

DIRECTORS' REPORT
ALL SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARDS
SUMMER TERM 2024

This term's report is prepared by BDSIP for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and includes the following items:

For Action

1. Inclusion Pledge, Race and Social Justice Approach & UNICEF Rights Respecting Awards
2. Attendance, Performance, Local & National Update
3. Suspension and exclusion, Local & National Update

For Information

1. Enhancing physical education provision and improving access to sport and physical activity in school Non-statutory guidance March 2024
2. New Non-Statutory Guidance for Governance
3. London Governors' Newsletter Summer 2024

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& Jane Hargreaves, Commissioning Director Education

For Action:

1	Inclusion Pledge, Race and Social Justice Approach & UNICEF Rights Respecting Awards
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Purpose:

To update Governors on key Inclusion work: the borough's draft Inclusion Pledge, Race and Social Justice Approach and UNICEF Rights Respecting Awards; and to highlight key actions for Governors in these areas.

Summary:

Inclusion Pledge (Please click on the [icon](#) below to review the Draft)

Our ambition is that 'all who work with or on behalf of the children and young people of Barking and Dagenham undertake to promote and embed the following values of this Inclusion Pledge':



On the 26 April, the LA Inclusion team started formally sharing with stakeholders the draft Barking and Dagenham Inclusion Pledge.

All stakeholders will be asked to carefully consider the content of the Inclusion Pledge and are invited to make comment on it prior to it being finalised for adoption across our borough, which is planned for Autumn 2024.

The Inclusion Pledge complements the Race and Social Justice Approach and UNICEF Rights Respecting Awards, which are outlined below.

Race and Social Justice Approach

The 'Race and Social Justice Approach' began as the 'Race and Social Justice' project in 2021, supported by seed-funding from the LA. It has been developed by schools and facilitated by BDSIP. To-date, this work has had a planned focus on themes pertaining to race.

Now in its third year, there is a drive to broaden out this work so that progress around issues relating to race, anti-racism and social justice continues to be explored and developed through schools' strategies and day-to-day practices. Governors can play a key role in supporting this work.

The UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award

The UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. The RRSA seeks to put the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of a school's ethos and culture to improve well-being and develop every child's talents and abilities to their full potential.

The award creates a culture in the school with inclusion at its heart, where children are treated fairly, listened to, and feel safe.

The London Mayor's Violence Reduction Unit has agreed to fund all Barking and Dagenham schools who are interested in joining this initiative. We currently have five schools who have already started their Rights Respecting journey, two of which have already achieved the Gold Award. We now have a further twenty- one schools interested in beginning their journey to becoming a Rights Respecting school.

Recommendations:

- Governors are requested to discuss the Inclusion Pledge with their Headteacher.
- Governors are requested to:
 - Check whether their school is engaged in work on the Race and Social Justice Approach, and (re)familiarise themselves with the Race and Social Justice Approach Charter: [PowerPoint Presentation \(bdsip.co.uk\)](https://bdsip.co.uk)
 - Discuss appointing a Governor for Race and Social Justice with their Headteacher, where this appointment has not yet been made. The Governor will need to discuss with the school their areas of focus.
- Governors are asked to note where their school is undertaking the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools award or has signed up to do so. Where their school has not yet signed up, Governors are requested to discuss the merits of undertaking the award.

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SEND**Background Information:**Inclusion Pledge

As background information, the 'Inclusion Pledge' started life as a development by the SEMH Workstream that was based on [Nurture UK's Six Principles of Nurture](#). However, it has now been expanded through the work of the 'Inclusion Strategy Working Group' to be a much more comprehensive set of values that draw from and reference a number of further sources – namely the [London Violence Reduction Unit's Inclusion Charter](#), the [United Nations Charter for Children's Rights](#), the [Principles of the Relational Approach](#) and the [Charter for Social Pedagogy](#).

Consequently, the attached draft is not an isolated local strategy but sits firmly within the context of excellent inclusive practice drawn from highly respected regional, national and international sources.

The Inclusion Pledge is not intended to be a one size fits all approach. It is for schools (and others) to use in guiding the further development of their existing good practice.

That said, it also provides a vehicle to open discussion and an opportunity to reframe the narrative of inclusive practice. With that in mind, it is important for every one of us to think deeply about defining what inclusion really means to us and our schools.

Race and Social Justice (RSJ) Approach

The RSJ project was launched in September 2021 by a group of the borough's Headteachers, facilitated by BDSIP.

Research was undertaken looking at practice in other parts of the country and engaging experts, including Paul Miller, Professor of Educational Leadership and Social Justice, in developing the project.

Areas of focus have included: pupil inclusion and pupil experience, staff experience including recruitment and progression, and curriculum development.

Key tools developed to support schools, and to help schools prioritise what areas they work on are:

- RSJ Charter for schools: [PowerPoint Presentation \(bdsip.co.uk\)](https://bdsip.co.uk)
- RSJ Self Evaluation tool for schools. This can be requested from BDSIP.

Michael Kaitell, Hunters Hall, is the Headteacher Lead for this work, continuing the positive work of Paramjit Roopra, Headteacher, Northbury and Thomas Arnold.

Highlights of the Race and Social Justice Approach include:

- Over 45 schools are involved. These schools have an appointed RSJ Facilitator in their schools. This staff member helps encourage and support race and social justice work, alongside other staff.
- RSJ Facilitator Network meetings are held, facilitated by BDSIP.
- RSJ Facilitators and Headteachers have received various training e.g. around Unconscious Bias.
- Several schools have developed ways they demonstrate their commitment to RSJ e.g. through arranging training, school events, assemblies, producing newsletters, and parent and student RSJ groups.
- Around 14 schools have opted to undertake a Leeds Beckett University Anti Racist Award.
- A small number of schools have showcased their work through written case studies.
- Two WhatsApp groups for RSJ Facilitators have been created by BDSIP to more easily share resources and information.
- The project has engaged the Barking & Dagenham Youth Forum to hear their views about this work.

The UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award

The award also allows schools to build good Global Citizens. Children gain a greater understanding of environmental issues as well as conflicts around the world and the impact on children's rights.

Children become active and involved in school life and the wider world.

The difference that a Rights Respecting School makes goes beyond the school gates, making a positive impact on the whole community.

2 Attendance, Performance, Local & National Update

Purpose:

To provide information regarding Attendance data/New guidance and Local Authority response to working with schools and improving attendance.

Summary: School Attendance Headlines – most recent full year data 2022/23

- Overall Absence (OA) rate has worsened to 7.0% from the previous year (6.6%) but remains better than national (7.4%).
- Persistent Absence (PA) (10% or more missed) rate has worsened by 1.1% to 21.8% and is worse than national 21.2%.
- Severe Absence (SA) (50% or more missed) rate has stayed the same for three years 1.2%. Nationally SA has worsened from 1.1% to 2.0% in the same period.

Areas of Strength

- Primary SA 0.2% better than national.
- Secondary OA 1.7% better than national.
- Secondary PA 4.2% better than national.
- Secondary SA 1.5% better than national.

Areas of Concern

- Primary OA 0.7 % worse than national.
- Primary PA 4.7% worse than national.
- Special OA 1.6% worse than national.
- Special PA 11% worse than national.
- Special SA 0.9% worse than national.

Current year attendance data

Year to date information taken from DfE View Your Education Data – Overall Absence is 0.4% better than national. Persistent Absence is 2% worse than national.

*This information should only be treated as indicative as not all schools share their daily attendance data yet. 54/60 schools (90%) in LBBDD currently share attendance data.

In supporting our schools with improving attendance we currently

- Have termly targeted support meetings with schools.
- Provide monthly webinars on supporting attendance.
- Provide training on working together for different departments within the authority.
- Support schools on cases through vulnerable pupil hot clinics and communications.
- Focus meeting with schools on Persistent and Severe Absent pupils.
- Monitor trends and data via View Your Data.
- Have grown our attendance team which now includes a Courts officer, EHE Officer, CME Officer.
- Incorporate attendance contracts as a means before legal action.

- ❖ The DfE has now published a new version of the [working together to improve school attendance](#). This will become statutory guidance on **19 August 2024**. The changes are a mixture of clarification on existing guidance and updates to reflect changes in the law, including the upcoming School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

The key changes for Local Authorities

❖ **New requirements on keeping and sharing registers**

You must:

- Keep registers electronically (paragraph 31)
- Preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years (previously it was 3 years) from the date the data was entered (paragraph 36)
- Use the revised attendance and absence codes (paragraphs 283 to 407)
- Share your school's daily attendance data (paragraph 51)

Maintained schools and non-maintained special schools **must** (and other schools are expected to):

- Only grant leaves of absence for specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the 2024 attendance regulations (paragraphs 37 to 40)

All schools can also grant absence for education off site (paragraphs 41 and 42).

Where applicable, you're also expected to report unexplained absences to the pupil's youth offending team worker (paragraph 52).

❖ **New rules around issuing fines for unauthorised absences**

The new national framework for issuing penalty notices will replace local codes of conduct, to ensure consistency across the country.

Fines will increase to:

- £80 to be paid within 21 days, or
- £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days

See paragraphs 174 to 200 for more details of the new framework.

❖ **Clearer expectations for the school's senior attendance champion**

This is an ongoing responsibility of the senior leader responsible for attendance. The champion is expected to:

- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence
- Have a strong grasp of absence data
- Regularly monitor and evaluate progress

See paragraph 25.

❖ **More detail about supporting pupils with physical or mental ill health**

This section provides more clarification about where the role of your school starts and ends.

It also provides more information about medical evidence, support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and part-time timetables.

See paragraphs 53 to 68.

❖ **Clearer link between improving attendance and wider school culture**

The guidance puts greater emphasis on working in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance (paragraphs 17 to 24).

❖ **‘Parenting contracts’ will be called ‘attendance contracts’**

This better reflects the agreement between parents, schools and/or LAs (see paragraph 138 to 150).

❖ **The new changes would mean for us as a local authority to:**

- Ensure all schools have signed up and are sharing their data.
- Provide further training and information on changes and additions to the new attendance codes.
- Monitor attendance data via DfE view your data.
- Revise the new Penalty notice Code of Conduct and framework and ensure LBBD guidance reflect the changes.
- Amend any stationery and communication where changes lay.
- Ensure Targeted support meeting is used effectively.
- Clear guidance on partnership working and roles and responsibilities.
- Devise a guidance on supporting pupils with physical or mental ill health.
- Ensure Local Authority and Schools are working in reflection of the Working together to improve guidance and that all are aware of the expectations.

Recommendation:

- Governors are asked to note the statutory changes and assure themselves that the school is compliant or will be compliant from 19 August 2024

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3 Suspension and exclusion, Local & National Update

Purpose:

To provide information regarding suspensions and exclusions

Summary:

Local authority school suspension and exclusions are rising but the LA is performing well when set against the National backdrop.

School Phase	Year	Term	England Permanent exclusions (rate)	LBBB Permanent exclusions (rate)	England Suspension (rate)	LBBB Suspension (rate)
Special	2022/23	Autumn term	0.03	0.00	4.31	3.92
Primary	2022/23	Autumn term	0.01	0.00	0.58	0.21
Secondary	2022/23	Autumn term	0.07	0.02	5.90	1.42

School Phase	Year	Term	England Permanent exclusions (rate)	LBBB Permanent exclusions (rate)	England Suspension (rate)	LBBB Suspension (rate)
Special	2022/23	Spring term	0.02	0.00	3.50	3.91
Primary	2022/23	Spring term	0.01	0.00	0.56	0.19
Secondary	2022/23	Spring term	0.07	0.03	6.41	1.56

Exclusion and suspension figures have compared favourably since 2016 when set against the national backdrop. This year’s spring and autumn term figures also compare well, except for the special school sector which is above national figures for the Spring term as it was for the spring term of last year.

There has been an increase in suspensions over the last 2 years, there has been a decrease in the LA figures for spring term of this year compared to previous spring terms. This is particularly noticeable when set against the national figure which shows a sharp, continued rise.

Fundamental to this is the close working relationship between schools and between schools and the LA. Through these relationships, schools are able to avoid suspensions due to intelligence gathering and sharing, alternative provisions, offsite referrals, and managed move programmes. The LA has developed an enhanced AP programme and inclusion system.

Current suspensions picture:

- Total suspensions: 946
- Most suspensions are for disruptive behaviour and physical assault against pupils.
- Total number of primary suspensions equal just one year group in secondary

The Inclusion team have supported in the following ways:

- Launch of the inclusion principles/pledge.
- Targeted meeting/discussions with high suspending/excluding schools.
- Graduated responses to suspensions via at risk registers, vulnerable pupil clinics, resourcing panels and an enhanced transition support via six into seven.
- Inclusion conference and Headteachers strategic priorities meetings.
- Inclusion lead teachers.
- Closer multi agency links with YOS, Safeguarding and Virtual School.
- Action planning with key school leadership teams.

Recommendation:

Governors should follow up with headteachers with regards to the following:

- Governors must now be informed by the school for every suspension, without delay where that suspension is over 5 days, or the pupil misses an exam, or the pupil is permanently excluded.

Additionally, every term governors must review the number of:

- suspensions and exclusions. This includes ALL suspensions not included in point 1.
- referrals offsite which are not a suspension.
- pupils on a reduced timetable, that is to say, all pupils who are not in receipt of a full-time provision.

The above should be presented by the Headteacher in such a way that Governors can consider vulnerable groups and the effectiveness of school policies.

In addition to the summary numbers above, Governors must assure themselves that the safeguarding need of each individual pupil is being met and that all are receiving an appropriate education suitable for the age, ability, and any special educational needs and that they are receiving alternative input for the minimum time possible.

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Background Information:

The DFE have now produced their own parental guide to suspensions and exclusions; you can find it here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusions-guide-for-parents>.

Information items

1 Enhancing physical education provision and improving access to sport and physical activity in school Non-statutory guidance March 2024

Purpose:

The non-statutory guidance, released by government on 23 March 2023 can support school staff, senior leaders, and governors to review their PE and school sport offer. The document should be used to stimulate discussions and generate ideas to create a positive and active school community through PE, school sport and wider physical activities.

Summary:

PE is a mandatory part of the national curriculum from KS1 to KS4. Maintained schools in England are legally required to follow the national curriculum as a piece of statutory guidance. Schools should organise and deliver a diverse and ambitious PE and school sport offer which best suits the needs of all their pupils. Factors that might influence that decision include the spaces available for sports and physical activity, and available equipment.

The recent PE subject report published by Ofsted found that most primary schools and around half of secondary schools visited as part of the report were timetabling a minimum of 2 hours PE per week. However, the time allocated to PE was found to be significantly reduced during KS4.

To embed PE and school sport into the school ethos and culture schools have to:

- Establish a clear rationale for the importance of PE in their timetable and communicated it to everyone within the school community.
- Use evidence from sources such as the UK's Chief Medical Officer's Guidelines to build a strong rationale for pupils needing to access PE and school sport more.
- Identify and incorporated how their PE and wider school sport offer can enhance the values and ethos of the whole school/trust and wider community.
- Write PE and school sport outcomes into their strategic plans to improve accountability.
- Create relationships with their local Active Partnership to develop PE and physical activity within their ethos.

The Local Authority continues to support schools with the delivery of physical activity and education through the School Sports Partnership, which the majority but not all of our schools are part of. This is led by our Physical Activity Lead and Coordinator.

Recommendation:

- Read the Guidance
- Share the non statutory guidance with Senior Leaders and Heads of PE/PE Leads
- Encourage school staff to liaise with the Barking and Dagenham School Sports Partnership – Leanne Robson and Michelle Daniel to ensure they are accessing opportunities, CPD, competitions and support.

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