



Minutes of a meeting of HASGA, Hackney School Governors' Association, held on Wednesday 30 September 2014 at Hackney Learning Trust offices. The meeting opened at 18:30

**Present:**

Lisa Neidich	Sir Thomas Abney
Catherine McGuinness	City Academy
Janice Bailey	Thomas Fairchild
Hannah Lownsborough	Federation of Orchard and Southwold
Layla Conway	Gainsborough
Jo Macleod	Lauriston
Jasper Corbett	Northwold
Maggie Kalnins	Mossbourne Academy and Brook Primary School
Bernard Hawes	Stormont House
Antonia Canning	William Patten
Ciaran Seymour	Northwold
Louis Coiffait	Springfield
Alexandra McKenzie	Tyssen
Alison Kriel	Northwold
John Coombs	Queensbridge
Tanya Addison	Parkwood Primary School
Derek Powell	Cardinal Pole
Jean Charles	De Beauvoir Primary School

**Clerk:** Angela Adedeji

**In Attendance:** Alan Wood, Matt Clack, and Jill Pitt

**1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all delegates to the meeting. The Clerk gave delegates' apologies and introductions were made. Apologies were received from Yusuf Erol (Hoxton Garden), Christopher Sills (Sir Thomas Abney), Pamela Sills (Holmleigh) Lee Laudatt Scott (Baden Powell), Diane Bernhardt (Rushmore), Kate Loewenthal (Lubavitch), Fiona Baird (Haggerston) and William Sheasgreen (Stoke Newington).

The Chair asked all those in attendance to observe a one-minute silence in honour of Tricia Okoruwa, Hackney Learning Trust's Education Director who died recently. The Chair added that the borough had lost a friend to the children of Hackney who was devoted to the children and making sure that they got the best education possible.

## 2. Speakers:

### 2.4 Alan Wood, Director of Children's Services *Education in Hackney – Where are we now?*

The following was noted from Mr Wood's presentation:

Tricia Okoruwa will be celebrated at an event. Further details will be provided in due course. Mr Wood also added that Mrs Okoruwa had worked hard for the children of Hackney and her determination, energy and willingness to see things through will rub off on us all and help us to make things more effective.

#### Education in Hackney

- The past is a place that no one wants to go back to.
- Comparisons with the past need to stop.
- Hackney is now a place that others visit to see good practice.

#### **Early Years**

- Great strides have been made however there is more to do to ensure children are accessing good provision.
- 90% of settings are good or better. 100% of settings should be excellent. (The target is 100% outstanding settings.)

#### **Primary Schools**

- Stronger results this year for schools in Hackney.
- The progress of children from ethnic backgrounds is not secure enough for all children in all schools.
- Successful models of intervention that lead to better standards for children need to be shared.
- 15-20% not getting level 4 in English and Maths needs to be addressed.
- SEN children and all barriers to learning also needs to be addressed.

#### **Secondary Schools**

- Progress has been made at KS4.
- 5 schools increased their results and 5 did not. The question as to why progress has not been consistently good in all schools must be asked.
- In some schools 90% of the children achieve A-C in English and Maths, yet in other schools only half achieve that result. The reasons need to be carefully thought through. It cannot simply be as a result of the syllabus having been changed.
- GCSE results should and will improve significantly and governors are helping the leadership in schools to focus on bringing about such improvements.
- It is important for governors to be fearless in understanding why progress has not been as expected.
- Some groups are not doing as well as others

- The experience of working class black children is that they do exceptionally well in some schools but not in others where they have the same resources.

### **Teaching**

- There is a teacher supply crisis.
- It is important that schools are not caught out by the lack of specialist teachers in maths and science. Without an effective supply of teachers it is not possible to have good schools.

### **Post 16**

- A2 results for Stoke Newington School are really impressive.
- Generally the A levels results are not as good as they should be
- Too many students are not getting good enough grades in specialist subjects.
- There are too many small classes and teachers are spread too thinly across classes.
- However the number of children leaving school and going to better universities has increased.
- The gaps in secondary are around vocational education. The University Technology College is closing as it was not serving the needs of Hackney children. It is important to think about the offer being made and how it can be improved. Progress has been made but more needs to be done.
- Vocational offer is currently a high priority.

### **SEN**

- The new changes in SEN are a big challenge for all schools. The way the local authority provides information and support to schools will change.
- There is disproportionality in Hackney in the distribution of children with SEN. Changes brought about by the Educational Health Plans will enable the needs of children with SEN to be met.

### **Schools, institutions and structures**

- Hackney has been at the forefront of working with all types of schools. Hackney is not overly interested in the type of school but more in what it is doing for students.
- The number of federated primary schools is expected to grow.
- There will be an increase in the number of partnerships between secondary schools and primary schools. It is hoped that all secondary schools will form stronger links with primary schools.
- Federations are successful largely due to the quality of leadership.
- There will be a general election. Regardless of the outcome of that election in the future there will be more autonomy for schools.

### **Governors**

- Without good governors you cannot have good schools just as without good teachers you cannot have good schools.

- Issue as to whether governors should be paid will hopefully be resolved. The expertise of governors will be spread and governors will become increasingly responsible for more than one school.

**Governor's Questions:** With your national hat on rather than your local Hackney hat, can we learn anything from any other boroughs?

**Mr Wood's Response:** There are things that other boroughs can learn from us and there are also things that other boroughs do better than us. For example other boroughs do teacher recruitment better than us. We need to think about how to retain teachers particularly specialist teachers. Some boroughs do better with some types of children. Primary Schools in Tower Hamlet have a stronger relationship with certain groups of parents. As a borough we need to continue to share expertise. There is excellence in Hackney schools. However well schools have done in Hackney league tables, there is always more that can be done.

**Governor's Question:** How can governing bodies across schools come together in a more powerful way and do what they do at school level at borough level for all children of Hackney?

**Mr Wood's Response:** The collective voice of governors is important but difficult to get. Governors should work together to demand extra resources for the children of Hackney and shape how the curriculum develops. They must have a perspective on what the future looks like and how the system is mediated. Every head and chair has a responsibility to the children that attend a Hackney school and part of the arrangement of schools is to ensure children have access to good provision. There is a group of children that do not have access to good provision as they are not always attractive to behaviour and league tables. Governors should have more of a collective voice for all children rather than just children within their school. More schools should engage with groups like HASGA.

Cllr Antoinette Bramble, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Governors noted the following from Ms Bramble's presentation:

- Cllr Bramble was appointed to cabinet on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014.
- Governors have an obligation to the children in schools.

- Governors have influence and should not be frightened to ask those uncomfortable difficult questions. That is their role.
- In the long-term governors' role is about getting Headteachers to think differently about how they can do things strategically for the better of children in Hackney.
- The aim is to avoid parents feeling that they only want to send their children to particular schools.

## 2.1 Jill Pitt, School Food Plan/Food for Life Partnership

### *How they can help increase your school's Free School Meal uptake*

Governors noted the following from Ms Pitt's presentation:

- Ms Pitt was asked to deliver a plan for free school meals uptake and make the free schools meals service viable.
- Commitment to a 5% increase in take up.
- There is an obligation under the Education Act to ensure meals are delivered to standards.
- There is new legislation being introduced in January which will help schools to be imaginative with menus
- Communities across Hackney thrive on volunteers and community food projects
- The aim is to increase living quality of family and children and decrease obesity
- School food plan reported on the state of school meals in July. Take up below 50% so making it viable will be a challenge. 50% of children not eating school lunches. This is particularly visible in secondary. Secondary is a lot more of a challenge as parental interaction is a lot more removed than at primary.
- Key to being viable is not reducing food costs but increasing sales and take up.
- In order for schools to succeed in take up, help from governors is needed.

### **Reasons to commit to a 5% increase**

- Increases opportunities for pupil engagement and involvement
- Can improve behaviour, attendance and attainment
- Better food quality through economies of scale
- Potential to boost to school finances
- Increases viability of school meals service
- More appetising food increases the take up of those entitled to free school meals

### **Health profile of hackney**

- ¼ Year 6 children obese which is higher than national average
- The number of children in Hackney living in poverty is higher than the national average

- FSM eligibility – 36%
- GCSE attainment gap currently 14% between those eligible for FSM and those paying

### **Who is Food for Life Partnership?**

- The organisation was established in 2007 and is led by the Soil Association and supported by Garden Organic
- Nearly 5000 have enrolled
- Need more skilled staff in schools as cooking is back on the curriculum
- It is a whole school approach
- Aim is to increase school meal take up
- It features an award winning programme providing a framework which schools use

Change starts with governors and leads to:

- Healthier children
- Improved attainment
- Cohesive community
- Financial benefits

Ms Pitt agreed that the slides would be made available to all governors following the meeting.

### 2.3 Matt Clack, Public Health Team

*The Healthier Hackney Fund, How schools can benefit from this new Hackney Council initiative*

Governors noted the following from Mr Clack's presentation:

- Community grants scheme launched this morning
- Public health is the science and art of promoting and protecting health and well being, preventing ill health and prolonging life through the organised efforts of society.
- Faculty of health is about working together to effect health

### **The grants scheme**

- Hackney's population face a number of huge health challenges including sexual health, smoking, mental health. This is why the scheme has been introduced.
- There are 3 funding streams and £300,000 in total is available
- Healthy activities – Up to £30,000
- Provision of activity relating to one of the two selected issues
  - a – preventing people from starting smoking
  - b – preventing onset of mental ill health in adults and children
- Single point of contact in the council, skills support, councillor champion, communications support
- Healthy ideas – Up to £8,000

- Radically new approaches to tackling entrenched problems relating to substance misuse and sexual health
- Healthy neighbourhoods – Up to £1,000
- Interested in groups with no money or less than £50,000
  - Small scale neighbourhood based projects
  - Improving local health and narrowing the gap between local communities
  - Health and wellbeing prospects
  - Structured groups of local residents
  - Parent associations

Governors noted that in addition to the funds the council would also offer all successful bidders ongoing communications support and skills support plus a single point of contact in the council.

Non-profit organisations are eligible to apply. Applications open on the 6<sup>th</sup> October. The closing date for all applications is the 19<sup>th</sup> December. The project is due to start on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

In response to a question from a governor Mr Clack confirmed that if a school developed a model for a sports day that was linked to athletics then such a group would be eligible to apply.

In response to a further query Mr Clack also confirmed that joint bids are welcome providing there is a main contact. Sole capital projects will not be supported however.

#### Residential School Keepers

Alison Kriel, Headteacher, Northwold, introduced the subject of residential school keepers. The following was noted:

Northwold is going through the process of converting to being an academy. In July the council announced changes to residential school keepers. Northwold has employed a residential keeper for some time. They receive a reduced salary that takes this into account. There are other benefits to having the school keeper on the school grounds. Non-residential school keepers could not afford to live in Hackney. Playground space is already at a premium. A meeting has been arranged with the DfE in two weeks.

It was noted that Hammersmith and Fulham had been through a similar process that resulted in an increase in salary to enable the residential keepers to live in a non-residential property.

It was further noted that the school had tried to negotiate through the unions and find a way of saving the role but all attempts had proved unsuccessful.

### 3. Refreshments and Networking Break

#### 4. HASGA Business

##### 4.1 Minutes

**AGREED** as an accurate record

##### 4.2 Meetings Attended

The Chair informed governors that the Children and Scrutiny Commission is currently interested in child minding and childcare.

##### 4.3 AOB

The Chair reminded governors of the papers circulated with the agenda.

##### 4.4 Dates for next year's meetings

8 December 2014	11 February 2015
24 March 2015	12 May 2015
8 July 2015	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_