

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Education Board	24 June 2014
Subject: Education Strategy Update	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision

This report updates the Education Board on the progress made in implementing the Education Strategy in the following areas:

1. The establishment of the Education Unit
2. The Head Teachers' Forum and developing work across the City family of Schools
3. Developing the Accountability Framework
4. Chairs of Governors Forum
5. Future training for Governors
6. Additional funding resource to Schools. Project proposals from the three Secondary and one Primary Academy Schools are attached (Appendix 1)

Good progress has been made overall with the establishment of the Education Unit and the recruitment of experienced education staff into the team.

Key groups which will assist in the implementation of the Education Strategy have been established and both the Headteachers' Forum and the Chairs of Governors' Forum met in May 2014.

Work has commenced on developing the Accountability Framework which will provide a benchmark for performance across the City family of schools and similar schools across London and nationally. It will be used to celebrate attainment and progress as well as to challenge and support.

Proposals for additional funding available for the City family of schools were returned to the Education Unit on 12 June 2014. Details of these proposals are outlined in this report in paragraphs 24-30.

Recommendations

1. Members are asked to note the report.
2. Members are asked to approve the additional funding resource to the Academy Schools as outlined in paragraphs 24-30 and submitted as Appendix 1.

Main Report

Background

1. The Education Strategy 2013-15 was approved in October 2013, a key recommendation was to establish an Education Board to have oversight of the City of London's education related activity. The Court of Common Council approved the establishment of the Education Board on 1st May 2014. An Education Unit is being set up to assist in the implementation of the Education Strategy and this is the first of termly reports to the Education Board updating on progress in respect of the key aims set out in the strategy which are detailed below:
 - To promote and support excellent education and access to higher education
 - To strive for excellence in the City schools
 - To inspire children through an enriched education and outreach opportunities
 - To promote an effective transition from education to employment
 - To explore opportunities to expand the City's education portfolio and influence on education throughout London

Education Unit

Purpose and Function

2. The Education Unit will be responsible for delivering the Education Strategy in relation to the City Family of Schools and will provide information to the Education Board on the activities under its remit. It has been established to:
 - To create a framework for clearer accountability, challenge and support for the City schools and report to the Education Board on the performance of the schools within the City Family of Schools
 - Provide information on best practice across London and benchmark and improve the City School education offer
 - To promote collaboration between the City schools and the City academies through the setting up of a forum that will share good practice and raise standards across the family of schools. This forum will meet termly to discuss ways of collaborating and providing school to school support
 - To provide a forum for the Chairs of Governors and co-sponsors to meet to share information and develop working practice and expectations across the family of schools
 - To provide advice and training for Governors to ensure that our schools are compliant with the arrangements necessary for good governance and accountability within our schools

- Create a central point of contact and information flow by establishing the post of an Education Policy Officer who will ensure regular briefings to the schools and co-ordinate the activities of the Education Strategy
- To establish a mechanism for assessing opportunities to expand the City schools offer
- To work with other partners to explore the City's role in London's education landscape.

Staffing and Resources:

The Education Strategy Adviser

3. The Education Strategy Adviser will lead the Education Unit. This post is full time and will be filled by two part time staff who will be accountable to the Director of Children's and Community Services. Both appointees are education professionals with significant experience as successful and are outstanding head teachers of secondary schools.
4. This role will be to support the implementation of the Education Strategy taking responsibility for engaging with the City Family of Schools on the development of a school improvement and accountability framework; advising on governance arrangements and working closely with the Director of Community and Children's Services and the Assistant Town Clerk on any proposals to expand the City's education portfolio.
5. The role includes the following principle functions to develop and implement the Education Strategy:
 - Establish and coordinate a regular forum for City Heads and Principals to meet, share best practice and develop opportunities for collaboration and school-to-school support.
 - To secure the agreement and implementation of a school improvement and accountability framework for the City schools to ensure the identification of any early signs of underperformance and to promote continuous improvement and excellent education outcomes.
 - To work with co-sponsors to strengthen collaboration and to secure robust and shared accountability for the academies and to represent the Director of Community and Children's Services at sponsor meetings.
 - To work with co-sponsors and local authorities on the development of coordinated arrangements for monitoring, challenging and supporting the academies, including arrangements to intervene in the event of serious risks to performance.

- To work closely with the Director of Community and Children's Services on the development of opportunities to expand the City's role in education, including the provision of additional school places, the expansion of existing provision and the development of federations and multi academy trusts.
 - To work closely with the Town Clerk's department providing expert educational advice to governing bodies where necessary and to support the development of a robust and challenging governance framework across the City schools portfolio.
6. It is anticipated that the team will expand in September when expertise in the Primary School sector will be brought in.

Education Policy Officer

7. An experienced Policy Officer will commence on 16 June 2014. The Policy Officer will be accountable to the Education Strategy Adviser with the following responsibilities:
- To support the development of an overarching education body to provide strategic oversight and monitoring of the Education Strategy
 - To ensure the overarching education body receives a regular cycle of performance reports on the City schools.
 - To provide policy officer support for the overarching body including the management of the agenda and work programme including progress reports on the implementation of the education strategy.
 - To act as the City's central point of contact for the City schools with responsibility for coordinating the City's offer.
 - To work closely with the Education Strategy Adviser to establish and coordinate the Heads Forum supporting the administration of the meetings and the development of collaboration and cooperation across the family of schools.
 - To ensure effective communication links across the City schools governing bodies and sponsors, Local Authorities and other partners, through the provision of regular reports.

The Headteachers Forum

8. The Forum has been established and held its first meeting in May 2014. Considerable time was spent discussing the new structure and the accountability to the Education Board. Each of the City schools is constituted differently and therefore the accountability lies with the separate Governing bodies. It was recognised that accountability to the Education Board therefore exists through the governors' representation on the Education Board.

9. The Forum agreed the starting point for the Accountability Framework and identified areas of common interest for collaborative work across the Academies and City Schools. Two of the aims from the strategy that are to be prioritised are: defining the 'City Brand', and the Sharing of Good Practice to raise standards across the City schools.

'City Brand'

10. As each school is a unique entity it is important that we define together our common purpose and aims as a family of schools. It is proposed that we work together to define the common features of the brand and will be facilitated by Ipsos a partner working with the Southwark Academy to achieve this.

Sharing of Good Practice

11. There is a wealth of experience and practice across our schools and we have considered the ways in which we can collaborate more to raise standards across the City family of schools. Some examples of collaboration opportunities for professional exchange that have arisen in discussion so far are:

- Developing an outstanding 6th form,
- Outreach to Primary Schools,
- Master classes to achieve A*,
- Peer mentoring,
- Achieving the Best 8 outcomes,

12. There is clearly a unique opportunity to look at developing Continuing Professional Development across the City family of schools. Four key areas have been agreed as a way forward to deepen the expertise in our schools:

- Subject Leader conferencing across the Independent and Academy schools
- Masters in Teaching and Learning Programme with Kings College
- Becoming a COL Direct School Provider for Training teachers
- Linking with The United Learning Trust in evidence based learning

13. An audit has begun to determine the lead schools and participants for each of the activities listed in order to begin the programme in the next academic year. A next step is to consider organising pupil engagement activities across the schools e.g. Music concert, Debates and Sports events.

Developing the Accountability Framework

14. The Framework will be devised in collaboration with the schools and co-sponsors. It has been agreed that all schools will use the Ofsted Framework as the basis for reporting and provide a copy of their self evaluation against these standards.

15. Headteachers will provide a copy of their report to the Governing Body termly to the Education Unit. This should avoid unnecessary burden of additional report writing as both this aspect should be standard in each of the schools.
16. Each school has its own data system for measuring progress and attainment. The Ofsted Data Dashboard and Raise on Line reports will be used as the baseline for discussion on pupil progress and attainment as well as the schools own data. This will be applicable for the Academies and Primary schools. Comparable progress data measures will be used for the Independent schools including National benchmarking.
17. The Education Unit will commission one of its Education partners to provide the necessary support to ensure that the data on school attainment and the assessment function against the school standards required by Ofsted are collated and analysed to provide robust and appropriate reports for the Education Board on the performance of the City's family of schools. The data will be analysed and provide a benchmark for performance across the City family of schools and similar schools across London and nationally. It will be used to celebrate attainment and progress as well as to challenge and support. Other aspects that will be measured, e.g. participation and collaboration, will be agreed over the next half term and be in place for September.

Chairmen of Governors Forum

18. The Forum for Chairmen of the Governing Bodies of the Academies has been established and the first meeting took place in May. It has been agreed to extend this group to include the Deputy Chairs in order to ensure the involvement of the co-sponsors going forward as the Chairs change to City governors. In addition we have also agreed to involve the other City School Chairmen in the forum in future meetings.
19. The meeting focussed on the shift in Ofsted emphasis on Leadership and Governance in Inspections. Ofsted is now reporting on governance in much greater depth and every report now includes a separate paragraph on the quality of governance.
20. The Court of Common Council approved the arrangements for the appointment of Governors to the City schools. It is essential that all governing bodies have the skill set necessary to fulfil their functions. It will be necessary to work closely with the co-sponsors to ensure that correct representation is achieved and that our governors can meet the new standards required by Ofsted. The risk to the school is that the Ofsted judgement for Leadership and Management will go down a grade and affect the category awarded to the school.

Future Training for Governors

21. Comprehensive training for governors should be provided by Local Authorities. In addition, the National Association for School Governors is an excellent resource for Chairmen. There are several other providers in this field.

22. The Education Unit does not wish to duplicate the comprehensive services provided elsewhere and encourages the schools to buy in to the local offer. However it will provide training sessions on critical issues as required by the schools. The following topics are offered as examples of areas that are critical for Governors that could be centrally offered: Exclusions, Examining the Data Dashboard, the Ofsted Framework and Safeguarding.
23. Chairmen of governing bodies have been asked to identify areas most in need and to advise the strengths of their governing body. An audit of City school Governors will be conducted this half term in order to ascertain the role they fulfil on the governing body committees and to identify their training needs in order to further develop the central training programme.

Additional Funding Resource for Schools

24. Funding has been allocated to the new Education Board to support projects in the City Academies for the 2014/15 academic year.
25. Each Academy has been allocated a grant of £150,000 and Redriff Primary £50,000. The grant allocated to each school is additional money and should be used to make a difference and add value to the educational offer already provided at the school. While Academies are responsible for their own financial management, they are subject to public standards of accountability. Therefore, as with all funds, governors hold the accountability function and the responsibility for ensuring appropriate spend complies with the financial accountability framework and assurance arrangements. Governors have been advised to ensure that the standards as set out in the Financial Management and Governance Self-Assessment (FMGS) are applied.
26. There is no intention to increase bureaucracy unnecessarily, but the Education Unit have requested an outline of the project to be supported through the grant, their target audience and the educational outcomes expected. A brief evaluation will be completed at the end of the project. Forms have been circulated to the schools and the proposals were received by 12 June 2014. All projects proposed are supported by detailed descriptions of aims and expected outcomes. The proposals are attached as Appendix 1
27. Redriff Primary school has submitted a proposal to enhance the playground by creating an adventure play area on site. This will help students access to physical activity as well as increase social interaction. The project is a result of consultation that has been done with architects, parents and the student council.
28. COLA Southwark submitted a bid which is directed at raising the standards of Teaching and Learning and Attainment in Maths. It includes staffing for 2 additional Maths specialists as well as provision for intervention classes, Saturday boosters and Holiday revision schools. It also has an element of outreach work to the primary school to raise the number of students attaining level 6 in the Standards Assessment Tests (SATS).

Maths has been correctly identified as an area that needs additional input to raise standards.

29. COLA Islington submitted a proposal consisting of 7 different activities as follows: developing ICT across the school through the purchase of tablets, lap tops and storage trolleys; accessing an external Pastoral Care programme; developing music provision and providing instruments for an orchestra; providing alternative provision for those unable to access the full curriculum; developing ICT in Science.
30. COLA Hackney submitted a proposal consisting 4 activities as follows: Saturday and holiday provision; lap tops for 6th form students beginning in September; enhancing music technology; overseas trips to raise the standards in Modern Foreign Languages and increase the outcomes in EBACC.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

31. There are no Corporate or Strategic implications associated with this report

Financial Implications

32. Members are asked to approve the sum of £150,000 to each of the Secondary Academy Schools and £50,000 to Redriff Primary Academy.

Background Papers:

Education Strategy 2013 - 15

Appendix

The proposals for use of funding submitted by the Academy schools are enclosed as:

- Appendix 1 Redriff Primary Academy
- Appendix 2 COLA Southwark
- Appendix 3 COLA Islington
- Appendix 4 COLA Hackney

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