

Chair of Governors Update: 18 October 2024

Dear Colleagues,

It was a real pleasure to be with our governor community last week. We opened our first forum of the year, recognising how much our thriving education system needs the dedicated efforts of our leaders, supported by our governors. In offering your combined lived experiences and professional skills, you provide great stewardship that ensures our schools serve the needs of all our children.

With this in mind, we are absolutely thrilled to have recruited 30 candidates into our **Hackney Young Governors** programme. During the recent selection activities, where they were asked to discuss how we enhance the sense of belonging for all young people, it was clearly evident these young voices will bring fresh thinking to contribute to the strong governance of our schools. If your board has not yet signed up, there is still a chance to **complete this form** before Thursday 24 October.

During the forum, we presented Hackney's key priorities, spoke about the school estates Strategy and shared headlines about pupil achievements. We also presented what will become a regular forum spotlight on Equity Matters. This time we focused on our young governors, parental engagement and the Vancouver Network Development - 'the power of storytelling to understand the communities we serve'.

As you review headlines in this update with presentations in the [slides](#), and reflect on this quote, we hope it will inspire a greater understanding of why our education system is so important, and why your collective efforts within it are so crucial.

'Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family' ~ Kofi Annan

We share a happy Sukkot to many colleagues across our community, a wonderful Diwali to those celebrating at the end of October and we hope you have the chance of a restful autumn break!

Sincerely,
Maggie Kalnins, Leader of Governance Services

The Content:

This update provides a summary of headlines from our In-Person forum for Chairs of Governors - which took place from 5pm to 6.30pm on Tuesday 8th October. The event focused on the following key areas:

- Sharing headlines/ best practice from our chairs and leader
- Update from the new Director of Education, Jason Marantz who spoke about Hackney's key priorities for this year, updating the education strategy and the next steps for the School Estates Strategy
- Hackney's pupil achievements and supporting all students to thrive
- Ofsted changes and what this means for governors
- A spotlight on equity, including the Young Governors programme and parental engagement

Future Dates of Hackney Governors Forums for 2023/24 starting at 5.00pm:

- Thursday 21st November (Virtual)
- Thursday 30th January (Virtual)
- Thursday 13th March (Virtual)
- Thursday 22nd May (Virtual)
- June date tbc (In Person)

We also remind you of our previous [updates and tools](#), our [Governors' Training Programme 24/25](#) 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.

EDUCATION DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Assistant Director of School Performance and Improvement - Jason Marantz

Below is an outline of Hackney Education's priorities for the 2024-25 academic year.

Hackney Education Priorities

- **Inclusion:** renewed focus on the importance of collaboration and working as a family of schools to tackle issues like inclusion, high SEND numbers, and resetting relationships between the SEND team and schools. Addressing the need for expanded SEND provision, balancing special schools and mainstream accommodations; being adaptive and agile to cater for children's varied needs.
- **Sustainability:** ensuring a robust school estate strategy (see item below for further detail); recognising the need for a long-term view to address financial pressures in the borough.
- **Collaboration:** commissioning further opportunities for collaboration between schools through soft partnerships, federations, and academies to support financial and educational sustainability.
- **School Led System:** importance working as a family of schools to tackle issues like inclusion, high SEND numbers, and resetting relationships between the SEND team and schools.
- **Strategy:** developing a Hackney Education strategy to ensure sustainable, high performing schools where every child can thrive, addressing inequalities and focusing on equity.

Hackney Education Strategy

- We are developing a Hackney Education Shared strategy for the local Hackney education system that will take place this academic year. In Autumn 2024, a draft will be shared with primary, secondary and special school heads to consider the key priorities. In early Spring, a revised version will be shared for further consultation, with an aim to publish a revised strategy in Summer 2025.

Exclusions

- School exclusions remain a key priority for Hackney Education. The continued development of Alternative Provision strategy will be a crucial element in reducing exclusions in the borough. Best practice in other local authorities will be considered in order to support this crucial work.

Key Staffing Updates

- Jason Marantz: New Director of Education and Inclusion.
- Terry Bryan, Assistant Director for School Estates
- Patrick Alexander: Interim Assistant Director, School Performance and Improvement
- Damian Parrott, Senior Primary leadership and Management Adviser

See [slides](#) 3-7

SCHOOL ESTATES STRATEGY

Terry Bryan, Assistant Director for School Estates

School Estates Strategy

There are proposed changes to a further number of Hackney schools, in response to the significant challenge facing the local authority of falling pupil rolls, financial strain and sustainability of local schools. Below is a brief outline of the council's school estates strategy. Further information can be found on the council's website [here](#).

- **Overarching Aims for the School Estate Strategy**
 - A sustainable estates planning model that ensures every school sees itself as part of a Borough wide approach, working together to ensure a flexible school organisation system from ages 3-19, that can maintain ambition for our children and respond to population changes.
 - An inclusive system that considers the need to support disadvantaged communities.
- **Draft Principles to Inform Decision Making on School Estates Strategy**
 - Excellent inclusive education across all schools from ages 3 -19, securing outstanding outcomes for Hackney's children.
 - Strong and valued workforce, with skills to meet curriculum and attainment needs from ages 3-19.
 - A variety of sizes and models for schools that are sustainable through partnership working.
 - Protect the diversity of our school offer, aiming to retain current proportions of different schools' faith status – e.g., RC, C of E, Jewish and non-faith.
- **Further matters that will be considered**
 - Schools in Hackney have experienced significant population changes, which have impacted on pupil numbers.. The School Estate Strategy is designed to tailor education to the needs of disadvantaged communities, ensuring inclusivity.
 - Proposals will focus on sustaining education within the community, considering a long-term, strategic approach rather than isolated school closures.
 - Some Hackney schools are losing staff due to a lack of sustainable funding and employment opportunities. New plans are being developed to better support displaced staff.

See [slides](#) 8-12

HACKNEY PUPIL ACHIEVEMENTS: SUPPORTING ALL HACKNEY STUDENTS TO THRIVE

Patrick Alexander: Interim Assistant Director, School Performance and Improvement
Damien Parrott, Senior Primary leadership and Management Adviser
Anton Francic, Principal Secondary Adviser

Primary Data

- **Good News:** Hackney's primary schools have seen strong outcomes in recent results.
- **Mathematics:** Maths outcomes are strong compared to the national and local average, but slightly weaker than reading and writing, especially at the 'greater depth', higher standard and historically, in terms of progress.
- **Multiplication Checks:** Hackney's primary students have historically performed slightly below the national average in the Year 4 (ages 8-9) multiplication check. This may be contributing to slightly weaker performance in Year 6 SATs in maths than in reading or writing. Schools are encouraged to review their approach to teaching times tables and providing test practice. Some pupils may face access issues if schools are using online programmes for maths homework.
- **Good Level of Development (GLD) in Early Years:** Hackney's GLD results are positive, but outcomes in the Prime areas of learning are slightly poorer. Early years practise in literacy and maths is a strength. An area of the Primes that may warrant attention is Physical Development.
- **Disadvantaged Pupils and SEND:** Governors should ask schools to drill down into the data for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with SEND, and those who are English as an Additional Language (EAL), to ensure schools are identifying and addressing performance gaps.

Secondary Data

- **GCSE Results:** Hackney's GCSE results have remained consistent with last year's, with only a slight dip in high grades compared to pre-pandemic levels.
- **Arts Curriculum:** National changes to curriculum and exam patterns may pose a threat to the availability of expressive arts subjects in our schools. School Improvement Partners are engaging with schools to ensure that arts education remains a priority.
- **Disadvantaged Students:** Disadvantaged students, particularly Black Caribbean students, have shown significant progress, with some making one and two-thirds levels of progress beyond their peers. However, there is still a need to address disparities to ensure every school delivers consistently high-quality education to disadvantaged pupils.
- **SEND and Exclusion Rates:** Reducing exclusion and suspension rates for students with SEND is a top priority. The borough is working closely with behaviour specialists and SEND colleagues to support students who are at risk of exclusion.
- **Post-16 and Destinations:** Hackney is expanding its efforts to support disadvantaged students in reaching higher education or apprenticeships. One case highlighted the success of a student with autism and an EHCP who secured a degree apprenticeship after seven years of dedicated support.
- **Overall Performance:** Hackney's secondary schools continue to perform well, with high-quality teaching and leadership across the system. However, SIPs and governors are urged to remain vigilant and push schools to address any areas of underperformance.

See [slides](#) 22 - 35

OFSTED CHANGES - WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR GOVERNORS?

Patrick Alexander: Interim Assistant Director, School Performance and Improvement

Ofsted Changes

- Sir Martyn Oliver is expected to be a reforming Chief Inspector, signalling potential significant changes.
- Early feedback indicates modifications to Ofsted's approach, largely welcomed across the education system.
- The current framework lacks specificity around inclusion
- Ofsted and the DfE acknowledge the challenges within the SEND system and are considering these in the review.
- Pupil absence remains a priority for inspections, continuing the focus from previous government policies.
- A rise in complaints related to inspections has been noted, stemming from multiple interconnected issues.
- There is a perceived disparity in curricular focus between primary and secondary schools, presenting an opportunity to enhance support for primary education and early years
- The Ofsted academy will launch in Autumn 2024, aiming to provide more resources and promote collaborative efforts in education.

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SPOTLIGHT ON EQUITY MATTERS

Maggie Kalnins, Leader of Governance Services
Anton Francic, Principal Secondary Adviser
Laura Stagg, Parent Engagement System Leader

Vancouver Trip/Network Development

- **Vancouver Trip & Network Development:** The trip to Vancouver provided significant insights into decolonisation in education and equity-focused approaches. Hackney is aiming to establish an equity-focused education system, with school-led networks.
- **Power of Storytelling:** Governors are encouraged to use 'the power of storytelling to understand the communities we serve'.

Maggie Kalnins - Introducing Our young governors programme

- The Young Governors Programme has relaunched, with the aim of diversifying boards by providing tailored support for young people to become school governors.
- The cohort has taken part in a selection activity, clearly demonstrating their understanding of the issues 'regarding sense of belonging' in our schools and in society.
- The programme emphasises the power of the young voice, and benefits that come from the unique insight and perspective in the development of a truly inclusive education system.
- Governing boards are encouraged to **express interest to have a young governor** by Thursday 24 November.

Laura Stagg - Why we need to focus on parental engagement

- Parental engagement is a critical factor in student success, but many parents face barriers such as time constraints, feeling unworthy, or a lack of invitation from schools.
- Ofsted's study found that parental engagement ranked low in professional development, indicating a need for schools to prioritise this area.
- Governors should evaluate how well their schools understand and address barriers to parental engagement. Practical steps should be taken to ensure schools are creating inclusive opportunities for parents to be able to engage in their children's education.

See [slides](#) 38-43

HIGHLIGHT GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNORS & TRAINING

Need to knows for Governors - Autumn 24/25

People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DfE announced 5.5% above-inflation pay award for September 2024, accepted by NEU for 2025; performance-related pay requirement removed - read here• Governor focus on getting the executive performance management right
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education and Skills Funding Agency to Integrate in the DfE
Regulatory Changes and Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ofsted's Inspection Handbook came into effect 14.09.2024 - summary here• Academy Trust Handbook 2024 published• Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) updated for 2024• New governance guides published• Attendance guidance is now statutory• NASENCo qualification replaced with NPQ for SENCOs

Crisis Management & Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nationally, a new government can mean more changes. (NGA article on key policies Labour hoped to pass in its Children's Wellbeing Bill here) Locally, Hackney schools are continuing to experience falling pupil rolls, and further proposals are made to merge / close down schools
Stakeholder Engagement and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hackney Training Parental Engagement Summit

***NEW! e-Learning:** to make your learning more flexible, we are now providing Hackney e-Learning for some modules, detailed below. [Create your Ed-App learner account here](#). Courses will need to be booked via bookinglive as usual, and you will then receive a link for your training. These will be available to book from **1 November 2024**. Take a look at the e-Learning training available below:

Training at a Glance	Cost Per Person	Autumn Term
Bespoke Live Training		
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.	
Live Online Training		
How do governors fulfil their professional and ethical responsibility? Maddie Brockmann	Free for all Hackney schools	Wednesday, 20 Nov 5pm-7pm
Equity over Equality: Exclusions: Maddie Brockmann The ethical decisions and statutory guidance that underpin the suspension and exclusion process	Free for all Hackney schools	Tuesday, 5 Nov 5.30 - 7.30pm
Parental Engagement and Complaints: Maddie Brockmann and Laura Stagg How do schools ensure effective engagement with parents/carers and effectively manage complaints?	£90 Per Person	Thursday 14 Nov, 5.30 - 7.30pm
Ofsted: Calvin Henry What do governors need to know about the Ofsted inspection process?	£90 Per Person	Tuesday 12 Nov, 5.00 - 6.15pm
How does the chair of governors shape strong governance and what is distinct about this role? Maggie Kalnins	Free for all Hackney schools	Wednesday, 4 Dec 5pm-7pm
How do we safeguard our children including those from	Free for all Hackney schools	Monday, 2nd Dec 5pm-7pm

RELEVANT LINKS

1. Promoting Equalities: with focus on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

- [How local authorities are segregated in England | The Sutton Trust posted on the topic | LinkedIn](#)
- Sir Kevan Collins: ["Supporting disadvantaged children to succeed actually supports all..."](#)
- [Institute for Educational and Social Equality - Black Exclusion Taskforce Report](#) - Access the full report [here](#)
- [Music pilot launched to help break down barriers to opportunity](#)
- [Equity in education and on the labour market](#)
- [Building-racial-literacy-guide](#)
- [Who is losing learning?: The case for reducing exclusions across mainstream schools](#)
- ['It's about developing relationships with pupils': the school working to reduce suspensions](#)
- [Primary school disadvantage gap narrows](#)
- [COVID-19 and social mobility: life prospects in a post-pandemic world](#)

2. Enabling achievement

- The DfE is undertaking a [curriculum and assessment review](#).
- [Commission sets out how to make oracy the 'fourth R'](#)
- [Children Missing Education: The Unrolled Story](#)
- [Education -the-ideas-2024](#)
- DfE curriculum [consultation hub](#) is open until 22 November, focusing on "evolution not revolution."

3. Assuring provision for Pupils with SEND

- [Sendco NPQ funding shortfall another SEND policy mess](#)

4. Sustainable school systems

- [Investigation: The true cost of falling rolls](#)

5. Safeguarding, wellbeing and pastoral provision

- [The National Parent Survey 2023](#)
- [How to boost parental engagement at school | Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\) posted on the topic | LinkedIn](#)
- [Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 2 summary report](#)

6. Governance

- [National Governance Association on LinkedIn: #educationleadership #governingboard #schoolgovernance #boardessentials...](#)