

London Borough of Hackney
Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission
Municipal Year 2025/26
Date of Meeting Monday 12 January 2026

Minutes of the proceedings of the
Children and Young People
Scrutiny Commission held at
Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street,
London E8 1EA

Chair	Councillor Sophie Conway
Councillors in Attendance	Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice-Chair), Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock, Cllr George Gooch, Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Cllr Patrick Pinkerton, Cllr Midnight Ross, Cllr Sheila Suso-Runge, Cllr Lynne Troughton, Cllr Claudia Turbet-Delof and Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas
Apologies:	Jahnine Davis.
Co-optees	Duval Middleton, Lisa Neidich and Hashim Rawat
In Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DM Bramble, Cabinet member for Children Services & Young People• Cllr Susan Fajana Thomas, Cabinet member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services• Dawn Carter-McDonald, Chief Executive• Jacque Burke, Group Director Children & Education• Jason Marantz, Director of Education & Inclusion• Diane Benjamin, Director of Children's Social Care• Jim Gamble, Independent Safeguarding Children Commissioner, CHSCP• Sir Alan Wood;• Rory McCallum, Senior Professional Adviser, CHSCP• Geeta Subramaniam, Director Environment & Climate Change & Public Realm• Jason Davis, Acting Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery• Dujon Harvey, Assistant Director Employment Skills and Adult Learning• Kieran Read, Director of Corporate Strategy & Transformation• Amy Wilkinson, Workstream Director, Public Health Unit, Children, Adults and Community Health• Deji Adeosun, Accountability Board Members.
Members of Press/ Public	1

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Councillor Sophie Conway in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Jahnine Davis, Parent Governor Representative.

2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 There were no urgent items of business.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 CHSCP Child Safeguarding Practice Review - Mossbourne Victoria Park Academy (19.05)

4.1 Following the concerns raised by parents, local safeguarding partners agreed to undertake a Child Safeguarding Practice Review of the impact of the school behaviour policy at Mossbourne Victoria Park Academy (MVPA) in December 2024. The focus of the review was to identify any lessons learned concerning the application of behaviour policies and how this impacted on students, families, staff and the wider school community.

4.2 The report of the City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) of the CSPR was published on the 9th December 2025. The Commission agreed to review the conclusions and recommendations of the report to assess the strategic implications for CHSCP, the local authority and the Department of Education. The Chair noted that:

- Alan Parnum, Interim Regional Director, Department of Education (DfE) could not attend but submitted a written response to questions from the Commission (included in agenda pack);
- Although not the focus of this scrutiny, MVPA were notified of this meeting and sent a response to the Commission 9th January 2025 (included in the agenda pack).

Jim Gamble - Independent Safeguarding Commissioner for CHSCP

4.3 The safeguarding review process and how this review into MVPA came about was set out by Jim Gamble the Independent Safeguarding Commissioner:

- Concerns were raised over a significant period about the application of the school's behaviour policy and its impact on children, families, and some staff. Early attempts by the lead member and officers to engage with the school were unsuccessful. It was also noted that the DfE was also involved in facilitating engagement with the school.
- The Independent Commissioner visited the MVPA for reassurance, met the school leadership, toured the school and found it quiet and orderly. An attempt to find a solution with the school failed as the view from the school was that complaints from parents were vexatious. After the visit CHSCP began receiving non-anonymous emails and phone calls from parents and staff (former and current). These communications described a consistent narrative of concerns,

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- including the "Mossbourne Way" encouraging "healthy fear," the use of shouting by teachers, and the practice of removing disruptive children and putting them on desks in the corridor (referred to as "desked"). This was also seen as 'messaging' to the wider school as much as addressing poor behaviour.
- Based on the information gathered, a subgroup meeting of CHSCP was held, and it was unanimously agreed that the criteria for a statutory Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) was met. This decision was challenged by the school but was ratified at the most senior level across partners. All through this time, further evidence was accumulating with CHSCP, all of which related to consistent themes.
 - MVPA approach to CHSCP became adversarial. The school engaged lawyers to manage correspondence and requests for information, which was noted as unprecedented in the experience of CHSCP. MVPA also commissioned its own King's Counsel-led review, despite advice against duplicating the effort and spending public money.
 - The CHSCP commissioned Sir Alan Wood to lead the CSPR due to his credible background, which included authoring the Wood Review and his involvement in the founding of the Mossbourne Schools.
 - The CSPR process was described as "difficult and elongated," with the school allegedly minimising a number of issues and delaying the provision of key data, noting that a substantive piece of data requested in February 2025 was not received until November 2025.
 - It was confirmed that the CHSCP had met with the Regional Director for Education and that the Department for Education unequivocally accepted the Wood Safeguarding Review of MVPA. There was also some degree of confusion over the academy's intent to "test the evidence", especially as the findings were based on information the school itself had provided.

Sir Alan Wood (CHSCP Report Lead)

4.4 The CSPR commissioned Sir Alan Wood to undertake the CSPR into MVPA. Sir Alan highlighted the following to the Commission.

- The review validated that many of the concerns reported by parents, pupils, teachers, staff, and agency workers "fit a pattern" suggesting that issues had occurred. The review's role was to identify and test themes, not to challenge individual testimonies.
- The central problems were identified as: failures in leadership, accountability, and governance at the academy, specifically around the implementation of the behaviour policy. Sir Alan concluded that children at MVPA have been let down in each of these areas.
- The review did not challenge the excellence of the school's academic results or the levels of attendance. The focus was entirely on how the behaviour policy was being implemented and its impact on children, not the academic performance of the school.
- Members of the Mossbourne Federation, whose role is to ensure the school is effective, should lead the response to the report and its recommendations. This includes addressing the leadership challenges identified. It was clear that there was a failure of governance at both the local and federation level to address issues arising from behaviour management at the school.
- It was emphasised that the Executive and senior leadership team at Mossbourne must stop the "constant negativity" and "unwillingness to cooperate" with the review. Unless the executive can accept and respond to the report, "nothing will change." This must be addressed by the Mossbourne Federation.
- A number of sustainable improvements were identified within the CSPR which the behaviour policy must address:
 - Additional training of school staff;
 - Modelling of good behaviour by staff must be part of the behaviour policy;

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- Ensure that the behaviour policy accounts for the different needs of children, including those who are neurodiverse or have special educational needs;
- Ensure the additional support arrangements (Behaviour Support Unit, Alternative Placement Centre) are led by skilled people with expertise in behaviour, which Sir Alan noted was currently not the case.

Deputy Mayor Bramble (Cabinet member Children Services & Young People)

4.5 DM Bramble (DMB), noted that the local authority is considering the report in detail and plans to work with MVPA and other academies to provide support and bring critical challenge. The review highlighted the opportunity to discuss the new Hackney Education three-year strategy and the ongoing importance of partnership working and collaboration between schools and the local authority.

4.6 DMB indicated that she had been in contact with the Executive Head at Mossbourne, Peter Hughes, who indicated that the Trust is carefully reviewing the report. It was suggested that a detailed response was not possible as the report was published shortly before the Christmas holiday.

- JG - It was emphasised that Mossbourne Federation had received the report on November 26th 2026, and it was not good enough that the school had not provided a response given the nature and seriousness of the concerns laid out in the report. It was noted that school had reconvened after the holidays and that children and their parents should know what is happening.

4.7 DMB addressed a previous concerning incident about children soiling themselves. It was clarified, based on a conversation with the Executive head teacher, that the school's policy is that children can go to the toilet if they wish, but they must make up that time later in the school day. This was stated to refute any implication that the policy prevents children from using the toilet.

4.8 DMB concluded by stating there would be further conversations with the head teacher after the Mossbourne Trust had considered the report in its entirety. The Director of Education would also be following up issues raised in the report with the school.

Chief Executive

4.9 Dawn Carter McDonald (DCM), Chief Executive Officer of Hackney Council thanked Jim Gamble and Rory McCallum for their leadership on this issue and Sir Alan Wood for conducting the review. DCM also acknowledged the political leadership on this subject and the role the local authority has taken in supporting this challenge. DCM also emphasised that it was really important that all of the parents and children know that there are people who are listening in the local authority, and understand that the authority wants to see the required changes implemented.

Questions from the Commission

4.10 The Chair highlighted concerns centred on the effectiveness of oversight. Given the documented frustrations, the adversarial response of the school, and the school's historical conduct of being "dismissive and defensive," what authority or specific mechanisms will ensure these recommendations are implemented, and what happens if the school fails to fully engage with the process? How will the Safeguarding Children Partnership translate the recommendations into concrete action and ensure the required changes are made with the necessary urgency?

- Sir Alan Wood (AW) indicated that oversight of this report's recommendations is contingent upon the school leadership working effectively with its governance structures to lay out a comprehensive programme of change and improvement. It was expected that, in the spirit of cooperation and partnership, they should be sharing this programme with the Safeguarding Partnership and the Director of Education and the local authority broadly to demonstrate willingness. Sir Alan's

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- role as the commissioned reviewer ceased upon delivery of the report and upon speaking with the Commission at this meeting, and will therefore not have a role in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations. The ultimate process of oversight and determining the timing of that oversight falls to CHSCP.
- (JG) Noted that there were now ongoing discussions with MVPA and with local education leaders and this was constructive. The DfE has confirmed its support for the review and would use what levers it had available to ensure that there was progress against the recommendations at the school. Once the Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) is commissioned, it will formally add the resultant actions into its action plan overview that is monitored within the Safeguarding Children Partnership. The CHSCP will maintain active oversight on this process not only to ensure that recommendations are acted upon, but also at pace. It was hoped that the members from Mossbourne Federation would take a firm leadership position, make a public statement that they accept the evidence-based review of Sir Alan Wood, embrace the findings, and commit to moving at pace. If, given its fundamentally independent nature, the CHSCP becomes concerned that recommendations are not being addressed, this issue will be raised publicly and privately.
 - (JG) This debate is being obscured by an ideological debate in education, a false dichotomy of "Zero tolerance versus chaos." CHSCP absolutely agreed with the need for order, structure, and discipline to prevent children from disrupting lessons for others. However, CHSCP must adhere to the core findings from the young people who engaged in the Child Q review, who stated that discipline needs to be fair, consistent, and be delivered with sensitivity and compassion. This is the balance CHSCP will seek.
 - Jacquie Burke, Group Director (JB) noted that engagement had taken place with the DfE as soon as this report was published. Meetings were held to discuss the recommendations and how these could be taken forward. Meetings had also taken place with Ofsted London Regional Inspectorate to also discuss the implications of this review for future inspections, noting that a new inspection framework was being implemented which will place a greater emphasis on school inclusion. The local authority was also reflecting on the recommendations set out in the report to understand their relevance and application to the wider secondary school system. There had been good engagement from local secondary heads in the development of the HE Strategy 2025-2028 which had children's wellbeing at its heart and had recently been agreed by Cabinet.

4.11 The Chair noted that the threshold for triggering this extraordinary review has been a source of discussion. Locally the Commission have heard many concerns regarding the mental health of children, emotional-based school non-attendance and broader inclusion issues for children with special education needs. Why was the decision to escalate to this level made now and not before, when concerns have accumulated for so long?

- (JG) The process took a significant period of time to get to this point, and the Commission has put its finger on a truly critical aspect. Because the school has an outstanding reputation for academic excellence and benefits from a significant level of community support, the initial phase was dedicated to verifying what was going on and attempting to collaborate with the school. Our officers, the elected members, and the DfE attempted to facilitate engagement with the school to provide a level of reassurance that these matters would be addressed. It was considered that trying to reconcile the situation without resorting to the CSPR mechanism was a sensible approach. The response of the school necessitated the CSPR.
- (JG) It was acknowledged that the review did take a long time to commence. The review was not advocating "throwing the baby out with the bathwater" accepting that the school is academically outstanding. It was clear however, that for a small but significant minority of children at MVPA no exceptions are made

within the application of the behaviour policy and the school needs to reset the balance in its approach to welfare and behaviour.

4.12 The Chair asked what was the moment or evidence that finally tipped the balance after the initial attempts at reconciliation?

- (JG) When that initial collaboration failed, when the school failed to grasp the opportunity that was presented, CHSCP gained access to additional evidence before the review was commissioned. This evidence provided a greater level of triangulation vis-à-vis the allegations, including both anonymous and non-anonymous accounts, and was supported by contact from teachers and others within the school which was extremely credible and reflected exactly the concerns CHSCP had heard. This provided the necessary basis for commissioning the extraordinary review. It was acknowledged that CHSCP had learned lessons itself through this process and would not wait as long again in the future. This however was the reality of learning process.

4.13 Cllr Turbet-Delof was deeply concerned about the report's finding that students have to make up for the time that they have spent in the toilet. This could be seen as punitive and appears to violate an almost fundamental human right. Is this a policy the council is accepting, and if not, how is it being challenged?

The Chair also noted that this also created a serious equality issue, as menstruating people and students with medical conditions would be disproportionately affected.

- (DMB) Indicated that they were not aware that the school had already had the report for a number of weeks before her conversation with them, but would be going back to further press the school on this and other issues. It was reiterated that a myriad of issues had been previously raised with the head teacher, including what allowances were made for children with additional needs.

4.14 Cllr Gordon remained extremely concerned about the degree of accountability the school faced, and expressed disappointment that the Department for Education (DfE) was not present at the meeting. This case clearly provided further evidence for the need for greater local accountability of schools which were educating local children. Furthermore, the school was recently awarded 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, despite its most recent report failing to build on serious concerns highlighted in the first two inspections. What concrete actions are being taken to engage these external agencies, and what is the local authority and CHSCP observation on Ofsted's role as an accountability partner? Are there sufficient local levers to support change?

- (AW) was of the view that changes coming forward in the Ofsted inspection framework were long overdue. They will be looking in more detail at the impact of policies on children in a more holistic way beyond just academic outcomes. It was believed that the school's very success and the power of their Federation created a situation where there was some anxiety in both the DfE and Ofsted about how to effectively deal with the concerns put forward by parents, teachers and of course children. It was felt that there was a lacunae—a significant gap—in the accountability structure of all schools (maintained, academy, and church schools), when there should be one singular approach which is consistent across the entire education system.

4.15 Cllr Binnie-Lubbock emphasised that MVPA should be teaching children about collaboration and learning, which is what it should be doing in relation to this safeguarding report. Have CHSCP and the LA had an opportunity to reflect on the answers that the DfE have provided in response to questions sent by the Commission?

- (JG) The Academy is formally designated as a relevant agency by virtue of legislation, allowing CHSCP to formally request that they meet the safeguarding standards that it sets. Regarding the DfE's published response to scrutiny, I welcome that they and Ofsted are taking the findings seriously, but the rest of the DfE's answers are largely template, stating general policy without being contextualised to the particular situation. It would be very useful to follow up with

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the DfE to seek an expectation of feedback about their assessment of what the Academy is doing and what they will do if specific timelines are not met. Furthermore, CHSCP has a mechanism developed from the Child Q Review, the reassurance and update report within a year of publication, and this can be used to provide persistent and consistent oversight until changes have been demonstrably made. It was also emphasised that the pattern of engagement exhibited by MVPA was not normally experienced among other schools it had worked with.

4.16 Cllr Binnie-Lubbock was also concerned about how children with SEND have been disproportionately impacted by the behaviour policy at MVPA, and asked if Hackney Education would commit to undertaking the recommended review of EHCPs at the school to ensure that student support is being adequately provided?

- Jason Marantz, Director of Education (JM) The issue of Education, Health and Care Plans and annual reviews was a topic raised during the partnership's recent SEND Ofsted inspection in November 2025. While the letter and its recommendations were forthcoming and not yet published for detailed discussion, Hackney Education, as an education system was already looking at best practice in this space. Hackney Education will be looking at how to best ensure that EHC plans for children across all schools were implemented, not just at MVPA and this would be brought back to a future meeting for consideration. It was also emphasised that the new Hackney Education Strategy was agreed by Cabinet in December, following extensive consultation and engagement with families, children, school leaders, and community partners. This plan dictates the work for the next three years and makes three very clear systemic commitments: a commitment to being anti-racist, a commitment to working in partnership with parents and carers, and a commitment to health and well-being. HE is actively working with all schools—maintained, independent, and academies—to consider the best ways to embed and deliver this new vision.

4.17 The Chair noted from the report that MVPA had higher retention rate loss of children at the school than the national average, yet this was not identified or acted upon by governors or the board. As a result of the work of this Commission on off-rolling of pupils, the local authority agreed to establish a system of challenge to local secondary schools which have higher rates of children moving off school roll in years 8/9. Is this challenge still provided by the Local Authority to schools with higher levels of pupils moving off-roll? Given that this system did not address the issues at Mossbourne Victoria Park, should this process be reviewed?

- (JM) As part of its work for a number of years operates a Keeping in Touch Programme with all schools, maintained and academies. This programme provides a space for Hackney Education to challenge and raise specific issues with local schools. Hackney Education will review this to ensure it is working optimally. An Assistant Director role within Hackney Education also has a specific remit to consider school-off rolling.
- The Chair noted that the focus now should not be on data collection but upon action, and if the Local Authority does not have the appropriate levers then it should be lobbying the central government to support local action.

4.18 Cllr Suso-Runge asked what concerns were raised about the school's "constructive engagement" and information sharing during the review?

- (JG) stated that while the school is a "relevant agency" and duty-bound to engage, the process of seeking information was "slow," "filtered through legal representation for the school," and initially involved "redacted" information. CHSCP described this engagement as not being genuine, citing the school commissioning an expensive, additional review to mirror part of the main safeguarding review, and the constant use of a legal firm for communication, which it was felt should not be accepted for a safeguarding review. Engagement

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from MVPA had not been constructive and the CHSCP has not experienced this level of resistance to the very difficult challenges posed by the Child Q CSCR.

- (AW) provided two specific examples: The school, after seven weeks, provided data on 127,000 sanctions (issued over three years) as a closed, 22,000-page PDF, claiming they couldn't provide it in any other form because the staff member who created it had left. They did not provide an analysis of this data when asked to do so by CHSCP. Secondly, when seeking details on a permanent exclusion, a solicitor from the school asked the review team to "please explain what you mean by permanent exclusion," despite the phrase appearing multiple times in a document the school had been considering at the time.

4.19 Cllr Gooch asked if CHSCP and senior and political leaders in the council had seen or heard of the system in which children were expected to make up time after school for toilet breaks?

- Unanswered.

4.20 Cllr Gooch asked if the CHSCP had confidence in the current school leadership at MVPA to deliver the required changes set out in the report?

- (JG) Returning to the issue of confidence, it was hard to have confidence in a governing body which did not see that the behaviour policy was having a disproportionate impact on certain groups of children. JG expressed no confidence, noting that the governing body was not alive to these issues of disproportionality. MVPA must be judged by what it does not by what it says, yet the Principal's immediate post-review statement to parents claimed that they "will not recognise our school in this safeguarding report" which undermined the review's credibility. It was suggested that if he were the chair of the governing body, he "would have already resigned" and that senior leadership should be "radically reflecting on my position" because "culture and tone is set from the very top." If it was acknowledged by the school that it uses shouting as a tool to manage behaviour, what does that say about behaviour management and expectations of children: shouting is a way to get things done. Significant concerns about the school remain. The DfE needs to challenge the school to make sure this issue is being taken seriously. There was a concern that the proposed changes would be 'lost' in the ambiguity of arguments.
- (AW) Stated that if the members do not get control of this process, then nothing will change and concluded that "something in the leadership has got to change, both on the governance side and on the executive side. The status quo will not work.

4.21 The Chair questioned the term "disproportionality," arguing it "masks discrimination and racism" and asked what action is taken beyond collecting data. What action is being taken to address unequal way in which sanctions schools are applying, and how was the link to racism addressed? How do authorities plan to take this up with the DfE and Ofsted?

- (JG) Highlighted the issue, noting that Black Caribbean and Black African boys, as well as children with special educational needs, are "four or five times more likely than white counterparts" to be placed in the Behavioural Support Unit (described as a "detention space") at MVPA. Identifying disproportionality is the beginning of the challenge and the agencies need to establish the underlying causes. CHSCP affirmed the Child Q report refused to use the word "unconscious bias," asserting that statutory authorities must be conscious of the impact they have. Suggesting that this is commonplace everywhere is deflecting the debate and not tackling the issues under its control. It was also hoped that the DfE would also be drilling into why such disproportionalities were occurring at MVPA school.
- (DMB) added that the council's Hackney Education team and the Children and Families Service has adopted a very proactive approach on having an anti-racist

practice way of working, which includes training and challenging bias. It was upsetting to note that children of a certain skin colour or disability were treated differently under the same system. This discussion needs to take place within the MVPA itself as to why it is experiencing a disproportionate impact of their behaviour policies.

4.22 Councillor Ross emphasised that the voice of the child is central to any effective service provision and asked how local partners can establish adequate mechanisms for children to report concerns that are acknowledged, believed and acted upon.

- (JG) stated that CHSCP philosophy is that children should be "seen, heard and helped." Following the Child Q review, the local authority is already committed to finding a mechanism to double down on seeking the voice of our children and young people from within school. For this review, the voice of the child was considered "critical," but to avoid "re-traumatising" some children, the evidence was triangulated" using data from "other surveys that had already taken place.
- (JM) Noted that this was a report about one school in Hackney and that there was generally strong practice among local schools in obtaining pupil voice. As Director of Education it was incumbent on his role to share best practices locally to help improve provision across the local education system. It was also noted that Local Authorities are not funded for any school improvement work for academies, only maintained schools.

4.23 Councillor Pinkerton raised the issue of informal methods of classroom exclusion such as "desking," for which schools are not required to collect data. What advice will the Local Authority consider issuing to schools on the use of these informal methods of exclusion? What representations will the local authority and other safeguarding partners make to the DfE (the regulator) and Ofsted (inspection) around introducing greater safeguards for use of informal methods of pupil exclusion?

- (JM) In terms of local practice in other schools, it was noted that the Director of Education wrote to all schools (all heads and governors) and encouraged school leadership to reflect on their own policies and practice in this policy area. A number of governing bodies had responded positively to indicate that they intended to review their policies.
- (AW) noted that the review's appendix 5 compares the school's practice of "desking" with Department for Education (DfE) guidance and found that the school "currently does not meet the guidance by a long, long way." The school has indicated that they are going to "seek advice and guidance from the DfE" on whether their operation of "the removal of children from the classroom" meets the DfE guidance.

4.24 Cllr Gordon asked what advice would Sir Alan give for the review on best practice in behaviour management for Hackney schools, particularly concerning recommendations for improving inclusion and consultation with stakeholders?

- (AW) The current models for behaviour policies (strict or programmatic), often devised in the 90s and early 2000s, are no longer fit for purpose. They fail to address the significant growth in children identified with mental health challenges or various spectrums over the last 10 years. A cultural approach to behaviour is needed, which involves engaging with people in the context they are in. We can't blame schools and we can't blame teachers, but we should be challenging the models that they are using. Any review, like the one at Mossbourne, should start engagement with discussions with parents, pupils, other agencies, and staff, building from the bottom up. A significant narrative that was evident at the school was that children have to just learn to keep their heads down and keep under the radar, which was not about positive and enjoyable educational experience.
- (AW) The authority must start from the base that "we haven't got the tools" and need to build new to models by having a different approach to understanding behaviour. This is necessary to avoid misidentifying sensitivity and response to

issues as misbehaviour. In so many instances, children have not wilfully denied instruction, their own predisposition just does not allow them to comply.

4.25 Cllr Binnie-Lubbock asked what is the council's policy and purpose for appointing Hackney Education staff as trustees/governors, and does this dual role present a potential conflict of interest?

- (JB) Hackney Council has a long tradition of having staff members as part of its governing bodies, giving staff paid time off for these civic responsibilities. This policy, combined with the young governor's scheme, has successfully diversified the membership of school governing bodies. The core issue is less about the dual role and more about what is expected of governing bodies. The council is currently reviewing how it organises and supports school governors to ensure they are asking for and scrutinizing the right information to identify areas of concern.

4.26 Cllr Turbet-Delof noted the number of reviews and policy developments which have taken place on this issue without any success. Is there anything else that local authorities can do to end and break the cycle of ineffective school behaviour policies?

- (AW) The main suggestion, as provided by Sir Alan Wood, is to address the underlying models. The current policies are not designed to meet modern challenges. Local authorities need to "build new tools" and have a "different approach to understand behaviour," which involves starting with engagement with the people impacted.

4.27 The Chair highlighted the commission's concluding points and next steps following the discussion?

- It is disappointing that no representative from the DfE could be present here this evening as there are clear policy implications of the safeguarding practice report in relation to child safeguarding, behaviour management, and accountability of academies which need to be addressed.
- Many of the issues raised by the MVPA child safeguarding practice review are not new to this Commission: disproportional impact of behaviour policies, lack of adjustments provided by schools to children with SEND, parental dissatisfaction with school complaints policies.
- The Chair of the commission also noted the need to explore the role of local authority governors further, especially in the academy structure, to ensure disproportionality data is adequately scrutinised.
- The report clearly is of local and national significance in terms of behaviour management. It will undoubtedly inform the ongoing work of the Commission in this area, and it would seem appropriate for the Commission to raise the concerns identified here in discussion today, directly to the regulator (DfE) and with education Ministers.
- (DMB) Confirmed that the Local Authority had written to the Secretary of State once the report was released.

5 CHSCP Annual Report 2024/25 (20.05)

5.1 The City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership is required to produce an annual report of its safeguarding activities as well as setting out priorities for the year ahead. The latest annual report (2024/25) is presented to the Commission to note and review.

5.2 The Commission noted the Annual Report, which was taken as read due to time constraints. Further questions related to the report are to be picked up and noted in a future meeting.

5.3 Cllr Binnie-Lubbock, what work has been done within the partnership or council to prevent or address any trauma that young people may experience at the hands of G4S as residents of Oak Hill?

- (JB) The Chair of the Safe Young Hackney Partnership Board confirmed a close relationship with any child in custody. Following concerns about Oak Hill, the council spoke directly with the young people involved and Youth Justice counterparts in government to ensure their safety. Individual plans were being produced, and risk assessments were conducted to determine the best course of action (move or remain). The well-being and experiences of the children are taken very seriously, acknowledging the harsh environments of all prison settings for young people.

5.4 Cllr Gordon asked if the Commission could be updated on any safeguarding incidents at local unregistered settings and the progress of the Education and Wellbeing Bill progressing through Parliament intended to improve regulation over these settings?

- (JG) The issue has been a perennial concern since 2013. There is national progress with the pending Education and Wellbeing Bill, which is hoped to provide regulatory alignment through amendments.
- (JM) Local constructive engagement has been established with a Yeshiva liaison committee, representing a fair number of yeshivas. This marks a positive shift from a past attitude of resistance to welcoming the council to review their activities. The council is keen to execute its duties and is engaging with both the community and the Department for Education (DfE), particularly regarding funding mentioned by the DfE for this space.

5.5 The Chair concluded that the breadth and richness of the data detailing the safeguarding activity of the Child Safeguarding Partnership should be fully acknowledged.

5.6 (JG) Noted that the CHSCP was only as strong as the partnership. There has been positive progress in partnership working was noted, including:

- Children and Family Services are now recognised as "good with an upward trajectory."
- The Metropolitan Police Service has been moved "out of engage."
- Partners, including the Integrated Care Board (ICB) in health, the local authority, and the police service, are navigating a "deep and broad reform agenda" amid significant cuts.

5.7 The Chair thanked all partners and individuals responsible for safeguarding children in the borough and welcomed the progress achieved through partnership working.

6 Improving Outcomes for Black Children & Young People

6.1 The improving outcomes for young Black men programme commenced in 2014. The purpose of this programme is to plan, prioritise and coordinate local systems change to address local inequalities as experienced by Black boys and young men. The overarching aim being that outcomes and opportunities for black boys and young men in Hackney would be the same as the wider population within a 10-15-year period.

6.2 In 2023, the scope of the programme expanded to encompass improving outcomes for Black girls and young women and was renamed Improving Outcomes for Black Children and Young People. A local accountability board was established in 2020, with the purpose of holding the Council to account and to oversee and review targeted work streams.

6.3 The improving outcomes for young black men programme was last scrutinised by the Commission in February 2020, details of submitted reports and minutes of this meeting can be found here. A 10-year evaluation of the programme is currently being scoped and this is therefore a good opportunity for scrutiny to review progress and achievements as well as future plans for this work.

Improving Outcomes for Black Children & Young People (IOBCYP)

6.4 DM Bramble (DMB) noted that it was a privilege to lead this work, underscoring the dedication of elected members and officers, in collaboration with the voluntary sector, to tackle local inequalities. There were a number of key milestones:

- Pre 2015 - Senior officers, elected members, and the voluntary sector began work on how to interpret and collaborate on existing data related to inequalities.
- 2015 - The Inspirational Leaders Programme was launched, leading to work in schools and empowering young leaders.
- 2020: The Accountability Board was established, led by the community, with initial key themes:
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Health
- The work expanded to include all children and young people (boys and girls) and a theme of Reducing Harm.

6.5 DM Bramble highlighted key areas of progress within this body of work:

- Leadership and Staffing: Work was led initially by Juliet Coley and is now headed by Deji Adeosun. Councillor Kennedy and the speaker co-lead a piece of work on health alongside the community, chaired by Patrick Vernon.
- Employment: Efforts were made with employers (including via Hackney CVS) to look at different ways to employ young people from diverse backgrounds without lowering standards.
- Reducing Harm: Work led by Community Safety Team, and Councillor Fajana Thomas involves engaging with children and young people through a detached youth work service, aiming to reach those who do not attend youth centres.
- Mental Health: A significant focus is on bespoke mental health services and cultural competency to provide the right, safe environment for conversations, challenging the myth that black people, especially men, do not talk.
- Anti-Racism: The council is openly discussing racism and committed to having an anti-racist practice to address it.
- Education and Inclusion:
 - The Diverse Curriculum written by Hackney teachers, provides positive images of the contributions of black people to the country, emphasising that this is a shared history.
 - The 'no need to exclude' policy was acknowledged as a test case, where exclusion still occurred despite the mandate. The importance of learning from the primary school sector's success (one exclusion in five years) and emulating this in the secondary sector was stressed.
 - Despite black pupils achieving high academic results on a national level, a local focus is needed to ensure this data improves, with an expectation that Hackney's best leaders collaborate to improve outcomes for all children, regardless of skin colour.
- Health and Police: Work is underway with Councillor Kennedy and Amy Wilkins on a commissioning framework for cultural competency around health inequalities. The Cabinet member for Community Safety and her team were leading on building trust and confidence with the police. The Director of Education and the speaker were working with the voluntary sector on a framework to strengthen inclusion with schools.

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6.6 DM Bramble acknowledged the deeply distressing fact that in 2026, children and young people are still treated differently based on the colour of their skin, but reaffirmed Hackney's reputation for innovation and its serious commitment to combating this through the current work to ensure all children in Hackney thrive.

6.7 Dawn Carter-McDonald, Chief Executive (DCM) acknowledged the Chair's statement on the significant and disheartening impact of historical disadvantages and negative statistics on Black children (specifically Black Caribbean, Black Afro Caribbean, and Black African backgrounds) in Hackney. Whilst acknowledging the Hackney Council's ambitious and innovative start a decade ago, it was noted that it hadn't made the strides that it should have and there was a significant way to go to ensure disadvantages don't negatively impact Black children further. It was noted that Deputy Mayor Bramble's commitment to Black children achieving above national expectations does not diminish the disproportionality still faced across the borough.

6.8 (DCM) The Chief Executive made a number of commitments to support the work of IOBCYP:

- To build much stronger working relationships with statutory partners, including education, police, and health, as disproportionality is consistent across these services.
- To go "deeper and... bolder" in efforts to eradicate racism across the system in all its forms.
- To remain committed to tangible change for black children and young people, regardless of how long it takes.
- To empower and enable the voluntary community sector to advise and help shape services that meet the specific needs of Black children and families.

6.9 (DCM) The local accountability board plays an important role in this work as it helps to provide challenge to the council. Having critical friend challenge from the community was important to ensure that the Council and its partners remained committed to this work and made the necessary improvements to the lives of black children and young people.

6.10 Jason Davis, Head of Policy & Strategic Delivery (JD) presented to the Commission highlighting key aspects of the interim review and report as detailed in the agenda pack.

- The formal work began in 2015 to improve outcomes for young black men, with its origins tracing back to the 2011 civil disturbances. The initiative has consistently operated on a "test and learn" approach, with continuous review and refinement over the years. The work was intended from the outset as a genuine collaboration with community partners. HCVs (voluntary and community sector organisations) were instrumental in developing the Young Leadership Model. The sustained focus over a 10-year period has been instrumental in shifting the council's conversation and culture, enabling a greater ability to discuss the impact of racism and systemic racism on both residents and staff.
- In terms of governance and accountability, the Community Accountability Board (CAB) was established in 2020 with directly recruited residents. The Board is chaired by Juliet Coley (Senior Deputy Head Teacher), with co-chair Deji Adeosun and members including Davis Williams, Renee Henry Kemp, Alanis Hernandez, and Joseph Dixon. The board acts as a "critical friend," holding leaders to account in their decision-making, checking program progress, offering challenge, and making recommendations for improvement.
- A number of key achievements were highlighted including:
 - Work on the decolonisation of the curriculum.
 - Collaboration with community partners to improve trust and confidence within the police force.
 - Rolled out culturally specific well-being initiatives, such as "Think in Spaces" and non-violent resistance training (in collaboration with HCVs).

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- Work through employment and skills to provide routes to employment for those impacted by gangs.
- Plans for the next 5 years for this work included:
 - Embedding the goal of improving outcomes and addressing disproportionality within mainstream service delivery—making it an integral part of strategic and service plans across directorates, rather than viewing it as "additional work." This is essential for systems change.
 - Renewed efforts are required to ensure improvements are "baked into the system" for sustainable change, building upon developed learning and expertise.
 - Additional focus on developing the approach to communications with residents is necessary to maintain engagement and involvement. This includes ensuring black communities, children, and young people are informed and have opportunities to lead the work.
 - The intention is to revisit the council's role in national lobbying, acknowledging that many challenges are due to wider system and governmental policies.
 - A planning evaluation will take the learning to co-produce the program design for the next five years, involving residents, communities, and specifically black children and young people.
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Community Accountability Board

6.11 Deji Adeosun from the Community Accountability Board spoke to the Commission about the Improving Outcomes for Black Children and Young People Programme (IOBCYP).

- The 10-year-old programme originated from work following the London disturbances to counter negative perceptions (gangs, knives, violence) of young black men in Hackney and promote positive self-image and successes.
- A number of successful projects were identified:
 - Inspirational Leaders: Connects young black role models (future doctors, lawyers, community leaders) with young people to show alternative paths.
 - The Tree of Life: Provides dedicated mental health support for the black community, now active in 10-11 secondary schools.
 - Black Book Fair: Highlights and showcases positivity with black authors and intergenerational attendance.
 - Pillar Organisations: Acknowledged the work of groups like African Community School and Father to Father.
- IOBCYP still had a number of challenges:
 - Systemic Racism & Parity: The core issue is identified as systemic racism, not just disproportionality, with a call to go further to bring parity.
 - Accountability & Measurement: A "missed trick" was the initial lack of targets; called for measures and data to be set for the next three to five years to ensure accountability and track impact.
- Resourcing:
 - Senior Leaders: More resources and time are needed for senior leaders to reflect on and embed the programme due to heavy caseloads.
 - Voluntary Sector (VCS): Heavy reliance on the un-resourced "goodwill" of the voluntary sector is unsustainable; pillar organisations are "dying" and need more than "lip service" to be saved, as their loss means losing decades of connection and expertise.
 - Accountability Board: The board itself needs more time and resources to properly quiz senior leaders, look through data, and hold them to account.
- Decision Making: The Accountability Board requests to be more embedded in senior leadership decisions to "reflect and idealise the ideas together," rather than only hearing reports on completed work.

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- It was stressed that the programme has been crucial in the borough, and they "dread to think" what incidents (like Child Q) may have occurred had it not been in place, while also acknowledging they are still "falling short of the required standards" at times. The resilience of young people performing "in spite of" the system was highlighted.

6.12 The Chair thanked the Community Accountability Board for its candour in reflecting on the work of the IOBCYP. Cooperative efforts to address local inequalities, among black children and young people was important as the Commission continued to highlight poorer outcomes that many young people continued to experience in relation to education, health and social welfare. It was therefore important to keep this work in the agenda so that this work remained a priority and that progress was maintained.

Questions from the Commission

6.13 Cllr Suso-Runge asked how will the council ensure the Community Accountability Board (CAB) is supported, empowered, and integrated into future strategic plans?

- Kieran Read, Director for Corporate Strategy and Transformation (KR) confirmed that upcoming corporate strategy documents, including a new strategic plan following the May elections and the renewal of the equality plan, provide a significant opportunity to embed the work of the IOBCYP. A framework with objectives and a performance framework will be developed to ensure a "golden thread" of accountability links through to specific inequalities, such as educational or community safety outcomes. The Council is committed to involving the Community Accountability Board expertise and is already working closely with the Board. There were plans to improve the structures through which the community sector is engaged which does not duplicate the demands on VCS organisations.

6.14 Cllr Turbet-Delof noted the concerns of the Community Accountability Board (CAB) in respect to the number of organisations which were currently struggling in the community and the need to provide additional resources. In the context of funding cuts for Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, what is meant by "resources"?

- (DA) stated that, to be blunt, the primary resource needed is money, and that funding processes should take into account the long-term good work of established organisations while also reaching newer ones.
- (JD) Added that internally, the council needs to consider structural reorganisation and changes to "shape the system internally," alongside the external engagement and involvement of community partners.
- (DMB) Deputy Mayor Bramble confirmed that addressing resourcing, including building permanent roles for staff currently seconded to this work, is a priority on the council's radar. DM Bramble thanked Lisa Raine Hunt and Tracey Thomas who had been leading on this work and spearheading community engagement.

6.15 Cllr Ross asked what distinct actions will be taken going forward to dismantle racist structures, and what specific new initiatives will help rebuild community trust in statutory services?

- (JB) ADCSC has been leading a work stream on race equity in children's services and as part of this has developed an all London disproportionality dashboard. This is important to help benchmark local activity and inform future target setting.
- (DA) suggested that rebuilding trust can be achieved by really empowering the voluntary sector to take on some of the heavy lifting. He proposed developing more forums led by the community, outside of council spaces, to foster community empowerment and to find its own way.
- (JD) Regarding structural change, it was noted the importance of embedding performance measures within all directorate service plans to prevent them from

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being treated as an "add-on" to day jobs. Additionally, there is a focus on a lobbying piece over the next five years to influence and change national policy.

- (DMB) stressed the necessity of being bold and ambitious with targets and bringing partners around the table, as systemic and institutional racism is not entirely within the gift of the council to change alone. DMB highlighted the cooperative work that took place after Child Q, where organisations met frequently to assess progress and challenge from community organisations and representatives was important in this. This work helped to shape the council policy and practice around systemic racism.

6.16 Cllr Gordon asked what are the current thoughts of officers and the Community Accountability Board regarding target-setting, given the tensions in the programme's early years, and what has been the impact of including black women and girls in the programme's scope?

- (DA) It was explained the initial reluctance to set targets stemmed from a concern that it would incentivise people to "cut corners" just to meet a number, thus undermining genuine, organic change that was needed. However, after ten years of figures remaining stagnant, the case for setting targets over the next five to ten years to drive a necessary shift is now needed.
- (DA) Confirmed that expanding the scope of the initiative to include young black women was the right move, noting that focusing solely on young black men had felt incomplete. The expansion has led to the team being even more aware, though the core issues and challenges remain very much the same.
- (JD) advised that tracking change must be "more sophisticated," as outcomes measures take time to change, and that evaluation will help identify appropriate measures.

6.17 The Chair applauded the ambition of the targets for the IOBCYP and the need for systemic change, but how do we change systems which are so entrenched, like for example the previous item which touched on poorer outcomes for black children in the education system. In this context, setting local targets might be challenging given the significant systemic structural challenges that need to be overcome to achieve progress. Whilst there was a reluctance to work with a specific small cohort, maybe this was the best way given the scale and nature of the challenge.

6.18 Cllr Binnie-Lubbock financial resources are currently dedicated to the programme, and will additional resources be available for work streams or partners? How can the identify, values and ambitions of this work be retained if it's absorbed into broader transformational work?

- (KR) clarified that the dedicated programme support from his team is only part of the overall resource for this programme. The true success of the work lies in influencing role the council's work and the work of partners, including:
 - Social workers implementing the STAR (systematic trauma informed anti-racist) framework.
 - The VCS grants funding provided to black and global majority organisations.
 - Engagement with community safety partners.
- (KR) Dedicated programme support is currently in place and is expected to continue while the programme's evaluation is reviewed and future support is determined in consultation with the Community Accountability Board (CAB)

6.19 Cllr Troughton asked further about the development of new targets and whether these could be qualitative rather than quantitative? In terms of resourcing, it was emphasised that there was a cost to not providing adequate funding to this work.

Unanswered.

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6.20 The Chair noted that whilst she would no longer be a councillor after the next local elections and would no longer be chair, it was suggested that it may be helpful for the Commission to receive regular updates on this work. Scrutiny can help to maintain momentum and bring key stakeholders together to ensure that progress is maintained.

7 Hackney Education Strategy 2025-2028

7.1 At its meeting on 13th October 2025, the Commission reviewed the draft Hackney Education Strategy 2025-2028, together with summary findings of the public consultation. The Commission provided a number of suggestions to the Cabinet member to be considered ahead of planned its agreement by Cabinet in December 2025.

7.2 The Cabinet members' responses to the Commission's recommendations was noted.

8 Work Programme 2025/26

8.1 The work programme for the remainder of the municipal year was noted. This confirmed agreed changes at the last meeting (10th December 2025):

- DM Bramble Q & A will now move to March 2026;
- SEND Area Inspection Report (which is expected to be published later in January early February) will be taken at the March 2026 meeting.

Review of Behaviour Management & School Inclusion

8.2 In terms of the survey and call for evidence, this closed on 16th January. The Response rate has increased. The Commission had also commenced in depth work and had already held a focus group with school governors. Other focus groups were planned in the coming weeks with school heads, other professionals working with children locally, parents and of course young people.

8.3 Members noted and agreed with the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year 2025/26.

9 Minutes

9.1 Minutes of the previous meeting of the Commission (October 13th & December 10th) were not available for this meeting and will be presented for agreement at the next meeting (February 10th 2026).

10 Any Other Business

10.1 None.

Duration of the meeting: 2hrs 55 minutes