

Committee:	Dated:
Education Board Safeguarding Sub Committee	04/07/2019 03/10/2019
Subject: City of London Family of Schools Safeguarding Review	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

This report provides Members with an update on the review of safeguarding arrangements across the City of London Family of Schools. This includes the key findings from the audit, along with the recommendations made for schools and the Education Unit of the City Corporation.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the *City of London Family of Schools Safeguarding Review 2019* report in **Appendix 1**.
- Note the recommendations on pages 12–15 of the report at **Appendix 1** and set out in the summary document in **Appendix 2** which were endorsed by the Education Board on 4 July, 2019.

Main Report

Background

1. As outlined in the Education Strategy 2019–23, the City Corporation is committed to ensuring that education is safe, inclusive, supportive and empowering for all. This includes the aim to work in close partnership with schools, parents, carers and the community to build a commitment to safeguarding all the pupils in the Family of Schools.
2. To deliver on these priorities, a review of the safeguarding arrangements in the Family of Schools was included in the Education Board's 2018/19 Annual Action Plan. The Strategic Director for Education, Culture and Skills applied for Priority Investment Pot (PIP) funding to conduct the review. A consultant was commissioned to quality assure the safeguarding practices against statutory requirements and current guidance, and align best practice across the Family of Schools. The review was designed and conducted between January and March 2019 by Sham Kidane, an independent safeguarding consultant.

3. At the Education Board meeting on 23 May 2019, Members noted that the remaining balance of PIP funding for the review had been carried forward into the 2019/20 Education Board budget. Phase two of the review will now support schools and the City Corporation to implement the review recommendations following their approval by the Education Board.

Methodology

4. The review examined safeguarding arrangements and practice across the following key areas:
 - Leadership and Management
 - Child Protection, Safeguarding and Promoting Child Welfare
 - Partnership Working
5. The review programme included examination of documentary evidence and the Single Central Record (SCR), meetings with Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) including the Headteacher and Safeguarding Governor, site visits, checks with relevant local authorities, attendance at relevant City Corporation forums and interviews with corporate Human Resources (HR), Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and HR Director of City of London Academies Trust (CoLAT).
6. Notable limitations include the absence of direct involvement of parents, pupils or teaching staff, site visits to any location other than the main school building, and full content review of each policy or procedure submitted.
7. While not all schools were able to participate in the full programme due to timing, all 15 schools welcomed visits and actively engaged in discussions about their safeguarding arrangements.

Findings

8. Overall, safeguarding across the Family of Schools is effective. The review identified areas for development in both practice and systems, however, in most cases, these were not areas that left children at risk.
9. All schools understand and believe in the principle that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff and governors who took part in the review recognised the essential role that schools play in protecting children from abuse, safeguarding them from harm, and promoting their welfare, and demonstrated that they take this responsibility seriously.

Areas for Development

10. Governance
 - Safeguarding Governors did not routinely demonstrate enough understanding of their role or the quality of safeguarding in their schools.

- There is notable variability in quality, frequency and content of reporting between the DSL, Safeguarding Governor and the Governing Body, which raises questions about the effectiveness of governor oversight.

11. Safer recruitment and SCR

- Where staff or governors are recruited and appointed by corporate HR, schools' accountability for the suitability of these appointments is limited, despite their responsibility for ensuring this.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) arrangements and recording practices vary considerably within and between schools. Tolerance for delays in providing DBS evidence requested among the governor cohort was too high in some cases.
- SCR spot checks are not routinely carried out at all schools: they are not carried out by people who know what is required; and/or not routinely tracked for progress against identified gaps.

12. Policies and procedures

- Safeguarding-related policies are not routinely updated or adapted to ensure that they are school-specific when model policies are used.
- The safeguarding response to children who miss education requires strengthening in policy and practice in most schools.
- Most schools would benefit from reviewing their practice and procedures in the management of allegations against staff.

13. Recording practice

- The quality of recording is not sufficiently robust across all schools.

Review Recommendations

14. The full report, including the recommendations from the review, is included in **Appendix 1**. A summary diagram of the review findings and recommendations is included in **Appendix 2**. Recommendations 1–4 address the areas for development listed above, while recommendations 5–6 are proposals for the development of sustainable, high-quality structured systems of scrutiny and support that fit within the Education Strategy's Accountability Framework and reflect the Family of Schools' commitment to: developing partnerships, learning from each other, sharing best practice, and exploring opportunities to become more efficient through greater collaboration.

Conclusion

15. This report summarised the findings and areas for development from a recent review of safeguarding arrangements across the City of London Family of Schools. The report asked Members to note that the full *City of London Family of Schools Safeguarding Review 2019* report is in Appendix 1 and the recommendations from the report which were endorsed by the Education Board on 4 July, 2019 are in Appendix 2.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Report: *City of London Family of Schools Safeguarding Review 2019*
- Appendix 2 – Summary: *City of London Family of Schools Safeguarding Review 2019*

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