

Chair of Governors Update

12 May 2022

Dear Colleagues,

We started this summer term with many significant issues to contend with. The rise in costs of living, which are already impacting on our children and their families, is also bringing greater financial challenges in running our schools. Along with the concerns about the War in Ukraine, we are also aware of the anxieties our children feel as they return to formal exams for the first time in three years. This week, our Hackney [Anti-racism conference](#) has also provoked our determination to tackle disparity, disproportionality and discrimination for children and families from black and global majority communities.

At our forum last week, we shared key headlines focused on national and local strategies that will ensure a better future for our children. We kept our strong focus on the lessons to learn from the Child Q review. We also emphasised our mission to support Governing Boards in promoting anti-discriminatory practices. As such, we are expanding [Get Hackney Youth Governing](#) and persuade you to [Express your Interest](#). We also want to hear from every governor to understand ["How inclusive are our Hackney Governing Boards?"](#) We also hope you will join our [Governors conference, online twilight series, 22 June, 30 June, 6 July 2022](#), focusing on how race and social class impacts on the education experiences of children. These headline messages are all captured in the [video](#), [slides](#) and the key notes below.

On a final note, the cacophony of birdsongs filling the warmer air of Maytime brings with it the words of Maya Angelou **"A bird does not sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song"**. No matter how challenging the future feels, we must maintain our clear sense of purpose, driving systemic changes that ensure every child has the opportunity to experience success!

Sincerely,

Maggie Kalnins, Leader of Governance Services

The content:

- Quality Education and high achievement for all
- Promoting Equalities and anti racism
- Systems and Support: Governance advice, information and training to support key systems:
 - SEND & inclusion; including reducing exclusions
 - Engagement with parents
 - Well being, health and safety of students and/or staff;
 - Safeguarding
 - Recruitment, development and retention of staff
 - Strategic business/ financial planning and risk management
 - Effective collaboration with the Hackney family of schools and key partners

We remind you of our previous [updates and tools](#), our **Governors Training Programme for Summer 2021/22** 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.

Quality Education and high achievement for all

Key Notes from Governors Forum

[\(Forum Recording 00:51 - 07:26\)](#) There is strong teaching and differentiation in Hackney. A number of schools work collaboratively to find solutions and answers. Whilst **Hackney schools often do better than national and London averages, we recognise the need to address historic achievement gaps that still need to be closed.** [Slide 4](#)

[\(Forum Recording 07:27 - 15:54\)](#) The White Paper '[Opportunity for all Strong schools with great teachers for your child](#)' sets out the government's vision for education, including programmes for teacher development and improvement, support for schools and pupil interventions. It sets ambitions that by 2030, 90% of primary school children will achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, a 25% increase on 2019's national average of 65%; and in secondary schools the average grade in English and Mathematics will increase from 2019's grade 4.5 to grade 5. The paper seeks to clarify the roles of the [Department for Education](#) (DfE) and the regional schools commissioners but also recognises the roles of local authorities in supporting and championing their schools. [Slide 9](#)

The white paper has four pillars. The *Excellent teacher for every child* pillar focuses on teacher and professional development. In accordance with the *High standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance* pillar, there will not be any changes in the national curriculum until 2024 but a new literacy and numeracy test which will be introduced in year 9 at the end of Key Stage 3. There is more support for teachers, a new national behaviour survey and revisions made to the school's guidance around suspension and permanent exclusions. [Slide 8 - 17](#)

[\(Forum Recording 19:45 - 28:30\)](#) There is a resonance with the Green Paper '[SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time](#)' which has a focus on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) review. It sets out reforms including restating the importance of alternative provision and meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils. Guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education and Keeping Children Safe in Education will be updated. [Slide 18 - 25](#)

There is new legislation for creating statutory guidance on attendance, requiring every school to publish a policy.

[\(Forum Recording 15:54 - 19:30\)](#) The fourth pillar, *A strong and fairer school system*, aims to be reflected by a fully multi-academy trust led system with a single regulatory approach, by 2030. In the coming year, we will set up working groups, to ensure stakeholder involvement, in discussing the strengthening of the local authority role and what a cluster of Hackney schools might look like under a different governance approach.

Relevant Announcements and Reports

- [Summer Schools 2021 Research Report](#)
- Ofsted's latest briefing on education recovery highlights overall [clear signs of improvements but casts concern on the impact of high levels of absence on pupil mental health and behaviour](#).
- [Ofsted powers boosted to tackle illegal unregistered schools in England](#)

Promoting equalities and anti-racism

Key Notes from Governors Forum

There has been **distress and anger in light of the case of Child Q**, emphasising the need for a joined up approach across schools, children's services and health aimed at ensuring the best for every school and every child.

[\(Forum Recording 29:39 - 44:02\)](#) Some of the **issues raised by the case of Child Q include a safeguarding first approach and tackling racism**. Much of that focus has been on the actions of police, particularly from teenaged children and colleagues at secondary schools. Our Secondary schools recognise the need to collaborate more with the joint purpose of providing excellent care and safeguarding for every child with a strong anti-racist approach and this will be promoted through individual meetings, a secondary head teacher conference in late June 2022 with a focus on best safeguarding, anti racism, inclusion and early help to prevent exclusions and continued work on Hackney's inclusion approaches and framework which aligns with the [inclusion conference on 1 July 2022](#). Hackney we must all ensure we work to safeguard and care for every black and global majority child and care for every black and global majority parent. [Slide 27](#)

As leaders, head teachers and governors, system leaders, we must all seek to understand what the experience of students is like in their institution. We must seek to hear the voices of young people to develop a system whereby children feel respected, they are able to integrate their home and school lives, and achieve superb qualifications at the end of their school careers. [Slide 28](#)

Hackney has firm foundations in terms of high achievement and high expectations. It is the moment to look at issues of racism, it is powerful to hear the authentic voices of our students, there are no quick fix solutions and we are not going to shy away from these issues. **Hackney head teachers made a commitment to a safeguarding and anti racist approach. Governors are urged to ensure that their school is signed up to it and that this approach is embedded.** [Slide 29 - 30](#)

[\(Forum Video 45:30 - 52:13\)](#) **Inclusive Governance: Expanding the Young Governors Project and diversifying governing boards.** Young governors are making boards think, behave and focus differently. [Slide 41](#)

Relevant Announcements and Reports

- [Equality, diversity and inclusion](#) and [Equality and diversity: a practical guide for governors](#)
- [Jim Gamble Child Q online panel for Hackney Schools](#)- contact Louise louise.grundberg@hackney.gov.uk for a copy of this session
- [Children's rights](#): materials provided by Young Hackney
- The Commission on Young Lives shared a thematic report entitled '[All Together Now: Inclusion not exclusion - supporting all young people to succeed in school](#)'.

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- [Tackling Inequalities: Hackney Young Black Men initiative - Understanding Cultural Competency, Racial Identity and Unconscious Bias](#) Wednesday 22nd June 2022, 5pm - 7pm

Systems and Support: Governance advice, information and training to support key systems:

SEND & Inclusion; including reducing exclusions

Key Notes from Governors Forum

[Forum Recording 19:45 - 28:30](#) The three key challenges identified by the '[SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time](#)' suggest that the system is fragmented with emphasis on where the child goes to school.

The main points in the review include:

- developing a single national SEND alternative provision (AP) system
- establish new local SEND partnerships across the system with the key players of education, health, care and local government,
- developing local and national standards around how to meet SEND needs. A code of practice will ensure consistency and avoid too much local decision making about how SEND operates.
- A digital standard Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) and process will be introduced, so that a child who moves to the borough will not have to restart the process.
- Parents will be empowered in decision making for their children with special educational needs. The appeals process will be streamlined with plans for mandatory mediation, to counter the 8,000 appeals nationally attending tribunals, of which 98% are found in favour of families. [Slide 19 - 24](#)

In terms of *Delivering change for children and families*, currently many local authorities are **struggling to manage their high needs budget** so the government's safety valve programme will be developed, and £85 million will be available for some local areas in the Delivering Better Value for SEND programme nationally. Delivery will be supported by a £70 million SEND and AP change programme. A new National SEND Delivery Board will monitor the progress of implementation and a national SEND and AP delivery plan will set out the government's response to the consultation. [Slide 24](#)

A 13 week consultation period follows the publication of the Green Paper, which ends on 1 July 2022. There will be written follow ups and a period of implementation which will take one to two years of further development. [Slide 25](#)

In terms of *Excellent provision from early years to adulthood*, the SEND system runs from 0 to 25 years old, and there will be an increase in core schools' budgets by £7 billion by 2024-25, a new national SENCO award and a focus on therapies and health provision informed by local strategic planning. £2.6 billion will be made available over the next three years in high needs capital investment for new places and improvements to existing SEND provision, and Hackney plans to build more SEND provision locally. There will be the move to multi-academy trusts by 2030, 10,000 additional respite places and £82 million to create a network of family hubs. There will be further investment in the work internships programme to support children that leave school aged 16 years old to reach paid work. [Slide 21](#)

Relevant Announcements and Reports

- [Calls for an end to 'exclusions culture' to tackle teenage violence and exploitation](#)
- **Film: Inclusion a View From Exclusion:** Haringey Learning Partnership, a Difference Leadership Programme partner school, teamed up with [deep:black](#) and [Collage Voices](#) on a recent film project entitled '[Inclusion a view from Exclusion](#)'
- NGA's [guide to SEND and the governing board](#) includes a comprehensive checklist

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- [How Do Governors Ensure An Inclusive Approach For Children With Special Educational Needs And Disabilities?](#) Thursday 9 June 2022, 9am - 11am

- [How Can Governors Improve Outcomes For Those At Risk Of Exclusion And What Should They Know Before Considering An Exclusion?](#) Wednesday 15 June 2022, 5pm - 7pm

Engagement with parents

Key Notes from Governors Forum

It is important to support the engagement of parents and carers in schools. Children do best when there is a warm and open relationship between them, and Debra Robinson, System Leader for parents and carers, is working with schools on this.

Relevant Announcements and Reports

- Introduction of a **Parent Pledge** as part of an increased emphasis on **parental engagement**.

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- [Stakeholder Engagement and Complaints:How do governing boards ensure effective engagement with stakeholders and effectively manage complaints?](#) Wednesday 25 May 2022 5pm - 7pm

Well being, health and safety of students and/or staff

Key Notes from Governors Forum

Early help is high on the current priorities agenda for children with special educational needs or disabilities and for those struggling with social issues or mental health, as getting support early is really important for those children.

Wellbeing and inclusion must be promoted for every child and we must also continue to work on reducing exclusion.

Relevant Announcements and Reports

- The **Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition** has announced an inquiry into behaviour and mental health in schools. The inquiry will "explore the links between mental health and behaviour", and look at how current school policies on behaviour "affect young people and their families".

Safeguarding

Key Notes from Governors Forum

[\(Forum Recording 29:39 - 44:02\)](#) In the wake of the Child Q report, Hackney issued local guidance which picked up on some of the themes, issues and challenges identified. A safeguarding first response to searching for prohibited items and the associated risks was considered, and whether a referral to early help can best support the child under these circumstances. Escalation routes to calling police need to be considered and this should be a decision for the head teacher. When police are on site, the head teacher should be nominated to ensure that involvement is appropriate and reasonable. Previously there was no requirement for informing parents or keeping records of searches, but now there should be a record of engagement with parents around searches of prohibited items, the circumstances of the searches in terms of what was being looked for and whether anything was found, particularly in order to recognise disproportionality. [Slide 36/37/38](#)

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- [Safeguarding: How Do Governors Fulfil Their Responsibility To Safeguard And Protect Children?](#) Thursday 16 June 2022, 5pm - 7pm

Recruitment, development and retention of staff

Key Notes from Governors Forum

In leading and supporting excellent work places, where staff are the most valuable resource across services and schools, we must provide positive environments where staff have high quality professional development to support retention in teaching or education.

Strategic business/financial planning and risk management

Key Notes from Governors Forum

The White Paper reports that the DfE has updated guidance on pupil premium and is looking at a menu of support including specific support, teaching and learning and wider support. There are financial incentives for schools to provide tutoring and catch up.

Relevant Announcements and Reports

- Updated guidance on [what governing boards and school leaders should expect from each other](#)
- *NGA provides a range of guidance and development opportunities to support governing board chairs:*
 - Leading Governance [Development for Chairs programme](#) – a blend of flexible learning and workshops with opportunities to network.
 - [Time management tips for chairs](#) – practical advice on managing the role.
 - [Co-chairing in practice](#) – how to share the role of chair.
 - [The Chair's Handbook](#) – essential reading for chairs of governing boards.

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- [The Foundations Of Strong Governance Step 3. How Do Governing Boards Strategically Assess And Manage Risks In Their Schools?](#) Tuesday 17 May 2022, 5pm - 7pm
- [Staff Welfare, Morale And Workload: How Do Governing Boards Create Excellent Workplaces That Support Staff Welfare, Manage Performance And Oversees Organisational Changes?](#) Tuesday 7 June 2022 9am -11am

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