

Chair of Governors Update

13 October 2022

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to share this update, the first for this education year. We include the [video](#), [slides](#) and headlines from last week's virtual forum, together with further relevant announcements and educational reports. We also signpost you to our virtual training opportunities, all of which we trust will support your crucial work in governing our schools.

At the start of this new academic year, we proudly watched our schools welcoming their pupils, celebrating outcomes from summer exams and assessment, and driving forward strategies to enable greater achievement for every child. These strategies are addressing disproportionate attainment; exclusions; attendance, and they also focus on SEND provision. In a week that began with World Mental Health Day, ends with World Food Day, and with strong campaigns to extend free school meals to all children living in households on universal credit, we feel these exceptionally challenging times. It requires that same courageous leadership that was evident throughout the pandemic. It also requires continued strong governance, supporting our school leaders in navigating these wider economic and social challenges, sustaining our school systems and minimising the impact on our children and their families .

As we strive in our collective mission to improve the life chances of every child and young person in Hackney, the word fortitude as defined by the late Hilary Mantel, aptly captures the spirit of this moment. "Fortitude. ... It means fixity of purpose. It means endurance. It means having the strength to live with what constrains you."

Sincerely,

Maggie Kalnins, Leader of Governance Services

The

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Future Dates of Hackney Governors Virtual Forum (5 to 6:00pm):

- Thursday 24th November 2022
- Thursday 2nd February 2023
- Thursday 16th March 2023
- Thursday 18th May 2023
- Thursday 29th June 2023

We remind you of our previous [updates and tools](#), our [Governors Training Programme for 2022/23](#) 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.

Welcome

Key Notes from Governors Forum

Cllr Anntoinette Bramble gave thanks to governors and acknowledged their critical role. Annie Gammon, Director of Education, was also thanked for her long standing contribution to Hackney

Education. Our interim Director of Education, Paul Senior, previously led Hackney's work on SEND and brings a wealth of experience. [Forum Video \(01:05 - 04:08\)](#)

Paul Senior emphasised that governors as being part of the 'education ecosystem', supporting school improvement. 97% local schools in Hackney are good or better in Hackney, which is fantastic. However, our ambition is to reach 100%. Whilst there are still challenges, tricky conversations and areas for improvement, the crucial role of governors remains to challenge and support the work of their school leadership teams.

Paul Senior's professional experience started in secondary education, including leading inner London pupil referral units, advising the DfE on inclusion, behaviour and attendance and then becoming Group Director, chairing and leading the national strategies programme including the London Challenge. Paul then worked as a Policy Advisor for both Tony Blair and then Gordon Brown when they were prime ministers, as well as several London Mayors. Paul has worked with the Home Office's Respect Team with the focus on antisocial behaviour, crime and prevention and family initiatives. He has held numerous roles as Director of Children and Education Services with a number of London Boroughs and also Sheffield, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham. Paul previously joined Hackney for three months in 2020 as Assistant Director for Education, working with a focus on SEND, admissions and high needs. Over the next six months, Paul will be working with partners, stakeholders and providers to help lead on areas for improvement and to strengthen and pave the way for the permanent director.

[Forum Video \(04:20 - 09:55\)](#) [Slides 1-3](#)

Hackney Education priorities for this academic year

Key Notes from Governors Forum

Hackney Education's mission is to improve the life chances of every child and young person in Hackney. We do this by making sure the local system of education best meets their needs, in order to optimise their life chances. Progressing the inclusion agenda and maximising inclusion in schools is a key priority. Hackney Education, Children's Social Care, schools, partners and governors all have a role in strengthening capacity for inclusion in our schools. Our key issues include:

- Last year, 35 pupils were permanently excluded. This is higher than other local authorities with a similar demographics to Hackney. Any permanent exclusion is a failure of the whole system, not just the school. It requires collective thinking about what can be done to reduce them.
- School conditions must be inclusive of all children, including those with SEND. Hackney invests heavily in SEND and is the 12th highest out of 152 local authorities issuing EHCPs.
- Falling school rolls is a pressure, and minimising the risk that this presents will be a priority given its impact on schools' viability and effectiveness.
- The cost of living and hardship is being seen daily, as it impacts on children's learning.
- There are challenges around anti-racism and additional training will be considered to compliment the current offer.
- Hackney must ensure it is future proof in terms of challenges related to the White Paper.
- Common themes and approaches in the three year plan, working for every child, include: promoting equalities and anti racism; working well in partnership; leading and supporting excellent workplaces including recovering the from pandemic and providing high quality professional development to make sure that people have the right capacity, capabilities and skill set for the future to make sure services are fully effective. . [Forum Video \(10:12 - 14:25\)](#) [Slides 4-8](#)

Relevant Announcements and Reports

- [The priorities and challenges facing our schools](#) -NGA report September 2022 and [Governing Chatters: 2022 -The challenges ahead](#)
- [Which school groups are most successful and why?](#) contribute to this EPI survey
- [School budget cuts follow national insurance change](#)
- [Systems of Meaning - Three Nested Leadership Narratives for School Trusts](#)
- [Schools shielding pupils from food price rises Hackney Schools Redundancy Panel](#)
- [Energy bills support for schools](#)

- [Criteria to assess funding of Hackney maintained school redundancies](#) - A panel has been established to assess applications to support funding cost of redundancies.
- [Department for Education \(DfE\) school governance update: September 2022](#)
- [Federations: guidance on the governance processes](#)
- [Finding your next chair: a succession planning guide](#)

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- [How to make the right strategic financial choices for your school?](#)
- Thursday, 3 November 2022, 5pm to 7pm
- [How do you strategically assess and manage risks in your schools?](#) Wednesday, 16 November 2022, 5pm to 7pm
- [How does the chair of governors shape strong governance and what is distinct about this role?](#) Wednesday, 30 November 2022, 5pm to 7pm

High quality Education - sharing headlines of educational outcomes for 2022/23

Key Notes from Governors Forum

Primary assessments resumed last year after two years' absence, noting that EYFS outcomes are not comparable with previous years due to the government's new system. Hackney is above national as 68% of children are reaching a 'Good Level of Development'.

KS1 data is provisional and yet to be clarified by the government. Phonics has fallen nationally but the Hackney average is above the national average at 82%.

KS2 tests are external except writing which is completed by school teachers and outcomes might change slightly. This cohort has had their KS1 and Foundation Stage disrupted by the pandemic. KS2 national outcomes have declined compared with London wide, although Hackney's decline is much lower than national averages. Hackney is one of the few local authorities in which education outcomes have bucked the trend as results have improved, which are testament to the hard work and dedication of teachers. Hackney has higher than national averages for KS2 greater depth outcomes. Compared to other local authorities, KS2 outcomes are in the top 5% and Hackney is 7th out of 150 LAs for reading, writing and maths combined.

GCSE comparisons with 2019, whilst not necessarily like for like, continue to show improvements with stronger passes and better results. Hackney GCSE outcomes continue to fare significantly better than national averages which is a pleasing picture.

Post-16 Pass rates have improved on figures from 2019. BTEC merits and distinction results have increased as have the numbers of students securing chosen university places or high quality apprenticeships and the range of courses continues to diversify which is a very positive picture.

The School Improvement Partner focus is not just on outcomes, but wider quality of education, curriculum and other areas, priorities that evolve from assessment / exam outcome results. In schools where outcomes are not as strong, additional support is provided. Context and narrative for these schools is established in terms of any downward trends or dips, to gain clarity and understanding.

There is a focus to ensure that increasing numbers of SEND children make appropriate progress whether or not benchmarking is utilised.

Ensuring an increasing number of pupils are educated in good or better schools remains a priority. We have 46 primary and secondary schools in Hackney due for potential Ofsted inspections this year. [Forum Video \(14:49 - 30:45\)](#) [Slides 9-22](#)

Relevant Announcements and Reports

- [KS1 and phonics data: The key stats schools need to know - TES October 2022](#)
- [Putting the Glue Back in the System: What approaches can practitioners adopt?](#)
- [Making information work for young people themselves](#)
- [The real glue is relationships: A shift towards continuity](#)
- [Moving forwards, making a difference: A planning guide for schools 2022-23 EEF](#)

- [The Good Childhood Report](#)
- [A good life: towards greater dignity for people with learning disability](#)
- [Parents' views on mental health and wellbeing in education - Parentkind September 2022](#)
- [Sport England research reveals how to create an inclusive PE environment](#)
- [EIF inspections in special schools - Ofsted Webinar](#)
The webinar focuses on how we apply the education inspection framework (EIF) in special schools and the specific factors that Ofsted inspectors take into account on these inspections.
Date: **Tuesday 1 November 2022** Time: **4:30pm - 5:30pm**
- [Ofsted publishes new briefings on the impact of COVID-19.](#)- Three new reports that highlight the ongoing impact of the pandemic, including catch-up, increased exam stress and schools facing difficulty in identifying pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) [[GOV.UK](#)].
- [Governance and inspection - Ofsted Webinar](#)
In this session we will discuss the inspection process and clarify the role of school governors in the process.
Date: **Tuesday 08 November 2022** Time: **5:30pm - 6:30pm**
[How schools are inspected - Ofsted webinar](#)
This session focuses on the practicalities of school inspection from the initial notification of inspection right through to the publication of the final report.
Date: **Tuesday 22 November 2022** Time: **4:00pm - 5:00pm**
- [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers Statutory guidance for schools and guidance for further education colleges and sixth form colleges](#) came into force on 1 September. The Act means that schools must now secure independent careers guidance for pupils from Year 7.

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- [How do schools create excellent workplaces with a diverse workforce?](#)
Thursday, 13 October 2022, 9am to 11am
- [What do governors need to know to ensure the performance management of the headteacher leads to school improvement?](#)
Thursday, 20 October 2022, 5pm to 7pm
- [What do governors need to know about the Ofsted inspection process?](#)
Monday, 21st November 2022, 5pm to 6.30pm

Hackney Education's Inclusion Charter

Key Notes from Governors Forum

Hackney has wide successes in outcomes, with over 97% of schools rated good or outstanding. However, not all groups of pupils have an equal share of this success.

The Hackney Education Inclusion Charter will seek to narrow the gaps amongst black Caribbean and Global Majority children and also focus on SEND. It will be designed and contributed to by secondary schools, primary schools and partners including SEND groups, parents, neighbouring boroughs and working groups.

The Inclusion charter aims to reduce the repetitive narrative amongst black Caribbean girls and boys of disproportionate exclusion. Hackney has had the second highest fixed term exclusion rate out of 33 local authorities for the last three years with the highest fixed term exclusion rates represented by the boys, pupils entitled to free school meals and pupils with SEND. Data from 2018-2019 shows that Hackney Caribbean pupils have the highest fixed term rate with three times the rate of white British pupils. Internal data allows more nuanced comparisons using multiple characteristics that are not published by the DfE and this data shows that there are higher fixed term exclusion rates for boys, SEN pupils, free school meal pupils and Caribbean pupils.

The charter will align with our commitments to our children, the school's priorities, our ongoing anti-racist focus and our partners such as the Children and Families Service. It will be used as a tool to support and initiate conversations around race and SEND, it will align with schools' values, principles and Equalities Duties and will be co-produced with heads, senior leaders and governors. [Forum Video \(31:25 - 41:19\)](#) [Slides 23-33](#)

Relevant Announcements and Reports

- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Among School Staff](#)
- [Serious concerns about racial disparity among girls 'kicked out' of school](#)

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- [Anti-Racist Praxist Days in Hackney Schools: the introduction](#) - hosted at Mossbourne Community Academy, 19th October 4:00 - 6:30pm and The City Academy, 20th October 4:00 - 6:30pm
- [How do we ensure an inclusive approach for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\)?](#)
Thursday, 13 October 2022, 5pm to 7pm
FREE TO ALL HACKNEY SCHOOLS

Extending the Governing Board Diversity of our Schools

Key Notes from Governors Forum

Last year 15 young governors embarked on a pilot project to **Get Hackney Youth Governing**. One year later, most of these young governors have been formally co-opted onto the board, many are actively participating in governance work and one young governor has recently been elected as the Chair of the board.

Diversifying boards brings unique voices and diverse perspectives. This stimulates challenge and debate, supports deeper exploration of disproportionality trends and assessment of the potential risks and benefits of strategic developments. It reduces group consensus and improves the process of key decision making.

The findings from our Hackney governor summer survey also highlighted the need to continue to place more younger voices on governing bodies. Furthermore, ethnicity data comparisons confirmed that the number of black and global majority governors (and staff workforce) in school is significantly underrepresented when compared with the pupil population inside our schools. We know some of our schools have made great strides to address the diversity of their governing boards, so we have practice across Hackney that we can learn from and share.

We will be launching our **Get Hackney Youth Governing** campaign later this term and hope to find 30 new young governors to our schools. We will also expand our work to focus recruitment, engagement and retention of diverse governing boards, and a sharper focus on how governors and leaders implement the Equalities Duties. [Forum Video \(42:00 - 47:44\)](#) [Slides 34-40](#)

Reflections from governors :

Marisa Childs reported how the murder of George Floyd prompted reflections on her sense of belonging in a borough as diverse as Hackney, especially when the complexity of class is added, because equity is class and it can look like colour. Sourcing black people to join the governing board ensured discussions included points of view that reflected a better understanding of the lived experience of the community. Ensuing **diverse voices at the 'table of decision makers'** means their views are also considered in relation to school policy, the culture of the school and how it reflects the community. Parents are at our school gates every day so they are easy to target as potential governors but may not know when there are elections. Marisa also recommended this book: [GCSE \(9-1\) Edexcel History Migrants in Britain c 800-present](#) which has excellent content. [Forum Video \(47:43 - 53:00\)](#)

Annwen Johnson identified with the idea and importance of belonging and how that relates to the aspirations of being a black parent. As a governor, Annwen wanted to understand more about how the governing body can impact all aspects of the school and the children, and what she could do further to support the senior leadership team. Annwen's experience as a governor has been positive for self development and learning, it provided an insight into children's education, and sharing opinions has positively affected action and change, showing that governors can make differences that really impact children's futures and lives. [Forum Video \(53:02 - 57:25\)](#)

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- [How do governors fulfil their professional and ethical responsibility?](#)
Date tbc
FREE TO ALL HACKNEY SCHOOLS

New requirements for governing boards

Key Notes from Governors Forum

The DfE have issued guidance relating to **attendance** and **exclusions** over the summer with some updates related to **behaviour**.

Hackney is doing a lot around the inclusion charter, including diversifying governing bodies and consulting with schools that have high rates of exclusion in response to the issues raised in the Child Q report. Governors have a critical role in ensuring that their schools are safe and inclusive for all children.

New, much more robust search guidance was developed following the Child Q report with a stronger focus than previous guidance, requiring reporting and tighter record keeping on safeguarding systems and around searching for prohibited items. Hackney is working with the police around their activity in schools, particularly the roles of the safer schools officers and other police involvement, in terms of developing local protocol.

New exclusions guidance changes include governors having oversight of data, which includes considering behaviour policy, use of removal from classrooms, isolation and managed moves.

New attendance guidance also outlines more governor duties in terms of policy and related responsibilities. [Forum Video \(58:25 - 1:01:33\)](#) [Slides 41-43](#)

Relevant Announcements and Reports

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022](#) - training requirements for governing boards.
- [Working together to improve school attendance](#) - expectations for an attendance policy and governing boards reviewing to evaluate the impact.
- [Behaviour in schools advice](#) - effective behaviour management and what to include in a behaviour policy.
- [Statutory suspension and exclusion guidance](#) - expectations about exclusion policies, greater focus on supporting vulnerable children, governing boards review to identify patterns of disproportionality
- [Working together to improve school attendance applies from September 2022](#)
- [Children's wellbeing continues to decline, according to new Good Childhood report](#)
- [The Department for Education's 'Searching, screening and confiscation' guidance](#)
- [Children's safety online](#) - The mental health and wellbeing of children was brought into sharp focus last week as the inquest into the tragic death of Molly Russell drew to a conclusion.

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- [How do we ensure the development of emotional, mental health and wellbeing of children?](#)
Wednesday, 12 October 9am – 11am
- [How do we safeguard our children including those Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities?](#)
Tuesday, 18 October 2022, 9am to 11am **and** Wednesday, 7 December 2022, 5pm to 7pm
FREE TO ALL HACKNEY SCHOOLS
- [Understanding the ethical, legislation, regulations and statutory guidance that underpins the exclusion process](#)
Tuesday, 15 November 2022, 9am to 11am -
FREE TO ALL HACKNEY SCHOOLS