

## 13 July 2020 Scrutiny Briefing: The Council's Covid-19 response to support children and young people Hackney Learning Trust

<b>Date of meeting:</b> 13 July 2020
<b>Title of report:</b> The Council's Covid-19 response to support children and young people Hackney Learning Trust Update Report
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<b>Authorised by:</b> Annie Gammon, Director of Education
<b>Brief:</b> This report provides an update on Hackney Learning Trust's response to the Covid-19 situation

### 1. Background & Introduction

- 1.1. This paper provides information on activity to date supporting educational progress of children & young people in the borough and the wider reopening of schools.
- 1.2. It also responds to the questions raised at the 15 June 2020 Scrutiny Commission meeting regarding provision of online education provision, assurance that there was no unconscious bias in verification of teacher assessments and use of other facilities and spaces to support children's attendance at local schools?

### 2. Schools Opening & Attendance

- 2.1. The numbers of pupils attending Hackney Schools continue to increase. All schools continue to be open to vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers, and all schools have widened their provision to include some or all of the other eligible year groups (Nursery, Reception, Y1, Y6, Y10 and Y12). Some schools have widened this further, with a number additionally offering places to pupils in Y5 and Y2 pupils where classroom space and staffing allows.
- 2.2. The daily attendance return to the DfE for 29 June was completed by 61 Hackney schools and colleges (including independent and maintained schools & academies). This shows that over 6,443 pupils were in attendance across Primary and Secondary settings, an increase of 5,323 pupils since 18 May (the week before the summer half term and before wider reopening of schools). This includes 1,437 pupils from critical worker families and 1,078 vulnerable pupils. Actual attendance will be higher than this as not all schools are completing the voluntary return.
- 2.3. All special schools continue to open and, although numbers remain relatively low (97 students as at 29 June), attendance is slowly increasing. Home to school transport remains a concern given social distancing requirements and options to respond to this continue to be considered.
- 2.4. Whilst the Secretary of State has stated his intention that all pupils should return to school from September, at the time of writing, further government guidance to support schools in planning for this has yet to be issued. Many schools, however, are planning for this scenario. HLT is supporting this work and is prioritising resources to support schools to develop an ambitious recovery curriculum and empowering headteachers to take forward and use government catch up funding.
- 2.5. In terms of managing social distancing and the requirement for smaller group / class "bubbles", it is likely that available staffing levels (rather than space) will be a main limiting factor when planning for wider reopening. Notwithstanding this, Hackney

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Learning Trust is liaising with Education Property Team to consider options for possible use of other facilities and community buildings should space become a limiting factor for schools. In this scenario, input & sign off from the Council's Insurance Manager and Health & Safety Teams would also be required.

### **3. Early Years Settings**

- 3.1. Settings continue to open incrementally. As at 29 June, 223 settings were open; 96 groups settings, 48 school early years provision and 79 childminders. A further 5 playgroups and 7 private nurseries remain closed.
- 3.2. Attendance has increased to 3,620 children, of which, 74 children have an allocated social worker and 75 hold an Education, Health & Care plan.
- 3.3. Due to reduced capacity (as a result of not all settings being open, alongside having to accommodate children in small groups), 10 settings (5 Children's Centres, 4 private nurseries and 1 independent setting) have reported that they are unable to meet the current demand for places. Measures are being taken to support settings to increase the number of children following further DfE guidance encouraging settings to increase the size of groups. In the meantime families are being supported to make alternative arrangements where they have not met the criteria for a priority place.

### **4. Ongoing activity**

#### **4.1. Home Learning -**

- 4.1.1. Children's centres continue to coordinate bi-weekly home learning resources with a weekly challenge such as dance and movement, colour sorting or making cookies, for children who have not yet returned to nursery, and for babies and those who have not started nursery. The home learning resources continue to be shared with Early Years settings to circulate to their families. In addition, virtual music, story and activity sessions will continue to take place over the summer. Children's Centres will also deliver a 'Getting ready for school' 5 session programme to support transition to school. Alongside this, online transition meetings are being held with parents.
- 4.1.2. School Improvement partners have been speaking to Headteachers weekly and reporting on the provision for pupils and the effectiveness of the systems that schools have in place to support home learning.
- 4.1.3. Schools continue to offer support to those children who are not yet able to attend schools or settings using a variety of different strategies and approaches (e.g., provision of printed materials to work on at home and online lessons). In addition, schools are ensuring pupils receive a weekly check in from a member of school staff.
- 4.1.4. Schools have developed a range of strategies to maintain motivation and develop online learning including the use of platforms such as Google Classroom and Zoom. Many schools have provided technical support and devices to families, and all have provided printed materials where needed. Many schools are able to track access to online learning materials and identify and contact pupils where the access has been low. Systems for feeding back on work submitted by pupils have also been set up by many schools.
- 4.1.5. Schools have varying capacity to provide online delivery and the explicit expectation from central Government was not to replicate the delivery of lessons through the school timetable being delivered 'live' online. Online learning requires a different approach than that in the classroom, and a full timetable of online teaching would not

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meet the needs of digitally disadvantaged pupils who are less likely to access extended online activity. Further, a full time online teaching approach would limit capacity to deliver for these pupils and for those pupils attending provision in school. Class teachers have been preparing materials for pupils who are in school and at home which can be accessed by as many pupils as possible whilst also providing for vulnerable pupils and those of key workers on the school site. Schools have been supported to direct parents to the national facility of Oak Academy, a virtual school with a range of teaching videos.

4.1.6. Schools have worked hard to manage the expectations of some parents that children would receive a full online timetable. This has to be balanced against the school's capacity to provide for pupils on site, needs of those pupils who were not able to access learning online, the capacity of teachers to maintain regular one to one contact with pupils, and also not suit younger pupils who require a more active approach.

4.1.7. A series of online forums have been held for Primary Headteachers, Secondary Headteachers and Chairs of Governors where best practice for online learning and formative planning for September has been shared. Further sessions are planned prior to the end of the school year: these will include discussion of planning for September and a blended learning approach, including sessions with external facilitators, Professor Barry Carpenter and Jenny Short, to consider approaches to planning a recovery curriculum.

### 4.2. Digital Divide / Laptops

4.2.1. 1,347 devices for children with a social worker were delivered to Hackney on 30 June as part of the DfE laptop scheme. The majority of these devices will be distributed to Hackney schools where we are aware they have eligible pupils on roll. The delivery started on 1 July and is expected to take a week to 10 days to deliver to all schools.

4.2.2. Hackney's Children & Families Service are managing distribution to pupils not on roll in a Hackney school.

4.2.3. 233 devices for disadvantaged Y10 pupils were delivered on 1 July as part of the DfE laptop scheme. These will all be delivered directly to the appropriate school.

4.2.4. Options for a local follow up scheme are currently being considered, topping up the numbers of laptops available for Hackney children. At the time of writing, details are still being confirmed and a verbal report on this can be made on 13 July at the meeting.

### 4.3. Exam Assessment

4.3.1. A new system has been implemented based on teacher assessment for those students who were due to sit A level, AS level and GCSEs this summer. Ofqual guidance highlights a broad range of evidence, including non-exam assessments, classwork, homework, mock results, course assignments and outcomes data.

4.3.2. Grades will be moderated by statistical modelling which aims to ensure that this year's system does not disadvantage centres with differing levels of students with protected characteristics and socio-economic backgrounds.

4.3.3. The [Council's submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry on the impact of COVID-19 on education and children's services](#) raised concerns that moving to a system of teacher assessment could have an adverse impact in Hackney, given its demography, leading to widening in performance gaps.

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- 4.3.4. In their approach to mitigate the risk of bias, Ofqual published guidance in its Equality Impact Assessment: literature review. This lays down the nature and extent of any bias that might arise in using teacher assessment. Studies suggest that this can sometimes be linked to student characteristics like gender, special educational needs, ethnicity and age, leading to over and under prediction for certain groups.
- 4.3.5. Hackney Learning Trust has also developed guidance. This offered practical steps such as blind marking and check marking; and strategies to combat bias such as awareness training and familiarisation with mark schemes. This has been well received, disseminated and discussed with Headteachers, Heads of Sixth Form and subject leaders in their network meetings.
- 4.3.6. A Fairness, Bias and Cultural responsiveness checklist has been shared with school, sixth form and subject leaders. It is applicable for all year groups and not just in respect of terminal assessments. Hackney Learning Trust's guidance paper is now being shared with primary schools, school improvement personnel and governors.
- 4.3.7. Challenging personal and systemic biases, however alert we believe we are, is essential. This requires a persistent effort by everyone and a shared intent for equality. All school improvement partners and teaching and learning consultants are reinforcing this message.
- 4.3.8. It should also be noted, where students do not feel their calculated grade reflects their performance, they will also have the opportunity to sit an exam in the autumn.
- 4.4. **Summer holiday plays provision & summer activities**
- 4.4.1. HLT is currently planning summer holiday provision at Benthall Primary School for up to 50 children aged 4 to 12. At this stage, priority will be given to vulnerable children and children of critical workers. The scheme will run from 20 July to 14 August.
- 4.4.2. The council was able to make £50k available for schools to run **summer activities** for vulnerable children. Fifteen schools are currently taking up this opportunity and are offering a range of activities. In addition one secondary school is being funded by the GLA to run a pilot scheme on transition from primary to secondary school. Just over 600 pupils will benefit from these summer activities.