

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 5 September 2017

Subject: School Governance Update

Report of: Interim Director of Education

Summary

This report outlines the support that the City Council has provided to assist with the development of effective school governance across the City over the past three years and outlines key priorities for 17/18 including: governor recruitment, governor training, development and resources, school quality assurance and external reviews of governance.

Recommendations

The committee consider the information in the report and comment on any areas for further development

Wards Affected: All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Department for Education – Competency Framework for Governance, January 2017

- Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 26 May 2015, School Governance
- Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 4 February 2014, School Governance

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 This report builds on previous reports to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee which have provided information and updates about:

- The establishment of a School Governance Unit in January 2013 and development of a Governance Strategy in 2014 to secure effective governance;
- Local authority governor recruitment;
- Partnership developments including the Manchester Schools' Alliance and the Strategic Education Partnership to support the Governance Strategy;
- Employer engagement to support governor recruitment;
- National legislation changes and policy developments relating to school governance constitution regulations, the Ofsted Framework and the Department for Education (DfE) Schools Causing Concern Guidance

1.2 School Governance plays a central role in the success of schools and the outcomes of young people in the City. The City Council is fully committed to supporting school governors and trustees and wishes to thank this large volunteer workforce for the continued commitment, professionalism and expertise that they provide in Manchester. In addition, the City Council recognises the support provided by a range of employers in the City who support their staff to contribute to this vital role, along with supporting their development.

1.3 The City Council recognises the high level of expectations and challenges that face governors in the City. The DfE published a Competency Framework for Governance in January 2017. The Competency Framework is non-statutory and sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours that are required for effective governance across 6 key areas: strategic leadership, accountability (for educational improvement, financial management, staffing and performance management and external accountability), people, structures, compliance and evaluation. These are all areas that the Manchester Governance Strategy aims to support. The DfE recommends using the framework to assist with: carrying out skills audits, induction, identifying training needs and supporting the review of the board's effectiveness. The breadth and depth of the document clearly demonstrates the high level of expectation and accountability required from school governance.

1.4 In addition, there continues to be a range of challenges for governors including: budget pressures, Ofsted accountability, new performance data and accountability measures. There are also a range of new governance models emerging across multi-academy trusts and federations. There are currently 23 multi-academy trusts operating in the City, the majority have a local governance model with a trust board and local governing boards/committees linked to individual school within the trust. However, the level of delegation to local governing boards/committees varies from trust to trust. There are currently 3 federations in the City, with one governing board governing the maintained schools in each federation.

1.5 This report examines the support that the City Council has provided through the Governance Strategy to assist with the development of effective school governance across the City over the past three years and outlines priorities for continued support and development including: governor recruitment, governor training, development and resources, school quality assurance and external reviews of governance.

2.0 Governor Recruitment

2.1 There are three national organisations available to support governing boards of schools to recruit governors/trustees. These organisations actively engage with employers through national networks:

- SGOSS – Governors for Schools, an online recruitment service for governors, previously funded by the DfE and now an independent charity. Schools and academies can register vacancies and receive applications from suitably skilled prospective governors.
- Inspiring Governance, an online matching service to connect schools with volunteers interested in serving as governors; run by the charity Education and Employers and the National Governance Association in partnership with the Association of School and College Leaders and the National Association of Head Teachers.
- Academy Ambassadors, a not for profit organisation which looks to match business leaders with academies. They work with academies to advertise specific posts on web-based networks and headhunt via personal and business networks.

2.2 The School Governance Unit currently works closely with SGOSS – Governors for Schools to receive applications and undertakes an interview and vetting process of prospective governors in order to understand their skills and qualities more fully to make suitable LA Governor nominations. In addition, schools and academies also approach the School Governance Unit directly for assistance with co-opted governor and academy board vacancies. All volunteers who are interviewed are provided with induction training to support them to understand the role and Manchester's priorities.

2.3 The Inspiring Governance service is being reviewed in September to provide increased access for local authorities, as the current format has been designed for individual school use. The School Governance Unit will be working with the Inspiring Governance regional team in the Autumn Term to develop its use with Manchester schools and academies.

2.4 Many employers in the City are engaged with SGOSS – Governors for Schools and Inspiring Governance, including The University of Manchester who have embedded a school governor initiative in their social responsibility strategy which encourages staff and alumni to become school governors. There are currently approximately 60 University staff serving as governors/

trustees in schools and academies in Manchester. The School Governance Unit provide support to their annual governors' conference and support network. The School Governance Unit are looking to develop and support employee schemes like this which provide high quality effective school governors, both internally across the Council and with key employers in the City as a priority in the 2017-2018 academic year.

- 2.5 The School Governance Unit has undertaken 140 governor interviews between 2013-2017 and placed 65 applicants as LA governors and 38 as co-opted/other governors. A total of 103 (74%) of the volunteers interviewed have been placed as governors since 2013. Eleven academies have approached the School Governance Unit for assistance in finding trustees and local governors during this time period. There are currently 9 LA governor vacancies in the City and 4 nominations in process.

2.6 **Summary of Governor Recruitment between 2013-2017**

	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
No of LA Governor vacancies at the start of the year	55	40	18*	26
Interviews undertaken	35	38	42	25
LA governors appointed	22	12	14	17
Other governors assisted with appointments	5	7	16	10

** All governing bodies had to reconstitute from September 2015 and this only provided for 1 LA governor on all governing bodies, 29 vacancies were lost through this process*

3.0 **Governor Training, Development and Resources**

- 3.1 The School Governance Unit has worked in partnership with the Manchester Schools' Alliance and the Manchester Governors' Association for the past three years to provide a programme of events for governors that have received good feedback. This included twilight events around: safeguarding, looked after children, special educational needs and disabilities, pupil premium, school finance, the Ofsted framework, the new curriculum and assessments, school data, quality assurance, head teacher performance management and two conferences. The School Governance Unit also delivers termly Chairs' Briefings to keep governing boards abreast of local and national developments and delivers a LA Governor Programme which has included focussed sessions on: the Ofsted Framework and self-evaluation, data analysis, finance and vulnerable learners. There have been 157 (87%) schools and academies represented at events for governors between 2014 - 2017, this includes 48 (81%) of academies and free schools. Engagement with the Chairs' Briefings has continued to increase each year with 119 (66%) of schools and academies represented between 2014 - 2017, this includes 37(63%) of academies and free schools.
- 3.2 In addition, the School Governance Unit has brokered the delivery of the National Chairs and Clerks Development Programmes that have been funded

by the DfE into the City for Manchester governors and clerks. These programmes take place over 9 -12 months and include face to face sessions, mentoring and online resources. To date 20 governors have completed the Chairs National Leadership Development Programme and a further 36 governors are currently completing the programme. Feedback about the first programme was excellent and many of the governors who started the programme as aspiring chairs have now taken on the role of chair on their governing board. To date 8 clerks have completed the National Clerks Programme with a further 4 clerks currently enrolled on the programme. The DfE are currently undertaking a procurement exercise to appoint providers for further funding through to 2020 for the Chairs and Clerk Development Programmes. The School Governance Unit will look to work with the appointed providers to continue to make this support available for governors in Manchester.

3.3 Event Participation by Manchester Governing Boards 2014 – 2017

Event	2014 -2015 (176 schools and academies)		2015-2016 (179 schools academies)		2016 -201 (180 schools and academies)	
	Schools/ Acads	%	Schools/ Acads	%	Schools/ Acads	%
Any Event	124	70%	118	66%	104	58%
Chairs' Briefings	59	34%	70	39%	82	46%
MSA Programme	91	52%	82	46%	64	36%
MSA and Conference	111	63%	97	54%	64	36%
Conference	63	36%	43	24%	0	0%
LA Governor Events	26	15%	13	7%	18	10%
National Clerks Development Programme	10	6%	NA	NA	NA	NA
National Chairs Development Programme	NA	NA	20	11%	NA	NA
Number of schools/acads not engaged	52	30%	61	34%	76	42%

Ever Engaged 2014 – 2017	All Schools and Academies (180 in Sept 2016)	%	Academies and Free Schools (59 in Sept 2016)	%	Maintained Schools (121 in Sept 2016)	%
Any Event	157	87%	48	81%	109	90%
Chairs Briefings	111	62%	37	63%	74	61%
MSA Programme	135	75%	41	69%	94	78%

% shown of the total schools or total academies or total maintained schools

3.4 In September, 2015 the ‘Schoolshub’ area of the Council website was developed for school leaders and governors in Manchester. Resources for governors include:

- The Manchester Governors’ Handbook, which details local and national web links to a range of helpful information for governors
- The Accredited Provider List, which details providers of governor support services and training which governing bodies may wish to commission to meet their own needs
- Termly School Governance Unit newsletters
- Guidance for parent and staff governor elections
- Guidance for governors about their roles with respect to: safeguarding and Prevent, looked after children, special educational needs and disabilities, school self- evaluation, school website requirements and Manchester’s financial regulations

3.5 ‘Schoolshub Website’ Data 2015 -2017

Schools Hub Data	Number of page views Sept 2015 – Sept 2016	Number of page views Sept 2016 – July 2017
School Circular Letters	20,496	27,814
Home Page	19,483	18,178
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	4615	3734
Finance	1930	564
HR – Employee Services	1508	968
Communications and Events	1191	1108
School Governance	1071	922
Safeguarding	988	997
Audit and Risk Management	909	607
Attendance and Exclusions	857	536
School Quality Assurance and Data	826	489
Health and Safety	723	588

The School Governance Unit will be developing an online learning module for governors around their responsibilities for safeguarding and will be continuing to promote the use of the 'Schoolshub Website' with governors across the City in the 2017-2018 academic year.

4.0 School Quality Assurance and External Reviews of Governance

4.1 The Council offers all schools and academies in Manchester, an annual Quality Assurance Report which is undertaken by an external quality assurance professional. The report provides an objective view about: the school's attainment and progress data, the school's self-evaluation judgements against the Ofsted Framework, priorities the school has identified for improvement and any actions the governing body should consider. The Chair of governors is invited to attend the meeting with the head teacher and quality assurance professional and a toolkit to assist governors to understand the Quality Assurance Report is available on the 'Schoolshub Website'.

4.2 If schools self-evaluate as Requires Improvement or there is local intelligence about governance concerns they are offered funding to undertake an external review of governance along with additional support from our Senior School Quality Assurance Officers. 18 schools have been provided with funding since 2013 to undertake external reviews of governance. To date there have been positive comments made about the impact of these external reviews of governance in nine Ofsted section 5 and section 8 reports. Examples include comments about governing boards:

- membership being strengthened through support from the Local Authority
- identifying their strengths, weaknesses and skills
- accessing relevant training
- increasing understanding of their role
- developing new committee structures.

4.3 Ofsted outcomes since undertaking external reviews of governance in these 18 schools to date are as follows:

- 3 schools have improved their Ofsted grades (2 from Requires Improvement to Good and 1 from Inadequate to Good)
- 1 remained Outstanding
- 1 remained Good
- 2 have remained Requires Improvement
- 2 schools decreased their Ofsted grades (1 from Good to Inadequate and 1 from Good to Requires Improvement)
- 3 schools were inspected just before starting their External Reviews of Governance (1 maintained Good ,1 decreased from Outstanding to Good and 1 moved from Good to Inadequate)
- 6 schools have not been re-inspected since undertaking their External Review of Governance

4.4 Plans are in place to further strengthen the School Quality Assurance Report for the autumn term 2017 to increase intelligence around governance in the City. This will help to identify schools as early as possible who may benefit

from undertaking an external review of governance or having additional support provided.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Governor recruitment has been supported through both national organisations and the School Governance Unit to provide skilled governors for Manchester schools and academies. A range of employers in the City have committed to promoting and supporting their employees to become effective governors. The School Governance Unit now needs to develop this work further, particularly with local employers, to maintain a supply of governors/trustees who understand the role and Manchester's priorities.
- 5.2 The feedback from governor events including the Chairs' Briefings has been very positive and data shows that governors are also accessing the 'Schoolshub Website' to obtain further information and guidance. Work is now needed to review the training, development and resources provided to understand future development needs more fully and how to engage an even wider group of governors.
- 5.3 Partnerships have played a large role in the development of the Governance Strategy and the School Governance Unit will continue to support the Manchester Schools' Alliance to deliver a programme of events for governors and broker DfE funded national programmes into the City. The School Governance Unit continues to play an active role in the North West Co-ordinators of Governor Services Group, allowing Manchester governors to keep abreast of regional and national developments and opportunities.
- 5.4 The School Quality Assurance process provides a range of intelligence about governance and this has enabled the City Council to initiate and broker support to governing boards that have required additional assistance, including external reviews of governance. A strengthening of a governance focus into the Quality Assurance Reports will provide increased intelligence to ensure challenge and support continues to be offered at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.5 Priorities for the academic year 2017 - 2018 include:
1. Develop and support an internal Council employee governor scheme.
 2. Develop and support employee schemes with other key employers in the City.
 3. Develop the relationship with Inspiring Governance to increase governor recruitment and employer engagement.
 4. Develop a relationship with the new providers of the National Chairs and Clerks Development Programmes to continue access to this training in the City.
 5. Review the 'Schoolshub Website' with governors in order to understand further development needs for the future.
 6. Keep abreast of national changes and communicate with governing boards to maintain effective governance in the City.

7. Continue to deliver the Chairs' Briefings, LA Governor Programme and support the Manchester Schools' Alliance Governor Programme. To include support for governors to: hold head teachers to account during the period of change with the new accountability measures and data systems, understand their role in safeguarding, the changes to school funding and provide information about emerging governance models in multi-academy trusts and federations.
8. Increase intelligence about governance through the Quality Assurance Report, in order to offer further support to governing boards.
9. Examine the demographics of the school governance community in Manchester to explore any under-represented groups.