

CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

WORKING DRAFT - EDUCATION STRATEGY 2024-29

(v5 January 2024)

FOREWORD

[To be completed once the 2024-2029 Corporate plan is confirmed].

INTRODUCTION (About the City Corporation and the Corporate Plan)

The City of London Corporation (City Corporation), established in its current form in 1189, holds a unique status as a local government body and a historic institution within London. We have played a pivotal role in governing the historic centre of London, preserving our autonomy through various monarchies and governments, and maintaining a distinct governance structure separate from the Greater London Authority.

Today the City Corporation is the governing body of the Square Mile, dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally-successful UK. The Square Mile is the proud home to 8,600 residents, 614,500 workers, and 24,000 businesses. Alongside this, a collection of Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) institutions operate within the Square Mile, as well as numerous training providers, and a number of world-renowned creative and cultural institutions.

To support our continued focus on social mobility, a key outcome of our 2024-29 Corporate Plan is the provision of excellent services that *'help people live healthy, independent lives, and achieve their ambitions'*. Central to this is our commitment to support outstanding education and lifelong learning.

This strategy sets out a framework of ambitions, actions and outcomes that illustrate how the City Corporation will continue to extend and enrich education experiences to help learners realise their full potential – regardless of their personal circumstances, age, gender, ethnicity, ability or socio-economic status.

CONTEXT (The education landscape, and the role CoL can play)

The City Corporation is a major provider and funder of education. We have local authority education duties in the Square Mile, are a proprietor of independent schools, and the sole sponsor of academies managed by the City of London Academies Trust (CoLAT). In its entirety, this group of schools is called the '**City Family of Schools**'.

Beyond school-age education, the **Adult Skills and Education Service** (ASES) delivers the City Corporation's statutory Adult Community Learning (ACL) services. ASES also delivers our Apprenticeship Programme which recruits apprentices at the City Corporation and brokers apprenticeships for local businesses and residents in the Square Mile and beyond.

This strategy will leverage our links to the Square Mile's world-class business community, learning and cultural institutions, and environmental assets. Our ambition is that this, along with our philanthropic commitments, will offer all 'City-linked learners' unique education experiences that inspire an appetite for excellence, creativity and innovation, and expand their opportunities to progress.

For this strategy to deliver meaningful impact, it must look beyond today's educational needs and account for the critical factors of the near future. Our evolving relationship with technology, our responses to local and global environmental issues, and the ways we can improve equity, diversity and inclusion are just a few examples of factors that will grow in significance in the near future. This strategy acknowledges this future landscape to start preparing learners for it now.

Delivery of this strategy is a cross-Corporation endeavour. Strategic oversight, including monitoring and evaluation of the strategy will be conducted by the **Education Board**, with day to-day operational oversight delivered by the **Education Strategy Unit**. City Corporation departments that will be key in delivery of this strategy are:

- Town Clerk & Chief Executive
- Department of Community & Children's Services
- Environment Department
- Innovation & Growth

VISION (the scenario we are working to realise)

Every young person is entitled to an outstanding education which enables them to achieve the best academic results that they can, whilst also helping them to develop and flourish as a person. The City Corporation is committed to supporting the delivery of world-class education. We define this as the development of academic excellence, cultural knowledge, work-readiness and a lifelong love of learning. This provides the foundation of our vision for education:

"Preparing people to flourish in a rapidly changing world through -----". [To be completed once the final selection of priorities is confirmed]

At the heart of this vision is our continued commitment to social mobility. Fundamentally, education at all stages and all levels should help all learners develop skills or knowledge that help them access new opportunities and move forward in life. However, today's education landscape is incredibly

complex, with a wide range of inter-connected factors influencing education outcomes. The City Corporation is uniquely positioned to help educators navigate this complexity through our ability to fund, influence and facilitate unique education initiatives across this spectrum.

To achieve breadth and balance, the Education Strategy is driven by a diversified set of strategic priorities:



These priorities act as a set of lenses. Viewing learner journeys through each will help us develop a suite of well-considered, broad and balanced education initiatives that acknowledge a richer definition of the education landscape and better support upward social mobility.

PRIORITIES

The City Corporation is uniquely placed to extend and enrich education experiences for learners in and around the Square Mile. We will support our pledges to champion outstanding education, promote lifelong learning and support upward social mobility by focusing on the following priorities:

● 'SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE'

Context:

The City of London Corporation defines educational excellence as a combination of academic attainment, achievement, and personal growth - a bedrock for holistic development. High attainment remains a crucial component for success in many spheres and the City Corporation remains passionate in its commitment to support academic excellence in all City-linked learning settings. Alongside attainment we will continue to promote the importance of achievement as a learner-centred way to track progress and motivate pupils who are less academically driven.

Research increasingly tells us however, that focusing on academic attainment and achievement alone will no longer meaningfully prepare learners to be work-ready *and* world-ready. The identification and development of personal skills and competencies, is now a critical factor in improving career opportunities, and equipping learners to navigate life in a constantly changing world. For this reason, the City Corporation will increase its drive to see skills and personal development integrated into all learning experiences.

Importantly, educational excellence is dependent on teaching excellence. Outstanding teaching can cater for diverse learning styles, foster engagement and improve comprehension, helping to build knowledge and skills, whilst also inspiring curiosity, creativity and a broader love of learning. Supporting the professional development of educators, especially where it involves innovation and creativity will be an important component of our drive for educational excellence.

Actions (what we will do):

- **Maintain our constant drive for excellence by continuing to assure and enhance the standards and quality of the Family of Schools and ASES.**
- **Reinvigorate the concept of the Family of Schools, reiterating its benefits to member schools and reinforcing the aspiration for a shared ethos and commitment to excellence.**
- **Continue to excel in providing adult learners with progression routes, covering informal and formal learning opportunities, across all levels of qualification**
- **Support the Family of Schools to become nationally recognised for a wide-reaching, well structured commitment to Environmental & Outdoor Learning**
- **Help drive innovation across all City-linked learning environments by working with educators to identify and introduce innovative tools and approaches that they believe will add value**
- **Further improve the education experiences, learning outcomes and future pathways available to disadvantaged learners at the Family of Schools through effective management of the City Premium Grant**
- **Continue to offer City-linked learners unique on-site enrichment experiences by leveraging our access to the City Corporation's physical assets and venues**

Outcomes (what we will achieve):

[To be completed once actions have been confirmed]

● 'CHAMPIONING EQUITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION'

Context:

The fundamental right of all learners to access equitable education experiences underpins Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) efforts in education settings. It involves creating environments free from all forms of discrimination where every learner, regardless of their background, identity, or ability, feels acknowledged, safe and supported to thrive and reach their full potential.

By supporting equity in education, we can narrow achievement gaps and provide equitable opportunities for all learners, regardless of their background, ability or circumstances. Alongside this, when learners and educators acknowledge the diversity of their classrooms and communities, they create the opportunity to boost engagement, understand different perspectives and enhance skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving. Furthermore, studies indicate that inclusive educational environments will more effectively equip learners to navigate the intricacies of a globalised workforce and interconnected societies.

The City Corporation will support its educators and learning organisations to introduce exemplary practise around EDI and commit to making City-linked learning environments leaders in this space. EDI will be woven throughout all activity borne of this strategy to ensure that at all times, *all* learners are acknowledged and supported to maximise the benefits of every educational opportunity.

Actions (what we will do):

- **Champion the adoption of EDI best practise across all City-linked learning environments, supporting educators with the sharing of knowledge and tools.**
- **Galvanise SEND expertise across the Family of Schools by launching a new SEND network that helps SEND leads better support each other through the sharing of knowledge and best practise.**
- **Meaningfully acknowledge the perspectives of all learners in the future support we offer by establishing and facilitating a City Schools Youth Forum**
- **Work with the Natural Environment learning team to increase the number of learners that access outdoor experiences in the City Corporation's open spaces, especially those with SEND or from disadvantaged backgrounds.**
- **Make the Family of Schools leaders in the field of parental engagement by establishing and promoting a bespoke parental engagement toolkit.**

Outcomes (what we will achieve):

[To be completed once actions have been confirmed]

● 'PROTECTING SAFETY, HEALTH & WELLBEING'

Context:

Good physical and mental health, combined with positive learning environments and effective safeguarding provide the foundation for learners to thrive and develop. These responsibilities are all critical aspects of a duty of care for learners and form the basis of our focus on Health and Wellbeing. Studies (conducted by Public Health England and the Education Policy Institute (PHE / Education Policy Institute) also) emphasise the link between health, wellbeing, and educational outcomes. Their findings highlight the fact that learners' physical and mental health significantly influences their academic achievement. Improved health and wellbeing positively impact attendance rates, concentration levels, cognitive abilities, and social-emotional development, thereby enhancing learning outcomes.

Schools play a crucial role in promoting the wellbeing of pupils, and those that prioritise learner wellbeing through initiatives such as mental health support, physical activity programs, and healthy eating interventions observe improved educational attainment among their learners. We also know that exposure to natural environments can benefit the mental health and wellbeing of learners, making Environmental and Outdoor Learning a crucial tool in this area.

The City Corporation continues to acknowledge health and wellbeing as a critical aspect of effective education. We will maintain our commitment to promoting and facilitating exemplary safeguarding practise throughout all City-linked learning settings, and continue to support efforts that strive to improve mental and physical health via specialist programmes, creative endeavours, innovative interventions and a bold new drive around Environmental and Outdoor Learning.

Actions (what we will do):

- **Work in partnership with schools, communities, parents, carers, and youth groups to maintain a universal commitment to safeguarding for all City-linked learners.**
- **Support improved internet safety and digital wellbeing across the Family of Schools by developing digital wellness toolkits for primary and secondary learners**
- **Help leaders across the Family of Schools pro-actively manage the health and wellbeing of their staff and pupils by comprehensively mapping the landscape of health and wellbeing support available for them.**
- **Work with the Natural Environment learning team to encourage schools to maximise the use of Environmental and Outdoor Learning to benefit the health and wellbeing of learners - especially those with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.**
- **Encourage City-linked cultural and creative learning educators to pilot programmes designed to benefit the health and wellbeing of learners.**

Outcomes (what we will achieve):

[To be completed once actions have been confirmed]

● 'PROMOTING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT'

Context:

The pairing of academic education with personal development is crucial for the overall growth of individuals. Personal development involves the building of principles and values such as respect, responsibility and citizenship as well as the development of skills and competencies that are valuable both personally and professionally. Central to this are Fusion Skills - a mix of creative, social, and interpersonal competencies as well as cognitive skills such as decision making, critical thinking and problem-solving. Fusion Skills have been identified as a set of skills that are highly likely to support success in tomorrow's world, especially with respect to the workplace.

Research tells us that access to opportunities for skills development varies substantially - particularly among underrepresented groups. The City Corporation believes that personal development is an essential component of a holistic education and should be available to all learners – especially those challenged by disadvantage. We can and will play an important role in making this a reality for City-linked learners. We will increase our drive to see skills development acknowledged in all City-linked learning settings and support key initiatives designed to help learners focus on their personal development.

Actions (what we will do):

- **Establish a 'City Mentors' program that gives City-linked learners exceptional access to mentors from the City's professional and Member communities.**
- **Promote and support the development of knowledge, skills and competencies in all City-linked learning environments so that school-leavers feel both work ready, and world-ready.**
- **Identify and engage delivery organisations specialising in personal development, and support the Family of Schools in the creation of a shared toolkit for personal development**
- **Support creative and cultural partners to develop learning experiences with a strong focus on personal development.**
- **Work with outdoor learning specialists to develop bespoke personal development programs for Family of Schools.**

Outcomes (what we will achieve):

[To be completed once actions have been confirmed]

● 'IMPROVING EMPLOYABILITY'

Context:

Education plays a pivotal role in preparing individuals for the workforce. A *meaningful* integration of employability into education however, requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond everyday classroom practice. It must also encompass the development of key skills such as problem-solving, communication, resilience and adaptability—essential qualities sought by employers. Alongside this, education experiences should build an appetite for lifelong learning – an essential component to succeed in the constantly changing workplace of future. Finally, and most critically, education can play a crucial role in exposing learners to the world of work, and connecting them with employers. Doing so better equips learners to navigate the complexities of the workplace, enhancing their prospects for meaningful employment and future career progression.

The City Corporation is uniquely positioned to provide learners with a world-leading offer in this respect. Along with an increase in our drive to see skills development acknowledged in City-linked learning environments, we will utilise our long-standing networks with key industries in the Square Mile and beyond to connect learners with workplace opportunities. These will include apprenticeships, work experience, volunteering, continued professional development, informal learning, traineeships, work placements, 'direct to employment' programmes and university pathways.

Actions (what we will do):

- **Better leverage the City Corporation's links with employers to help all City-linked learners – including those with SEND, and especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds – access world class careers opportunities, and develop professional networks as early as possible.**
- **Respond to learner appetite for apprenticeships by giving the Family of Schools unparalleled access to the 'apprenticeships map' of the Square Mile.**
- **Map the landscape of Green Careers to help ASES and the Family of Schools offer City-linked learners the most comprehensive overview of the space, and connect them with career pathways and green skills development opportunities**
- **Support the Family of Schools in adopting a digital destinations platform to help their learners independently explore career opportunities and navigate the pathways best suited to them**
- **Engage the City's creative community to connect learners with independent artists and creative practitioners that can help them pursue an independent creative career.**
- **Better support school-leavers and adult learners interested entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation through collaborative work with SBREC and ASES.**
- **Continue to promote the development of Fusion Skills to equip learners with the competencies that will make them attractive to employers when they enter the workplace.**

Outcomes (what we will achieve):

[To be completed once actions have been confirmed]

● 'LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY'

Context:

The transformative impact that technology can have on education is accelerating. When effectively utilised, technology can enhance learning outcomes by improving operational efficiency, and enabling personalised, adaptive, and inclusive educational experiences.

In particular, AI-powered tools such as Adaptive Learning Platforms (ALPs) can analyse student performance, providing tailored content and targeted interventions. This in turn enables customised learning paths, catering to diverse student needs and promoting better equity in education. Additionally, technology can provide significant support to educators in administrative tasks such as lesson planning and marking - allowing them to focus more on teaching and less on paperwork.

Alongside this sits the growing need to equip learners with the digital skills. Doing so empowers learners to effectively navigate an increasingly digital society, and enhances employability by preparing them for the demands of the future workforce.

The City Corporation will play a pivotal role in both of these arenas, identifying partners and providers that can support the development of digital skills across all learning settings and supporting educators to access these opportunities. We will also work with educators to identify and introduce value additive digital tools that address the specific needs of different learning environments and provide demonstrable benefits to both learners and teachers.

Actions (what we will do):

- **Establish robust relationships between the City Corporation and the Square Mile's (tech) employers to support learners and educators in the development of their baseline digital skills.**
- **In partnership with the Family of Schools and sector specialists, identify where digital tools and platforms will deliver the most impact, and support the introduction of EdTech that significantly benefits teachers and learners.**
- **Work with specialist partners to identify and promote the ways in which technology can be used to improve education experiences for City-linked learners with SEND**
- **Create and maintain a unique dialogue between AI specialists in the Square Mile and City-linked educators to help City-linked learners become experts in constructively utilising AI, both now and in the future.**
- **Help City-linked educators access tech-focused CPD and help them establish a network of digital leads that can share skills, knowledge and best practise throughout their individual learning environments.**

Outcomes (what we will achieve):

[To be completed once actions have been confirmed]

● 'EMBRACING CULTURE, CREATIVITY & THE ARTS'

Context:

Access to cultural and creative learning nurtures imagination and creativity, and significantly contributes to the development of skills, knowledge, and well-being in learners. Moreover, research emphasises the growing importance of creative skills such as problem-solving and innovation in the future workplace. Despite the acknowledged value of arts subjects however, there is a noted lack of recognition for arts education within the state education system. Aligning with this issue, it is often the case that learners have limited access to arts and culture.

The City of London is home to a wide range of high-quality cultural venues and inspiring green spaces, within historically and culturally significant geographical areas. This presents a remarkable educational resource that can enrich the learning of children and adults.

As well as these cultural venues, the Square Mile is neighbour to many of London's richest creative communities. Through our arts institutions and resident creative practitioners, there is an opportunity to create meaningful connections between aspiring creatives and established artists.

We will unlock the potential in both of these areas, building stronger links with, and easy access to cultural venues and creative communities to support high quality cultural and creative learning experiences both within learning settings, and also within the inspiring cultural and creative communities we are connected to.

Actions (what we will do):

- **Work with the local creative community to introduce the first City Schools artist in residence to directly inspire and work with creatively driven learners.**
- **Utilise the City's wider, resident creative community to deepen and enrich cultural and creative experiences for children and young people, inspiring them to explore their creative potential and to love the arts and culture.**
- **Support creative CPD training that equips non-arts teachers to use culture and creativity to enhance learning across the curriculum**
- **Create and maintain connections between creative partners and the Family of Schools' network of eco leads to ensure learners can explore culture and creativity via Environmental & Outdoor Learning.**
- **Strengthen knowledge and skills across cultural and creative learning partners so they are confident in working with learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, and offers are accessible and compelling to a variety of participants including learners with SEND and learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.**
- **Create more connected routes for pupils and teachers to access the cultural and heritage offer.**

Outcomes (what we will achieve):

[To be completed once actions have been confirmed]

IMPLEMENTATION, DELIVERY & MEASUREMENT

[To be completed once outcomes have been finalised, but this will be an annual action plan that references all outcomes and then reports against each].