



**Agenda Item
13**

The Children and Young People's Service

Report to Haringey Schools Forum: 4th July 2023

Report Status

For information/ notes

For consultation and views

For decision

Report Title: Annual Report on Schools

Authors: Minesh Jani

Telephone: 0208 489 5973

Email: minesh.jani@haringey.gov.uk

Purpose: To share the outcome of the 2022/23 Schools' Audit Work

Recommendations:

1. To note and discuss the content of the report.

Report

- 1.1 The outcomes of schools' audit work have improved considerably since 2019/20 when I reported as part of my annual report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion for the Council that the control environment in Haringey's schools required improvement. Nevertheless, there has been a dip in overall performance this year; the number of schools assigned "Limited" assurance has increased slightly, albeit from a low base. This may be due to the nature of the cyclical school programme and will continue to be monitored.
- 1.2 It is noted no schools in 2022/23 has been assigned a "nil" assurance. A programme of follow up for all 2021/22 audits was also completed in 2022/23 by Mazars and the outcomes were positive. Most recommendations raised have been implemented. Some additional follow up work has been requested on receiving this annual report to ensure schools assigned "Limited" assurance have taken appropriate action to achieve "Adequate" Assurance. Two schools will be followed up in July and the other two in September when their actions fall due. Audit will continue to work closely with other back-office teams supporting schools, the HEP and in conjunction Children's Services to assist schools to efficiently mitigate the potential risks. Appendix A provides a summary relating to the schools' audit plan, information will also be provided to Senior Management and Members as part of the Council Annual Audit Report.
- 1.3 A summary of outcomes for 2022/23 is as follows:
- Nine out of 13 schools completed received "Adequate" or above assurance rating;
 - Two schools received the top rating of Substantial Assurance;
 - No schools received a "nil" rating;
 - Three schools received "Limited" Assurance; and
 - Three schools demonstrated a reduction in assurance from the last audit, these schools will be followed up early in 2023/24 to ensure control environment has strengthened.
- 1.4 Full details of the work completed in 2022/23 is included at appendix A. The common themes arising from the audit work were: -
- Governors not providing evidence of their DBS certificate, particularly where the previous certificate requires an update;
 - Contracts have been rolled over for several years, and spend on them exceeds the thresholds for going out to tender; and
 - Evidence not retained to clearly show that reconciliations are prepared by one officer, and then reviewed by a second independent officer.

- 1.5 I have asked Mazars to issue satisfaction surveys when the final report is issued. The number of responses has been low, though responses received have been positive. I would encourage all schools to feedback with their views at the end of the audit.
- 1.6 For the financial year 2022/23, a total of 113 recommendations were raised. This is an increase from last year where 88 recommendations were raised. The priority of the recommendations raised is as follows: -
- Priority 1 recommendation – 1
 - Priority 2 recommendations – 73
 - Priority 3 recommendations – 39
- 1.7 The majority of recommendations raised relate to school governance (22%), financial Planning and Monitoring (24%) and Procurement (26%).
- 1.8 Work to plan and start to deliver the 2023/24 audit programme commenced in April. Mazars have engaged with all schools to agree a provisional date for the audit to take place. Communications and briefings, as usual, have been sent to the schools to help them prepare. Training for Governors is also offered on Audit and Risk, and programmed in for the year.
- 1.9 Governors have requested additional support for schools on risk management and we are currently exploring how this can be delivered within our current resources constraints.
- 1.10 There have been a few risk events in schools this year, Payroll Frauds, Email Spoofing, Missing Income, Cyber Attack these have been reported outside of the issues identified through the audit process. Schools have received support and guidance from a cross section of specialist teams in the Council, with regard these events, and we will look to help schools identify risk areas and help to guide schools in 2023/24 through both our audit and risk management roles.

Minesh Jani
Head of Audit & Risk Management