

Report of: Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Executive	15 October 2020	All

Delete as appropriate:	Exempt	Non-exempt
-------------------------------	--------	------------


SUBJECT: Equalities in Educational Outcomes– Response to the report of Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee**1. Synopsis**

- 1.1** In June 2020, Executive received a report from the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee which examined Equalities in Educational Outcomes. The scrutiny report proposed fourteen recommendations to offer the best support to pupils. This report proposes actions to be taken in response to the recommendations.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** To welcome the findings of the Equalities in Educational Outcomes Scrutiny Review
- 2.2** To agree the responses to the Review as set out in Section 4 of this report.
- 2.3** To note that the Review and these responses fit within the wider context of an Equalities Action Plan
- 2.4** To agree that officers report back on progress to the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee in one year’s time.

3. Background

- 3.1 Between July 2019 and April 2020, the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee conducted a review of Equalities in Educational Outcomes. In carrying out the review the Committee met with young people, parents, head teachers, council officers and others to gain a balanced view. The Committee also considered relevant data, guidance and other documentation. Overall the review focused on the inequalities faced by young people from disadvantaged White British and Black Caribbean backgrounds throughout their education. Although the Committee recognised this as a national issue, they concluded that we must not wait for a national solution, and as part of its commitment to fairness and equality, Islington Council must seek to address these inequalities at a local level.
- 3.2 The Committee also recognised that the causes of these inequalities are complex, with no simple solution, and that progress may be incremental. The Committee noted progress made over recent years on this issue and hopes that the review will further support this agenda by further highlighting the inequalities in educational outcomes and by proposing practical changes to address these.
- 3.3 This is a formal response to the fourteen recommendations that have been made in response to the evidence received. These are related to values, aspirations and relationships, supporting children and young people's wellbeing through the curriculum; developing school processes to offer the best support to children and young people; and developing council services. This report outlines the current response to those recommendations.
- 3.4 In our response we must also acknowledge the significant additional challenges that have impacted disproportionately on already disadvantaged groups as a result on the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown period since the Scrutiny Committee carried out its original work. One consequence is the strong likelihood of inequalities being further embedded. In addition, the aftermath of the brutal murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor has further sharpened our focus and determination to bring about decisive change in relation to the inequalities we see in our educational outcomes in Islington. A robust and ambitious 'Return to School' recovery programme, underpinned by the delivery of a recovery curriculum, is in place and many of the actions that form part of the recovery plan are both influenced by and incorporated into our response to the recommendations flowing from the scrutiny.

The process of Scrutiny has been a catalyst for other work in the People's directorate and these recommendations and the response sit as parts of a wider, overarching and strategic approach to equalities work.

- 3.5 There is further work to do but we are ambitious about eradicating existing inequalities in education, intensified by the COVID-19 disruption. This demands that we all take a deep look at ourselves, understand the pain and injustice caused by our systems and take steps that lead to long lasting change. Sitting behind this response is therefore a strong commitment to address inequality, equity, diversity and inclusion across the People Directorate and the Council as a whole and we will ensure there is a coherent approach to our work. Workshops for managers have already taken place and will continue in September and beyond to set the ambition, with the long-overdue need to respond robustly to address racial inequality and systemic racism here in the UK forming the starting point for our conversations.

Staff and services supporting the delivery of the actions set out in this report will work even more collaboratively to reflect and further implement specific measures and clear lines of accountability that result in sustainable improvements and positive, lasting outcomes for our adults, children and young people. Choosing to stand so that the lives of our children, young people, adults and colleagues are valued is no longer an option; it is now non-negotiable.

4. Response to the Scrutiny Committee recommendations

Values, Aspirations and Relationships

4.1 Recommendation 1: Islington Council should continue to support schools in developing their relationships with parents/carers to ensure school staff understand the communities they serve. School leaders may wish to explore the make-up of their communities and raise awareness of unconscious bias through cultural competency training in staff induction materials and staff and governor training sessions.

Through the Equalities Reference Group made up of officers and headteachers, we have compiled a Best Practice Charter for Engaging Parents, Pupils and Communities. This is based on good practice existing in Islington schools and settings and work is ongoing with schools and settings to ensure a post-Covid relaunch, with wide adoption and impact. This will be monitored by the Equality Reference Group through surveys, school websites and the completion of the cultural competency audit tool.

We will use good practice at Upward Bound which was highlighted in the background research of the Scrutiny Committee. This will be particularly in relation to building relationships with parents/carers and listening and responding to the voices of children and young people. This work will begin in the autumn term with a group of schools and will be used as a template for future work with schools (Upward Bound is a programme aimed at raising attainment and aspirations for young people from Islington secondary schools funded by the Dame Alice Owen Foundation and run in partnership with Islington Council and London Metropolitan University. A team of specialist teachers, group leaders, student ambassadors and peer mentors and provide a model for breaking the cycle of low aspiration and achievement, changing lives by enabling pupils to achieve and supporting their progression post 16).

Following cultural competency training in November 2018, Islington officers have created an Unconscious Bias training session, with 15 schools having taken up the offer of training. The session has also been delivered to governors. Extensive separate Unconscious Bias work was carried out in spring and summer terms with all secondary English, maths and science departments to address the issues in relation to GCSE teacher assessment. We will continue to deliver this work to a range of audiences and ensure meaningful and impactful follow-up in schools.

We will make available the Governors' equalities training to targeted groups of governors and follow up through governors' briefings and meetings with chairs of governing boards

on governors' intentions to make equalities a standing item on the agenda at meetings. See Section 4.10 for more detail of actions proposed to improve the diversity of school governors.

We will also research other examples of good practice outside of Islington to further develop cultural competency training and staff induction materials.

Work has commenced to engage with several community groups/parents. To date meetings have been held on the 18th and 24th August 2020 with community organisations. Further meetings will be held in September with parents. These meetings have been organised in conjunction with Public Health, Early Help, Pupil and Early Years Services. As schools return in September, Pupil Services will be monitoring attendance on a weekly basis and working in collaboration with schools to meet with community groups/parents that remain anxious about returning to school.

4.2 Recommendation 2: Islington schools should revisit the aspirational values embedded in their work. Schools should be encouraged to reflect on whether their values and aspirations are meaningful for all of their communities, particularly those from underachieving groups.

Since the introduction of the revised Ofsted Framework in September 2019, schools have been using it as an opportunity to review and refresh the aspirational values that embed their work. Schools need to demonstrate a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, particularly those from underachieving groups. Schools are developing statements, identified as their "curriculum intent", which summarise how they will design the curriculum so that it is accessible for all pupils and how they will ensure that all groups achieve the expectations of the national curriculum. These "drivers" that underpin pupils' access to the curriculum are evidenced based strategies, interwoven through a refreshed set of progression maps that guide teachers and pupils.

Schools that have been inspected by Ofsted prior to and following September 2019, have been successful in demonstrating with confidence this approach to designing an inclusive learning environment and curriculum.

We will further support and encourage our schools to reflect on whether their values and aspirations are meaningful for all of the communities they serve, particularly those from underachieving groups, by using some of the strategies outlined in the body of this report (e.g. Belonging and Place) and our 'Return to School' programme (e.g. the Recovery Curriculum) to ensure that our children's aspirations and lived experience are reflected in curriculum intent.

4.3 Recommendation 3: Islington schools should consider the identification of suitable role models and mentors to work with children and young people. It is important that role models and mentors are relatable to the borough's different communities.

We will be encouraging schools to use every opportunity to provide community role models for the children and young people they serve. This might be through approaches to recruitment and promotion at all levels as well as through careful choices of agencies used for interventions including mentoring, catch-up and assemblies.

Our diverse offer of role models and mentoring will also be sustained and deepened through programmes such as 'Upward Bound' (see 4.1 above), the Islington Youth Council, the work of Arsenal in the Community and Big Alliance as well as our enrichment programmes such as World of Work, 11 by 11, Science for Life, Music in Education.

We will continue to develop these and other mentoring opportunities to ensure that our offer reflects the borough's different communities.

Our work in supporting and quality assuring Mother Tongue Supplementary Schools will continue to play a major role in providing strong role models from a range of communities in Islington and we will be working more closely with these organisations to align their working more with mainstream schools and to encourage them to put forward candidates to become school governors This is part of a more explicit collaborative relationship with MTSS organisations.

Supporting children and young people's wellbeing through the curriculum

4.4 Recommendation 4: Committee considers that the wellbeing of children and young people should be supported through the school curriculum. From September 2020 the new statutory health education curriculum will provide an opportunity for schools to reflect on how well they address pupil wellbeing through personal, social and health education (PSHE), including strategies for dealing with stress, sleeping and eating well. They should also aim to provide age-appropriate life skills lessons to support their personal development journey to adulthood. If possible, and within school budgets, schools could consider appointing dedicated and specialist staff to support children and young people who would benefit most from such approaches.

As we prepare for return and recovery in September, addressing friendships, family, relationships and health through PSHE lessons has never been more important. The Health and Well Being Team are providing updated lessons now which are available at IslingtonCS and are free to all Islington schools.



You, Me, PSHE
A scheme of work for the primary school
Years 1-6

ISLINGTON

Whole school curriculum overview						
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Autumn 1	Physical health and wellbeing Painless	Physical health and wellbeing What keeps me healthy?	Drugs, alcohol and tobacco education Tobacco is a drug	Identity, society and equality Democracy	Physical health and wellbeing It's not me	Sex and relationship education Healthy relationships / How love is made
Autumn 2	Keeping safe and managing risk Fighting off	Mental health and emotional wellbeing Feeling good	Keeping safe and managing risk Substances - weed, e-cigs, e-cigarettes	Drugs, alcohol and tobacco education Making choices	Identity, society and equality Discrimination and prejudice (history, equality, human rights)	Sex and relationship education Healthy relationships / How love is made
Spring 1	Identity, society and equality Me and others	Sex and relationship education Boys and girls, families	Mental health and emotional wellbeing Thoughts and challenges	Physical health and wellbeing What is important to me?	Keeping safe and managing risk When things go wrong	Drugs, alcohol and tobacco education Weighing up risk
Spring 2	Drugs, alcohol and tobacco education What do we put into and on to bodies?	Sex and relationship education Boys and girls, families	Identity, society and equality Celebrating differences	Keeping safe and managing risk Fighting off	Mental health and emotional wellbeing Feeling safe inside	Identity, society and equality Human rights
Summer 1	Mental health and emotional wellbeing Feelings	Keeping safe and managing risk Factors and outdoors	Careers, financial capability and economic wellbeing Setting, spending and saving	Sex and relationship education Going up and changing	Drugs, alcohol and tobacco education Different influences	Mental health and emotional wellbeing Feeling good
Summer 2	Careers, financial capability and economic wellbeing My money	Drugs, alcohol and tobacco education Medicines and me	Physical health and wellbeing What helps me change?	Sex and relationship education Going up and changing	Careers, financial capability and economic wellbeing Earning and saving money	Keeping safe and managing risk Keeping safe - not just about sex

The 2020 YMPSHE includes lessons covering the statutory curriculum requirements for health and relationships as well as relationships and sex education (RSE) lessons. Secondary schools can adapt YMPSHE Year 6 RSE lessons, as many Year 7 pupils will not have experienced their full, enjoyable and useful PSHE curriculum this term due to the pandemic. The DfE has stated that schools can adopt a phased approach to teaching the

statutory curriculum – for example if schools need more time to consult and engage parents. This must be in place by the beginning of the summer term, April 2021.

Schools have access to a full suite of materials on [IslingtonCS](#) (Healthy eating and cooking skills) that are designed to support pupils and families.

Additionally, in June 2019 Islington was successfully awarded 'Trailblazer' status as part of a national NHS and schools in England initiative to provide trained mental health support. Please see Recommendation 8 for more detail.

From September 2020, Islington Council will participate in the DFE programme: "Wellbeing for Education Return". The package will aim to maximise local authority support to schools and colleges in the Autumn term. At the time of writing the report we are unable to confirm funding arrangements, however it will be determined by the number of state-funded education settings in Islington. Support will be provided to the local authority before it is offered to schools. Nominated staff from every local state-funded school and college will have access to the training and support from the local authority team during the first half of the autumn term. Support and training will be split into manageable, accessible sessions that can be delivered as twilight webinars.

Important Council initiatives such as World of Work, 11 by 11 and Music in Education have a vital role in supporting well-being through the curriculum. It is vital that we ensure that the offer of involvement in these initiatives is equitable and open to all. We will continue to develop these and other opportunities to provide age-appropriate life skills activities to support children's personal development, encouraging schools to develop the new role of Mental Health and Well-being lead. This will be particularly important in a Covid context.

4.5 Recommendation 5: Islington Council should encourage schools to offer a broad, inclusive curriculum for all pupils up to Year 11, including the arts and digital and other technologies, to ensure that everyone can enjoy their learning and optimise their skills in order to progress to a successful adult life. A broad curriculum would reflect the new Ofsted Framework for inspection and support Islington Council initiatives such as 11 by 11 and the 100 hours of the World of Work.

All schools are required to provide a broad and inclusive curriculum for all pupils up to Year 11 and it is the strong implementation of this requirement which is of particular importance in tackling issues of inequality. Schools are reviewing their curriculum offer in light of the revised Ofsted Framework introduced in September 2019 and in particular in light of COVID-19 and the resulting interruption of learning that has impacted on schools.

Schools are being supported by Islington Council through regular network meetings with curriculum leaders and clear guidance has been provided to schools in relation to what needs to be taught, the best ways to teach a subject and how to use resources within a subject that reinforces currently health and safety guidance. Schools are rightly being challenged in light of recent world events to consider the curriculum as an equality agenda and ensuring that their curriculum is relevant to the young people of today, acknowledges the past and challenges diversity, inequalities and stereotypes.

Particular attention and focus is being given to ensuring that 11 by 11, Music Education Islington and the 100 hours of work initiatives are embedded in a sustained approach to enrichment so that pupils are able to link their learning and skills to cultural and employment opportunities in the future.

As schools welcome all pupils back to school in September, a revised model is being shared with all schools so that they can access the Islington Council initiatives.

Schools are also considering the Islington Recovery Curriculum, based on 5 recovery levers – relationships, community, transparent curriculum, metacognition and space. These levers are fundamental in reigniting the national curriculum. Work has already been undertaken with cultural and world of work partners to use the recovery curriculum to support their work with schools and to help shape their offer to schools in the autumn term and beyond. Islington Council is committed to supporting schools offer the full breadth of the national curriculum within a context of COVID-19. Therefore, we are working constructively to reduce the digital divide across the council and supporting schools and disadvantaged families with increasing access to digital technology so that learning can be maximised beyond the confines of the school gate.

4.6 Recommendation 6. As teachers are increasingly aware, and research studies confirm, setting pupils can contribute to feelings of segregation and lower aspirations for young people. We encourage Islington schools to further explore flexibility in groupings and consider minimising or removing setting where appropriate. Issues for consideration should include opportunities for movement between sets and/or how teachers are allocated to sets and year groups to ensure the most effective use of teaching experience and expertise. Islington Council should help to raise awareness of the impact of setting through the Community of Schools and governor briefings.

The School Improvement Service has strong links with UCL and has utilised those links to ensure that research on the impact of setting on equality and equity in education has been widely shared through headteacher and deputy headteacher networks, through subject leader meetings and through work in schools. This information will also be shared with governors. This work is an ongoing priority for our work with school leaders and has already impacted on practice in several primary and secondary schools. This will be monitored through the WiSS process and where there are barriers to learning as a result of setting, governors and school improvement will support leadership teams to explore solutions in light of the information shared by UCL.

Developing school processes to offer the best support to children and young people

4.7 Recommendation 7: Islington Council should support schools in developing clear strategies for raising the achievements of any underachieving group within their school, taking into account approaches identified as best practice within the Islington Community of Schools. Islington Council should also support governing bodies in their oversight of underachievement and equality issues. The Committee welcomes the work already underway to achieve this.

Islington Council welcomes the recommendations and acknowledges that there is more to be achieved in order to reducing the attainment gap for all under achieving groups.

Although it is acknowledged that Islington outcomes for many disadvantaged groups are making improvements, there is still more to be achieved. The School Improvement Service, through the 'Work in Support of Schools', is working with schools to develop and share good practice and challenge where appropriate to improve the practice of professionals and outcomes. Schools are expected to know their cohort, to analyse their data and to intervene to remove inequalities in pupil outcomes. The School Improvement Service will be strengthening these conversations in the autumn round of school meetings to ensure that schools have clear strategies in place to tackle inequalities in their contexts.

The effect of COVID-19 and the impact it may have on future outcomes brings many significant challenges to schools. The government has announced £1 billion of funding to support children and young people to catch up.

- This includes a **one-off universal £650 million catch-up premium** for the 2020 to 2021 academic year to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time.
- For Islington pupils this equates to approximately £80 per child.

Although all children have had their education disrupted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, it is likely that many ethnic minority, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups will have been hardest hit. We will expect schools to use the catch-up funding to ensure targeted interventions with underachieving groups using evidence based approaches. This will be monitored through the WISS approach referenced above.

- Alongside the universal catch-up premium, schools will have access to a **£350 million National Tutoring Programme** to provide additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help.

Both programmes are scheduled to commence in September 2020, with full implementation by October 2020.

Schools have nominated a "catch up" leader in each school. School Improvement will be meeting with these leaders to support them with expectations, timescales and implementation of both funded programmes. Meetings will be held each half term and "catch up" leaders will be further supported with a fortnightly newsletter directing them to appropriate resources, timescales etc.

In addition to the named national programmes, Islington School Improvement secured a grant for £125,000.00 to support Y6 disadvantaged pupils from the Richard Reeves Foundation. The intervention programme provides a Chrome Book for each identified pupil and 3 hours per week of additional online learning (Reading, Maths, SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) from October until May 2021. The catch programme has been written by the School Improvement Team and they will work in conjunction with the Y6 teachers to implement and monitor the impact of the intervention. An important part of this monitoring is the use of data to direct targeted interventions at pupils and groups of pupils who are in danger of falling further behind. Schools will keep the Chrome Books at the end of the academic year, and they will then be distributed to the new cohort of Y6 pupils.

The role of governors will be critical in holding schools and leaders to account for the nationally funded programmes, the Year 6 intervention and for attainment and progress

and underachievement across all years and groups. Training will be provided for governors that will focus on the following:

- Key attainment and progress issues in schools
- How to understand data
- Key questions to ask about the impact of interventions
- What are the criteria for selecting effective interventions and the role of the Education Endowment Fund (EFF)?

4.8 Recommendation 8: Islington Council should continue to encourage schools to make best use of iTIPs and adopt other supportive approaches to understanding the behaviour of children and young people. As far as possible, all school staff are encouraged to be trained on how to recognise and respond to symptoms of trauma in children, young people and their parents/carers.

A number of approaches to working with and understanding the behaviour of young people have been developed in Islington and have been seen to have positive impact on schools' work to mitigate the impact of discrimination and trauma for all groups and of racism in particular for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people. These are available to all of our schools and all schools are strongly encouraged to take up the offer through work with leaders and governors.

Islington Mental Health and Resilience in Schools (iMHARS)

The iMHARS framework helps schools understand the seven aspects (components) of school life that can support and contribute to pupils' positive mental health and resilience. The seven components were created from a wide body of evidence and have been developed and tested in Islington schools. The framework can be used in schools to audit support in place to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils, and preventative measures for all pupils. 66% of Islington schools have used the iMHARS framework to improve practice and develop a whole-school approach to mental health. We aim to increase the % of Islington schools by 10% each year, while continuing to monitor and support schools in revisiting their ongoing work.

Islington Trauma Informed Practices in Schools (iTIPS)

This programme aims to help schools embed a whole-school trauma strategy. Each iTIPS school has a 'champion' from Islington CAMHS and the EP service to train staff and support the development of the approach, which draws from the ARC (Attachment, Regulation and Competency) framework. iTIPS has been piloted in three phases (2017-2020) and currently includes nineteen primary schools, three secondary schools, including New River College and three Children's Centres and nursery schools. We plan to increase this by 6 schools each year subject to further funding.

Further roll-out of these programmes will be directed towards schools with higher levels of exclusion.

Mental Health Support Teams 'Trailblazer'

Additionally, in June 2019 Islington was successfully awarded 'Trailblazer' status as part of a national NHS and schools in England initiative to provide trained mental health support. Trailblazer sites will test how the development of Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) can work with schools, local authority and other services to improve earlier identification and intervention, thereby reducing waiting times for specialist NHS mental health services.

MHSTs will be based in and near schools. Islington will develop two teams, North and South of the borough, so that every child in an Islington school will have access to a MHST. The MHSTs will:

- Build on support already in place e.g. school counsellors, nurses, educational psychologists, voluntary sector, programmes such as iMAHRS and iTIPs
- Support children and young people with mild to moderate mental health issues e.g. exam stress, behavioural difficulties or friendship issues
- Help children and young people with more severe needs to access the right support, and provide a link to specialist NHS services

The Department for Education will also fund training for senior mental health leads in each school in the MHST area to ensure a 'whole school' approach to mental health and wellbeing. All Islington schools will be supported and encouraged to participate. This compliments and links with the DFE training support mentioned in Recommendation 4.

'Belonging and Place'

In researching successful approaches to equality and inclusion, we identified a body of research on '[Belonging and Place](#)', led by Kathryn Riley, Professor of Urban Education at UCL

The research suggests that one in four children report a feeling that they don't belong¹. It is also suggested that children from disadvantaged communities are twice as likely as their more advantaged peers to feel that they don't belong², and four times more likely to be excluded³.

For some children, if they don't belong in school, they don't belong anywhere.

Schools come into their own when they recognise that each child, each young person, each adult who passes through the school gates brings their own story into the life of the school

The research evidence also shows that a sense of belonging in school leads to improved academic outcomes, and has a strong association with positive social outcomes such as health and wellbeing, increased student motivation and reductions in absenteeism⁴. This evidence is particularly important for our thinking in relation to Islington's underachieving groups.

Recent evidence from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, 2019) also shows a strong link between children's sense of physical and emotional 'safety' in school and their academic performance in maths and science.

It is also suggested that an impact of exclusion and a sense of not belonging can mean that disaffected or excluded children and young people therefore search for a sense of belonging elsewhere, and may find it in extremism, self-harming or gang membership. The research also recognises the key role of schools as one of the very few shared social institutions that can create a sense of belonging or exclusion.

This work reflects Islington's 'Fairer Together' approach, the Islington Parents SEND Charter and the recommendations from the Scrutiny Board to develop inclusion and

¹ OECD (2017). PISA Results 2015 (Volume III).

² OECD (2013). PISA 2012 Results in focus. What 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know. Paris, France: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

³ The Fair Education Alliance (2017). Report Card 2016–2017.

⁴ Goodenow, C., & Grady, K. E. (1993). The relationship of school belonging and friends' values to academic motivation among adolescent students. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 62(1), 60–71.; Louis, K. S., Smylie, M., & Murphy, J. (2016). Caring leadership for schools:

address the underachievement of some groups. On the basis of a strong starting position, Professor Riley has therefore kindly agreed to work with us in Islington to develop 'Belonging in Islington - The Inclusion Imperative', with the aim of ensuring that all of our schools become places of belonging for all of our children.

In January 2020, Professor Riley hosted a conference for all of our schools to consider inclusion, belonging and place. Further workshops have taken place with Headteachers to introduce the concepts, give tools and consider what schools can take forward.

Focused work is also taking place with children in one of our primary schools around what does it look like when I feel I belong? What does it look like when I feel I don't belong?

What belonging means to children and young people in one of our schools:



The intended products from the work are a short leaflet charting the journey and recommendations for all schools, supported by a short film.

Unfortunately this work has been interrupted by the COVID-19 outbreak. However, workshops with Headteachers have continued with support from Prof Riley to consider leadership in the new era, taking into account some of the issues emerging from COVID-19 about equality - in particular the 'Black Lives Matter' campaign. The programme will continue at pace from September 2020, providing a framework and platform for wider systemic change.

We will continue to encourage schools to make best use of these and other supportive approaches to understanding behaviour and tackle the underachievement of groups as whole school approaches.

4.9 Recommendation 9: Islington Council should encourage schools to adopt behaviour policies that are underpinned by fairness, kindness, consistency and positivity. Behaviour policies should provide clear and succinct guidance to pupils, parents/carers and staff on what is and is not acceptable.

We have provided advice and guidance to all Islington Schools on [Attendance and Behaviour](#) as one of twelve priorities in our Covid-19 'Back to School' plan. This guidance stresses that:

- All school staff should be aware of the negative impact that adverse and traumatic experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can have on the mental health of pupils, parents and colleagues
- Schools may also experience an escalation in behaviour that challenges as children return to school
- While exclusion powers remain, schools must still be non-discriminatory, reasonable, fair and proportionate. Proportionality of any exclusion will differ hugely in the current climate. Alternatives to exclusions will be crucial in this time of national emergency.

The guidance contains further suggestions on how schools might amend their behaviour policy in light of the current circumstances (e.g. the need to maintain social distancing).

We will carry out an audit across a sample of schools behaviour policies during Autumn Term 2020, taking into account [Behaviour and Discipline in schools](#) statutory guidance requirements, to support the further development of positive behaviour policies in all schools. The audits will include evidence from pupils, systems and observations. We will also consider the agreed core values that sit beneath the policies as well as the outcomes sought. Good practice will be captured and presented to all schools through our interactive [Behaviour Handbook](#), including examples of good policies that reflect the criteria set out in the above recommendation.

4.10 Recommendation 10: Islington schools should review their staff appointments to ensure that, wherever possible and in all kinds of posts, these reflect local communities. Schools and the local authority should also review appointments to governing bodies to ensure that they reflect the borough's communities.

We will be working closely with school leaderships and with Islington Schools' HR to ensure that inclusive recruitment practices are in place so that the recruitment process - from advertisements through to interviews and final appointments – reflects local communities. Work starts in September with leadership and governing boards in two secondary schools on cultural competency and unconscious bias training with a focus on recruitment which will be used as a model for work across Islington schools.

To increase the supply of leaders from ethnic minority backgrounds we will be working in partnership with the Angel Islington Teaching School Alliance on the GLA funded Stepping into Leadership programme held at EGA that aims to equip minority ethnic teachers with the leadership skills, personal confidence and professional networks to make a successful application for promotion. The programme offers high quality relevant learning for minority ethnic teachers, opportunities to connect with successful, inspiring minority ethnic leaders and access to a local network of minority ethnic leaders that continues beyond the lifetime of the programme. We have ensured that Islington teachers have access to this training and will actively encourage recruitment to Islington schools for strong candidates.

We will host in an Islington school a one-day workshop funded by the GLA and facilitated by Dr Nicola Rollick, an academic, consultant and public speaker specialising in racial justice in education and the workplace. In January 2019 she was appointed Specialist Advisor to the Home Affairs Select Committee's Macpherson 20 Years On Inquiry. The

workshop is aimed at senior school leaders and will offer an overview of key debates, arguments and theory about race and racism. Using a mixture of small and whole group activities, participants will explore concepts such as white privilege and everyday racism and examine their relevance to education. The workshop will also identify practical ways of foregrounding racial justice in school leaders' professional relationships with others

We have started work to encourage a wider representation from Islington's communities on governing bodies. Actions planned to achieve this include:

- An equality impact needs assessment on governance of schools, taking into account who is affected by the function of governors, what we want to achieve and the desired improvements and benefits
- A survey of current BAME governors – what more can we do to support them and do they have suggestions for recruiting more governors from black and ethnic minority groups
- Advice to schools about recruiting parent governors that reflect the schools population
- A Communication Campaign to recruit a wider representation of governors that includes targeting of Council staff
- Presentations to community groups about the role and benefits of becoming a school governor
- An improved training offer so that current and new governors are better supported and equipped with the skills and knowledge needed so that they can be confident in the role.

4.11 Recommendation 11: Best practice in supporting young people and their parents/carers across transitions should be shared throughout Islington's Community of Schools. This should focus on all transitions from early years to post-16. This could include enabling staff to liaise with other education settings about the needs of pupils prior to transition, developing pupil resilience prior to transition and providing support for lower achieving and vulnerable pupils throughout and beyond the process.

We have produced a range of approaches, materials and guidance for schools to support all stages of transition from early years to post 16. Good examples are the set of resources to support [Year 6](#) pupils, parents and teachers as they prepare for their transition to secondary school, including wellbeing as well as specific curriculum areas; and the work done with a system change focus across services to target young people in danger of becoming NEET post 16. These will be monitored and updated based on feedback from pupils, parents and teachers.

Transition from early years to school settings is well-supported and prioritised by both sectors.

There are also a number of specific programmes supporting transition for vulnerable groups (Council, Health and Voluntary and Community Sector). To date they have operated independently. To improve planning, we have brought the programme leads for these groups together in a forum, mapped provision for this year so that we can analyse any overlaps or gaps, ensure that all groups are represented, and to prepare for collaborative planning for next year to maximise efficiency and effectiveness and bring about system change to future ways of working. We will be tracking those individuals supported to

assess impact. Once we have a base line, it will be possible to consider future targets, informed by improved data analysis.

As part of our COVID-19 response, transition will continue to have a major planning and intervention focus that supports resilience building and ensures particular support for lower achieving and vulnerable pupils before, throughout and beyond the transition process, based on best national practice.

Developing Council Services

4.12 Recommendation 12: Islington Council should continue to raise awareness of equalities issues among all staff through historical and local contextual information regarding specific communities and should provide unconscious bias and other relevant training to encourage fairness

Council Services are committed to raising the awareness of and challenging equality issues. Challenging conversations and workshops have been provided for all staff to attend. "Rethinking Diversity" has been successfully run by the People directorate with more sessions planned over the academic year. The Challenging Inequality Programme (CIP) team will work with directorates to develop challenging inequality action plans. Unconscious Bias training is being provided for all teams within the Learning and Schools directorate. This will take place in the autumn term. Learning and Schools in conjunction with Schools HR will explore historical and local contextual information and share this through a series of head teacher meetings to raise awareness within school communities, including governors.

4.13 Recommendation 13: Islington Council should review how it supports schools to use data related to Black Dual/Mixed Heritage groups of children and young people. This may include using the data to plan a series of assemblies and school topics/educational experiences that reflect differences in self-definition and personal identity among this group; e.g. post-Windrush 'Black Londoner' or 'Black British' as opposed to the diaspora-related 'Black Caribbean'.

The School Improvement Service will work with the council's data team and with schools to ensure that there is appropriate support for the sensitive analysis of the data available for schools and settings with appropriate responses.

A resource bank of culturally inclusive assemblies has been created for schools and made available on Csonline and these will be added to with further materials that will allow schools to reflect the diverse communities that they serve.

A culturally competent curriculum audit tool has been developed to support schools in offering a more inclusive curriculum. We will continue to support school leaders through the provision of resources and advice from within the council and wider, in particular working with schools and settings to decolonise their curricula and make diversity a priority in approaches to ethos, lesson planning and delivery.

User voice is very important in this context. We will use work we have planned with three secondary schools as well as the work on Belonging to explore parents, carers and young people's notions of identity and self and feed outcomes into policy and practice.

4.14 **Recommendation 14: To improve outcomes to children and their families, Islington Council's social care and early help services should further develop their interactions and work with schools. This could include engaging with schools to review systems and processes jointly with the aim of ensuring that they are as effective as possible for all parties. Islington Council should also consider if it can help to enhance the relationships between schools and key partner organisations, such as the Police and voluntary sector.**

Improving collaboration between service to improve outcomes for all children with a focus on those who are systematically underachieving has been a key strategic priority for People Services, and as a consequence, our local offer has developed considerably over the last 12 months as follows:

- An expanded SEMH emotional wellbeing pathway, including Barnardo's (new contractual relationship); Emotional Wellbeing Workers (new roles); Social Prescription (Third Sector / Universal Services pilot); online counselling (Kooth – new service)
- Full integration of CAMHS and the emotional wellbeing pathway within the Children's Services Contact Team (CSCT) (live from September 2019).
- Mental Health in Schools Teams (see Recommendation 8 above)
- Review of Early Help Services and relaunch for September 2020 with a much sharper focus on pushing support 'in' to schools (rather than schools needing to refer 'out')
- A renewed sharpness to the work of the Progress team with strong cross working with School Improvement and schools to ensure that the right young people are targeted for the right interventions and blockages to effective practice are smoothed out

The new / reorganised Services and pathways have been promoted to schools through briefings, communications and direct contact; schools are generally the highest referring agency.

'Team Around the School' (TAS) is a partnership that enables schools and other family support services, including Social Care and Early Help services to meet on a regular basis and have a shared conversation about children they may be worried about. This means that early help and intervention can be put in place to stop concerns escalating.

We are developing a local TAS model as an effective framework for enabling information-sharing, by setting out a local protocol and making better use of virtual platforms to improve sustainability. This will be underpinned by each schools data protection arrangements.

We will continue to build on these and other initiatives to further develop relationships and interactions between schools and services to the benefit of children and families.

Currently a named police officer is linked to each of our secondary schools and there are four dedicated police officers covering our primary schools as part of a Safer School programme that focuses on prevention and engagement through education rather than law enforcement.

At the beginning of every term, each school is provided with a primary engagement programme that explains the type of contact and presentations that a safer schools police officer can offer to students. Topics can cover drugs, knife crime, cyber bullying, online safety, child sexual exploitation, and mobile phone theft amongst others.

We will continue to work closely with the Police to further enhance relationships with schools.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial implications:

All of the recommendations are being implemented within existing budgets with the exception of part of recommendation 4 where in June 2019 Islington was successfully awarded 'Trailblazer' status as part of a national NHS and schools in England initiative to provide trained mental health support. The Trailblazer funding is being provided by NHS England for 2019/20 and 2020/21 (£160k and £588k respectively). £19k of this funding in 19/20 and £76k in 20/21 will come to the Council, with the rest going to the CCG.

Recommendation 7 is funded by the DFE for the academic year of 2020 – 21. The Richard Reeves grant is fully funded and brings no additional cost to the school.

5.2 Legal Implications:

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic, that are connected to that characteristic, to take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it, to advance equality of opportunity and to encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life.

Additionally, under Section 158 of the Equality Act 2010, it is lawful for the Council to take action to compensate for disadvantages which it reasonably believes are faced by people who share a particular protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Positive action is lawful if it is taken to:

- a) Enable or encourage people who share a protected characteristic to overcome a disadvantage connected to the characteristic;
- b) Meet the needs of people who share a protected characteristic where those needs are different to those people who do not have the characteristic; or
- c) Enable or encourage people who share a protected characteristic to participate in an activity in which their participation is disproportionately low.

The Council must also have regard to the overriding duty placed on public authorities to act fairly, lawfully and reasonably in the exercise of their functions and powers.

5.3 Environmental Implications

The actions proposed in this report do not have any environmental implications beyond those associated with standard office usage and are unlikely to significantly change the existing impacts of the services.

5.4 Resident Impact Assessment:

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

Resident Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of the process of developing and implementing policies and actions arising from this report.

6. Reason for recommendations

- 6.1** This report details the Executive's response to the recommendations from the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



6 October 2020

Executive Member for Children, Young
People and Families

Date

Report Author: Mark Taylor
Tel: 020 7527 5881
Email: mark.taylor@islington.gov.uk

Financial Implications Author: Tim Partington
Tel: 020 7527 1851
Email: tim.partington@islington.gov.uk

Legal Implications Author: Sonal Mistry
Tel: 0207 527 3833
Email: Sonal.mistry@islington.gov.uk