

Director's Report to Governors

Including Governor's Training
Spring Term 2021



Introduction

Dear Governors

As we start 2021, I sincerely hope that it will be a better year than the last one, but as I write it is clear that we are in another acute stage of the pandemic and that the return to school in the New Year will be full of challenges. I am confident that all our schools, thanks to the leadership that you and our Headteachers provide, will continue to rise to these challenges – and that we will continue to work together in effective partnerships to get through these tough times.

I am both proud and grateful. Proud to be the Director of Children's Services in a borough with such committed school leaders and with such an outstanding track record of educational improvement that enhances the life chances of our children and young people. Proud to be a partner with schools that have shown such resilience, flexibility and commitment through the global pandemic with an unremitting focus upon the welfare of our children and their learning needs. And I am profoundly grateful. Thank you for having shown such deep commitment to our children and young people through the most challenging year most of us have ever had to deal with; thank you for keeping your focus on their welfare and their learning throughout; thank you for leading your schools so effectively and managing your duty of care to your staff; thank you for the community leadership you have shown and for your role in managing so much anxiety within your school communities; and thank you for keeping going despite the maddening way in which government has acted, and the relentless deluge of guidance, much of it with such very late notice.

The year will start out with Covid still at the forefront, and schools will continue to have a key role in our borough's efforts to protect people in particular those more vulnerable to the virus. Schools will have a part to play in the roll out of testing – and I do hope that the combination of mass testing and the step by step roll out of the vaccine will begin to turn the tide as we move further into the year. And we will then have longer term challenges to deal with, both in terms of the longer term learning impact of so much disrupted education, in terms of the emotional impact for all those children who have had difficult experiences, and in terms of the anticipated economic impact of the pandemic. But we will also be looking to resume the pace of our focus on the big

educational issues that we continue to grapple with: continuing to strengthen our culture of collaborative school improvement; further innovation and creativity in curriculum development across the borough; stepping up our work to deliver the SEND Improvement Plan across the partnership; ensuring that we both have sufficient school places and that schools are supported to have stable budget positions, in a context of changing demographics; and strengthening partnership working and ensuring that all the multi-agency roles that schools need to support them are delivering in a joined up and effective way.

I look forward to working with you through 2021 and hope to see you (virtually) at next Director's meeting on Tuesday 2nd February at 6pm.

James Thomas
Corporate Director
Children and Culture Directorate

Contents

Training and key meeting dates	5
Articles for Action	8
➔ School Governance and Information Update Spring 2020	8
➔ Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP)	10
➔ Update from Schools Library Service and Global Learning London	12
Articles for Information	14
➔ Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic Inequality Commission	14
➔ Governance in 2020 - new normal working, old normal issues	17
➔ Governance and leadership services from The Key now available via Tower Hamlets	19
➔ Parent and Family Support Service	21
➔ Information for families	23
➔ Review of Primary School Places	24
➔ Supporting children and families during the pandemic - Play in the early years	27
➔ Tower Hamlets Play Charter	29
Support	30
➔ Organisations, publications and websites to support governors	30
➔ The Governor Services Team	31
➔ Governing Body Agenda Planner	32

Training and Dates for the Diary

The training programme for academic year 2020/21 for governors and school leaders is listed below. Please note that some trainings are chargeable, and these are clearly marked. However, if your school has purchased an SLA with Governor Services you will receive a 10 per cent discount for these chargeable trainings.

It is good practice to undertake external governance reviews periodically to ensure that school governance is effective. We have experienced facilitators and Governing Boards can arrange external review through Governor Services.

Governor Services offers three types of training opportunities:

- ➔ Central training for all governors
- ➔ In-school training for whole governing bodies
- ➔ Clerks' briefing for independent clerks

Participation

In partnership with the National Governors Association (NGA) and Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP) Tower Hamlets Training Programme has been developed to meet the real needs of those governing. All workshops expect high levels of participation and interaction and will include:

- ➔ a mix of individual, pair, group, and whole group activities with some facilitator overviews
- ➔ practical focus such as, the 'how' is more important than the 'what' and the 'why'
- ➔ references to the context, including any relevant C19 guidance

- ➔ sensible practical post workshop activities aimed at achieving quick wins as well as improving confidence
- ➔ use of NGA, Tower Hamlets Governor Service and THEP texts and membership guidance materials where suitable

Format

The workshops will be delivered either on a face-to-face or online basis using Zoom depending on Covid-19 regulations at the time.

School based training

Governing bodies that wish to make enquiries regarding school-based training or external Governance review can contact Governor Services for further information.

Email:

governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk

You can book a place on these courses through Governor Hub

<https://governorhub.com/#home>

or by telephoning Governor Services on 020 7364 3141/4617.

Course	Date/time/venue	Details
How to Understand Finance	Tuesday 12 January 2021 5.30pm – 6.30pm PDC Facilitator: THEP	Cost: Free To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Director's Meeting with Governors	Tuesday 2 February 2021 6pm – 8pm PDC Facilitator: LBTH	Cost: Free To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Chairs training	Saturday 13 February 2021 10am – 2pm Mulberry Place Facilitator: LBTH	Cost: Free To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Panels Work: Employment	Tuesday 23 February 2021 5.30pm – 7.30pm PDC Facilitator: NGA	Cost: £55 - 10% discount for SLA Schools, charged to school To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Preparing for Ofsted	Thursday 4 March 2021 5.30pm – 7.30pm PDC Facilitator: NGA	Cost: £55 - 10% discount for SLA Schools, charged to school To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Induction Training for New Governors	Saturday 13 March 2021 9.30am – 2pm PDC Facilitator: LBTH	Cost: Free To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Ofsted: Practical session	Tuesday 16 March 2021 5.30pm – 6.30pm PDC Facilitator: THEP	Cost: Free To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Safeguarding	Thursday 25 March 2021 5pm – 8pm PDC Facilitator: LBTH	Cost: Free To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Panels Work: Exclusions	Thursday 20 April 2021 5.30pm – 7.30pm PDC Facilitator: NGA	Cost: £55 - 10% discount for SLA Schools, charged to school To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here

Course	Date/time/venue	Details
Director's Meeting with Governors	Tuesday 27 April 2021 6pm – 8pm PDC Facilitator: LBTH	Cost: Free To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Preparing for Ofsted	Thursday 13 May 2021 5.30pm – 7.30pm PDC Facilitator: NGA	Cost: £55 - 10% discount for SLA Schools, charged to school To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Induction Training for New Governors	Saturday 29 May 2021 9.30am – 2pm PDC Facilitator: LBTH	Cost: Free To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Appraisal & Performance Management	Thursday 10 June 2021 5.30pm – 7.30pm PDC Facilitator: NGA	Cost: £55 - 10% discount for SLA Schools, charged to school To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Roles and responsibilities (maintained schools)	Tuesday 22 June 2021 5.30pm – 7.30pm PDC Facilitator: NGA	Cost: £55 - 10% discount for SLA Schools, charged to school To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here
Managing Risk	Thursday 1 July 2021 5.30pm – 7.30pm PDC Facilitator: NGA	Cost: £55 - 10% discount for SLA Schools, charged to school To book: governor.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk or via Governor Hub here

For Action

School Governance and Information Update Spring 2020

Contact for enquiries:

Runa Basit

Head of School Governance and Information

Tel: 020 7364 4302

Email: runa.basit@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Director's Meeting with Governors – Tuesday 2 February 2020 at 6pm

The agenda and meeting login details will be sent out to governors over the next two weeks.

DfE Education Blog

Education in the media is the Department for Education's blog on the latest topical education and equalities issues. This blog features a review of leading media stories as well as Ministerial comment. The Department for Education blog also has frequent Q&As clarifying government announcements and can be found using the following link: <https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk>

Governance Handbook

In the latest Governance Handbook 2020, Baroness Elizabeth Berridge (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools) wrote:

Governance has never been more critical to the education of our nation's young people. As Minister for the School System I see at first hand the impact of governors and governance professionals. The governance duty is, above all, to drive relentless ambition for the young people served by our schools system, whatever the circumstances.

The coronavirus outbreak brought out the best in the leaders and teaching staff of schools and academy trusts. The response to the pandemic has been exceptional in ensuring that, as far as possible, all children have continued to have access to education, whether at home or, for the vast majority, now back in the classroom.

Governors are asked to note some critical changes in the Governance Handbook 2020, for example information on the resumption of Ofsted inspections from January 2021. The most significant updates and changes to the content within the Handbook is outlined from page 8 of the document. The Handbook focuses on key governance and educational policy updates to support governors for the year ahead.

Alongside the Handbook, the DfE will be publishing new governance role descriptors. These are in response to requests for clear information relating to roles in school and trust governance, and how these different layers of governance interact.

The Governance Handbook 2020 can be accessed via the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925104/Governance_Handbook_FINAL.pdf

FOR ACTION

Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP)

Contact for enquiries:

Tracy Smith

Director of Tower Hamlets Education Partnership

Tel: 020 7364 2710

Email: tracy.smith@the-partnership.org.uk

Audience: School Governors

THE Partnership Update

This term we have continued to support schools and school leaders with managing the response to Covid 19. The increased time for Leadership Consultancy and the Executive Coaching for headteachers has been very well received and provided timely and effective support.

Our subject networks have been thriving as colleagues come together to share their thinking and learning around leading the curriculum and addressing any gaps that have arisen. There have been some superb examples of curriculum development across the networks.

We have piloted a version of peer review with a focus on remote learning; 12 schools took part in the pilot which involved each school sharing their approach. There was a wealth of information, ideas and resources shared with each school; we will be publishing this as a short report shortly.

We have been working to support the LA's 14 – 25-year-olds Strategy and are launching our work in the Spring Term with a post 16 conference.

The external review of the Board has been completed and the recruitment process for new trustees is underway.

Governors' Forum: Professional Development

We are keen to further develop our links and support for governors and are offering the following professional development sessions for governors:

Session 2:

12 January 2021, 5.30pm – 6.30pm (Zoom)

How to understand finance

A practical session, working with current headteachers, to understand the details behind school's finance.

FOR ACTION

Session 3:

16 March 2021, 5.30pm – 6.30pm (Zoom)

Ofsted

This session will explore the implications of the Education Inspection Framework and provide opportunities for governors to practise the questions you may encounter during an inspection.

Please do get in touch if we can support you in anyway.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

What does this mean for governors?

Governors should:

- ➔ Discuss THE Partnership offer with Headteachers
- ➔ Book onto training as appropriate
- ➔ For bespoke training for Governing Bodies: please contact THEP info@the-partnership.org.uk

FOR ACTION

Update from Schools Library Service and Global Learning London

Contact for enquiries:

Gillian Harris

Head of Tower Hamlets Schools Library Services

Tel: 020 7364 6428

Email: gillian.harris@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Audience: School Governors

The Schools Library Service remains open for teachers to request resources to support their teaching. We are not yet able to receive visitors, but teachers can fill in our usual request form on our website www.towerhamlets-sls.org.uk/request.

See our website www.towerhamlets-sls.org.uk for book and resource lists to support Holocaust Memorial Day (27th January 2021), LGBT History Month (February), International Women's Day (8 March 2021) and many other themes.

Tower Hamlets Book Award

"Pie in the Sky" by Remy Lai won the 2020 Tower Hamlets Book Award, as voted by children aged 10 to 13 in the borough. This is a funny but poignant story about finding your feet when moving to a new country, with a new language, customs and lifestyle to contend with. Schools enjoyed a virtual event, based at Canary Wharf, with the six short-listed authors on Friday 27 November 2020.

Tower Hamlets Creative Writing Competition

"I am not Alone" is the theme of our 2021 poetry and short story Creative Writing Competition which runs during the Spring term 2021. There are categories for all age groups, and schools can book up to two author-led creative writing workshops, either virtual or in-school – to encourage children to write their entries. Closing date Friday 2 April.

KS2 Poetry Slam

Eleven schools and 12 classes are taking part in our KS2 Poetry Slam on 11 February 2021, which this year will be a virtual event. After working with local poets, children write and perform their own poetry. Our funding from Amal Fund and Samuel Butler Educational Foundation has enabled us to recruit and train poets from a Muslim background, to act as role models in the creative industries for children in Tower Hamlets schools.

FOR ACTION

World Book Day

Watch this space. We are planning a virtual event with authors and illustrators – more details soon.

HEC Global Learning Centre is now renamed Global Learning London

<https://globallearninglondon.org>

Towards an anti-racist classroom' CPD for schools

In response to the Black Lives Matter protests, Global Learning London designed a two-part training for schools on the theory and practice of anti-racist pedagogy. This training is available to all schools and runs as an open course for individual teachers, or as a whole-school training offer.

'Be Well' sessions for schools

Global Learning London facilitated spaces of mutual support for school staff to nurture wellbeing and resilience, using principles of Restorative Practice, Group Coaching, and Community Building. The sessions were open to all but we particularly welcomed colleagues from BAME backgrounds, who we acknowledge are being disproportionately affected by COVID 19.

As a result of the two trainings, we were commissioned by the British Council to author two resources for their 'Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning' programme: Mental Health and Wellbeing and Reducing Inequalities (forthcoming).

We are recruiting schools for our Tower Hamlets Schools Linking Project and our Creative Communities project, both of which are responding to the pandemic by connecting children with each other in spaces of joy to enhance positive contact (THSLP) or with their communities to respond with small but impactful acts of active citizenship (CoCo).

For Global Learning London enquiries, contact alia.alzougbi@towerhamlets.gov.uk

What does this mean for governors?

- ➔ Encourage your school to book free author-led creative writing workshops as part of the Creative Writing Competition (primary and secondary)
- ➔ Consider recruiting GLL to run "towards an anti-racist classroom" training for your school
- ➔ Consider taking part in The Tower Hamlets Schools Linking Project and Creative Communities project

For Information

FOR INFORMATION

Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic Inequality Commission

Contact for enquiries:

Afazul Hoque

Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy

Tel: 020 7364 4636

Email: afazul.hoque@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Audience: School Governors

Background/context

The shocking and public killing of George Floyd, and subsequent Black Lives Matter demonstrations across the world has brought the subject of racial inequality to the forefront of personal and political discussions.

Tower Hamlets Council is committed to creating cohesive communities that are strong, fair and equal. We recognise that we can only do this by working in partnership with our communities to advance equality, promote good relations and tackle discrimination.

However, we understand that for all our success and progress there remains much room for improvement to achieve greater equality in the borough. We know that racial discrimination means some people have neither had equal access to public services or employment, nor fair treatment and life chances.

In addition to the Black Lives Matter movement, the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population has served to expose the severe consequences of the structural disadvantages and discrimination faced by these communities. Public Health England's review of disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19 found that imbedded inequality means that the likelihood of testing positive and dying with Covid-19 is higher for Black and Asian ethnic groups when compared to White ethnic groups.

In recognition of the high level of concern raised about the longstanding levels of racial inequality in the borough, Mayor John Biggs announced that Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor for Community Safety, Youth and Equalities would lead a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequality Commission. The Commission is tasked to deliver tangible and practical actions which will deliver real change to the lives of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, and allow the council and its partners to champion the enormous impact these communities can contribute to the borough.

The key aims of the Commission are:

1. Engage and operate at the heart of Tower Hamlets' communities to hear about people's lived experiences and solutions, specifically Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women and young people who experience higher levels of inequality.
2. Work with institutions to advance and prioritise race equality to achieve an inclusive, cohesive, thriving and representative Tower Hamlets.
3. Influence local, sub-regional and regional leaders who have significant influence on Tower Hamlets, particularly in the development of policy and strategy practices and the allocation of resources.

The areas of focus for the Commission are:

1. Community leadership
2. Health
3. Education
4. Employment

The Commission has listened to the views of residents and organisations to understand how the lived experience and chances for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in Tower Hamlets differ significantly and detrimentally from those of White people. The aim of the Commission is to deliver tangible and practical actions which address the systemic discrimination and disadvantages experienced by Tower Hamlets residents because of their race or ethnicity ensuring they feel valued and empowered to fulfil their potential.

You can find out more on the dedicated Commission webpage - www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/raceinequalitiescommission. It's not too late to give your views on the Commission's four key subject areas, so please visit: talk.towerhamlets.gov.uk/raceinequalitiescommission

What does this mean for governors?

The Commission held a virtual meeting with school governors in early November 2020 and noted the significant contribution of school governors to education including progress we have made over the years. School governors will be interested in findings and recommendations from the Commission and how they can ensure these are embedded within their schools.

Key highlights of the conversation

1. Acknowledgement of the diversity of the group and expertise from various walks of life.
2. Productive conversations on the concept of community leadership and the importance of growing leaders into various roles as school governors.
3. Identifying some of the obstacles that stop people from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic groups progressing into leadership positions.
4. Open conversation about the importance of having a diverse range of people represented on boards and ensuring their voices are heard.
5. Encouraging people to move on after serving as long-term school governors to allow opportunities for others to grow.

What's next?

- ➔ Findings of the commission will be presented to Commissioners, Elected Members and Chief Officers for comments – January 2021
- ➔ A final report with recommendations will be shared with key stakeholders including school governors in February 2021
- ➔ The report will also be published on the website.

FOR INFORMATION

Governance in 2020 - new normal working, old normal issues

Contact for enquiries:

Paul Aber

Head of Training Development, National Governance Association

Email: paul.aber@nga.org.uk

Recent circumstances have meant changes to the way that those of you who govern, and your schools do things, in a variety of ways including for example risk management, virtual governance, virtual recruitment and prioritisation. But in these new normal times it's also useful to maintain a sense of perspective and see this in the context of what's been going over a longer time and across the country.

Every year NGA's carries out a comprehensive survey of its members to uncover the practice and concerns of those with responsibility for overseeing state schools in the interests of pupils. This year the 2020 survey results were published in November. Here is a snapshot summary of just a few of the things NGA members said that you may find interesting.

Top six issues

The 2020 survey was carried out in the relatively early days of COVID-19 as the move to remote governance began. There are of course variations between settings, regions and phases but the top six issues overall were:

1. Balancing the budget: 40 per cent
2. Staff wellbeing including workload: 36 per cent
3. Ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum: 28 per cent
4. Improving attainment: 28 per cent
5. Pupil wellbeing: 28 per cent
6. Support for pupils with SEND: 22 per cent

It is interesting to note that despite governing during a pandemic, the top two concerns that governors and trustees say face their organisation have been at the top of the list for some years: balancing the budget and staff wellbeing. Rather than focus on these two things whose importance has remained for some years it is useful to look at other trends.

FOR INFORMATION

Governance practice

The survey looked at the manageability of the role, recruiting a chair, the role of their clerk and their approach to training and development.

Three-quarters of governors/trustees surveyed agreed that their governance role is manageable around their professional and personal commitments. However, chairs and those in full time employment were less likely to report that it is manageable.

Overall, 35 per cent of governors/trustees agreed that their board finds it difficult to attract a good chair and vice chair. However, looking at the responses from current chairs only, 43 per cent say that chair recruitment is difficult and 46 per cent of senior executive leaders (SEs) also said chairs recruitment is difficult.

Staff workload and wellbeing

Most respondents are confident that their board systematically monitors and addresses issues relating to the workload, wellbeing, and work/life balance of all staff at their school or trust (71 per cent). However, 15 per cent report that their board does not monitor or address these issues while 15 per cent admit that they are not sure and there were other responses which suggest a variable picture.

Since the survey was completed the issue of staff workload and wellbeing has become even more important.

Training and development

The amount of training done by those responding is impressive. Ninety-three per cent reported that they had undertaken some form of training or development for their governance role. This did vary by role, with 96 per cent of chairs and vice chairs reporting having undertaken some form of training compared with 88 per cent of those who held no chairing responsibilities on the board.

In terms of training overwhelmingly, respondents agreed (37 per cent) or strongly agreed (56 per cent) that relevant high-quality induction training should be mandatory for new governors/trustees.

Face to face training was the most popular form of governance training and development with e-learning second but what is particularly interesting is how those governing and some training providers have further adapted to the constraints of COVID-19 since the survey was done. So, for example here in Tower Hamlets working with Farhad Ahmed and his team, the NGA has delivered all workshops on its programme using Zoom. If anything, the already very high sign-up rate has increased as participants have realised that, done properly, workshops can be interactive and engaging and very convenient. So as with meetings it's been great to see how quickly governors and trustees have been able to adapt to change.

Above all what the last year has shown is the ability of governors and trustees to adapt quickly to working in a different way to deal with the matters at hand whilst remaining focussed on longer term areas of concern.

FOR INFORMATION

Governance and leadership services from The Key now available via Tower Hamlets

Contact for enquiries:

Kieran Dwyer

Head of Sales

Tel: 07389 180154

Email: kieran.dwyer@thekeysupport.com

Audience: School governors and school leaders

The Key is the country's most-trusted provider of sector intelligence, services and resources that gives education leaders like you the knowledge to act. 160,000 school leaders and governors are already using The Key to get the guidance they need to run their schools.

There are 2 discounted service bundles available to purchase via Tower Hamlets:

- ➔ Governance with: The Key for School Governors and GovernorHub
- ➔ Leadership and safeguarding with: The Key for School Leaders and Safeguarding Training Centre

Governance bundle

About the Key for School Governors

The Key for School Governors provides role-specific, expert-led guidance for every member of your board. Membership will:

- ➔ Help new governors to hit the ground running, with an on-demand, online induction that splits the basics of governance into manageable chunks
- ➔ Guide your board on how to support your school effectively
- ➔ Keep your board up to date with the latest sector news and actionable next steps

And so much more!

Learn more about The Key for School Governors [here](#).

About GovernorHub

GovernorHub is built specifically for governors and governing boards. With GovernorHub you can:

- ➔ Store documents securely with tightly controlled access, communicate easily with all members of the board and keep a shared calendar of meetings

FOR INFORMATION

- ➔ Track governance-specific information such as constitution, roles, committees, governor types and terms of office
- ➔ Download a wide range of reports on vacancies, membership, meetings, attendance, declarations of interest and more
- ➔ Find information, advice and training provided by your local governor services
- ➔ Access GovernorHub offline when on the move, with the app for smartphones and tablets

Over 9,000 boards are already using GovernorHub. Learn more about how GovernorHub works and what's included [here](#).

Leadership and safeguarding bundle

About The Key for School Leaders

The Key for School Leaders provides leadership know-how to help you run your school.

- ➔ Get clarity on the latest sector updates and use our actionable guidance to respond to national changes quickly and confidently
- ➔ Save time and reduce your workload with our editable templates - from checklists to staff briefings
- ➔ Feel confident about compliance, with our up-to-the minute guidance and lawyer-approved model policies

Over 120,000 school leaders use The Key every day to support them in their role. Learn more about The Key for School Leaders [here](#).

About Safeguarding Training Centre

Safeguarding Training Centre will cut the time you spend running annual safeguarding training and give you total confidence that you're meeting your statutory obligations. Use it to:

- ➔ Save time inducting staff joining mid-year
- ➔ Test staff knowledge of KCSIE pt.1 and your school's safeguarding procedures
- ➔ Easily report on who has completed and passed training

Learn more about Safeguarding Training Centre [here](#).

What does this mean for governors?

The two discounted service bundles are available to purchase via Tower Hamlets Education Partnership.

Please contact kieran.dwyer@thekeysupport.com or farhad.ahmed@towerhamlets.gov.uk for more information.

FOR INFORMATION

Parent and Family Support Service

Contact for enquiries:

Jill McGinley

Head Parent and Family Support Service

Tel: 020 7364 4946

Email: jill.mcginley@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Audience: School governors

Parent and Family Support Services (parental engagement and parenting team, transition team, special educational needs & disability information, advice and support service [SEND IASS] and family information service) are available to advise and support schools in their work with families, particularly supporting the return to school in the New Year and during the Spring term.

Our work with schools and families has changed and adapted as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and continues to be delivered through virtual workshops, discussion forums, telephone, email communication and face-face where safe to do so.

Information about our services can be found at: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentfamilysupport

What does this mean for governors?

The parental engagement team have extensive experience of working with school leaders to tackle barriers to parental engagement, develop home-school communication and provide early help and support for children's learning and well-being.

Benefits:

- ➔ A highly skilled and experienced team.
- ➔ Extensive experience of working in partnership with Tower Hamlets schools.
- ➔ Extensive experience of working with Tower Hamlets families.
- ➔ Understanding of challenges and issues faced by Tower Hamlets families and skills to support them.
- ➔ Tried and tested interventions, resources and professional networks developed in collaboration with Tower Hamlets Schools.

Buy-back and grant funded services include:

- ➔ Bespoke project development to support parental engagement and home-school communication to tackle barriers to learning and improve children's outcomes
- ➔ Family support and early help
- ➔ Engaging parents in their child's learning and school life
- ➔ Engaging parents in the curriculum, early reading and phonics
- ➔ Parenting programmes to support Relationship, Sex, Education, health and well-being, keeping children safe on-line, parent / child relationships and managing behaviour
- ➔ Enrichment activities for families
- ➔ Recruitment and support for Parent Governors

Summary of services available from the Parental Engagement Team can be found at the Tower Hamlets Services to Schools portal: <http://www.ths4s.co.uk/Services/183>

Also available:

- ➔ Termly Families Matter magazine: a roundup of best practice and projects taking place in schools, updates and service information from across the Tower Hamlets partnership, national updates and support for families plus resources and training.
- ➔ Monthly Bitesize e bulletin: sharing information, parenting support and links to Tower Hamlets networks such as the Parent and Carer Council and the Somali Parents Network.
- ➔ Professionals support network and training opportunities for professionals working with families.

FOR INFORMATION

Information for families

The Family Information Service provides information and advice on services for children, young people (birth to 25 years old) and parents and carers. The team also manage the Local Offer, Tower Hamlets online directory of services and information for children, young people and families in Tower Hamlets.

To help parents and carers access the information they need add the Family Information Service contact details and the Local Offer link to your school website. The telephone helpline is open 9am to 5pm.

Tel: 020 7364 6495

Visit: www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk



FOR INFORMATION

Review of Primary School Places

Contact for enquiries:

Christine McInnes

Divisional Director, Education and Partnerships

Tel: 020 7364 3114

Email: christine.mcInnes@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Audience: School governors

This is to update governors of the current position concerning the pupil projections, review of primary school places, planning for school places 2020/21, and schools Capital Programme.

Pupil Projections

The Council has experienced rising primary school rolls year on year since 2011/12, peaking in 2016/17. In the last three years, there has been a levelling of numbers, comparable with the fluctuating birth data.

The 2020 projections confirm that the birth rate and follow-on pupil projections, factor in a rise in need in the long term. However, in the short to medium term, there are still pockets of significant surplus places in areas west of the borough. The LA is addressing this through its Review of Primary School Places. The landscape in the east of the borough differs from the west, in that planned housing developments indicate there could be an increased demand for primary places in the Isle of Dogs and Poplar areas. Primary planning areas have been created to address the differing needs of the primary estate in their localities.

Though the borough has continued to experience rapid population growth, this has not translated into pupils presenting at Reception at the rate expected. In part, this has been driven by high mobility of families out of the area and parental preference.

The secondary school estate is planned as borough-wide and it is forecast that rolls will increase in the medium term, in line with the historic rise in primary places. Although there are pockets of surplus in distinct areas, there are increased needs in others. There are plans to deliver a new school at London Dock by September 2023; a new expanded accommodation for Canary Wharf College at Westferry Printworks by 2023/24; and new buildings for the pupils at George Green's School on the Isle of Dogs by 2023/24 (subject to a feasibility study).

Primary School Places Review

The changes to primary school rolls have led to a number of unused places, with schools in some areas finding that they have more unused places than they would normally expect.

FOR INFORMATION

The funding that schools receive from central government is based on the number of children they have registered. Therefore, when a school's number of children is lower than expected it receives less funding. The school may then find it difficult to retain and/or recruit enough teachers and support staff to maintain high standards of teaching and learning.

The council has the responsibility to make sure that its school places are organised in a way that helps all schools to continue to maintain high standards. To do this the Council set up a Primary Review Advisory Group. This included

- ➔ headteachers from all sectors
- ➔ representatives from Diocesan Boards
- ➔ the Council of Mosques
- ➔ the Greater London Authority
- ➔ the office of the Regional Schools Commissioner and
- ➔ the early years sector.

The role of the advisory group is to advise on the review process and assist in reviewing options for change.

Recommendations from the primary review have led to a number of school organisation changes, as follows:

- ➔ **St Anne's and Guardian Angels Catholic Primary.**
The merger of St Anne's and Guardian Angels Catholic Primary Schools to form a 2FE Catholic Primary School on the St Anne's school site. The new school is called St Anne's and Guardian Angels Catholic Primary.
- ➔ **Stepney Park Primary**
The merger of Smithy Street School with Redlands to form a 3FE Primary School. The new school is called Stepney Park.
- ➔ **Shapla Primary School**
Statutory consultation on the proposal for the closure of Shapla Primary School.
- ➔ **Cubitt Town Infants and Junior Schools**
Statutory consultation on the proposal to amalgamate (combine) Cubitt Town Infants and Cubitt Town Junior Schools.
- ➔ **St Matthias Church of England Primary School**
Statutory consultation on the proposal for the closure of St Matthias Church of England Primary School.
- ➔ **Cherry Trees Special School**
Statutory consultation on the proposal for the closure of Cherry Trees Special.
- ➔ **Federation**
The federation of Stewart Headlam and Hague Schools to form a single governing body, with Stewart Headlam school reducing from 2FE to 1FE places

➔ Reduction of the Planned Admission Number (PAN) at:

- ➔ Cayley School, from 90 to 60 places
- ➔ Malmesbury School, from 75 to 60 places
- ➔ Canon Barnett School, from 45 to 30 places
- ➔ Bangabandhu Primary School, from 60 to 30 places

Planning for School Places 2020/21 Annual Update

This report is an annual review of planning for school places in Tower Hamlets. It updates the Mayor's cabinet on:

- ➔ the latest position with expected demand for school places
- ➔ actions being taken to reduce the numbers of primary school places in areas of surplus
- ➔ plans to increase places in areas of current or expected increased demand
- ➔ the options to be considered for future school development sites.

The council has a statutory duty to provide and plan for enough school places with an appropriate mix and number of high performing and financially sustainable schools. These school places must be accessible to all children in the local community, and available when they are needed.

Schools Capital Programme

The Council has agreed a major school's capital programme amounting to more than £150m over the next three to four years. This will provide both sufficient school places for young people in Tower Hamlets as well as improve existing school accommodation.

The programme will include a new secondary school in Wapping, major improvements to existing primary and secondary schools, major condition works, and increased provision for pupils with special needs within mainstream and special schools.

FOR INFORMATION

Supporting children and families during the pandemic - Play in the early years

Contact for enquiries:

Pauline Hoare

Head of Early Years

Tel: 020 7364 6023

Email: pauline.hoare@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Audience: School governors

Play is important to everyone whatever their age. Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a keyway in which young children (and everyone else) learn with enjoyment and challenge. Play can help a child fit into the world physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially, and grow to be a healthy and competent individual. During this pandemic, life has become difficult for many families and children, so pleasure and human contact through play is even more important.

Amongst other things, all 12 children centres have been offering the following play activities that:

- ➔ Facilitate children and families in learning and developing confidence and skills in a playful way;
- ➔ Encourage parents to follow their child's fascinations as a way of improving language;
- ➔ Encourage families to enjoy play at home and create a rich home learning environment.

Children under five are fortunate in having a statutory curriculum that is play based. During the pandemic, play has become crucially important to maintain mental health and wellbeing and our children and family centres are providing exciting new opportunities linked to the early years' curriculum.

Many centres have introduced "walk and talk sessions" with the sessions offered by Overland Children's Centre taking place in Victoria Park, focusing on families with low mood. The aim is to support the family through the difficulties of the pandemic in a creative way. The activity was introduced because of the obvious benefits of being amongst nature, exercise and talking and the impact this can have on parental mental health and subsequently on their parenting. These are proving to be very successful.

Some of our feedback from Overland parents:

- ➔ "Both baby and I loved and benefited from being with other Mums"
- ➔ "The benefit of being with other Mums has been priceless, I have felt isolated all day during Covid with no interaction"

Children's centres also build parenting capacity and resilience by empowering parents to continue the play and learning at home on a tailored and individual basis. The following anonymised example at Mile End Children's Centre shows the significance and impactful nature of the "Invitation to Play" sessions for a child.

Max is 2 and a half years old, when he first started his mother showed concern about his language development and his skills regarding social interaction. Staff invited the family to attend the Invitation to Play and universal sessions.

During lockdown staff provided many one-to-one Zoom sessions, as well as giving him the book start pack and explained to mum how to use it at home.

Staff provided strategies to help Max in terms of language development, setting boundaries and developing his listening skills. Role modelling these strategies in practice with mum during sessions empowers the parents to adapt in their home environment, pretending to be a customer dining at his restaurant is one way of utilizing everyday tasks into playful learning opportunities.

In nearly a year since attending the session Max has improved greatly, his communication and language skills and personal social emotional development have really come along. Max can sing the Twinkle, twinkle little star rhyme and plays with other children in the home corner, all achieved through the natural inclination of children to play.

Children's centres offer families the following resources for play during the pandemic:

- ➔ space indoors and outdoors
- ➔ areas for energetic activity and quiet activities
- ➔ an environment which celebrates children achievements
- ➔ an environment that fosters an opportunity for children to interact with their parents for slash carers and practitioners
- ➔ one which accommodates the needs of children with additional needs and various levels of abilities.

All our early years education and childcare settings offer this play-based approach. And of course, the Forest School offer continues. Forest school encourages, motivates, engages and inspires children through positive outdoor experiences to grow in confidence, demonstrate independence and self-awareness, make connections with the natural world and have lots of FUN... it's child's play!

What does this mean for governors?

All your schools' early years provision will be offering the play-based learning described above. It's important to celebrate their achievements in this difficult time. If school leaders would like to refer parent and families to children and family centres, please call 020 7364 1553 or email early.years@towerhamlets.gov.uk

FOR INFORMATION

Tower Hamlets Play Charter

Contact for enquiries:

Jill McGinley

Head Parent and Family Support Service

Tel: 020 7364 4946

Email: jill.mcginley@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Audience: School governors

Sent on behalf of Councillor Hassell and James Thomas

We are delighted to share the Tower Hamlets Play Charter with you, which you can access [here](#). Developed over many months with partners across the borough, the Charter sets out the partnership's vision for play in Tower Hamlets. It calls on residents, businesses, voluntary organisations and charities, providers of childcare and education, the council, and developers to be imaginative and create initiatives, or build on existing projects, which embed play into the daily lives of our children and young people. No step is too small, no idea too big. By working in partnership and sharing resources, we can make Tower Hamlets a borough for children, the place to play, and rich in imagination and discovery.

We hope you enjoy reading the Play Charter and will use the Charter's principles and commitments to open up opportunities for play in the work your organisation does.

A Play Charter Working Group has been formed to support implementation of the Charter and bring together different organisations across Tower Hamlets who are passionate about play and what it has to offer children and families. Please get in touch with Jill McGinley, jill.mcginley@towerhamlets.gov.uk if you are interested in being part of this group. Our thanks to Jill, and to all the individuals and partners who have contributed to the charter.

Support

Organisations, publications and websites which support governors in their roles

➔ The Governance Handbook

All school governors need to know their legal responsibilities and how these fit in with the responsibilities of the headteacher, the local authority (LA) and the Secretary of State for Education. The Governance Handbook (January 2017) provides information about the role and legal duties of governing bodies in maintained schools and academies (including free schools). The Governance Handbook can be found on the Department for Education website or downloaded via this link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/788234/governance_handbook_2019.pdf

➔ A Competency Framework for Governance – January 2017

A Competency Framework for Governance - The knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for effective governance in maintained schools, academies and multi-academy trusts. The framework sets out the competencies needed for effective governance. It is non-statutory guidance and should be read alongside the Governance Handbook, particularly the section explaining the key features of effective governance. The Framework can be found using the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583733/Competency_framework_for_governance_.pdf

➔ The National Governors' Association

is the representative body for school governors in England. www.nga.org.uk

The NGA works for governors by:

- ➔ supporting local governor associations and governing bodies
- ➔ lobbying ministers and policy makers
- ➔ producing high quality guidance and information
- ➔ organising events and conferences.

Governors can join the NGA as individuals, as members of a governing body, or through their local governors' association.

➔ **Governors for schools** is a national charity which connects volunteers to schools with governor vacancies all across England. Governors for Schools has won awards for the way it works with volunteers, builds partnerships with employers, manages its finances, and develops its staff. Its services are FREE to local authorities, volunteers, employers and schools.
www.governorsforschools.org.uk

➔ **Ocean Somali Community Association (OSCA)**
 Concordia Centre, Railway Arches, 420-421 Burdett Road, London E3 AA
 OSCA promotes governor recruitment among the Somali community in Tower Hamlets. It aims to increase the number of BME governors in schools, raises awareness and supports new governors.
 Tel: 020 7987 5833 Email: abdi@oceansomali.org.uk or info@oceansomali.org.uk
www.oceansomali.org.uk

Tower Hamlets Governor Services Team

Name	Title
Runa Basit	Head of School Governance and Information
Suzette Nicol	Governor Support Officer
Rochelle Clarke	Governor Support Officer
Angus Huck	Governor Support Officer
Nigel Caleb	Governor Support Officer
Lorraine Feyi-Shonubi	Governor Support Officer
Salma Siddiqua	Governor Support Officer
Shamsun Nessa	Governor Support Officer
Farhad Ahmed	Traded Service and Business Development Manager
Shamina Ali	Admin Assistant

To contact Governor Services, email governors@towerhamlets.gov.uk or call 020 7364 3141.
 Governor Services, 5th Floor, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London E14 2BG.
 For more information, go to the Tower Hamlets Governor webpages:
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/education_and_learning/schools/school_governors/school_governors.aspx

	Full governing body	Curriculum (School Development, Pupil Achievement, Teaching and Learning)	Resources (including Finance, Personnel and Premises)	Pay/personnel appeals	Performance management
Autumn term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Elect Chair and Vice Chair ➔ Update register of business interests ➔ Review Committee Structure / Membership/Terms of Reference/link governors ➔ Agree Code of Conduct ➔ RE-constitution of the governing body ➔ Head's Report ➔ Review Safeguarding Policy - ensure it is in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance (KCSIE) ➔ Agree SFVS to return to LA ➔ Review Governors' development plan; including training needs and setting strategic goals for the year ➔ Review Pupil Premium and Sports Premium Reports ➔ Review Admissions Policy (VA school) ➔ Review school data & agree targets ➔ Review Self Evaluation Form (SEF) ➔ Agree new School Improvement Priorities ➔ Review and approve Pay Policy, Appraisal Policy & Capability Policy ➔ Report on governor visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Report on behaviour and bullying issues ➔ Report on inclusion issues ➔ Set school targets ➔ Review behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy ➔ Curriculum area reports ➔ Review pupil attendance ➔ Identify key lines of enquiry for Ofsted using summer examination results and review of data dashboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Monitor budget ➔ Agree virements ➔ Review budget surplus spending plan ➔ Review pupil roll and consider possible budget implications ➔ Review pay policy in line with School Teachers Pay and Conditions document ➔ Receive Health & Safety and Premises updates ➔ Annual review and spot check of asset register; review asset management plan ➔ Review child protection policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Carry out annual salary review ➔ Consider recommendations from Head's Performance Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Arrange review meeting with head and advisor ➔ Meet to discuss head's PM and make recommendations to Pay Committee / Governing Body

	Full governing body	Curriculum (School Development, Pupil Achievement, Teaching and Learning)	Resources (including Finance, Personnel and Premises)	Pay/personnel appeals	Performance management
Spring term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Head's Report ➔ Monitor School Development Plan ➔ Agree SFVS to return to LA by end of February ➔ Governor training ➔ Receive Safeguarding report ➔ Agree budget (or summer term) ➔ Report on governor visits ➔ Agree holiday dates for next year (VA schools) ➔ Agree school prospectus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Review overall curriculum policy in light of school self review ➔ Report on inclusion issues ➔ Report on behaviour and bullying issues ➔ Curriculum area reports ➔ Receive report on impact of interventions ➔ Review pupil attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Monitor budget ➔ Agree virements ➔ Review staffing structure ➔ Plan new budget in line with new SDP ➔ Review Service Level Agreements ➔ Review budget surplus spending plan ➔ Receive Health & Safety and Premises updates ➔ Review equal opportunities policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Consider staffing reductions / ending of temporary contracts in August 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Monitor Head's performance

	Full governing body	Curriculum (School Development, Pupil Achievement, Teaching and Learning)	Resources (including Finance, Personnel and Premises)	Pay/personnel appeals	Performance management
Summer Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Agree budget ➔ Agree Budget Surplus Plan (if required) ➔ Head's Report ➔ Monitor School Development Plan ➔ Receive SEND Report ➔ Review Self Evaluation Form ➔ Monitor Governor's development plan ➔ Agree prospectus ➔ Report on governor visits ➔ Agree meeting dates for next year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Report on behaviour policy ➔ Report on inclusion issues ➔ Report on bullying and behaviour issues ➔ Curriculum area reports ➔ Receive report on impact of interventions ➔ Review pupil attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Agree budget to be recommended to the full governing body for approval. ➔ Agree Budget Surplus Plan to be recommended to the full governing body for approval (if required) ➔ Review 3 year budget forecast ➔ Agree virements ➔ Receive Health & Safety and Premises updates ➔ Review staff attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Consider issues from leadership review of teacher annual salary reviews ➔ Consider succession planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Monitor Head's performance
Every Meeting	<p>Reports on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Racist incidents ➔ Pupil exclusions <p>Standard items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Apologies for absence ➔ Declaration of pecuniary interest ➔ Minutes/matters arising ➔ Reports from committees ➔ Chair's Action ➔ Any confidential items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Apologies for absence ➔ Declaration of interest ➔ Minutes / matters arising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Apologies for absence ➔ Declaration of interest ➔ Minutes/matters arising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Apologies for absence ➔ Declaration of interest ➔ Minutes/matters arising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Apologies for absence ➔ Declaration of interest ➔ Minutes/matters arising

	Full governing body	Curriculum (School Development, Pupil Achievement, Teaching and Learning)	Resources (including Finance, Personnel and Premises)	Pay/personnel appeals	Performance management
As Necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Review aims/ethos of school ➔ Re-constitution of the governing body ➔ Governing Body Code of Practice ➔ Receive curriculum area reports ➔ Induction of new governors ➔ Preparation for Ofsted inspection ➔ Draw up freedom of information publication scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Review of Policies/cycle of dates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Audit of school funds (to be done annually) ➔ Health and Safety Report ➔ Review personnel policies ➔ Review Finance Code of Practice (spring term) ➔ Review policy on charges and remissions ➔ Review SEF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Personnel appeals ➔ Review SEF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Review Policy including leadership group (autumn term)