

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 5 March 2019

**Subject:** School Governance Update

**Report of:** Director of Education

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**Summary**

This report outlines the support that the City Council has provided to assist with the development of effective school governance across the City including: governor recruitment, governor training, development and resources and school quality assurance.

**Recommendations**

To note the report and make any comment about the work that has taken place to support effective governance.

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**Wards Affected:** All

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**Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)**

<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Effective school governance strives to support improved educational outcomes which will enable Manchester's young people to contribute to the economic growth and take advantage of the job opportunities created.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Supporting effective school governance in the City to increase accountability of schools in order to increase the quality of education and educational outcomes for children and young people. Improving educational outcomes amongst the Manchester school population is essential for young people to gain qualifications and contribute to Manchester's economic success.

A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	School governors are volunteers and the role assists residents to increase their employability skills and become actively involved in their communities. Effective school governance strives to ensure all children and young people have the opportunity to fulfil potential and therefore make a contribution in their communities and beyond.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Effective school governance strives to increase the quality of education provision which will make Manchester an attractive place to live and work and create schools of choice. Investment in modern, energy efficient and high quality education infrastructure drives reductions in carbon across the estate of schools.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Effective school governance strives to increase the quality of education provision which will enhance the City's attractiveness to potential residents and contribute to the development of high quality neighbourhoods.

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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.

- Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 17 July 2018, School System,
- Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 7 September 2017, School Governance
- Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 26 May 2015, 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
- The school self-improving system in Manchester and how the Local Authority works in partnership with schools to ensure improving educational outcomes.

1.2 The City Council recognises the high level of expectations and challenges that face governors in the City. 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.

## **2.0 Governor Recruitment**

2.1 The School Governance Unit undertakes interviews and a vetting process for prospective governors in order to understand their skills and qualities more fully, to enable us make appropriate LA Governor nominations to maintained schools. 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.

2.2 The School Governance Unit developed an online application on the Manchester Jobs Website in March 2018 which enables applicants to directly apply to be a governor in Manchester. To date there have been 19 applications through the site and applicants have been of a good standard.

2.3 The School Governance Unit continues to work with Governors for Schools, a national independent charity, previously funded by the Department for

Education (DfE) to receive additional governor applications. In 2017/2018 they provided 33 applications for consideration.

- 2.4 The DfE now fund an online matching service called Inspiring Governance, to connect schools with volunteers interested in serving as governors. It is 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. The service is aimed at schools/ academies and is more difficult for local authorities to use to fill multiple vacancies. The School Governance Unit are starting discussions with Inspiring Governance to examine how we can work in partnership with moving forwards.
- 2.5 The University of Manchester continue to promote school governance to their staff. The School Governance Unit provide support with regular network meetings and hold an annual conference to develop the skills of their staff as governors. There are currently 67 University Staff serving as governors in Manchester. The School Governance Unit has recently started a project with Manchester Metropolitan University and are looking to work with more employers in the City to increase the promotion of school governance and assist staff to understand Manchester's priorities.

## 2.6 Summary of Governor Recruitment between 2013-2018

	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18
No of LA Governor vacancies at the start of the year	55	40	18*	26	18
Interviews undertaken	35	38	42	25	42
LA governors appointed	22	12	14	17	21
Other governors assisted with appointments	5	7	16	10	12

*\*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*

- 2.7 At the start of the 18/19 academic year there were 20 LA Governor Vacancies. To date we have undertaken 10 interviews, appointed 5 LA governors and 1 Co-opted Governor. There are currently 9 LA Governor vacancies in the City with 7 LA Governor nominations in process.
- 2.8 Over the past 4 years, 13 academies have approached the School Governance Unit to ask for governor nominations to their boards.
- 2.9 We have started to examine the diversity of the LA Governor population in Manchester and work is still ongoing to collate all the information, 53% of LA Governors are currently female and 47% are male. When chairs of governors were asked in Summer 2018 if they felt their governing body reflected the community they serve, 68% responded 'yes' and 32% 'no'. The National Governance Association has launched a campaign to increase diversity on

governing bodies across the Country and this is going to be discussed with Manchester Chairs of Governors in the Spring Term 2019 meetings.

### 3.0 Governor Training, Development and Support

- 3.1 The Chairs' Briefings organised by the School Governance Unit each term have continued to see increased attendance with positive feedback. Each governing body is invited to send along two people and governors do not need to be a chair to attend. Since 2013, 133 (73%) of schools and academies have been represented at the meetings. In the academic year 2017/2018, 91(51%) of schools and academies were represented, with 14 new schools and academies attending for the first time. Topics discussed included: Finance, audit and procurement, safeguarding, educational outcomes, DfE Governance Competency Framework, school exclusions, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), head teacher well-being, Special Educational Needs, Head Teacher Performance Management, the Council School Quality Assurance Policy, Curriculum for Life and Careers Strategy.
- 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 and are run by the National Governance Association. To date 56 governors have undertaken the chairs leadership programme with a further 23 enrolled for a new programme this academic year.

### 3.3 Summary of attendance at Chairs' Briefings and National Training

Event	2014 -2015 (176 schools and academies)		2015-2016 (179 schools academies)		2016 -2017 (180 schools and academies)		2017-2018 (183 schools and academies)	
	Schools/ Acads	%	Schools/ Acads	%	Schools/ Acads	%	Schools /Acads	%
Chairs' Briefings	59	34%	70	39%	82	46%	91	51%
National Clerks Development Programme	10	6%	NA	NA	4	2%	NA	NA
National Chairs Development Programme	NA	NA	20	11%	18	10%	18	9%

<b>Ever Engaged 2014 – 2018</b>	<b>All Schools and Academies (based on 183 schools in Sept 2017)</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Academies (based on 65 in Sept 2017)</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Maintained Schools (based on 118 in Sept 2017)</b>	<b>%</b>
Chairs Briefings	133	73%	45	69%	88	75%

- 3.4 Governors in Manchester continue to have access to the password protected area of the Council website, the 'Schoolshub Website'. This contains a range of information and guidance for governors including: factsheets for governors about key themes e.g. finance, special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and safeguarding, a list of providers who can deliver training to governing bodies and a Manchester Governor Handbook that provides weblinks to national and local information. In 2017/2018 there were 704 page views with the most popular source of information being accessed the parent and staff governor election toolkits. The School Governance Unit continues to provide email updates and newsletters to ensure governors remain up to date with local and national issues.
- 3.5 The Manchester Schools' Alliance and The Manchester Governors' Association have built on the partnership work that was developed and supported by the Council from 2014 – 2017 to sustain and deliver their own independent events for governors in Manchester. Themes have included: Fischer Family Trust Data Analysis, finance, safeguarding, GDPR and understanding the role of the governor.

#### **4.0 School Quality Assurance**

- 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'. Increased focus on governance was added into the report and conversations this year to assist with identifying schools that could benefit from additional support.
- 4.2 Where challenges are identified through the Quality Assurance process which highlight a school would benefit from intensive support, the head teacher and Chair of Governors/CEO of the Trust are invited to attend a Support and Challenge Board with the Director of Education. The purpose of this meeting is to explore any concerns in detail, review progress towards action plans for improvement and any additional support that may be required.

- 4.3 The Local Authority works with the Manchester School Improvement Partnership (MSIP) which is made up the two Manchester Teaching School Alliances and experienced head teachers who are National Leaders of Education; to identify support for schools who have been identified through the Schools Quality Assurance process as requiring additional leadership support. This often leads to the development of an Executive Headship Leadership model with a head teacher taking responsibility for two or more schools.
- 4.4 The School Governance Unit has recently worked with two sets of schools who had this Executive Headship model in place to look at the federation model of governance to hold the executive leader to account more robustly. A federation is when two or more maintained schools operate under a single governing body, holding the Executive leader to account for the performance of both of the schools. Federating schools maintain their DfE number and are inspected as individual schools by Ofsted.
- 4.5 Other examples of support provided to governing bodies in response to schools identified through the Quality Assurance process include:
- Advice and support to the chair/governing body from the School Governance Lead and/ or the Senior School Quality Assurance Council Officers
  - Assisting with sourcing governors to strengthen the governing body
  - The offer of additional funding to undertake a health check or external review of governance, develop an action plan and a programme of training for the governing body
- 4.6 The Local Authority recently took part in a Peer Review in December 2018 with other Greater Manchester Local Authorities to review the effectiveness of our approach to school improvement. The support we provide to governors was seen as one of the strengths along with the strong partnerships and trust that have been developed with school leaders and governors:

*Manchester has a highly effective, well developed and systematic model for school improvement, secured by the 'buy in' of the vast majority of school governors and leaders, partners and the Council. As a result, there is a very high level of confidence, and trust, in and through the collective political, executive and system leadership of education, which is clearly articulated collectively as 'Our Manchester'.*

*Governor effectiveness is integral to school improvement. It is highly regarded by governors and school leaders with a good blend of support and challenge. Support is proportionate to need and includes new*



*governance arrangements. The LA 'Walks alongside schools in difficulty'.*

*GM Peer Review Dec 2018*

## **5.0 Conclusion**

- 5.1 The Ofsted Inspection Framework continues to examine the effectiveness of school governance as part of the overall Leadership and Management judgement of a school. The Council remains committed to support effective governance in the City through the School Governance Strategy in order to continue to strive to increase the quality of education and educational outcomes for children and young people as part of the Manchester Strategy to create a highly skilled City.
- 5.2 The next steps for development of the Governance Strategy include:
- Continuing to support governors with local and national changes particularly relating to school funding, the inclusion strategy, reducing school exclusions and the new Ofsted Framework which is due to be implemented in September 2019.
  - Developing a peer to peer review toolkit for governing bodies to use to develop their practices building on expertise from across the City.