

Committee	Dated:
Education Board	18/07/2019
Subject: City of London Family of Schools Safeguarding Review	Public
Report of: 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**.
- Approve the recommendations on pages 12-15 and set out in the summary document in **Appendix 2**.

Main Report

Background

1. As outlined in the Education Strategy 2019-23, the City Corporation are committed to ensuring that education is safe, inclusive, supportive and empowering for all which 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 was carried forward into the 2019/20 Education Board budget. Phase two of the review supports schools and the City Corporation to implement the review recommendations subject to approval from the Education Board.

Methodology

4. The review examined safeguarding arrangements and practice across the following key areas:
 - Leadership and Management
 - Child Protection, Safeguarding & 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.

Finding

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 amongst the governor cohort was too high in some cases
- SCR spot checks are not routinely carried out at all schools, 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 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 include 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 whilst 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.

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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