



London Borough of Hackney
Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission
Municipal Year 2018/19
Date of Meeting Wednesday, 10th October, 2018

Minutes of the proceedings of the
Children and Young People
Scrutiny Commission held at
Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street,
London E8 1EA

Chair	Councillor Sophie Conway
Councillors in Attendance	Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice-Chair), Cllr Katie Hanson, Cllr Ajay Chauhan, Cllr Humaira Garasia, Cllr James Peters and Cllr Clare Potter
Apologies:	Cllr Soraya Adejare, Cllr Clare Joseph and Cllr Caroline Woodley
Co-optees	Graham Hunter, Michael Lobenstein, Jo Macleod, Ernell Watson, Shuja Shaikh and Sevdie Sali Ali
Officers In Attendance	Anne Canning (Group Director, Children, Adults and Community Health), Annie Gammon (Director of Education), Andrew Munk (Head of Employment and Skills), Alex Jacobs (Programme Manager Employment Pathways) and Anna-Renee Paisley (Programme Manager Supported Employment)
Other People in Attendance	Kiran Gill (Founder), Karnjit Birk (Head of school), Oran Blackwood, Richard Brown (Executive Head), Anna Cain (Principal), Sue Davies (Head Teacher), Ian Ellis (Head of Department Progression), Joel McIlven (Head of School), Marika Morrison (Head of Student Services & DSL), Sue Parillon (Head of School) and Pat Quigley (Head of School)
Members of the Public	
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Councillor Sophie Conway in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from the following Members of the Commission:

- Soraya Adejare (Councillor)
- Clare Joseph (Councillor)
- Caroline Woodley (Councillor)
- Liz Bosanquet (Co-optee)
- Shuja Shaikh (Co-optee)
- Jane Heffernan (Co-optee)

2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 There were no new or urgent items and the agenda was as published.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 Cllr James Peters declared that he was a Governor at the Garden School but this was not a prejudicial interest.

4 Outcomes of Exclusions in Hackney - evidence session

4.1 The Chair welcomed all guests to the evidence session and explained that this was the first evidence session for the scrutiny review into outcomes of exclusions in Hackney. The Chair explained that terms of reference and many of the questions that would be asked by the Commission had been influenced by the [‘Forgotten Children: alternative provision and the scandal of ever increasing exclusions’](#) report recently published by the House of Commons Education Select Committee.

4.2 It was noted that this report was included in the agenda pack and had been circulated to Members and guests prior to the meeting.

4.3 The Chair further explained that the House of Commons Education Select Committee’s review sets out the current landscape in regards to school exclusions, much of which the Commission was already familiar with, for example that outcomes for excluded pupils are far worse than their peers in mainstream schools. It was also noted that the report made a number of recommendations around how schools, local authorities and alternative provision can improve their offer to pupils at risk of exclusions, excluded pupils and their parents.

The Difference – Kiran Gill

4.4 The Chair asked Kiran Gill to begin by briefly introduce the Difference including how this programme proposes to improve relations between mainstream schools and alternative provision as well as give the Commission an idea of the progress so far. In response Kiran Gill made the following substantive points;

- The programme was borne out of research by IPPR into the cost of exclusions, highlighting both the economic and social imperatives to take action to upskill the teaching workforce, improve outcomes for multiply disadvantaged pupils and to stem the rising tide of exclusions.
- The rising number of exclusions, with 6,685 permanent exclusions in 2016, was noted to be the ‘tip of the iceberg’ as there was a much larger cohort, approximately 50,000 vulnerable pupils nationally, being educated and that sit their exams in alternative settings which caters for excluded children despite not being officially excluded. Highlighting the disparity between the official numbers of excluded children and the actual number of children that are receiving their education in alternative provision.
- Recent data analysis has further highlighted how hard it was to track children that are leaving mainstream school rolls and are for a period of time on roll at an alternative provision. However, in comparing the figures available around of

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children leaving mainstream for alternative provision has revealed an increasing trend of children and young pupil disappearing from the rolls altogether.

- 4.5 At this point Kiran Gill urged the Commission to as a part of their review compare the different rolls to get a better understanding of how this national trend of 20,000 pupils disappearing completely from school rolls a year, compare to Hackney as well as looking at which schools officially exclude more pupils and which schools exclude less pupils. While also taking a closer look at the actual school rolls in order to compare, share and broker best practice where it is needed. It was noted that this was more difficult in inner-London borough due to the transient nature of the population but should nonetheless highlight to the Commission where there might be a potential issue.
- 4.6 The Commission heard that nationally IPPR had been looking at Fair Access panels' practices and protocols in order to assess what a good Fair Access panel should look like. Again, this might be harder in Hackney which has seen a higher level of academisation than for example in Tower Hamlets. Nonetheless Fair Access panels are great places for head teachers to come together and share best practice and for effective managed moves to take place.
- 4.7 Kiran Gill further informed the Commission that the research also revealed that, in terms of who gets excluded, pupils on;
- free school meals are 4 times as likely to be excluded and;
 - pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are 7 times as likely to be excluded and;
 - pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH) are 10 times as likely to be excluded and;
 - according to recent figures from the Department of Education (DfE) pupils interacting with Children Social Care services are 20 times as likely to be excluded.
- 4.8 Kiran Gill suggested that in regards to unofficial exclusions, it would be fair to assume that, these patterns would be similar or worse. Furthermore, evidence also shows that this vulnerable group by interactions more often also end up being exploited and recently there has been a number of articles in the press around excluded children and young people being groomed as a part of wider criminal activities. Yet, alternative provision also do some remarkable work with children and young people that have complex needs and would therefore play an important part in raising the expertise in mainstream schools around children and young people with complex needs and help ensure teachers are able to recognise mental health issues in pupils. The Difference lead on a programme which proposes to strengthen specialist school leadership by recruiting exceptional early career teachers with leadership experience and placing them in leadership positions in alternative provision, and upskilling them through a two-year bespoke programme of on-the-job training. Whilst also aim to ensure training is cascaded, teacher vacancies are filled. It was noted that nationally there have been difficulties in recruiting teachers to alternative provision and often there was a low qualified teachers per pupil ratio.
- 4.9 The Difference strive to ensure that there was a flow of good teachers both in and out of alternative provision to help ensure learning was shared across settings to help improve standards and to reduce exclusion rates.
- 4.10 Finally, Kiran Gill further suggested that the Commission also review school behaviour policies as their research often found them to be disproportionately affecting certain cohort of students in by way of punishing behaviour that is cultural specific inconsistently i.e. kissing teeth and receiving a harsh punishment than for tutting.

Alternative Provision

4.11 The Chair thanked New Regent's College, the Boxing Academy and Inspired Directions School for their submissions in the printed agenda pack and asked all guests to give a brief introduction of their provision before answering questions specific to them.

New Regent's College (Hackney's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU))

4.12 The Executive Head at New Regent's College made the following substantive points:

- New Regent's College is a community school and their processes and policies are in line with all other community schools in Hackney and therefore different from other alternative providers in the borough.
- Subsequently, New Regent's College only employ qualified teacher and pay in line with teachers pay and conditions and according to the centrally agreed pay scales.
- New Regent's College have no unfilled vacancies. Teachers are qualified able to meet the individual need of their students.
- Hackney Council has invested in developing a purpose built pupil referral unit 'the new Nile Street site' which will be available shortly. This resource will be the first of its kind and shows that there was a real commitment to the most vulnerable children and young people in the borough.
- Once the building is completed the PRU will be offering its own Key Stage 4 provision.
- However, currently the PRU, in addition to providing primary and Key Stage 3 provision, commissions 12 external Key Stage 4 providers which are quality assured by the PRU. They also monitor attendance and ensure safeguarding procedures are in place and the student remain on the PRU's roll.
- The commissioning process takes into account student outcomes and includes a Tri-borough quality assurance process and carry out inspections as a part of this framework.
- It was noted that the 2018 GCSE results were still provisional and to a large part contested and therefore not available at this meeting. Further, due to the nature of most students that are excluded, as mentioned above, the results ought to be understood in that context. Last year's results, provided in the agenda pack, was an amalgamation of all the provisions and shows New Regent's College to be 24% above the national average. The Commission noted that national and London averages are worryingly low but nevertheless it was important to acknowledge that New Regent's College were doing significantly better than many other boroughs.
- It was noted that unofficial excludees do not attend New Regent's College. The cohort attending New Regent's College are a Hackney residents, permanently excluded from a Hackney school or from an out of borough school. Once on roll at New Regent's College they are educated either directly at New Regent's College or via one of their commissioned provides which are quality assured by New Regent's College.
- New Regent's College also provide provision, paid for by the individual school, for children or a young people that are dual registered – registered with New Regent's College and their school - where they remain on roll following a decision taken in agreement with the parents/carers when schools recognise that not all children and young people are able to be successful in mainstream provision with classes of 28 students following a curriculum with no variation or possibility to adapt it to their individual learning needs. In these cases New Regent's College are able to provide a lesson plan and qualifications better suited to their needs.

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- 4.13 At this point the Executive Head at New Regent's College stated that it was a misconception to regard children and young people's experience of alternative provision, in Hackney, as negative when in reality it was a reflection on the school recognising that this child or young person's need was not met in their setting and that a different curriculum in a different setting would be necessary for this student to be successful. Further, there was a need to reframe this perception and start looking properly at the outcomes for these children and young people. To illustrate this point the Executive Head told the Commission that;
- One young person referred to their setting had 3% attendance whilst in a mainstream setting and all forms of statutory actions and interventions in regards to attendance had failed. New Regent's College, in close partnership with the family managed to change this young person's mind-set and moved from low attendance to achieving good outcomes for this child.
 - Apart from a few cases of chronic non-attendees and in some unfortunate cases where a young person have receive a custodial sentence and the responsibility shifts to Children and Families service, all pupils at New Regent's College leave Year 11 with qualifications and a great amount of work was done to ensure that progressions routes in to post 16 provision were in place.
- 4.14 In addition, the Executive Head at New Regent's College reassured the Commission that in Hackney, there might be the odd one-off case of unofficial exclusions but, off-rolling was not institutionalised and the offer available for children and young people in terms of exclusions was transparent and work take place with parents with the aim to return to mainstream settings.
- 4.15 It was noted that many of the primary aged children present at New Regent's College with undiagnosed special educational needs and subsequently 50% are placed in a specialised educational setting following their assessment.
- 4.16 In terms of their Key Stage 3 students approximately 50% successfully return to a different mainstream setting through the in-year Fairer Access protocol.

Question and Answers

- 4.17 The Chair wanted to know whether New Regent's College feel that there was more schools could do to reduce disproportionality in exclusions, i.e. reduce the number of children from Black and Black British backgrounds, children with SEND and children in receipt of Free School Meals from being excluded. In response the Executive Head at New Regent's College made the following substantive point:
- The Executive Head at New Regent's College had been invited to discuss the outcomes of excluded children and young people in Hackney and he didn't feel he was in a position to answer this question. However, there ought to be more that can be done to reduce disproportionality as it exists but New Regent's College have not got the capacity to control who is referred to them. However, it was important that they ensure they always have capacity to take on the children and young people that are excluded.
- 4.18 The Commission wanted to know whether New Regent's College felt equipped to meet the needs of the SEND cohort – which are overrepresented in the exclusion rates. In response the Executive Head at New Regent's College made the following substantive point:
- New Regent's College has the expertise to diagnose SEND whereby they also draw in external expertise to carry out the assessment including, to name but a few, the Speech and Language service and Young Hackney.
 - As mentioned above, most of the primary students go on to a specialist setting and those that are successfully re-integrated into mainstream settings do so with a package of additional support to meet their needs.

4.19 The Commission wanted to know what the timetables at New Regent's College looks like, whether they use reduced timetables, twilight hours or whether the timetables were in line with regular school hours. In response the Executive Head at New Regent's College made the following substantive point:

- New Regent's College operate a 25 hours per week lesson model, in line with Ofsted recommendations and almost identical to another school in the borough, located across the road from New Regent's College.
- Currently there was only one child on a reduced timetable. The use of a reduced timetable in this instance forms part of the re-integration plan towards a move to a setting more suited to meet the needs of this particular child.

The Boxing Academy

4.20 The Principal for the Boxing Academy made the following substantive points;

- The Boxing Academy started in Tottenham in 2007 and moved to Hackney in 2010. In 2017 it became an Alternative Provision Free School with the aim to expand the provision to provide a wider curriculum include more vocational courses to ensure their student have the opportunity to learn essential life skills, such as cooking and other practical skills.
- The Boxing Academy does not have a catchment area and 50% of the pupils are Hackney residents.
- For the past 7 years their provision has had a full take up of places and have therefore not experience an increase in number of students on their roll as such or in line with the national increase in the number of exclusions since 2013.
- Most children and young people are referred to the Boxing Academy from mainstream school settings but parents/carers are also able to self-refer. At the Boxing Academy they have an opportunity to address the underlying issues preventing these children and young people from succeeding in mainstream school, where they have had a negative experience, i.e. poor attendance, gaps in education, undiagnosed learning difficulties and mental health issues in a small, secure and friendly setting through forming a close relationship with their individual mentor.
- The mentors are professional boxers, some now retired, and they have a calming influence on the young person who reportedly relate to their life experiences and most importantly the mentor is available throughout the day to talk to and to provide consistent support.
- Most of the children and young people at the Boxing Academy present with anger management issues and enjoy the physical exercise which includes punching the boxing bag.
- They are educated in small groups of no more than 8 students. It was noted that each student has a personalised pathway to ensure that their specific needs are meet and that any educational gaps are filled before they are expected to move forward and before taking their GCSEs.
- All teachers at the Boxing Academy are qualified teachers and they all come from mainstream settings, with a desire to alongside teaching also provide a level of support than they are not able to in a mainstream setting. However, a few years ago they found it more of a challenge to find suitable teaching staff.
- Students attend lessons 25 hours a week, in line with mainstream school, and the foundation of the work is centred around helping these children and young people change the way they see themselves and the world around them. Consequently, a huge amount of work is done around wellbeing and in making it a positive environment where they begin to see aspirations as more than wanting to be on X-Factor (television show) or become a professional footballer. The Principal illustrated this point by explaining that this includes conducting visits to large organisations in the City such as KPMG – where the young people have a chance to speak to staff in different roles within the organisations.

Question and Answers

4.21 The Commission wanted to better understand how children and young people are referred to the Boxing Academy and what role they and their parents/carers play in the decision making process. In response the Principal made the following substantive points:

- The Boxing Academy's referral process follows the DfE guidelines and;
 - when a child or young person is referred from a mainstream school, the school consult with the parents and the child as well as with the Boxing Academy around the young persons need, the support and curriculum available to ensure that they all agree that the Boxing Academy is the appropriate setting. Only when all are in agreement that the Boxing Academy is the right provision is the child or young person moved to their provision. The child or young person stay on roll at their school, the school pays for their placement, while completing Key Stage 4 at the Boxing Academy. This allows enough time, a year an three quarters, to help this student overcome his or her challenges while still getting through the entire curriculum.
 - Students can also be single registered at the Boxing Academy and in these cases they have either come through one of the following routes, they do not currently have a school, this can be due to a variety of reasons, or they are referred from the Virtual School, they are Looked After Children from other boroughs or through the SEMH panel.

4.22 The Chair wanted to know whether the Boxing Academy feel that there was more schools could do to reduce disproportionality in exclusions, i.e. reduce the number of children from Black and Black British backgrounds, children with SEND and children in receipt of Free School Meals from being excluded? In response the Principal made the following substantive point:

- The children and young people attending the Boxing Academy are not only from Hackney and therefore it was difficult to say how this disproportionality compare year on year or whether they would have been able to stay in mainstream school had there been other support in place. However, in the assessment process it becomes evident that schools have tried numerous interventions before they refer the young person to the Boxing Academy and only when they feel that it is time for a fresh start and for something different is a referral made.
- Unsurprisingly, because they are a Boxing Academy, most of their students are boys. Nonetheless, the Boxing Academy has been assessed to be the best place for them.

4.23 At this point Kiran Gill, founder of the Difference, added that in general there are things schools can do to address disproportionality including;

- Review their behaviour policies and sanctions (including detentions)
- Review staff training around escalation to prevent small infringements does not rapidly lead to sanctions such as exclusions and instead focus on diagnostic approach to managing behaviour.
- Review sanctions with regards to when, why and during what class they occur, to establish if there are patterns and trends within the own school system.

Inspired Directions School

4.24 Joel McIlven, the previous (recently left) Head of School at Inspired Directions School made the following substantive points:

- Inspired Directions Schools was set up in 2009. In 2014 it was formally registered as an alternative provision offering a different curriculum and project based learning. Depending on the individual student's interests and needs the project bases learning might involve spending one day a week on at a construction site or enrolling on a media programme a couple of days a week.

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- The small setting and the different and innovative curriculum allows staff to form good relationship with students and subsequently better support their academic progress. Therapeutic support was available and was used to address the trauma experienced by a lot of the students and forms a large part of their work and is essential to their students in order for them to make any academic progress.
- These students' academic achievement on its own does not capture the actual work that was needed to 're-build' them as students to allow for them to progress.
- Better incentives in mainstream schools around incentives to use a wider curriculum and to provide the type of support to meet the needs of these students, who most often struggle in mainstream schools, needs to be addressed to help improve inclusion in general.
- Inspired Directions School receive the majority of their referrals from New Regent's College, who fund the places for these children. However, it was noted that Inspired Directions School are not in a position to pay teachers terms and conditions and found it a challenge to recruiting qualified teachers. Nonetheless, they were able to demonstrate a diversity in their staff which was a strength in terms of providing a variance in behaviour management as well as in providing the support that was not available to these students in mainstream school.

Question and Answers

4.25 At this point the Commission wanted to know if Inspired Directions School work with excluded children only or whether there are children and young people attending their provision for reasons other than having been excluded from mainstream school as well as to what extent is the child and young person involved in the decision to attend your provision? In response Mr McIlven and the Executive Head at New Regent's College made the following substantive points:

- They also work with children and young people on EHC Plans that have not been excluded.
- New Regent's College placement person set up an initial meeting between the child and Inspired Directions School staff and once it has been agreed that this person will be attending an external provision. The first step in this process would normally involve setting out a number of options before embarking on the transition which includes the family and the child or young person meeting with and visiting the external provider followed by a two weeks induction process to ensure that the child or young person have a chance to settle in to the provision before confirming whether they like to stay.
- New Regent's College view this provision in particular as a small, nurturing provision that cater for those who have had almost no academic success and were at a point where they have almost stopped engaging with education.
- Students can be either on a single or dual registration with Inspired Directions School.

4.26 Subsequently the Chair wanted to know whether Mr McIlven felt that some of the children and young people they worked with would have been better suited to a mainstream setting providing they were receiving the appropriate support or in a specialist setting. In response Mr McIlven made the following substantive points:

- There was a hope that mainstream school should be equipped to be able cater for these children and young people needs, but in reality they have a very negative experience in mainstream school and are therefore a long way from being able to be reintegrated to mainstream school.
- There had been instances when a child or a young person have moved from Inspired Direction School to a specialist setting but they do not always meet the thresholds despite their high needs.

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- 4.27 The Commission noted that Inspired Directions School offer a 25 hour a week timetable but because the cohort they work with might not have been engaging in education for 2 years and therefore their timetable would initially be staggered to allow them to settle in. However, whilst they are not fully engaging with the provision they are contacted daily, their whereabouts are known to them and Inspired Directions School adhere to and take full safeguarding responsibility for them.
- 4.28 The Commission asked the representatives from Inspired Directions School if in their view there was something wrong in the system that needed to change in order to address the issue around disproportionality in the rates of exclusions in regards to ethnicity, SEND and socio-economic factors. In response the two representatives made the following substantive points:
- There need to be a greater focus on issues that relate to socio-economic factors and cause great stress on children and young people for example, inadequate housing. Ideally housing representatives would form a part of multiagency meetings to ensure that all agencies are fully aware that there are a range issues that first need to be met before these children and young people are receptive to learning. As well as to provide them with the stability needed to participate in mainstream education where there is a narrow academic focus which disadvantages this cohort and in particular those with SEND often linked to their early year experiences.
 - Further, Central Government need to acknowledge and respond with government policy that take into account that since the Back on Track paper in 2006 things have not improved. Previously and as a part of the Every Child Matters framework, there were more funding available for pastoral support and there was the drive that every child was entitled to an education with a BME (Black and Minority Ethnicity) action plan to improve their outcomes.
 - Different models of education need to be considered in particular in mainstream education to ensure they are equipped to and have the expertise to support these group to achieve better outcomes.
 - It would be encouraged to cascade best practice though the Fair Access Panel.
- 4.29 The Executive Head for New Regent's College informed the Commission that all providers that are commissioned by them provide a 25 hour timetable apart form in particular cases and when there are specific reasons why they do not. Further, he explained that the local authority exclusion team attend all community and voluntary school exclusion panels prior to any permanent exclusion. However, it was noted that academies and free schools, are not required to invite a representative of the local authority to permanent exclusion hearings. This sometimes leads to a lack of information being passed to New Regent's College. It was noted that there was a piece of work to be done around ensuring that academies and free schools provide the necessary information as a part of the exclusion process to ensure that the child or young person are place in the most suitable provision.
- 4.30 Kiran Gill added that by putting a focus on these issues might in effect help to reduce exclusions in Hackney by way of bringing their leadership together to review practices around exclusions and to challenge head teachers to think creatively about how they can reduce exclusions and how they can commission the specialist support the children might need and to promote earlier interventions.
- 4.30 At this point the Director of Education highlighted that Hackney Learning Trust has set up a Reducing Exclusions Partnership Board which will look at issues around exclusions in Hackney Schools and there has been a great interest in participating from both primary and secondary school head teachers who want to see a reduction in exclusion rates.

ELATT

4.31 The Commission was informed that:

- ELATT have been providing community learning for approximately 30 years and in the last 3-4 years, when Oran Blackwood joined the organisation, they set up their alternative provision.
- Most referrals come directly from schools and often the young person will remain on roll at their mainstream school while completing their education at ELATT.
- ELATT work with Key Stage 4 and with students that have, in consultation with their school, parents/carers as well as their key worker, decided they want to attend their provision.
- It was noted that the provision has not had difficulties in recruiting teachers and that their teachers are qualified and have experience of SEND.
- Further, it was noted that ELATT feel that their setting was the best setting for the young people they work with. They are almost exclusively working with young people with SEND and who do not thrive in mainstream schools due them finding it to be a stressful, noisy and loud environment. In contrast to ELATT which was reported to be a small setting where everyone knows them by name, and where they are not at risk of being lost in the system instead they are taught in classes of 10 pupils and received support tailored to their individual needs which makes a difference to their success.
- Being a charity meant that ELATT was not driven by achievement and outcomes.
- They are rapidly becoming a specialist provision for SEND. Last year the outcomes for their pupils with SEND were 5% better compared to other settings. It was believed to be because it was very difficult for mainstream schools to cater for children with autism due to the nature of a mainstream school being a noisy environment and where you are dependent on your ability to easily form relationships with your peers.
- Young people attending ELATT most often wish to stay there to complete their education rather than go back into mainstream school and are therefore rarely reintegrated to a mainstream school.
- Progress is monitored similarly to those in mainstream school and includes measuring their distance travelled and the provision hold regular meetings with parents/carers.
- ELATT collaborate with Stormont House School (local authority specialist school), the Virtual School and has also worked with Inspired Directions School in the past. However, it was noted that the provision was not currently working in partnership with New Regent's College.

4.32 The Commission was informed that Oran Blackwood also work as a counsellor in one of the academy schools in Hackney and in his experience there are some really good work taking place around exclusions. At this point the Commission heard that nationally the link between levels of exclusions and academy schools, were not higher than between levels of exclusions and maintained schools.

4.33 Kiran Gill suggested that in improving outcomes for those in alternative provision it would be advisable to speak to other services around what they monitor and assess i.e. attendance and to share best practice but also to tease out what measures apply to pupils in alternative provision and could include a picture of improvements such as interactions with the Police since they began attending the alternative provision that indicate whether they have become more or less vulnerable or safe. As well as liaise with other settings, in line with the more Public Health approach.

BSix Sixth Form College

4.34 The Commission was informed that:

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- The alternative provision at BSix College was a small setting within the mainstream Sixth Form college where young people are offered a fresh start after not fitting into mainstream education. They have the opportunity to study a vocational course in an industry they are interested in for example business, childcare, media or social care.
- Currently there are 28 students, 4 of them are on roll at New Regent's College,
- Over the last few years the number of ESOL students, newly arrived in the country, make up the majority of Hackney AP students.
- The complex needs of the young people in their alternative provision are taken into account, in considering their achievements which are therefore not based solely on academic success but instead in a wider context of a wellbeing matrix taking into account their own personal plan. This plan was also used to address the issues that prevents them from learning.
- BSix work collaboratively with other alternative providers both in Hackney and in neighbouring boroughs and all their teachers are qualified with experience of working in a Pupil Referral Unit, as youth workers and as SEND support workers.
- It was noted that generally pupils are most vulnerable when there was a delay from when they are excluded until they are placed in their provision.

Question and Answers

- 4.35 In light of the recent House of Commons Education Select Committee's report and the national statistics in relation to the criminal justice system which both paint a rather dire picture of outcomes of excluded children and young people, the Commission wanted to know what the guests thought needed to be done to improve the outcomes of excluded children. In response the representative from BSix College highlighted the importance of ensuring the right student was in the right setting to ensure they achieve their full potential and it was noted that in Hackney he felt that there were a lot of alternatives available to children and young people.
- 4.36 In addition, it was noted that ELATT, which is mostly IT based, provides the only alternative provision for the cohort they work with and were of the opinion that if there were more provisions like theirs schools might be less likely to hold on to these children for as long as they currently do and their wellbeing would be prioritised at an earlier point.
- 4.37 The Executive Head at New Regent's College added that early intervention was key however, providing alternative provision at primary was complex and requires extensive intervention and that might be the reason for why the charitable sector provide alternative provision solely cater for the older cohort and also reflective of why their own Key Stage 4 provision was a dedicated vulnerable girls group which was noted to be an equally complex demanding group to work with. It was noted that there was a lack of diversity lower than Key Stage 4 provision and New Regent's College would seek in the future to create a much more varied curriculum for primary age students that are referred to them and to work closely with other services around the underlying issues. Key Stage 4 providers are currently functioning as a sticking plaster – trying to in the last two years of a young person's educational career to address their individual challenges in order to improve their outcomes when in reality a lot more has to be done a lot earlier.
- 4.38 The Principal at the Boxing Academy told the Commission that they are expanding their Key Stage 3 provision because if the therapeutic intervention they offer was offered already in Key Stage 3 there would be a much greater chance of these children returning to mainstream education.
- 4.39 The Head of School at Inspired Directions School added that it was essential that primary schools have the funding and capacity to pick up on SEND and put EHC

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plans in place as early as possible and to ensure this happens before Year 7. However, due to current financial pressures the capacity was not there to do essential piece of work and meeting the thresholds was harder than 5 to 10 years ago.

- 4.40 At this point her colleague Mr McIlvern told the Commission that it was also important to look at what happens to this cohort once they leave the alternative provision and that there was ongoing support in place to ensure that they maintain a place in college.
- 4.41 The Commission noted that at the last New Regent's College providers meeting they discussed the issue of ongoing support and the role current providers like BSix and other colleges can support this development.
- 4.42 The Head of Student Services & DSL at the Boxing Academy added that in their experience often the young people would have benefitted from early intervention CAMHS support but in most cases referrals to CAMHS have not been accepted or cases have been opened and closed shortly after and these children have not received the ongoing support needed prior to attending the Boxing Academy.

Special Schools

Garden School

- 4.43 The Commission was informed that:
- The Garden School is a highly specialist provision for children with autism between the ages of 4 and 16. It was noted that there was a desire to be able to provide provision post 16 and early year's provision too.
 - The majority of the children and young people they work with are non-verbal.
 - The provision was described as successful and they provide staff with a large amount of training. Their induction training span 4-5 months and thereafter staff receive ongoing training.
 - They provide a holistic approach, working closely with school health team, speech and language therapists, occupational therapist and CAMHS clinicians as well as other services such as children social care services around behavioural support and safeguarding issues.
 - They also engage with other professionals through multi-agency behavioural support forums, where professionals are given an opportunity to ask questions, reflect on their practice, share learning in regards to specific cases.
 - The learning from these forums feed into the wider process of ongoing learning. The school employs a positive behaviour support approach which involves gathering a wide range of data through observations to learn more about when, where and why certain behaviours take place. This then informs proactive strategies to address challenging behaviours in the school. In order to, for example reduce the instances of holding children. The school has dramatically reduced restrictive positive intervention.
 - The school does not practice any seclusionary practice. If children need 'time away' any instances where this happens are carefully recorded and monitored in order to get a better understanding of the reasons for the child not coping in a lesson and put in measures to address this.

Question and Answers

- 4.44 The Commission wanted to know whether the Garden School work in collaboration with mainstream settings to help them meet the need of the children and young people they have on roll with SEND. In response the Head of School made the following substantive points:

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- The Garden School provide training for and have done outreach work with other professionals in their network including the Police, children social care and school transport.
- The Garden School is a purpose built setting which had been developed to meet the specific needs of their pupils. They were aware that it might be difficult to replicate what they have in other settings, in particular those that were not purpose built settings. However, they continue to welcome other professionals into their setting to observe and learn from how they work at the Garden School.
- Staff training is ongoing and forms part of a comprehensive recruitment process, further staff supervision provided through Educational Psychology Service includes an opportunity and safe space to reflect on difficult issues. The work can be physically challenging situations for example staff have been hit, bitten or have had their hair pulled. This helps staff to deal with the emotional aspects of their work, it helps to build resilience and ensure that they continue to feel that they are making a difference.
- Their training also actively involves promoting a change of mind-set around how the children's behaviour is viewed, moving away from blaming the children by referring to their behaviour as aggressive and violent to instead using words such as dis-regulated and disengaged.

4.45 The Commission also wanted to know the Head of School's views around the overrepresentation of children and young people with SEND in school exclusions. In response the Head of School made the following substantive points:

- The Head of School did not feel that she was in a position to make any evidence based statement in regards to the issue of overrepresentation. However, she informed the Commission that research show that early experiences of trauma is linked to behavioural disorders.
- The children and young people at the Garden School are there because their needs which cannot be meet in mainstream school and the largest number of their pupils are from black African heritage and stated that this was probably reflective of the Hackney school population in general.

Ickburgh School

4.46 The Commission was informed that:

- Ickburgh School work with children and young people with autism and learning difficulties. Forty-six percent of their students have profound learning difficulties and 36% have sever learning difficulties.
- Ickburgh school provides a suitable learning environment in which they are able to meet the children's needs and address behaviours that were described as dis-regulated and distressed by focussing on communication and ensuring the children have the to express themselves.
- Most of the students are non-verbal and staff are trained to and use non-verbal communications techniques such own-body touch communication and when working with pupils with autism and learning difficulties they use a range of communication strategies including Makaton.
- Children and young people are referred to Ickburgh through the HLT SEND team and in instances where parents self-refer they are re-directed to HLT.
- When students leave Ickburgh to be educated elsewhere they usually either move on to New City College (offering post 16 SEND programmes) or the John Dewey Specialist College in Haringey.
- It was noted that Ickburgh School work with the local authority around support post 19 and a lot of work had gone into the development of a post 19 apprenticeship scheme.

Question and Answers

4.47 The Commission wanted to know whether Ickburgh School work in collaboration with mainstream settings to help them meet the need of the children and young people they have on roll with SEND. In response the Head Teacher explained that they do not provide as much training as the Garden School but to be able to meet the growing need to of pupils with autism and learning difficulties in the local authority the school continues to prioritise the need for them to be able to provide training around learning difficulties.

LBH Employment and Skills

4.48 The Commission was informed that:

- The objectives for this non-statutory service were to provide high quality pathways into employment based in the ethos around providing personalised support with a focus on Hackney residents experiencing multiple disadvantages in the labour market through offering support via the Employment Pathways and Supported Employment strategies.
- In reference to the latter, the team manages the Council's apprenticeship programme for 16-24 year olds. The programme was brought in by Mayor Glanville in 2016 and since then the team has increased the number of apprenticeships in the council from 30 to approximately 120. It was noted that the Programme Manager - Employment Pathways was not able to tell the Commission how many of the young people in these placements were excluded from schools but he explained that a lot of work had gone into making sure apprenticeships were accessible to those that have not gone down the academic route, ensured they pay the living wage and run screening sessions where the focus is broader than looking solely at previous experiences, academic attainment but where they instead look at potential and how the individual perform in those sessions.
- Further, the team has increased the number of apprenticeships available to disadvantaged groups for example, care leavers and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. In addition, a large percentage of young people in the Council apprenticeships are young black men.
- The team has also piloted a pre-employment paid placement in order to give young people a tangible experience of work and a chance to develop their employability by for example understanding the importance of time-keeping and to prepare them for an apprenticeship.
- The team have been promoting the apprenticeship programme in schools, primarily in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. The Commission noted that they would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with the alternative provisions and the specials schools present at this meeting and would be happy to come into the schools and talk to the young people and staff about the apprenticeships schemes in the Council but also within other businesses and organisations and suggested that they would bring some of the young people to talk about their apprenticeship experiences.
- In addition, through the Supported Employment strategy the team provide focused support to residents with learning difficulties, autisms and suffering from mental health issues to get into and to remain in employment.
- Recently, the embarked on a piece of work with HLT, establishing a new position around SEND in the form of a SEND champion to organise a variety of, and meaningful employment experiences and taster sessions for young people with SEND in order to ensure they are exposed to a range of possibilities. This piece of work involves close partnership with Homerton Hospital, one of the largest employers in the borough, in launching a supported internship to which 10 young people, aged 16 to 25 years old, with SEN and physical disabilities have been recruited to so far. The young people will be doing 3 placements in one academic year based on their employability skills and also including the

development of employability skills, job coaching and hands-on work experience and an opportunity to consolidate the learning at the end of each day.

Question and Answers for all guests

4.49 The Commission wanted to know how they track the outcomes of the young people at their provision in terms of sustained employment and also what partnership work exists between the alternative provision and the Council's Employment and Skills team. In response the Commission was informed that:

- ELATT have been working with the Council's Employment and Skills team on the pre-employment programme and welcome this initiatives which was similar to the model they follow with their 16-19 year olds where by the young person's time was split between lessons and a work placement. It was noted that this approach had been successful and had helped to increase the essential engagement from employers and ELATT would therefore like the opportunity to work with Council's Employment and Skills team especially in regards to 'selling' young people with SEND to employers.
- The Boxing Academy has not worked with the Council's Employment and Skills team yet however, in the last three years all their students, have been successful in getting a place either at college or on an apprenticeship. It was noted that there is a need for apprenticeships and internships especially since these young people most often do not have family connections and/or the full set of GCSEs and are as a consequence nearly always overlooked. As far as possible they visit the young people at college or at their placement every 6 months and find that most of them are still at college or in a placement but most often they have change the course from that they initially enrolled on. Further, they young people often continue to come back and visit the Boxing Academy.
- However, the Boxing Academy reported that these placements are often as competitive to get into as it is to get into university and would argue that it is essential to support this cohort into work placement. Further, the Boxing Academy as well as the importance of and have submitted a funding bid to set up an alumni programme which would better help them support the young people's progress and track their outcomes.
- It was noted that New Regent's College commission Connexions to do some of the tracking and monitoring of their students. The Executive Head further highlighted that it was difficult for sixth form colleges to provide the same level of support that these young people need to be successful, at the same time as they are most often urging to be independent, and have received to that point. It was noted to be a personal disappointment that they, New Regent's College, are not in a position to commission Key Stage 5 services replicating the variety and support available at Key Stage 4.
- At the Inspired Directions Schools three students that previously attended the provision, and have successfully moved on, come back to talk to the current student as a part of their transition and it was noted that they act as powerful role models which the present students relate to as well as look up to.
- BSix further acknowledge that it was hard for this cohort to get in to professional training, apprenticeships and internships and that they work with the SENCOs, provide information around their offer at career days and have been liaising with Homerton Hospital around the provision of supported internships.

4.50 At this point the Head of Employment and Skills suggested that the Commission also look at, in terms outcomes, numbers in sustained employment, as this is key to avoid a cliff edge when they turn 25 are might not be able to access adult services for support. He further highlighted that apprenticeship and training placements could possibly mask the real outcomes.

4.51 Further, the Commission wanted to know how the statutory provision interact with third sector community groups when a child or young person has been permanently

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excluded or around support for the post 19 cohort. In response the Executive Head at New Regent's College replied that there was no shortage of third sector organisations wanting to work with New Regent's College – including an organisation called Street Doctors that work with young people around the impact of knife crime and the Red Cross who has delivered first aid classes to their students. New Regent's College are open to work with charitable organisations however, it needs to be managed around the curriculum and to ensure that there was a clear understanding of what the expected outcomes.

4.52 In addition, the Commission expressed that they would like the HLT to include a bit more clarification around the funding model for mainstream schools and the alternative provision as well as what is being done within our 'family of schools' to try to join up how schools devices behaviour policies to ensure a well-being approach is central to the support rather built on further down the line through a whole-school approach in which school staff are able to spot early signs of mental health issues in order to move away from potentially a more punitive approach.

4.53 At this point the Executive Head at New Regent's College added that there might be an idea to further investigate the use of permanent exclusions that fall under the reason 'persistent disruptive behaviour' to ensure the academy schools are not brought into disrepute where these must in many cases be preventable. In situations where a one off incident of violence has taken place then for the good order of the school a Head teacher has very little choice but to permanently exclude.

4.54 In addition, Oran Blackwood added that there has been extensive research on how young people with SEND often are punished in regards to their behaviour when the behaviour is actually a symptom of their personality disorder. Further, the Commission was informed that ELATT works with a large number of school refusers who appear to have underlying mental health reasons acting as a barrier to learning which mainstream schools do not seem to be equipped to address or work with.

4.55 Finally, the Commission wanted to know whether any of the guests had any other ideas or suggestions of how mainstream schools and alternative provisions could work more collaboratively with HLT to meet the needs of the SEND cohort and how they could draw on the learning and practices in special schools. In response the Commission heard that:

- Provisions benefit from ensuring SEND is part of the teachers' CPD.
- Mainstream school would be able to attend a conference hosted by Garden School around the culture in schools, leadership in schools whereby the focus is to move a way form a punitive approach.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

5.1 The Commission agreed the minutes of the last meeting.

6 Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission - 2018/19 Work Programme

6.1 The Members of the Commission noted the last version of the work programme for the municipal year 2018/19.

6.2 The Members were informed that that there was flexibility in the work programme to include another 3-4 substantial discussion items. The Chair encouraged the Commission to put forward areas for scrutiny including context, objectives and desired outcomes and for this to be done outside of the meeting.

7 Any Other Business

7.1 The Scrutiny officer informed the Members that this was her last meeting before joining the Integrated Commission Children, Young People and Maternity work-stream on a two year secondment.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.30 pm