



Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Children's Services Scrutiny Committee	23 June 2021	All

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

SUBJECT: Equalities in Educational Outcomes – 12 Month Update

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 In September 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 outlined proposed actions in response to the recommendations. This report is an update on those recommendations and the impact of the proposed actions.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress made against the recommendations from the Review
- 2.2 To note the further work proposed to consolidate and build on the improvements to date.

3. Background

3.1 In Islington, there are a range of educational settings characterised below:

Nursery/Primary Schools (51)	Number	% of total	State Maintained/Other
Nursery Schools	3	6%	57%
State Maintained Primary Schools	26	51%	
Voluntary Aided Primary Schools	15	29%	43%
Primary Academies/Free Schools	7	14%	
Secondary Schools (11)	Number	% of total	State Maintained/Other
State Maintained Secondary Schools	4	36%	36%
Voluntary Aided Secondary Schools	2	18%	64%
Secondary Academies/Free Schools	5	46%	
Special Schools including PRU (6)	Number	% of total	State Maintained/Other
State Maintained all through Special Schools including PRU	3	50%	50%
Special School Academies/Free Schools	3	50%	50%

3.2 From September 2020:

- Educational settings were open to full time, face-to-face education and attendance was compulsory
- Educational settings focussed on supporting pupils' return to education and begin to close any learning gaps that had been widened during the previous lockdown
- School Improvement Service, Health and Wellbeing, CAHMS and New River College provided guidance to schools, titled "The Recovery Curriculum" that focussed on supporting the mental health of pupils and staff
- Schools implemented remote learning policies that would facilitate the teaching of the national curriculum

3.3 From January 2021:

- Educational settings remained closed to pupils, with the exception of those of critical workers, pupils with special educational needs, including those with an EHCP and those deemed vulnerable
- Early years providers were required to remain open to all children during this time
- All educational settings were required to teach the national curriculum to pupils attending school and those accessing learning remotely
- Islington Council with guidance from LA officers supported schools, with providing additional digital devices to complement the devices schools were able to access from the DfE. Digital devices from a range of organisations included Richard Reeves Foundation, Arsenal, Islington Giving/ Cripplegate and Google Education

3.4 **From 8 March 2021:**

- Educational settings were open to full time, face-to-face education and attendance was compulsory
- Educational settings focussed on supporting pupils' return to education and begin to close any learning gaps that had been widened during the previous lockdown
- The School Improvement Service is reviewing the "Working in Support of Schools" (WiSS) and the categorisation tool, to reflect the impact of the pandemic and will aide schools to engage in a range of services that will support their school improvement strategy
- The Early Years and Childcare Service has revised the 'Working in Support of Children's Centres' document and the categorisation tool for early years settings in the private, voluntary and independent sector to ensure sufficient focus on responding to ongoing and emerging risks and challenges posed by the pandemic including equality and mental health factors

4. **Data update**

- 4.1 In 2020, National assessments were cancelled for Early Years, Phonics, KS1, and KS2. GCSE and A levels assessments were completed in 2020; however, these were based on teacher assessment. In 2021, assessments are cancelled, GCSE and A levels will continue as a teacher assessment. There has been no published assessment data since 2019.
- 4.2 In 2021, the local authority has written to all schools inviting them to submit end of year data. While, non-statutory the data report will provide schools with internal data and be benchmarked against validated and published 2019 national data.

5. **Working in partnership with our schools to reduce Educational Inequality**

Values, Aspirations and Relationships

5.1 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.

Unconscious bias training has gained significant traction despite the restriction of COVID-19. 22 educational settings have received training and 11 settings have now scheduled training. Training for colleagues within Childrens Services has been completed. Training within a subject specific context, for example the impact of unconscious bias in English and Maths has also been undertaken in schools. This has supported leaders in educational settings when considering teacher assessments at GCSE and A levels. This training and support will continue while teacher assessments are undertaken in a modified manner. Training has also been extended to Islington partners, including the Islington Music Education Service. In order to inform next steps, the School Improvement Service will undertake a survey of participating schools/partners to identify the impact of the training on policy and practice.

Islington Governor Services provided a "Governors Equalities" course in October 2020 focusing on the attainment gap between Black Caribbean and White Free School Meals children and all other children – 20 governors attended. Two Unconscious Bias sessions

have been provided in November 2020 and January 2021, with 24 and 19 attendees respectively. All three courses received very positive evaluations.

Belonging and Place

Officers facilitated a small group of Headteachers (5 primary schools) to work with UCL during the COVID period to develop our local response to work already begun on recognising Islington schools as places where all children feel that they 'belong'. This led to the development and publication of a leaflet summarising Compassionate Leadership as an important component of resilience building during that difficult time for schools and communities. The work will be developed during the Summer Term.



The research evidence 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 absenteeism. This evidence is particularly important for our thinking in relation to Islington's underachieving groups.

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 address the underachievement of some groups.

Parent Voice Forum

A new 'Parent Voice Forum' has been established, led by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families, to hear directly from parents about what is working well and what things might be improved. The first meeting took place in April 2021; which raised issues including drug dealing, police response, community safety and the impact of exclusion. Meetings will continue to be solution focused, with feedback to, involvement and response from relevant services and organisations, as well as feedback to schools about the wider issues of concern.



The work of the Equalities Reference Group and Upward Bound continues to build on the existing good practice. The Equalities Reference Group recently shared practice at a Head Teacher briefing to increase their profile and to share the latest resources development by the group. Under the stewardship of Upward Bound, the "Your Voice Matters" project has progressed. This project aimed to develop:

- Identity
- Stereotypes and how they affect us
- What different communities think of each other
- What we have in common and share
- Hierarchy of culture
- Understanding and challenging racism

A suite of resources is available to support and guide teachers and school staff to discuss with students their feelings around the current representation of Black, Asian and ethnic minority people in the curriculum. These resources encourage staff and young people, to analyse issues together, such as race, the practicalities of decolonising education and identity. Michelle Mangal created 10 lessons for Islington schools to use. Upward Bound will undertake a series of evaluations in July 2021 with all those who participated in the in the "Your Voice Matters" project to monitor use and impact of the resources. The findings of the project will be disseminated with school leaders in September 2021.

In order to support parents and carers in school communities, the Health and Wellbeing Service have used funding from the DfE to disseminate the "Return, Recovery and Wellbeing" materials and resources to schools and early year's settings, including newsletters to share with their staff and parents/carers. The co-production and co delivery of these materials has strengthened the SEMH partnerships so that there is now an enhanced understanding of how different services can support schools and influence future collaboration opportunities.

The Tiny TIPS (Islington trauma informed practice in the early years) programme is developing and piloting parent workshops on wellbeing and stress. The outcome of this pilot will be shared beyond early years for use in schools.

In response to the new statutory guidance on relationships, sex and health education, schools have been offered support when consulting with parents on their curriculum, explaining the new requirements and how this aspect of the curriculum will support children's health and wellbeing.

Work with community groups has continued to be a focus throughout the pandemic. The joint work with Islington Council and [Mother Tongue and Supplementary Schools Partnership](#) (MTSSP) continues to strengthen. Recently Islington Council donated book

boxes containing over 100 new books for each of the 12 community groups running Mother Tongue Supplementary Schools, for children between the ages of 5-11 years. The books selected included a range of titles, which focussed on celebrating cultural heritage, characters with diverse backgrounds, as well as many popular children's favourites.

5.2 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.

Throughout the pandemic schools and settings have continued to revisit their aspirations and values. This has also included continuing to develop their curriculum provision so that it is meaningful to their communities in the event of remote/face to face teaching.

Schools have a statutory requirement to review their published SEND Information Report for parents to ensure that it is up to date and reflective of current practice.

The local authority has undertaken a SEND Review. This work has identified some over-represented ethnic groups, particularly among children diagnosed as having autistic spectrum conditions. The over representation of ethnic groups will be considered through a SEND Review Steering Group, which will guide further action and support to communities in Islington schools.

Governing bodies are being encouraged to include Equalities as a standing item on their Full Governing Board meeting agendas and appointing an Equalities Link Governor to lead this area of the school's work.

Following the return of schools to face to face learning in March 2021, the School Improvement Service refreshed the "Return to School" programme, renaming it "Re-engage, Re-build and Re-Ignite" programme and the Recovery Curriculum. These materials all referenced specific guidance on reducing inequalities because of the extended lockdown period.

Remote Ofsted inspections of schools has been positive and have confirmed that, in the view of Ofsted, schools are meeting the challenge of the pandemic and are providing a good education to pupils and their communities during this time.

5.3 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.

To support schools and families, Pupil Services have developed a Transition Support Matrix that coordinates all the mentoring and support projects that can help young people from different backgrounds and with varying needs to make a successful transition from primary to secondary school. This includes timeframes in which support will take place and will support schools to map the appropriate programme to the right individuals and/or groups.

Partners delivering these interventions presented their suite of provision to SEND Co-ordinators in January 2021. Pupil Services will collect feedback from young people who received transition support last year to further inform the network of providers, who now meet together on a regular basis, facilitated by Islington Council officers, to ensure a coordinated approach, which results in being able to match need to provision.

Colleagues across the People Directorate (Learning and Schools, Pupil Services, Young Islington, Youth Safety Commissioning) are explore options for a borough-wide mentoring programme focused on children and young people from African and Caribbean heritage. A proposal from [Father2Father](#) in partnership with the Aspire Education Group is currently being prepared based on the organisation's systemic approach to addressing inequalities in the education system using the SPT (Student-Parent-Teacher) model. The aim of this work is to increase children's sense of belonging, raise attainment and reduce the risk of exclusion and offending in the community.

The School Improvement Service has continued to support and quality assure the Mother Tongue and Supplementary Schools Partnership; it has encouraged these organisations to nominate candidates to become school governors and work more closely with mainstream schools.

Music Education Islington (MEI) plays a key role in promoting diversity and inclusion. MEI has recently piloted the new audit tool I'M IN (Inclusive Music INdex), which helps music organisations to effectively dismantle structural inequalities in the sector, including racism, to drive systemic change.

Supporting children and young people's wellbeing through the curriculum

5.4 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.

Throughout the pandemic, the Health and Well Being Service focus was to ensure that schools and settings were aware of:

- the importance of emotional wellbeing for their staff, children and young people, and having existing systems in place which could be built on
- the negative impact that adverse and traumatic experiences and distressing life events can have on the social, emotional and mental health of children, young people, parents and colleagues
- the importance of developing and re-establishing relationships to support children, young people's and staff's feelings of belonging and safety
- the importance of a positive school climate that enhances belonging and connectedness is a protective factor for children and young people's mental health

Primary schools: a revised PSHE curriculum and comprehensive teaching resource has been written and disseminated; this has been well received and is used by many Islington primary schools. Teaching of PSHE in the primary school is best carried out by skilled and confident class teachers rather than specialist staff; the health and wellbeing team have worked with PSHE subject leaders and teachers to develop their skills and mean they are well placed to provide effective teaching and learning in PSHE. Over the past 12 months, 36 schools have received support from the Health Improvement Adviser: PSHE and Children's Life Skills; teachers from 14 schools joined a professional development programme run by Islington's adviser working alongside a teaching alliance; these teachers are now ready to share their learning and expertise with staff in other schools.

Secondary schools: most Islington secondary schools have experienced and dedicated PSHE subject leads and teaching staff. This academic year a teacher on secondment from an Islington secondary school provided additional support, including developing resources. Camden and Islington Young Peoples Sexual Health Network provides staff to contribute to the teaching and learning of relationships and sex education.

Early Years in schools and settings: children's wellbeing and emotional development is supported through an emphasis on PSEd, a prime area of the EYFS learning and development. This is a key aspect of general good practice although has been emphasised strongly through training, signposting, advice and written guidance during the pandemic. This has included how to support parents and families with young children.

5.5 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.

The work of the Enrichment Strategic Group continues at pace. This has included maintaining the relationships with schools, and enrichment partners throughout lockdown and supporting them with the Islington Recovery Programme and the "Re-engage, Re-build and Re-Ignite" guidance issued to schools and settings.

The 11 by 11 initiative will be holding the 11 by 11 Festival: Celebrating our Creative Community. This is a free weeklong festival of cultural and creative celebration taking place from 5-9 July 2021, for all Islington schools, education settings and cultural organisations. It is an opportunity to celebrate the community's resilience through a challenging year, reignite the 11 by 11 partnership and kick start a summer of fun through the Holiday Activity and Food Programme. The festival will include 1:1 partnership projects, which are already underway, along with a programme of free activity and resources. The programme includes "*Inspired to make*" sessions for SEND settings from the British Museum, 5 free digital schools' packages from Little Angel Theatre, a singing assembly with the Voices Foundation, exclusive resources from the Southbank Centre and acting workshops with the Guildhall School.

Educational settings have continued to offer a broad, rich and stimulating provision for children and young people following the constraints enforced by the pandemic. Educational settings have continued to do this through their Remote Learning offer to all pupils.

The council is working closely with the social enterprise organisation "[The Black Curriculum](#)", who spoke at the Islington head teachers' forum and shared a package of materials for all schools including a suite of industry-leading teacher training workshops, which will help teachers to teach Black history effectively and appropriately. The Black Curriculum will also deliver The National Ambassador online self-learning programme to up to 400 young people aged 14-18, helping them to build skills in research, critical thinking and campaigning. Schools have been encouraged to participate in this initiative

Two long-term school collaborations in Islington, Future Zone and Maamulaha, are focusing their school improvement priority on decolonising the curriculum.

Future Zone is a 21 school collaborative working in partnership with Darren Chetty, Lecturer (Teaching) and Doctoral Candidate at UCL are focusing on diversity through ["The Conolly Project"](#), named after the UK's first Black female head teacher (Ring Cross Primary School, Islington in 1968). The intention is to share the learning from the Future Zone project with Islington education settings. The project aims to:

- ensure schools' curricula reflects the children being taught
- develop positive identities for all children and young people
- that staff and pupils are provided with a critical lens to review and evaluate learning materials
- promotes models of good practice in an open yet challenging forum that generates discussion on the issues and barriers facing Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in our schools.

11 by 11 is Islington's free programme of creative and cultural activity and resources, aiming to offer 11 outstanding cultural experiences to all children and young people in Islington by Year 11. It includes training and resources for teachers and practitioners working in the cultural education sector and focuses on challenging inequalities in education and diversifying the curriculum, through creative writing and using photography and visual material to help pupils think differently about race, representation, identity, citizenship and human rights, and raise awareness of British history, including Empire.

The following priorities are articulated in the "Re-engage, Re-build and Re-Ignite" guidance to support educational settings return to full time face to face learning:

- Identifying key objectives for Reading, Writing and Maths within a relevant context for learners as a priority for the school / setting
- The school curriculum is underpinned by the "Recovery Curriculum"
- Children and young people need to resume school with staff they are familiar with – teacher, teaching assistant.
- In shaping the curriculum schools and settings should gather the views of pupils in order the help inform and shape the content of the curriculum
- Identify what is required to maximise the national catch up funding in light of the extended lockdown period from January to March 2021 and in particular how the curriculum offer will enhance home learning opportunities and reduce inequality
- Modifying the curriculum to support and inform data assessment points during the return to full time education in order to maximise the full breadth of the national curriculum
- Revisit the school teaching and learning policy
- Schools to consider the motto – "The more I remember, the more I have learnt. If I cannot remember my learning, it may never have been learnt" - how might the use of mini plenaries, knowledge organisers, recapping learning help to support pupils to access increasing elements of the national curriculum

The School Improvement Service will prioritise their focus of supporting schools through its traded offer and central professional development programme to ensure that a broad curriculum creates a sense of identity and purpose for children and young people. A key feature of the revised "Working in Support of Schools" (WiSS) document will continue the dialogue of how:

- Schools and early years settings are developing an inclusive and antiracist curriculum and brokering good practice across the Community of Schools
- Religious Education (Islington SACRE) promotes the importance of developing religiously literate young people who are able to have an informed conversations of world views and develop the sense of difference and identity

- A comprehensive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum, including health, relationships and sex education (HRSE) and addressing the needs of Islington's diverse communities (culturally competent and reflecting the LGBTQ+ experience) is being embedded
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) addresses equalities
- Through CPD, empowering teachers/support staff are supported to confront and address unconscious bias in learning and assessment
- Pupil voice informs school leaders that children and young people are happy, healthy, safe and confident about their futures so they can make outstanding progress and achieve their full potential
- Education settings support the parental/carer community to understand and contribute to the local curriculum and support further learning and development

5.6 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.

Education settings are best placed to make complex decisions regarding how and when to best group pupils for learning. The age of the pupils and young people, the subjects taught; the national assessment outcomes would in turn influence these decisions. This will be different in individual educational settings and reflected in the teaching and learning policy of the school. Schools know their communities well, the strength of their teaching staff and therefore able to evidence progress and attainment for groups of pupils through the development of effective policies and approaches and reduce over time educational inequalities in learning.

The School Improvement Service and the Early Years and Childcare Service in supporting schools has promoted the pedagogical approach of "scaffolding up" rather than differentiating down, and avoiding the need to arrange learning in "sets". This pedagogical approach has been successful in the local authority implementation of "Whole Class Reading" rather than guided reading. However, it may not be the same approach used by schools in maths for example.

The use of "sets" in primary schools may be appropriate for the teaching of phonics as it is an instructional technique to teach children.

In secondary schools, the use of "sets" will be an approach used to teach the complexities of the national curriculum and support the progress that young people undertake. Schools' forum commissioned a research project from June 2018 to November 2019 in three Islington secondary schools by a member of The School Improvement Service. The project was in affiliation with University College London (UCL). The project was commissioned to explore the under achievement of White British Free School Meals pupils in Islington. Schools are reflecting on the findings of the report, which will further contribute to their decisions of "setting". These considerations may include:

- The importance of learner identity that develops confidence, resilience and concentration.
- The necessity of skilful teaching; the support for independent study; well managed and timely interventions and maximising positive parental influence.

5.7 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.

The School Improvement Service is reviewing the 'Work in Support of Schools' (WiSS) document, so that there is a significant focus on how schools are addressing the educational inequalities that have been highlighted because of the pandemic.

The School Improvement Service will be strengthening these conversations in the autumn term round of school meetings (September 2021) to ensure that education settings have clear strategies in place to tackle inequalities in their communities.

Schools have positively engaged in the national Catch Up programme. Schools have dedicated catch-up funding to ensure targeted interventions with underachieving groups are in place. During the autumn term 2020, educational settings were establishing these interventions, however many were disrupted due to the high numbers of pupils self-isolating because of COVID_19. This challenge was highlighted during the extended lockdown, as schools had to deliver the national curriculum as well as deliver interventions through digital devices and without these interventions being face to face. Many schools met these challenges and were able to overcome these barriers. Schools have reported that the national tutoring programme has been the least successful strand of the catch up funding. In part, this is due to the demand outreaching the capacity of the provider to deliver the programme in a timely and effect way.

To support primary schools, The School Improvement Service successful applied for funding through the [Richard Reeves Foundation](#) and launched the Richard Reeves Catch Up programme for disadvantaged Y6 pupils. 1,000 Chromes books have been provided to schools for the Richard Reeves programme. This has included an additional 400 Chromes being available to Year 5 and Year 4, Caribbean and White UK disadvantaged pupils in their schools. The intervention programme provided 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 School Improvement Service primary team wrote the programme and worked in conjunction with Islington Y6 teachers to implement and monitor the impact of the intervention.

The programme was interrupted due to the high numbers of pupils self-isolating in November and December 2020 and by the extended lockdown from January – February 2021. In responding to this, the School Improvement Service has engaged with schools to re-establish this programme with Y6 pupils and to begin to target the current Y5 pupils. The relaunch of the programme was held on 20 May 2021 with implementation beginning in Summer 2. The current Y5 cohort will be the first cohort of pupils to sit Key Stage 2 assessments in May 2022.

The planned training for governors did not occur due to the interruptions of the lockdown in the Spring term 2021. This will recommence in June 2021 and again in September 2021 to support governors. This 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)

5.8 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.

To date 24 schools and New River College have worked as part of the iTIPs programme. A further 15 schools have had whole staff training to understand what trauma is, its impact and to begin to consider how to respond effectively to trauma-impacted children and young people. We continue to roll the programme out to Islington schools.

Early Years in schools and settings: the Tiny TIPS training is expanding to include private voluntary and independent (PVI) settings with joint training delivered by the Early Years and Childcare Service and CAMHS practitioners; one session was delivered at the end of April with participants keen to attend a follow up session. More dates will be added. All council run children's centres (16) have received initial or full training sessions and are building iTIPs principles into curriculum planning and ongoing work with children and families

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 Education Psychology 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 phases. A further roll-out will be directed towards schools with higher levels of exclusion in September 2021.

Mental Health Support Teams

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. The teams are intended to build on support already in place e.g. school counsellors, nurses, educational psychologists, voluntary sector, programmes such as iMAHRS and iTIPs. They support children and young people with mild to moderate mental health issues e.g. exam stress, behavioural difficulties or friendship issues, and help children and young people with more severe needs to access the right support.

5.9 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.

Pupil Services have provided advice and guidance to Islington Schools on Attendance and Behaviour as one of twelve priorities in our Covid-19 "Re-engage, Re-build and Re-Ignite" plan. This guidance highlights the importance of:

- All school staff being aware of the negative impact that adverse and traumatic experiences and distressing life events (including the COVID disruption), can have on the mental health of pupils, parents and colleagues
- The likelihood that schools may also experience an escalation in behaviour that present challenges as children and young people return to school
- While exclusion powers remain, schools must still be non-discriminatory, reasonable, fair and proportionate and that alternatives to exclusion would be particularly crucial at a time of national emergency.

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

Pupil Services will undertake an audit across a sample of schools behaviour policies during Summer Term 2021, taking into account Behaviour and Discipline in schools statutory guidance requirements, in order to share good practice of positive behaviour policies in schools. The audits of good practice will include evidence of pupil voice, systems and observations. They will also consider the agreed core values that sit beneath the policies as well as the outcomes sought.

5.10 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..

Decisions on appointing staff is a delegated role of the Governing Body and the Headteacher. Schools HR provides guidance to schools on the recruitment and selection process, and Safer Recruitment advice in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance.

The current Equalities data for Islington schools who purchase the Schools HR service broadly indicates that staff in schools reflect local communities. Further analysis is required to determine further actions.

Ethnicity	Nursery		Primary		Secondary		Special & PRU		Total	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
Black and Minority Ethnic BME	31	34%	470	25%	131	29%	42	38%	674	27%
White British	40	44%	916	50%	209	46%	51	46%	1,216	49%
White Other	17	19%	379	21%	78	17%	16	14%	490	20%
Refused	3	3%	79	4%	39	9%	3	3%	124	5%
Total	91		1,844		457		112		2,504	

Schools HR have updated and published safer recruitment guidance for schools. This has included the following items:

- All panel members have completed the recruitment and selection and equalities training
- Effective monitoring is essential as a key element to inform the recruitment strategy and is an important tool in fulfilling the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity to all job applicants. Data collected for monitoring should not be used for any other purposes



We have continued our work to encourage a wider representation from Islington's communities on governing bodies. To date we have achieved the following:

- 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. This will then inform further next steps, including making presentations to community groups about the role and benefits of becoming a school governor.
- We are in the process of creating information leaflets that would encourage parents to understand the role and the contribution they can bring to the governing as a parent governor. This additional advice will be issued to schools in September 2021.
- We provided a governance workshop in November 2020 for the Equality Forum. This was attended by approximately 35 participants and included representation from BAME leaders. The impact of this is being assessed and this will determine next steps.
- We continue to offer our highly rated induction course to all new governors and this has been further complemented by unconscious bias training.
- Governor Services is also working with the Chief Whip's Office to attempt to identify suitable nominees from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to fill LA governor positions – this is the only position on a GB that the LA has any significant influence over.

5.11 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.

Transition guidance for educational settings has been refreshed, updated and disseminated during the pandemic and extended lockdown periods to ensure that children and young people are effectively supported, during remote learning and when they are at school. The Transition Matrix is an important tool to make a successful transition from primary to secondary school.

The School Improvement Service and the Early Years Childcare Service are providing guidance on:

- Transition from Reception to Year 1
- Using data from end of year assessments to adapt and adjust the curriculum to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress

- The implementation for the DfE Summer School programme, which is designed to focus on pupils who will commence school in September in Y7 and whom may be disadvantaged
- Using data from end of year assessment to adapt and adjust the curriculum to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress
- Implementing a borough wide transition event to support pupils moving into Year 7

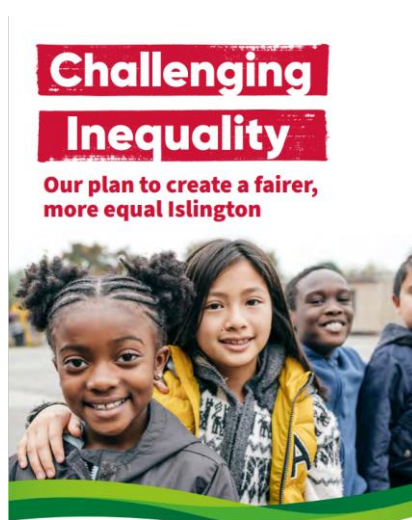
Thursday 1st July 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beacon High 2. Central Foundation Boys School 3. City of London Academy, Islington 4. Highbury Fields 5. St Aloysius' College
Friday 2nd July 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Arts and Media School, Islington 7. City of London Academy, Highgate Hill
Tuesday 6th July 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. City of London Academy, Highbury Grove 9. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson 10. St Mary Magdalene Academy

Developing Council Services

5.12 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 remain committed to raising the awareness of and challenging inequality issues. Council staff have attended and participated in challenging conversations and workshops. The People directorate has successfully run "Rethinking Diversity" with more sessions planned over the academic year.

The [Challenging Inequality Programme](#) (CIP) team are working with council directorates to develop a challenging inequality strategy and action plans. This strategy has shared with schools and settings. All teams within the Learning and Schools have completed Unconscious Bias training.



The School Improvement Service in conjunction with Pupil Services regularly contribute to the Challenging Inequality Programme Board. This cross-departmental working provides a greater insight into the existing good practice and the joining up of services.

The Early Years and Childcare Service programme, "Beyond Black History Month" has been hugely successful. This programme has developed and delivered 3 x 2- part training courses focusing on an anti-bias curriculum in the early years. More than 60 participants from over 30 settings have attended. Feedback has been positive. The sessions have signposted colleagues to a range of high quality early years resources and to parents/carers through [Bright Start Bright Ideas for parents](#) (a current audience of over 4,000). This includes a race equality audit which the Early Years and Childcare Service has developed in partnership with colleagues from across the sector and which will be piloted by all Council run children's centres to monitor impact against equality action plans.

The Fairer Together Partnership is a key opportunity for council services to come together to consider the impact of historical and local contextual information regarding specific communities.

The Fairer Together Partnership will focus on educational settings being:

- A place of belonging
- A key partner in early intervention and prevention
- A community partner

So that:

- The Council, health, police, the voluntary and community sector and education share common priorities for helping children, young people and families Start, Live and Age Well
- A new Bright Islington approach is built upon the already successful Bright Start programme
- A new helpline, a directory of support, activities, services for residents with links to the wider community is created as a result of the Councils previous response to COVID-19 – "We are Islington"

5.13 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 continue to 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 of culturally inclusive assemblies for schools is available on Islington CS; further materials will be available to support schools reflect the diverse communities that they serve. Additional, refreshed resources to support schools with Windrush Day on the 22 June 2021 are now available.

A culturally competent curriculum audit tool is available to support schools in offering a more inclusive curriculum that encourages diversity a priority and engages schools to reflect on ethos, lesson planning and delivery.

5.14 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.

Children's Social Care in response to this recommendation made an application to the What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) to be a part of the Social Workers in Schools (SWIS) Scale-up. The Social Workers in Schools programme aims to promote better inter-agency working between schools and the children's social care system. We were not successful in this bid however we have a range of services developed that further assist in interactions between social care, early help and schools as follows:

The new Bright Start 5-19 Service continues to work with schools as part of their family support offer and return of face to face Team around the Child and Family meetings outside of lockdown periods. Each school has a named Team Manager, Senior Practitioner and Education or Outreach Practitioner who is able to provide support on issues such as school attainment, attendance and behaviour. The Education and Outreach Practitioners regularly attend Area Forums and borough wide Attendance Forums, as well as Team around the School Meetings. The Service has a team attached to New River College (NRC), this team aims to work with schools and NRC's Outreach Team to avert the need for a place at NRC as well as supporting children, and families who attend NRC and their re-integration back into mainstream education.

The Anti-Bullying Coordinator and Domestic Violence Prevention Officer work closely with the school communities to support the Violence Against Women and Girls/Anti-Bullying/Equalities agenda and provide a greater understanding amongst school staff and parents of the various forms of bullying and discrimination experienced by children and young people, this in turn supports students to understand their rights and responsibilities.

The Director of Safeguarding now regularly attends the Headteachers' Forum to present and update schools on Children's Social Care developments as well as take feedback on strategic matters. The council runs group supervision for all Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools and an annual report is completed and shared with Children's Social Care to influence practice and direction.

In November 2020 Islington was awarded a DfE grant of £106K to further develop the council's Covid-19 response to Children in Need and children in need of protection to improve their educational achievement.

Advisory Teachers have been involved in approximately 100 cases, (with varying levels of involvement). Emerging anecdotal evidence suggests that where Advisory Teachers were intensively involved, children's attendance and engagement with learning increased. This evidence also suggests that close partnership working with schools and Advisory Teachers was valued, particularly when understanding the reasons behind children's behaviour in school and identifying the most appropriate intervention.

6. Further Action

To note the progress, in light of the impact of COVID-19, the extended lockdowns and the interruptions to all educational settings. All of the 14 recommendations will continue to feature in all school improvement work with schools and settings.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial implications:

All recommendations are implemented within existing budgets. Funding for the iTIPS programme runs out at the end of 2021/22. A budget of £118k per annum would be required to fund this project at its current scale from 2022/23 (£265k cost, less £147k of ongoing budget).

7.2 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.

7.3 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.

7.4 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 have been undertaken as part of the process of developing and implementing policies and actions arising from this report.

8. Reason for recommendations

8.1 This report details the response to recommendations from the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families	Date
Report Author:	Anthony Doudle	
Tel:	020 7527 3367	
Email:	Anthony.doudle@islington.gov.uk	

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

Legal Implications Author:	Paul Mohamudally
Tel:	020 7527 3174
Email:	paul.mohamudally@islington.gov.uk

