

Strategic Director's Report to Governors Spring Term 2024

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Dear Governors,

Happy New Year! I hope you had a wonderful winter break and been able to spend time with your family and friends, enjoying the festive season.

I know Spring term has already started off productively with schools and headteachers driving forward their planned priority actions in line with School Development Plans. Last term, Ofsted and CQC visited Halton to conduct a Local Area SEND inspection. This inspection looked at all aspects of SEND support and the services available across the borough to support children, young people and their families. The outcome of the inspection has not yet been published, but once it has we will continue to work with all agencies, partners and services to continue to drive forward with our work to best support all children and young people across Halton in line with the findings of the inspection. At this time though, we would like to say a huge thank you to all those who were involved in the inspection, including those schools who were visited or who met with the inspecting team during the duration of the three week inspection. Your support was incredibly appreciated.

I am delighted to share that following the retirement of the previous post-holder, our new Early Years Team Lead, Sarah Campbell, joins Halton in February. Sarah and her team will be leading upon the expansion to free childcare entitlement as well as the rollout of extended wraparound care from 8am-6pm for all primary aged children.

There have been a number of key updates from Ofsted and DFE which are included within this report for governor update information. This includes the release of the new Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023 and the new Prevent Strategy. Please take time to read all the other updates contained within the report. Further safeguarding information will be provided at the Governors Briefing later this term by our Safeguarding Officer, Maria Needham. This event will be held on 30th January at Halton Stadium, Widnes at 6pm. Please can schools ensure they have a governor representative at this termly briefing.

As discussed at the Autumn term Governor briefing, the SLA for School Improvement Support is now open for schools to select the appropriate level of support from April 2024. A breakdown of the levels of support can be found on our new website: <https://haltonschoolimprovement.co.uk/> Please consider which level is right for your school, to ensure there is sufficient support, challenge and guidance for your senior leadership team over the coming year. If you are not sure, please speak to Ben Holmes, Mike Stapleton-Chambers or your schools Associate School Improvement Advisor.

I would like to wish you every success in the forthcoming year and look forward to meeting you at events in Halton over this year. Many thanks for your ongoing commitment.
Best wishes



Jill Farrell
Operational Director for Education, Inclusion and Provision.

1.1 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ITEMS FOR ACTION

2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect on the information and reassure leaders that the changes will impact on the inspection process and relieve some of the stress associated with the system.• Be aware of the pressures placed upon leaders when an Ofsted Inspection is on the horizon.• Be as supportive as possible before, during and after the inspection.• Link Governor for Safeguarding to reflect on the latest framework and engage with the blog and the webinar.
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FOR INFORMATION
2.3	<p>The governing body should ensure that:</p> <p><u>Admissions</u></p> <p>Children in Care are at the top of the over-subscription criteria</p> <p><u>Pupil progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school has an overview of the educational needs and progress of children in care• School policies have been reviewed from the point of view of children in care <p><u>Support Professional Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The designated teacher for children in care has the opportunity to attend training offered by the local authority for designated teachers• There is a clear policy on professional development for all staff in contact with children in care and other vulnerable children <p><u>Continuous Monitoring</u></p> <p>The information you should know or your school should be able to give you quickly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The name of the designated teacher for children in care• What safeguards the school has in place for sharing sensitive information about individual looked after children with relevant staff members• What the procedure is for liaising with carers, residential children's homes and social services to ensure that the school has relevant information about a child's care history• How the child's achievements are effectively communicated to the carer <p>Personal Educational Plans (PEPs)</p> <p>Procedures are in place to ensure all children in care have up-to-date PEPs. You should be made aware of the PEP completion and quality assurance rate.</p> <p>Keeping the governing body informed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The governing body may want to appoint a nominated governor to meet, on a termly basis, with the schools designated teacher for Looked After & Previously Looked After Children.• The governing body can also keep up to date on anonymised issues relating to LAC/PLAC via the head teacher's report to the full governing body where numbers of children in care and related issues can be raised.• In some cases schools include this information in the Designated Safeguarding Lead's (DSL) report to governors.• One full governing body meeting a year should consider the Designated Teacher's statutory report to the school governing body and minute any resulting actions.

2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors should check their school's performance in comparison to national and local benchmarks. It is important to remember that not all schools or local areas were impacted in the same way during the Covid-19 pandemic, and therefore caution should be used when comparing the performance of children in 2022 and 2023 to any previous academic year. At primary level, no formal data was available in 2020 or 2021.
2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FOR INFORMATION
2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FOR INFORMATION
2.7	<p>How Schools can get involved in the Family Hub Programme;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate your nearest Family Hub Make a connection with a professional from the family hub and even arrange a visit. Engage with them on a regular basis to have an awareness and understanding of what the family hub offer is and how it can support children and families who access your school. Understand the referral process and encourage families to get involved with the universal offer and any targeted interventions that you feel may support children and families. Ask for parenting interventions to be delivered in or from your school to your families Ask about training for school based support staff on a range of targeted interventions that can then be delivered in school to children and families Make sure you are following the family hub social media pages so you are kept up to date with anything new that is happening Get involved in any of the current work streams if you have any 'spare' time or capacity or a genuine interest in a particular area Maximise any training opportunities that are available. These will all be fully funded so is a great opportunity to be upskilled. i.e. mental health first aid awareness training, developing father inclusive practice Come to the launch events in Widnes when they are announced We hope to be developing and launching a 'Communities of Practice' concept in 2024 which will be an opportunity for a group of people who share a common concern, a set of problems, or an interest in a topic to come together to fulfil both individual and group goals. Provide us with feedback on how we can co-produce a family hub that can work in your area. What are the needs you are experiencing and are there currently any gaps in meeting any of those needs? Share the learning on what currently works well for families in your school and local community. Do you need help, advice and / or support in anything now or in the future? Invite someone in to school to talk to staff or parents in coffee mornings
2.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FOR INFORMATION
2.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The item to be noted
2.10	<p>You should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What works well? What learning can you apply from one area to another? What are the concerns? Are any areas at risk of becoming a concern? What changes need to be made? What can be done about it? How will this affect productivity for your school or academy trust? What is the impact on educational and possible financial outcomes?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the FREE Resource Management training be beneficial?
2.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOR INFORMATION
2.12	<p>Recommendation to governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the termination of current SLAs • Approve the selection required for 2023/2024
2.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Teachers to register online that haven't already done so
2.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of the above grant and how it impacts on your budget
2.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can Governors ensure Head teachers and staff are aware of this and to rectify when planning LOTC visits?
2.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider whether you wish your school to apply for this FREE resource.
2.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOR INFORMATION

2.0

2.1	Ofsted changes since Autumn 2023		
	<p>Sir Martyn Oliver in January 2024 is now the Chief (HMI) Her Majesty Inspector of schools for Ofsted, replacing Amanda Spielman.</p> <p>Damian Hind is the new minister for school replacing Nick Gibb. (You might recollect that DH was the Secretary of State for Education - January 2018 to July 2019)</p> <p>Prior to her retirement Amanda Spielman published in November 2023 the Ofsted annual report and a statement after the publication of the coroner's report on the suicide of Ruth Perry.</p> <p>Please see the documents below for further information.</p>		
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #e0e0e0;">Further information</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p>The OFSTED Update: https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/09/how-we-inspect-safeguarding-in-schools/</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/655f2551c39e5a001392e4ca/31587_Ofsted_Annual_Report_2022-23_WEB.pdf</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202223-education-childrens-services-and-skills</p> <p>The School Inspection Handbook: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook-for-september-2023</p> <p>The OFSTED Webinar: https://youtu.be/OTJYYNP9AEc?si=q7RRMvBVjuWLouze</p> <p>OFSTED Webinar Scenarios: https://youtu.be/OTJYYNP9AEc?si=mKQU9tONaizJsYBk&t=2341</p> <p>DfE SCR Webinar: https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/dfescr</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Further information	<p>The OFSTED Update: https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/09/how-we-inspect-safeguarding-in-schools/</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/655f2551c39e5a001392e4ca/31587_Ofsted_Annual_Report_2022-23_WEB.pdf</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202223-education-childrens-services-and-skills</p> <p>The School Inspection Handbook: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook-for-september-2023</p> <p>The OFSTED Webinar: https://youtu.be/OTJYYNP9AEc?si=q7RRMvBVjuWLouze</p> <p>OFSTED Webinar Scenarios: https://youtu.be/OTJYYNP9AEc?si=mKQU9tONaizJsYBk&t=2341</p> <p>DfE SCR Webinar: https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/dfescr</p>
Further information			
<p>The OFSTED Update: https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/09/how-we-inspect-safeguarding-in-schools/</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/655f2551c39e5a001392e4ca/31587_Ofsted_Annual_Report_2022-23_WEB.pdf</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202223-education-childrens-services-and-skills</p> <p>The School Inspection Handbook: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook-for-september-2023</p> <p>The OFSTED Webinar: https://youtu.be/OTJYYNP9AEc?si=q7RRMvBVjuWLouze</p> <p>OFSTED Webinar Scenarios: https://youtu.be/OTJYYNP9AEc?si=mKQU9tONaizJsYBk&t=2341</p> <p>DfE SCR Webinar: https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/dfescr</p>			

SCR FAQs: <https://6282.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/FAQs+KCSIE+Series+Webinar+2++Single+Central+Record.pdf>

Scenario Transcripts: <https://6282.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/How+Ofsted+inspects+safeguarding+in+schools.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-inspection-framework>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/inspecting-schools-guide-for-maintained-and-academy-schools>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-65013919>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-eif>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspections-statistical-commentaries-2022-to-2023/schools-commentary-deep-dives-in-school-inspections>

Contact:

Name: Mike Stapleton-Chambers
Title: Schools & Settings Improvement Officer
Tel: 0151 511 8129
Email: Mike.stapleton-chambers@halton.gov.uk

Actions

- Reflect on the information and reassure leaders that the changes will impact on the inspection process and relieve some of the stress associated with the system.
- Be aware of the pressures placed upon leaders when an Ofsted Inspection is on the horizon.
- Be as supportive as possible before, during and after the inspection.
- Link Governor for Safeguarding to reflect on the latest framework and engage with the blog and the webinar.

2.2

Safeguarding Update

Keep Children Safe in Education 23.

Governors need to seek assurances from education settings that part 1 of KCSIE has been distributed to all staff and they have read and understood the document.

Ensure the updated Safeguarding Policy in the Autumn Term has been approved by governors, distributed to all staff and a copy is available on the school website.

Ensure any new members of the governing body or proprietors have received appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training as part of their induction.

Ensure any new staff who have commenced employment since Sept 23 have completed their induction process which includes Safeguarding, Online Safety and Prevent Duty training.

Keep Children Safe in Education 23 & Meeting digital and technology standards in school and colleges.

Have governors considered the broader guidance on cyber security including considerations for governors and trustees can be found at [Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/industry-sectors/education/cyber-security-training-for-school-staff).

Have governors nominated a member who has responsibility for ensuring filtering and monitoring standards are being met by the setting. Have governing bodies and proprietors reviewed the

standards and discussed with IT staff and service providers what more needs to be done to support schools and colleges in meeting this standard.

Link to guidance and standards – click here [click here](#)

The Prevent Duty 23

The Prevent Duty has been updated and came into effect on 31st Dec 23. Governors need to seek assurance the new guidance has been shared with all staff and governors and this has been read and understood. The schools Safeguarding Policy will need to be updated to reflect the new guidance and any staff who completed The Home Office Prevent Duty training has been updated in line with new guidance anyone completing training prior to 25th July 23 will need to complete the training again in light of the changes.

Governors need to seek assurance that settings have followed the DfE recommendations of updating their risk assessments, so they accurately reflect and account for national/ local risk & threats and are they proportionate based on setting size and provision. The risk assessment needs to be shared with all stakeholders.

[Click to access Prevent Duty Guidance](#)

Working Together to Safeguard Children 23

The Department for Education updated the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children on the 15th Dec 23. The new guidance has brought about considerable changes for all safeguarding partners. Further consultation with key partners of HCYSP are currently taking place in response to any necessary changes that will be required to comply with the statutory guidance. Once the consultations have commenced the Local Authority will be briefing settings on any relevant changes and implications for settings. Once these decisions have been made Safeguarding Policies and safeguarding training for all staff will be updated. Please be aware that these changes will be occurring.
Link to guidance – please click.

[Click to access Working Together to Safeguard Children.](#)

Early years foundation stage statutory framework For group and school-based providers. Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.

The Early year's foundation stage statutory framework has been updated and came into effective on the 4th Jan 24.

In the term ahead governors need to seek assurances that settings have updated policy and procedures inline with the updated framework.

[Click to access guidance.](#)

Prejudicial / discriminatory incident reporting

As a Local Authority we are now asking educational settings to report any prejudicial and or discriminatory incident to the Local Authority used a reporting link. Governors need to seek assurance from settings that they are reporting all incidents using the links provided.

Contact:

Name: Maria Needham
Title: Safeguarding Children in Education Officer
Tel: 0151 511 6454 or 07385395743

Email: Maria.needham@halton.gov.uk

Governor Actions

- FOR INFORMATION

2.3

Virtual School – Promoting the education of Looked After Children

Key Responsibilities of the School Governor

The school governors at the educational placement have a duty and responsibility to ensure that their school keeps the education of children in care as a high priority and that an experienced teacher is appointed as a designated teacher for children in care within their school.

- The governing body must ensure that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training
- As a minimum governors must receive an annual report from the designated teacher
- The governing body and school leadership team have a duty to act on any issues raised with the report.
- Resources are allocated to match priorities for children in care
- How children in care are performing compared with their peers
- The numbers of children in the school who are in care
- The school has considered including raising the attainment of children in care in the school improvement plan?

The governing body should ensure that the Designated Teacher is a member of the teaching staff with appropriate seniority, professional experience and status to provide leadership, training, information and advice to others that will influence decisions about the teaching and learning needs of children in care. Where the Designated Teacher is not a member of the senior leadership team, a member of the team should be designated as a champion of children in care issues to work closely with the Designated Teacher.

Governing bodies and the school leadership team should also make sure that the Designated Teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting children in care to achieve.

Contact:

Name: Benjamin Holmes
Title: Headteacher of Halton Virtual School
Tel: 0151 511 7817
Email: Benjamin.holmes@halton.gov.uk

Governor Actions:

The governing body should ensure that:

Admissions

Children in Care are at the top of the over-subscription criteria

Pupil progress

- The school has an overview of the educational needs and progress of children in care
- School policies have been reviewed from the point of view of children in care

Support Professional Development

- The designated teacher for children in care has the opportunity to attend training offered by the local authority for designated teachers

- There is a clear policy on professional development for all staff in contact with children in care and other vulnerable children

Continuous Monitoring

The information you should know or your school should be able to give you quickly:

- The name of the designated teacher for children in care
- What safeguards the school has in place for sharing sensitive information about individual looked after children with relevant staff members
- What the procedure is for liaising with carers, residential children's homes and social services to ensure that the school has relevant information about a child's care history
- How the child's achievements are effectively communicated to the carer

Personal Educational Plans (PEPs)

Procedures are in place to ensure all children in care have up-to-date PEPs. You should be made aware of the PEP completion and quality assurance rate.

2.4 Key Stage Assessments 2023

All data in the following tables is for **all pupils** and does not consider the performance of different pupil groups, the data for whom can be provided by your school.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (Reception)

	% GLD		
ALL Pupils	2022	2023	Diff
Halton	60.6	62.9	2.3
England	65.2	67.2	2.0
NWR	61.7	64.3	2.6
LCR	60.2	63.4	3.2
SN10	63.8	66.2	2.4

Proportion of children achieving a good level of development (GLD) up from 2022 and closing the gap slightly to national. Earlier data not relevant due to the change in the Early Years Framework in 2022.

Phonics Screening Check

Expected standard by end of Year 1

ALL Pupils	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023
Halton	79	79	80	73	79
England	81	82	82	75	79
NWR	80	81	81	74	78
LCR	77	80	80	74	78
SN10	81	82	81	75	79

Proportion of pupils achieving expected standard up year-on-year and ahead of national

Expected standard by end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

ALL Pupils	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023
Halton	91	92	90	86	88
England	92	92	91	87	89
NWR	91	91	91	86	88
LCR	90	90	90	85	88
SN10	92	91	91	87	88

Proportion of pupils achieving expected standard in phonics up year-on-year.

Key Stage One % achieving expected standard (EXS+)

Reading EXS+	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023	Diff 22-23	Diff 19-23
Halton	66	73	71.6	66.4	65.3	-1.1	-6.3
England	75.5	75.4	74.9	66.8	68.2	1.4	-6.7
NWR	73.3	73.6	73.2	64.6	66.7	2.1	-6.5
LCR	70.2	71.8	71.7	63.9	65.7	1.8	-6.0
SN10	74.7	74.2	74.1	65.3	67.7	2.4	-6.4

Writing EXS+	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023	Diff 22-23	Diff 19-23
Halton	57.9	66.8	65.9	57.8	57.5	-0.3	-8.4
England	68.2	69.9	69.2	57.6	60.1	2.5	-9.1
NWR	65.8	68.1	67.4	54.9	58.2	3.3	-9.2
LCR	62	66.5	65.8	54.4	57.1	2.7	-8.7
SN10	69.1	70	69.7	57.2	60.8	3.6	-8.9

Maths EXS+	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023	Diff 22-23	Diff 19-23
Halton	65.1	73.7	71.5	66.9	66.7	-0.2	-4.8
England	75.1	76	75.6	67.6	70.4	2.8	-5.2
NWR	73.2	74.6	74.1	65.8	69.2	3.4	-4.9
LCR	70	73.5	72.8	65	67.9	2.9	-4.9
SN10	75.4	75.5	75.4	66.8	70.4	3.6	-5.0

Although year-on-year performance was down from 2022, this was a particularly hard-hit cohort with regards to the Covid-19 pandemic, with a lot of disruption to their early years learning. Comparison to pre-pandemic 2019 was favourable for Halton in all three subject areas, compared to national performance.

Key Stage Two % achieving expected standard:

ALL	% EXS in READ				
	2019	2022	2023	Diff 22 to 23	Diff 19 to 23
Halton	69.9	75.8	73.3	-2.5	3.4
England	73.8	75.0	73.3	-1.7	-0.5
NWR	73.2	74.7	72.7	-2.0	-0.5
LCR	71.8	73.3	71.6	-1.7	-0.2
SN10	73.8	74.4	73.3	-1.1	-0.5

ALL	% EXS in WRITE				
	2019	2022	2023	Diff 22 to 23	Diff 19 to 23
Halton	75.7	70.3	71.0	0.7	-4.7
England	78.9	69.7	71.7	2.0	-7.2
NWR	78.1	68.1	70.8	2.7	-7.3
LCR	76.2	66.8	69.7	2.9	-6.5
SN10	79.7	70.2	72.9	2.7	-6.8

ALL	% EXS in MATH				
	2019	2022	2023	Diff 22 to 23	Diff 19 to 23
Halton	75.2	69.2	70.3	1.1	-4.9
England	79.1	71.8	73.3	1.5	-5.8
NWR	78.9	70.8	72.9	2.1	-6.0
LCR	76.8	67.3	69.7	2.4	-7.1
SN10	80.3	71.8	73.5	1.7	-6.8

ALL	% EXS in Reading, Writing and Maths				
	2019	2022	2023	Diff 22 to 23	Diff 19 to 23
Halton	59.7	58.4	58.2	-0.2	-1.5
England	65.4	59.0	59.8	0.8	-5.6
NWR	64.6	57.6	58.8	1.2	-5.8
LCR	62.3	55.5	57.3	1.8	-5.0
SN10	66.0	59.3	60.7	1.4	-5.3

Year-on-year increases in the proportion of children meeting expected standard in key stage two writing and mathematics, with performance in reading down, but still the highest across the comparison areas. Combined reading, writing and maths broadly in line with 2022 performance and difference to pre-pandemic 2019 the best performance across the comparison areas.

Key Stage Two average progress scores:

Avg READ Progress Score			
ALL	2019	2022	2023
Halton	-0.12	0.27	0.50
England	0.03	0.04	0.04
NWR	0.23	0.30	0.17
LCR	0.01	0.22	0.22
SN10	0.24	-0.14	-0.17

Avg WRITE Progress Score			
ALL	2019	2022	2023
Halton	0.45	0.59	0.42
England	0.03	0.05	0.04
NWR	0.15	0.05	0.12
LCR	-0.14	0.15	0.19
SN10	0.66	0.13	0.28

Avg MATH Progress Score			
ALL	2019	2022	2023
Halton	-0.33	-0.07	-0.17
England	0.03	0.04	0.04
NWR	0.29	0.13	0.17
LCR	-0.03	-0.19	-0.19
SN10	0.53	-0.08	-0.11

Strong key stage one to key stage two average progress scores in 2023 in both English reading and writing in Halton, ahead of all other comparison areas.

Key Stage Four (GCSE): Basics 9-4 in English and Maths

TOTAL	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Halton	56.8	64.1	63.5	63.1	58.3
England	64.9	71.2	72.2	69.0	65.1
NWR	62.9	69.3	70.3	66.2	62.1
LCR	60.3	67.8	68.6	63.6	58.3
SN10	59.0	66.0	68.3	62.5	59.1

Halton performance was best variance to pre-pandemic 2019 in this measure

Average Progress 8 score

TOTAL	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Halton	-0.14	-	-	-0.15	-0.30
England	-0.03	-	-	-0.03	-0.03
NWR	-0.18	-	-	-0.16	-0.20
LCR	-0.22	-	-	-0.22	-0.34
SN10	-0.29	-	-	-0.37	-0.35

Halton's performance in this measure better than LCR and SN10 areas.

Average Attainment 8 score

TOTAL	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Halton	45.4	47.6	47.2	46.1	42.6
England	46.8	50.2	50.9	48.9	46.3
NWR	45.5	49.0	49.6	47.2	44.5
LCR	45.0	48.6	49.0	46.4	42.8
SN10	43.2	46.8	47.6	45.0	42.9

Key for tables:

NWR – North West Region

LCR – Liverpool City Region

SN10 – Local authorities who are our 10 closest statistical neighbours

% Below national

% Above national

Contact:

Name: Paul Moore

Title: Education Data Analyst

Tel: 0151 511 7338

Email: Paul.moore@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- Governors should check their school's performance in comparison to national and local benchmarks. It is important to remember that not all schools or local areas were impacted in the same way during the Covid-19 pandemic, and therefore caution should be used when comparing the performance of children in 2022 and 2023 to any previous academic year. At primary level, no formal data was available in 2020 or 2021.

2.5

School Census and Catholic Census - SIMS

The Census reference date for both Pupil census and Catholic Census is on the Thursday 18th January. The upload date for the School census is Friday 26th January.

School administrators and Headteachers complete the census routine, ensuring all data in SIMS is accurate. Once this data has been checked, and corrected where necessary, the census is uploaded to the LA where more data checks occur and the Census is approved for the DfE to review.

The SIMS team are on hand to aid all school in this process.

The Catholic Census deadline is on the 9th February and this is uploaded direct to the CES, once again the SIMS team will help schools complete this census.

Contact:

Name: Helen Loftus
 Title: SIMS Support
 Tel: 0151 511 7272
 Email: sims.helpdesk@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- FOR INFORMATION

2.6

Action for early years settings: Apply for the National Professional Qualification in Early Years Leadership

The National Professional Qualification in Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL) is free, flexible, and designed by sector experts to help leaders and aspiring leaders across the early years sector develop their skills. It trains leaders to support children impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as helping them to lead effectively through:

- creating and implementing a vision and policies
- improving staff recruitment, development, management and appraisal
- marketing their setting
- working in partnership with parents and carers

[Read this blog](#) to learn about the experiences of an NPQEYL facilitator and how they feel the course could benefit you.

The application window for the February 2024 cohort is open. Apply today at [GOV.UK](#).

Contact:

Name: Mike Stapleton-Chambers
Title: Schools and Settings Improvement Officer
Tel: 0151 511 8129
Email: Mike.stapleton-chambers@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- FOR INFORMATION

2.7 Update on the Halton Family Hub Programme

The Family Hub programme aims to join up and enhance services delivered through transformed family hubs in local authority areas, ensuring all families can access the support they need. The programme will provide support to parents and carers so they are able to nurture their babies and children, improving health and education outcomes for all, contribute to a reduction in inequalities in health and education outcomes for babies, children and families across Halton by ensuring that support provided is communicated to all parents and carers, including those who are hardest to reach and/or most in need of it, build the evidence base for what works when it comes to improving health and education outcomes for babies, children and families in different delivery contexts. Family Hubs are not just a physical place but a way to transform the way in which we support children and families by bringing together all the support families may need from pregnancy through to young people turning 19 (25 if they have a disability).

Family Hubs provide families with the right help, at the time and in the right place. They are a critical way in which we will deliver our Early Help Strategy.

Contact:

Name: Adam Hindhaugh
Title: Early Help Transformation Lead
Tel: 07775900836
Email: familyhubs@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

How Schools can get involved in the Family Hub Programme;

- Locate your nearest Family Hub
- Make a connection with a professional from the family hub and even arrange a visit.
- Engage with them on a regular basis to have an awareness and understanding of what the family hub offer is and how it can support children and families who access your school.
- Understand the referral process and encourage families to get involved with the universal offer and any targeted interventions that you feel may support children and families.
- Ask for parenting interventions to be delivered in or from your school to your families
- Ask about training for school based support staff on a range of targeted interventions that can then be delivered in school to children and families
- Make sure you are following the family hub social media pages so you are kept up to date with anything new that is happening
- Get involved in any of the current work streams if you have any 'spare' time or capacity or a genuine interest in a particular area

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise any training opportunities that are available. These will all be fully funded so is a great opportunity to be upskilled. i.e. mental health first aid awareness training, developing father inclusive practice • Come to the launch events in Widnes when they are announced • We hope to be developing and launching a 'Communities of Practice' concept in 2024 which will be an opportunity for a group of people who share a common concern, a set of problems, or an interest in a topic to come together to fulfil both individual and group goals. • Provide us with feedback on how we can co-produce a family hub that can work in your area. What are the needs you are experiencing and are there currently any gaps in meeting any of those needs? • Share the learning on what currently works well for families in your school and local community. • Do you need help, advice and / or support in anything now or in the future? Invite someone in to school to talk to staff or parents in coffee mornings
2.8	<p>FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS – Careers education advice and guidance</p> <p>The Gatsby Foundation's Good Career Guidance Report and Benchmarks are recognised by Government as good practice. As it was written in 2014 the Gatsby Foundation carried out a review of their work in 2023. As part of the review, they found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gatsby Benchmarks are universally supported - 94% see them as a valuable framework for career guidance. • Every Benchmark is highly valued as part of the overall framework - the value placed on each of the eight Benchmarks individually ranges from 96% to 99%. • The vast majority (88%) of secondary school and college leaders say that the Benchmarks have had a positive impact on their students. <p>The Gatsby Foundation concluded that these findings, together with all the other evidence seen, have encouraged them to focus on stability. They believe the Benchmarks are highly respected and are having an impact. They have therefore concluded that radical changes to the Benchmarks are not needed. Instead, they have heard the extensive feedback and suggestions from the sector and over the next few months will focus on reviewing the evidence and considering and consulting on any evolution of the Benchmarks to ensure they can secure even more impact for young people over the next decade.</p> <p>Contact:</p> <p>Name: Háf Bell Title: 14-19 Programme Leader Tel: 0151 511 7255 Email: Haf.bell@halton.gov.uk</p> <p>Recommendation to Governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOR INFORMATION
2.9	<p>Adult Learning</p> <p>From January 2024, Halton Adult Learning will broaden its offer of ESOL provision across Widnes and Runcorn, with delivery taking place at Kingsway Learning Centre, Acorn Learning Centre and Halton Lea Library. Learners can access the following provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Entry, non-accredited provision • Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3 ESOL programmes • Conversation clubs • ESOL art programmes <p>Additionally, Halton Adult Learning will offer accredited programmes in its Family Learning offer to provide parents with the opportunity achieve certification in a range of Personal Development and</p>

Wellbeing topics whilst their children are in school. Delivery will take place across Primary Schools in Widnes and Runcorn.

Contact:

Name: Kelly Arrowsmith
Title: Quality and Learner Experience Manager
Tel: 0151 511 8453
Email: Kelly.arrowsmith@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- The item to be noted

2.1
0

Understanding your data guide for schools

The DfE updated [Understanding your data: a guide for school governors and academy trustees](#) in the autumn. This resource brings together a range of data to help boards analyse, discuss, and challenge the performance of their school or academy trust.

It includes:

- Subsections on cyber security,
- Additional support for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities
- GB composition

All GBs, no matter what type of school or how many schools they govern, have 3 core functions:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

Further information

[Understanding your data: a guide for school governors and academy trustees - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[View your education data](#)

<https://www.entrust-ed.co.uk/dfе-funded-school-resource-management-webinars>

Contact:

Name: Mike Stapleton-Chambers
Title: Schools and Settings Improvement Officer
Tel: 0151 511 8129
Email: Mike.stapleton-chambers@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

You should consider:

- What works well?
- What learning can you apply from one area to another?

- What are the concerns?
- Are any areas at risk of becoming a concern?
- What changes need to be made?
- What can be done about it?
- How will this affect productivity for your school or academy trust?
- What is the impact on educational and possible financial outcomes?
- Would the FREE Resource Management training be beneficial?

2.1
1

Support finding new Governors from Inspiring Governance Free governance recruitment support sessions

Are you looking for skilled volunteers to join your governing board this year? Would you like to diversify how you find skilled volunteers to become governors or trustees at your school or multi academy trust?

[Inspiring Governance](#) is a free, online service that connects schools and trusts in England with skilled volunteers in your area who are interested in becoming a school governor or trustee.

Inspiring Governance has published free online videos to support you in filling vacancies. This includes a video on *Creating a Vacancy* and *Recruiting Volunteers*.

Inspiring Governance works with employers, professional networks and universities to find individuals interested in becoming school governors. The volunteers come from a wide range of professions and sectors, with skills and expertise in areas such as finance, human resources, law, marketing and education. Their online technology enables a quick search for volunteers based on skills, experience and location.

Further information

[Visit the Inspiring Governance website to register and create an account.](#)

www.inspiringgovernance.org

[Creating a Vacancy - Inspiring Governance](#)

[Recruiting Volunteers - Inspiring Governance](#)

Contact:

Name: Mike Stapleton-Chambers
 Title: Schools and Settings Improvement Officer
 Tel: 0151 511 8129
 Email: Mike.stapleton-chambers@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- FOR INFORMATION

2.1
2

Service Level Agreements from Halton BC

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) will be required from schools/Governing Bodies during Autumn. This requires:

- Notice period to be adhered if you wish to service notice to terminate a current SLA.

Please logon to the SLA online system – Head teacher holds a password, in order to establish what SLAs you currently have and the relevant notice periods.

The new costings and SLA content for 2023/2024 will be available for your perusal and consideration from **1st November 2023**

Please note, all selections will need to be entered on to the online system by **1st February 2024**.

Governing Bodies are required to approve the selections for your school and this should be recorded in your minutes.

Contact:

Full name: Lucy Unsworth/ Helen Goodwin
Title: Divisional Manager Support Services
Full Tel: 0151 511 7096/ 7097
Email: lucy.unsworth@halton.gov.uk helen.goodwin@halton.gov.uk

For help with any Technical Issues (other than passwords) please contact;

Full name: Richard Guignet
Title: Senior Systems Analyst (SLA System)
Full Tel: 0151 511 7046
Email: Richard.guignet@halton.gov.uk

For help with password/password reset please contact:

Title: HBC Central Administration Team
Email: hbc.school.slas@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

Recommendation to governors:

- Approve the termination of current SLAs
- Approve the selection required for 2023/2024

2.1
3

Teacher Pay and Pensions

It is important for all teachers to register for My Pension Online at www.teacherspensions.co.uk/forms/registration

This will assist teachers to understand the value of their pension and plan for their retirement. It also enables Teachers' Pensions to effectively communicate information about the Scheme, particularly when they start their role or a new job and when they leave.

Contact:

Name: Robert Jennings
Title: Senior Pay and Pensions Officer
Tel: 0151 511 8271
Email: Robert.jennings@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- Encourage Teachers to register online that haven't already done so

2.1
4

Teacher Pay Additional Grant (TPAG)

In July 2023 the DfE announced £482.5 million for schools through the teachers' pay additional grant (TPAG) in 2023 to 2024. They are allocating this funding to support schools to meet the costs of the 2023 to 2024 teachers pay award.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will pay the TPAG funding to local authorities for maintained schools and directly to academies on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education.

For maintained special schools and alternative provision, and for special and alternative provision academies, the ESFA will pay the TPAG funding to local authorities.

Non-maintained special schools (NMSS) will be funded directly by ESFA.
The following terms and conditions apply to TPAG for the financial year 2023 to 2024.
TPAG will continue as a separate grant in 2024 to 2025.

From 2025 to 2026, TPAG funding will be incorporated into core budget allocations by being rolled into the schools and high needs national funding formulae (NFFs).

This funding can be used to support schools which see a short-term fall in the number of pupils on roll. The grant can be carried forward into the new financial year if required.

Further information

[Teachers' pay additional grant 2023 to 2024: conditions of grant - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/teachers-pay-additional-grant-2023-to-2024-conditions-of-grant)

[Teachers' pay additional grant - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/teachers-pay-additional-grant)

Contact:

Name: Naheem Shafiq
Title: Principal Finance Officer
Tel: 0151 511 8680
Email: Naheem.shafiq@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- Be aware of the above grant and how it impacts on your budget

2.1
5

Lack of use of the Evolve System

During a recent schools H&S meeting which was attended by a representative from Evolve, they reported that there had been a noticeable decline in the use / notifications to them by Halton schools, when compared to other authorities.

It has also been noticed that this applies to residential premises.

They asked that schools be reminded that, Evolve need to be notified as well as the centre.

It has also been noted that risk assessments appear to have a lack of reference to any conditions etc for staff and information appears to concentrate on the students only i.e. health conditions.

Contact:

Name: Lynn Pennington-Ramsden
Title: Principal H&S Adviser
Tel: 0151 511 8567

Email: Lynn.pennington-ramsden@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- Can Governors ensure Head teachers and staff are aware of this and to rectify when planning LOTC visits?

2.1 6 **Apply for a framed portrait of His Majesty The King**

On 1 April 2023, the Cabinet Office issued a [press release](#) to announce a new scheme to allow public authorities across the UK to apply for a free, framed portrait of His Majesty the King to celebrate the new reign.

The Cabinet Office have now launched the voluntary government funded scheme.

All schools including free schools, state funded special schools, non-maintained special schools and FE colleges are eligible for receiving a free portrait. The supplier organisation chosen to operate this scheme is Cubiquity Limited. Eligible settings can [request their free portrait by using the supplier's website](#).

The deadline to request the free portrait is **Friday 2 February 2024**.

Please refer to the [FAQ](#) (see link below) document for any specific questions about the portrait and the scheme itself. Further details will be provided in due course for public bodies that do not fall within scope of the scheme but wish to purchase a portrait or any authorities who would like to purchase additional portraits.

Further information

Any queries relating to His Majesty The King's portrait scheme should be directed to hmkportraitscheme@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

[Cubiquity Media \(cubiquityonline.com\)](http://cubiquityonline.com)

[Cubiquity Media - Login \(cubiquityonline.com\)](http://cubiquityonline.com)

Contact:

Name: Mike Stapleton-Chambers
Title: Schools and Settings Improvement Officer
Tel: 0151 511 8129
Email: Mike.stapleton-chambers@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- Consider whether you wish your school to apply for this FREE resource.

2.1 7 **General Advice Spring Term 2024 with suggested tasks**

Halton has been fortunate over the last few terms to have recruited many new governors across their schools. It has been asked by some for an overview of what they should be doing/looking out for in the meeting:

The main focus of the work of the GB must be to secure school improvement and to ensure statutory compliance. Governors must create robust accountabilities for all leaders and be well

equipped to ask the right questions. Governors need to have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school; they need to be influential in determining priorities for school improvement and have a clear role in monitoring progress and evaluating and evidencing impact.

This spring schedule is intended to give an overview of GB responsibilities and help with your tasks. Some activities need to be completed by a specific date. Governors need to add value to the school.

Maintained Schools: Governing Boards of maintained schools may delegate some of their decision-making powers either to committees or individuals.

This will be highlighted in the Terms of Reference for those committees which should have been ratified in the autumn FGB meeting.

Academies: Governors of academies should refer to their Articles of Association and Schemes of Delegation when deciding which of the items listed in this schedule relate to their work; items specific to academies are included and have been identified.

List of suggested general tasks/activities.

This spring schedule is intended to give an overview of the responsibilities of the Trust Board / Local Governing Board / Governing Board (GB)

Ofsted often refer to you Scheme of Delegation, as they want to know who carries the main responsibility for governance. This differs between Maintained schools and schools in a MAT.

- Carry out a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis as governors (Academies and Maintained (A&M))
- Draft the budget for new school year. (Maintained)
- Agree budget for new financial year and ensure this is minuted in the FGB meeting (Maintained)
- Minute School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) submission to LA. See section 4 of this document) (Maintained)
- Monitor budgets (A&M)
- Review purchase of external services and decide on Service Level Agreements (SLAs) (A&M)
- Review Local Authority (LA) November 2022 pay policy and update your policy if you have not already done so (A&M)
- Ensure governing board and committee meetings are scheduled for the rest of the academic year (A&M.)
- Conduct self-review of governing board effectiveness and arrange training to fill any identified knowledge/ skills gaps (A&M)
- Ensure there is a record of governor training e.g., on GovernorHub (A&M)
- Evaluate current governance action plan, particularly impact (A&M)
- Review the governing board succession plan and check membership is updated to facilitate this (A&M)
- Review progress of the School Development Plan (SDP) or School Improvement Plan SIP (A&M)
- Review the Special Education and Disabilities (SEND) Information Report (A&M)
- Review Equalities / Accessibility policies and plans if appropriate - Ofsted are looking at these in detail (A&M)
- Review and minute comments on pupil progress and attainment as appropriate (A&M)
- Review and monitor specified focus areas based on Link Governor reports - share the reports with the board as a priority (A&M)
- Review quality of teaching using headteacher's report and compare with external reports (A&M)
- Review effectiveness of Pupil Premium funding and check correct DfE template is being used referencing research papers to show impact (A&M)
- Pupil Premium strategy template to include impact to date of Recovery Premium grants with references to research to support (A&M)
- Check safeguarding/ child protection policy and procedures are up to date (A&M)

- Check preparations are underway for the annual report from the designated teacher for looked-after children and the designated safeguarding leads (DSL) (A&M)
- Review behaviour principles written statement/behaviour policy, inform parents of review even if there are no changes (A&M)
- Review attendance of pupils from the previous term, compare in % terms (A&M)
- Review pupil exclusions from the previous term, compare in % terms (A&M)
- Prepare Admissions information for the next academic year (Academies).

Contact:

Name: Mike Stapleton-Chambers
Title: Schools and Settings Improvement Officer
Tel: 0151 511 8129
Email: Mike.stapleton-chambers@halton.gov.uk

Recommendation to Governors:

- FOR INFORMATION