

Chair of Governors Update

28th November 2024

Dear Colleagues,

At our virtual forum last week, Jason Morantz, our Director of Education and Inclusion, reflected on the incredible journey of our Hackney Education system. Over the past 20 years, we have moved from one of the lowest to one of the top performing authorities in the country. Today, our strong and inclusive school system is facing completely different challenges. These include poverty and the wider impact of socio-economic disadvantage, a significant increase of children with SEND, falling rolls, high pupil exclusions and limited resources to support the increasing needs of our children.

It is evident across our education system that leaders, governors, staff and officers share a common mission to sustain the development of quality education that will ensure excellence, equity and inclusivity for all our children. In these exceptionally challenging times, we also recognise this will only be possible by working collaboratively across our family of schools and settings, sharing valuable expertise, giving challenge and inspiring innovation.

During last week's forum, we engaged everyone in a discussion about key priorities. It was a true pleasure to hear the consideration that our governors shared, which we have captured to help shape the future strategy for Hackney Education. The voices of our leaders are likewise feeding into the development of an education strategy that will be shared in the summer term. We also presented key headlines and placed a spotlight on SEND and Hackney's Graduated Response: Right Support, Right Time.

As you watch back the video, review headlines in this update and consider the presentations in the slides, we hope it will inspire all to see what we can bring to our children through a cohesive and collaborative education system.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

(Helen Keller, author, disability rights advocate, political activist and lecturer.)

Wishing you all peace, joy and love during advent, the festive season and Hanukkah!
Sincerely,

Maggie Kalnins, Leader of Governance Services

The Content:

This update provides a summary of headlines from our forum for Chairs of Governors - which took place virtually from 5pm to 6.30pm on Thursday 21st November. The event focused on the following key areas:

- Sharing Headlines/ best practice from our chairs and leader
- Hackney's Education Strategy Draft Vision
- SEND: Right Support, Right Time, Graduated Response
- Hackney's SEND Strategy 2022-2025
- (The [slide deck](#) and [video](#) from last week's event)

Future Dates of Hackney Governors Forums for 2024/25 starting at 5.00pm:

- Thursday 30th January 2025 (Virtual)
- Thursday 13th March 2025 (Virtual)
- Thursday 22nd May 2025 - **Governors Annual Conference**
- Thursday 26th June 2-25 (Virtual)

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

Jason Marantz - Director, Hackney Education

Patrick Alexander - Assistant Director for School Performance & Improvement

Maggie Kalnins - Head of School Governors Services

Headline Notes:

- **Academy Governance** From 1st January, the Department for Education (DfE) will end the conversion grants for maintained schools converting to academies. This will mean there will not be a financial incentive for academy conversion, which is a significant development for the governance of schools. [Schools Week have also reported](#) that The Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson was 'open' to academies returning to Local Authority oversight.
- **Ofsted Review** Following the change in Ofsted inspection gradings, inspections will be graded with reference to the four sub-categories (Quality of Education; Behaviour and Attitudes; Personal Development and Effectiveness of Leadership and Management) rather than a single word overall grading.
- **National Government Budget and Implications for Schools** Schools will be compensated for the increases to employer national insurance contributions, however schools should be aware that there may be implications on non-staff costs or services schools procure as a result of the increases.
- **Reforming SEND: National Audit Office (NAO) - Value for Money Report** The National Audit Office have produced a '[Value for Money](#)' report on reforming the SEND system, particularly with regards to the costs for Local Authorities. The report focuses on moving towards a more inclusive mainstream system, with a mandatory SENCO qualification for schools.

Local:

- **Hackney Young Governors Programme** We are delighted that the [Young Governors Programme](#) at Hackney has launched, and that 30 young governors have been recruited for schools. Hackney's aim is to support and enable every school in the borough to have a young governor. Please contact maggie.kalnins@hackney.gov.uk if you would like further information on this programme for your school.
- **Diverse Leaders Project** Hackney Education has begun the development of a Diverse Leaders Project to ensure the recruitment, induction and retention of school leaders from Black and Global Majority heritage. This project arose from an analysis of the diversity of Hackney's maintained schools workforce data, which indicated a need to ensure the leadership of schools reflected the communities we serve. We will ask our Academies for some broad data on their school workforce to

allow for a more accurate picture across Hackney's schools. Debra Robinson, Diversity and Inclusion Systems Leader at Hackney has already set up a Peer Network for School Leaders of Black and Global Majority heritage. Information will be shared on how schools can support staff to participate in this group.

- **Headteacher Peer Coaching Model** In October 2023 Hackney Education conducted a survey amongst Headteachers on wellbeing in response to the increasing spotlight on Ofsted and wider accountability pressures and their impact on Headteachers and schools. The survey identified peer coaching as an effective strategy to enable Headteachers to receive and provide support. As a result, a headteacher peer coaching project has been set up, further information on which can be found [here](#).

See [slides](#) 5 ([Video](#) 00:17-09:10)

HACKNEY EDUCATION VISION - STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Jason Marantz

Director of Education and Inclusion

Hackney Education Vision / Strategy

Hackney's Education system has been on an incredible journey over the last 20 years, improving from one of the lowest performing education systems in the country to one of the highest. This journey to success was built on a clear vision from the local authority and a strong partnership with schools and all of our stakeholders. With this in mind, Hackney Education is in the process of developing an education strategy, which aims to provide a shared approach for education across the whole of Hackney's system.

Throughout Autumn 2024 there will be consultation on the vision at Hackney Education's key forums and with key stakeholders and partners, before revised versions are brought back for further workshopping and discussion in the Spring Term 1. By Summer term 1 the aim is to have a revised strategy shared and published.

Comments on the vision are very welcome and will be considered. Please send any views by December 12th to governor.services@hackney.gov.uk

Draft Hackney Education Vision Statement

*Our aim is to improve the life chances of every child, young person and learner in Hackney across all communities. We will develop an education offer which is **ambitious, inclusive and encourages individuality whilst fostering a sense of belonging**.*

*We will achieve this by working **collaboratively and in partnership 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 excellence, equity and inclusivity for all.*

Draft Priorities

The draft vision has 6 priorities, which are outlined below.

- **Priority 1: SEND** To ensure our SEND provision fully meets the continuum of children's and young people's needs in a way which is increasingly sustainable. We will support our schools and settings responsively and strategically to identify children's needs early and work with them to meet the increasing level of need.
- **Priority 2: Alternative Provision** To develop the Alternative Provision offer to ensure that all pupils have the appropriate setting to ensure their needs are met. Tiered support will ensure pupils receive the correct support in the appropriate setting thereby reducing exclusions and disproportionality.

- **Priority 3: School Estates** To develop a sustainable estates planning model that ensures every school sees itself as part of a borough wide approach, working together to ensure a 3 -19 flexible school organisation system, that can maintain ambition for our children and respond to population changes. This will be an inclusive system that prioritises the need to support disadvantaged communities.
- **Priority 4: Strength and Sustainability** To ensure that our family of schools are strong, sustainable and financially viable with appropriate supports and accountabilities in place. A spectrum of partnership working will be encouraged to achieve this.
- **Priority 5: School Led System** To ensure that the borough's strong education offer and outcomes are sustained. Hackney's successful landscape of settings, including schools, academies, early years, and independent providers, is well paced to support each other through effective brokering and commissioning from the centre.

Feedback from Breakout Groups

- At the governors forum on 21st November, attendees were placed into breakout groups to discuss the above priorities and provide feedback. Below is a highlight of some of the feedback:
 - Quality and Outcomes of Alternative Provision: Focus on the quality of Alternative Provision and its outcomes, including successful transitions to further education (FE) colleges and local accommodations for SEND learners.
 - Alignment with Other Policies: Concerns about how the school planning process aligns with other local council policies, like housing and regeneration.
 - Flexibility and Sustainability of Schools: Emphasis on the need for flexibility in accommodating a changing population and ensuring that buildings within Hackney are not lost.
 - Strengthening Partnerships and Knowledge Sharing: Emphasis on building strong partnerships between schools and sharing expertise to solve common problems, with an interest in how effective brokering and commissioning work.
 - Addressing Achievement Gaps: Focus on closing the achievement gap, with a recognition of the need for interdepartmental collaboration and addressing underlying factors like poverty, deprivation, and intersectionality (e.g., socioeconomic status and ethnicity).

See [slides](#) 6 - 11 ([Video](#) section 09:10-31:33)

SEND: RIGHT SUPPORT, RIGHT TIME, HACKNEY GRADUATED RESPONSE

Joe Wilson, Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion
Yvonne Wade, Interim Head of SEND

Right Support, Right Time: Hackney's Graduated Response

Hackney's [Right Support, Right Time document](#) outlines the local authority's policy for an integrated SEND service Graduated Response for SEND pupils.

Right Support, Right Time describes what mainstream schools and settings are expected to make ordinarily available to SEND pupils.

The education setting must always consider their graduated response through interventions over time, before they consider that it may be necessary for an EHC needs assessment to take place.

Hackney's Right Support, Right Time approach follows the principle of the 'Golden Thread' between the following four themes: Aspirations, Needs, Outcomes and Provision. Assessments should identify the needs that get in the way of identified aspirations. Outcomes are achieved through purposeful and evidence based provision. (see slide 25)

Key Definitions and Responsibilities for Schools

The below describes some of the key definitions and responsibilities for schools as outlined in the Children and Families Act (2014) and the 'SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years' (2015).

Special Educational Need A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability. A learning difficulty or disability is defined as a child who has:

- a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions

Special Provision Special Provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that which is made generally for others of the same age in:

- mainstream schools
- maintained nursery schools
- in mainstream post-16 institutions
- places at which relevant early years education is provided

Statutory Responsibilities of Schools and Governing Bodies The governing body must ensure that there is a designated governor identified to maintain oversight of SEND provision.

The governor responsible for SEND provision acts as the link between the governing board, headteacher and SENCO, reporting back to the governing board on monitoring and compliance with the law.

The governor responsible works with the (SENCo) to report on the steps being taken to ensure compliance. The role also includes ensuring that there is appropriate challenge to leaders so that SEND remains high on the school's agenda and that the school has high aspirations for SEND pupils.

Education Health and Care Assessments and Plans Most children and young people with SEN will have their needs met by their mainstream setting. Some may require an EHC needs assessment in order for the local authority to decide whether it is necessary for it to make provision through an EHC plan.

See [slides 14 - 25](#) ([Video](#) section 31:35 - 48:08)

DEVELOPING HACKNEY'S SEND STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

Joe Wilson, Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion
Yvonne Wade, Interim Head of SEND

Hackney Education SEND Strategy 2022-2025

- Hackney Education has a strategy for SEND which has been in place from 2022 and will last until 2025. The strategy document can be found [here](#). Below are the four strategic priorities as outlined at the governors forum, as well as the local areas of improvement that have been identified as part of the strategy.

Strategic Priorities

- **Priority One - Outstanding Provision and Services** Children and young people with SEND and their families require high quality local provision and services that provide a foundation for a future in which they can thrive.
- **Priority Two - An Earlier Response** We know that providing children and young people with SEND earlier access to targeted support leads to better outcomes.
- **Priority Three - Joining Up Services** We believe that young people with SEND should have equal life chances as they move into adulthood.
- **Priority Four - Preparing for Adulthood** Only by working together and pooling resources can we commission and provide services to our children and young people with SEND that they need to achieve good outcomes.

Local Areas of Improvement

- Further details on local areas of improvement can be found on [slide 30](#).

- For further information on the Hackney Education Strategy and how this might impact your school, contact Yvonne Wade yvonne.wade@hackney.gov.uk

See [slides](#) 27 - 40 ([Video](#) section 50:00 - 65:00)

HIGHLIGHT OF TRAINING & GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNORS - HEADLINES

- **New e-Learning for governors and headteachers going through Performance Management!** An opportunity to understand your role as a governor during the statutory process of performance management of headteachers, executive headteachers and principals. The e-Learning offers a mix of case studies from an ex-headteacher as well as opportunities to test your knowledge through gamified features. **This e-Learning is only available to CPD package holders (Primary, Secondary, Post-16 and Governance) - please contact cpdadmin@hackney.gov.uk for access.** If you require this training and you are not a package holder, please contact cpdadmin@hackney.gov.uk.
- **New Chair of Governors or looking for a refresh?** Join us online on 4th December 2025, 5pm to 7pm to understand how Chairs of Governors shape strong governance. This session emphasises the importance of strong governance for inclusive education, delves into the chair's specific responsibilities, and showcases best practices for effective, ethical, and accountable school governance. Book here: <https://hackneyeducation.bookinglive.com/book/add/p/639/>

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 Black and Global Majority communities? James Sykes	Free for all Hackney schools	Monday, 2nd Dec 5pm-7pm
Finance: How do we govern financial performance and ensure money is well spent?	£90	Tuesday 28 Jan, 5.00 - 5.45pm

RELEVANT LINKS

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

- [Trussell Trust: More than 1.42 million emergency food parcels distributed in past six months](#)
- [Gov.uk: Multi-agency responses to serious youth violence: working together to support and protect children](#)
- [WPI Economics: Poverty rates now higher than at any other time in the 21st Century](#)
- [Guardian: More than one in three children in poverty as UK deprivation hits record high](#)
- [Sutton Trust: Speaking Up - Accents and Social Mobility](#)
- [Times Education Supplement: Scorecard trial to assess how schools serve disadvantaged pupils](#)
- [Sutton Trust: A Class Act - Social Mobility and the Creative Industries](#)
- [National Governance Association: A whole-school approach to food](#)

2. Enabling Achievement

- [National Literacy Trust: Children and Young Peoples Reading Habits in 2024](#)
- [Education Policy Institute: What can quantitative analyses tell us about the national impact of the phonics screening check?](#)
- [IPPR: Who is losing learning?: The case for reducing exclusions across mainstream schools](#)
- [Times Education Supplement: Regional support and intervention teams: 3 things we can't forget](#)

3. Sustainable School Systems

- [Lessons Learnt: Reflecting on 20 years of school reform in England](#)
- [Schools Week: 'Tough choices' behind academy grant cut, and 5 other findings from education questions](#)
- [Schools Week: Risk 'positive' school improvement story 'masks growing challenges', says ex-DfE adviser](#)
- [Confederation of School Trusts: Next-gen governance](#)
- [Browne Jacobson: Funding withdrawn for trusts and academy conversions](#)
- [National Governance Association: Response to Autumn Budget](#)
- [National Governors Association - Focusing on Fraud Protection: Protecting School Funds](#)
- [National Governance Association: 2024 Annual Address](#)

4. Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Pastoral Provision

- [Education Support : Teacher Wellbeing Index](#)
- [Edurio: Balancing Workload in School Trusts](#)