

**Report for:** Scrutiny

**Title:** Education update

**Report authorised by :** An Graham, Director of Children's Services

**Lead Officer:** Eveleen Riordan, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** Information

### **Introduction**

This report provides a brief update on education in our schools, including the impact of Covid on national testing, learning and how digital poverty is being addressed.

Covid lockdown in March 2020 had a significant impact on our schools and education settings in that they immediately closed to all but the most vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Schools immediately switched to remote or distance learning for the majority of pupils and the attached report, Supporting the Future of Children and Young People's Education and Skills Following Covid-19 (also known as the Lost Learning Report) sets out how our schools (and those of the five adjoining boroughs) managed during lockdown, lessons learnt for remote learning and strategies to strengthen how our children and young people learn remotely looking forward. This report has previously been presented to Scrutiny.

Below is a summary of the position in our schools.

### **Return to full opening**

On 2 September, in line with government guidance, Haringey schools and education settings (hereafter collectively referred to as 'schools') began a full opening to all pupils. This was supported by robust risk assessments (RAs) which had been quality assured by the LA and signed off by chairs of governors and Head teachers or equivalent.

Since September 2020 there has been a small but steady number of Covid positive tests among staff and pupils and schools have taken immediate and relevant action as required to keep all within our school communities safe. This has usually meant self-isolation of relevant 'bubbles' but, in a very small number of instances, has meant a temporary closure for a whole school and the relevant remote learning has been put in place. As of the end of October 2020, the following numbers have been impacted by Covid.

<b>Confirmed</b>	77 students 67 staff 2 nursery child
<b>Schools total</b>	41 Schools 1 childminder 4 nurseries

### Impact on national testing

The country's lockdown has had an inevitable impact on the ability of schools to nationally test.

**SATs** - There were no SATs (standard assessment tests) tests at year 6 and no predicted score was given for any child. Instead, primary schools used existing data to inform schools for secondary transfer.

**GCSE, A Levels (and equivalent)** – there were no exams in England in summer 2020. The algorithm process used to predict A levels is well documented in the press: in summary, it resulted in very many young people being awarded grades that were significantly down on that which they had been predicted. The algorithm method was replaced with the use of teacher predicted grades by 17 August (A Level) national results day had been 13 August. The delay of this move caused undoubted impact to many of our young people. Higher education places were, in many cases, not achieved and while some universities were able to honour grade offers made to young people on 17 August 2020 and after, many had already accepted a full quota of young people onto courses and were not retrospectively able to honour offers previously made. In summary, A level results day had the following impact on our schools and young people:

1. Pressure on young people when results first came out and the algorithm was used: it led to huge stress in the system for young people, families, schools, colleges and higher education establishments.
2. Some young people missed out on their chosen of preferred university(s) as by the time they got their predicted grade, the places were all allocated
3. For those students who were not expected to get high grades (often the most vulnerable and/or disadvantaged) the algorithm gave some of them U grades where they would have been predicted Cs etc. Some schools were particularly hit by many of their students not getting a pass grade(s) at A level(s) initially and by the time predicted grades were confirmed, the destinations they might have secured were full.
4. The situation (plus Covid) led to many young people deferring higher education from 2020 to 2021 which is likely to mean a bumper year next year and so lots of competition for too few places.
5. Our schools were extremely disappointed by the initial process, for the staff but mostly importantly for the young people. Haringey schools and settings worked tirelessly to help young people secure a destination for 2020 where this is what they wanted.

The whole experience ended up doing exactly the opposite of what the Government said they wanted – i.e. ‘grade inflation’ was the highest of any possible option by reverting to CAGs (centre assessment grades).

By the time of the GSCE national results day, the government had confirmed the use of CAGs and so the system for young people and for schools was more certain and less fraught.

While grades have been awarded to our young people at GCSE, A Level and all equivalents (e.g. BTECH), these results will not be published on a setting by setting basis for 2020 and so there will be no league tables for schools for 2020.

For 2021, the government has announced that GCSEs and A Levels will be delayed. In a [written statement](#) on Monday 12 October, Gavin Williamson said: “I can confirm that GCSE, AS and A level exams in 2021 will go ahead, with most exams moved back three weeks next year to give students more time to prepare and a chance to catch up on education lost due to Covid-19. While [GCSE](#) and [A-level](#) exams in England are to be delayed by three weeks, the Government has rejected calls to cut down their content. The Education Secretary said there would be back-up plans in case exams were disrupted, but that students, teachers and parents would have to wait until “later in the autumn” to find out what they are.

For primary schools, SATs for year 6s in Key Stage 2 (KS2) are expected to go ahead at the time of writing. Phonics screening (year 1) will be monitored in the usual way, i.e. visits will be carried out by a School Improvement Advisor or the Lead for Statutory Services assessment being carried out as it should be. There will be KS1 and KS2 sampling across schools i.e. a number of schools visited to check teacher assessments are robust and at KS2 (during the SATs week) unannounced visits are made to assure procedural compliance and test administration. There is also a sampling of KS2 writing in general, e.g. looking at sample of greater depth, expected standard and below expected standard). For Early Years, the early adopters<sup>1</sup> (those that applied on a school by school basis) are using the new EYFS framework and the EY team do an EYFS assessment at the end of the year to quality assure teacher assessments.

### **Remote learning**

The Supporting the Future of Children and Young People’s Education and Skills Following Covid-19 report (appendix 1) has previously been presented to Scrutiny. The report was commissioned by six LAs (Haringey, Camden, Islington, Waltham Forest, parent and Enfield) to look at the impact of Covid on our children and young people’s learning, examine what had worked well for learning during lockdown, and making recommendations for how to continue with blended learning (in school or remote learning as dictated by any self-isolation and other circumstances and the ability of schools and young people to switch quickly and competently between the two. The report makes some useful recommendations and also acknowledges that it is the quality of the teaching, whether remote or face to face, that ultimately determines the quality of the learning.

### **IT poverty**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-adopter-schools-eyfs-framework>

There is a heavy but not sole reliance on IT access to support remote learning. At the point of lockdown our schools did a number of things:

1. Produced hard copy learning packs, often hand delivered to our families, to allow children to continue to access learning. This was particularly evidenced in some of our special schools where hard copy was more relevant for some (but not all) learners than electronic learning.
2. Where there were electronic devices e.g. tablets in school and not being used, these were shared with families with priority being given to those families where it was clear that IT access would be most challenged
3. The government had a roll out of IT equipment to young people, including those with a social worker and those considered to be the most vulnerable (deprivation indices were used by the government to determine this e.g. eligibility for FSMs.
4. Schools continue to support families where IT access is a challenge, including through the provision of devices where possible and provision of dongles to allow internet access.

Lockdown has thrown into sharp focus the inequity for so many families in being able to access devices and internet to access learning for their child(ren). In some households, a single mobile phone is the only device available, shared between parent/carer(s) and child(ren), often with limited data.

There is ongoing work within schools and the LA to support access to IT for all and to ensure that no child or young person is disadvantaged by lack of access to remote learning. We are currently questioning schools to gather data on any gaps that the government laptop scheme has not filled and assessing the most cost, learning and security effective way to provide devices to those who can't easily access remote learning. When we are sure our data is robust and gaps are identified, we will look at how fund raising can secure the purchase of sufficient devices to plug these gaps. This may include work with local businesses and residents as has happened in Camden where a crowd funder is being used to raise funds.

### **Free school meals (FSM)**

FSMs (vouchers) were provided across all holidays from Easter through to the end of the summer. On 22 October, MPs voted not to continue this provision into the October half term. The LA therefore stepped up to provide vouchers to all FSM eligible families for this period and is currently giving consideration as to how our families will not go hungry over the Christmas break and beyond.

### **Appendix 1 - Supporting the Future of Children and Young People's Education and Skills Following Covid-19 report**