

Review of the Council's Current and Future Relationship with Academies and Free Schools

A review by the Children, Young People & Learning
Policy Overview Committee 2016/17 MY



Councillors on the Committee

Cllr. Jane Palmer, (Chairman), Cllr. Nick Denys (Vice-Chairman); Cllr. Jem Duducu; Cllr. Dominic Gilham; Cllr. Becky Haggar; Cllr. Allan Kauffman; Cllr. John Oswell ; Cllr. Jagjit Singh and Cllr. Jan Sweeting and Mr Tony Little (Roman Catholic Diocesan Representative)

June 2017

Putting our residents first



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Chairman's Foreword



With the changing landscape in education, there are a number of different types of schools which cannot always be easy to distinguish. These schools vary in the way that they are set up, the curriculum, governance, the structure of management, the management of finances and the responsible authorities to whom they are accountable. One thing for certain is that they all have the same function and objective for teaching children within our society to help them achieve and thrive for their future.

The Council supports the work of all schools within the Borough, whether they are maintained schools, academies or free schools. There is a clear vision to build, develop and maintain relationships between the Council and schools as it is in everyone's interest, particularly the children who attend these schools, many of whom are our residents. The consequences of not doing this results in a lack of transparency and trust in the relationship between schools and the Council; inconsistencies in the services provided and most worrying of all, children and young people being disadvantaged due to inadequate schooling.

It is within this context that the Committee decided to undertake a review into the Council's relationship with academies and free schools. The review identified a number of areas where improvements should be considered and it made recommendations accordingly. It was unanimously agreed that a close, transparent and accountable working relationship would create a productive learning environment which ensured that children would receive the best access to education. In many ways, the Council already provides similar types of support to schools but the Committee wished to explore how these provisions might be improved.

Following the undertaking of a review by a Committee of the Council, it is normal for an update on progress made, with regards to implementation of the review recommendations, to be presented to the Committee. This is typically submitted around one year after the review.

Finally, I would like to thank all the witnesses who helped the Committee to gather evidence, either by attending a Committee meeting or by completing the head teachers' surveys. A sincere thanks goes to the following individuals and organisations:

- Councillor David Simmonds CBE, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
- Officers from the London Borough of Hillingdon
- Primary Forum Executive
- Hillingdon Association of Secondary Head teachers Executive
- Schools Forum
- Schools Strategic Partnership Board
- Governor Executive Committee
- Head teachers in the London Borough of Hillingdon

Their contributions to the Committee have been valuable and have enabled the Committee to undertake a full and thorough review of this topic.

Councillor Jane Palmer

Chairman of the Children, Young People & Learning Policy Overview Committee

Recommendations

Following witness sessions and discussion, the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee saw it fit to recommend:

Recommendation 1

That the Council provides clear contact details for all school enquiries, including giving consideration to providing a single point of contact to all schools.

Recommendation 2

That Officers look at further ways to build on the good relationship between the Council and the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Recommendation 3

That where there are specific attainment and progress concerns at various Key Stages, the Children Young People & Learning Policy Overview Committee advises that the Council and schools work together to continue to ensure that there are clear and accountable plans in place.

Recommendation 4

That the Council strongly encourages all school governing bodies to have in place satisfactory induction and continuous professional development arrangements for new and existing governors/trustees.

Recommendation 5

That the Council continues to assist schools with the conversion transition to an Academy school and continues to support existing Academy Trusts where new schools join their Trust.

Recommendation 6

That the Council works with Hillingdon Schools to revise the school improvement framework effective from September 2017 in light of the changing role of the Local Authority in education.

Overview

About the review

National education policy, as outlined in the White Paper "Educational Excellence Everywhere" published in March 2016, laid out a clear direction of travel for all schools with the Government's ambition being for all schools to cease to be maintained by Councils and become academies by 2020 or sooner. Although recent changes in Government have marked an easing of the pace of conversion, the Government continues to promote this ambition and recent months have seen the merging of the Department for Education's (DfE) Education Funding Agency (EFA) with the resources of the Regional Schools Commissioner's office.

In light of this significant change to the national landscape in education and the associated reduction in funding for Councils to use to support schools in their local area, Members of the Children Young People & Learning Policy Overview Committee (the Committee) expressed interest in exploring the Council's current relationship with schools in Hillingdon who already have academy/free school status. The Committee also expressed an interest in considering how these relationships may evolve to include maintained schools who may be considering academy conversion in the short or medium-term.

After the review topic was agreed, the Government altered its ambition for all schools to cease being maintained by their local councils. On 27 October 2016, the Government announced that it was withdrawing the requirement for all schools to convert to academies. Although it was still the Government's ambition that all schools should benefit from the freedom and autonomy that an academy status school brings, conversion would not be compulsory, instead it would only be encouraged.

Aim of the Review

The aim of this review was to present a picture of the Council's current roles, responsibilities and relationships with local standalone, multi-academy trust (MATs) and maintained schools.

As part of this process, the review explored the changing relationship of the Council with all schools as the academy agenda gains momentum. The Committee believed that the review should clarify the Council's strategy for supporting maintained schools who may choose to convert to academy status in the short and medium-term, alongside those maintained schools who have not yet made decisions about conversion.

The review should allow the Committee to ensure that the proposed and reduced statutory education function at local government level is able to operate efficiently and effectively, making best use of reduced resources, whilst ensuring that the Council is able to continue to champion high standards of education for all residents and for the young learners in the Borough whether they are educated in academy, free or maintained settings.

Defining the review

In order to undertake the Committee's review effectively, it was first necessary to define what is meant by a number of key terms.

For the purposes of the review, these have been defined as follows:

Academies

Academies are independent state - funded schools that receive its funding directly from central government, rather than through their local council. Academies have more autonomy in their decision making and do not have to follow the national curriculum. Generally the day to day running remains with the head teacher of the school but the school is usually run by an academy trust which employs the staff. The performance and standards of academies are monitored by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC).

Free schools

Free schools are funded by the Government and are not run by the local council. Free schools also have more autonomy over their decision making and do not have to follow the national curriculum. Free schools are usually set up by parents, teachers, charities and businesses. Free schools have a higher level of control over teachers' pay and conditions and also on the length of school terms and days.

Maintained schools

Maintained schools are schools that are funded by the local council. The local council oversees the running of the school, pays for staff and must follow the national curriculum. There are four types of maintained schools namely community schools, foundation and trust schools, voluntary aided schools and voluntary controlled schools.

Multi- academy trust (MAT)

A multi - academy trust is a single body established to undertake ways to improve and maintain high educational standards across a number of schools. A group of schools form a single MAT which has overarching responsibility for their governance. Each school can have their own governing body but overall the MAT is accountable for the performance of schools that are part of that MAT.

Background Information

The Council has 104 state-funded secondary and primary schools. Of these, 47 (45%) are academy/free schools and 57 (55%) are currently maintained by the Council. Of the 47 academy/free schools, three are registered as free schools including one specialist provider. There have recently been three additional free schools approved in the Borough. Two of these are mainstream secondary settings and one is a special education provider.

The majority of academies are in the secondary sector with 20 schools holding academy status and, in most cases, having converted as standalone academies some time ago. In four of these cases, standalone academies have well-established Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) status and are now responsible for outcomes in other local schools. Currently a number of single-school secondary academies are actively exploring or have applied for MAT status and it is anticipated that these schools will extend their reach in the next year.

In the primary sector, 52 of the 72 primary schools in the Borough are currently maintained settings with the majority of primary academies sitting within a local MAT.

The table below shows a breakdown of schools by type and their current inspection grades (correct as of September 2016). It should be noted that, in line with Ofsted protocols for new schools or those who have recently converted to academy status, 7 schools have yet to be inspected. It is also noted that 1 maintained primary school is currently in the process of converting under a new Directed Academy Order.

Type of School	No. with current judgement *	% Outstanding	No. Outstanding	% Good	No. Good	% Requiring Improvement	No. Requiring Improvement	% Inadequate	No. Inadequate
Primary All	69 (of 72)	17.4	12	69.6	48	11.6	8	1.4	1
Academy	17 (of 20)	11.8	2	58.8	10	29.4	5	0	0
Maintained	52	19.2	10	73	38	5.8	3	2	1
Secondary All	19 (of 22)	26.3	5	52.6	10	15.8	3	5.3	1
Academy	17 (of 20)	29	5	53	9	12	2	6	1
Maintained	2		0	50	1	50	1	0	0
Special All	9 (of 10)	33.3	3	44.4	4	22.2	2	0	0
Academy	6 (of 7)	33.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	2	0	0
Maintained	3	33.3	1	66.3	2	0	0	0	0
All Schools in Hillingdon	97 (of 104) *new schools without a judgement	21.00%	20	64.00%	62	13.00%	13	2.00%	2

The DfE is clear that the establishment of MATs is key to providing effective system-leadership in education and that school-to-school support and improvement models delivered within the MAT structure are central to securing more good school places across the country.

It is noted that the large, national academy chains have not yet established themselves in the Borough and that, presently, the MATs operating within the Borough are local in nature with some cross-border presence.

The table below outlines the shape of the MATs that currently operate within the Borough:

MAT	No. of schools
The Rosedale Hewens Academy Trust	7
LDBS Frays Academy Trust	4
Park Federation Academy Trust, The	3
Elliot Foundation Academies Trust, The	3
QED Academy Trust	3
Eden Academy, The	3 (+ 2 new free schools approved in Wave 13 – proposed opening dates 2018 and 2019)
Vyners Learning Trust	2
Orchard Hill College Academy Trust	2
Barnhill Partnership Trust, The	2
Willows School Academy Trust, The	1
Uxbridge High School Academy Trust	1
Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust, The	1
Ruislip High School	1
Bishop Ramsey Church of England School	1 (+ 1 free school confirmed)
Swakeleys School for Girls	1
Bishopshalt School	1
Haydon School	1
Charville Primary School Academy Trust	1
Harefield Academy Trust	1
Heathrow Aviation Engineering UTC	1
Aspirations Academies Trust	1 (Stockley)

Structure of review

Evidence gathering

In order to explore the Council's future and current relationship with academies and free schools, the Committee aimed to engage schools. The Committee undertook a series of three witness sessions and reports were produced for these sessions. These sessions received evidence presented by a number of Council officers, witnesses representing Hillingdon School's executive committees in addition to the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services.

As part of the evidence gathering, head teachers were invited to complete surveys which asked a number of questions about the services provided by the Council and generally their view on how the relationship between academies and free schools should look. Perspectives were sought from both academies/free school status and also from a maintained school status. Additionally, head teachers were also given the opportunity to attend the Committee session in person.

A full breakdown of witnesses who provided evidence to the Committee can be found at Appendix A alongside the review's terms of reference. The Committee was extremely grateful to those who gave their time to present at the witness sessions and, without exception, the Committee was both encouraged by and in admiration of the outstanding work that was being done across the Borough to meet the needs of this group of residents.

Findings of the review

After considering the evidence heard, the Committee discussed recommendations on how to improve the relationships between the Council and academies/free schools.

Contact with the Council

The Committee took into account the evidence it heard from head teachers and the results from the surveys. During the review, it was identified that it was sometimes difficult to contact officers within the Council for issues and queries as head teachers did not always know who to contact. The Committee noted that in other councils, lists of main contact points were produced for schools for the general types of issues raised.

The Committee acknowledged that the nature of queries varied and it could therefore prove difficult to provide a single list of who to call. It also acknowledged that there was a question around the stability of the administrative capacity in overseeing the single point of contact. However, the Committee was of the view that having a clear contact point or some form of single sign post would provide stability, clarity and confidence to head teachers who were trying to access important information efficiently. This would continually increase and improve the communications channels between all schools and the Council.

As such, the Committee decided to recommend:

1

That the Council provides clear contact details for all school enquiries, including giving consideration to providing a single point of contact to all schools.

Relationship with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC)

The Committee took into account evidence that the local education landscape means that there are 57 maintained schools in the Borough that may be in scope for academy conversion. At this stage, the Governing Bodies and leaders of these schools are engaged in exploration of their future status with a varied picture in terms of definite decisions and timescales.

The Council's School Improvement Team has undertaken an academy exploration survey with maintained school Chairs of Governors to gain a picture of the progress that schools are making. 22 Chairs of Governors responded to the survey with the majority of these schools in the early stages of exploring this agenda. In order to support schools with this process, the School Improvement Team, in partnership with the Schools Strategic Partnership Board (SSPB), planned Academy Conversion Information Events for maintained schools.

It was clear to the Committee that the Council had invested time in developing the SSPB which was proving to be a positive piece of work and it was hoped that the SSPB would play a key role in driving

improvements in education standards in the Borough. This was supported by the evidence of the head teachers, in witness session three, who described it as being a useful tool as it allowed the views of all head teachers, including those in MATs, to be represented at a strategic level. This was corroborated by the evidence from witnesses from the SSPB who described the relationship between academies and the Council as a "cordial partnership".

The Committee noted that when school performance results are published, the Council uses risk assessment processes and published results and inspections to target, support and challenge activities in schools. Underperforming academy schools within the Borough have been referred to the RSC, a responsible authority for academies, which takes action to assist the school to improve. Usually, if there are issues with maintained schools the Council would intervene at an early stage. It was noted that MATs and academy head teachers are not duty bound to engage with school improvement services from the Council. However in the Borough, most single academies and trusts engage positively with the School Improvement Team and associated services. If an academy was failing the RSC would identify a local sponsor to take over, although in practice the Council would need to ensure school places for children were available as ultimately they were responsible for ensuring children in the Borough had access to education. Generally, the pace at which a school improves mainly depends on the way it engages with the services available to support it and this is often dependent on the quality of leadership and governance in the school.

Based on the evidence before it, the Committee was clear that in order to ensure that all children within in the Borough had access to good education, schools needed to be accountable to a responsible authority and willing to improve. To achieve this, productive and positive working relations would need to be established and developed to maintain trust and public confidence.

The Committee therefore recommended:

2

That Officers look at further ways to build on the good relationship between the Council and the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Plans for Improvement

During the course of the review, the Committee heard evidence about school performance across all schools within the Borough. The main findings from the review of schools performance for the academic year 2015/16 were that:

- Within the early years and primary phases, overall attainment using both the new and the maintained performance measures had risen with all of the key indicators demonstrating outcomes and progress that were at least as good as and, in many cases, significantly better than national averages. It was noted that results in some key areas were now in line with or better than London averages which demonstrated improvement when compared to previous years.
- Particular improvement was noted in the early years' sector which had improved from a historically lower starting point and was now performing above the national average.

- Within the secondary phase, overall attainment using the new performance and progress measures had improved for most of the key indicators and was above the national comparators although it remained below the London averages. Key Stage 5 outcomes remained a concern in the secondary phase.
- Hillingdon's Ofsted inspection data demonstrated an overall improvement in 2015/16 when compared with previous years with 87% of schools now judged good or better.
- It was of concern that two schools in the Borough were judged by Ofsted as 'inadequate'. The Council was undertaking the necessary challenge to expedite improvement in these two schools and to challenge other schools which need to continue to improve.

In summary, the Committee noted that school performance levels were progressing positively and areas of concerns have been identified and are being worked on in partnership with school leaders

The Committee generally accepted that school-to-school support provides an effective model of improvement for most schools and that facilitating the collaboration of high-quality school leaders results in improved outcomes for children and young people. The Committee believed that building capacity in the school-led improvement community is critical to the success of this model and the Government has invested in the creation of Teaching Schools alongside the development of oversight functions through the Regional Schools Commissioner's office. The Committee considered that the collaboration of working relationships between the Council, all schools and relevant bodies were necessary to ensure that clear and accountable places were implemented to manage concerns. There were already good relationships in place such as the relationship with the RSC where concerns in performance could be identified and managed in proactive ways.

To ensure that no key stages are overlooked, the Committee recommended:

3

That where there are specific attainment and progress concerns at various Key Stages, the Children Young People & Learning Policy Overview Committee advises that the Council and schools work together to continue to ensure that there are clear and accountable plans in place.

Training for School Governors

In the Committee's view, school improvement is crucial to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved for children. This is supported by the evidence provided from witnesses representing the Governor Executive Committee who described effective governance as being the key to a school's success. A school governing board's functions include setting the strategic direction; holding head teachers to account for school performance and ensuring the best value for services.

The Committee considered suggestions to ensure effective school governance which included:

- Training - governors making it a priority to attend quality training sessions.

- Open and transparent discussion across school boards regarding the role of governance in that school and how it could be achieved.
- Reducing administrative tasks so that governors could focus on significant matters.
- Learning from other schools and arranging meetings with other governors to share ideas on best practice and resources.
- Being proactive - being visible in the school and being approachable to parents and teachers.
- Strong collaborations with head teachers.
- Although many governors can be volunteers, having people with the right skills and experience.

During the course of the review, it became apparent to the Committee that it was not compulsory for school governors to undertake training. This concerned the Committee as outstanding, objective and transparent governance was significant for school improvement, as was the ability to act as a critical friend.

The Committee noted that the matter of governance was outside of the scope of the Council in relation to academy and free schools. However, the Council did provide the opportunity for all head teachers and Chair of Governors in the Borough to attend Improvement Conferences which were provided at no charge. In order to ensure that school performance was maintained and governed to the highest standard possible, the Committee recommended:

4

That the Council strongly encourages all school governing bodies to have in place satisfactory induction and continuous professional development arrangements for new and existing governors/trustees.

Continuing Support of the Council

The Committee noted that the Council does not provide a traded service via a Service Level Agreement for school improvement for academies. However, during the past two years particularly, the Council's education teams have developed stronger links with the academy sector in Hillingdon. The Hillingdon Schools Improvement Plan 2015 - 18 outlined the Council's commitment to championing high quality education for all learners in the Borough regardless of where they are educated. In line with this approach the LA currently provides a range of education support functions to academies in Hillingdon at no cost. These include:

- General education improvement advice and guidance including ad hoc email/telephone school improvement advice
- Bi-monthly Head Teacher's Briefings and centralised Head Teachers Termly updates
- New Head Teachers to Hillingdon orientation event / induction
- Assessment and moderation training including the provision of statutory moderation services
- Additional improvement events and coordination capacity for Borough-wide improvement conferences and networks
- School-specific performance data reports and support from the Business Performance Team

Historically, in the Borough the freedom for good or outstanding maintained schools to convert to academies has resulted in a number of settings opting to move away from the Council's control. A

number of these schools have developed into MATs and offer trust-specific models of governance and support to their families of schools. It should be noted that there have not been any academy conversions in the Borough since 1 September 2015.

Across the country, the engagement of academies with their local councils is variable although anecdotal evidence suggests that smaller academy chains have tended to retain stronger links with their local councils than larger chains. In addition, across the London Councils region there is a diverse approach to academy conversion, ranging from blanket direction for all schools to convert by a given date to a longer-term commitment to school improvement functions for maintained schools.

Head teacher surveys

To gain an up to date and insightful perspective on the Council's position, the Committee considered that it would be useful to seek the opinions of head teachers as they were at the frontline of services. There were two types of surveys sent out: one to head teachers of academies/free schools and one to headteachers in maintained schools. It was hoped that the surveys would highlight areas that worked well and areas in need for improvement. Once the surveys were completed, a summary of the responses was produced.

Summary of results from head teacher survey - maintained schools (16 responses)

From the maintained schools responses there was a mixed review on what they considered to be the key difference between the Council's relationship with maintained versus academy/ free schools. There was a general consensus that academy/free schools tended to have more freedom and control over the services they chose. The Council had less control over holding schools to account. It was acknowledged that the relationship between schools and the Council had changed over the years and that both systems had their merits and challenges and getting the best out of both systems was hard to do.

Key factors the Committee took into account when considering the future relationship with academies and free schools included:

- Remembering that children of these schools were residents and their wellbeing and education is a key priority;
- Quality, clarity and awareness of services is paramount when considering whether or not to use Council services; and
- School improvement support in whatever form irrespective of school type.

In considering any future academy conversion, 81% of schools that responded believed their relationship with the Council should be on statutory functions and a range of traded services, with the remainder of respondents solely believing in a relationship based on statutory responsibilities.

Summary of results from head teacher surveys - academies and free schools

The results from the head teacher surveys clearly indicated 50% of responses indicated that the relationship between the Council and their school was usually positive, and a further 31.3% said 'very positive'; 12.5% said 'not as positive as I would like' and 6.3% replied saying 'no relationship'. 56% of

responses indicated that only occasionally did the Council support, challenge or engage with their school. In response to the question asking which Council Services had been accessed by the school, the most typically used services and the most useful services included Admissions, SEND team and safeguarding. Admissions, SEND team and safeguarding were clearly the most useful services provided to academies.

There were key factors identified when shaping the possible future relationship with academies and free schools and these included:

- Awareness of MAT structure;
- Consultation and clear communications;
- Working towards a model of partnership and co-leadership of the education provision.

The Committee wholly endorsed one head teacher's comment from a maintained school which stated "working together is the only way forward. Integrity and resilience are key."

Moving forward: concluding comments

Overall, most local councils provide or signpost academies in the area to school support services. Some councils, including a number of London boroughs, have well-established traded services with their academies and, in some cases, these commercial relationships have evolved into the development of arms-length partnerships or trusts with links into a Council as required.

From the surveys it was clear that a number of services were valued by head teachers and the quality of services provided was significant in deciding whether or not to use them. The Committee however noted that with the withdrawal funding and limited resources the Council currently faces, the regularity, quality and quantity of these services will vary. For all Councils, supporting maintained schools that wish to convert into academy status may bring capacity challenges. The national withdrawal of funding and duties around school improvement and wider education services may reduce the Council's capacity to coordinate discussions with school leaders and national partners and there may be additional capital assets, legal and finance challenges on the Council as schools convert.

In light of the changing landscape, and in order to support schools within the Borough, the Committee recommended:

5

That the Council continues to assist schools with the conversion transition to an Academy school and continues to support existing Academy Trusts where new schools join their Trust.

School Improvement Framework

The School Improvement Plan clearly states that the vision for every child within the Borough is that they deserve the best. The Committee fully endorses this notion.

Prior to the publication of the White Paper and in line with the Government's clear commitment to the academy agenda for all schools, many Councils have been working with schools to explore different shapes, paces and models of school governance, leadership and improvement.

In the Hillingdon School Improvement Plan 2015 - 18 it explains that the SSPB is the "key to the development, leadership and quality-assurance of school improvement strategy and direction" across the Borough. It further states that; "This leadership group is strategically aligned with a range of partners in order to best represent the needs and vision of school leaders and professionals across the borough and to take the driving role in shaping and securing school improvement in Hillingdon. As national and local requirements regarding school and education development evolve, it is anticipated that the SSPB will broaden and extend its focus." ¹

School improvement factors which are hoped to deliver the vision include: partnerships and collaboration between school leaders and the Council; local solutions; challenge and support mechanisms should be transparent and understood by all.

The Council aims to promote the highest possible education standards. It does this in a variety of ways including²:

- Monitoring of the performance and effectiveness of all schools in the Borough and sharing this information with stakeholders regularly to scrutinise Hillingdon's school provision against London and national averages.
- Collaborating with partners to tackle key barriers to school improvement at Borough, phase/setting and individual school level.
- Encouraging head teachers and school leadership teams to set and achieve aspirational targets for all.
- Identifying and challenging underperformance in the earliest stages.
- Sign-posting and, where necessary, brokering appropriate support in a timely and effective manner.
- Intervening without delay where schools require rapid improvement.
- Identifying and assisting vulnerable young people so that they may sustain their engagement in education, employment and training.
- Securing sufficient high quality early years provision, in support of children's development and readiness for school.

The current model for school improvement aims to ensure that progress and attainment compares positively against local Borough and national statistics and are in line with national medians. The strategy for doing this is captured in "Six Strands of Success" which include:

<p>Securing outstanding leadership and governance</p>	<p>Supporting the development of exceptional leadership by linking established leader to aspiring leaders to share best practice, engaging head teachers using the SSPB and by working close with governance support providers to identify, develop and place consistently excellent governance.</p>
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¹ School Improvement Plan 2015 - 18- Our partnership for success November 2015 Version 2 amended February 2016

² Hillingdon School Improvement Plan 2015-18, Our partnership for success November 2015 Version 2 amended February 2016

Borough overview	Managing and monitoring school performances and the overview of school effectiveness at all times. The overview should be "inclusive" and encompass all school data and intelligence regardless of type.
Communication and navigation	Providing a clear and consistent channel for communication and sign-posting that is accessible to all schools. This is being done through the head teacher briefings and school improvement conferences.
Innovation and improvement networks	Facilitating time-limited learning networks, based around key themes of challenge or concern in the LBH.
School reviews and self evaluation	Facilitating the provision of School Reviews and data analysis to inform individual school self-evaluation and risk assessment.
Schools at risk and interventions	Raising concerns with school leaders when an individual school is identified as being at risk and the Council will retain a register of schools considered to be at risk.

The Committee questioned whether more could be done in the school improvement plan to take into account the changing landscape education. Whilst acknowledging budgetary constraints and the limits of the remit of the Council, the Committee considered that it was important to revise the school improvement to take into account the local landscape. As such, the Committee recommended:

6

That the Council works with Hillingdon Schools to revise the school improvement framework effective from September 2017 in light of the changing role of the Council in education.

Closing word

As the measures outlined in the White Paper translate into practice it is expected that the role of the Council with regard to education will move away from the promotion, monitoring and support of high-quality education standards. The pace of this move will be dependent on the speed of all-school conversion to academy status. However, the Council is likely to retain its role as a champion for the young people in its area including those with SEN and/or a disability and those facing disadvantage. In addition, the Council is likely to retain responsibility for School Place Planning, aspects of Admissions and quality outcomes for all children for whom it has a corporate parenting responsibility.

The Council may consider access to good or outstanding school places in both academy and maintained schools as key to ensuring an equitable educational offer for Hillingdon's learners. It is noted that closing attainment gaps is central to school improvement.

The Committee has identified six recommendations which it is hoped will improve the relationship between the Council and academies/free schools and also maintained schools. In conclusion the Committee found that, by working collaboratively with a wide range of school leaders and partners, and through the early identification of problems or concerns, any support necessary to ensure the resolution of difficulties could be identified.

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the review were as follows:

1. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the national and local academy agenda.
2. To explore the Council's current relationship with academies in the Borough.
3. To investigate the measures that the Council currently has in place to support conversion to academy status.
4. To ensure that the Council's vision for academy schools is clear, aligns with the Council's wider strategic plans and is in the best interests of residents and providers of education.
5. To review the shape of the Council's current and future relationship with schools and to provide practical recommendations that ensure that Council resources are used effectively during and after the national education transition period.

Appendix B: List of witnesses

Witness Session 1 (23 November 2016)

Setting the context and Council's overall position

Councillor David Simmonds CBE, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

Laurie Baker - Head of School Improvement/Education Quality and Strategy - LBH

Peter Malewicz - Finance Manager, Children and Young People - LBH

Laura Palmer - School Placement and Admissions Team Manager - LBH

Jackie Wright - Head of Disability Services - LBH

Witness Session 2 (11 January 2017)

Perspective from the range of executive committees for schools in LBH

Representing Primary Forum Executive (PFE): Manjit Bringan (Chair of the PFE) and Veronica Shepherd (Member of PFE)

Representing Hillingdon Association of Secondary Headteachers Executive (HASH): Kim Rowe (Chair of HASH)

Representing Schools Forum: Jim Edgecombe (Chair of Schools Forum) and Phil Haigh (Deputy Chair of Schools Forum)

Representing Schools Strategic Partnership Board: Andrew Wilcock (Member of the SSPB)

Representing Governor Executive Committee: Jo Palmer (Chair of Governor Executive Committee) and Graham Wells (Member of Governor Executive Committee)

Witness Session 3 (1 March 2017)

Perspective from headteachers

Simon Hawley, Headteacher for Colham Manor Primary School

Colin Tucker, Headteacher for Ryefield Primary School

Appendix C: Background reading

To assist with the writing of this review, reference has been made to a wide-ranging selection of background information.

LBH Survey results - Headteachers

What does it mean to be an academy schools? (2016) Available at:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-13274090>

What is the rationale behind free schools? (2015) Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-13266290>

Educational Excellence Everywhere (2016) Available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/educational-excellence-everywhere>

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