

London learners, London lives
Tackling the school places crisis and supporting
children to achieve the best they can

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Foreword

The beating heart of our global city is our education system. Timid, shy, playful four year olds are transformed through primary and secondary school into articulate, creative, resourceful young people who will drive our city forward to ever greater success. At least that is the goal. A good school will achieve that end; supporting and nurturing the development of the child into a young person the city can be proud of. A poor school will quite possibly irreparably damage the life chances of the children entrusted to it.



Over the past year I and my colleagues on the Education Panel have been reviewing how London government can effectively respond to two great challenges faced by our education sector: how to ensure we create enough school places to meet the demands from our fast growing population; and how to ensure that our schools continue to stretch the able and support those that need extra support to ensure they all achieve the best they can. Through the hard work and dedication of teachers, teaching assistants, middle and senior leaders, through the extracurricular support of volunteers, parents and carers and governors London's education system is delivering results that make it the best performing region in the country. A London advantage is emerging as our children surge ahead of their contemporaries.

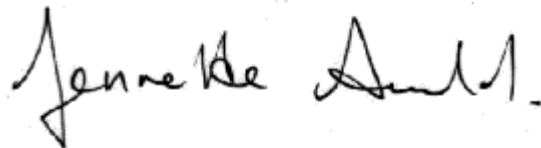
Our work has sought to identify practical recommendations where further work from the Mayor can continue to support our schools ensure our young people are fully equipped to compete in what in London is in effect a global labour market. Children in my patch in Hackney will be competing not only with children from Islington and Newham or even Richmond for jobs but with young people from across the UK and from across the world drawn by the opportunities and excitement of working and living in the most popular city in the world.

For me, education is the key to pushing forward social mobility and the means through which we can equip generations of young people with the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need to succeed in a diverse, fast-moving and ever-changing world. I believe that education is also the solution to so many of society's ills. By providing a quality, well-rounded curriculum that covers traditional academic subjects, and, at the same time, gives pupils the information and tools they need to be good

members of society, we can make our great city and our country fairer, more equal, a more tolerant and more accepting place. As such, I have a real passion for education and, as well as Chairing the Assembly's Education Panel, I am privileged to sit on the Boards of the University of East London, as well as Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School, which sits in my constituency. I am delighted to have chaired the Education Panel in its first year, and look forward to continuing this work over the coming months.

I want to thank the many people who work in schools across London who have given generously of their time to our review and who have been able to show case the fantastic work so many of them are doing. We are so proud of their achievements.

I hope you enjoy the report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennette Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'S'.

Executive Summary

Although the Mayor of London has no statutory responsibility for education in the capital he is committed to playing a role across London to ensure that every London child “has the skills, knowledge and creativity to thrive in the global city.”¹ The Mayor has identified two main drivers for future education provision: the growth of London’s population means there is increasing pressure on school places and at the same time there is rising demand for youngsters to develop skills in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), as well as modern foreign languages. This report reviews what actions the Mayor has taken to help tackle the school places crisis facing the capital and his role in supporting schools to raise standards. The report also looks at the challenge for London government in holding schools to account and in tackling poor performance as provision across the sector becomes more diverse.

Free schools will not solve the school places crisis

There is no complete picture of the need for new school places in London nor is there strategic oversight of how the education sector will meet that need. There are concerns that by solely supporting the creation of free schools, the Mayor is allowing a mismatch to develop between the need for new school places and the supply of parent led-new build. Our report sets out arguments for an enhanced role for the Mayor to produce a strategic plan to both map out the need and to establish options for meeting it.

Our young people are competing in a global labour market

It is easy to forget that in 2006 London was the worst performing region at both primary and secondary level. The transformation has been profound and as OFSTED notes its inspection outcomes for London are now the best in the country. But the challenge is always changing and London’s education system must aspire to be among the best in the world. London’s popularity as a place to live, study and work means that our young people are competing within a global labour market and not just a regional one. International rankings suggest London students should be aiming to achieve alongside the best from Singapore, Hong Kong, Switzerland and Germany yet at present we do not have the data to be able to assess if we are. Our report calls for a new set of international

¹ Letter to the Chair of the Education Panel from the Mayor

city comparators so we can compare our performance with the best in the world.

A fragmented education system needs to be accountable

Our report recognises that as new providers enter the education system issues of accountability and performance management become more complex. This challenge is particularly acute with regard to academies and free schools. The government's preferred solution of regional commissioners who will intervene where there is poor performance is welcome but by splitting London into three denies the regional identity that has been so hard won. The creation of a London identity for teachers, for leaders and for schools is the framework within which so much good work now takes place. Our report seeks to reinforce and develop that identity further.

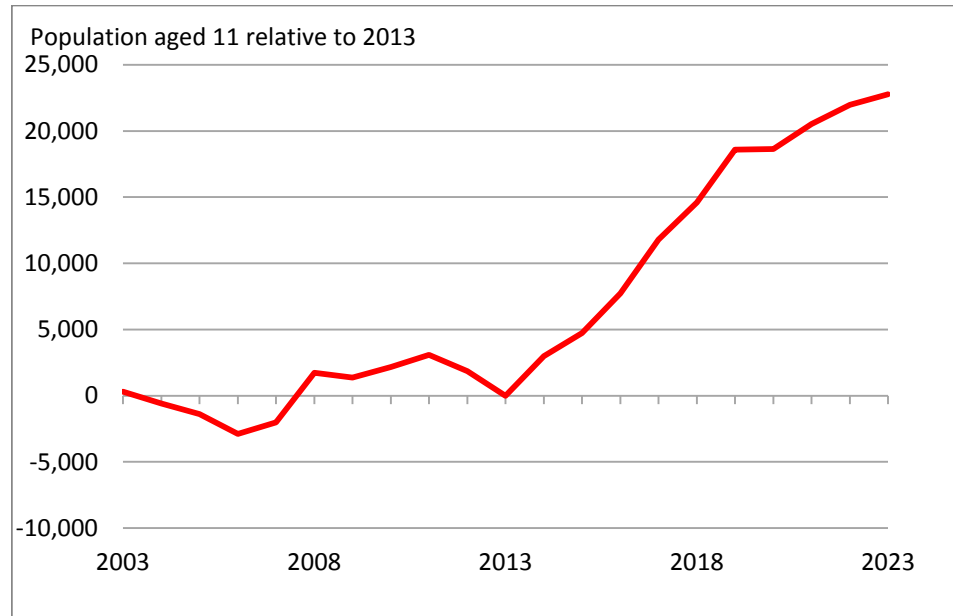
1. The school places crisis

London's extraordinary recent population growth is well documented. According to the 2011 Census, London's population stood at 8.2 million, an increase of close to a million people over the previous decade or around 90,000 new inhabitants every year. This growth rate makes London the fastest growing region of the UK and the projections for the next decade are for similar increases in population. By 2021, London's population is expected to reach 9.2 million. This growth rate has exceeded previous planning projections which estimated a population of 7.8 million by 2011 – the annual projections had been out by over 35,000 a year.¹ This divergence between actual and projected population growth has had far reaching consequences for London's education sector.

The rising natural birth rate and the greater number of families staying in London have increased the pressure on school places. Local authorities and schools which just a few years ago were closing classrooms because of surplus places are now scrabbling to open new ones. As of January 2013, London had just over 1.1 million children in its maintained education system. This figure is set to grow year on year to approximately 1.3 million by 2017/18. To help illustrate the demographic pressure local authorities are under it is worth noting that in, for example, Lewisham, there are over a 1,000 more children born in 2013 than in 2001.²

Over 46,000 places, or 1,535 classes, have been created since 2010.³ However, according to projections from London Councils, there will need to be an additional 133,000 primary places created by 2018.⁴ This shortfall largely affects primary schools at the moment but London will see a steep rise in demand for secondary school places for the next ten years or so. The forthcoming challenge for secondary school provisioning can clearly be seen in the chart below which sets out the additional numbers of 11 year olds relative to 2013 expected to enter secondary school over the next nine years.

Chart 1: The projected additional number of 11 year olds in the capital relative to 2013.



Source: GLA 2013 round population projections

A funding gap has emerged

The Department of Education has struggled to keep up with the recent extraordinary demographic changes. Nationally throughout the 1990s the birth rate declined and with fewer children starting school each year the challenge facing the Department and local authorities was to remove excess capacity; and so between 2003/4 and 2009/10 the number of primary places fell by 5 per cent. However, this was happening at a time of rising number of live births, which between 2001 and 2010 rose by 22 per cent, the largest ten-year increase since 1954-64. Although the change in the birth rate started in 2001, the ONS did not factor this into its projections until those it published in March 2008 as it wanted to be sure that this change represented a sustained trend. This lag has left local authorities scrambling to ensure there are sufficient places available.

Following the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Round, the Department for Education reduced its capital funding grants for school maintenance and cancelled its primary capital programme and many Building Schools for the Future projects. This affected mainly refurbishment of existing schools, although some local authorities had started to use the funds to expand schools to provide extra places in areas of need.⁵

The Department did, however, increase its specific funding for school places with extra capital provided in July and November 2011 and again in December 2012 as Government sought to keep up with a revised assessment of the funding required.⁶ Under the Basic Needs formula, the allocation for two years covering 2013/14 and 2014/15, totalled £800 million per year, of which London received 36 per cent of the total amount. Further funds were made available in March 2013 through a Targeted Basic Needs programme where local authorities were invited to bid for funding in September 2014 and 2015.

However, these additional sums do not fully cover the actual cost of meeting the increased demand for school places. Local authorities are also expected to contribute. In its September 2010 funding bid, the Department for Education required local authorities to make a contribution to close the gap between the sums they were allocating and the full market price of buying the site and building the school. The Government anticipated that local authorities would contribute up to 20 per cent of the total cost of providing new places.

But we have heard that these estimates are “widely inaccurate”. As the Education Panel heard at its September 2013 meeting:

If I give you an example, they (the Education Funding Agency) are saying that the DfE costs that they have per pupil is around £10,000 to £10,500 per pupil, whereas we have done our surveys and we are getting those out as between £16,000 to £20,000 per pupil for London. They think you can build a two-form entry primary school for £4.4 million. Well, you cannot in London and in inner London it is even more expensive. You cannot do that for less than about £8 million. Then when you talk about it as a secondary it goes through the roof in terms of the mismatch [between grant and costs].”⁷

Across London as a whole there is, according to London Councils, a shortfall of about £1 billion. In one borough alone (Lewisham) there is a £20 million deficit just to 2016. In commenting on revised Government funding allocations London Councils state that “For the 2015-17 allocations, the funding per place (pre-weighting) has increased to £11,805 for primary places and £14,756 for secondary places. The difference in the funding per place in 2013-15 and 2015-17 allocations shows the problem with having a fixed quantum of funding. It demonstrates that the funding has not been based on the actual cost of supplying new school places, but on a flawed government assessment of how much funding is available during Spending Review 2010 and Spending Round 2013”.⁸

We heard that other factors also complicate the ability to meet rising demand. There is the lack of timeliness of the funding. Local authorities are getting annual allocations when they need surety of funding in order to expand permanently and this therefore restricts their ability to plan effectively. There is also the spatial challenge of delivering new or expanding existing schools when there is clearly a shortage of potential sites or when those that are suitable are in private ownership. As Sir Daniel Moynihan (Chief Executive, Harris Federation) noted “The single biggest difficulty is finding sites...the problem is finding the sites and getting the owners of the site to make the presumption in favour of a school.”⁹

Without a significant number of new buildings parents and children will need to get used to “a new normal”.¹⁰ This could include longer journeys to school, less chance of getting your school of preference and a less pleasant learning environment with a diminution of play space. Some schools will need to look at new ways of organising their teaching with different routines, more creative use of space and enhanced use of technology. There has even been talk of split shifts with some children taught in the morning and others in the afternoon.

Gascoigne primary school

Gascoigne Primary School in Barking and Dagenham is the largest primary school in England, with a student body of approximately 1200 pupils split into 47 classes; almost double the 700 pupils it had 16 years ago. The current main school building was built in 1977 to replace the original Victorian school, although development and building work continues today to accommodate the large demand for school places. In addition to the main school building, Gascoigne has eight mobile classrooms and five new permanent classrooms were added in 2013 and building work continues through 2014.

The positive inspection reports of Gascoigne lay testimony to the dedication of the 150 staff members and determination to cater to all their pupils, from a variety of backgrounds and abilities. In their July 2013 Ofsted inspection, Gascoigne received a ‘Good’ rating in all areas, consistent with previous inspections.

Credit for managing this massive expansion must be paid to Headmaster Bob Garton who has successfully organised the school into four mini-schools so that appropriate age groups mix with each other thus limiting the extent to which the younger children have to contend with the older ones.

Quantifying the need and identifying provision

There is no complete picture of the need for new school places in London, nor strategic oversight of how the education sector will meet that need. The Mayor's Education Inquiry¹¹ recommended that the Mayor and the GLA should work with boroughs and the Department for Education to develop pan-London collection and analysis of data necessary for planning the provision of school places. The GLA has the data and the capability to generate robust, credible pupil projection numbers to support better places planning across London, but at present this doesn't fully happen. The GLA runs a subscription-based school rolls projections service for both primary and secondary schools. This is well established and combines household trend data with local intelligence on new developments. The information is currently provided to 30 of the 33 London local authorities. But it is not open data available for public scrutiny. Nor is it possible to easily access local authority plans for school expansion or to know where new academies or free schools are likely to open or when. This seems to obscure rather than support effective pupil place planning and indicates a possible role for the GLA.

The GLA provides another resource - the London School Atlas - which provides a mapping tool, using Department for Education data, to illustrate for each school where its pupils travel from and correspondingly where the children from a defined area go to school. This tool for the first time begins to capture the complex, cross-borough mobility travel patterns of London's school children. It also illustrates projected changes in demand from 2012/13 to 2017/18 helping to give an indicative picture of where pressure on places might be in the future.

The London Schools Atlas begins to create a map of the need for school places. Further data could be added to enhance the robustness of the projections – for example planning decisions that will increase the number of homes could be added in, as could information on household sizes. As London's strategic planning authority, the Mayor already has access to information about any planning application that will lead to construction of more than 150 houses, but local decisions should also be included to increase the detail of the maps. Other information such as applications data, which would indicate if a school in an area of high population growth was already over-subscribed, would also help develop a more accurate picture of where need was arising.

How is the Mayor working to secure more school places?

The Mayor can do three things to help meet the rising demand for school places: release GLA sites for conversion into schools; lobby for more capital support from central government; and use planning powers to push through new developments where new school places will also be created.

Freeing up sites for use and...

The Mayor has set up a New Schools unit at the GLA to scope out the expansion of free schools in the capital and has identified ten sites across the GLA Group estate that are to be used for free schools over the course of this Mayoral term. The first of these new schools will be based at the site of the old East Dulwich Police Station which has now been sold and is to become a new Harris primary school. A list of a further eight primary or secondary schools that will be supported through the release of public land was published on 26 June. Seven of the new schools will be primary schools, with one secondary and one all-through school planned. All but one are free schools. Five of the sites freed up for use are former police stations. These new schools will provide at an additional 7,000 or so places. The Mayor has also committed to providing a site for the proposed Fulham Boys School in Hammersmith and Fulham.

...using his planning powers

The Mayor has also exercised his strategic planning powers twice in the past 18 months to take over developments where new housing will cross-subsidise the building of a new school. At the Holy Trinity primary school site in Dalston, the Mayor has approved the demolition of the existing one-form entry school. This is to be replaced by a two-form entry nursery and primary school and 101 flats, despite local opposition which wanted more affordable housing on site and a different design. The Mayor, however, overruled these objections arguing that “the proposed expansion of this education facility would promote educational choice, and increase the availability of primary school places in response to established need in Dalston.”¹²

The Mayor has also used his planning powers to call in Southwark Council’s refusal to grant planning permission for the Southwark free school. He ruled in favour of the proposed development on the grounds that it would create a three-form entry free school plus sixth form space

and as such “provides much needed school places for a growing population and by providing a free school it is enabling greater choice.”¹³

A bias towards Free Schools

There are concerns, however, that by solely supporting the creation of free schools, the Mayor is allowing a mismatch to develop between the need for new school places and the supply of parental-led new build. Such concerns have been examined at a national level in a recent Public Accounts Committee report which found that while the Department for Education had a very specific policy to support local authorities to meet the need for extra places in their local areas, only 19 per cent of secondary places in the free schools opened so far were in such areas (the figure for primary schools was much higher, at around 87 per cent). However, the Department acknowledged that it had received no applications to open primary free schools in half of districts with a high or severe forecast need for school places by the academic year 2015/16, which leaves a significant worry for local authorities tasked with finding places.

In response to these national findings, the Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture stated that “there are not many places in London where there is not a basic needs shortage and from the figures that I have, of the mainstream free schools opening in London in September 2014, 97 per cent will be in areas of basic need for school places.”¹⁴ It is to be welcomed that at least five of the new Mayoral supported primaries will be in wards where the expected growth in the number of 4-10 years olds is above the average expected growth rate for the borough as a whole – see table 1 below.

Table 1: Is the Mayor intervening in the right places?

Mayoral intervention (Primary schools)	Ward projection of population growth children 4-10; actual and % change (2012-17)	Borough mean growth children 4-10 (2012-17)
Canary Wharf (Tower Hamlets)	625 (41%)	12.5%
Harris primary - East Dulwich Police Station (Southwark)	252 (29 %)	13 %
South Norwood (Croydon)	308 (20%)	12%
Holy Trinity CoE primary (Hackney)	108 (10 %)	8.5 %
The Olive school (Hackney)	52 (4%)	8.5%
Alma primary (Barnet)	110 (8%)	12.5%
Southwark Free School	56 (4 %)	13 %
Abacus Belsize primary (Camden)	-44 (-5%)	0%
Mossbourne (Hackney – from 2016)	-34 (-8%)	8.5%
Mayoral intervention (Secondary schools)	Ward projection of population growth children 11-15 (2012-17)	Borough mean growth children 11-15 (2012-17)
Riverside (Barking and Dagenham)	293 (39%)	10%
Legatum School (Newham)*	141 (19%)	-2%

Legatum is an all-through school – for primary aged children the actual number of additional children projected in the ward is 583 and increase of 52% over the period.
Source: Workings from the GLA's School Atlas

The Mayor appears comfortable exercising his planning powers to increase school places, albeit in a piecemeal fashion but it takes around two years from identifying need to providing school places, much like the timescales involved in building a new residential development. There is therefore value in a more strategic approach to pupil place planning. Lucy Keller, Chief Executive for ARK Schools stated that “I think there is one thing, and I am not sure necessarily that it is the Mayor’s role, but certainly there is a pan-London role, it seems to me, for a strategic look at pupil place planning.”¹⁵ Sir Tim Brighouse stressed the importance of this issue “I think it is urgent now and, although it is not in the power of the Mayor, and it is not in the power of the GLA, I think taking that really seriously will do more for children in London than many of the other things you talk about. If you do not have a school place and you do not have teachers then you are in trouble.”¹⁶

London Councils argue that they have stepped into that strategic space; Cllr Peter John, Executive Member for Children and Young People, stated

that “I think we are doing it pretty effectively actually, and I think if you look around London the fact that there are adequate school places (in September 2013) for all children means that we are doing our job.” He was, however, quite scathing about the role that the Mayor was playing: “I think that the role that the Mayor set up for himself, as I understood it, was really to be an honest broker in terms of where some new schools might come and sort of freeing up GLA land, and I am not sure that has actually happened.”

Nevertheless, the rapidly changing education landscape is shrinking the role of the local authority in helping to shape pupil place planning. The majority of existing London secondary schools and all new public funded schools are either Academies or free schools and thus outside of local authority control. Local authorities cannot sanction the building of a new school unless it is an academy or a free school and if they do identify a site for a free school it has to be put out to tender which allows housing developers with deep pockets to buy it. Local authorities are increasingly in an unenviable position where they have the statutory responsibility for ensuring that every child who wants a school place should have one, but are unable to control the supply of school places through expansion or new build.

A Strategic plan for housing; so why not for schools?

National planning guidance requires planning authorities to have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area. The Mayor prepares a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess the housing needs in London, to identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need given projected migration and demographic changes. The Mayor has produced updated studies in 2008 and 2013 to reflect changes to demographic projections these support his Housing Strategy.

The Mayor has the opportunity to do something similar for school places. He should bring together in a more coherent fashion his existing interventions to provide a strategic plan of the likely expansion in demand for school places, where that demand will be, and what the available options are to meet that need. A strategic assessment of new-build needed to meet the increase in demand could then be more closely aligned with a funding requirements package that the Mayor and London Councils could jointly support and lobby on. There would be options for the Mayor to put in GLA assets and, by working across the public sector, the pool of available public land could be widened.

The key future output from the Mayor should therefore be a strategic assessment of school places and a strategic plan for meeting that need, mirroring the work the GLA already produces for housing need. These documents would provide clarity and reassurance for parents, a direct steer for local authorities and new providers, and create confidence within the education sector as to the future direction of travel.

New build is not, however, the only option. Good and outstanding community schools should also be supported to expand where there is need. Up to now the Mayor has only articulated a concern to support the creation of new Academies or free schools. We heard from Dr Vanessa Ogden, Head Teacher of Mulberry School for Girls, who stated that “I would love to expand Mulberry. My parent governors really want to expand and we can do because we know there is demand out there...we would welcome the opportunity to talk to the Mayor about it.” This is a course of action he should pursue.

Recommendation 1

The Mayor, using data from the boroughs and the Department for Education, should set out a strategic pupil places needs assessment, mapping down to ward level the projected need for new school places at primary and secondary level. This should be incorporated within the Schools Atlas.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor in conjunction with London Councils should map out a land and asset availability assessment to provide options for meeting the need for new school places, with a particular focus on secondary schools where the need will become more pressing in the next three to five years. Where appropriate it should include options for the expansion of Good or Outstanding rated maintained schools.

Recommendation 3

Working with London Councils, the Mayor should set out a revised regional funding bid to the Department for Education that will run alongside the land and asset assessment.

2. The challenge to raise standards across London's schools

It is easy to forget that in 2006 London was the worst performing region at both primary and secondary level. The improvement in pupil attainment in London has been remarkable and all analyses identify the London Challenge, which ran from 2003 to 2008, as a key driver for change.¹⁷ But, as the Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture noted “there were other programmes at the same time; Teach First was focused on London and changed the identity of the London teacher...and the Academies Programme took off in London more than anywhere else...[which brought in] new high capacity, high quality governance where local authorities were not doing their jobs.”¹⁸

Ofsted's Annual report for London 2012/13 demonstrates how well London's schools are performing. The report finds that “London has seen a rise in the quality of its schools again this year and inspection outcomes overall were the best in the country for 2012/13.” The report notes that “children in London start at the age of five years broadly in line with those of the rest of the country, but then surge and stay ahead of all other regions at ages 11, 16 and 19.” There are particularly impressive results achieved for pupils eligible for free school meals.¹⁹

While the overall picture is strong compared with other English regions, the latest data also show that 35 per cent of London teenagers failed to achieve the basic passport for work of five good GCSEs (albeit this is better than the 41 per cent national average who fail to achieve that standard). The number of London pupils getting the English Baccalaureate — awarded for passing GCSEs in five academic subjects — has increased sharply since last year but still less than a third of London pupils gain the qualification. In terms of global comparisons, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is undertaken by the OECD every three years to assess the competency of 15 year olds internationally in key subjects including reading, mathematics and science, found that English children perform around the average in English and maths (and just above the average in science) among the 34 OECD countries. Although by contrast, performance in reading is well below the highest performing parts of the world such as Shanghai-China, Finland and South Korea.²⁰

It is not, however, possible to measure how London children are performing against children from other global cities or economies with

high levels of high tech or service sector exports. PISA does not provide city-level data that can be used to benchmark London's performance. This is a significant deficiency in our understanding of how well London is doing. Having such data would help London develop its own vision and ambition as to where it wants its school children to be in five or ten years' time. It could identify cities that were doing exceptional things and promote a city learning programme.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should request the OECD to develop a new set of international city comparators so that London can more effectively benchmark its own attainment and achievement levels.

What is the Mayor's ambition?

The Mayor's ambition is to make London state schools among the best in the world and ensure that young Londoners can compete successfully for jobs and university places against the talent the city attracts from around the globe. To this end, he wants to promote excellent teaching in all London state schools. The first five of the Education Panel's twelve recommendations cover this theme.

London Councils is also committed to deliver high achievement across all schools and has discussed establishing a set of expectations that local authorities could work towards that could include progression rates, achievement levels, and the numbers of good and outstanding schools in the local authority. Some local authorities have themselves discussed whether they should have a specific target for their secondary schools, for example, delivering 5 A*-C GCSEs for 75 per cent of all school leavers at 16. However, the local authority's ability to influence such outcomes is very limited: school improvement teams have been slimmed down, relevant data is not shared by the academy chains and accountability mechanisms are weak. Local authorities do, however, retain the ability to issue warning notices for poor performance where necessary.

The key mechanisms that the GLA has put in place to support the promotion of excellent teaching include:

- the London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF) which has a £20m grant from the Department for Education (plus £4.25m from the GLA) to support a range of initiatives established through partnerships of schools and education organisations to improve

literacy and numeracy, and increasing the take-up of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM);²¹

- the London Schools Gold Club which is an annual scheme to identify schools that are achieving exceptional results particularly for their most disadvantaged pupils; and
- the London Curriculum which is a programme of resources and activities to help London schools re-imagine the new national curriculum through the history and stories of the capital.

What impact are the Mayor's initiatives having?

The latest version of the Delivery Plan for the Mayor's Education programme²² sets out progress to date with the implementation of the LSEF. As of April 2014, there had been three rounds of applications and 104 projects have so far been funded. These projects are now moving into delivery, with over 50 per cent led by schools. Overall, some 800 schools are benefitting from the work of these projects. The funding spans four financial years 2012/13 to 2015/16.

The Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture is clear about what the LSEF is for: "[it] is about supporting partnerships between schools to address some of the underperformance in areas like STEM, subject teaching, languages, literacy and numeracy."²³ The LSEF builds on learning from the London Challenge about the value of peer-to-peer support with schools working with each other to raise standards and improve teaching. Sir Daniel Moynihan spoke in praise of the scheme "... [the Excellence Fund] is a particularly good idea because groups of schools are incentivised to work together to produce things which are of use to schools across the capital. We [the Harris Federation] have £500,000 to work on schemes of work in the English Baccalaureate subjects for the younger years and we are working with 50 other school groups across the capital and all of that material that is produced will be shared widely."²⁴

We are clear that there is a distinction to be drawn between what schools can do themselves to tackle underperformance and create excellent teaching and where external intervention is required, but that line is unclear. As the GLA itself recognises "there are a number of areas where the research base is weak nationally about the most effective way for schools to raise standards".²⁵

The initiatives supported by the Fund differ in their ambition and reach compared with the level of support provided through the previous

scheme, the London Challenge, which was targeted to address the needs of a school that had been identified as underperforming. Furthermore, the London Challenge provided a structured programme of support for the leadership team and for individual teachers; with financial resource available mainly for supply cover for teachers and managers who are engaged in training programmes.²⁶ The Excellence Fund has the ambition to tackle underperformance but it is unclear whether the different projects that will be supported will deliver measurable progress that Ofsted can capture. We are comparing a “smorgasbord of projects” against a clear strategy for tackling underperformance.

It will be some time before a full evaluation of the LSEF will be available. The funding will however soon be fully committed and it is now time for the Mayor to map out a longer term vision for supporting London’s schools. The priority must be to bring together performance data from across all the schools that are state funded. Academies and free schools should provide the GLA with their performance data so that there is transparency across the education sector.

Recommendation 5

The Mayor should draw together performance data (attainment and achievement) for all schools in London and publish this in his next Annual report.

The Gold Club remains a contentious initiative. As the Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture noted “...the Gold Club programme, which is essentially taking the notion of great schools working with other schools and sharing good practice and developing a mentoring relationship”²⁷ is led by head teachers and is designed to create a positive, competitive environment in London rewarding those schools that achieve exceptional results with some Mayoral profile. Some Assembly Members have raised concerns about how the Gold Club will work with new, additional criteria being used to reward schools over the Ofsted classifications and whether this work in effect duplicates the “Teaching Schools” initiative.²⁸ There remain concerns that for parents it is unclear what being in the Gold Club means and what it means if the school should fall out of the Gold Club. Bob Stapley, National Union of Teachers, commented that “I would have to say I do not think it has any resonance with teachers...[and that] the idea of this Gold Club that has exclusive membership...rather than the celebration of success that we [should] see across London.”²⁹

In the first year of the Gold Club, 119 schools were selected for praise. The 2014 eligibility criteria have now been published and those schools

that qualify have been notified by the Mayor. The take-up and feedback from schools will shape the future for the initiative and is something we will continue to monitor.

The London Curriculum is a potentially powerful tool for shaping a distinctive curriculum that will support London's transformation into a City of Knowledge competing alongside the very best performing city-regions across the globe. At present, the Curriculum is in development and a formal public launch date has been set for the summer 2014. We will monitor take-up of the Curriculum and review the reasons why others may not be so keen.

The Mayor's Academy Programme³⁰

The Mayor's Academies Limited (MAL) was established in 2010 to act as a co-sponsor for academies with the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET). The two companies formed the London Academies Enterprise Trust (LAET) in 2010, a company limited by guarantee, to be the academy sponsor and body responsible for academies opened under the Mayor's Academy Programme. The original aim of the Mayor's Academy Programme was to establish up to 10 academies across London, and funding of up to £8million was initially provided. Only four academies were ultimately opened under the Academies Programme (the Aylward and Nightingale Academies in Enfield, the Bexleyheath in Bexley and Kingsley Academy in Hounslow). The selected schools were converter academies and were chosen following a local authority bid process. Co-sponsors no longer need to provide an initial investment of a million pounds and so the Mayor's pot of funding is no longer needed to drive forward the creation of new schools, be they Academies or free schools.

The Mayor has now withdrawn from the London Academies Enterprise Trust and is no longer involved in the governance of any single school but the GLA is still providing funding to these academies to deliver targeted support to young people at risk of being not in employment, education or training (NEET). The funding profile up to 2015/16 is for a total of £800,000 to go to the two Enfield schools, £350,000 to go to Bexleyheath Academy, and £330,000 to go to Kingsley Academy. The Mayor has no intention of providing any more such funding.

Bexleyheath Academy

The Education panel visited Bexleyheath Academy to better understand the kind of work and the type of programmes that Mayoral funding was supporting. The Academy seeks to identify those at risk of becoming NEET at Year 9 and then to use GLA funding to design a bespoke curriculum to really engage with those students and support them in enrichment activities they might not ordinarily have access to.

Having that additional funding resource has really challenged the senior team to think through what it is they can offer their young people and how that can be continually improved. The Careers, Advice and Information Guidance that was provided is seen as best practice across the borough.

While formal evaluation of the programme is awaited there are some very encouraging signs: In the summer of 2014, Bexleyheath achieved excellent A Level results with an improvement for the eighth year in a row; 38% of the grades being A*-A, 79% A*-C and an increased number of pupils securing places in Higher Education and Russell Group Universities. This model of well resourced, targeted programme intervention is one that the Mayor can and should build on to provide a mechanism by which underachievement can be effectively challenged and the students offered rapid support.

Recommendation 6

The Mayor should provide this Panel with an evaluation of the impact of the Academies' programme (now known as the "Championing careers guidance in schools programme") by the end of 2014.

3. Accountability and tackling poorly performing schools

Throughout the course of our meetings, experts have raised concerns about the accountability of schools to their local communities and elected representatives. For Cllr Peter John, accountability means having a local, elected representative able to respond to people's concerns about their local school; "If I go and knock on somebody's door and I say I am a local councillor and they have a school issue or educational issue, either with school places or the performance of their local school, they are looking to me to provide an answer. People do look to local authorities to provide the answer for school issues."³¹ But for others that accountability is more spoken than real; Sir Daniel Moynihan stated that "...talk[ing] about local accountability being a good thing. It is a good thing if it has teeth and it works. In many of the cases where we have taken on schools the rhetoric of local accountability exists. [However] I have never seen a local councillor in those places be held to account and lose their post because a school has been terminally failing and children have been destroyed in terms of their life chances. In those cases there is hardly any evidence of local accountability."³²

Through the use of publicly accessible data parents, governors, local councillors and local authority school improvement teams, working with Ofsted, can make an assessment of the quality of education a maintained school is providing and its potential for continuous improvement. Local authority scrutiny panels operating in public should be reviewing these data and pressing the local authority's education lead to ensure that there is clarity over what educational objectives their schools should be aiming for and what support package can be put in place to tackle underperformance or to press for further improvements.

There are examples where that process can create a dynamic and thriving "family of schools" – Camden for example where all schools bar one are local authority maintained has some of the top primary and secondary schools in London. However, there remain concerns as to how effective local authorities are at tackling poor performing schools. "I can think of an example where a school had been in and out of special measures three times in 15 years and the local community had signed a petition and 1,200 people locally said "We want this to be a Harris Academy because we have to sell up, move house to find a good school"...[but] that local authority, with the moral responsibility for these children, told us that they needed to protect the "local family of schools".³³

For Academies and free schools, the nature of accountability is more opaque. It is unclear how poor performance is to be identified in an Academy or free school when their data are not readily accessible to parents and relevant partners. Even if poor performance is identified, it remains unclear what pressure those local partners could bring to bear on the academy chains that run many of our schools or the disparate boards of different free schools. Cllr Peter John has spoken of his frustration at his inability to challenge academy chains where there is poor performance. His view is that, where necessary, local authorities should just serve a notice to improve, and copy in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, with the expectation that something would happen to address the situation.

Ultimately the buck stops with central government. The funding agreements for all Academies and free schools are with central government and so central government is, therefore, responsible for data monitoring and for addressing underperformance. In recognition of this challenge, the Government has established new Regional Commissioners, who will, from September 2014, have powers delegated from the Secretary of State for Education to intervene where academies are underperforming, and to approve new academies and new academy sponsors. Little detail is known about the criteria triggering intervention or the powers/sanctions they will have to support them in doing so, other than Commissioners will be able to direct underperforming schools to commission school improvement services and will use formal interventions in the most severe cases.

Regional Commissioners will be responsible for approving applications from maintained schools wishing to convert to academy status. According to some media reports, they will also consider Academy requests to change their admissions criteria. They will also be responsible for matching underperforming schools to new Academy sponsors and to act as advocates for the Academy programmes in general. Accountability is strictly to the Secretary of State for Education through line management by the Department's Director General for Infrastructure and Funding. There will also be a key relationship with the national Schools Commissioner through Regional Commissioners' responsibility to ensure the sponsor meets local need.

The jury is out as to whether this new arrangement will effectively address poor performance. Lucy Keller stated that "We wait with interest. I am clear that academies, like all schools, need to be held to account and I am only interested that it is done well and effectively. I do not know

how this is going to work in practice. I think we are all waiting to see.”³⁴
The relationship with Ofsted also remains unclear – as Sir Daniel Moynihan noted “we are going to work closely with Ofsted. Ofsted has appointed regional directors, Ofsted will check and monitor standards...”, thus the value added of the Regional Commissioners remains unclear to some.

4. Developing a regional identity

London does not comprise a distinct region under the proposed structure despite its unique regional administration in the form of a directly elected Mayor and Assembly and the Greater London Authority. London has been divided into three, so that each of the three sections forms part of a larger, wider region. The justification for why Government has chosen such jurisdictions is unconvincing. As the Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture noted “There was not any public consultation before it was announced and we did raise concerns because there was some nervousness about what regional commissioners would do.”³⁵ Furthermore the reform does not adequately provide for input from London schools into the workings of the Commissioner; of the 12 members of the elected boards of Head teachers that support the three Regional Commissioners that cover London only one is from a London school.

Within the changing education landscape in London we want to see effective monitoring of pupil attainment and achievement and robust interventions to tackle poor and underperforming schools. We argue that this is best done at the London level. The creation of a London identity for teachers, for leaders and for a shared vision of “what it was to be a London school” and how to tackle underachievement were all part of what made the London Challenge such a success. The momentum remains and we do not want to see it lost. Children in London will often go to primary school in one borough, secondary school in another and into higher education elsewhere. Federations of schools are developing across borough boundaries and at a sub-regional level, Academy groups are developing clusters that are geographical close but across borough boundaries. The Commissioner needs to be able to operate effectively across the whole of London to ensure effective oversight and to ensure supporting partnerships can be brokered and shared learning. It is nonsense to have separate regional commissioners for neighbouring London boroughs but to have the same commissioner for a school in the Isle of Wight as for Lambeth. The London should have one regional commissioner who is accountable to the Secretary of State for Education.

Recommendation 7

The Secretary of State for Education should reconfigure the Regional Commissioners so that London has one Regional Commissioner.

The Mayor has set out a powerful case to support education provision in London in order to enhance our young people’s life chances and to

support our economy. The Mayor needs to support the building of new schools and the expansion of existing schools which are Good or Outstanding by the better collation and presentation of the projection of the need for school places and the development of a high level strategy for how that provision should be met. The latter should set out the options for meeting that need and the required funding from central government.

While the shadow of the Inner London Education Authority still casts a pall for some educationalists and commentators, we support a role for the Mayor in “keeping London together and moving forward in terms of raising standards and concentrating on the immense work that was done to build the capacity and professional development”.³⁶ His role is to forge a regional identity to offer “figurehead leadership of someone driving a vision home about excellence”³⁷ and “to celebrate the success of teachers and to co-ordinate at a strategic level work that we can do to drive up standards.”³⁸ This may include, for example, working with an organisation like the Teacher Development Trust to provide support at a regional level for teachers working in the most disadvantaged areas. The obsession with structures must not mask the need for quality teaching and senior leadership and it is by creating and sustaining that vision of what London schools should and can be that we will continue to attract the best teachers to work in our schools.

Appendix 1 Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Mayor, using data from the boroughs and the Department for Education, should set out a strategic pupil places needs assessment, mapping down to ward level the projected need for new school places at primary and secondary level. This should be incorporated within the Schools Atlas.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor in conjunction with London Councils should map out a land and asset availability assessment to provide options for meeting the need for new school places, with a particular focus on secondary schools where the need will becoming more pressing in the next three to five years. Where appropriate it should include options for the expansion of Good or Outstanding rated maintained schools.

Recommendation 3

Working with London Councils, the Mayor should set out a revised regional funding bid to the Department for Education that will run alongside the land and asset assessment.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should request the OECD to develop a new set of international city comparators so that London can more effectively benchmark its own attainment and achievement levels.

Recommendation 5

The Mayor should draw together performance data (attainment and achievement) for all schools in London and publish this in his next Annual report.

Recommendation 6

The Mayor should provide this Panel with an evaluation of the impact of the Academies' programme (now known as the "Championing careers guidance in schools programme) by the end of 2014.

Recommendation 7

The Secretary of State for Education should reconfigure the Regional Commissioners so that London has one Regional Commissioner.

Appendix 2 Endnotes

¹ Draft Alterations to the London Plan, January 2014

² Frankie Sulkie, Executive Director, Children and Young People, Lewisham Council), Education Panel meeting September 2013

³ Op. cit.

⁴ *Do the Maths 2014, London's school places challenge*, London Councils

⁵ See more detail in *"Capital Funding for new school places"*, National Audit Office report, March 2013, para 2.5

⁶ *"Capital Funding for new school places"*, National Audit Office, March 2013 para 2.7-2.8

⁷ Frankie Sulkie, Executive Director, Children and Young People, Lewisham Council), Education Panel meeting September 2013

⁸ *"Do the Maths 2014"*, London Councils, 2014.

⁹ Education Panel meeting, 13 February 2014

¹⁰ Frankie Sulke, Education Panel meeting, September 2013

¹¹ In November 2011, the Mayor announced the establishment of an Education Inquiry, chaired by Dr Tony Sewell, to "explore the critical challenges facing London's primary and secondary schools and make practical recommendations to key stakeholders, including Government and local boroughs." The inquiry published its final report, *Going for Gold – Turning achievement into excellence in London's schools*¹¹, in October 2012. The Mayor has chosen to target his intervention across four themes: school places, excellent teaching and preparing young Londoners for life and work, and new for 2014, fostering engagement and building resilience among London's young people. Accordingly, there are a series of programme objectives backed by financial and other resources led by Greater London Authority (GLA) officers. The most significant is a £24 million Fund (funded by £20m from the Department for Education and £4m from the GLA) which is designed to stimulate new teaching partnerships and help schools raise standards across a particular range of subjects.

¹² http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/representation_hearing_report.pdf

¹³ http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/399_rotherhithe_new_road_report.pdf

¹⁴ Education Panel meeting, 13 February, pg 13 of the minutes of the meeting

¹⁵ Education Panel meeting 13 February, pg 11 of the minutes of the meeting

¹⁶ Education Panel meeting, 27 November, pg 28 of the minutes of the meeting

¹⁷ See for example Hutchings et al (2012) Evaluation of the City Challenge programme; London Challenge, OFSTED report Dec 2010, The Mayor's Education Inquiry 2012.

¹⁸ Education Panel meeting, 27 November 2013 pg 23 of the minutes of the meeting

¹⁹ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/ofsted-annual-report-201213-london-region>

²⁰ Mayor's 2013 Education Annual Report

²¹ More details of the kind of schemes being supported can be found here:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/media/mayor-press-releases/2013/10/mayor-unveils-multi-million-pound-investment-to-drive-up>

²² www.london.gov.uk/education-programme

²³ Education Panel, 27 November 2013 – pg 15 of the minutes of the meeting

²⁴ Education panel, 13 February 2014 – pg 35 of the minutes of the meeting

²⁵ Mayoral Direction 1132

²⁶ London Challenge, December 2010, pg 8

²⁷ Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture, Education panel, 27 November 2013 pg 15 of the minutes of the meeting

²⁸ There are now 360 government designated Teaching Schools in England and Wales. Teaching schools give outstanding schools a leading role in the training and professional development of teachers, support staff and head teachers, as well as contributing to the raising of standards through school-to-school support.

²⁹ Education Panel meeting, 13 February

³⁰ This programme has now been re-named “Championing careers guidance in schools”.

³¹ Education Panel 27 November, 2013 – pg37 of the minutes of the meeting.

³² Education Panel 13 February 2014 - pg27 of the minutes of the meeting.

³³ Education Panel 13 February 2014 - pg 27of the minutes of the meeting.

³⁴ Education Panel meeting, 13 February 2013 – pg39 of the minutes of the meeting.

³⁵ Education Panel meeting, 13 February 2014 – pg40 of the minutes of the meeting

³⁶ Education Panel meeting , 13 February 2014 – pg19 of the minutes of the meeting

³⁷ Op.cit.

³⁸ Education Panel meeting, 13 February 2014 –pg 29of the minutes of the meeting

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Arabic

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فارجاء الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو الاتصال على
العنوان البريدي العادي أو عنوان البريدي
الالكتروني اعلاه.

Gujarati

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