SEND & Inclusion Governor Training – Tuesday 20th October 2026

Presented by: Dominika Michalik, Asst Director of SEND & Inclusion, Hannah Sheridan, Senior SEND Advisor and Caroline Ryder, Education Improvement Advisor

Purpose of the Session

The session provided governors with an overview of the national SEND reforms, Hillingdon's SEND Reform Plan, and the role of governors in ensuring schools are inclusive, data-informed and prepared for forthcoming changes. The training also focused on understanding SEND data, inclusion, governance responsibilities, and the practical implications of the reforms for schools.

1. SEND Reform Plan

Dominika presented an update to the Hillingdon SEND Reform Plan Approved Confirmed that Hillingdon's SEND Reform Plan, submitted in June 2026, has been approved by the DfE and received positive feedback for being evidence-based and well-developed. The newly published "SEND Together" document brings together the SEND Reform Plan, SEND Improvement Plan and SEND & Alternative Provision Strategy. Hillingdon SEND Together Plan | Hillingdon Council

Core Principles of the Reform

- Early identification and intervention.
- Greater access to local provision.
- Fair and equitable support across the borough.
- Evidence-based practice and measurable impact.
- Strong partnership working with families, schools, health and social care services.

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2. National SEND Reform Changes

The reforms introduce:

- Individual Support Plans (ISPs) for all children receiving SEND support.
- Greater focus on mainstream inclusion.
- New National Inclusion Standards.
- Inclusion strategies to be published by every school by the end of 2026.
- Increased accountability for inclusion through Ofsted and performance measures.
- Significant national funding for inclusion training, mainstream provision and capital developments.

Governors were advised that EHCPs will remain in place, although future reforms will focus specialist plans on children with the highest levels of need.

3. Hillingdon's "Expert at Hand" Model

The borough's delivery model is built around four levels of support:

- Universal
- Targeted
- Targeted Plus
- Specialist Provision

The model aims to provide earlier access to expertise and interventions, strengthen partnership working and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

- Specialist outreach from special schools.
- SEND screening tools such as Nessy.
- Therapy support within schools.
- SENCO outreach networks.
- Parent champions.
- Stronger cluster-based support through locality partnerships aligned with Family Hubs.

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4. Inclusion Bases and Capital Funding

Governors were briefed on plans to develop Inclusion Bases within mainstream schools.

- Secondary schools will be prioritised initially.
- Schools may bid for specialist inclusion base funding.
- Capital funding will support adaptations, sensory spaces, and specialist provision.
- Schools are expected to strengthen their own support-base provision over time.

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5. SEND Data and School Improvement

Hannah Sheridan and Caroline Ryder highlighted:

- SEND prevalence in Hillingdon remains slightly below London and national averages.
- Speech, language and communication needs remain the most common SEND need.
- Autism remains the most common primary need for pupils with EHCPs.
- Governors should understand their school's SEND profile and how it compares locally and nationally.

Governors were encouraged to scrutinise:

- Progress and attainment of SEND pupils.
- Attendance and exclusions.
- Parent and pupil voice.
- Inclusion practices.
- Quality of teaching and adaptation.
- The impact of SEND and pupil premium funding.
- Review school SEND data, attendance, exclusions and outcomes for children with SEND.

- Consider how schools will contribute to and benefit from locality clusters and the Expert at Hand model
- Understand the SEND provision and inclusion practices in your school against current Ordinary Available Provision (OAP) expectations and forthcoming National Inclusion Standards.

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6. Governance and Ofsted

The revised Ofsted framework places much greater emphasis on inclusion.
Governors were reminded that they should be able to:
Governors were reminded that they should be able to:

- Articulate the school's inclusion vision.
- Challenge leaders using evidence and data.
- Understand strengths and weaknesses in SEND provision.
- Ensure inclusion is embedded across the school community.
- Monitor how effectively the school meets the needs of vulnerable pupils.
- Governors to keep informed of the implications of the SEND reforms and National Inclusion Standards as further guidance is released

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The training reinforced that SEND reform is intended to create a more inclusive education system, with earlier intervention, greater local provision and stronger partnership working. Governors have a critical role in challenging and supporting schools to deliver inclusive practice, monitor outcomes and ensure all children feel a sense of belonging and achieve positive outcomes.