



London Borough of Hackney
Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission
Municipal Year 2023/24
Date of Meeting Thursday 30 November 2023

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 Alastair Binnie-Lubbock, Cllr Lee Laudat-Scott, Cllr Sheila Suso-Runge, Cllr Lynne Troughton and Cllr Sarah Young
Apologies:	Cllr Ifraax Samatar
Co-optees:	Andy English, Jo Macleod, Chanelle Paul and Mariya Bham and Mia Arthur (Hackney Youth Parliament)
In Attendance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayor Caroline Woodley (Cabinet lead for Families, Early Years & SEND)• Cllr Anntionette Bramble, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Young People & Children's Social Care• Paul Senior, Director of Education and Inclusion• Donna Thomas, Head of Early Years, Early Help & Wellbeing• David Court, Interim Assistant Director, School Estate Strategy• Kate Cracknell, Head of Wellbeing and Education Safeguarding• Debra Robison, Diversity and Inclusion Systems Leader• Karen Thomson, Alternative Provision Commissioner
Meet recording:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIW4hPasE3Y
Members of the Public	There were no members of the public present.
Officer Contact:	Martin Bradford (martin.bradford@hackney.gov.uk)  020 8356 3315  martin.bradford@hackney.gov.uk

Councillor Sophie Conway in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence:

- Cllr Ifraax Samatar

1.2 Apologies for lateness were received from:

- Cllr Anya Sizer
- Deputy Mayor Bramble

1.3 The following members connected virtually:

- Cllr Anya Sizer;

2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 There were no late items and the business of the meeting was as published.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 The following declarations were received:

- Jo Macleod was a governor at a local primary school.
- Chanelle Paul was a governor at a local secondary school.

4 Pupil Movement (19.05)

4.1 Following the completion of the review of the Outcome of School Exclusions' in December 2021, the Commission recommended that all pupil movement data is submitted annually to the Commission. This helps the Commission to retain oversight of why pupils may be moving to or from mainstream education in Hackney, their characteristics and their subsequent education destination.

4.2 Further to the investigation by the Commission into the 'off-rolling of pupils from local mainstream schools in 2019/20, this report also helps to identify those schools where there is above average pupil movement at years 10 and 11 and the challenge provided by the local authority to those schools.

Questions from the Commission

4.3 Children with SEND make up a significant proportion of this cohort of young people missing from education. What assurance do officers have that the final education destinations of children missing education (CME) are appropriate for their needs? Are officers confident that all EHCP annual reviews are taking place?

- CME who have SEND are generally those with an EHCP or on SEND support. Children with an EHCP are closely monitored as this system requires an annual review of their education, so the service generally is able to maintain contact with parents and to suggest alternative education settings. Children with SEND who are CME are supported under the universal offer for schools.
- It was also noted that there were experienced teachers within the CME team of HE who could provide expert advice on the inclusive adaptations that schools may be able to provide to support children with SEND to attend.
- Annual reviews are delegated to educational settings to undertake under the oversight of the SEND team.

4.4 Is there any data on how long children are generally missing from education? How many of those children missing from education are long term cases? Is there any correlation with the SEND status of children and long term missing from education? Is there any data or assurance that these children have up to date EHCP plans?

- The authority maintains a substantial data set on CME as it is statutorily required to report on this area of education. There are two CME data sets; those children within the Charedi community and standard dataset which covers all other children. For the latter, 96% of children are placed in alternative educational settings within the statutory timeframe. Of the remainder, most of these relate to

transfers overseas which whilst assurance has been provided by the school, there is no corroborated data or evidence to support this. A small number of these cases relate to the team's investigations to verify the existence of children in relation to benefits assessments.

- The Head of SEND reported that it is a duty for the LA to undertake annual assessments of EHCP, but this is delegated to schools and settings (and overseen by the LA). When a child is not in school, this duty falls back to LA. As there are over 3,700 children with an EHCP annual reviews are a significant undertaking, but new software has been developed to assist assessments on the quality of annual reviews undertaken and other trends.

4.5 The Children Missing Education team is supporting in excess of over 1,100 children. How many staff (whole time equivalents) are part of this team? What are the key areas of support to children and families? What are the pressures within this team?

- The CMT team sits within the pupils out of school team, but there were lots of interdependencies and collaborative working within this team. There were 2 full-time officers in the CME team and a senior lead for CME who oversees the work. One of the officers works with the Charedi community and the other works with the standard CME cohort. There is also the Elective Home Education team of 2 workers, one of which is a qualified teacher and the other post is currently vacant. There is also an attendance team made up of 7 officers (managed by an ex-head of a primary school) to support children who are on-roll and making sure they are taking advantage of the education available. Officers are from a range of disciplines covering teaching, youth work, social care and other related educational areas.

4.6 If there are two officers for children missing education, one of which focuses on the 1,100 children from the Charedi community, what scope is there for this officer to undertake any welfare assessments or enquiries for CME to ensure that they are receiving a good education?

- Although there is one officer leading on CME in the Charedi community they are supported by the wider team of officers. Officers will visit families to check on elective home education arrangements, and in most if not all instances. If arrangements are unacceptable, Officers will continue to visit parents to check on progress and to ascertain if they are ready to engage.
- There is the scope and capacity to undertake welfare checks for standard CME cohort and there is a statutory timeline which the service works within. In many cases, the circumstances are quite straightforward and the council can complete these obligations efficiently.
- The DoE noted that whilst more resources would always be welcome the performance and coverage of this service is annually reported to Ofsted and has not been found to be wanting.

4.7 The LA has a statutory duty to provide some form of educational provision once a child has missed 15 days of school. What proportion of children who are missing school are being supported through this process and what form of support are they being provided with?

- This relates to Section 19 Duties, and this can be provided in a number of ways including PRU, AP or on-site provision in the school itself.
- Children who have been off school for 15 days or more due to a medical condition are supported by the Medical Needs Education Service which is made up of experienced teachers. Teaching is generally provided on a one-to-one basis in the home in liaison with the clinical team with the aim of moving children back on to full time education as quickly as possible (wherever possible). For CME the focus is always to get children back on roll at an educational setting *with their peers* and to enable them to receive full-time education. Children who are permanently excluded from school are provided with education on the 6th day by the local pupil referral unit.

4.8 (From Hackney Youth Parliament) There are many excluded children who are being kept under the radar who are being kept within detention centres or other separate facilities within their own school away from the main student body. There also needed to be further work to assess the correlation between the neuro-diverse children and those experiencing difficulties in relation to exclusion or other forms of out of classroom sanction.

- The Chair noted that the Commission's review had highlighted this exact point, noting that many children who were excluded from school were diagnosed with some form of SEND after their exclusion.
- The AP officer noted that a new AP strategy was being developed which would focus on how local provision can help to respond to unmet needs of children, especially those children with SEND, neuro-diversity or mental health concerns. There was a growing concern around 'emotionally based school avoidance' (EBSA) and the strategy would also help local schools to respond to this.

4.9 What contact does the Children Missing Education team have with parents of Charedi boys to assure them that they are receiving an appropriate education? What information do we have on SEND support for children from the Charedi community and any annual checks that might be undertaken?

- DoE reported that is a serious issue and there are termly strategic meetings between HE and the Charedi community, in particular with Interlink. These meetings cover a wide range of health, social care and educational issues including SEND support and provision. There is an ongoing dialogue to support those UES to become independent schools and therefore fall within the regulatory framework.
- In terms of the CME and the Charedi community there is no data on their SEND needs despite the efforts of officers to engage parents. It is however a very complicated area of work and there are barriers to working as regulatory oversight is limited as these settings are not schools and are outside the regulatory framework. The LA continues to work creatively to engage and involve the Charedi community to ensure that there is a line of sight with these children. The DoE noted that the Schools Bill, which would have brought additional regulation of UES, was cancelled in the last parliamentary session.

The Chair noted that the Commission would be revisiting this subject in more detail at the January 2024 meeting.

4.10 a) The report notes that all schools with a pupil movement between years 10 and 11 above the local average (5%) are challenged by School Improvement Partners (SIP). Can officers set out how schools are challenged? Is there a case by case review? Is there a review of local policy (e.g. school moves, exclusions)? How have schools responded to challenge?

b) Children moving education settings between years 10 and 11 can impact on their educational attainment as well as being very personally unsettling for them and their families, yet the report shows that the proportion of children moving at this time has risen from 3% to 5% over the past two years. From the challenge provided to schools, what does the LA know about the underlying reasons for this increase in pupil movement? How is the authority working with schools to reduce pupil movement at this critical juncture in their education?

- It was confirmed that those schools with 5% or above pupil movement were visited by SIP and challenge was provided on a case by case basis. Whilst it may not always be in the best interests of children that they are moved at this time, historically, schools have been able to provide a valid reason why these children have been moved. In many instances, this is at the request of parents.

(Follow up) The Chair noted that this was often the account given by schools, but there was no work done to verify these reasons with parents themselves, who often had a very different perspective. In the context that there were 6 schools who were above the threshold (5%) and one where the move rate was 15%, is the authority satisfied that there is sufficient challenge to local schools and that children are being moved in their best interests? Are there any other reasons which might be behind these rising figures?

- On the school admissions side it is clear that there are often complex family needs which may be behind a school move, whatever stage that takes place. In many cases, the parent is seeking to remove their child from a difficult situation. There was a belief among the SIP that schools were not misrepresenting the reasons as to why children might be moving.
- The DoE cited an example where another head teacher had noted a rise in the number of children being moved to their school, and requested that HE investigate. The DoE, alongside the SIP, visited the school in question and concluded that there were genuine reasons for moving children. The LA was administering the system as best as it could within the legislative framework.

(Follow up) The Chair highlighted that given the evident disproportionalities in the school move data, there should be clearer ambitions for the children and families affected. The Chair emphasised that there had to be more challenge to address the system which is creating these inequalities in relation to race, gender and SEND status.

(Follow Up) The Vice Chair questioned whether schools were all made aware of these patterns of movement as this affects all schools within the local educational system. Whilst schools may have their own governance arrangements, being part of the same local educational systems requires greater consistency in the way that school moves are managed.

- It was noted that there has been much work to help schools become more inclusive, particularly work around the local Inclusion Charter.
- The outcomes of the admissions panel are shared with local schools and the individual deliberations are shared with the destination school (including advice from related professionals). The Fair Access Panel is chaired by an independent chair who oversees this process to ensure the best outcome for local children.
- Officers understood the frustration at the lack of progress in this sphere, but noted that this was a complex system in which there were a number of moving parts including AP reform, resetting the Fair Access Panel and the duties of the school and the LA in terms of admissions. The LA fully understood the local narrative and what needs to be done and where children were being failed. It was noted that a pilot MDT system was being trialled in 9 schools in the north of the borough to identify how children with persistent behavioural issues could be better supported through a whole systems approach.

4.11 The report noted that 68% of children leaving education in Hackney took up a place at a school outside Hackney. Is there any data on how well these children perform? Is there any tracking of such students?

- It was acknowledged that whilst that it would be positive if this tracking of pupils could take place, there is no statutory duty to do so, and therefore there is no data on this. If there was capacity and the budget to do so, then this would be something that the HE would like to do.

(Follow up) The Commission noted that in many cases the outcomes for children who were moved were poor, and that if tracking data was available, this could be shared with parents and other stakeholders to inform decision making. There was a view that this data was available locally (e.g. in our schools, in our housing service and social care office), but there were questions as to how effectively this might be collated and shared.

(Follow up) The Commission also noted that in a number of instances, families had little control over the reason why their child was being moved, as increasingly families were required to move for housing and other welfare issues. Is there any data on this?

- Officers confirmed that there is no tracking of data on children leaving the borough.
- DoE noted that a secondary heads working group had been commissioned to look at school estates and falling school rolls to ascertain why children might be leaving the borough which will hopefully improve understanding of this issue.

(Follow up) The Commission noted the importance of local data collection and sharing this appropriately across departments to inform decision making.

(Follow up) A lot of the data around CME and moving school appears to be anecdotal. Are there any other authorities which appear to have good data collection systems which capture this data in a more systematic way? If so, what can we learn from them and import within local provision?

- At a recent meeting of London Directors (of Education) it was made clear that there was no authority across London which was collecting this data, but Hackney would be looking to start collecting this data. In terms of best practice, if the Commission has evidence on areas where it thinks local provision can be improved in terms of data collection, then this would be welcomed.

(Follow up) Is there a dashboard which brings all this data together? It would help the Commission to have oversight of the data and also help to assess if there are any gaps? Further data on the children in this cohort would be welcome especially in relation to age, ethnicity, gender, SEND status and their location. The Commission would also welcome further longitudinal data on this to help assess whether presenting issues are ongoing and for comparative purposes, how Hackney data compares with other boroughs. For example, the report makes reference to Black Congolese children, when for consistency and coherence, it should be referred to as Black African.

- The authority has over 340 statutory duties in relation to education, and whilst officers would welcome the creation of a singular dashboard covering these services, it is not possible to do this given the breadth provision. The authority would always want more data to inform decision making but the needs of the children are now more complex spanning much wider information datasets and there has to be limitations on what can be accessed and analysed.

4.12 On page 18 of the report it notes that all schools regard removal from the register as a potential safeguarding issue. Was this a general view or the view of schools in relation to individual cases? What are the review and follow up processes in respect of removal from the register?

- This is in regard to an individual child assessment, and this could be for the school to refer them to Multidisciplinary Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or some other professional. The focus would be on assessing the specific needs of the child in question.

4.13 The number of children being electively home educated (EHE) continues to rise, and there are now over 300 children who are educated at home (excluding Charedi children). Can officers explain what is driving this increase in the number of children being electively home educated? How do the number of children being electively home educated in Hackney compare to other boroughs? What happens when a child has an EHCP or SEND statement and is transferring to elective home education?

- Since the pandemic it is apparent that more parents are choosing to EHE their children, in Hackney and elsewhere. Whilst there has been some stabilisation, figures are on an upward trend. There are also in-year variations with higher rates of children in EHE in September term than other terms, as often parents have not obtained their preferred school option and prefer to EHE until a more suitable option becomes available. There were lots of drivers for the increase in

children in EHE, the main one being that their parents felt that their needs were not being met in school.

- 29 of the 304 children in EHE have an EHCP and in this context, officers would work with the SEND team to ensure that they are receiving a suitable education and their needs are being met.

(Follow up) The Chair noted that if there are a growing number of parents who are taking their children out of school to EHE because they feel that schools are not meeting their needs, then this is an inclusion issue for the authority.

- The DoE noted that Hackney is not an outlier, and that all local authorities were experiencing similar increases in the number of children being EHE. It was noted that there was a crisis in many parts of the health care service where there were delays in children getting the mental health or other health support that they needed. Whilst waiting times were comparably better in Hackney than in many other authorities, it was recognised that this was still problematic for many children and their families.
- The authority is not legally obliged to record why children enter into EHE. The school usually notifies the authority that a child is being EHE and the parent has to confirm this and that they were not pressured into doing so and never offered as an alternative to exclusion. Once a referral has been received, a safe and well check is undertaken (which is prioritised according to need). An education suitability check is also carried out by a qualified teacher to assess their needs, and this is undertaken with a social worker if the child is in receipt of statutory care.

4.14 The main in-year movement of children with EHCP is from mainstream school setting to another mainstream school setting (accounting for 55% of all movement). Are different schools differently equipped to meet the needs of children with SEND?

- There can be many reasons why children with SEND move from one mainstream school to another, this could be parents moving school in Hackney or parents moving into the borough. All schools are required to follow the SEND code of practice and provide the basics of SEND support, but clearly some schools do this better than others. This is monitored by the SEND team.
- The SEND team does have the data on the proportion of (55%) of children with an EHCP which are new to the borough or moving to another local school which can better meet their needs. This can be supplied at a later date.

Action: HE to provide data on the proportion of children with an EHCP who move from one mainstream school to another who are a) moving to another Hackney School to obtain a better educational offer and b) who are new to the borough.

4.15 The Chair thanked officers for attending and closed this item with a request that a meeting with HE takes place ahead to scope this item before this is confirmed in the work programme for next year so that it can add value to the work of the officers in this field.

Action: The Commission to meet with officers to scope out the pupil movement item ahead of confirmation within the 2024/25 work programme.

4.16 The DoE noted that any lobbying of the DfE and central government that the Commission could undertake in relation to EHE would be welcomed by Hackney Education. The Chair agreed that it would consider this approach.

5 Outcome of School Exclusions (Recommendation Update) (19.55)

5.1 The Commission completed a review of 'The Outcome of School Exclusions' in December 2021. The review made 18 recommendations to the Council. Responses to the recommendations were approved by Cabinet in March 2022. The Commission

reviewed progress in the implementation of the recommendations in 2023, and agreed a further follow up within 12 months of that date. Members of the Commission scrutinised the further update report, including plans to develop an Inclusion Charter, and question officers present.

Introduction from HE officers

5.2 The Inclusion Charter is now called the Charter for Hackney Schools for Race and SEND (based on feedback from schools). This is a practical response to local educational inequalities and disproportionalities in relation to race and SEND. The Charter is not an isolated tool, but will work in conjunction with other priorities. The Charter is for school leaders and school governors and was launched in late November. A live document will go online which captures good practice. The Charter is not a 'bolt on' but will align with existing curriculum and teaching in schools. The Charter aims to enhance the voice of black and global majority children and those children with SEND. The headline data shows that schools are successful, but not all children enjoy this success. Officers will continue to work closely with local heads and Professor Paul Miller in developing the Charter.

5.3 The re-engagement unit (REU) has been up-scaled to cover secondary schools. This was a traded offer, but has now been funded as part of a universal offer to local primary and secondary schools. There were over 300 referrals to this service, 40% of which were for secondary school aged pupils, and this cohort continues to grow (as the service was originally for primary school aged children). Having been in operation for 10 years, the REU has long standing relationships within primary schools and employs a multidisciplinary team to engage with and support children with a wide range of needs (CAMHS youth work, education, social care). The REU also provides training to help build capacity within school to manage children's concerns.

Questions from the Commission

5.4 Whilst it is encouraging to note the work of officers to help address school exclusions, the most recent data continues to show that Hackney has among the highest rates of permanent and temporary exclusion in London. Are we seeing any benefits from the work to stem permanent school exclusions?

- The DoE acknowledged that despite significant local investment, exclusion numbers were not where the authority wanted them to be. It was emphasised that there was no reluctance to engage by local school leaders and all were committed to reducing school exclusions. The authority has sought to reset the approach locally and made a number of developments including the extension of the REU which has had a significant diversionary impact and helped to maintain children in school. The authority is also continuing to look to other authorities to understand what can be learnt in tackling school exclusions which can be transplanted here in Hackney. A school exclusions summit was held in July which was attended by all sectors and which developed some key actions which will be reviewed in the summer term of 2024.

5.5 What tangible differences will the Inclusion Charter mean for children from black and global majority backgrounds or children with additional needs? Will there be additional safeguards to ensure that their needs are met equally? Will there be any additional protections for them such as increasing support for parents to challenge decisions?

- The DoE noted that the Charter has brought stakeholders together and will help local schools develop a consistent and standardised approach to supporting children to stay in mainstream education. It will make sure that schools are aware of and use the wide range of resources available for them to support their children at risk of exclusion.
- Training is being developed to sit alongside the Charter. One school has a Black and Global majority parents group which has helped to reach out and connect parents with each other. It was acknowledged that the experiences of black and global majority children and parents in schools as well as those with SEND, have

not always been positive. The Charter will provide a voice to local children and parents.

5.6 Is the authority seeking ways to engage those schools which have changed their practices and had good results which the authority can help to showcase an influence practice at other schools?

- The Do E noted that there are school inclusion champions and that some schools which have outstanding practice in terms of their anti-racist work. Leaders from these settings regularly share their learning and best practice with other local schools through local forums and through the weekly bulletins.
- The Inclusion Charter is enclosed within a wider document which sets out what is going well in local schools and what needs to be improved. Schools will be expected to update their own position in relation to the Charter so that this is a living document and that other heads can see what other schools are doing in this space. This will be online and a public facing document, so everyone will be able to see what schools are doing as well as evaluating their own practice.

5.7 The Commission made specific recommendations about Positive Behaviour Management strategies. Do officers know the extent to which such Positive Behaviour Management strategies are being used in local schools? To what extent are cumulative points based behaviour policies still being used in local schools?

- Whilst officers may be able to provide advice, creation of these policies are down to the schools and the school leadership teams to devise. The authority has examples and can discuss good practice with the school, but the school is responsible for its own policies. Hackney Education has developed a graduated response which it expects schools to follow in supporting pupils to maintain their place in school.
- In the spring of 2024, Hackney Education will conduct a survey of local schools which will assess approaches to behaviour management. There were no schools that the DoE was aware of that were using points based behaviour policies, but this does not mean that they do not exist. If schools want to do this however, it is not illegal, it is for them to determine their own approach.

5.8 What is the authority doing to help shape and improve local behaviour policies in local schools? Is there any intention to draft a model behaviour policy which schools can model?

- The Commission will be aware that the authority cannot dictate the policies of local schools, these must be drawn up by them to reflect their individual circumstances with reference to statutory guidance. The authority can create spaces where local school leaders and practitioners can come together to discuss these issues and share good practice. There is a Behaviour and Wellbeing Partnership which is attended by local school leaders and is a mechanism to share good practice. SIP have annual conversation with schools which covers school behaviour and the DoE has had more targeted conversations with heads and school governors where behaviour has been identified to be an issue and these have taken place in both primary and secondary settings. Where there are outliers, these will be challenged.

(Follow up) Whilst accepting that there are many forums to share good practice, what is Hackney saying about what it expects to be good practice to be for local children?

- DoE noted that the excellence was in local schools, not within Hackney Council. The authority role is to showcase and shine a light on this best practice. The authority must also make sure that schools do not look through a singular lens (be it exclusions, SEND, race) and that their approach must be wider. The wider the range of options for intervention, the more likely that schools will be able to engage on at least one of these platforms. The authority has effective governance arrangements in place to ensure that all these programmes work effectively together.

5.9 Are schools undertaking an independent multidisciplinary safeguarding assessment prior to permanent exclusion? How many pupils were provided with a multidisciplinary safeguarding assessment in the last year of full data? How is this data recorded?

- (DoE) Whilst no schools want to exclude a child, when it is necessary school leaders will consider all the options available. In some instances, the school will need to make a tough decision based on one-off but extreme incidents concerning the child, particularly weapons related incidents. The authority was revising its guidance around this issue and has been working with police, schools and safeguarding partners to see if an alternative can be found for exclusion for one off incidents. In some circumstances however, the school has to take difficult decisions, irrespective of the views of other professionals and parties. There are wraparound multi-agency approaches available to schools, such as the REU.
- (Deputy Mayor Bramble) It was noted that there continues to be no exclusions in primary schools, which suggests that local schools in these settings are getting it right. Persistent disruptive behaviour continues to be the most prevalent reason why children are excluded in secondary settings however, so it is right that we continue to look at behaviour policies to understand if these are having a disproportionate impact on certain groups of young children. It was right that the local authority set out its aspirations for the local school system, and as secondary schools have come on board with this priority it was hoped that Hackney would not be an outlier for high rates of school exclusion for much longer.

5.10 What is the communication pathway between schools, parents and the authority when a child is being excluded from school? What welfare or safeguarding checks take place once a child has been excluded from school?

- Prior to a decision, schools will generally contact the exclusions team to see what else can be done to support the child, such as other forms of wraparound support. Where possible, it is important that children resettle in their original setting. Once a child has been excluded and the authority receives the paperwork, officers will make contact with the school and the parents to explain what the next steps might be. At this point a referral may be made for family support to help families through this process. The child will start with the PRU on the 6th day of their exclusion and there will be a multi-agency planning meeting to assess their needs prior to entry.
- It is hoped that there will be a repurposing of the PRU to help further inclusion in local schools.

5.11 The Chair thanked officers for attending the meeting and responding to questions from members of the Commission. It was agreed that this report should come back to the Commission in the next work programme (2024/25) so oversight of progress could be retained.

Agreed: That a further update on the recommendations from the Outcome of School Exclusions review be taken within the next work programme (2024/25).

6 Alternative Provision Strategy (20.40)

6.1 Hackney Education is developing a new Alternative Provision Strategy for children who are unable to receive education in mainstream schools. Officers presented the report which included the principles, plans and timelines for the development of this strategy. Key points from the presentation included:

- AP has meant many different things to different sections of the education system over many years which has impacted development;
- On the whole AP has been on the periphery of local education systems but this needs to change with a more integrated role;

- The AP strategy will repurpose what is already available, and make sure there are more options available to young people which are flexible and responsive to their needs;
- There must be a graduated alternative provision system to extend the options for schools so that more on-site and off-site options are available to children.

Questions from the Commission

6.2 How will the new strategy ensure that Alternative Provision commissioned and utilised for young people will be of high quality and configured to meet their needs? What systems will be used to review and monitor the quality of Alternative Provision? Will this be a shared QA system with other LA's? Will this also include the physical state of some of the buildings used by AP?

- The current QA framework used by the authority needs to be improved. There are 13 national benchmarks which cover relationships as well environmental issues. In collaboration with the PRU, a more localised set of standards have been developed which will be consulted upon and trialled over the next few months to March 2024.
- It will be important to move forward from behavioural policies toward relational policies, which encompass and work across all tier 1, tier 2 and tier 3 educational settings so that there is a unified and consistent approach.
- The DoE noted that all 151 local authorities will need to have regard to the National SEND and AP Action Plan and will be redesigning provision in this context. There will be an expectation that all schools will go through a graduated response before any decision is made about exclusion.

6.3 One of the failings of the current system is that there is very little connection between mainstream schools and alternative provision. How will the new alternative provision strategy support greater collaborative and partnership working between schools and alternative provision? How do you expect schools to respond to this strategy and their response will be critical to this success?

- There is a real need for guidance for the maintained sector in how it interrelates with the AP sector, and there is some expectation that AP should lead on this agenda. School engagement will be the catalyst for change. There has also been some assessment of the role of the Fair Access Panel, in the hope that its brief can be expanded to encompass children from a managed move or referral to the PRU, EBSA and other areas where the needs of children needs to be addressed in deciding the next steps.

6.4 Educational attainment and outcomes for children in Alternative Provision are substantially below counterparts in mainstream schools (<4% receive good GCSE pass in English and Maths compared to 64% in mainstream schools).

- Narrowing the Gap is a key programme to reduce gaps in attainment for children in certain settings (AP or children with SEND). This is on the forward plan and Hackney Education will be bringing a paper on this to the meeting in March 2024. This data will be shared fully with the Commission at that point.

6.5 What will the role of the PRU be in the new AP Strategy? Will the PRU continue to Commission AP or will this be undertaken by the Local Authority?

- It is the recommendation of the strategy that the authority takes over the Commissioning role of the PRU in the short to medium term (2-3 years). In terms of the proposed hub and spoke model, the PRU will be central but it will be repurposed.

6.6 The Chair thanked officers for attending and responding to questions from members of the Commission.

7 Work Programme (21.10)

7.1 The main changes to the work programme were summarised by the scrutiny officer:

- The main items for December were confirmed, including the outline for the Commission's work on School Behaviour Policies.
- In January 2024, the Children Centre item will be replaced by Cllr Bramble's Q & A of the Cabinet Report will now be published in January, not December.
- As a consequence, the EBSA item will be moved to March from February 2024, and Disabled Children Service to May 2024.

7.2 Given the forthcoming Mayoral and General election, a forward work programme has been developed to 2024/25 to help bring continuity and assist planning for council officers.

7.3 Members of the Commission were requested to submit their comments on the consultation response to the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy by December 4th 2023.

8 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

8.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on the 14th September were noted and agreed.

Agreed: Members agreed the minutes of the 14th September 2023.

9 Any Other Business

Date of next meeting confirmed for 18th December 2023.

The meeting concluded at 9.45pm.