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29 September 2020

Dear Cllr Conway and Cllr Gordon

Off-rolling in schools in Hackney

Thank you for your [letter](#) of 5 August 2020. The thorough work undertaken by the Commission has highlighted a number of areas for Hackney Education to consider. I would like to thank you for the time, effort and commitment of both yourselves and those who worked with you as part of the Commission in considering this important issue and coming to your recommendations.

I have discussed the Commission recommendation with officers, and set out our response to each below.

Recommendation One	Response
<p>That Hackney Education should continue to monitor school moves between years 9 and 11 and to provide challenge to those schools where the rate of removal from the school roll is high (currently 4%)¹. Where possible, Hackney Education should speak to a sample of selected parents and children to validate reasons for removal from school and to help build a rounded – case study – picture of the circumstances around removal. Any identified concerns, should be raised with both the Head teacher and school governing body and with Ofsted as necessary.</p>	<p>Schools are required to notify the Local Authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the admissions register. An admission officer updates the council's database following receipt of roll notifications and queries instances where there is missing information.</p> <p>If the removal is unexplained, school performance and standards are notified.</p> <p>Using school census data, Hackney's Management Information, Systems & Analysis (MISA) team will produce data on an annual basis showing year on year movement in the number of pupils on roll. This allows cohort figures to be tracked e.g. Year 10, November and, again, Year 11 March. Where the change in roll is significant or unusual this will, in the first instance, instigate a conversation with the school leaders, led by the linked School Improvement</p>

¹ This rate should be reviewed annually.

Partner or adviser. Further conversations may be arranged with the school leaders if necessary.

At times Hackney Education do carry out discussions with parents and pupils to better understand the circumstances and reasons for moving schools.

Whenever concerns around the roll movement are formally raised with the headteacher and governing body then Hackney Education's risk assessment process will be automatically informed, given that this area would be a focus for Ofsted inspectors.

Recommendation Two

That Hackney Education should aim to improve the level of advice, guidance and support to parents and in Hackney and publicise provision to ensure that they:

- a) Are aware of their rights and responsibilities in respect of the removal of their child from the school roll;
- b) Have access to informed and independent advice at critical educational junctures (e.g. transfer to Elective Home Education, managed move, or moving to an Alternative Provider etc.) to ensure that such a move is in the best interest of the child;
- c) Are aware of the full range of educational options / settings which are available when their child is moved off-roll;

Response

Hackney Education will review and update the information available to parents/carers on its website to ensure there is specific information for parents/carers relating to removing pupils from school rolls. This will be completed by December 2020.

The elective home education policy and associated assessment framework has recently been updated. This was developed in conjunction with elective home education families. The updated policy has been added to elective home education pages on the SEND Local Offer [website](#) and Hackney Education [website](#). This provides parents/carers with information in respect of their responsibilities and that they are aware of their responsibilities.

In respect of exclusion from school there is information for parents/carers on both the Hackney Education [website](#) and the SEND Local Offer [website](#).

The Pupils Out of School team are available to attend in-school meetings around managed moves for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. This enables us to provide advice to parents and schools around their rights and the process.

Currently managed moves are organised at a school level and reported as part of the fair access arrangements. We will continue to review whether moving to a centralised process would be desirable, though this would have resource implications.

Advice and guidance is also available from Hackney Education's Pupils Out of Schools team. Parents/carers can contact the service and obtain impartial information, advice and guidance

Recommendation Three	Response
<p>That Hackney Education should further develop and promote the concept of the 'inclusive school' to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Schools continue to offer high levels of achievement and progress alongside b. Schools are aware of the protective influence of mainstream education in helping to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Maintain oversight and contact with statutory services; ii. Maintain children's social support networks; iii. Contribute to adult oversight that help children to be kept safe; c. Children with challenging or behavioural needs can where possible be maintained within the school community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Where the school and staff are provided with appropriate behaviour management training; ii. <i>With</i> the support of other statutory and other services (e.g. CAMHS); d. School governors are made aware of their duties and responsibilities in respect of children being removed from the school roll and are provided with sufficient training and to fulfil these functions. 	<p>At the heart of Hackney Education's vision is the promotion of an inclusive school. This is carried out through our strategic role as champion for children, parents and families, vulnerable pupils and educational excellence.</p> <p>Strong oversight of schools and the delivery of statutory duties is maintained through our 'Good to Great' policy.</p> <p>We will provide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robust accountability 2. Rigorous monitoring 3. A programme of contact sighted on outcomes, relationships and impact 4. High quality professional development and training for all leaders and governors 5. A strategic plan of action focused on our priorities concerning closing performance gaps); curriculum - breadth, relevance and inclusion of all; development of high quality SEND provision; reduce exclusions; develop strong links with Orthodox Jewish schools; and safeguarding. <p>Hackney Education has its '<u>No Need to Exclude</u>' policy. This advocates a well-being led approach to finding alternatives to exclusion, which schools are expected to have regard to.</p> <p>The points raised in (b) about the wider responsibility of school leaders for young people will be promoted at meetings with leaders during this year by the lead member and Hackney Education senior leaders.</p> <p>The Re-engagement Unit (REU) is a traded service that provides support to primary schools around pupils at risk of exclusion. From 20/21 the Re-engagement Unit is piloting the expansion of its successful primary offer to pilot a funded service to secondary schools to support them around pupils at risk of exclusion.</p> <p>There is also an increased focus on promoting awareness of mental health and wellbeing in schools both through the WAMHS project and training in trauma informed practice.</p> <p>As part of our governance training programme, a number of courses cover issues to do with off rolling. Each session will support attendees to be aware of the issues,</p>

as well as governor duties and responsibilities in respect of children being removed from the school roll.

Governors have also been reminded of their duties regarding off-rolling at Governors forums and through emailed leadership updates. Most recently the September edition of the monthly Chair of Governors Update referenced.

Recommendation Four

That Hackney Education should further invest (than the current resource 0.5 WTE) in to the EHE team to provide additional support to this cohort of children, this is in recognition of:

- a. The significant growth in the number of children in EHE in Hackney (currently at approximately 500);
- b. Additional responsibilities and expectations that may result from the new statutory requirement for the LA to establish an EHE register and for parents to register their child if they are home educated;
- c. That vulnerable children are disproportionately represented in the cohort of EHE children and that current safeguarding oversight for some of this children is limited;
- d. Supporting a more proactive approach of the EHE team in its interaction with parents to enable further promote awareness and uptake of local educational support services.

Response

Hackney Education has increased the resourcing in this area from 0.5 WTE to 1.0 WTE. A new officer has been appointed to this role. In addition, funding has been agreed for an additional Elective Home Education (EHE) officer for six months to support our work around elective home education.

A new EHE policy and assessment framework has been agreed and is being implemented. This allows for a risk based approach for oversight and engagement with EHE families. Some families will receive a greater level of contact than others depending on the vulnerability of the children and/or the capacity of the parents.

The information meetings for EHE families, which were previously held annually will be increased to twice a year. These meetings will provide parents/carers with relevant information (e.g. post-16 options) and the opportunity to engage with lead officers. The next meeting, Covid-19 permitting, is scheduled for November 2020.

Recommendation Five

To maintain oversight of those children who are moved off the school roll, it is recommended that as part of its annual reporting on school achievement to the Children and Young People YP Commission, that Hackney Education also report on:

- a. The number of children who are in receipt of fixed-term and permanent exclusions;

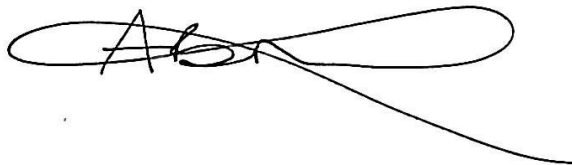
Response

The relevant information that is held by Hackney Education can be reported to the commission on an annual basis.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">b. The number of children moving from mainstream education to Elective Home Education:c. The number of children moving from mainstream education to Alternative Provisiond. The number of children going through a managed moves process. | |
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I hope that this response is helpful, but should you have any further questions on this matter, please do come back to me.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anntoinette Bramble', with a long, sweeping tail extending to the right.

Cllr Anntoinette Bramble

Deputy Mayor and Cabinet member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care