

Chair of Governors Update

Date 10 November 2025

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to this update following our recent Governors' Forum, where we engaged in a substantial discussion on Hackney Education's Proposals for a *Place-Based Approach to a Sustainable Education System*. This initiative is designed to tackle the evolving educational landscape, addressing shifts in pupil demographics, higher levels of need, and financial constraints, through enhanced collaboration among all our schools and settings. The governors engaged in a robust discussion that included: the need for improved communication and timely data regarding their own setting and that of settings in their area to support decision making around collaboration; harnessing the power of governance to support the creation of a culture of trust and collaboration, while still operating in a competitive environment; and how effective working in partnership with parents and carers will be vital to the success of the approach. We encourage you to reflect on the presentations in the [slide deck](#) and notes provided.

Next steps involve:

Autumn Term 2025

- Engage with school leaders and governors on proposed partnership model
- Share further data to inform partnership approach.
- Check our collective readiness to set up Area Steering Groups and the School Clusters to operate within them.

Spring Term 2026

- Work with school leaders and governors to finalise steering groups and school clusters, and move to the next stages of establishing governance structures and Terms of Reference for the partnership model.

Summer Term 2026

- Finalise partnership model, establish formal agreements with school leaders and governors, and confirm timeframe for implementation - aiming for the start of the 2026/27 school year. Establish Corporate Board.

We hope the content of this forum will further support and inspire the most crucial role you have as governors - that of supporting your leaders and all staff in ensuring our children are safe, happy and ready to learn.

To further support your vital role, we encourage you to explore the comprehensive training opportunities available. The **new 2025/26 Hackney Governors' training programme** (book [here](#)) provides details on various modules, including new e-learning options for flexible learning. Please encourage your new governors to attend the upcoming **Introduction to Governance / Refresher training on Thursday 27 November 17:00, online**, or click on [this form](#) to request access to recordings (will be provided after the session).

We are deeply regretful to let you know that our next **Governors Forum** which was scheduled for **Thursday 27th November, from 17:00-18:30 is now CANCELLED**. This is due to Hackney having been notified of a local area SEND inspection which will be carried out by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Colleagues will be focussed on the inspection for the next three weeks. Do look out for our next Chair's update, though, which hopefully will support your work to shape a sustainable and effective education system, together.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the Chairs Update and we wish you all a productive second half of the autumn term.

Sincerely,

On behalf of Maggie Kalnins, Leader of Governance Services

The Content:

This update provides a summary of headlines from our Extended forum for Chairs of Governors - which took place in person from 5pm to 7pm on Thursday 23rd October, at the Tomlinson Centre. The event focused on the following key areas:

- Director of Education & Inclusion Update
- Hackney Education Strategy + SEND and Inclusion 3 Year Strategy
- New Ofsted Education Inspection Framework
- Place-Based Approach to a Sustainable Education System
- (The [slide deck](#) and from last week's event)

Future Dates of Hackney Governors Forums for 2025/26 starting at 5.00pm

- Tuesday 27th January 2026 - 17:00-18:30 (Virtual)
- Tuesday 24th March 2026 - 17:00-18:30 (Virtual)
- Tuesday 23rd June 2026 - 17:00-18:30 (Virtual)

Governors Training Programme:

Please find enclosed an update on the **NEW 2025/26 Hackney CPD Training Programme for Governors and Trustees**, together with the schedule of training sessions planned for the Autumn 2025/26 term. We are delighted to announce that all training sessions are now free for Hackney Governors.

Please note that all Autumn Term training sessions will run from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm

Tuesday 18th November 2025	Strategic Leadership of School Finance: Budgeting and the Governance of Sustainability (Foundation)	Book here
Wednesday, 19 November 2025	Strategic Leadership of Inclusion - managing behaviour and building relationships (Foundation)	Book here
Wednesday 26th November 2025	Strategic Leadership of Complaints and Stakeholder Engagement (Foundation)	Book here
Thursday, 27th November 2025	Hackney Governor Induction and Refresher	Book here
Tuesday 2nd December 2025	Strategic Leadership of School Finance: Budgeting and the Governance of Sustainability (Advanced)	Book here
Wednesday 3rd December 2025	Strategic Leadership of Curriculum, Achievement and Teaching	Book here
Wednesday, 10 December 2025	Strategic Leadership (<i>mandatory by law, every 2 years</i>)of Safeguarding	Book here

Thursday 11th December 2025	Preparing for Ofsted: understanding the new Education Inspection Framework	Book here
Thursday 18th December 2025	Strategic Leadership of Careers	Book here
E-learning	Headteacher's Performance Management	via this link

We strongly encourage all governors to attend live online sessions or click on [this form](#) to request access to the recordings (will be provided after the session). Click on the links above to book and reach out to our CPD team at cpdadmin@hackney.gov.uk for booking support. You can also sign up to the CPD newsletter [here](#), in order to stay up to date with our offers - which are updated regularly!

We remind you that Governor CPD is vital as it ensures governors and trustees have the current skills and knowledge to effectively support their schools, while also building their personal and professional development. It helps governors meet statutory responsibilities, improve school performance by contributing to strategic goals, and develop new skills like finance, leadership, and risk management. Ultimately, this continuous learning benefits the school community by improving outcomes for students and staff.

All sessions have been redesigned and refreshed this year, to consistently equip governors, trustees, senior leaders, and governance professionals with the most up-to-date knowledge, skills and understanding to support governors and trustees to fulfil their strategic responsibilities in key areas. Each training theme will be delivered by experts, dynamically in conversation with a governance expert adding the governance lens to the session.

Every session will include:

- Focusing on the dual roles of strategy and compliance monitoring, understanding the legal requirements, and how this topic impacts on school organisation effectiveness, pupils' progress, safety and wellbeing
- Understanding how to effectively work with, challenge, support, ensure accountability and seek assurance from school leaders
- Deploying governance tools effectively, such as knowing which information / what key questions to ask, how to best plan governance work, and making best use of meetings and visits
- Encouraging reflections on inclusion and equity, applying intersectional lenses such as anti-racism, SEND, trauma-informed practice, and adultification
- Understanding how to effectively work in partnership with external agencies
- Case-studies, as appropriate
- Opportunities for reflective practice, further learning, and networking tips
- A toolkit to takeaway: the slides/ webinar recording, guidance, references to support this strategic responsibility

Recommended Webinars

Strategic Governance of AI (Artificial Intelligence) *Not currently offered by Hackney this term.*

Recommended external training offers: [Governing AI in Schools and Trusts: responsibilities, risks and opportunities](#) - 25 November 2025 6pm (NGA)

Strategic Leadership of Data Protection *Not currently offered by Hackney this term. Recommended external training offers:* [UK GDPR and Data Protection for governance webinar - \(The Key\)](#)

Strategic Leadership of Cyber Security *Not currently offered by Hackney this term. Recommended external training offers:* [Cybersecurity for Governors / Trustees \(The Key\)](#)

Coming up soon

Strategic Leadership of Human Resources and Strategic Leadership of SEND - tbc

The list above is not exhaustive and we also offer bespoke advice and training tailored to specific circumstances, in the following themes:

- Governance effectiveness
- Optimising board dynamics and the interface with school leaders, including succession planning
- Confidentiality assuredness / conflicts of interests
- Panel hearings / chairing a panel
- Complaints management, including scoping, casework and investigation support / training

For any bespoke training requests, please email governorservices@hackney.gov.uk. We look forward to your attendance!

Governors' Annual Conference:

- Thursday 14th May 2026 - 16:00-19:00 (In Person - Hackney Town Hall)

We also remind you of our previous [updates and tools](#), our Governors' Training Programme above and our [Governance Services offer](#), all designed to assist the crucial work you do. We encourage you to share this update with board members and your wider networks, who can [subscribe here](#) to be included in our future communications.

In the meantime, for any governance questions, no matter how small, do reach out to us at governorservices@hackney.gov.uk.

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Jason Marantz, Director of Education and Inclusion

Hackney Education Strategy + SEND and Inclusion 3 Year Strategy

Background

The success story of schools and settings in Hackney is well known. Having been one of the lowest performing Boroughs, to now being one of the best.

However, the high education our schools and settings provide is under threat due to a number of factors, which include:

- The number of children attending our maintained schools has fallen dramatically and is set to decline further
- High number of exclusions locally
- Rising mental health and increased need means more children require even more support
- Rising Special educational needs means our schools have to do more with less

Vision Statement

Our vision is to improve the life chances and well being of every child and young person in Hackney across all communities. Our education offer must be ambitious, anti-racist and inclusive. It will encourage individuality, whilst creating a sense of belonging and wellbeing.

We will achieve this by working together with parents, carers, settings, and partners and across the entire family of schools and settings, including academies, early years, and independent providers, to sustain and evolve a high quality education offer that ensures success, excellence, equity and inclusivity for all.

Overarching Commitments

Our commitments underpin all of our priorities and objectives. By committing to:

- Being anti racist
- Working in partnership with parents and carers
- Developing children's mental health and well being

We are committing to ensuring that all pupils in Hackney reach their potential no matter their background.

We also recognise the crucial role that parents and carers play in supporting their children and commit to partnering with them.

- **Priority 1: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and inclusion**
- **Priority 2: Additional and Alternative Learning Provision**
- **Priority 3: Strength and sustainability**
- **Priority 4: Sustainable school improvement**
- **Priority 5: Equity for children and families**

For the details of the priorities, please see [slides 10-14](#)

Next Steps

The development of the Hackney Education 3-Year Strategic Plan involves the following key stages:

- **Autumn 2024:** A draft vision and refined key priorities were presented to primary consultative, secondary/special heads, and governors for feedback.
- **Spring 2025:** Plans were drafted, and a revised version was shared in a series of stakeholder events for workshopping and discussion.
- **Spring/Summer 2025:** The formal Consultation will be launched.
- **Autumn 2025:** The revised strategy will be shared and published.
- **Spring 2026:** Feedback from engagement and consultation will be released in a "You Said, We Did" report.

New Ofsted Education Inspection Framework

Key Changes

- Introduction of Report Cards and a new grading system (Exceptional, Strong Standard, Expected Standard, Needs Attention, Urgent Improvement)
- Six evaluation areas + EYs/Post 16 + safeguarding
- Inspection Toolkit available for each evaluation area
- Changes to inspection methodology e.g. emphasis on inclusion, wellbeing and disadvantaged pupils
- Removal of ungraded inspections
- Changes to monitoring of underperforming schools
- Inspections once every 4 years, including nurseries and childminders
- Inspections will be 2 days
- One hour webinars for all school types
- Ongoing campaigns against the proposed changes
- Dame Christine Gilbert now chairs Ofsted Board.

Evaluation Areas

- Inclusion
- Curriculum & Teaching
- Achievement
- Attendance & Behaviour
- Personal Development & Wellbeing
- Early Years
- Post-16

- Leadership & Governance
- Safeguarding (met/not met)

An example of a school report card can be found on [slide 20](#).

Key Governor Responsibilities

- School provision enables all pupils to thrive
- Well-informed about statutory duties and fulfil these effectively
- Provide effective support/challenge to school leaders
- Assure the quality and impact of the school's work
- Consider and support leaders' workload and well-being
- Accurate understanding of the school's context and priorities for improvement
- Monitoring and quality assurance are fair, reliable, and constructive
- Hold leaders to account for:
 - staff professional learning and development
 - provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, and those known to social care

Behaviour Management and School Inclusion

The Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission investigates issues of importance to the local community and makes recommendations to the Council and its partners to improve or develop local services. Against a backdrop of ongoing high rates of school exclusions and suspensions, the Commission is investigating how different approaches to behaviour management impact on school inclusion.

The Commission wants to find out how the Council can work together with schools and families to better identify and support the behaviour and learning needs of children to enable them to remain in school and other educational settings.

The Commission is launching an online public call for evidence in November 2025, which will be followed by focus groups with key stakeholder groups, *including local school governors*. The Commission will shortly be writing to school governing bodies inviting them to contribute, in the interim you can read more about the review, its aims, what work has already been done and what further work is planned [here](#).

For further information on the details of the grading system, see [slides 22-25](#)

See [slides 3-15](#)

CELEBRATION OF YOUNG GOVERNORS PROGRAMME AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Maggie Kalnins, Head of School Governors Services

Hackney Education's Young Governors Programme

Hackney is committed to ensuring its governing boards genuinely reflect the diverse communities they serve. Nationally, governance suffers from a lack of diversity: over 50% of governors are aged 60+, and fewer than 1% are under 30. Furthermore, only about 4% of governors are from Black and Global Majority (BGM) communities.

Hackney's Young Governor's Programme seeks to address these challenges, by providing young people in Hackney training and support to become effective governors for schools across our borough.

In the programme, Young Governors undergo a structured induction to the role of a governor, and are provided with mentoring and support networks that ensure they will feel safe, respected and capable of contributing meaningfully to the boards they will eventually serve.

Over the course of the programme, we have worked with around 40 young people, 7 of whom attended the Governors Forum on 23rd October.

Programme Highlights and Testimonials

The section featured a message from Deputy Mayor Cllr Antoinette Bramble and shared testimonials from participants, including Liz Conway - Chair of Trustees, Clapton Girls Academy.

Deputy Mayor Cllr Antoinette Bramble's Message

Cllr Bramble highlighted the success of the Young Governors Program, a key manifesto pledge driven by the desire of 2,500 young people to see greater youth representation on governing boards. The programme has significantly changed the face of governance in Hackney, increasing the diversity and reducing the average age of governors to better reflect the communities and young people they serve. Cllr Bramble expressed immense pride in the young people who have stepped into this space and urged current young governors to encourage their peers to participate, ensuring the program continues to place young voices at the heart of influencing education.

Liz Conway's Testimonial (Chair of Trustees, Clapton Girls Academy)

Liz Conway spoke positively about the young governor that was assigned to Clapton Girl's Academy during this year's Young Governors Programme. Liz highlighted the successful transition of the governor from the program to an associate trustee, with confidence that they will become a full trustee soon. A key benefit was that the young governor was a school alumnus, providing invaluable insight into the school's culture. The Hackney Young Governor Programme's comprehensive training ensured the governor arrived with a strong understanding of governance and an enthusiastic, relatable perspective as someone new to the world of work. This addition was particularly valuable as school boards often attract older members, emphasising the importance of young governors who students and younger staff can relate to.

Voices of Hackney's Young Governors provided powerful insights into the impact of the programme:

- *"The YG programme gave me the confidence I needed to feel as though I belonged on a governing board. In a field that can otherwise feel as though it is ruled by people who seem to 'know' everything, I wouldn't have had the confidence to put myself out there if it wasn't for the YG scheme."*
- *"The biggest impact has been building the confidence, skills, and knowledge to step into governance with clarity about my role and responsibility. The training deepened my understanding of governance structures, safeguarding, and how schools are held accountable, while the placement...gave me first-hand experience of board culture and decision-making."*
- *"The programme helped me understand how real decisions in schools are made. It's built my confidence to speak up and contribute ideas in a professional setting."*

Building on Success: Future Ambitions

Hackney Education is committed to two main goals, building on the success of Young Governor's Programme:

- I. To continue the ambition to have at least 1 Young Governor on every governing board across all Hackney Schools.
- II. To increase the representation of Black and Global Majority Parents Across Hackney's Boards.

Why Increasing Representation on Governing Boards Matters

Four key reasons why having diverse boards, including Young Governors and Black and Global Majority Parents, is essential:

- **Diverse Perspectives:** Varied experiences prevent "groupthink," leading to more informed, inclusive, and challenging discussions, and ultimately, more robust decisions.
- **Enhanced School-Community Connections:** A reflective board builds trust and stronger connections between parents and the school, ensuring understanding of all community members' lives, contexts, and aspirations.
- **Improved Outcomes:** Diverse boards better challenge educational disparities, address issues like disproportionate exclusion rates for Black and Global Majority pupils, and develop inclusive policies.
- **Positive Role Models:** Diverse leaders provide powerful role models for young people and staff, broadening perceptions of what's possible.

See [slides 26-31](#)

PLACED-BASED APPROACH TO A SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Jason Marantz, Director of Education & Inclusion

Terry Bryan, Assistant Director, School Estates Strategy

Lisa Williams, Head of School Improvement and Education Performance

Introduction

Hackney is proud of its journey in raising education standards over the last 25 years. However, our success is currently facing significant challenge from the changing education landscape and shift in our pupil population, higher levels of need, and reduced finances. It is evident that these challenges are having a greater impact on our underserved communities

The current challenges can only be effectively addressed through a system of collaboration and partnership between all schools and settings, fostering a shared vision and strategy.

Background & Context

- Primary: 3,000 fewer school children compared with January 2017; and a further reduction of 2,800 projected by the mid 2030s
- Secondary: 300 fewer children compared with January 2023; and a further fall of 2,240 is projected by the mid 2030s
- Summer 2025 - 1,720 EHC plans in mainstream schools, 5,234 children on SEN Support.
- Levels of engagement with families and our communities has been mixed.

What Discussion with Governors Aimed to Achieve

1. For governors to leave with a shared understanding of our ambition for sustaining high quality and equitable forms of education in Hackney.
2. To consider how we improve our school organisation models to ensure that we have a fairer offer for all, especially the disadvantaged, vulnerable and our most underserved groups.

The Proposal

- Develop place-based approaches – ensuring the equity of provision, fairness of admissions, investment in SEND
- Create partnership structures that enable all schools to collaborate on tailored, flexible solutions based on local community needs.
- Develop locality models for schools and settings to enhance sustainability by sharing services and resources, such as Early Years, SEND, Alternative Provision, and Post-16 provision.
- Encouraging collective group decision making about local education provision

Why Place-Based?

- Place refers to the level at which decisions are taken and actions are carried out. We mean culture, context, community.
- It focuses the work of schools (and our partners) on collaboration and avoids the potential for fragmentation.
- This approach has the potential to greatly improve our ability to respond to increasing demands and meet educational needs in a locality.
- System improvements will need to be integrated across education services, viewing this as an opportunity to address inequality of our most vulnerable and underserved children

Place-Based Approaches are not

- The largest schools/ organisations having the greatest voice and the strongest say
- A way of compelling schools to work with specific partners
- A threat to the autonomy or ambition of existing partnerships

Breakout Discussion Groups

Groups discussed the following questions. A summary of their discussion can be found below.

1. *How can governors support local schools to work together instead of acting on their own?*

- The LA must incentivize cooperation to help schools overcome the competition mindset, shifting the focus to serving the community and building trust.
- Governors should establish strong networks (like simple CoG mailing lists or formal groups) and use collaboration to share expertise (e.g., Maths, outreach) and increase shared capacity across the borough.
- There is a need to clarify the governance role (recommendations vs. decisions) and establish consistent expectations across all schools, guided by data and audits, particularly for inclusion.

2. *How can governors work together with school leaders to improve local area education provision for children in their communities?*

- Governors and leaders should forge links between educational tiers (nursery–primary–secondary) to ensure continuous learning and seamless provision, especially in response to issues like falling rolls.
- The LA should guide shared working models to ensure they are reciprocal and mutually beneficial for all schools, not just a 'strongest and weakest' approach.
- Improve information clarity among all stakeholders and prioritize building strong relationships with parents, utilizing community organizations and encouraging parental advocacy (e.g., PTAs).

3. *How can governors, schools, and the local authority work together to make sure there is sufficient support to help children who need it most?*

- The system must balance top-down and bottom-up approaches (structure mixed with stakeholder buy-in), bringing Governors and Head Teachers together to build vertical clusters (VCs).
- The LA needs to clarify the VISION ("the Why") and provide support (e.g., more school visits) to build confidence that the structure can tackle vulnerabilities and local challenges effectively.
- Governors should leverage their role to promote consistency in provision boroughwide (e.g., across new SEND legislation) and overcome the isolation of Head Teachers by encouraging staff recruitment onto partner schools' governing bodies.

A full transcript of the conversations held in the break-out groups can be found [here](#), which we hope will be helpful.

Proposed Next Steps to Establishing a Place-Based Partnership Model

- Autumn Term 2025:
 - Engage with school leaders and governors on proposed partnership model
 - Share further data to inform partnership approach.
 - Check our collective readiness to set up Area Steering Groups and the School Clusters to operate within them.
- Spring Term 2026:
 - Work with school leaders and governors to finalise steering groups and school clusters, and move to the next stages of establishing governance structures and Terms of Reference for the partnership model.
- Summer Term 2026:
 - Finalise partnership model, establish formal agreements with school leaders and governors , and confirm timeframe for implementation - aiming for the start of the 2026/27 school year.
 - Establish Corporate Board.

Useful Resources

- [DRAFT - Hackney Education Guidance on Collaborations and Partnerships 2025](#)
- [Turning the Tide a study of place based partnerships - Research Explorer The University of Manchester](#)
- [Strategies for transforming local education systems. Education Development and ISOS Partnership](#)
- [Research into how local authorities are ensuring sufficient places and supporting vulnerable children](#)
- [Developing Place-based Partnerships | The King's Fund](#)
- [Place-based Partnerships Explained | The King's Fund](#)
- [Driving productivity and effectiveness in schools and trusts - Why organisational ingredients matter most.pdf](#)
- [Enabling school improvement](#)
- [Working-better-together-in-neighbourhoods](#)
- [Creating connections: An exploration of school collaborations June 2025](#)
- [Trusting place: Improving the lives of local people through place-based approaches | Local Government Association](#)

See [slides](#) 32-45

NATIONAL GOVERNANCE POLICY & GUIDANCE UPDATES AND REPORTS OCTOBER 2025

Madalina Brockmann, Governor Services Manager

DFE's Effective Governance Resources 2025

Supportive resources for maintained school governing bodies, academy trust boards, leaders and governance professionals (clerks) in developing sustainable and effective governance:

- [Working with governance professionals \(clerks\): resources](#)
- [Governing strategically in your school or academy trust: resources](#)
- [Producing effective board reports for strong governance: resources](#)
- [Creating an effective and agile governance structure: resources](#)
- [Recruiting governors and academy trustees: resources](#)

Finances, Funding, Property Management

- **Academy Trust Severance Payments:** The [Academy trust handbook](#) and guidance on [trust severance payments](#) have been updated. The qualifying salary for DfE permission for severance payments has increased from £150,000 to £174,000. New provisions regarding confidentiality clauses in staff severance agreements state they must not prevent whistleblowing under the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#), require prior DfE approval if novel, contentious, or repercussive, and must not hinder DfE's regulatory information gathering.
- **Cost of School Uniforms:** Updated [guidance on the cost of school uniforms](#) includes draft statutory guidance on a proposed limit to the number of branded school uniform and PE kit items schools can require, with the intention of making this a legal requirement from September 2026. Schools are advised to review their uniform policies and engage with suppliers.
- **DfE: Condition Improvement Fund 2026-27** - The Department has [published information for schools on the Condition Improvement Fund \(CIF\) for academic year 2026-27](#). Full guidance to support applications has been published, alongside a loan repayment calculator, with key changes for 2026-27 including:
 - Use of technical advisers and procurement: For 2026-27, the procuring and appointing of technical advice must be clearly set out and evidenced.
 - Assessment considerations: Guidance covers that in certain circumstances, a CIF application may be put on hold while additional due diligence is undertaken by the DfE, or where the DfE attaches conditions to the funding.
 - Contingencies and provisional sums: The guidance clarifies that project contingency is for unforeseen work, while provision sums should only be expended on work within scope.
- **Academies Land and Buildings Collection Tool (LBCT):** [Guidance for trusts and dioceses on the annual submission of the LBCT](#) has been updated for the 2025/26 year.

Performance

- **Key Stage 4 (KS4) Performance Data:** Provisional Performance Data for 2024/25: DfE has published provisional KS4 data at [national](#), regional, and [School](#) levels for the 2024/25 academic year. Progress 8 data will not be published for 2024/25 and 2025/26 due to the absence of KS2 assessments for these cohorts. Attainment, entry, and destination measures are published, including three-year time series on the Compare School and College Performance (CSCP) tool.
 - Headline Statistics for 2024/25:
 - Average Attainment 8 score: 45.9 (same as 2024, 0.8 points lower than 2019).
 - Percentage achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths: 45.2% (0.7 percentage points lower than 2024, 2.0 percentage points higher than 2019).
 - EBacc entry rate: 40.5% (0.1 percentage points higher than 2024, 0.5 percentage points higher than 2019).

- EBacc Average Point Score (APS): 4.08 (0.1 higher than 2024 and 2019).
 - KS4 disadvantage gap index: narrowed to 3.91 in 2025 (compared to 3.93 in 2024 and 3.70 in 2019).
- Secondary Accountability Guidance: An update of the [secondary accountability guidance](#) was also published.
- **DfE: Primary Assessment** - The DfE has published a series of documents in relation to primary assessment:
 - [Primary assessments: future dates](#)
 - [2026 optional key stage 1 tests access arrangements guidance](#)
 - [2026 Key stage 2 tests access arrangements guidance](#)

Post-16:

- **16 to 18 Qualifications, Discount Codes, and Point Scores:** The DfE has updated its [guidance on 16–18 performance tables](#), including discount codes, and point scores.
- **The Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper** proposes to work with employers to drive growth and opportunity through education and training; a specialist and prestigious further education system that delivers high-quality education and training for all; and strengthening the UK's world-leading higher education system.
 - Part 1: **Working with Employers to drive Growth and Opportunity:** The government, through the White Paper, is committing to "build a system that leaves no learner behind." This is the rationale for the target that two-thirds of young people should participate in higher-level learning, with 10% of young people going into level 4 or 5 study, including apprenticeships, by age 25 by 2040. The Growth and Skills Levy will play a key role.
 - Part 2: **The Further Education System:** The White Paper commits to building on the excellent work of our further education teachers, while post-16 teachers and senior leaders lack a comprehensive, national, evidence-based and visible professional development offer. Specific and up-to-date industry knowledge is also crucial for education and training to be of the highest quality. The White Paper also commits to reform of curriculum, assessment and qualifications and also commits to better support and regulation of the FE sector.
 - Part 3: **The Higher Education System:** Increasing specialisation and collaboration in teaching and research, Putting the sector on a sustainable footing and driving efficiency, Improving Access and Participation, Strengthening incentives on higher education providers to promote growth: Improving the quality of higher education, training, and research
- The [consultation on the planned design and implementation of the new pathways for 16 to 19-year-olds](#) proposes V-levels at level 3 and two new pathways at level 2. The new pathways at level 2 are a 'Further Study' pathway and an 'Occupational' pathway which will provide distinct routes to progression for level 2 students. The consultation will be open for 12 weeks, from Monday 20 October 2025 to Monday 12 January 2026.

Wellbeing

- **The Children's Society: [Good Childhood Report 2025](#)**, Key findings indicate that 9% of children surveyed had low wellbeing, "getting good grades" was the top worry for children's futures (43% worried), and children's average happiness was significantly lower across all aspects of life compared to 2009/10, with schoolwork being the area of least happiness in 2022/23.
- **Complaints NGA - [The school complaints landscape in 2025 - Insights and priorities for reform \(September 2025\)](#)**, highlights several key findings:

Increase of Complaints: 82% of governors and trustees report an increase in complaints over the past 3 to 5 years, with half experiencing significant rises. This trend is more pronounced in secondary schools (93%) compared to primary schools (79%).

Main Complaint Topics: Complaints primarily concern special educational needs and disability (SEND), teacher interaction, bullying, school management, and attendance. Schools and trusts are also dealing with a notable number of vexatious and unreasonable complaints.

Actions to Reduce Complaints (Schools/Trusts): Governors and trustees suggest that schools and trusts can reduce complaints by:

- Having strong parental/stakeholder engagement and communication (42%).
- Taking early intervention to prevent escalation (16%).
- Implementing more effective complaints management processes (11%).

Actions to Reduce Complaints (DfE): Governors and trustees believe the Department for Education (DfE) could help reduce complaints by:

- Providing more SEND funding (15%).
- Designing more robust complaints procedures (13%).
- Managing parents' expectations of schools (11%).

Safeguarding, wellbeing and pastoral provision

- [City of London and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership \(CHSCP\)](#)

SEND

- **IPPR Report on SEND Reform:** A new [new report on SEND reform from the Institute for Public Policy Research](#) (IPPR) makes five recommendations: design an inclusive education system, introduce a new model for earlier support, build capacity through funding and workforce investment, incentivize inclusion in school improvement and accountability, and retain existing EHCPs during the transition to better support.
- **DfE: SEND Unit and Resourced Provision Networks** - The DfE has launched national peer-to-peer Special Educational Needs unit and resourced provision networks (SURP). These networks are open to all schools that have a SURP with an autism specialism, schools with their own autism provision, and schools interested in setting one up. The networks are aimed at those with responsibility for the day-to-day running of the provision.support.SURPNOWORKS@education.gov.uk

Other Reports

- **NAO: Overview of the Department for Education** - The National Audit Office (NAO) has published an [Overview of the Department for Education](#). In 2024-25, DfE spent £95.5 billion, including: £64 billion on schools; £15 billion on skills; £8 billion on families; £5.5 billion on capital. But the NAO finds that there are key risks DfE faces in ensuring resilience, including the systems supporting children with special education needs, and those in residential care, which have been struggling to meet rising demand; and a £13.8 billion maintenance backlog in schools (8% of the government backlog) may impact resilience of the school estate.

HIGHLIGHT OF TRAINING & GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNORS - HEADLINES

Bespoke Training Opportunity

- **Harnessing the power of governors and leaders in bringing about systemic change** particularly targeted for chair of governors and others with lead role on the board and senior school leaders Maggie Kalnins. This will be a bespoke session and you will need to go through governor services to book. Please email governorservices@hackney.gov.uk for more information.

All training is from 5:00pm-6:30pm

Live Online Training / webinar on demand	Trainers	Autumn 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026 Please note these dates are provisional ONLY
<u>Governor Induction and Refresher</u>	Madalina Brockmann and Donna Knight	Webinar coming soon	Tuesday 10th March 2026	Thursday, 11th June 2026
Curriculum, Achievement and Teaching	Damien Parrott	Wednesday 3rd December 2025	Tuesday 3rd March 2026	Tuesday 30th June 2026
School Finance: Budgeting and the Governance of Sustainability	Suhal Kadir and Maggie Kalnins	Part 1: Tuesday 18th November 2025 Part 2: Tuesday 2nd December 2025	Part 1: Tuesday 24th February 2026 Part 2: Wednesday 18th March 2026	Part 1: Tuesday 12th May Part 2: Wednesday 3rd June
Safeguarding	James Sykes	Wednesday, 10 December 2025	Wednesday, 25th March 2026	Tuesday, 16th June 2026
Human Resources	Lolita Brown	TBC	TBC	TBC
Health and Safety	tbc	TBC	TBC	TBC
Preparing for Ofsted	Calvin Henry	Thursday 11th December 2025	TBC	TBC
Complaints and Stakeholder Engagement Foundation	Madalina Brockmann Laura Stagg	Wednesday 26th November 2025 (Foundation)	Wednesday 25th February 2026 (Advanced)	Wednesday 20th May 2026

Advanced (Complaints Panels)				
Inclusion - through the lens of managing behaviour and building relationships - Foundation -Advanced (Exclusion Panels)	Madalina Brockmann Kate Cracknell	Wednesday, 19 November 2025 (Foundation)	Tuesday, 17 March 2026 (Advanced)	Tuesday 2nd June 2026 (tbc)
SEND	Yvonne Wade	TBC	TBC	TBC
Careers	Anya	Thursday 18th December 2025	Thursday 19th March 2026	Tuesday 7th July 2026
Headteacher Performance Management	live (on demand)	e-Learning module via this link . Attendees will need to create an account to access the workspace		