

CABINET

16 February 2015

Title: Inspection of Arrangements for Supporting School Improvement	
Report of the Corporate Director Children's Services	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: Not applicable	Key Decision: No
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Accountable Director: Helen Jenner, Corporate Director Children's Services	
Summary Barking and Dagenham's arrangements for supporting School Improvement were inspected by Ofsted from 24 to 28 November – the first in the country to be inspected under the revised inspection framework published November 2014. This report informs Cabinet of the outcomes. The draft letter has been received from Ofsted and comments have been sent to Ofsted by the Director of Children's Services. A copy of the final letter from Ofsted will be circulated once it has been published.	
Recommendation(s) The Cabinet is recommended to note the contents of the inspection report.	
Reason(s) This report provides Cabinet with an external judgment of the impact and effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for School Improvement.	

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Barking and Dagenham's arrangements for supporting School Improvement were inspected by Ofsted in November 2014 under the Education and Inspection Act 2006. It was the first to be inspected under the revised November 2014 Framework. The revised Framework removes the single effective/ineffective judgment and replaces it with a narrative of evaluative comments under nine areas as set out in the inspection Framework and Handbook documents (see links under Public Background Papers).
- 1.2 Inspections are targeted based on Ofsted risk assessments. The reasons given verbally for the inspection concerned Ofsted performance, mainly below average

proportion of good and outstanding primary schools in July 2014 and progress in reading and writing KS1 to KS2 and in maths KS2 – KS4; plus local intelligence.

- 1.3 Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) reported that of the fifteen inspections carried out since May 2013 only two local authorities had been found effective to date.
- 1.4 The report is published in the form of a letter to the Director of Children's Services with recommendations for action.

2. Process and Consultation with Schools

- 2.1 The inspection was in two parts – Week One – where three schools were inspected and additional questions asked about the local authority, and telephone calls to five good or outstanding schools to gather views on local authority performance and how the strengths of schools were being used.
- 2.2 The second week, based at Barking Town Hall covered interviews and scrutiny of documentation and data. Around 90 people were interviewed including 46 heads and governors and 5 elected Members; 35 schools were represented.
- 2.3 The focus of the evidence gathering judged what difference the local authority is making to outcomes in all schools and how effectively the local authority knows all schools as it acts as champion for all our children and young people.
- 2.4 Current themes high on the agenda are:
 - How the curriculum and spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision contributes to pupils' understanding of British values;
 - How effectively the LA follows up complaints relating to pupils' safety;
 - How actively and effectively the LA is brokering partnerships and school to school support.

3. Main Findings and Recommendations

- 3.1 The lead HMI was clear that if inspected under the previous framework arrangements would have been judged effective. The outcome letter will be circulated when published by Ofsted.
- 3.2 As is normal practice after any inspection, the local authority will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations. This will be shared with elected members, headteachers and governing bodies. As the draft outcome letter was received later than expected, there was insufficient time to submit the plan alongside the letter to meet Cabinet deadlines.
- 3.3 This report supports the priorities and direction of the Borough's Education Strategy with its two overarching objectives:
 - A place in a good or outstanding school or early years setting for every child or young person
 - Exceeding national standards and then London standards

- 3.4 It recognises the strength of the partnership between schools and the local authority and the shared drive to continue to improve outcomes for all our children and young people through the challenge and support we provide for each other.
- 3.5 The School Improvement Service welcomes the report and its findings and will include progress against recommendations in its annual report to Cabinet.

4. Financial Implications

Implications completed by Patricia Harvey (Group Manager Children's Services Finance)

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications associated with the School Improvement Inspection that was undertaken in November 2014 by Ofsted. The local authority's action plan and recommendations will be addressed from existing resources.

5. Legal Implications

Implications completed by Lucinda Bell, Education Lawyer, for Fiona Taylor (Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

- 5.1 This is an updating report for Cabinet and its contents are to be noted only. No decision is required. The Authority is under a duty imposed by s13A of the Education Act 1996 to promote high standards and fulfilment of potential of children and young people in its area. HMCI may inspect an Authority's education function at an time under section 136(1)(b) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The inspection includes schools maintained by the Authority and those that are not so maintained.

6. Other Implications

- 6.1 **Risk Management** - Councils where School Improvement arrangements are deemed ineffective are subject to enhanced monitoring and inspection from Ofsted. This is not the case in Barking and Dagenham.
- 6.2 **Staffing Issues** - The inspection confirms the expertise and impact of the small core of school improvement staff and the quality of work they do in local schools.
- 6.3 **Corporate Policy and Customer Impact** - Narrowing the gap in attainment and ensuring that every child realises their potential is a key part of the Council's vision. In particular, this is addressed under both the encouraging civic pride and the social responsibility priorities. Strengthening school partnerships is also a priority project identified in the Corporate Delivery Plan.

This report endorses the priorities and direction of travel set out the Education Strategy approved by Cabinet in November 2014. The recommendations from the report will be used to help the Council to meet its objectives for Children and Young People.

- 6.4 **Safeguarding Children** - Whilst not a safeguarding inspection, the inspection followed up the LA handling of complaints as part of the process and evidence base.
- 6.5 **Health Issues** - Local authority support for promoting health and healthy life styles was considered as part of the evidence base used in forming the overall judgments.
- 6.6 **Crime and Disorder Issues** - LA support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was considered as part of the evidence base used in forming the overall judgments.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

- Framework for the Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for Supporting School Improvement November 2014
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/framework-for-the-inspection-of-local-authority-arrangements-for-supporting-school-improvement--2>
- Handbook for the Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for Supporting School Improvement November 2014
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-local-authority-arrangements-for-supporting-school-improvement--2>

List of appendices:

- **Appendix 1** - Inspection of LBBD Arrangements for Supporting School Improvement Outcome Letter – **to be circulated when published**