

Lewisham Education Commission



Report April 2016



Commissioners

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Lewisham Education Commission Report

Contents

- Chapter 1** Introduction and overview
- Chapter 2** Establishing a new approach to school organisation
- Chapter 3** Developing a school-led model of improvement
- Chapter 4** Achieving more school places
- Chapter 5** Creating Lewisham Secondary Challenge

- Appendix 1** Education Commission members, remit, process and acknowledgements
- Appendix 2** Lewisham in context: data analysis
- Appendix 3** Summary review of secondary school Ofsted inspection reports
- Appendix 4** Distribution of additional primary places in Lewisham since 2008/9
- Appendix 5** Forecast of school places in Lewisham

Chapter 1: Introduction and overview

Background

Education is important to Lewisham. It is important to the life of its residents and to the development of Lewisham as a strong and vibrant place to live and work. The council recognises this and in establishing this Education Commission was seeking to ensure that the significant advances so evident in primary schools over recent years were consolidated and extended to the secondary sector.

It is clear from all we have done in undertaking this Commission that school improvement and raising educational outcomes, most particularly for young people in the secondary sector, are top priorities for the council, as indeed they must be for Lewisham itself. The establishment of an Education Commission underlines their importance to the council and seeks to accelerate change by bringing in an external team to work collaboratively with local stakeholders to shape a vision for education in Lewisham and make recommendations to the Mayor and to the community of schools in Lewisham for future development.

If the council's ambitions are to be realised, we believe there will need to be a widespread and working commitment to making more of a difference. This requires the emergence of a driving coalition for change from both within and beyond the council which not only increases pride in what is being achieved but also ambition for achieving more in the future. There also needs to be a proactive approach to the national change agenda. Both of these key aspects have influenced our approach in undertaking the work of the Commission.

The council set a very ambitious and challenging time frame - 11 weeks - for the work of the Commission. We understand the rationale for this speed. However, not only did it mean that we had to maintain a very disciplined and strategic approach to our work but also that some of our recommendations would inevitably point to the need for more detailed work or follow up in certain areas. Within the constraints of the timeframe, we sought to make the process of stakeholder engagement as inclusive as possible and we have gained a great deal of insight from having done so. The details of our visits and meetings are set out in Appendix 1.

The council's specification for the work of the Commission pointed to five key lines of enquiry that provided the strategic focus for our work, namely:

- school organisation, given the national and regional context
- sustainable, school-led model of improvement for Lewisham
- the best means of providing additional secondary and SEND places in Lewisham and of ensuring existing schools are schools of choice
- leading edge practice at Key Stages 4 and 5 that could benefit Lewisham
- improving how Lewisham's system serves the most vulnerable.

As expected, there was considerable overlap in undertaking these five key areas of investigation. Nevertheless, we have provided separate chapters on the first four areas and ensured that the fifth is addressed within each of those.

The White Paper and role of the local authority in education

During the sixth week of the Commission's work, the Secretary of State for Education published the White Paper, **Educational Excellence Everywhere**, which has been taken into account in making our recommendations. As was signalled by the recent consultation document on school funding, the government is:

".....reforming school improvement policy in the context of the overall drive towards a school-led system. This means that we expect LAs to step back from running school improvement from the end of the 2016/17 academic year and therefore they will not require funding for this function."¹

The White Paper makes clear that the local authority's education duties will focus on three areas:

- ensuring every child has a school place
- ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils are met
- acting as champions for all parents and families.

Whatever the statutory definition of its role, the local authority's democratic base gives it leverage locally and local people will continue to look to local councillors to ensure education is of good quality.

As community leaders, Lewisham councillors recognise the importance of education to their local communities, especially to parents of children at local schools and to prospective parents. They share strong moral purpose in wanting to raise aspirations for educational outcomes locally so the achievements of those leaving schools and colleges improve. They will continue to listen hard to the needs of children and their parents and help them navigate the system. Certainly, councillors will expect to play a key role in shaping provision in the area, particularly given the emphasis in the White Paper on their role in securing a school place for every child.

As guardians of children in the area, Lewisham councillors are already vigilant about the needs of the most vulnerable, such as looked after children or those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). As they do now with health, councillors may want to continue to scrutinise how the needs and interest of young people are being served and seek to improve this by pressure and influence even if their statutory role is reduced. They may well want to promote the interests and needs of children in Lewisham by reporting on local quality and provision and by engaging with those providing it. Many local authorities will want to scrutinise too what happens to young people when they leave school and to find active ways of supporting young people's transition into the world of work.

¹ Department for Education, 2016, Educational Excellence Everywhere, Cm 9230, Her Majesty's Stationery Office

Local authorities already see themselves as champions for parents and families and for children too. The councillors we spoke to certainly understand the importance of education as a powerful force for regenerating and sustaining the life of the local area as well as the main driver of social mobility. The Commission believes that many councils will continue to see themselves having a role in stimulating and articulating a local and ambitious vision for education locally, tied in perhaps to a borough or community plan. This should give active support to schools in their drive for improvement. Finally, as champions, Lewisham council will continue to be keen to make connections across people, services and places in the area that could benefit young people.

The performance of pupils in Lewisham schools

The context for Lewisham's education system is aptly described as a tale of two halves. Standards and pupil outcomes in early years and primary are amongst the very best in the country and Inner London. No school performs below the national floor standards and the vast majority of groups achieve well above average outcomes. The borough's secondary system sits in stark contrast, with average pupil outcomes being far below those for Inner London and London as a whole. Indeed, performance tables for London show the borough's schools as having the worst GCSE results in London. A much lower than average percentage of Lewisham's Key Stage 5 students go on to higher education study.

Many people spoke to the Commission about the poverty and deprivation in Lewisham. Without doubt, this affects a significant proportion of Lewisham's children; in 12 of Lewisham's 18 wards, 22 per cent or more children live in poverty. At least one quarter of the borough's 0-19 year olds live in workless households: the same as the Inner London average. As shown in Appendix 2, the proportion of low income households is reflected in the number of children in receipt of free school meals (FSM) but here the figures are more positive than for Inner London. So, although the challenges of poverty are great in Lewisham, they are no harder than for most other Inner London boroughs. Poverty therefore cannot be offered as a reason for Lewisham's poor average performance in the secondary sector.

As shown in Appendix 2, it is clear that children of all backgrounds generally perform far below both the Inner London and the national average for their groups. The significantly below-average performance of black and mixed heritage pupils reflects a long-term trend of below-average outcomes amongst these groups. Lewisham's white pupils have also underperformed in comparison to their national counterparts over a number of years – although the discrepancies in performance are generally less marked for this group than for those pupils of black and mixed heritage.

The performance tables also reveal an issue relating to the attainment of pupils with higher prior attainment. The national proportion of these pupils gaining at least 5 A*- C (including English and maths) has been declining slightly over the last three years. In Lewisham, this proportion has also been declining, but at a faster rate than found nationally.

The picture is a little brighter in terms of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND. In terms of achieving 5 A* - C (including English and maths), disadvantaged pupils, using those in

receipt of free school meals as a proxy, perform significantly above the national average for these groups. However, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers from more advantaged backgrounds has remained static over the last three years. Only 39 per cent of pupils receiving free school meals achieved 5 A* - C (including English and maths) at GCSE, compared to 59 per cent of pupils not receiving free school meals. In contrast, in the top performing local authorities (Newham and Tower Hamlets), the gap between the numbers of receiving free school meals and those pupils not receiving free school meals is under 10 per cent.

There was little discussion of absence from school as an issue during the work of the Commission but persistent absence remains a serious issue for the borough's secondary sector. Worryingly, the primary sector has recently also seen an increase in persistent absence. This has been picked up as a priority by the Executive Director in the Children and Young People Plan and the new school improvement strategy.

Lewisham's primary sector has experienced no permanent exclusions within the last few years. Unfortunately, this is in notable contrast to the secondary sector, where permanent exclusions are almost at the national average and far higher than Inner London.

Ofsted judgements on schools in Lewisham reflect the same disparity between primary and secondary that we see in test and examination results. HMCI's Annual Report for 2014/15² shows Lewisham as fifth in the national primary school league table with 95 per cent of pupils in good or outstanding schools. This represents an increase of seven percentage points from 2014. In the secondary school league table, Lewisham languishes in the bottom quarter of the table with only 65 per cent of pupils in good or outstanding schools, a slippage of two percentage points from 2014.

The desire to tackle poor average performance at secondary level was a major driver behind the establishment of the Education Commission. All stakeholders have engaged constructively in discussion about how to work together to improve the quality of education and performance so that more children and young people have the qualifications, skills and confidence in their ability to learn that they will need when they leave school. As pointed out by the council's chief executive, London is increasingly one of the world's most competitive labour markets with many jobs in inner London at graduate level and above.

A school-led system for improvement

Developments over the last 10 years or so mean that we have already reached a tipping point in England in favour of schools themselves as the primary drivers of systemic improvement. The days of local authorities vigorously leading and managing school improvement have long since gone, although many, as in Lewisham's case, have continued to take their statutory responsibilities seriously, especially for schools causing concern. This is evidenced by Lewisham's recently introduced improvement strategy and its organisation of school improvement adviser visits. Even without the publication of a White Paper³ that signals the removal of councils'

² Ofsted, 2015, The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2014/15, Her Majesty's Stationery Office

³ Ibid

statutory school improvement responsibilities, it is clear there can be no turning back from a school-led model of improvement. The logic of a self-improving system is that schools themselves take on responsibility, and even accountability, for ensuring that every individual school has the support they need to improve. The system is driven by schools with school leaders, teachers and governors playing key roles.

Teaching schools are outstanding schools which are intended to provide a major strand of the support for a school-led system. This is explored more fully in chapters 2 and 5. Each teaching school establishes a broader group called a teaching school alliance which then provides school-based initial teacher training, school to school support to improve practice, and a range of professional development opportunities for teachers and leaders. Later chapters provide more detail of their activities and potential. Although the borough has four teaching schools, all with linked alliances, only one of these has a secondary dimension and the work of that school is focused primarily on its own multi-academy trust (MAT). Some secondary schools work with teaching school alliances in other boroughs but the majority do not. It is important that secondary schools and more all-through schools find ways of accessing the opportunities offered by teaching school alliances not least because school improvement funding is likely to be increasingly routed through teaching schools from September 2017.

Beyond teaching schools, we have seen many excellent examples of schools in Lewisham, both primary and secondary, working in active partnerships to effect improvement. This has been at a range of levels. Examples have included improvement through:

- shared headship for an interim period
- time-limited 'soft' federations or collaborative partnerships, often with interim or executive headteachers generally sourced by the local authority
- seven 'hard' federations with executive leadership
- high quality professional development across schools or groups of schools, including some innovative programmes operating across a MAT.

In addition, headteachers across the borough have themselves put in place arrangements at primary and secondary level for meeting together to share thinking and commission some joint professional development activity.

The positive impact of collaboration is clear in Lewisham and offers a good foundation on which to build a more systematic and consistent approach to school partnerships. A number of heads reported that they see becoming a MAT as the next logical step in their development and even those more hesitant about this have been spurred on to discuss their future options by the publication of the recent White Paper⁴. This would have the advantage for the borough of enabling some local schools to become 'home-grown' MATs. If accredited as sponsors, 'home-grown MATs' could not only step in and give support to schools experiencing difficulties but also promote and run free schools to help meet the demand for additional pupil places. This is explored more fully in Chapter 2.

⁴ Ibid

Many schools are still not interested in becoming or joining a MAT but the Commission recommends that they all work more systematically as part of some collaborative group, be that small or large. Such groups might be the basis for sharing practice and expert practitioners, for undertaking peer review, and for organising professional development – including forensic, classroom-based development of practice in teaching and reviewing its impact on learning. Developing real depth to collaborative working would help prepare schools for forming sound MATs in the event that the government’s proposals are enacted in legislation. However, we also recommend that Lewisham should form an overarching partnership that encompasses individual schools, informal groups of schools, federations, MATs and teaching schools. This partnership would enable schools to work together across the borough, to draw on each other’s strengths and thus complement improvement efforts within local groups of schools.

We have been impressed by the strength of the Heads’ Leadership Forum in supporting headteachers, both operationally and strategically. The Forum gives all schools in Lewisham access to a professional learning partnership and this is much appreciated by the primary heads with whom we spoke. Although open to all headteachers, the Forum is run by primary heads and its most active participants are from the primary sector. It is unusual to have primary schools so much more engaged in collaborative activity than secondary schools. The Forum offers a potential base for taking on greater responsibility for school-led improvement across Lewisham and developing an ambitious programme designed by the schools themselves for Lewisham schools.

In our discussions with headteachers, parents and governors, we have found pride and a sense of belonging to Lewisham as a place, as well as a strong and shared moral purpose to do the best for all Lewisham’s children and young people. We found a working commitment to the principles of public service, collaboration and integrity. An overarching schools’ partnership, rooted in these principles, with its focus on securing the best possible outcomes for Lewisham children and young people could lessen the potential for local fragmentation and the risk of vulnerable children and young people not being well served in a diverse and more independent system. We recommend that headteachers, governors and the local authority should establish a steering group to do the detailed planning to set up such a partnership.

As part of their deliberations, they should investigate the benefits and feasibility of establishing an independent company through which the partnership would work. Such a company would be owned by the schools themselves and all surplus funds would be used for investment in further development. It would provide or broker a range of services to support the improvement of schools in Lewisham. As with the Wigan model described in Chapter 3, it might work in depth in separate primary and secondary groupings, coming together to address shared issues, such as Year 6 and 7 transfer and transition, at regular intervals. The partnership would also liaise with the local authority on those issues for which it remains responsible:

- admissions
- special educational needs
- champion for children

We recommend too that Lewisham Governors' Association (LGA) should be a key part of this company. The role of governors is critical in supporting and challenging schools. This has been recognised in the local authority's new school improvement strategy which has a strong emphasis on governance and working with governors. Indeed, in an academised system, governance is more important than ever and it is crucial that experience and practice is shared and the skills of governors are developed well. Governance in MATs is different from that in individual schools or academies and will require appropriate support and training too.

Lewisham's partnership would use the schools themselves, including teaching school alliances and MATs, to ensure that it was able to:

- develop a good working knowledge of all Lewisham schools
- establish effective and energising approaches to monitoring, challenge and support
- ensure underperforming schools, or schools in need for a particular reason, receive targeted support
- liaise with external bodies, such as the DfE or the Regional Schools Commissioner, about performance issues
- offer all schools access to a professional learning partnership rooted in peer learning and development of classroom practice, giving a range of opportunities to work across schools
- build skills, knowledge and practice across Lewisham making effective use of increasingly scarce resources and key partnerships, such as nearby universities and the world of work
- ensure training is available as needed, particularly for more school-to-school work, for school staff and for governors
- broker partnerships for peer review, for support in particular areas and for development of best practice
- trial new approaches
- be confident that schools in Lewisham improve well
- input to the development of strategies, policies and practice that impact on children and schools

It might also offer a wider range of highly rated traded services.

To ensure the company is given a strong start, we recommend that Lewisham council should allocate the money needed to pump prime this initiative. Such support would be essential in helping it become established and sustainable.

Lewisham Secondary Challenge

A major focus of the Commission's work has been on the relatively poor performance of the secondary sector. Chapter 5 sets out a number of very practical suggestions to support improvement. Chaired for the second year running by a system leader with experience of successful school-to-school support, and by September comprising a large number of new headteachers, the Secondary Heads' Group offers the potential for steering the intensive

development programme described in Chapter 5. However, the programme itself would best be managed by an external director with the expertise and time to ensure effective implementation, including ongoing support and challenge.

The suggestions in Chapter 5 emphasise the establishment of a Lewisham Secondary Challenge, based loosely on the model of the London Challenge. There is a need to lift aspiration across the secondary sector and to persuade young people, their teachers and key stakeholders not only that they can achieve more but that they can acquire the sorts of skills, knowledge and confidence in learning to make more of the opportunities open to them in London. The aim of this initiative would be, within four years, to lift Lewisham to at least average performance in London with some of its individual schools competing with the very best performers across London. It would require commitment from all secondary schools, be they maintained schools, academies, faith schools, in federations or MATs.

Lewisham's Secondary Challenge would focus specifically on improving progress, raising standards and closing gaps, and ensuring that all schools become good or better, as designated by Ofsted. It would require some resourcing and a part-time director to ensure pace and external challenge. We see the Challenge as owned by the Lewisham secondary heads, but operating best as a sub-group, and in time becoming part of the wider borough partnership.

Meeting the demand for school places

Lewisham's population has been growing faster than either nationally or the London average, with one in four people being under the age of 19. The need for more pupil places in Lewisham schools has therefore been huge with an increase of over 20 per cent in places provided in reception in the eight years between 2008/9 and 2016/17. The Commission was asked to focus on the best means of achieving additional secondary places as these children move through the system. Although we have done that, we need to report the dissatisfaction of parents in some areas of the borough with plans and provision in the primary sector. This dissatisfaction is reflected more generally in DfE statistics which show the proportion of Lewisham parents offered primary schools at any of their preferences is lower than both the national and Inner London averages⁵.

One strategy that the local authority has adopted to provide extra places – namely the expansion of individual year groups through 'bulge classes' – has resulted in unintended consequences in small primary schools. Allocating priority places to siblings means that the brothers and sisters of children in bulge year groups, who live slightly further away, have taken places in reception that would previously have gone to pupils living near the schools.

Given the White Paper has now made clear its intentions about academisation, and many schools in Lewisham are actively considering establishing a MAT, the Commission would urge the council to make greater use of academies or free schools to secure extra provision – in addition to considering the locations of schools where extra forms of entry are feasible. The example already given of an existing high performing primary school or federation establishing a 'home-

⁵ Department for Education, Statistical First Release 17/2015 Secondary and primary school applications and offers: 2015

grown MAT', would not only better meet the demand for places but also parental preferences. It would also be more cost effective for the local authority.

This issue is explored further in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4.

Expansion in the secondary sector is inevitably linked to pupil achievement, particularly at 16, and Ofsted designation. Parents want good schools where their children thrive, are safe and achieve well. The places in Lewisham's least popular schools will only be filled when parents are confident that improvement is clearly underway.

Nevertheless, the Commission is concerned that even if all the current surplus places were filled, the council's place planning strategy relies not only on neighbouring boroughs accommodating Lewisham pupils at the current rate but increasing that outflow. However, if, as we believe, performance in secondary schools improves over the next few years, fewer parents would be inclined to opt for a school preference out of the borough. Secondly, even if performance does not improve significantly, we do not see the incentive for neighbouring boroughs to create places for Lewisham pupils.

As with the primary sector, there is a need for the borough to find high quality sponsors and providers when seeking to establish one or more new schools. If the authority is proactive about this, it could select sponsors and providers whose values and beliefs accord well with those of Lewisham. We do recognise, however, the relative lack of sites for new schools in Lewisham.

In terms of special school places, the Commission recommends that the council considers these further in developing its SEND strategy for 2016-2019. This is explored more fully in Chapter 4.

The borough is projecting a minimum 7.7 per cent increase in the number of children with SEND over the next 10 years. As part of planning for this, it is forecasting the need for an additional 120 special school places by 2020. There seems to be general agreement that expansion on two of the existing special school sites is appropriate but some concern too that establishing a new special school is, on its own, not necessarily the right answer. We are concerned not only by the size of the projected rise but also by the lack of emphasis on appropriate provision within mainstream schools – particularly secondary schools – for many of these pupils. We agree with the points made to us by a number of teachers and governors that the skills and expertise needed to teach pupils with SEND yield benefits for the teaching and learning of all the children in mainstream schools.

A particular concern is the large number of children assessed as having autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), particularly as the figures are so disproportionate to either the national picture or that of Inner London. We heard anecdotes of how parents had manipulated the system to get the special school of their choice by emphasising the ASD elements of their children's needs. The authority is aware of this issue and needs to undertake an in-depth scrutiny of its assessment practice. It also needs to be rigorous in the annual review process for each child with a statement

of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan, particularly in considering integrated pathways for support.

Engaging parents and the local community

A number of parents used the opportunity afforded by the Commission to express their concerns about practice in individual schools. At the same time, we had representations from parents concerned about the council's approach to place planning in primary schools. Some third sector groups also emphasised the need for the council to engage with them better.

We recognise that numerically these voices are relatively small and that parents rarely make the effort to comment when they are content. Nevertheless, we believe that their points raised more general issues which both schools and council should consider. As the White Paper⁶ stresses, 'The role of parents is crucial; from supporting their child to holding schools to account'.

Research has consistently shown that parental involvement in children's education has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Parents told us they feel very involved in their children's primary schools but far less so at secondary level. At secondary level, schools are larger; the links between individual teachers and parents are generally less close; and, as they get older, children themselves are more reluctant for parents to be closely involved in school life. Nevertheless, the best schools find ways of involving parents and making communication an effective two-way tool.

All schools should help parents to be involved with their children's learning. They should also encourage parents to express their views on the education provided by the school. We heard too many examples where parents could not make their views heard, responsiveness was insufficient or where communication was very poor. The complaints we heard came from a range of schools, including those designated as outstanding by Ofsted. We would urge all secondary schools to involve parents in reviewing their current engagement and communication strategies. In particular, those schools with federated arrangements and executive headteachers need to clarify to parents exactly how these arrangements add value to the life of the school and their children's education. Too many parents drew unfair connections between the cost of executive arrangements and the cuts on books and equipment.

The White Paper points to a number of innovations that will be introduced over the next few years to "help parents to support their child's education, making it easier for them to understand and navigate the schools' system". This includes a new, online Parent Portal intended to clarify in some detail the key things a parent needs to know about schools, including how they can support their child's development and achievement. Sitting alongside the portal will be a new performance table website, 'where it will be easier for parents to find out how well their child's school is performing and to compare schools across a range of key measures'⁷.

The best schools already know themselves well and so these promised innovations are unlikely to provide much greater insight. They use what Ofsted gives them now in terms of the dashboard

⁶ Op.cit

⁷ Ibid

and inspection reports as well as the information provided in league tables. Many also use the views of pupils, parents and the community to inform planning and action for improvement. The Commission urges all secondary schools to review their processes for self-evaluation and development planning to improve involvement of key stakeholders. Such feedback will bring the quantitative data to life. Indeed, it will often highlight emerging problems or dissatisfaction before these have a chance to translate into poor test results or inspection findings. More positively, engaging parents and key stakeholders in this way also creates a powerful sense of common purpose and urgency in the drive for improvement.

Key messages

We have made a number of detailed recommendations as set out below which are repeated at the end of each of the chapters to which they relate most closely. However, we want to reinforce our 5 key messages.

First, we would urge Lewisham to build on its strengths in collaborative working across schools.

The borough should extend the good collaborative work we have seen working well between schools be that in time-limited projects, clusters, federations or in multi-academy trusts. We think there are dangers in isolation and that every school would benefit from being part of a collaborative group. Much of the effective work we have seen has been in the primary sector but we know also about plans for greater collaboration between secondary schools. The latter hold considerable promise.

The Heads' Leadership Forum, run expertly by primary headteachers but open to all heads, is highly valued and a much respected part of the education service in Lewisham. Primary heads in particular use it to develop their collective, professional knowledge and skills as well as to give active support to each other. Although still relatively young, it offers a potential base for building the cross borough partnership we think will be a powerful way of keeping the Lewisham family of schools together and focused keenly on the needs of the community.

The Secondary Heads Group is collegial and supportive and will be enriched from the freshness and expertise brought by many new headteachers joining it this year. The latter come with an ambition and determination to improve their schools that should bring a new energy to the Group.

We think establishing a school-led, borough wide partnership for improvement will build on existing strengths, avoid fragmentation and provide a comprehensive programme to meet needs and interests. Governors are key players in the drive for improvement and more important than ever with increasing academisation. They should work with the heads and the local authority in designing the partnership. This would be an inclusive partnership that would include individual schools and groups of schools, be they federations, MATs or teaching schools.

Second, the local authority should be more vigorous about shaping the government's academisation policy to the needs of Lewisham.

A number of heads and governors are actively planning to establish MATs. We think the council should support these 'home-grown MATs' and use them as potential academy sponsors for schools in difficulties and even as promoters of free schools, which is the only way new schools can now be opened.

Third, there needs to be an intensive boost to improve Lewisham's secondary sector.

Headteachers in these schools want to succeed and should be supported in doing so. We believe Lewisham's secondary and all-through schools have within them much of the capacity needed to improve and the heads themselves must drive this change. But they need some extra, well targeted support, most particularly from experienced system leaders to build both greater capability and skills. A customised programme of intensive support, based loosely on the successful model of the London Challenge should be introduced. This programme would be enriched by looking at practice and initiatives beyond Lewisham and engaging with external organisations to lift aspirations and expectations. A three year Secondary Lewisham Challenge programme will need external support to ensure it proceeds with speed and makes progress at pace.

Fourth, all those involved in education should nurture the collective pride in Lewisham as a place and the passionate commitment to the local community that was evident from headteachers, governors, third sector groups and the council.

We think this shared moral purpose could be channelled more profitably into an ambitious and shared vision for education locally that engages key stakeholders, lifts aspirations and is supported by an inclusive plan for success.

Finally, we believe that whatever change comes about in its legal responsibilities, the council should maintain an important role in the future development of education in Lewisham.

Education remains of fundamental importance to local people particularly those with children. It remains a powerful force for regenerating and sustaining the quality of life in Lewisham and for promoting social mobility. Local people will continue to look to local councillors to ensure education is of good quality. Lewisham council will want to support its schools, even work in active partnership with them, but it will also want to hold an increasingly autonomous system to account on behalf of the local community. There will be a number of ways in which that can be done.

Recommendations

Establishing a new approach to school organisation

- School federations in Lewisham should be supported if their governors decide that they wish to convert to academy status, with these **'home-grown' MATs** being seen as potential academy sponsors for schools experiencing difficulties and as promoters of free schools where these are required across the borough in the next few years.
- The local authority, headteachers and governors should work together to ensure that **every school in Lewisham is part of a formal and effective school collaborative group** – whether as part of a MAT or through developing and deepening the work of a local cluster, collaborative or federation.
- The development of **MATs and local clusters of schools should be seen alongside** – and not as a substitute for – a **borough-wide school-improvement partnership**. The borough-wide partnership that we propose should be tasked with identifying those heads that have the potential and interest in moving into executive leadership and providing them with the **development and support to take on this role** as more schools move to working through federations, MATs or other school groups.

Developing a school-led model of improvement

- By July, 2016, an agreement should be established **between headteachers, Lewisham Governors' Association and the local authority to set up an overarching partnership that establishes a school-led system of improvement** for Lewisham, where schools themselves increasingly take on the primary responsibility, collectively, for supporting improvement and standards.
- From September, a **Partnership Steering Group, with an independent chair but involving headteachers, governors and the local authority** should be set up to work out exactly how the partnership would work, and how it might be resourced. It should also devise appropriate arrangements for governance and accountability. This Group should reproduce a set of **proposals for consultation by October** half-term 2016.
- To ensure momentum, while the Partnership is being developed, the Leadership Forum should **liaise with the London Leadership Strategy to develop Lewisham's system leadership and school-to-school support**.

Achieving more school places

- The local authority should **review whether sufficient additional primary places are being planned for the next five years** bearing in mind the relatively low proportion of parents obtaining their first preference in 2015. This review should include consideration of whether additional places will come on stream quickly enough in those primary planning localities facing the greatest pressure and the option of seeking promoters for a primary free school to help address this challenge.
- The local authority should **set out a clear and comprehensive School Place Planning Strategy** which sets out plans for the next five years as well as criteria for expanding schools, seeking to promote new free schools and addressing the relevant recommendations in this document. This will also enable the local authority to be more open and consultative about its strategy and plans for providing additional places than it has been in the past.
- The local authority should work closely with governors, headteachers and the Regional Schools Commissioner to **ensure that those schools in the secondary sector with low numbers of first parental preferences and unfilled places urgently address the school improvement challenges** and the associated reputational issues facing these schools.
- The local authority should **consider seeking the provision of a further secondary free school, run by a proven education provider** (in addition to the Citizen Free School and the free school that is already under discussion with the EFA), with a view to **increasing options for parents** and the proportion of pupils educated within the borough.
- The local authority should **formalise both the process for cross-borough discussions on pupil place-planning and any resulting agreements**, if there is to be an increased reliance on neighbouring boroughs providing additional secondary school places to meet the growth in numbers of secondary school-age Lewisham pupils.
- The local authority should **investigate the underlying reasons for the high incidence of ASD** among its school population and **review whether the annual assessments and reviews of pupils with Statements or EHC Plans are sufficiently rigorous and precise** in identifying and specifying the needs of each pupil.
- The local authority should **satisfy itself that there are clear integrated pathways across the mainstream and special school sectors so that children are educated and supported in the setting best suited to their needs**. In particular, the authority should ensure that pressure on special school places – particularly in the secondary sector – is not increasing because of a lack of appropriate support and/or patterns of provision in mainstream settings.

- The local authority should seek to **mitigate its funding shortfall in planning for school places by maximising the use of centrally-approved free schools that share Lewisham's values.** It can do this by:
 - continuing to keep in close contact with the EFA so that central free school proposals are matched to the borough's place-planning needs;
 - exploring the White Paper proposal to provide funding, in advance of developers' contributions, for new free schools linked to housing developments within the borough;
 - encouraging some of its best schools to lead academy trusts and become proposers of free schools in the borough; and
 - seeking school providers with values that are similar to those held by the local authority and encouraging their interest in providing places within the borough.

Creating Lewisham Secondary Challenge

- Working with the Secondary Heads' Group, the local authority should **establish and resource a Lewisham Secondary Challenge** (including post 16) to provide intensive and bespoke support. This initiative should be managed by an experienced, external adviser working to the Secondary Heads' Group. It would make use of system leaders, focused school to school support, intensive programmes and forensic data analysis to improve progress, raise standards, and close gaps. The aim would be that within 4 years, all schools in Lewisham would be judged good or better, performance at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 would be at least at the London average, and the vast majority of parents would have confidence in their choice of local schools.
- Supported by the local authority, the Leadership Forum should facilitate a small scale **trial of different models of peer review** so that the Lewisham Improvement Partnership could broker such a **process across all schools and settings beginning no later than April 2017.**
- Supported by the local authority, and using an external resource, the Heads' Leadership Forum should **raise Lewisham's positive profile** and agree a process for identifying and sharing **best practice**, in both the primary and secondary sectors, including **the publication of a set of Lewisham case studies by January, 2017.**
- The Secondary Heads' Group should establish strategic groups of **senior and middle leaders to meet to develop collective solutions to particular issues of concern or requiring development**, such as Progress 8 and EBacc performance, improving 'A' level performance at the highest grades, behaviour, attendance and exclusions.

- The Secondary Heads Group should **work closely with the London Leadership Strategy** which is one of the largest and most effective providers of school-to-school support in London, **enabling access to a wide range of system leaders and teaching school alliances**. Their programmes support schools at every point of development including specific professional development opportunities and leadership development.
- The Secondary Heads' Group, working with the local authority, should also **engage with other organisations outside the borough to help raise aspirations and build greater capacity** for the development of a school-led system of improvement, for example, the Education Endowment Foundation, universities, the Innovations Unit and Office of the Mayor of London.

General

- The local authority should allocate funding to **pump prime** the establishment of a **borough-wide, school-led partnership for improvement** in Lewisham. We see this partnership operating as a family, sharing strong roots and commitment to the local community but with schools sometimes working alone, sometimes in different groups and sometimes all together, to add value to the whole Lewisham education service.
- The **local authority should stimulate an ambitious vision for education locally** and engage **constructively with a range of key stakeholders and third sector groups** who share the council's ambitions for improvement and will have much to contribute to the **development of a plan for success**.
- Many schools **use the views of pupils, parents and the community to inform planning and action for improvement**. Secondary and all-through schools should review their processes to ensure greater involvement, particularly of parents.

Chapter 2: Establishing a new approach to school organisation

Given the national and regional context, what is the best form of organisation for Lewisham's schools going forward?

The national context

Three main trends are shaping the work and organisation of the school system in England:

1. Reform of curriculum, assessment and accountability arrangements

Schools are in the midst of coming to terms with a complete overhaul of the curriculum, assessment and accountability system. The curriculum of each Key Stage (KS) has been reformed to focus more on knowledge and the mastery of key core skills. In general the bar has been raised in terms of the standards that children and the young are expected to achieve.

Assessment arrangements have been changed to reflect the curriculum reforms:

- This summer children are being assessed on the new primary curriculum for the first time at KS1 and Year 6 pupils will sit revised national curriculum tests. The tests will produce 'scaled scores' that will report pupils' progress relative to a new and higher expected standard of attainment.
- There may be further changes at both KS1 and KS2 in 2017 with the government considering the introduction of more 'rigorous' assessment for seven-year-olds and the inclusion of times-tables at KS2.
- Year 6 pupils not achieving the expected standard at KS2 will have to re-sit the tests in the first term of their Year 7 secondary schooling.
- Year 11 pupils will sit new GCSE in mathematics and English in 2017 and in other subjects from 2018 onwards. From 2017 a 1-9 grading system will replace the current A*-G model.
- Summer 2016 also sees students starting to take new AS level exams and they will sit new A levels from 2017 onwards.

Schools' anxieties about these changes were made clear to us in our discussions with headteachers, particularly primary headteachers.

Other changes to the accountability regime are also wide-ranging and demanding. The 2016 performance tables will report for each primary school the percentage of pupils reaching the 'expected standard' and a 'high standard' in the national curriculum tests for reading, writing and mathematics. Average scaled scores and average progress since KS1 will also be reported across these three subjects. In the secondary sector Progress 8, Attainment 8 and the percentage of students attaining the EBacc threshold form the new performance framework from this summer onwards, while 16-19 providers also have new performance metrics based on student progress, attainment, retention and destination.

The government has also revised the minimum floor standards that primary and secondary schools are expected to meet and introduced a new category of 'coasting schools'. Schools judged inadequate by Ofsted will be compulsorily academised and regional schools commissioners will have powers to intervene in coasting schools.

Taken together these changes increase the pressure on schools to improve teaching and learning and they raise the stakes still further in terms of pupil achievement and progress. They are having to do this while at the same time being expected to practise high standards of safeguarding, to look after the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils, to support efforts to reduce obesity, to extend the availability of childcare for working parents and to take action to prevent extremism. This is a stretching agenda for any school to manage on its own and, and at a time of declining local authority support, points to a need for schools to come together to address these challenges jointly.

2. School funding changes

Two separate but important policies will affect schools across England and will have a particular impact on schools in Lewisham.

First, the government has committed to protecting day-to-day per pupil school spending on a cash basis during this parliament. As there will be more pupils in the system the actual spend on schools will rise. However, cash protection means that there is no allowance for inflation from one year to the next. The Institute for Fiscal Studies calculates that this policy, along with projected wage rises and increases in National Insurance and pension contributions, is likely to mean that school spending per pupil will fall by around 8 per cent in real terms between 2014/15 and 2019/20⁸.

Second, the government is proposing to introduce a national funding formula for schools from 2017/18⁹. Funding would be allocated to LAs to distribute for the first two years, and then allocated directly to schools from 2019/20. At this stage the government has only published the architecture for the proposed new arrangements rather than projected detailed allocations. However, Lewisham is the ninth highest per pupil funded authority in the country and so it is reasonable to assume that most, if not all schools, in Lewisham would be losers rather than gainers from the new arrangements – although the single funding formula will be phased in over time and there will be some protection for schools that lose out.

⁸ See www.ifs.org.uk/publications/8027 as accessed on 11th March 2016. This assessment was made before the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced further increases in employer pension contributions for school staff in the Budget on March 16th 2016.

⁹ Department for Education, 2015, Schools national funding formula: Government consultation – stage one

The introduction of a single funding formula also has important implications for LAs – which are discussed below.

The combination of these funding changes again points to the need for schools to work and join together to share resources, posts, expertise, costs and procurement. The government has indicated that it will make an ‘invest-to-save’ fund available in 2016/17 to help schools plan for operating on a lower budget. The Commission recommends that schools in Lewisham should consider applying for this funding linked to the development of the partnership strategies and options described in this report.

3 Moving towards a school-led system

The government’s ambition is to move to a system where schools – rather than national programmes or agencies or local authority officers and consultants – are driving school improvement. Figure 1 below explains in more detail what a school-led system means. The government’s vision is based on every school being an academy but a school-led system has a much wider reach and ambition: it involves schools leading improvement and taking responsibility for ensuring that all schools receive the challenge and support they need.

Figure 1: What is meant by a school-led system?

- Leaders, teachers and schools are in control of their own improvement and are responsible for this.
- Leaders, teachers and schools learn from each other so that effective practice spreads more quickly.
- The best schools and leaders extend their reach across other schools so that all schools improve.
- MATs, federations, clusters and teaching school alliances act as facilitators, commissioners and brokers in terms of support and challenge to individual schools and groups of schools.
- Within a school led system of ‘supported autonomy’, institutions can collaborate and access the support that they need.

Progress towards this school-led system is being supported by three policies:

- **Teaching school alliances (TSAs). Teaching schools are** outstanding schools, designated by the National College for Teaching and Leadership, to work with other schools, universities and LAs to provide high quality training and development to new and experienced school staff. The alliances they form have been focused on six areas of activity – though, as Figure 2 explains, the government’s recent education White Paper¹⁰ consolidates the six roles into three. There are four TSAs in Lewisham – as well as a number in neighbouring authorities. This is a rich resource for the borough. The local authority has started to have a more strategic relationship with the TSAs in the borough and meets the leaders from the four TSAs on a regular basis. The potential to develop the impact of TSAs across Lewisham is discussed in Chapter 5

Figure 2: Current and future roles of teaching school alliances

Current roles	Future priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● school-led initial teacher training ● continuing professional development ● supporting other schools (including deploying national and local leaders of education) ● identifying and developing leadership potential ● recruiting, accrediting and deploying specialist leaders of education ● undertaking research and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● co-ordinating and delivering high quality school-based initial teacher training ● providing high quality school-to-school support to spread excellent practice, particularly to schools that need it most ● providing evidence-based professional development for teachers and leaders across their network

Source: www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-schools-a-guide-for-potential-applicants and Department for Education, (2016)

¹⁰ Ibid

Multi-academy trusts (MATs) – the government’s rationale for academy status is that it has:

“...freed thousands of headteachers and leaders to drive improvement in their own schools and across the system. Autonomy and accountability align in academy trusts, where leaders are free to take decisions they believe will improve standards, and are held to account for the outcomes they achieve”.¹¹

Originally, the government was happy for schools to convert to academy status on a stand-alone basis but since then it has shifted its position. Now it encourages schools – particularly primary schools – to convert as groups of schools working through MATs. There are over 800 MATs and Figure 3 below shows how at the end of 2015 a far higher proportion of academies were part of a MAT than in 2011. There are, however, differences between the primary and secondary sectors. As of March 2016, 18 per cent of primary schools were academies and around two-thirds of them were in MATs. In contrast 65 per cent of secondary schools were academies but over half were standalone.

Figure 3: Number of academies, by size of multi-academy trust, in 2015 compared with 2011

Group range	2011		2015	
	Number	%	Number	%
1	649	59%	2093	41%
2	132	12%	519	10%
3-5	128	12%	932	18%
6-10	57	5%	547	11%
11-20	31	3%	443	9%
21-30	25	2%	126	2%
31-40	18	2%	136	3%
41+	55	5%	283	6%
Total	1095		5079	

Note: The term ‘Group Range’ refers to the number of academies within a MAT

Source: Department for Education

¹¹ Para 4.3. of Educational Excellence Everywhere

The move towards MATs is set to accelerate still further as the education White Paper, *Educational Excellence Everywhere*, signals a step change in the government's approach to academisation. The government now intends that every school will become an academy and that by the end of 2020 every school will either have gained academy status or be in the process of acquiring it. The government proposes to achieve this objective in three ways:

First, it will continue to encourage schools to convert to academy status. For example, the DfE has been incentivising primary schools to move towards becoming an academy within a MAT. A one-off development grant of between £75,000 and £100,000 has been available to groups of three or more schools that want to convert to academy status and become a MAT, providing that the majority of them are primaries¹². The government has said that it will continue to provide capacity-building support and has set up a MAT Growth Fund and expects most schools to convert as part of a MAT.

Second, it will continue to use compulsion in respect of schools judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted. The Secretary of State for Education, acting through the eight regional school commissioners (RSCs), will use new powers in the Education and Adoption Act (2016) to automatically place all 'inadequate' schools in trusts run by approved academy sponsors. Some coasting schools may also be allocated to MATs as a means of supporting their improvement. The free school presumption (discussed in Chapter 4) that requires all new schools to be free schools¹³ will also fuel both academy and MAT expansion.

Third, the government intends to take new powers to direct schools to become academies in underperforming local authority areas or where the local authority no longer has capacity to maintain its schools; or where schools have not yet started the process of becoming an academy by 2020. The requirement for all schools to become academies will include church schools and they will normally be expected to become part of diocesan MATs or MATs linked to a diocese.

- **The diminution of the LA role in school improvement** – Local authorities currently have a substantial number of statutory duties in respect of the quality of schooling within their authority. For example, Section 13A of the 1996 Education Act states:

"A local authority in England must ensure that their relevant education functions ... are (so far as they are capable of being exercised) exercised by the authority with a view to a) promoting high standards, b) ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training, and c) promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person to whom this subsection applies".

Ofsted still inspects local authorities and holds them to account for their effectiveness in discharging these duties. However, the combination of the move towards a school-led system combined with budget pressures means that most if not all local authorities are constrained in the level of staffing and resource LA they can allocate to their school improvement functions. In some authorities, the capacity to know or track the performance of schools has all but

¹² There is a cut off date for applying for this particular round of grant funding of 30th April 2016.

¹³ Free schools are legally academies and have the same funding and governance arrangements.

disappeared. The schools' funding settlement for 2016/17 saw a reduction in the Education Services Grant as a prelude to phasing out the grant entirely. The grant is the principal means of funding school support and improvement functions.

The proposals contained in the government's consultation for a national funding formula for schools, published at the beginning of March 2016 and reinforced in the education White Paper, make clear the government's thinking for the future. It is proposed that

- Local authority involvement in and funding for running school improvement should cease from the end of the 2016/17 academic year and local authorities' statutory functions should be reviewed and amended accordingly
- Local authorities' statutory role in education should be confined to three areas: school place planning and ensuring fair access through admissions; ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils are met; and acting as champions for all parents and families¹⁴
- Local authorities should be allowed to retain some of their maintained schools' grant funding to cover the statutory duties that they carry out for maintained schools. However, this would have to be agreed by the maintained school members of the schools forum, with recourse to the Secretary of State of Education if they are unable to agree. These changes mean that if schools want their local authority to provide a governor training and development programme or offer a school improvement adviser to assess their schools' performance and progress, this will have to be paid for either via a pay-as-you-go traded service or through top-slicing the money from the schools' budget.

The implications of the national context

This chapter has described the scale of the curriculum, assessment and accountability challenges facing schools. With previous reforms, schools were able to look to national agencies (such as the National College for School Leadership, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) or local authority for support. Most of these national agencies have now been abolished and/or the scope of their work has been drastically reduced. The ability of local authorities to support schools is being phased out – or only sanctioned to the point where maintained school agree to fund it.

How should schools and local authorities respond? A school-led system presents many opportunities for schools to learn and benefit from working with each other. Moreover the scale and volume of change makes it risky for schools to try and navigate the whole education change agenda on their own. Funding pressures reinforce the logic of schools collaborating to maximise economies of scale.

¹⁴ There is a fuller description of three roles at Paragraph 4.77 on page 7 of Educational Excellence Everywhere

Lewisham has a strong foundation on which to build a more systematic approach to school partnership. For example, the borough has:

- seven federations encompassing 16 schools
- four collaborative partnerships, two of which are led by executive heads¹⁵
- one multi-academy trust comprising two all-through schools, a primary free school and one school in another borough
- two academies, one of which is part of a MAT that operates across the country and the other which is part of the Roman Catholic Diocese
- a network of more informal collaboratives across the borough – though some of these engender greater commitment and have a greater impact than others

It would seem sensible to build on this foundation in four ways.

First, a number of the federations have told the Commission that they see the shift to becoming a MAT as a natural and positive move. It would enable them to extend and deepen how they work together as a group of schools. However, they have hesitated to convert because they believed the local authority to be opposed to academisation and had not wanted to ‘break ranks’ with what they understood to be the prevailing view in the borough. However, given the proposals in the White Paper, the Commission considers that moving to becoming a MAT would be a logical next step for these federations to extend and deepen their partnership working.

One other advantage of encouraging the development of what might be termed by some as ‘home-grown’ MATs is that it would enable local schools (if the MATs also applied to be accredited as sponsors) to promote and run free schools to help meet the demand for additional pupil places – an issue that is discussed further in Chapter 4.

Second, much of the formal partnership activity in the borough has tended to come about on an ad hoc or opportunistic basis. For example, a school has faced a major crisis and the local authority has asked an experienced, effective headteacher to help out. Formal collaboration has been a response to a problem rather than a strategic policy or goal. The Commission recommends that the local authority, headteachers and governors should work together to ensure that every school in Lewisham is part of a formal school collaborative group. In some cases, this might mean some schools joining an existing federation as they convert to becoming a MAT. Faith schools might seek to join with other faith schools through, for example, forming a MAT linked to their diocese. Some schools might feel it right to link up with schools sharing their ethos but based in a neighbouring borough. For other schools, it might not mean joining or forming a MAT at this stage. Rather it could involve formalising and deepening the existing work of a local cluster or collaborative through sharing practice and expert practitioners, committing to peer review and organising

¹⁵ There have been a number of other collaborative partnerships led by executive heads that have now ended mostly because the circumstances that gave rise to the partnership (e.g. school improvement challenges or a failure to recruit a head) have been addressed.

professional development jointly – including classroom-based coaching and teachers working together to improve their practice through inquiry-led learning. This partnership strategy will also require discussion and consultation with parents and the trade unions.

Developing a network of school groups across the borough and bringing real depth to collaborative activity would ensure that schools were in a strong position, whether or not parliament approves the government’s proposals for every school to become an academy. The basis for coherently-formed and mostly locally-based MATs would be in place rather than there being a mad rush to join a MAT or find a partner following enactment of the legislation. This strategy would also pave the way for implementing the new statutory duty that is being placed on local authorities to “facilitate the process of all maintained schools becoming academies”¹⁶.

As noted above, federations or other school groups planning to join a MAT would be eligible to apply for funding from the government’s MAT Growth Fund.

The DfE will be providing guidance on becoming a MAT and will be publishing ‘design principles’ for MATs based on the experience of those that are most successful. In the meantime, schools and school leaders might like to have regard to the advice set out in Figure 4 below as they consider how to get together in formal collaborative groups and/or MATs. The 10 points are drawn from research reports on school improvement partnerships and federations¹⁷, a tool¹⁸ developed by Sir David Carter, the Commissioner for Schools, and the experience of the Lewisham commissioners in working with federations, school partnerships and MATs.

¹⁶ Para 4.7 c. of Educational Excellence Everywhere

¹⁷ Muijs, D, & Chapman, C, 2011, A study of the impact of school federation on student outcomes, National College for School Leadership Christopher Chapman, Daniel Muijs, James MacAllister August 2011

¹⁸ DfE, 2015, Characteristics of successful multi-academy trusts: A tool developed by the Regional Schools Commissioner for the South West for multi-academy trust, their boards and senior leaders

Figure 4: Advice on forming and developing formal school partnership groups and multi-academy trusts

- Schools should look to build in the first instance on existing partnerships such as federations, collaboratives and teaching school alliances – though in some cases schools may find that they share the values of a MAT or other school group that currently operates in a neighbouring or nearby borough.
- Schools coming together to form a MAT or formal collaborative should take time to consider and agree a shared vision and mission for what they want to achieve together.
- Schools should visit MATs and federations to understand how to develop an effective school group on sound organisational principles. They should use the DfE capacity-building and invest-to-save funding so that they can afford to bring in external expertise and fund a senior leader to work on a dedicated basis on developing their culture, organisation and systems.
- The geographical location of the schools in the proposed MAT or formal collaborative group should enable and facilitate leaders and staff to easily work with and support each other.
- Schools should discuss and agree a balance between doing things together and agreeing shared systems and procedures while still respecting and valuing each school's individual identity.
- Arrangements for governance should be defined so that there is clarity about those issues and policies that will be decided at a MAT or school group level and those that will be delegated to individual schools.
- School groups and MATs should expect to adopt an executive leadership model while also fostering a culture of distributed leadership, shared leadership roles across schools in the group and using the group to identify and nurture leadership talent.
- Schools should ensure that, while working together can bring benefits on a number of fronts (including back office support functions), the main focus of their work should be on improving teaching and learning.
- School groups and MATs should ensure that their membership incorporates sufficient expertise to address the school improvement challenges facing the schools in the group.
- School groups and MATs should build quality assurance into their joint work and regularly evaluate the impact the group or MAT is making towards improving pupil outcomes and school performance.

Third, Lewisham has been adept at building a cadre of executive heads – particularly in the primary sector – to lead federations and wider school improvement work. Research indicates that formal school groups are more likely to be effective where executive leadership is exercised¹⁹. This does not necessarily mean establishing an additional post. Having an executive head – which may sometimes start with one of the heads in a group of schools taking on wider responsibilities for two or three days of the week – can bring a number of benefits. It can help with leading school improvement in specific areas, deploying expertise across schools, facilitating joint training, development and coaching between schools, consolidating common ways of working, realising economies of scale and introducing new models for sharing leadership across schools. However, taking on an executive role does require new skills and perspective. A key role for the Lewisham partnership that we propose should be to identify those heads that have the potential and interest in moving into executive leadership and providing them with the development support to take on this role as more schools move to working through federations, MATs or other school groups.

The fourth way that schools in Lewisham could build on the foundations of their current collaborative activity is by developing and strengthening their borough-wide school improvement activity through the establishment of a more formal borough partnership. Being part of a MAT or local group of schools does not mean that schools need to lose their Lewisham identity or structures. It is clear to the commissioners that there is a strong sense of pride in and commitment to Lewisham and the achievement, progress and wellbeing of children across the borough. Many leaders have worked in the borough for a long time. There are good links and relationships between many schools and school leaders. The development of MATs and other local school groupings within the borough need not and should not be at the expense of also working through borough-wide structures, teaching school alliances and other collaborative activities. MATs should be outward looking as well as inward facing. The shared goal should be to promote the life chances of all children in Lewisham.

One of the issues raised with commissioners was the possibility of the local authority establishing its own academy trust to enable it to sponsor academies. Given the white paper's vision for local authorities, it is doubtful whether the DfE would determine, as it would have to, that Lewisham council is an 'appropriate body' to become an academy trust. However, this sector-led partnership, if it were a legal company, could, in time, set up a subsidiary company as an academy sponsor. This may be something worth investigating further in the future once the partnership has established its capacity, expertise and credentials in leading and supporting school improvement.

The next chapter will set out the options for working together through a broader borough-wide Lewisham partnership. It will describe how some other London boroughs and local authorities outside London are combining cluster work and the development of MATs with a strategic commitment to work with each other on a range of school improvement functions through a collaborative system and structure to which all schools in the authority are committed.

¹⁹ Muijs, D, & Chapman, C, 2011, Op cit

Recommendations

- School federations in Lewisham should be supported if their governors decide that they wish to convert to academy status, with these 'home-grown' MATs being seen as potential academy sponsors for schools experiencing difficulties and as promoters of free schools where these are required across the borough in the next few years.
- The local authority, headteachers and governors should work together to ensure that every school in Lewisham is part of a formal and effective school collaborative group – whether as part of a MAT or through developing and deepening the work of a local cluster, collaborative or federation.
- The development of MATs and local clusters of schools should be seen alongside – and not as a substitute for – a borough-wide school-improvement partnership. The borough-wide partnership that we propose should be tasked with identifying those heads that have the potential and interest in moving into executive leadership and providing them with the development and support to take on this role as more schools move to working through federations, MATs or other school groups.

Chapter 3: Developing a school-led model of improvement

Is there a school-led model of school improvement which would put Lewisham's work on a more sustainable footing, given the council's financial constraints?

There are a wide range of different models of school-led improvement developing around the country and later in this section we give a number of specific examples about borough wide initiatives. Chapter 2 set out the key elements of a school led-system of improvement and in this chapter, we describe what system leadership can do. We believe that, once established, it offers a sustainable model of improvement for schools that would not depend on the council for expertise or resourcing.

Given the right model and infrastructure, system leadership can:

- empower the real leaders, at all levels within the school, who can make change happen
- find time and create the space for innovation
- keep the work where it needs to be: close to the frontline
- sustain a sense of shared endeavour and a climate for improvement
- influence the system at all levels and develop future leaders.

There are many virtues in system leadership and evidence suggests that schools are more likely to improve if they work collaboratively. The principal benefits of collaboration, including carefully planned sharing of expertise and resources to develop practice in the classroom, are better teaching and learning. Disciplined and well-focussed collaboration within and across schools can also stimulate greater creativity and innovation, leading to better outcomes for students. The sustainability of a school-led system of improvement is helped by spreading leadership and teaching expertise among more schools and staff. System leadership offers both strategic and operational support to school improvement which builds competence and capacity.

We are not defining system leaders just as executive heads, national, local and specialist leaders of education, or national leaders of governance although they all play a key role, but rather leaders at all levels. They might be leaders of phase, subject and aspects of the curriculum, who are prepared to work across a local system. We see governors as having the potential to be influential system leaders.

It is probably better in some circumstances to use the term 'systemic leadership' rather than system leadership – going system wide and system deep. Systemic leaders at all levels have a strong professional motivation to collaborate to share and develop common solutions, develop teacher and leadership capability and raise standards. In providing support and challenge, they seek reciprocal benefits that lead to self-improvement through observation, reflection,

evaluation, the development of better practice together as well as the sharing of best practice. System leaders take professional responsibility for leading, co-ordinating and delivering sustainable school improvement across schools to raise standards for students. Peer review, as described in more detail in Chapter 5, is an essential part of this process.

A key shift within the English school system over the last few years has been the increase in the number of schools working together in both formal and informal arrangements on a range of school improvement issues as the role of local authorities change. All schools in Lewisham should now be involved in focused, productive networks within which leaders, teachers and students challenge, support, involve and learn from each other with measurable improvement in outcomes.

The current drive to creating a school-led self-improving system is weighted heavily on the premise that groups of schools will work with, learn from, and support one another to develop localised solutions to the problems they face. This includes much better systems of sharing professional knowledge as described in other chapters. A range of collaborative models have emerged and the role, size and shape of these school-led systems reflect local contexts. They include local strategic partnerships with teaching school alliances and MATS as well as free schools, schools owned and schools led by not for profit companies and school-led research and development hubs as centres of excellence. Some are legal entities and others are voluntary with a loose grouping of clusters and networks.

Ever since the White Paper of 2010²⁰ signalled the beginning of a school-led system of improvement, some local authorities, either by choice or necessity, scaled back their involvement in school improvement to a bare minimum. Other local authorities maintained a reduced but still effective school improvement service. However, in other areas, local authorities anticipating the future have worked with schools to maintain a framework for a strong, local school improvement partnership where individual schools and system leaders play a leading role.

There is no simple recipe for success and empirical evidence of partnership models is sparse but schools talk with enthusiasm of progress and potential. Typically in these arrangements, schools own, govern and lead the partnership with the local authority as a minority player. Schools take responsibility for peer challenge and support and commission individual support packages, often with some facilitation from the local authority working closely with teaching schools, federations and national leaders of education. In one sense, these school-led partnerships have been ‘growing the green’ – building collective leadership and teaching capacity and sharing best practice across the local area. However, the ‘heavy lifting’ in terms of a range of interventions in underperforming schools has often been left to the local authority which might, of course, broker and commission some support from other schools.

Up and down the country there is a range of developing models of school improvement partnerships with local authorities. Some are very much school-led and some are mainly driven

²⁰ DfE, 2010, The importance of teaching: the schools White Paper, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office

by the local authority. To some extent this is determined by where, historically, expertise and leadership for school improvement has been located in a particular area. In local authorities with many academies, federations, trusts and teaching schools, school-led systems of school improvement have emerged quickly but where the reverse is true, the local authority is still driving school improvement, although often commissioning and brokering work with individual and groups of schools.

Where schools have a closer history of forms of cluster working, there is more openness in moving towards a model which is predicated on executive leadership and governance functions across groups of schools. In such circumstances, the local authority role has already shifted quite dramatically – towards being a convenor or facilitator of partnerships and a champion for parents and children – rather than in any real sense a provider of school improvement services.

An interesting example is that of Wigan, which is a metropolitan borough council with some 130 schools

The Wigan model

All Wigan schools, including academies, are in one of nine education improvement consortia that are organised by phase and locality across the borough. There are five primary and four secondary consortia. Each consortium is led by an elected headteacher who has to meet particular criteria such as being an NLE or outstanding in terms of leadership and management as judged by Ofsted. Each consortium has a constitution which covers its remit, terms of reference and ways of working. Although there is some variance in organisation, all the consortia are committed to four basic principles:-

- focusing primarily on improving standards of teaching and learning and leadership and management
- supporting the self-improvement of the whole consortium so that all children achieve their potential
- working collaboratively to prevent schools falling into requiring improvement categories as judged by Ofsted or below floor standards
- working together to pool consortium resources and to share best practice

The local authority and the consortia have an agreed process for identifying schools that are vulnerable in terms of underperformance, as well as highlighting those with the best practice, based on evidence and data and of providing the best support for vulnerable schools. Further, there is a shared agreement on how leadership and teaching and learning can best be developed and improved. The local authority is also a strategic partner in the overall teaching school alliance and leaders of teaching schools are represented on the education improvement boards (EIBs) brokering school-to-school support and providing CPD and leadership development opportunities.

Too often decisions about the form, constitution and governance of a school improvement partnership become problematic and muddled because the fundamental purpose behind the partnership has not been agreed sufficiently clearly. It is crucial that this is really clear to all from the outset. In Lewisham, it would only be worth investing time, energy and resources if the goal was to be accelerated improvement and higher standards of achievement.

One of the key differences between the various approaches is whether the partnership has developed in order to promote a successful trading relationship in school support services or whether the locus for school improvement is in smaller school-based clusters and therefore the role of the overlaying partnership is more around strategic co-ordination rather than delivery.

Herts for Learning is probably one of the most developed partnerships. It is predicated upon a strong and well-established trading relationship between the local authority and schools. Its annual turnover is now over £23 million and after its first year of trading it generated a profit of £600,000 some of which is distributed to its shareholders (Hertfordshire schools) by way of funded additional services or benefits. At the other end of the spectrum, the Wigan partnership encompasses no real trading activity but seeks to generate improvement through cluster working at school level with some strategic oversight. The Lincolnshire model is another which focuses on school-led peer review and network development rather than an extensive traded offer in training, school improvement or consultancy.

Partnerships as a legal entity

Some of the partnerships are seeking to form a hybrid between these two extremes. For example, the Camden Schools Led Partnership (CSLP) combines a traded model with an increasingly integrated teaching school offer and school-led research and development hubs. Harrow and Brent both encompass the notion of schools-based centres of excellence within what is essentially a traded-service model.

There is quite a clear distinction in partnership arrangements between those which have opted to establish a legal vehicle in which the partnership is located (Herts for Learning, Newham, Brent, Harrow, Camden, North Tyneside, Croydon) and those which have opted for a collaborative arrangement which is not legally binding (Lincolnshire, Wigan, Oldham, Birmingham).

Some of the advantages that come with establishing the partnership as a separate legal entity are that it ensures longevity for the governance arrangements, even when individuals move on, and it creates a form of organisation which is separate from both the authority and individual schools to trade, employ staff, enter into contracts and so on. Such a body might well be in a stronger position to attract funding and grants. However, it will only be worth doing this if it serves the stated purposes of the partnership and may be most relevant to those which envisage an ongoing trading relationship.

One of the areas in which there is less variety is the type of legal vehicle used to support the partnership arrangement. Although different partnerships have different names (for example, trust or collaborative), the large majority which have some legal basis, rather than simply being an informal arrangement, are either companies limited by guarantee or companies limited by shares. This status imposes certain requirements in terms of the involvement of the local authority. Some partnerships established as companies have also taken a decision to register as either a charity or a co-operative.

The Croydon model

An example of a company model is that established by the London Borough of Croydon which has 115 schools. Working with the headteacher associations, the council has established a partnership company (Octavo) with schools which became operational in April 2015. The Croydon Headteacher Association has a 40 per cent stake in the Octavo partnership with remaining shares owned by Croydon Council and the partnership's own employees. Representatives of the headteacher association have been appointed to the board of directors and have a key role in shaping the strategic direction of the company and the services offered.

Octavo has two main functions. It delivers 'statutory services' on behalf of Croydon Council such as early years education, assessment and moderation, monitoring school performance and supporting schools at risk, as well as NQT training and operating a recruitment pool. Support for vulnerable pupils in local authorities' maintained schools is funded through the Direct Schools Grant (DSG). Octavo also sells school improvement services to schools (including academies and MATs) at reduced rates to members. These include leadership development, performance management, teaching and learning, primary assessment, RAISEonline support, subject support networks, pupil premium reviews, and behaviour and safeguarding support. Croydon also has three teaching school alliances and half termly meetings are held with Octavo to understand each other's plans and offers and to avoid duplication. A wide range of other services are also traded such as human resources, finance services, governor services, information systems, education welfare and education psychology.

An interesting example of a school-led system of school improvement is that of the City of Birmingham which was established as a co-operative model. Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP) was launched in 2014 as a membership and subscription organisation for Birmingham schools and by summer 2015, the local authority had contracted responsibility and accountability for all school improvement services to the partnership, with appropriate delegated funding.

The Birmingham model

The Birmingham Education Partnership is governed by a BEP Board with an independent chair, managing director, director of continuous school improvement, five headteachers and a post connected to finance and higher education. The partnership is a city-wide strategic organisation with three main pillars of activity:

- universal school Improvement
- system leadership and innovation
- partnership and engagement

The BEP model puts headteachers firmly in the driving seat with the city being divided into 10 districts led by part-time, seconded serving headteachers as the more local face of education backed up by district co-ordinators. They offer ongoing support to schools as well as ensuring that every school is part of an effective cluster. They also gather information to be fed back to the school commissioning group. This group consists of successful, recently serving headteachers with an independent chair and the director of continuous school improvement (a full-time post). Their role is to commission and broker support for schools requiring improvement and to intervene where more challenge is required, whilst also maintaining good links with both Ofsted and the regional schools commissioner. Working alongside the school improvement commissioning group is the system leadership and innovation group which is charged with building the capacity for system change and system leadership, particularly through teaching schools and their alliances. It is chaired by a serving headteacher and has headteacher representatives from all the districts, plus representatives from nursery and special schools and a national leader of governance.

A particular aspect of this group's work is to ensure that peer review is embedded across the system, working in partnership with the Education Development Trust. The local authority retains responsibilities for safeguarding, vulnerable pupils, and what are deemed to be 'cross-cutting issues' acting as a champion for parents, families and communities as well as ensuring that every child has a school place. It has also retained responsibilities for data services, including the performance of schools, in-depth analysis of the performance of groups of children across the city, and benchmarking comparative data. The BEP is able to commission performance data and evidence on trends and anomalies, as required.

There is thus an emerging, city-wide schools-led improvement system close to the front line and fully accountable for the progress of Birmingham's schools.

The publication of the White Paper²¹ raised issues about the role of local authorities in the future, not least the responsibilities of the director of children's services and the lead member for children. There is certainly an expectation in terms of school improvement that local authorities will use their democratic authority to encourage MATs and clusters of schools to take the lead and facilitate an effective school-led system of improvement. In terms of doing this, the example of Essex is instructive.

²¹ Ibid

The Essex model

In 2015, through a small pump-priming grant, the local authority incentivised the whole system in Essex to move into formal self-improving school-led clusters. This has required a cultural shift across the system. Some schools had, through opportunity or need, already moved into MATs or teaching school alliances. Others were exploring other partnerships.

To support this work, Essex has created a joint partnership agreement between the County Council, Essex Primary Heads Association, Association of Secondary Heads in Essex, Essex Special Schools Education Trust and Essex School Governors Association. The joint partners have developed a strategy for a self-managing, self-improving school system with co-operation and trust at its heart and key components such as shared values and a common moral purpose, mutual accountability, deep and tight partnerships with high ambition, strong governance, developing and sharing outstanding practice and a willingness of school leaders to operate as system leaders.

In parallel to local partnerships, models of 'peer review' have been developed across the county. Leaders at all levels are being trained to review and assess each other within triads or larger partnerships. It is recognised by all partners that peer review will be crucial to the success of a self-improving school system providing the key to quality assurance. Further to this, the partnership is developing a new vehicle for schools to undertake self-evaluation that embraces the culture of 360 degree feedback. School Effectiveness Plus is an online tool which schools can either use individually or in trusts and collaborations.

Essex believes that schools can thrive outside the 'formal' local authority structure and that groups of schools can develop and commission collectively the support that is required. They also provide the necessary accountability. Of course, the role of the local authority remains strong as the local champion of children and families. As part of this duty, councillors will always be interested in the quality of schools and if necessary will report concerns to the regional commissioner.

We see the green shoots in Lewisham of many of the conditions necessary for effective collaboration in a borough wide partnership at headteacher, governor and local authority levels. Establishing a borough wide partnership would build on:

- an existing culture of schools working together at all levels with positive relationships and trust
- well established structures that can be further developed
- sufficient outward looking and forward thinking leadership able to organise for systemic change at a local level

- a clearly articulated and shared moral purpose and focus on student outcomes and the establishment of common improvement agendas, priorities and plans related to all stakeholders
- headteachers, senior leaders and governors who are committed and skilled enough to drive collaboration forward, take collective responsibilities and deal with uncertainties
- external support from credible consultants (from the local authority or elsewhere) who have the confidence to learn alongside school partners and develop new roles and relationships where necessary
- creativity and flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and new developments.

Lewisham local authority should consider bringing together the main groups representing headteachers and governors to agree formally to establish an overarching partnership for a school-led system of improvement. This group might want to look in more detail at particular elements of systems introduced in other local authorities, including those given here, to develop this partnership. For example, the partnership would need to decide whether it wanted to establish a company. This would be owned by the schools themselves and all surplus funds would be used for investment in further development. It would provide or broker a range of services to support the improvement of schools in Lewisham. Alternatively, it might wish to become a trust or co-operative, formalising its partnership arrangements and agreeing a structure for its governance with all schools becoming members. Whatever the model, it would need to establish a strategic board and agree representation on this body.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, in our discussions with headteachers, parents and governors, we have found pride and a sense of belonging to Lewisham as a place as well as a strong and shared moral purpose to do the best for all Lewisham's children and young people. This included a working commitment to the principles of public service, collaboration and integrity. An overarching schools' partnership, rooted in these principles, could lessen the potential for local fragmentation and the risk of vulnerable children and young people not being well served in a diverse and more independent system. We recommend that headteachers, governors and the local authority should establish a steering group to do the detailed planning to set up such a partnership.

The partnership would also liaise with the local authority, both strategically and operationally, on those issues for which it remains responsible:

- admissions
- special educational needs
- champion for children.

Recommendations

- By July, 2016, an agreement should be established **between headteachers, Lewisham Governors' Association and the local authority to set up an overarching partnership that establishes a school-led system of improvement** for Lewisham, where schools themselves increasingly take on the primary responsibility, collectively, for supporting improvement and standards.
- From September, a **Partnership Steering Group, with an independent chair but involving headteachers, governors and the local authority** should be set up to work out exactly how the partnership would work, and how it might be resourced. It should also devise appropriate arrangements for governance and accountability. This Group should reproduce a set of **proposals for consultation by October** half-term 2016.
- To ensure momentum, while the Partnership is being developed, the Leadership Forum should **liaise with the London Leadership Strategy to develop Lewisham's system leadership and school-to-school support.**

Chapter 4: Achieving more school places

Lewisham needs additional secondary and SEND places. What are the best means to achieve this, alongside ensuring all existing schools are schools of choice?

Pupil place expansion to date

Lewisham's population has been growing at a faster rate than either the national or London average – in 2014 there was a two per cent increase compared with 1.5 per cent for London and 0.8 per cent nationally. More families with school age children move out of the borough than move in but since 2008 the overall growth in the school-age population has been such that the pressure to find additional school places has been acute.

In 2008/09 the number of places in the reception year (Year R) of Lewisham primary schools was 3,203. In September it is projected to be 3,893 – an increase of 21.5 per cent. The borough has achieved this through a combination of:

- lowering the age of entry at two existing secondary schools to enable them to add a primary phase
- temporary enlargements (i.e. bulge classes for specific year groups)
- permanent new provision through the enlargement of existing schools

Appendix 4 summarises the distribution of the extra provision of places since 2008/09 across the six primary place-planning localities in Lewisham.

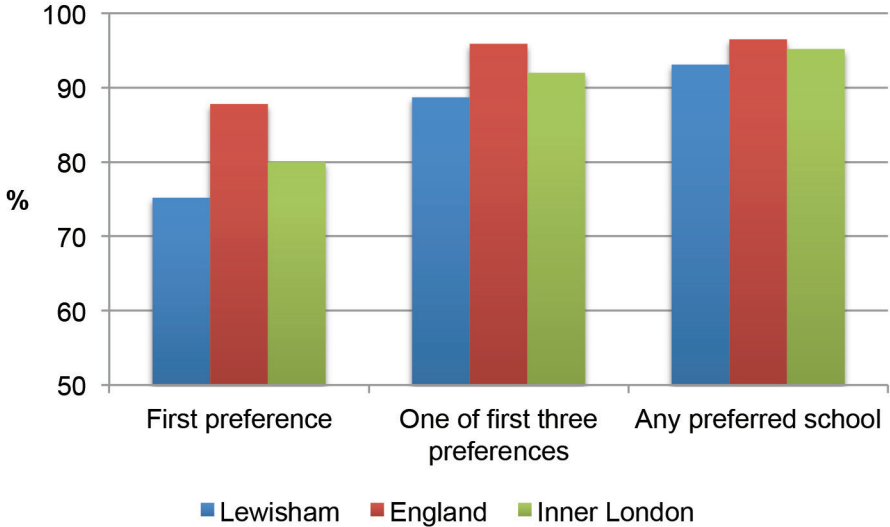
The main surge in pupil numbers has yet to reach the secondary phase but four extra forms of entry have been provided at Prendergast Vale and Prendergast (Hillyfields) is taking a bulge class in September 2016.

The expansion programme seems to have been well managed with a good level of consultation between the local authority, headteachers and governors. In our conversations with headteachers we found that they were generally supportive of the approach and style that the borough has adopted. A key element in this success has been that in most cases the provision of extra classroom capacity for the increased number of pupils has been accompanied by improvements in a school's buildings and facilities. Commissioners have been impressed with the quality of the buildings in the schools that we have visited.

However, despite this broadly positive picture there remains pressure on primary places in general and in certain parts of the borough in particular. The Commission has received well-argued representations from parents living in the Brockley, Lewisham and Telegraph Hill area regarding their inability to obtain any of their parental preferences for a place. For example, one parent reported that he had been unable to obtain a place for his child at any of the six schools

nearest his home. Statistics published by the Department for Education (DfE) confirm the extent of this problem. Figure 1 shows that the proportion of parents of primary age children obtaining their first preference school is significantly lower than both the Inner London and national averages. Only two other local authorities have a lower proportion of parents obtaining their first preference primary school.

Figure 1: Proportion of parents in 2015 offered a primary school place at their first preference, one of their first three preferences and any of their preferred schools



Source: Department for Education, Statistical First Release 17/2015 Secondary and primary school applications and offers: 2015

Pupil place projections until 2021/22

Forecasting the demand for places is not straightforward – especially in a London context where there is a substantial cross-borough flow of pupils. Appendix 5 provides details of the projections made by the borough for increases in the number of primary and secondary pupils.

Between 2016/17 and 2019/20 the numbers in Year R are projected to rise by another 140 pupils from 3,893 to 4,033. The demand for primary places is concentrated in four of the six place-planning localities: Forest Hill and Sydenham; Lee Green; Brockley, Lewisham and Telegraph Hill; and Catford, Bellingham and Grove Park.

In the secondary phase, Year 7 pupil numbers are projected to rise over the same period by nearly 460 – from 2,672 to 3,130. That is equivalent to 15 forms of entry.

In terms of the basis for its projections, the borough draws on statistics for live births from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), census and mid-year estimate data from ONS and the Greater London Authority, and actual pupil numbers. There is a perception among some schools and parents that the local authority has been slow to pick up on the consequences of new housing in the borough. However, the borough's pupil places forecasting methodology does factor in housing developments with planning approval, boundary changes, expected migration and error margins. The projections also track those schools converting or moving to academy status – this change can be significant as the local authority is not in a position to direct an academy to increase its intake. Funding additional places in academies also involves the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

The local authority currently maintains 1,582²² statements of special educational needs, education, health and care (EHC) plans and learning difficulty assessments (LDAs). There are currently 534 places in five special schools²³ but around a quarter of the children with statements/EHC plans are placed in or choose placements out of the borough or in independent provision. The total spend on SEND provision (covering mainstream, special school and out of borough placements) is £35 million²⁴. The local authority is forecasting an increase in the demand for special school places of 120.

The Commission has found no cause to question the basis for the projections, but considers that there are issues relating to the planning and provision of additional places in primary, secondary and special schools that require detailed consideration.

Meeting the projected demand for primary school pupil places

The borough's strategy, as reported to the Children and Young People Strategic Board on 2 February 2016 and the Regeneration Board on 19 February 2016, is to continue using a combination of bulge classes, expanded provision and new schools. It will not be possible to recycle all the existing bulge classes when the bulge moves to Year 7 because, for example, they are in the wrong area. Moreover, bulge classes store up problems in terms of having to earmark a disproportionately large number of places in future years for siblings of children from both the permanent provision as well as the bulge provision within a school. The borough is therefore planning 9.5 extra forms of primary school entry in the four priority place-planning localities listed above by 2021.

The borough has conducted an exhaustive evaluation of potential sites and has narrowed down its plans to seven primary schools potentially having the extra forms of entry. Preliminary discussions have been held with the headteachers and governing bodies concerned. In some cases headteachers and governors are supportive but in at least one case governors and parents are resistant to expansion.

²² This total includes post-16 students and was the total reported to the Children and Young People Committee on 12th January 2016

²³ Source: DfE SFS 16/2015, Schools, pupils and their characteristics, January 2015, LA Tables

²⁴ Report to the Regeneration Board on 19th February 2016

Of necessity, these plans have to be flexible. There is the possibility, for example, that if a site is found for the Citizen Free School (whose establishment has been approved in principle by the DfE), this could provide three additional forms of entry at Year R.

The local authority is also mindful of plans for two substantial housing projects in the borough and is in discussion with the developers about including appropriate primary school provision in their plans. Although any provision created on these sites would for the most part only meet the increased demand arising from the developments, there is still a potential for them to contribute to the authority's broader strategy. The recent education White Paper²⁵ contains this sentence:

"DfE will also consider providing funding for schools that are part of housing developments to be built in advance of contributions from developers being paid, to bridge the gap between places being required and funding being available."

It may assist with current place pressures if it is possible for these new schools (which would have to be free schools) to be, as it were, front-loaded and built in the initial rather than the later phases of development – particularly where they are in a locality in which there is a pressing need for primary places.

In summary, therefore, the Commission has three concerns regarding the authority's overall strategy on primary places:

- a) Are sufficient additional places being planned bearing in mind the relatively low proportion of parents obtaining their first preference? Should the local authority also be seeking promoters for a primary free school in at least one of the primary planning localities facing the greatest pressure on places? Should the authority be seeking to use DfE funding to bring forward the building of free schools on sites of major housing development?
- b) Are the additional places being made available quickly enough? The Brockley, Lewisham and Telegraph Hill place-planning locality referred to earlier is not, for example, due to receive additional places until September 2018.
- c) Is the authority being open enough about its future plans for primary place provision? While the borough does discuss plans for expanding individual schools with heads, governors and parents, is there a case for a more strategic consultation on the local authority's overall projections and plans for primary school places over the next five to 10 years? This would enable parents who want extra places more quickly, as well as those who object to the expansion of particular schools, to communicate their views and for the authority to listen to and assess these competing concerns.

²⁵ Ibid

Meeting the projected demand for secondary school pupil places

At one level, planning for an increase in pupil provision in the secondary sector is straightforward as the numbers coming through the school system from the primary phase are very evident. However, cross-borough flows at the age of transfer complicate the picture considerably. Lewisham is a major net exporter of pupils at Year 7. Over a quarter of pupils go out of the borough for their secondary education, as Figure 2 below illustrates. The corresponding figure for the primary sector is 10 per cent. There are only three other London boroughs – Croydon, Greenwich and Ealing – that have a net export of more pupils than Lewisham.

Figure 2: Import and export of pupils from London at Year 7 in 2015

Total imports from all LAs to Lewisham	Total pupil imports from all LAs as % of all pupils going to schools in Lewisham	Total exports to all LAs from Lewisham	Total pupil exports from Lewisham to all LAs as % of all pupils living in Lewisham	Net Export
1,890	14.60%	3,923	26.20%	2,033

Source: London Councils

Figure 3 shows that Lewisham is a net exporter of pupils to all five of its neighbours.

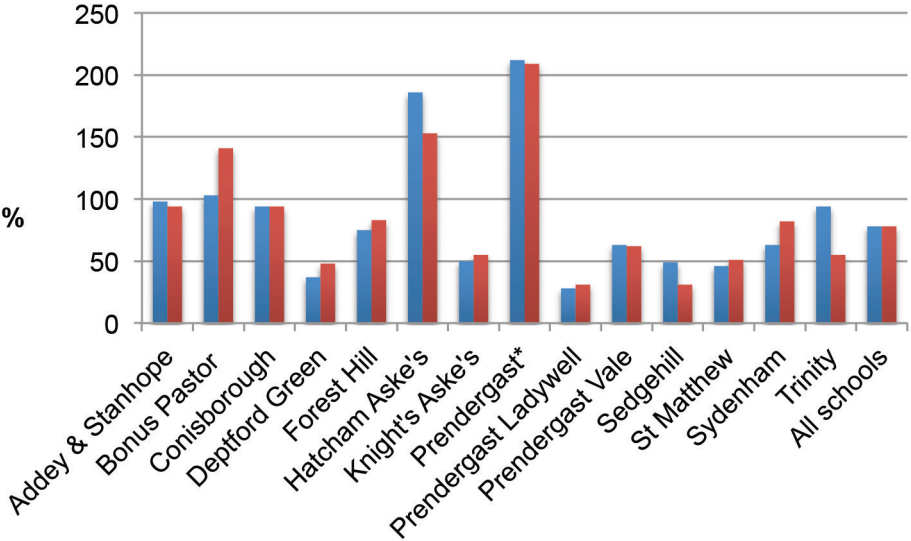
Figure 3: Import and export of pupils to Lewisham from neighbouring London boroughs

	Exports to Lewisham	Imports from Lewisham	Net import from Lewisham
Southwark	799	986	187
Greenwich	470	781	311
Bromley	359	1125	766
Lambeth	78	130	52
Croydon	70	278	208
Total			1524

Source: London Councils

In the primary sector, the level of pupil export seems to be driven by a general insufficiency of places, whereas in the secondary sector there are enough places but the performance of secondary schools would appear to be a much more dominant factor in parents opting for out of borough placements. Put simply, quantity is the issue in the primary sector and quality in the secondary sector. Figure 4 shows for each secondary school in the borough the number of first parental preferences in 2015 and 2016 as a percentage of the school's planned admission number (PAN). Only three schools are oversubscribed on first parental preference with just two others close to 100 per cent.

Figure 4: Parental first preferences in 2015 and 2016 as a percentage of each secondary school’s Planned Admission Number (PAN)



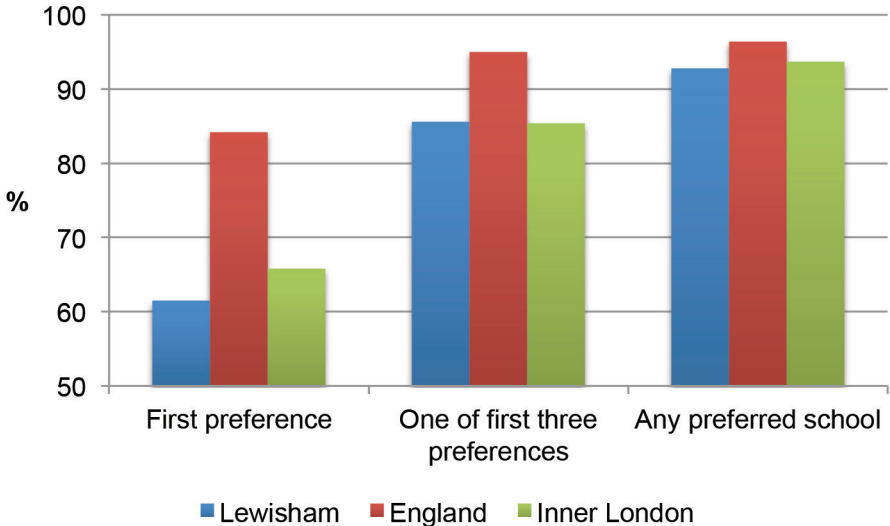
Note: In 2016 Prendergast will admit a bulge class raising its intake to 150 but the calculation in the table above is based on parental first preferences as a proportion of its permanent PAN.

Source: London borough of Lewisham

Most secondary schools were able to fill their PAN in September 2015 when other preferences and allocations were taken into account but three schools had a total of 195 surplus places between them: Sedgehill, Prendergast Ladywell and Deptford Green. Data for provisional secondary school allocations in September 2016 indicate that there may be a reduction in the number of surplus places at these three schools but this will only be achieved if a significant number of parents (31 at Deptford Green, 77 at Prendergast Ladywell and 131 at Sedgehill) accept an allocation to a school that was not one of their six preferences.

As with the primary sector, the government reports the percentage of parents that were offered a place at their first preference secondary school and at one of their top three preferences. Figure 5 shows that in 2015, the respective figures for secondary school first preferences in Lewisham lagged behind the national averages and, more significantly, the Inner London averages.

Figure 5: Proportion of parents in 2015 offered a secondary school place at their first preference, one of their first three preferences and any of their preferred schools



Source: Department for Education, Statistical First Release 17/2015 Secondary and primary school applications and offers: 2015

The combination of the level of pupil export and parental reservations about applying for Lewisham schools have a number of implications for meeting the demand for secondary school places in the borough.

First, it reinforces the need to implement the recommendations on school improvement contained in this report. These should, if enacted, benefit the existing cohort of students. Securing improved performance is vital because it provides the key to enhancing both the individual and the collective reputation of the borough’s secondary schools. This in turn would help to reduce or even eliminate the surplus places in the three schools identified above that have a level of admissions below their PAN. Filling these surplus places from parental preferences would, on the 2015 figures, be the equivalent of creating over six forms of entry. A further two forms of entry are planned for Addey and Stanhope in 2018/19 and they will need to ensure that their performance is such that they can attract applications to fill those places.

Second, it points to the need to seek proven high quality sponsors and providers when seeking to establish a new school or encourage a free school to come into the borough. The borough is in discussion with the EFA over a possible site for a school that would provide an additional six forms of entry in 2019/20. The borough should be seeking to ensure that the selected school provider has a strong track record of delivering high quality education that will make it attractive for parents to want to send their child to the school. A further three forms of entry will also come on stream in 2017/18 if the EFA finds a site for the Citizen Free School.

Third, the level of pupil export at Year 7 poses the issue of whether the 11 extra forms of entry proposed (even presuming the Citizen Free School comes on stream) are going to be sufficient to meet the needs of the borough through to 2020 – given the 460 place (15+ forms of entry) shortfall identified. The local authority’s strategy assumes that the borough’s surplus places are filled and that post 2020 the surrounding boroughs will be able not only to accommodate Lewisham pupils at the current rate but increase their level of imports from the borough. Officers in the school planning team have been liaising with their colleagues in the surrounding boroughs and consider that this is not an unrealistic assumption. However, there must be a degree of risk attached to this assumption. Providing extra places is expensive for local authorities (see below) and it is hard to see what the incentive is for any other authority to build places for Lewisham pupils.

A more prudent course might be to extend the conversations with the EFA to include discussion about establishing a further free school run by a proven provider. This would increase options for parents and also potentially enable the borough to increase the proportion of pupils educated within the borough. However, the difficulty associated with this proposal is identifying suitable land and/or buildings for another secondary school. This challenge is not peculiar to Lewisham and the EFA is becoming increasingly adept at identifying sites and seeing the potential of less obvious locations. The location issue should not therefore of itself be used as a reason for not pursuing these discussions.

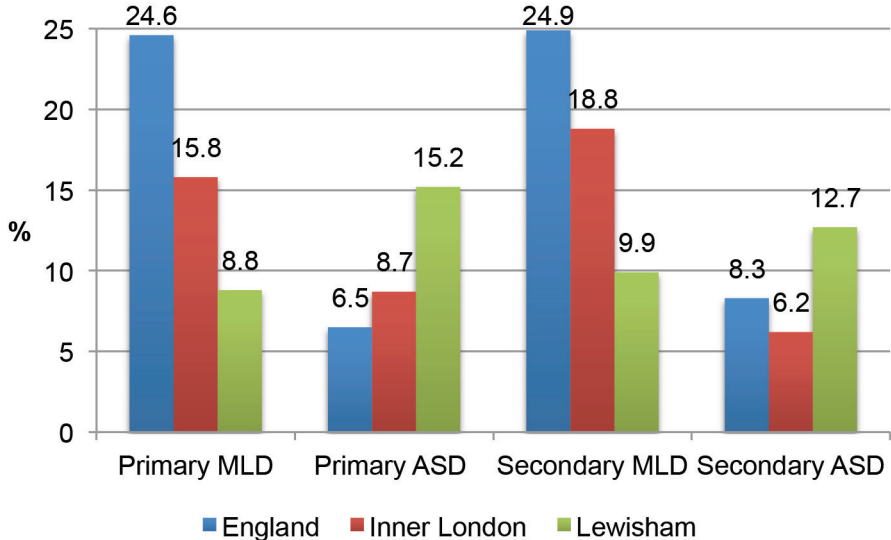
In addition, if there is to be an increased reliance on secondary school provision in neighbouring boroughs, the Commission recommends formalising both the process for cross-borough discussions and also any arrangements agreed as a result of the discussions.

Meeting the projected demand for special educational needs school pupil places

The borough is projecting a minimum 7.7 per cent increase in children with special educational needs (SEN) over the next 10 years. In particular it is expected that there will be a rise in the numbers of children diagnosed with severe learning disability and high-function autism spectrum disorder (ASD) – especially among boys. The combination of these factors means that the borough is forecasting a requirement for an additional 120 special school places by 2020. The plans for meeting this demand include expanding provision on two of the existing special school sites and providing new provision on a fresh site that has potentially been identified.

There are, however, issues concerning the pattern of existing SEND assessment and provision in Lewisham that need to be considered alongside expansion plans. Lewisham’s profile of SEND pupils is similar to the national profile except in three categories. Lewisham has a higher proportion of pupils assessed as having speech, language and communications needs but the figure for the borough is almost exactly in line with the Inner London average. However, in the two other categories the Lewisham assessment of need is significantly out of step with both the national and Inner London averages. As Figure 6 shows, a much smaller proportion of pupils in both the primary and secondary sectors are assessed as having moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and a much higher proportion as having ASD.

Figure 6: Proportion of special educational needs pupils in primary and secondary schools assessed as having Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)



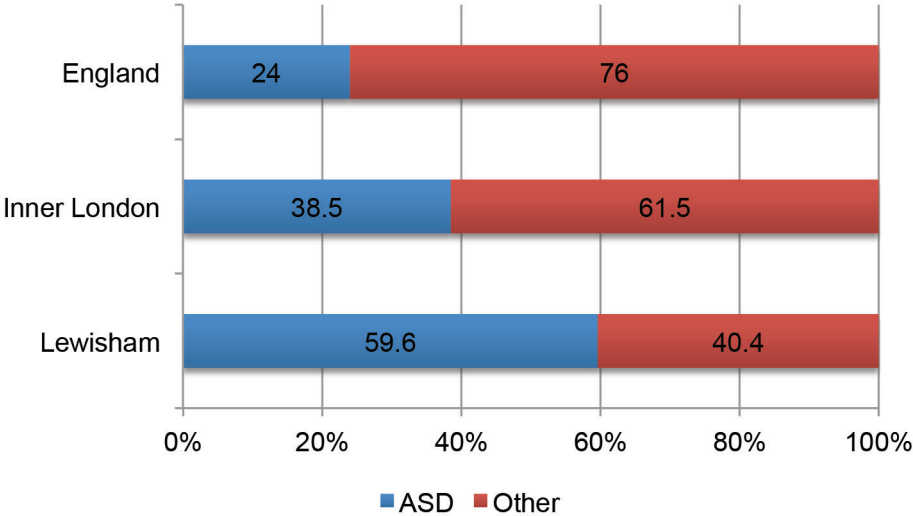
Source: Department for Education, Statistical First Release 25/2015: Special educational needs in England, January 2015, LA Tables

This relatively high level of assessment of ASD feeds through into the profile of pupils in the authority’s special schools. Figure 7 demonstrates that a far higher proportion of these places are filled by pupils with ASD compared with Inner London and the rest of the country²⁶.

It is not clear what lies behind these disparities – whether it reflects the particular circumstances and characteristics of young people in Lewisham, differences in assessment practice or a combination of the two. The Commission understands that the local authority is aware of this situation but would recommend that the council investigates the underlying reasons for the high incidence of ASD among its school population. Another area that warrants investigation is whether the annual assessments and reviews of pupils with statements or EHC plans are sufficiently rigorous and precise in identifying and specifying the needs of each pupil. For example, discussions with special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) indicated that their close observations over several years of some children identified as ASD, might lead to them being re-assessed as having attachment disorders.

²⁶ The 60 per cent is also a proportion of a relatively high baseline figure. Lewisham has more special school places than the Inner London average: 534 compared with 402 (excluding the City of London) – see DfE SFR 16/2015, Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2015, Local Authority and Regional Tables.

Figure 7: Proportion of pupils in special schools assessed as having Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)



Source: Department for Education, *Statistical First Release 25/2015: Special educational needs in England, January 2015, LA Tables*

In terms of how this issue relates to planning for additional places, the key issue is whether at both primary and secondary level there are integrated pathways supported by consistent criteria that determine whether pupils with a statement or EHC plan are educated in mainstream, in specialist resource provision, or a special school. Given the overall rise in the pupil population, an increase in the number of special school places may well be necessary. However, without the appropriate pathways and support also being in place, all that will happen, as the chair of the governing body of one of the special schools told the Commission, is that:

“Build a new school and the children will arrive to fill it up.”

The Commission recommends, therefore, that the local authority satisfies itself that there are clear integrated pathways across the mainstream and special school sectors so that children are educated and supported in the setting best suited to their needs. In particular, the authority needs to ensure that pressure on special school places is not increasing because of a lack of appropriate support or patterns of provision in mainstream settings. The authority has already started reviewing the pathways for providing support for ASD pupils.

On the face of it the system would seem to be working better in the primary than the secondary sector. A significantly greater number of ASD pupils are being educated in mainstream provision

in Lewisham’s primary schools than in its secondary schools – 488 compared with 276²⁷. The same applies for all pupils with a statement or EHC plan. As Figure 8 illustrates, proportionately more primary than secondary pupils with a statement or EHC plan are being educated in mainstream provision. Secondary pupils aged 11-16 with a statement or EHC plan fill 57 per cent of the places in special schools and account for three-quarters of the out-of-borough placements.

Figure 8: Education settings for Lewisham pupils aged up to 16 with a Statement or EHC Plan

	Mainstream (including Resource Bases and units attached to academies)	Special Schools	Out of borough placements (including independent provision)	Total
Primary	377	189	52	618
Secondary	294	252	153	699
Total	671	441	205	1,317

Source: London borough of Lewisham, as provided at March 2016

School quality may again provide part of the explanation. Mainstream schools that are performing well with strong leadership, good behaviour systems and high quality teaching and learning are more likely to be able to manage and provide a good offer for pupils with a range of special needs. The relative strength of the primary schools in Lewisham is therefore likely to be contributing to the overall capacity of the sector to manage ASD. Moreover, Commissioners observed several examples of primary schools where good teaching and learning for children with SEND was having a positive impact on the teaching in the rest of the school. The fact that there is also a network of four specialist resource bases for ASD pupils across the borough also strengthens the capacity of the primary sector. Although the work of these resource bases is under review, at their best they provide additional excellent expertise to work with pupils potentially capable of managing in mainstream but needing extra support to prepare them for teaching and learning in mainstream classrooms.

In the secondary sector, there are proportionately greater problems with both performance and behaviour. This provides a weaker teaching and learning and pastoral platform for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs in general and ASD pupils in particular. In addition, the development and impact of a 35-place resource base at Conisborough College has been affected by a serious lack of clarity about the role and remit of the unit. The pathways for ASD pupils in secondary schools in Lewisham could, therefore, be strengthened. Significantly the borough has begun placing some ASD pupils with a small independent mainstream provider just outside the borough – not only does this indicate the lack of capacity in Lewisham but is indicative of the type of provision that is needed.

²⁷ The figures are taken from DfE SFS 25/2015, Special educational needs in England, January 2015, LA Tables.

Creating extra capacity for special needs pupils in secondary schools through a combination of better teaching and learning, improved pastoral systems, good leadership, specialist support and access to effective specialist resource provision in schools could bring a double benefit. It could relieve pressure on special schools and out of borough placements and result in more of Lewisham's high special needs budget being retained and used within the borough.

None of the above necessarily negates the case for the 120 additional special school places but it would ensure that they were being planned in the context of a more comprehensive and holistic strategy.

Funding the growth of pupil places

The local authority's plans for expanding the number of pupil places over the next five years leave it with a projected shortfall of at least £36 million – though that sum is based on an estimate of the basic need funding the borough might receive from the government and so the actual figure might be higher or lower. The authority is planning to reduce that gap by reviewing the specifications for the various building works, securing efficiencies through improved procurement and project management and maximising contributions from the community infrastructure levy. However, that is likely to still leave a funding shortfall.

The borough might be able to reduce the gap by the policy stance it adopts on free schools. As noted above the borough is planning a number of new schools: two primary schools linked to housing developments, a special school and at least one new secondary school. All these schools will by law have to be free schools. However, there are two distinct routes for establishing free school provision.

The central free school route has been set up to deliver the government's commitment to open 500 free schools during this parliament. Proposers can apply to the DfE to open a school in a particular area and, if approved and subject to finding an appropriate site, the EFA will pay for the capital costs. Free school proposers may enlist the support of a local authority for their bid and/or local authorities may encourage and support a promoter to make a bid. To date most free schools have been set up through the central free school route – and increasingly applications are being made that have the support of the relevant local authority.

The so-called free school presumption route is used where there is no appropriate free school proposal to meet the demand for local places and the local authority needs to establish a new school. In these circumstances the local authority is required to run a competition and invite proposals for opening a free school that meets the authority's specification. However, under the presumption route the local authority is responsible for providing the site for the new school and meeting the associated capital and pre-/post-opening costs. Local authorities are also required to meet the revenue costs of the new provision. They must make provision in their growth funds to support increases in pupil numbers relating to basic need. School funding arrangements allow local authorities to retain funding centrally to cover these costs.

There is therefore an incentive on authorities to encourage free schools via the central route and thus minimise their own capital commitments. Despite this incentive some local authorities have been reluctant to adopt this approach. They have had concerns about the nature of the education offer being made by some providers and the new provision has not always supported a place-planning strategy. However, the borough could address these concerns by:

- continuing to keep in close contact with the EFA so that central free school proposals are matched to the borough's place-planning needs
- exploring the DfE proposal to provide funding, in advance of developers' contributions, for new free schools linked to housing developments within the borough
- encouraging some of its best schools to lead academy trusts and become proposers of free schools in the borough (schools have to have academy status and be approved as a sponsor in order to be able to propose a free school)
- seeking out school providers with values that are similar to those held by the local authority and encouraging their interest in providing places within the borough

This strategy may not entirely resolve the funding shortfall and the government may change the funding goalposts but the Commission recommends pursuing and testing the feasibility of each of them.

Recommendations

- The local authority should **review whether sufficient additional primary places are being planned for the next five years** bearing in mind the relatively low proportion of parents obtaining their first preference in 2015. This review should include consideration of whether additional places will come on stream quickly enough in those primary planning localities facing the greatest pressure and the option of seeking promoters for a primary free school to help address this challenge.
- The local authority should **set out a clear and comprehensive School Place Planning Strategy** which sets out plans for the next five years as well as criteria for expanding schools, seeking to promote new free schools and addressing the relevant recommendations in this document. This will also enable the local authority to be more open and consultative about its strategy and plans for providing additional places than it has been in the past.
- The local authority should work closely with governors, headteachers and the Regional Schools Commissioner to **ensure that those schools in the secondary sector with low numbers of first parental preferences and unfilled places urgently address**

the school improvement challenges and the associated reputational issues facing these schools.

- The local authority should **consider seeking the provision of a further secondary free school, run by a proven education provider** (in addition to the Citizen Free School and the free school that is already under discussion with the EFA), with a view to **increasing options for parents** and the proportion of pupils educated within the borough.
- The local authority should **formalise both the process for cross-borough discussions on pupil place-planning and any resulting agreements**, if there is to be an increased reliance on neighbouring boroughs providing additional secondary school places to meet the growth in numbers of secondary school-age Lewisham pupils.
- The local authority should **investigate the underlying reasons for the high incidence of ASD** among its school population and **review whether the annual assessments and reviews of pupils with Statements or EHC Plans are sufficiently rigorous and precise** in identifying and specifying the needs of each pupil.
- The local authority should **satisfy itself that there are clear integrated pathways across the mainstream and special school sectors so that children are educated and supported in the setting best suited to their needs**. In particular, the authority should ensure that pressure on special school places – particularly in the secondary sector – is not increasing because of a lack of appropriate support and/or patterns of provision in mainstream settings.
- The local authority should seek to **mitigate its funding shortfall in planning for school places by maximising the use of centrally-approved free schools that share Lewisham’s values**. It can do this by:
 - continuing to keep in close contact with the EFA so that central free school proposals are matched to the borough’s place-planning needs;
 - exploring the White Paper proposal to provide funding, in advance of developers’ contributions, for new free schools linked to housing developments within the borough;
 - encouraging some of its best schools to lead academy trusts and become proposers of free schools in the borough; and
 - seeking school providers with values that are similar to those held by the local authority and encouraging their interest in providing places within the borough.

Chapter 5: Creating Lewisham Secondary challenge

Given Lewisham's strong commitment to improving outcomes at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, are there any more radical or leading edge models or approaches that Lewisham could adopt at borough or school level?

Earlier chapters explained the Commission's views about the best forms of organisation for schools in Lewisham and the importance of school-led models of effective collaboration for school improvement, particularly linked to system leadership. Clearly, improved outcomes should be facilitated by whatever organisational structures are adopted. However, whatever the organisational structure, the primary responsibility for improvement rests with schools and colleges themselves. This chapter sets out a number of very practical suggestions to support improvement. Better outcomes for students continue to depend upon school leaders and governors forensically monitoring and evaluating progress and standards, focusing above all on students' experiences of teaching and learning and robustly tackling the key issues identified for improvement. The suggestions outlined in this chapter would need to be built into each school's own priorities and development planning.

For all school leaders to get results they need three kinds of focus – 'inner' focus attuned to their own institutions, 'other' focus connecting to their local communities and 'outer' focus for navigating in a larger system. Leaders need the full range of inner, other and outer focus for their schools to improve and excel. As we have indicated in earlier chapters, school leaders need to work with each other in much better ways to develop localised solutions to the challenges they face and to share their professional knowledge and skills more effectively. The secondary sector, in particular, needs to look beyond the borough to widen knowledge and understanding of effective practice and to use that when developing localised solutions.

Lewisham as a borough, in consultation with its schools, has produced a relatively new school improvement framework that clearly sets out principles, priorities and performance indicators together with school categorisation and risk assessments. The local authority support and challenge to schools is based on the well-established model of 'intervention in proportion to success' with both core and additional offers to schools depending on their circumstances.

For underperforming schools, the framework requires both raising attainment plans and raising attainment boards which include governors. The framework generally aims to develop capacity for school-led self-improvement and improved partnership working, with the intention of better leadership, management and governance. However, the local authority's School Improvement Board is made up only of officers although there is now an intention, which we strongly endorse, to add headteachers and governors to the Board

This chapter sets out a range of school-led, collective solutions to support Lewisham's school improvement framework and accelerate progress. The most important proposal is to boost

support for secondary education by establishing a Secondary Challenge for Lewisham. This will need to be owned by the secondary and all-through schools and post 16 institutions themselves if outcomes are to be transformed.

As Chapter 1 showed, the stark fact is that only 65 per cent of secondary pupils in the borough are in a good or outstanding school. Lewisham collectively at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 finds itself at the bottom, or near the bottom, of most London benchmarked data and also below national averages, though some institutions are exceptions to this. An intensive programme of tailored support is therefore both necessary and urgent. However, Lewisham averages will not improve significantly just by turning around schools requiring improvement. The message of the London Challenge was that all schools need to improve on their previous best performance. Lewisham needs to 'grow the top' as well as dealing with underperformance.

A Secondary Challenge for Lewisham

We believe there needs to be an intensive boost to improve Lewisham's secondary provision. Headteachers in those secondary and all-through schools want to succeed and, collectively, they need to get behind a focused and energetic project to drive the huge change that is needed. We believe that Lewisham secondary and all-through schools have within them much of the capacity needed to improve but need targeted and supportive intervention to bring about the step change needed. We are recommending that a customised programme of support, based loosely on the model of the London Challenge, should be introduced. If managed well, this could bring about a change of culture, most particularly a change in aspiration and expectations with achievement not far behind.

We believe that the heads themselves should drive the change but they need to work closely with the local authority over the next 15 months or so in doing that. One of the distinctive features of the London Challenge was its focus on partnership between schools and local authorities. It was impressive too in the way it avoided stigmatising schools and this provides an important and useful precedent. For example, the schools requiring the most intervention were known as 'key to success' schools, as these schools were crucial to success in London overall. Importantly, and particularly relevant given the current discussions about a school-led system, was that a series of 'sector led' support mechanisms were put in place. School to school support, for example, was a key feature of the programme. Strong monitoring and evaluation, including forensic use of individual student data, were central to its success.

We think it would be important to emulate the use by London Challenge of experienced educational professionals, system leaders who are expert in their fields. London Challenge Advisers, many of them recently retired headteachers, with strong records of leadership success, were appointed on a part time basis to support individual schools and they were highly effective and well regarded. The adviser worked with each school to develop a bespoke and time-limited support programme, which was then kept under close review and adjusted as necessary to keep progress on track. Something similar should be developed in Lewisham.

Lewisham's Secondary Challenge would be established and resourced to give intensive support across the sector for a period of 3 years. It would seek to lift aspirations across the sector and to persuade young people, their teachers, parents and key stakeholders not only that they can achieve more but that they can acquire the sorts of skills, knowledge and confidence to make the most of the opportunities open to them in London. By the end of 4 years, our expectation is that:

- all schools with secondary provision would be good or better, as judged by Ofsted
- performance at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 would be at least the London average, with some schools competing with the very best performers in London
- the vast majority of parents in Lewisham would have confidence in their choice of local schools
- every pupil in a Lewisham secondary or all-through school would feel proud of their school and want to continue learning
- teachers would feel proud of an ambitious and successful education system.

To ensure the Lewisham Secondary challenge is managed well, consideration should be given to establishing a Lewisham Secondary Challenge Board to focus on implementation and outcomes. If the headteachers are prepared to take ownership of the Secondary Lewisham Challenge, this Board could be a sub-group of the Secondary Heads Group. It would look specifically at improving progress, on raising standards, and closing gaps. The Board would include leadership from within the heads themselves, and perhaps a primary headteacher. The Challenge would need to be managed, on a part-time basis, by an external expert with experience of such work. He or she would organise some part-time secondments to ensure co-ordination and detailed support for schools. The local authority would need to secure funding for the Challenge, initially perhaps through the DSG or other grants or subscription.

We believe the Challenge would lift aspiration across the secondary sector and energise schools to develop greater capacity, competence and confidence. It could be used to persuade young people, their teachers and key stakeholders that improvement can be accelerated and more can be achieved. Most important of all, it should help young people acquire the knowledge, skills and commitment to lifelong learning that would enable them to make more of the opportunities open to them in London and beyond.

An example of an improvement programme currently underway in another London borough

Another borough, which also sits near the bottom of the London league tables, has established its own intensive programme for change with some funding from the DSG. It is led by the heads themselves with two project directors, seconded for a day a week, and an executive group with an independent chair reporting to a wider strategic education partnership in the local authority. It has some interesting collective programmes which are worth describing in detail:

Insilnsight Raise: In 'learning threes' headteachers / principals and some senior staff team up to provide peer review of each other's performance data that is available in September. The review is based on 'cold facts' with an early RAISEonline typed analysis. It is held early in September, before confirmed data have been published, to allow the maximum time for action planning.

Subject networks organised in geographical hubs meeting after school – with a published timetable and a commitment to participate.

Best practice visits and Teachmeets also run after school on a hub basis.

Teacher development programmes: These include the Improving Teaching Programme (ITP) and the Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP) delivered through existing teaching school alliances.

Quality assurance peer reviews managed for the partnership by Challenge Partners, including training and development.

An Innovation Fund providing for innovation projects with a strong action research component linked to improved outcomes for students such as closing the gap.

Beyond the Lewisham Secondary Challenge, but complementing it, we would like to see secondary headteachers focus collectively on both peer and professional development with an emphasis on issues that are of pressing concern for them all. We outline below a number of developments that headteachers of secondary and all-through schools should consider. None is costly to implement but they have the potential for strengthening the work already underway in their schools as well as helping to create a more positive image about education in Lewisham.

Peer review

Increasingly, schools are using peer review as a reciprocal process to help school leaders develop their evaluation skills, reflect and learn with each other. These are reviews not inspections but they have the great merit of being undertaken by current leaders and practitioners with the objective of being solution focused rather than simply judging current performance. They offer very valuable professional opportunities too. In the interest of rigour, it is important that senior leaders are trained as reviewers and that there is an agreed formal process. Being prepared to engage in scrutiny by peers and for peers can help schools improve. Peer review, as on-going process rather than a one-off event, can be a vital element in transforming practice and extending knowledge across schools.

There are different models of peer review. Some use pairs or triads of schools which have agreed to work together. Challenge Partners²⁸ is a charity, owned and led by over 300 schools, who work together to lead school improvement. Peer review is an essential element of their work. Training is given to participants on the process and skills needed for review and Challenge Partners organises quality assurance programmes. Each year, every school has a two day review resulting in a written report. Reports often look at performance relative to the most recent Ofsted inspection but they also identify and validate outstanding practice. In undertaking these professional audits, Challenge Partners balances peer support with peer challenge, which supports reflection and learning for all involved.

Two Lewisham headteachers talked to us not only about the value of peer review in terms of school self-evaluation and planning but also for the professional development of staff involved. There is always a series of actions stemming from the reviews, which might involve constructive collaboration about school improvement programmes and initiatives, including the Improving Teaching and Outstanding Teacher programmes (ITP and OTP). Other more general outputs include the production of a school support directory which identifies good practice across all schools in Challenge Partners, a 'closing the gap' project with the EEF and a range of working groups on particular issues.

Another national model of peer review is that of the Education Development Trust²⁹ (formerly CfBT), called the Schools' Partnership Programme (SPP). This offers a bespoke programme of review not focused on Ofsted inspection. Schools work in partnerships, their chosen clusters, and their leaders are trained in the key components of the SPP model. Each cluster must have at least one good or outstanding school. As part of the SPP, inspirational leaders and future system leaders known as 'Improvement Champions', take on wider responsibilities by becoming experts in 'evidence-based improvement strategies'. Headteachers report that professional development is evident at every level of the peer review process and it builds a culture of coaching and professional dialogue within and across schools. There is no written report.

A few Lewisham schools already use peer review programmes and secondary schools should consider collectively whether there is a model they might all use. It is an essential part of strong

²⁸ www.challengepartners.org

²⁹ www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com

school self-evaluation and development planning. Peer review should have an enabling impact on the relationships within and between schools, driving the development of professional capital and the sharing of excellent practice. It can be a significant catalyst for change and improvement.

Identifying and sharing good or interesting practice

It is important for any local system of school improvement, whether at school or local authority level, to challenge itself by seeking evidence about what is working well and what is not working. Good use of data is not focused just on the quantitative. In discussions with officers, one commissioner asked: 'Does Lewisham know what Lewisham knows in terms of the best practice throughout the borough?' It is clear it does not and indeed, the local authority no longer has the resource to be able to answer this question fully.

This question, of course, applies to all schools and institutions but in terms of secondary and post-16 provision we need to ask more specific questions. For example, where are the best subject departments in terms of attainment and progress? Where are the best middle leaders in terms of subjects and aspects of the curriculum and could they lead others? Where are the outstanding practitioners in terms of teaching and its impact on learning? Where are the best schools in terms of pupil premium provision planning and the best outcomes in closing gaps? Where are the best schools for inclusion, attendance and behaviour? Which schools are the most advanced in terms of action research and evidence based practice?

Working with the local authority, schools themselves should identify their best practice. We think this should be done in both the primary and secondary sectors as it will showcase the work of schools and raise the profile of the excellent work that is happening in Lewisham. Some of this may be identified partly through published data and inspection reports as well as local authority and other reviews. Some might be validated by internal quality assurance and external evidence. Some might be validated by peer review. These case studies could be specific examples of excellence in addressing whole school issues such as behaviour or provision for vulnerable students, a focus on particular aspects of teaching and learning, or initiatives that have improved the quality of professional development or leadership development. Once there is greater collective intelligence of best practice, plans for learning from that practice could be developed, including the identification of 'centres of excellence' in schools across the borough.

Individual schools now often write case studies of their best practice which go beyond mere description to reflect evidence based practice. Where schools have made this a regular practice, they tend to publish an annual collection and encourage their staff to contribute as part of their professional development.

There will be examples of good or interesting practice in all Lewisham's secondary or all-through schools. It would be a mark of a thriving school-led system if all schools were able to contribute at least one best practice case study every year to be shared electronically and published as a Lewisham collection. Collections of case studies are good evidence of self-evaluation in practice

and demonstrate each school's reflective intelligence. They also increase enquiry and innovation amongst staff and can create a buzz of excitement around the best practice that can make a real difference to school improvement. We would recommend that Lewisham publishes a collection of case studies as soon as possible and propose that this be done by the Leadership Forum, supported by the local authority. This would help raise the profile of Lewisham's education service, promote the image of the borough and, as a consequence, also assist with recruitment.

Excellence visits

The principle behind this activity is that schools and colleges can learn from seeing good practice in action. This exercise would need to be approached with professional commitment and appreciative enquiry in order for all participants to get the most learning from each other. Appreciative enquiry focuses on the best of what is taking place in terms of creativity, questioning and dialogue to promote further improvement. These visits are often organised as focused half days, with preparatory briefing papers, and then observations and questioning sessions, taking care not to disrupt the routine of the host school. They should lead to further reflection and follow up action plans from the visiting school and further partnership work, particularly joint practice development where teachers reflect, observe, plan and evaluate their teaching together.

In Lewisham, these visits could be cross-borough given the size and scale of secondary and college provision. However, sometimes schools might prefer to work in triads, or geographical clusters or trusts. The principle is the same and there may be more opportunities for sustained joint practice development with a smaller group of schools. The effective identification and sharing of best practice should result in the establishment of 'leading' subject departments for the borough, such as Bonus Pastor School for maths or Prendergast School for English. Staff in schools and colleges identified as leading on particular aspects of provision, system leaders, could then be consulted by others for advice and support.

Strategic meetings and workshops for senior and middle leaders on whole school issues

Some meetings for middle or senior leaders already operate in Lewisham, for example, post-16 summit meetings and raising attainment groups. These are rated positively by schools. A similar approach that has been used elsewhere is the exchange of policies and programmes ('swap shops') in order to learn from each other.

A good example is an exchange of pupil premium plans and 'gap busting' strategies. All schools are required to have pupil premium plans and yet they usually vary considerably in quality, even in the same locality. Every institution has a senior leader responsible for the pupil premium sometimes known as 'pupil premium champions'. The disadvantage gap is wider in Lewisham than in both statistical neighbours and Inner London boroughs and so it is right that closing the attainment gaps of the performance of specific groups of students is a key priority. This especially applies to the performance of some minority ethnic groups such as Black Caribbean pupils.

Establishing a pupil premium group of senior leaders to meet regularly and exchange practice should stimulate a better set of pupil premium plans with many practical ideas to close gaps in performance. Such a group would, for example, use the latest research from the Education Endowment Foundation, liaise directly with this organisation as it is based in London, and call on other expertise. The group could produce a Lewisham strategy and toolkit for school leaders and governors to use in support of their work on the pupil premium, or closing attainment gaps more generally. Schools requiring improvement are often required by Ofsted to commission an external pupil premium review and such a group of senior Lewisham leaders could offer this service. The group might also choose to investigate further the many schools in London which do exceptionally well in transforming outcomes for these students and make good connections with them through the London Leadership Strategy, for example.

Another example of specialist strategic meetings might be on whole curriculum and assessment, particularly related to getting the best outcomes from Attainment 8 and Progress 8 in the future and also EBacc performance. The latter is of particular concern in Lewisham, with only 18.8 per cent of students achieving the EBacc, in contrast to 30.2 per cent across Inner London boroughs and 24 per cent nationally. Again, there would be a direct exchange between a specialist group of senior curriculum leaders of internal curriculum models and some external stimulus of the best practice elsewhere. This is not to preclude specialist workshops and conferences for a wider audience or ongoing reviews such as those now taking place in Lewisham on two issues of concern: maths performance and the performance of the more able students.

The need to tackle both attendance and exclusions in secondary schools are key priorities for consideration by a specialist group. In a school-led system, groups of senior leaders should organise and lead on 'specialist' issues focused on improvement and outcomes. Although this chapter focuses on the secondary sector, this sort of approach would bring benefits at primary too, for instance, in looking at the problem of increasing absence from school that is emerging in the primary phase.

Subject networks

Subject networks are a fairly traditional way of sharing practice and discussing common issues such as the subject curriculum and assessment, teaching and learning, and variable student outcomes. However, in emerging school-led systems, subject leaders themselves are beginning to step up to lead these groups themselves and meetings are hosted by schools. Of course, their success depends upon several schools participating and how practical and relevant they are to subject leaders. In the best examples, these meetings can provide compelling evidence of what works well and they are extremely practical with ideas to take away and put into practice. The best are also well linked to research and evidence from subject associations, higher education and subject web sites. Many of those that work well have a number of subject examiners and organise additional external inputs from chief examiners. In the worst examples, they are talking shops, poorly attended, and defensive about why progress cannot be made.

Teachmeets and forums

Sometimes the work stemming from the meetings and processes already suggested do not reach classroom teachers. The Secondary Heads Group might therefore want to launch a series of Teachmeets which teachers often find both useful and energising.

Teachmeet invitations, open to all teachers on a range of topics, have proved very popular in different parts of the country although more in primary and early years than secondary. They are usually organised on a 'hub' basis often through teaching school alliances, federations, MATs or other collaboratives and can lead to the very best joint practice development. They are almost all hosted in schools, taking place after school, and are a good way of informing and energising practitioners to improve practice with better outcomes for students. A particular feature of the best examples is the use of electronic communications through blogs and Twitter, creating virtual communities of interest.

Teaching school alliances

There are now well over 600 teaching school alliances in England (almost 100 in London) and, according to the recent White Paper³⁰, their numbers are set to increase significantly alongside a rise in the national leaders of education. As indicated in earlier chapters, their focus is on supporting school-based initial teacher training, school to school initiatives, leadership development and continuing professional development within a school-led system of improvement.

Teaching schools and their alliances have a range of national and local leaders of education and specialist leaders of education to call upon to help them with their school-to-school support function. Working strategically with a range of partners including local authorities, federations, MATs and other collaboratives, teaching schools can help all schools, not just those requiring improvement, to build capacity through coaching and mentoring, modelling best practice and strengthening teaching and leadership in order to improve outcomes.

Lewisham currently only has one teaching school alliance that encompasses the secondary sector and that is focused primarily on its own MAT. The majority of Lewisham's secondary schools are therefore not part of a teaching school alliance. There seem to be very few specialist leaders of education in the secondary sector in contrast to primary and the secondary numbers need to be expanded as a priority. The White Paper refers to a targeted approach focused on areas where teaching schools and national leaders of education are most needed. Lewisham should take advantage of this.

All Lewisham's secondary and all-through schools, particularly those requiring improvement, should be part of a teaching school alliance. It may be there could be some development of the range of the borough's current teaching alliances and this option should be explored through the recently established joint meeting of the 4 teaching schools, which has been brokered by the local authority. Alternatively, the secondary sector should use the London Leadership Strategy to access provision outside the borough so that they can take advantage of the resourcing going into teaching schools for particular school improvement programmes. These programmes cover a range of opportunities for leadership and teacher development.

30 Ibid

Other partnerships

Secondary and all-through schools usually have a range of partnerships helping them to better serve their students. We heard of several interesting examples of schools working with small third sector organisations to target underachieving groups, such as the use of a small local company selling the services of expert mathematicians who had attended Lewisham schools. These alumni were able to relate well to students and to have an impact not only on their knowledge and skills in mathematics but on their motivation overall. We also heard from a number of small third sector organisations who had worked effectively with particular groups in schools. Such examples of success should be shared across the borough.

If secondary and all-through schools are to accelerate their performance at Key Stages 4 and 5, it is vital that they all have strong transitional arrangements with 'feeder' primary schools. As mentioned earlier, the level of criticism from primary schools underlines the urgency of the need for headteachers from both the secondary and primary sectors to come together to agree and implement improvements in transfer and transition. The Commission heard many concerns from primary headteachers that secondary and all-through schools underestimated the skills and achievements of transferring pupils who, as a consequence, became bored or slipped back in both progress and attainment. Many primary heads are eager to work with secondary and all-through schools to support improvement in the early years of secondary education.

We heard from some parents of children in all-through schools that transitional arrangements could be more effective between the primary and secondary phases which in some cases were seen as operating very separately from each other.

Transitional arrangements should be strong too between secondary and all-through schools and post-16 institutions.

Similarly, for 11-18 and post-16 settings there should be good arrangements with higher education. Lewisham has established a university challenge and seems to have a good partnership with Goldsmiths but it should also approach other local higher education (HE) institutions such as the University of Greenwich and the UCL Institute of Education as well as the Russell Group universities. All secondary schools with sixth form settings should have a direct HE – school partnership including HE governors where possible.

Lewisham's secondary sector also needs to make sure that it is connecting positively with national agencies and organisations such as Teaching Leaders (programmes for middle leaders), Future Leaders (programmes for senior leaders), and Teach First. Links with some of these exist already with individual schools and groups of schools but we believe that there should be a more strategic partnership with these organisations. They are all London based and offer considerable opportunities to build teaching and leadership capacity to boost outcomes.

Given Lewisham's priority of closing gaps in attainment and progress, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) offers a useful strategic resource for the borough giving easy access to

evidence based practice. The EEF is a grant-making charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. The local authority should explore with headteachers, and a local university, the potential of preparing a bid to the EEF for funding a research project in Lewisham.

Other strategic partnerships include the office of the Mayor of London which has an Excellence Fund and a Gold Club together with some excellent curriculum materials. The London Leadership Strategy (successor trust body to the London Challenge) also provides access programmes for schools, such as 'Securing Good', and school-to-school support through its NLE and system leadership networks. Currently, links with Lewisham are limited and there is much to be gained from greater involvement.

Key Stage 5

Key Stage 5 outcomes across the borough are low in comparison with London and national measures across all measures. For example, in 2015 the borough ranked 11 out of 13 out of all inner London boroughs on the average point score per students, 12/13 for grades AAB, including two facilitating subjects, and 13/13 for average point score for subject entry.

Progress has been made in rationalising post-16 provision into 11 settings with some of these in consortia but there is considerable variation between settings and little evidence of practice development initiatives designed to improve the quality to teaching and learning.

Lewisham has sought to address some of these issues and two of the major priorities in the Raise Achievement and Attainment section of the Children and Young People's Plan relate to post 16:

- Raise participation indication and training, reducing the number of young people who are NEET at 16-19.
- Raise achievement and progress for all our children, closing the gaps between under-achieving groups at Key Stage 5 and post-16 so that all young people are well prepared for adulthood and able to access the best education and employment opportunities for them.

A post-16 summit and a curriculum summit have been held with recommendations although these remain to be implemented. There are regular meetings of heads of sixth form but no regular systems of identifying and sharing and developing practice as outlined above.

There is a particular need to address the issue of getting the highest grades, particularly in facilitating subjects, as this holds the key to entry to the best universities. This could be facilitated through post-16 specialist subject networks linked to subject examiners and other Inner London boroughs.

In conclusion

If owned by the headteachers and principals themselves, the approaches and models outlined in this chapter would give Lewisham's secondary and post-16 institutions opportunities to get the best out of each other to raise standards. They could harness knowledge, talent, creativity and energy to raise standards at Key stages 4 and 5 but also to meet the needs of the most vulnerable students more effectively.

The Secondary Heads' Group works collegially and supportively but needs to focus more on professional learning and development. Working collaboratively, the Group needs to develop interests and expertise across schools. Headteachers also need to be more thoughtfully outward facing, seeking out best practice in other London boroughs and linking to a range of London and national school improvement programmes.

Headteachers themselves told us they see the Group as being refreshed and enriched by the many new heads recently in post or arriving in September. The latter come fresh to new headships with an ambition and determination to improve their schools that should bring energy to the Group.

Recommendations

- Working with the Secondary Heads' Group, the local authority should establish and resource a Lewisham Secondary Challenge (including post 16) to provide intensive and bespoke support. This initiative should be managed by an experienced, external adviser working to the Secondary Heads' Group. It would make use of system leaders, focused school to school support, intensive programmes and forensic data analysis to improve progress, raise standards, and close gaps. The aim would be that within 4 years, all schools in Lewisham would be judged good or better, performance at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 would be at least at the London average, and the vast majority of parents would have confidence in their choice of local schools.
- Supported by the local authority, the Leadership Forum should facilitate a small scale trial of different models of peer review so that the Lewisham Improvement Partnership could broker such a process across all schools and settings beginning no later than April 2017.
- Supported by the local authority, and using an external resource, the Heads' Leadership Forum should raise Lewisham's positive profile and agree a process for identifying and sharing best practice, in both the primary and secondary sectors, including the publication of a set of Lewisham case studies by January, 2017.
- The Secondary Heads' Group should establish strategic groups of senior and middle leaders to meet to develop collective solutions to particular issues of concern or requiring development, such as Progress 8 and EBacc performance, improving 'A' level performance at the highest grades, behaviour, attendance and exclusions.

- The Secondary Heads Group should work closely with the London Leadership Strategy which is one of the largest and most effective providers of school-to-school support in London, enabling access to a wide range of system leaders and teaching school alliances. Their programmes support schools at every point of development including specific professional development opportunities and leadership development.
- The Secondary Heads' Group, working with the local authority, should also engage with other organisations outside the borough to help raise aspirations and build greater capacity for the development of a school-led system of improvement , for example, the Education Endowment Foundation, universities, the Innovations Unit and Office of the Mayor of London.

Appendix 1 Education Commission members, remit, process and acknowledgements

Education Commission: team members

Christine Gilbert is chair of the Commission. She is currently visiting professor at the Institute of Education, UCL. Christine was previously a headteacher, director of education, local authority chief executive and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector at Ofsted.

Robert Hill, a visiting senior research fellow at King's College London, is an educational consultant, researcher and writer. He was a senior policy adviser to the Labour government.

David Woods is a visiting professor at Warwick University and chair of the London Leadership Strategy. Formerly, David was a senior Education adviser at the Department for Education and chief adviser for London Schools and the London Challenge.

Michael Pain is Director of Forum Education. He was previously at the National College and is supporting the work of the Commission.

The remit

In establishing the Education Commission, the council emphasised that school improvement and raising educational outcomes are top priorities for Lewisham. We were asked to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to help shape up a vision for education in Lewisham and to make recommendations to the Mayor and to the community of schools for future development.

The council set an ambitious and challenging timetable of 11 weeks for the work of the Commission. However, the specification for the Commission's work helpfully set five questions that provided strategic focus and directed the key lines of enquiry.

Within the short timeframe, the 5 questions provided a particularly helpful discipline:

- Given the national and regional context, what is the best form of organisation for Lewisham's schools going forward?
- Is there a school-led model of school improvement which would put Lewisham's work on a more sustainable footing, given the council's financial constraints?
- Lewisham needs additional secondary and SEND places. What are the best means to achieve this, alongside ensuring all existing schools are schools of choice?

- Given Lewisham's strong commitment to improving outcomes at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, are there any more radical or leading edge models or approaches that Lewisham could adopt at borough level?
- Underpinning all these questions is the central theme of how Lewisham's system serves the most vulnerable.

Education Commission: Process

- Significant desktop analysis was undertaken. Commissioners have considered a number of key strategies, plans, reports and other documentation.
- The team commissioned an analysis of recent school Ofsted reports with particular focus on the secondary sector.
- Extensive data analysis at both school and local authority level has been undertaken and this was supported by Lewisham's Policy, Service Design and Analysis hub.
- Throughout this period, commissioners attended a number of existing fora and have hosted bespoke sessions as part of a broad programme of stakeholder engagement.
- Commissioners have attended a number of existing meetings, including the
- Children and Young People Select Committee and meetings of primary, secondary and special school headteachers, including the Heads' Leadership Forum, and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) Forum.
- The chair met with the Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Children
- The chair also met with other councillors, including the Chair and Vice-chair of the Children and Young People Select Committee, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet Member for Community Safety (also equalities) and the Chair of Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee.
- The chair met with Lewisham's Young Advisers and attended one of their meetings
- Commissioners have had discussions with a number of officers, including those responsible for school improvement and place planning.
- In addition to existing fora, headteachers were invited to arrange meetings with commissioners. Throughout the project, commissioners have met with executive headteachers, headteachers and chairs of governors of early years settings, primary

schools, secondary schools, special schools and academies. The chair also met with the chief executive of a MAT.

- During the Commission, visits have been made to 18 schools (1 nursery school, 7 maintained primary schools, 5 maintained secondary schools, 2 maintained 'all-through' schools, 1 academy, 1 special school and 1 pupil referral unit).
- Two bespoke evening governors' events have taken place, led by the chair.
- Residents and other stakeholders were offered the opportunity to meet with the chair as part of the 'open sessions' held by the Commission; these sessions consisted of 25 separate meetings. During these sessions, Christine Gilbert met with, among others, residents' groups, voluntary and community sector representatives, union representatives, parent groups and individual parents.
- The chair spoke to the Regional Schools Commissioner.
- She also spoke with the directors of education at both Dioceses.
- Written submissions were received and considered by commissioners from, among others, individual parents, teachers, residents groups, voluntary and community sector representatives and providers.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to everyone who made time to see us and share their views. We would like to express our sincere thanks to the many council officers who not only provided information but undertook extra work in response to our queries. We should pay particular tribute to the work of David Humphreys, Principal Officer: Policy, Service Design and Analysis. David gave outstanding support to the Commission, always going the extra mile. David's invaluable contribution made it possible to complete the report to deadline.

Appendix 2 Lewisham in context: data analysis

Overview

Lewisham is one of London's largest boroughs, being home to approximately 292,000 people – and it is steadily growing. The borough's population is relatively young, with one in four people under the age of 19.

Lewisham is one of the most ethnically diverse local authorities in England, with around 130 languages spoken by its inhabitants³¹.

The borough is one of the most deprived local authority areas in the UK (48th most deprived out of 326 local authority districts).³² Indeed, Lewisham ranks as the 19th highest local authority in the UK for the proportion of children living in income deprived households, although this proportion is still less than other Inner London boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Islington, Hackney, Lambeth, and Southwark.³³ The proportion of 18 to 24 year-olds claiming Jobseekers Allowance is the highest of any Inner London borough, and is double the UK average.

Population

The population is expected to grow significantly in the next five years. Most of this population growth will be driven by a significant increase in the number of children between 0–14 years of age. It is projected that between 2013 and 2018, the number of children under the age of 15 will have increased by almost 5,000 – representing over a third of Lewisham's population growth during that period³⁴.

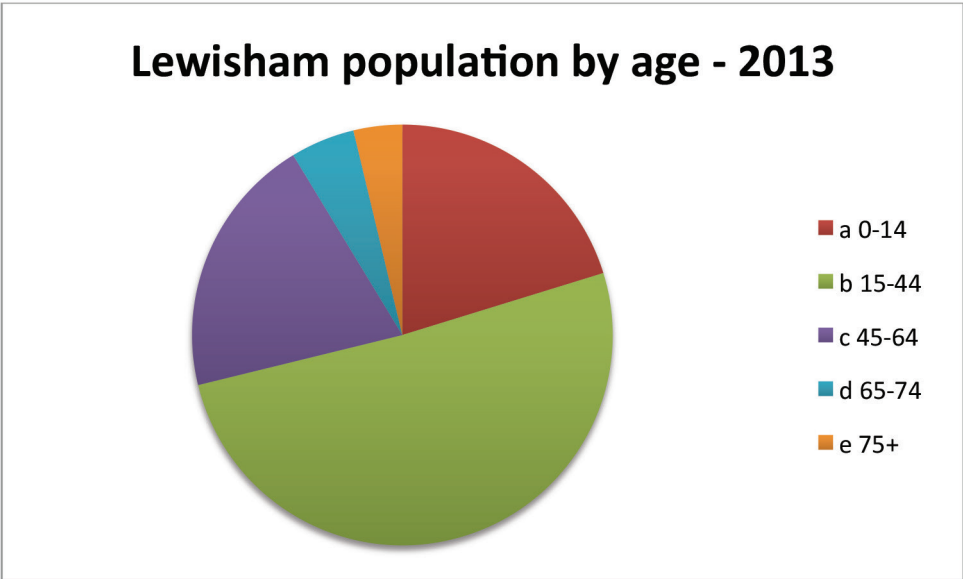
³¹ <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/2015-factsheets-london-borough-of-lewisham.pdf>

³² www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/465791/English_Indices_of_Deprivation_2015_-_Statistical_Release.pdf

³³ Lewisham's joint strategic needs assessment- <http://www.lewishamjsna.org.uk/a-profile-of-lewisham/demography/population>

³⁴ Ibid.

Figure 1: Lewisham’s Population by Age Group



As highlighted in the report, significant increases in Lewisham’s pupil population are expected in wards that demonstrate the greatest levels of disadvantage and child poverty (namely Evelyn, New Cross, Lewisham Central, Rushey Green).³⁵

Income and economy

The government uses the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) to assess relative levels of deprivation in local authorities – dividing up each local authority into a series of small areas known as Local Super Output Areas (LSOAs). According to the IMD 2015, Lewisham is the 48th most deprived of the 326 local authorities in the UK.

Lewisham has higher than average levels of employment than both London and the wider UK. This may partly be driven by a higher than average economically active population – with almost three quarters of Lewisham’s residents being aged between 16 and 65.

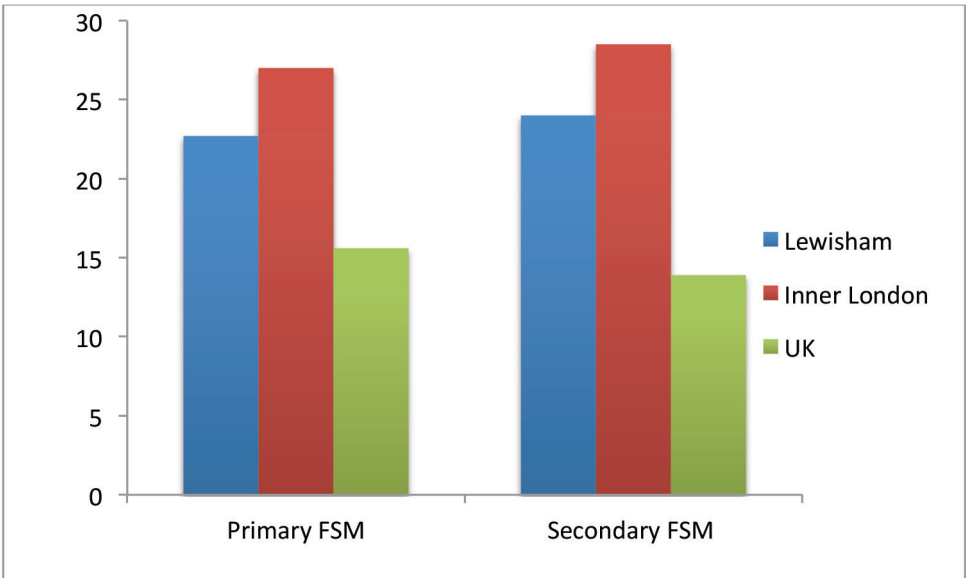
A higher percentage of Lewisham’s workforce is employed in managerial and/or professional job roles (Soc 2010 Major Group 1-3) than in both London and the wider UK. However, Lewisham also has a significantly higher than average number of people working in low grade service sector roles – such as caring, leisure and customer services. This is reflected in the average level of gross weekly pay of full-time workers in the borough, with Lewisham’s citizens being paid just under £63.26 less per week than the average pay for Inner London^{36,37}. The service sector dominates Lewisham’s economy.

³⁵ www.lewishamsna.org.uk/a-profile-of-lewisham/demography/population
³⁶ www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157254/subreports/asher_compared/report.aspx?
³⁷ LRelates to 12 Inner London Boroughs and excluding City of London.

Lewisham’s children

A significant proportion of Lewisham’s children live in economically disadvantaged homes. Whilst unemployment has declined during the past three years, in twelve of the borough’s eighteen wards, 22 per cent or more of children live in poverty³⁸. In 6.5 per cent of Lewisham households with dependent children all adults were unemployed. The borough is the 21st highest-ranking authority against this measure in the country, however four other Inner London boroughs rank higher.³⁹ Thirty six per cent of those households with dependent children are lone-parent households, which is significantly higher than the UK average (24.6 per cent) and the London average (27.6 per cent) ^{40 41 42}

Figure 2: Percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals



The number of low income households is reflected in the proportion of pupils that are in receipt of free school meals. On average, 22.7 per cent of the borough’s primary and nursery pupils receive free school meals (FSM), compared to 27 per cent of primary and nursery pupils in Inner London as a whole, and 15.6 per cent of primary and nursery children nationally. Of Lewisham’s secondary-age pupils, 24 per cent receive free school meals, compared to 28.5 per cent of secondary pupils in Inner London as a whole, and 13.9 per cent of secondary pupils nationally.

The borough’s children come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The majority of primary-age children are of either white British (23 per cent), African or white African (19 per cent) and Caribbean or white Caribbean (20 per cent) heritage⁴³. There are a wide range of other minority ethnic groups represented, including but not limited to children of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage.

³⁸ www.londonspovertyprofile.org.uk/indicators/topics/income-poverty/child-poverty-by-borough/

³⁹ www.lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/Documents/2011CensusSecondReleaseDec2012.pdf; www.google.co.uk/#q=No+adults+in+employment+in+household:+With+dependent+children

⁴⁰ 2011 Census - www.lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/Documents/2011CensusSecondReleaseDec2012.pdf

⁴¹ www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/articles/householdsandhousehold-compositioninenglandandwales/2014-05-29#dependent-children-in-households

⁴² www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/KS105EW/view/2013265927?cols=measures

⁴³ LA RAISE Online

Approximately one third of primary-age children have a first language other than English, compared to 19.4 per cent nationally. This figure is slightly less (27.2 per cent) for secondary-age pupils.

In Lewisham 17.3 per cent of children⁴⁴ are identified as having some form of special educational needs (which is just above average for Inner London, where the proportion stands at 17%). Across England, 15.4 per cent of pupils have identified special educational needs.⁴⁵

Pupil and school performance in Lewisham

The context for Lewisham's education system is best described as a tale of two halves.

Standards and pupil outcomes in Key Stage 1 and Key stage 2 are amongst the very best in the country and Inner London, with no primary schools falling below floor standards and the vast majority of pupil groups achieving well-above average outcomes at the end of their primary education.

The borough's secondary system sits in stark contrast, with Lewisham's pupils generally achieving outcomes far below those attained by secondary pupils across Inner London and England as a whole.

Lewisham secondary students perform significantly below the national average and are therefore placed at a significant disadvantage when looking to apply to higher education or to the jobs market. A much lower than average percentage of Lewisham's Key Stage 5 students go on to further study at higher education institutions.

Lewisham's early years sector

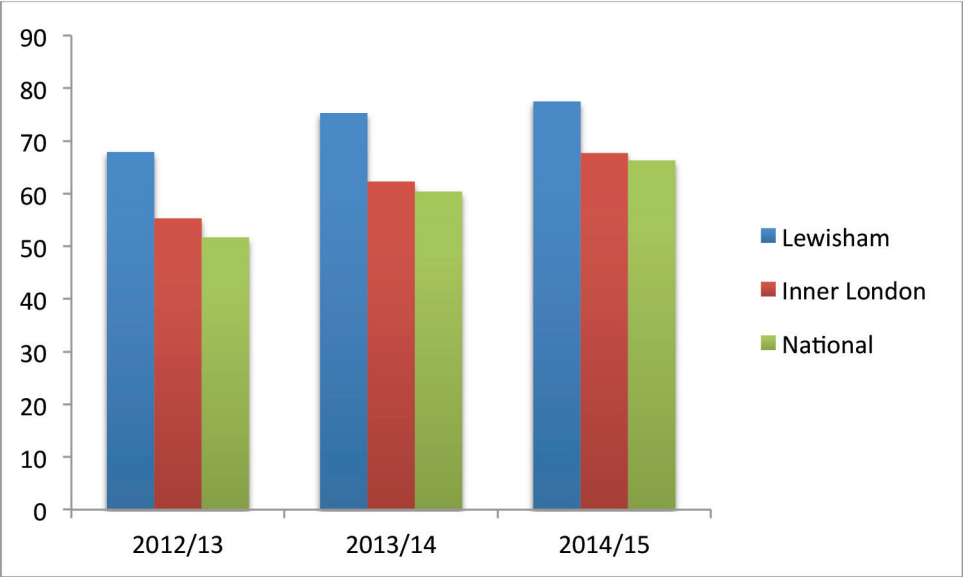
The performance of Lewisham's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is well above both the inner London and national average. In 2015, 77.5 per cent of children 'attained a good level of development' compared with 67.7 per cent in Inner London and 66.3 per cent nationally.

This is consistent with a three-year trend between 2013 and 2015 (see Figure 3 below).

⁴⁴ LA RAISE Online 719/3044 KS2 pupils & 457 / 2124 KS4 pupils.

⁴⁵ January 2015 School Census (DfE): www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447917/SFR25-2015_Text.pdf

Figure 3: Percentage of children attaining a good level of development at EYFS, 2013-2015



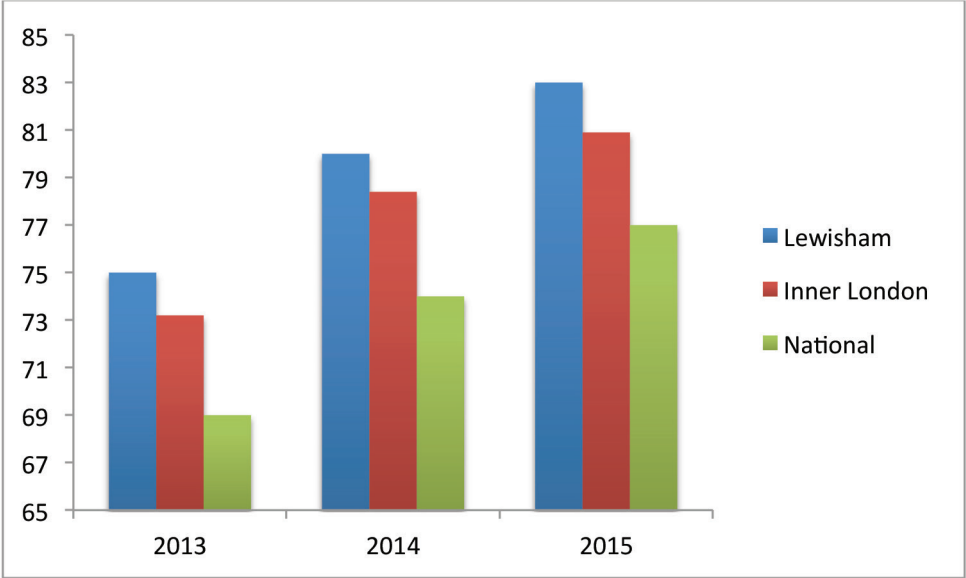
The percentage of both Lewisham’s boys and girls attaining a good level of development is far higher than the Inner London and national average for both groups. As is the case nationally, Lewisham’s girls outperform boys at EYFS – however the gap between girls and boys in Lewisham is much smaller than the gap between girls and boys in Inner London and in England as a whole.

Lewisham’s primary sector

Key Stage 1

Performance at Key Stage 1 is also strong – 83 per cent of pupils achieved the expected level in phonics decoding in Lewisham in 2015, compared to 80.9 per cent in Inner London and 77 per cent nationally. Of pupils receiving free school meals in Lewisham, 78 per cent achieved the expected level in phonics decoding in 2015, compared to 72 per cent in London and 65 per cent nationally.

Figure 4: Percentage of Year 1 pupils meeting required standards of phonics decoding in 2015



Pupils in receipt of free school meals, pupils with identified SEND, and children from most minority ethnic backgrounds perform – on average - above the national levels for their group in the Year 1 phonics assessment. This places the majority of the borough’s children on a strong footing for learning. However, this is not the case for pupils with Pakistani heritage or Gypsy/ Roma pupils.

In terms of average point score for all national curriculum core subjects at Key Stage 1, most of Lewisham’s pupils perform above the national average for their cohort. This is not the case for travellers of Irish heritage or pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan.

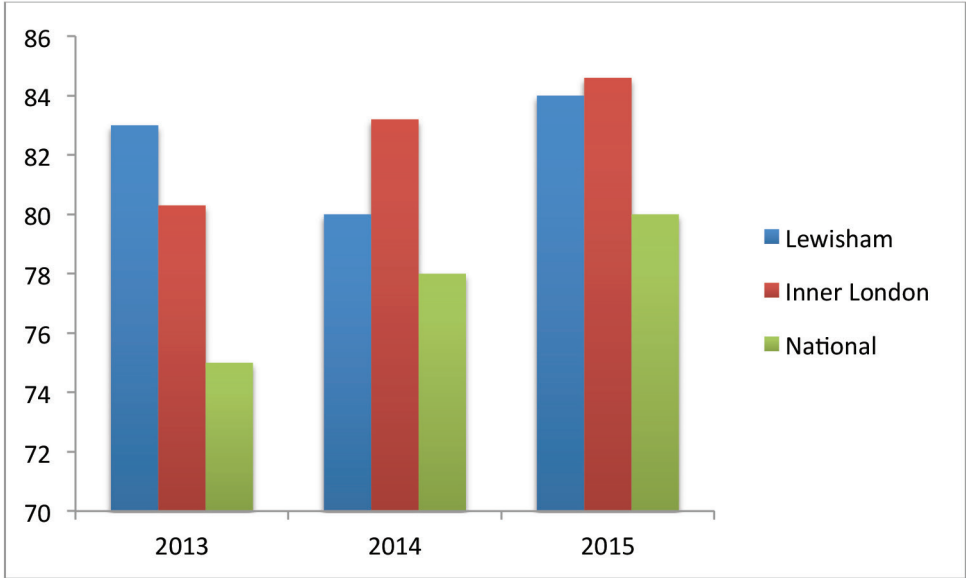
However, there are no pupil groups that perform statistically significantly below the national average at Key Stage 1.

Key Stage 2

In 2015, there were no primary schools in Lewisham that did not meet the floor standard of 65 per cent of pupils achieving level 4+ in reading, writing and mathematics. This compares to 1.7 per cent of schools in London and 5 per cent of schools nationally.

The borough sees a significantly high percentage of pupils (84 per cent) achieve level 4+ in reading, writing and maths combined. This compares with the Inner London average of 84.6 per cent of pupils and is well above the national average (80 per cent). The number of Lewisham’s pupils achieving level 5+ in reading, writing and mathematics (29 per cent) is 5 per cent higher than the national average. This is a crucial statistic, as attainment at Level 5 is a strong predictor that children will achieve 5 A* – C (including maths and English) at GCSE.

Figure 5: Percentage of pupils achieving KS2 level 4+ reading, writing, and maths.



Disadvantaged pupils also do relatively well when compared with other boroughs. Of those pupils in Lewisham who are in receipt of free school meals, 75 per cent achieve level 4+ in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This performance is identical to the rest of London as whole, but nine percentage points higher than for the whole of England. Despite the good performance of pupils in receipt of free school meals as a group (when compared to the national average), in Lewisham the gap between the performance of all pupils and those in receipt of free schools meals at Key Stage 2 has remained static over the past three years.

The percentage of Lewisham pupils with a statement of SEN achieving a level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths, has gone down by 7 per cent to 10 per cent in the period 2013-15. This is the only group in Lewisham whose performance is statistically worse at KS2 than the national average for the same group.

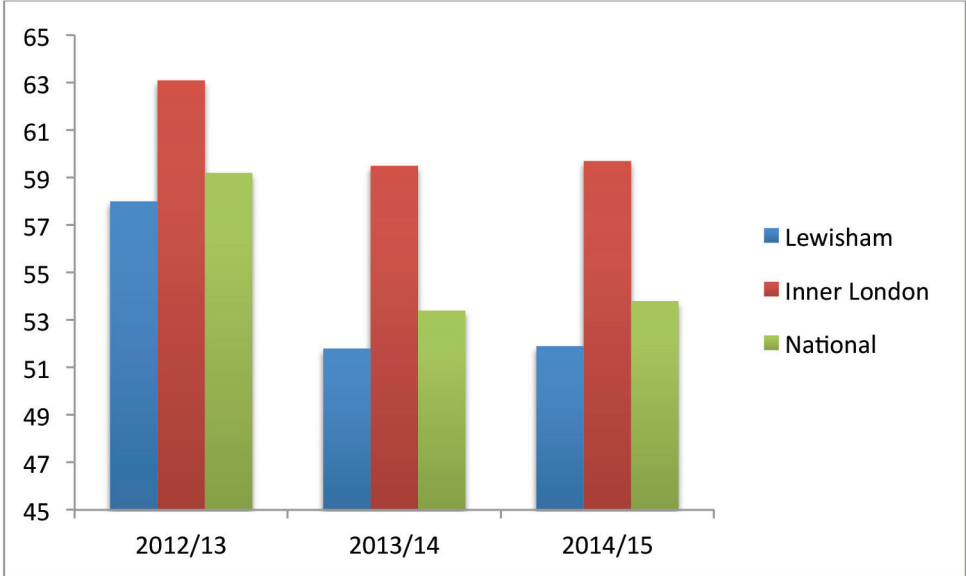
When considering the attainment of those from different minority ethnic backgrounds, all groups, aside from Chinese pupils, perform above the national average for each group. Pupils of Chinese background in Lewisham achieve Key Stage 2 results that are far below the outcomes achieved by this ethnic group across Inner London and wider England⁴⁶.

Lewisham’s secondary sector

Secondary pupils in Lewisham achieve GCSE results that are significantly below the national average. The gap between the percentage of Lewisham pupils achieving 5 or more A* – C (including maths and English) and both the Inner London and the national average has widened over the past three years.

⁴⁶ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-at-key-stage-2-2015-revised

Figure 6: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 A* – C GCSE, including English and maths, (or equivalent) 2012 – 15⁴⁷



In 2014/15 51.9 per cent of Lewisham’s pupils achieved 5 A* – C (including maths and English), compared to 59.7 per cent across Inner London. Lewisham is the lowest performing of all Inner London boroughs against this measure for the past three years⁴⁸. The gap between Lewisham pupils and secondary pupils in Inner London and England as a whole is widening over time.

The percentage of Lewisham pupils attaining the EBacc stands at 18.8 per cent in 2015, compared to an average of 30.2 per cent of pupils across Inner London boroughs. Indeed, the proportion of pupils attaining the EBacc in Lewisham has fallen since 2013 by 0.5 per cent.

Both boys and girls in Lewisham perform significantly below the Inner London and the national average for their cohorts at GCSE. Whilst girls perform better than boys in Lewisham (as they do nationally), Lewisham’s girls fall significantly behind their peers across both Inner London and England as a whole, with 55.5 per cent of Lewisham’s girls achieving 5 A* – C (including maths and English), compared with 63.7% per cent in Inner London and 58.9 per cent nationally.

In 2015, 69.8 per cent of Lewisham’s secondary pupils made expected progress in English between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4, compared with 71.1 per cent nationally, and 61.9 per cent of pupils made expected progress in maths, compared with 66.9 per cent nationally. Lewisham falls far behind its statistical neighbours in terms of expected progress in English and maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4; the percentage of pupils making expected progress was 76.25 per cent (English) and 70 per cent (maths). There is one outlier group, however, with Lewisham’s lower attainers making better progress in Maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 than the national average for their group.

⁴⁷ The implementation of the Wolf reforms in 2013/14 led to a general decline in the number of pupils attaining 5 A* – C GCSE, including maths and English

⁴⁸ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reviced-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2014-to-2015

Figure 7: Percentage of pupils making expected progress, between KS2 and KS4, in maths by prior attainment (2015)

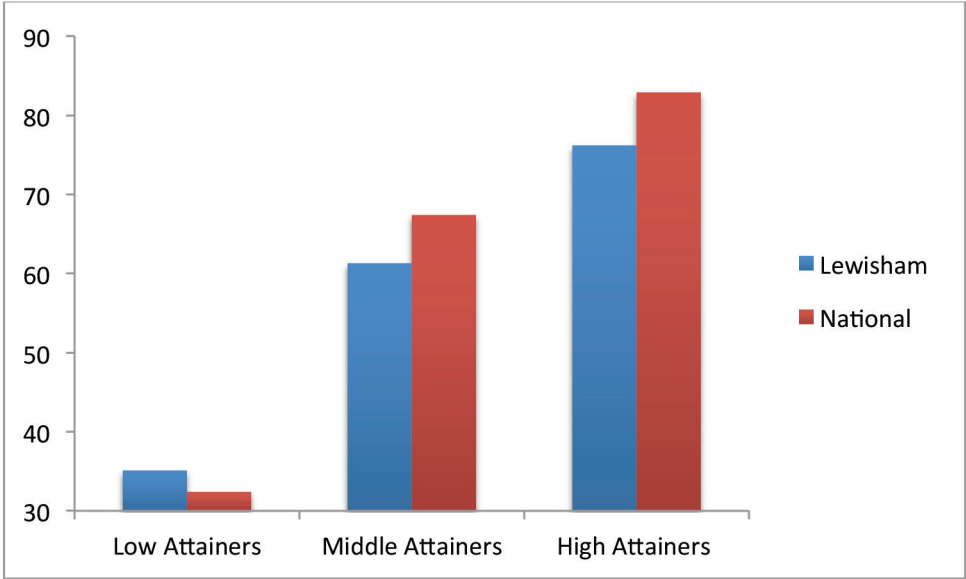
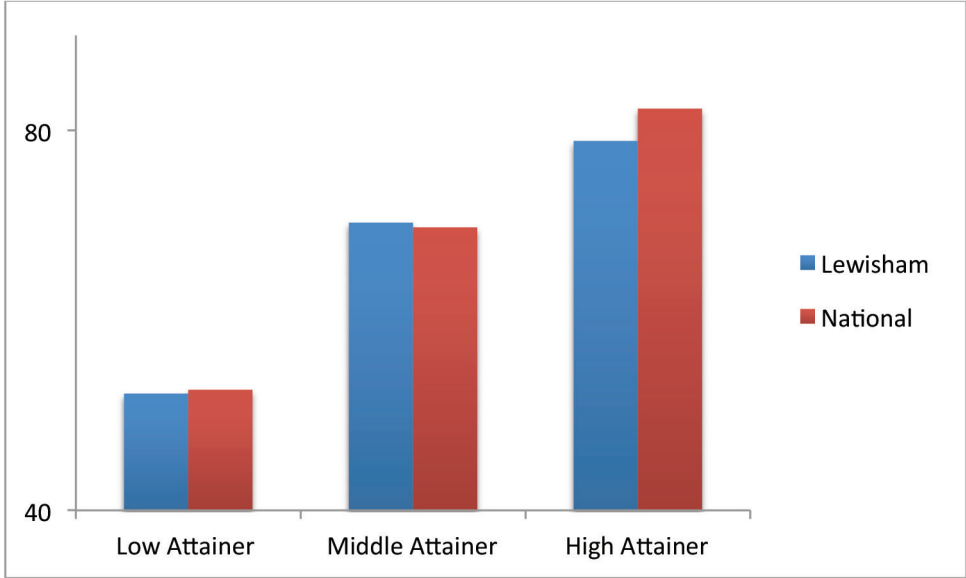


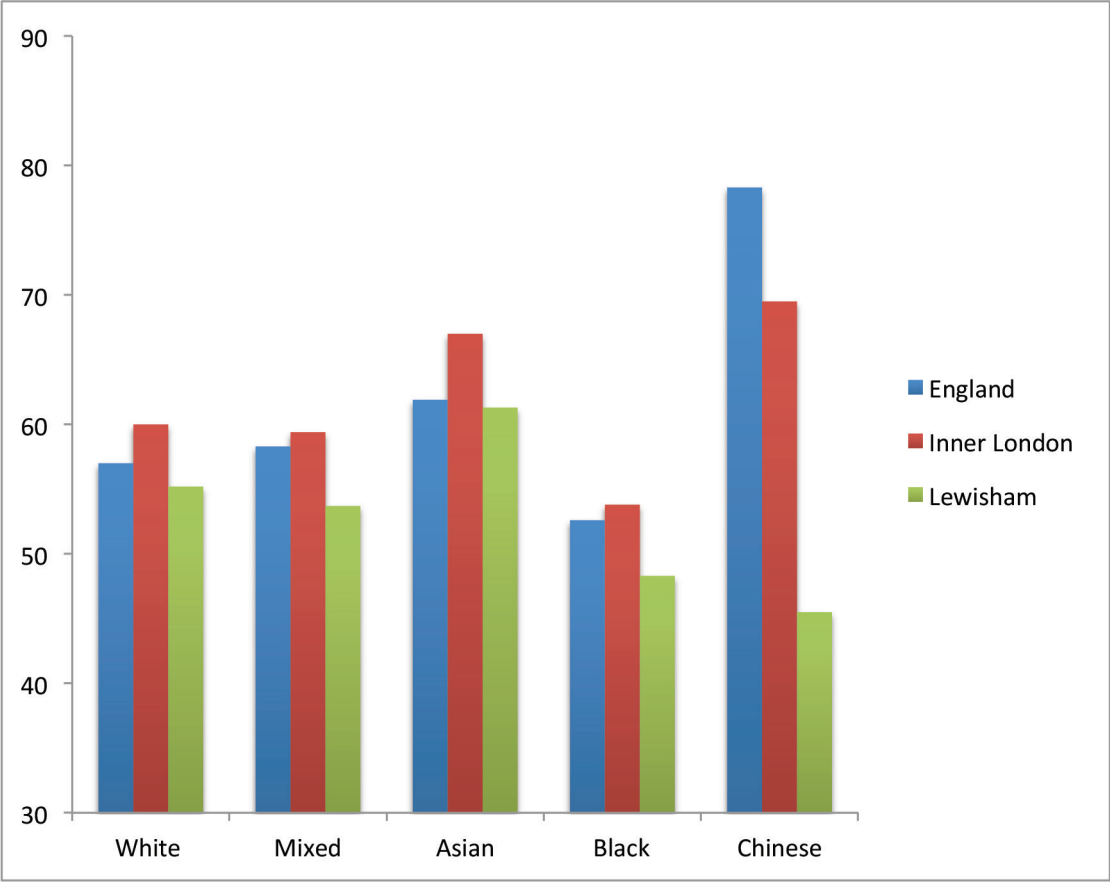
Figure 8: Percentage of pupils making expected progress in English by prior attainment (2015)



When considering Lewisham’s performance by minority ethnic groups, it is clear that children of all backgrounds generally perform far below both the Inner London and the national average for their groups.

Children of mixed ethnicity, black heritage and Chinese heritage perform significantly below the average performance of their respective groups across Inner London and England.

Figure 9: Pupil performance by ethnicity at GCSE (% of children achieving 5 + A* – C including English and maths)



Whilst the significantly below average performance of children of Chinese heritage reflects a considerable year on year drop in performance between 2014 and 2015, the significantly below average performance of black and mixed heritage pupils reflects a long-term trend of below average outcomes amongst these groups. White pupils in Lewisham schools have also underperformed in comparison to their national counterparts over a number of years – although the discrepancies in performance are generally less stark for this group than for those pupils of black and mixed heritage.

The performance tables also reveal another issue for Lewisham relating to higher attaining pupils. The national proportion of these pupils gaining at least 5 A*- C (including English and maths) has been declining slightly over the last three years. In Lewisham, this proportion has also been declining, but at a faster rate than found nationally. In 2015, 86.8 per cent of Lewisham’s high attaining pupils reached this benchmark compared with 91.1 per cent nationally. The gap has widened tenfold since 2013. There are eight schools where higher ability pupils’ attainment in 2015 fell below the national average and only two where it was higher. This is a weaker profile than in 2014 or 2013 when six schools had higher attaining pupils achieving above the equivalent national average.

The picture is a little more positive in terms of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND. In terms of achieving 5 A* – C (including maths and English), disadvantaged pupils, using those in receipt of free school meals as a proxy, perform significantly above the national average for these groups. However, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers from more advantaged backgrounds has remained static over the last three years. Only 39 per cent of pupils receiving free school meals achieved 5 A* – C (including maths and English) at GCSE, compared to 59 per cent of pupils not receiving free school meals. In contrast, in the top performing local authorities (Newham, Tower Hamlets), the gap in attainment between the proportion receiving free school meals and those not receiving free school meals is under 10 per cent.

In 2015, the percentage of Lewisham’s pupils with a statement of SEN achieving 5 A* – C (including maths and English) was 12.3 per cent, which was higher than both the national average (8.8 per cent) and the borough’s statistical neighbours (10.1 per cent). However, when one considers the percentage of Lewisham’s pupils with a statement of SEN who are achieving 5 A* – G (including maths and English), the borough’s figure of 32.1 per cent falls some way below both the national average (36.1 per cent).

Ofsted judgments on Lewisham’s schools

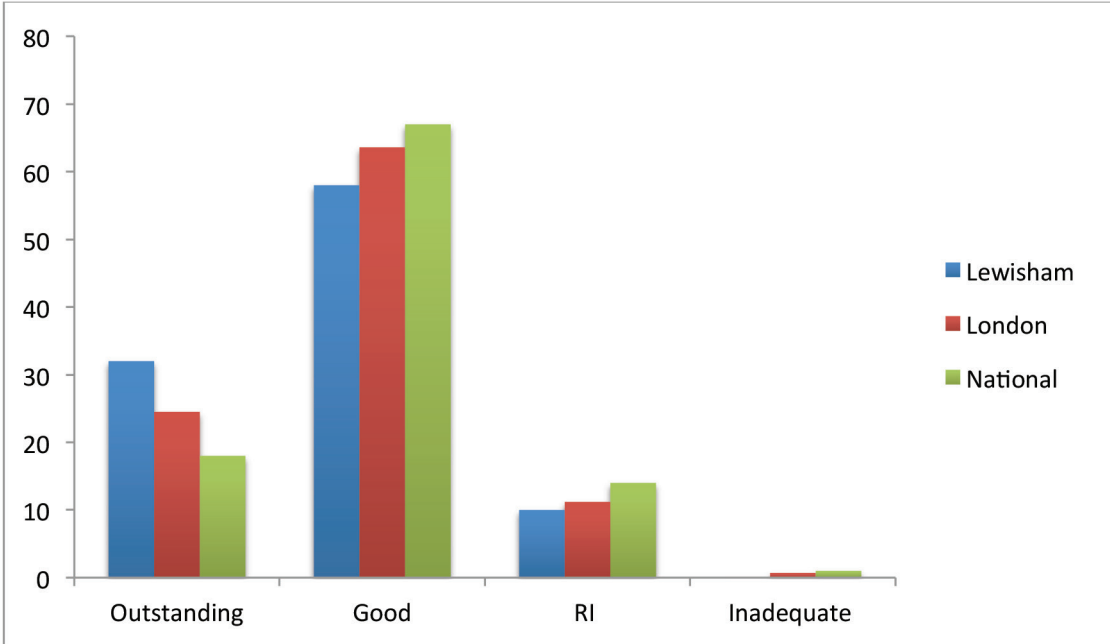
As judged by Ofsted, Lewisham’s performance as a local authority in terms of the number of pupils attending good or outstanding primary schools is in stark contrast to its performance in the secondary sector.

Lewisham has a very strong primary and nursery sector. Indeed, it is the fifth highest performing local authority in the country in terms of the percentage of primary-age pupils attending a good or outstanding school (95 per cent)⁴⁹. This is reflected in the performance data at these stages.

Of the 72 schools providing state-funded primary education, 23 are currently judged by Ofsted to be ‘outstanding’, 42 are ‘good’, and seven are judged as ‘requires improvement’. Four of those schools that are judged as ‘requires improvement’ are all-through schools. Five of the borough’s primary schools (including three all-through schools) are academies.

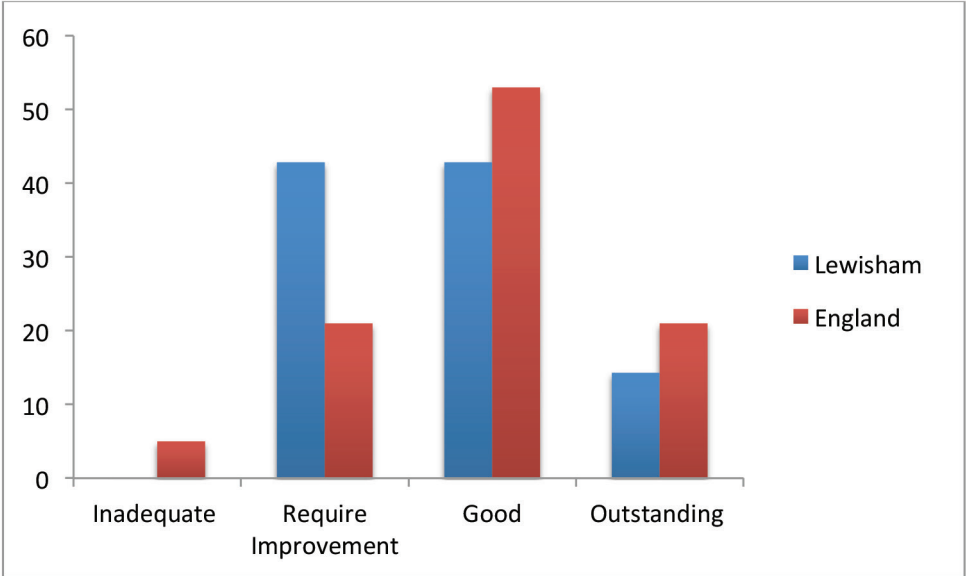
⁴⁹ Lewisham sits below North Tyneside where 99 per cent of pupils attend a good or outstanding school, Newcastle upon Tyne (97 per cent), Kingston upon Thames (97 per cent) and Camden (96 per cent).

Figure 10: Overall judgment of primary schools’ quality based on most recent Ofsted inspections (March 2016)



The picture within the secondary sector is less positive. HMCI’s Annual Report for 2014/15 reported that 74 per cent of secondary schools were good or better at their last inspection. Lewisham’s equivalent proportion is only 57 per cent. This reflects significant variability in the quality of provision across the borough’s secondary schools. Two of the borough’s eight secondary schools are currently judged by Ofsted to ‘require improvement’, five are judged to be ‘good’, and one is judged ‘outstanding’. All are currently community schools. There are six ‘all through’ schools, of which four are currently judged to ‘require improvement’, one is ‘good’ and one is ‘outstanding’. Three of the borough’s all-through schools are academies, of which one is outstanding and two are judged to ‘require improvement’.

Figure 11: Secondary providers by most recent overall Ofsted judgment (national figures taken from Ofsted Annual Report 2015)



Of the schools that are either secondary or all-through, 43 per cent are below good (the national percentage of secondary schools below good is 26 per cent).

There are five state-funded special schools within the borough, three of which are rated as ‘good’ and two judged as being ‘outstanding’. The borough has one PRU, on two campuses, which is rated ‘good’ by Ofsted.

The local authority currently maintains 1,582⁵⁰ statements and EHC plans. There are currently 534 places in five special schools⁵¹ but nearly a quarter of the children with statements or EHC plans are placed in or choose placements out of the borough.

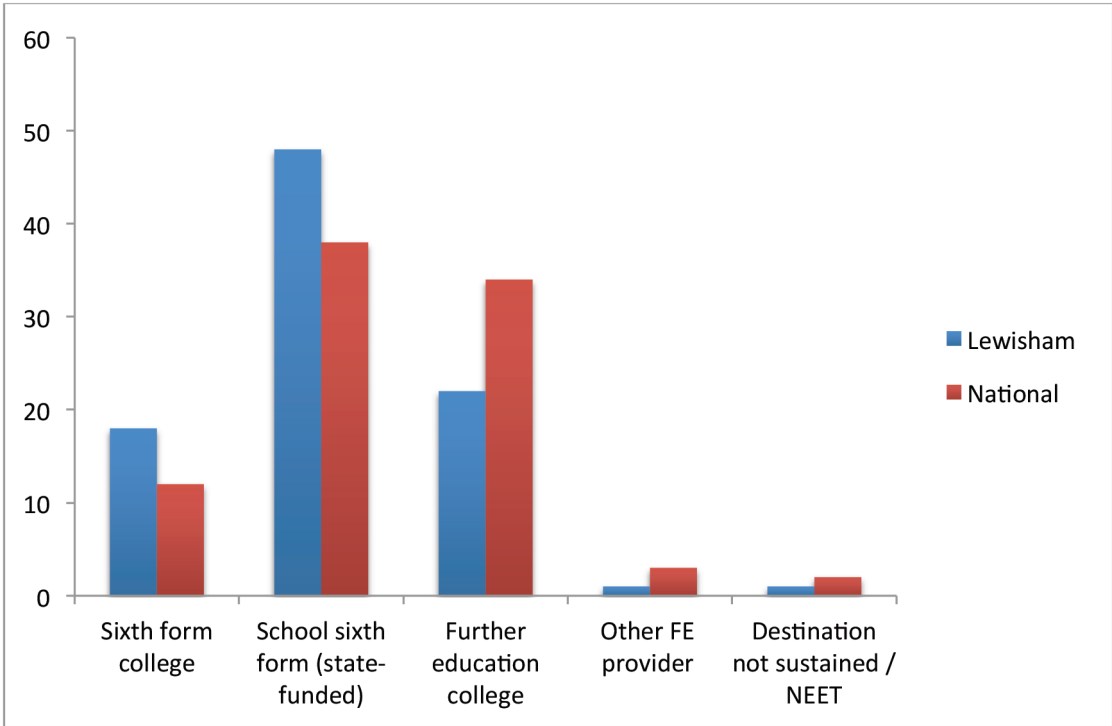
Lewisham’s post-16 sector

Ninety-one per cent of KS4 pupils went on to full-time further education in 2013/14, which is 1 per cent higher than the national average. Most of Lewisham’s KS4 pupils attended either a sixth form college, school-based provision, or further education college.

⁵⁰ This total includes post-16 students

⁵¹ Source: DfE SFS 16/2015, Schools, pupils and their characteristics, January 2015, LA Tables

Figure 12: Destinations of Lewisham’s students at post-16



Of Lewisham’s cohort of disadvantaged pupils, 51 per cent attend a school or college sixth form compared with 36 per cent nationally.

Eight of Lewisham’s 14 state-funded secondary schools provide Key Stage 5 provision. In addition, two further education institutions (one sixth form college and one general FE college) also provide KS5 provision. When translated into student numbers, the non-school FE sector dominates with 4,654 students attending either the sixth form or general further education college, compared with 1,986 students attending state-funded school sixth forms.

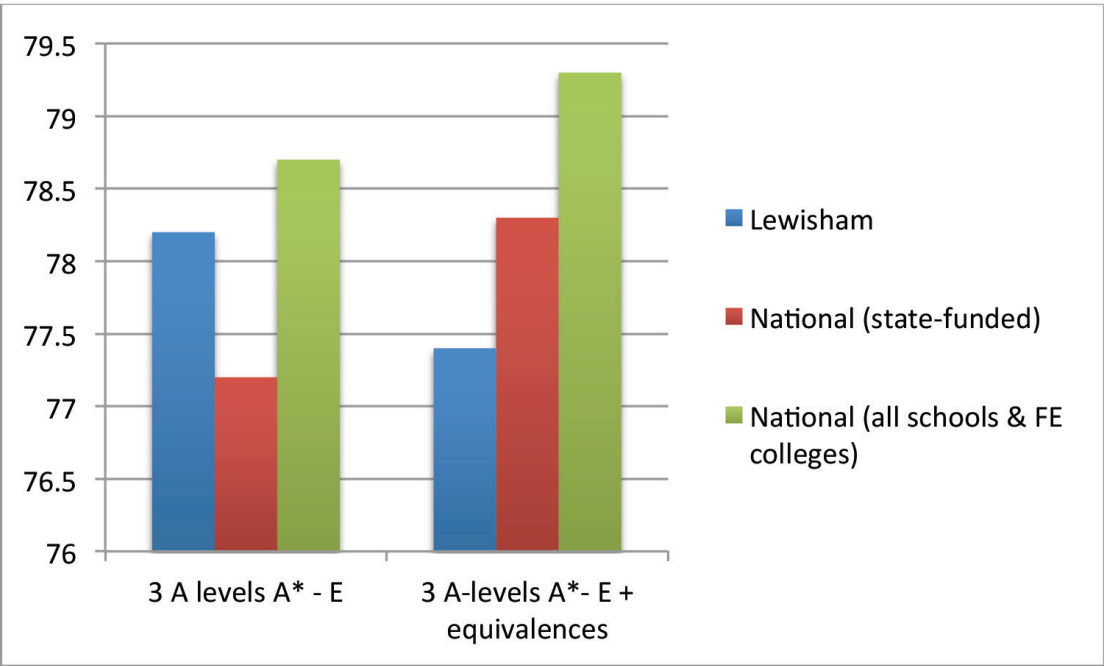
Performance in Lewisham’s further education sector is very variable. In terms of Ofsted judgments, three of the 10 institutions providing further education provision are either judged as ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’. Of those students attending a further education institution in Lewisham, 39 per cent attend one that is either judged by Ofsted to ‘require improvement’ or as ‘inadequate’. Two institutions are judged to be ‘outstanding’ and the remaining five are currently judged to be ‘good’⁵².

The two independent sixth forms within Lewisham achieve strong results in comparison with most state-funded sixth form provision and provide an alternative avenue of provision for some pupils on completion of Key Stage 4.

⁵² www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/download/pdf/32_ks5.pdf

The percentage of those students in Lewisham institutions achieving 3 A levels at A* - E grade is 78.2 per cent, which is 1 per cent above the national average for state-funded institutions. However, when taking into account those students achieving A-levels qualifications and equivalent qualifications (at the same level of performance) the figure falls to 77.4 per cent - 1 per cent below the national average.

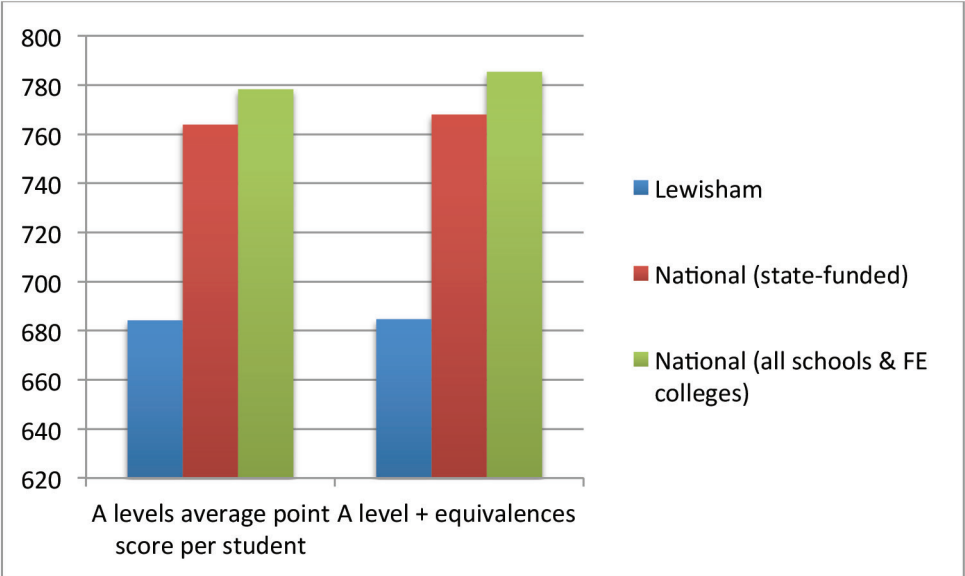
Figure 13: Achievement of students attending Lewisham’s further education institutions



Performance on entry to KS5 is below the national average⁵³. More stark, however, is the average point score attained by students on completion of A levels or equivalent qualifications. As the table below shows, Lewisham students perform significantly below the national average and are therefore placed at a significant disadvantage when looking to apply to higher education or to the jobs market:

⁵³ www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/download/pdf/32_ks5.pdf

Figure 14: Average points achieved by students at A level and/or equivalent qualifications



Given this performance it is also no surprise that the percentage of students gaining AAB or higher in at least two facilitating subjects is less than half that of the national average. Just 5.5 per cent of students attained this standard on completion of KS5, compared to a national average of 11.8 per cent of students in state-funded institutions, and 14.7 per cent of students in all institutions.

Students of Caribbean heritage perform significantly below their peers at Key Stage 5, with the average point score per student for this group being 588.5 points (against an LA average of 639.3points⁵⁴). Pupils of White British and African heritage perform above this and the relevant national average measure.

In terms of progress to higher education, 49 per cent of Lewisham students who entered an A level or other level 3 qualification went on to a higher education institution, compared to 62 per cent of such students across Inner London, and 58 per cent nationally. Eleven per cent of students went on to attend a Russell Group university (including Oxford or Cambridge). This contrasts with 14 per cent of pupils across Inner London and 17 per cent nationally.

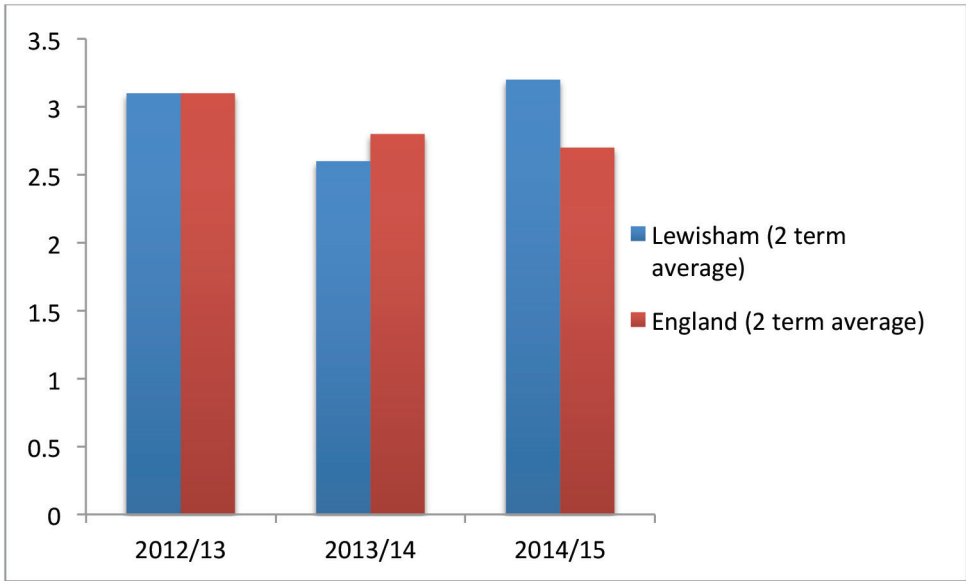
⁵⁴ N.B. These figures are taken from the Local Authority’s Post 16 LA Profile and include some qualification outcomes that the DfE methodology for vocational and A-level routes (cited on the previous page and chart) does not include.

Absence and exclusions

Absence and persistent absences

Lewisham has experienced a recent increase in levels of persistent absence in the primary sector, with the borough now being above the national average for this measure. This is particularly concerning given that persistent absence is a significant issue for the borough's secondary sector.

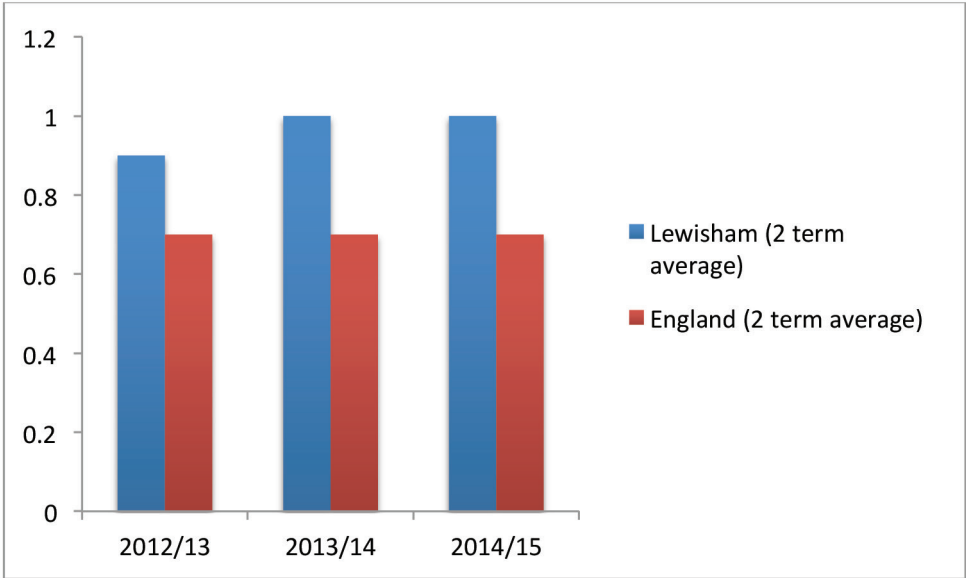
Figure 15: Percentage of persistent absences amongst primary-age pupils



At primary phase, Bangladeshi children have over **double** the level of persistent absence (7.2 per cent) compared with their national counterparts (3.3 per cent). In addition, white British, white Irish and mixed white and Caribbean pupils are higher than the national average for their groups.

The level of unauthorised absences amongst primary age pupils has remained high for a number of years, and is above the national average.

Figure 16: Percentage of unauthorised absences in Lewisham primary schools 2012/13 – 2014/15

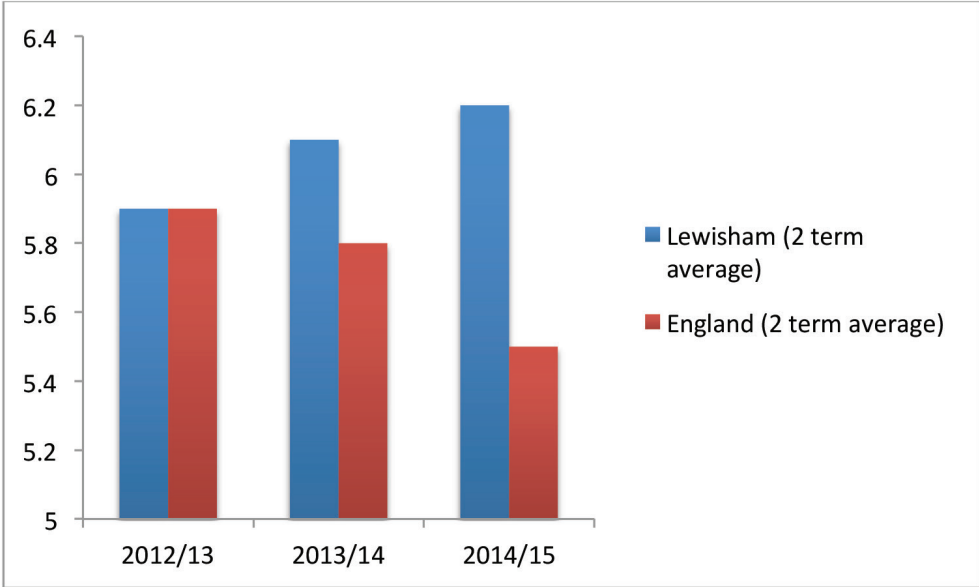


Lewisham’s secondary sector experiences very high and growing levels of persistent absence. Whilst levels of persistent absence have decreased nationally over the past three years, Lewisham has seen levels increase by 0.3 per cent. The borough is the worst ranking authority in both Inner London (and London as a whole) in terms of levels of persistent absence amongst its secondary pupils. The borough also performs worst of all against this measure when compared with its statistical neighbours.⁵⁵ In the secondary phase, white British students have almost double the level of persistent absence (11.3 per cent) as their national counterparts (6 per cent). In addition, mixed white and black Caribbean students (10.8 per cent) are higher than the national average for this group (8.3 per cent).

The number of unauthorised absences amongst secondary age pupils has also been significantly above the national average for the last three years.

⁵⁵ Autumn 2014/Spring 2015 School Census Data – DfE Statistical Release

Figure 17: Percentage of persistent absences amongst secondary age pupils



Persistent absentees are more likely to come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Three in four persistent absentees reside in super-output areas (SOAs) in the bottom three deciles for deprivation nationally, and seven in 10 were in receipt of free school meals at some point in the last six years. Pupils with special educational needs, many of whom are transported to and from school, were less likely to be persistent absentees than non-SEN pupils. One in two persistent absentees is in either Year 10 or Year 11⁵⁶.

White British pupils have almost double the level of persistent absences when compared with the national average for this group. In addition, white mixed and black Caribbean pupils are overly represented – with 10.8 per cent being persistent absentees (compared to the 8.3 per cent national average for this group).

Exclusions

Lewisham’s primary sector has experienced no permanent exclusions within the last few years. This compares to a national average of 0.02 per cent of the school population having been permanently excluded within each year for the last three years (2011/12; 2012/13; 2013/14). This is in stark contrast with Lewisham’s secondary sector, where permanent exclusion rates are almost treble the national average and are over double the percentage in Lewisham’s statistical neighbours. Permanent exclusion rates across Lewisham’s secondary sector have been above average for over six years running.

⁵⁶ Autumn and spring term 2014/15

Appendix 3 Review of secondary school performance in the London Borough of Lewisham

Michael Chisnall, 11 March 2016

Background to the review

1. This report was commissioned by Christine Gilbert to support the work of the Lewisham Education Commission. The brief was to analyse the most recent Ofsted inspection reports, and other key performance data, to identify any trends or issues that might explain the current performance of Lewisham's secondary schools.

Context of Lewisham's secondary schools

2. The 2015 5 A*-C GCSE (including English and maths) performance of secondary schools in Lewisham (51.9 per cent) is below the national average for all state funded schools (57.1 per cent) and the lowest of all London boroughs. The gap between Lewisham and the national picture is widening over time. This is despite the performance of Lewisham pupils at Key Stage 2 being above the national average for at least the last four years.
3. The majority of the most recent inspection reports for Lewisham's secondary schools make reference to attainment on entry to Year 7: four are noted to be around average, five below average and only one is noted to be slightly above average. Four reports made no reference to attainment on entry. The earliest inspection reports date from 2012; from this year Lewisham's primary school outcomes have been above average.
4. There are 14 relevant schools, including academies and free schools, one of which has not yet generated GCSE results. All of these schools have higher than average proportions of disadvantaged pupils, those from minority ethnic heritages, and those with English as an additional language. Nine of them have higher proportions of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs than found nationally.

Summary of main findings

5. Lewisham's secondary schools do not paint a strong picture in relation to GCSE attainment and progress. Not only are these below national averages, they are also in decline. Too many schools require improvement as judged by inspectors, although none is deemed inadequate.

6. In reviewing the most recent inspection reports and performance tables over a number of years, it is clear that there are several factors that are common to many schools and may well be having a negative impact on overall attainment. The local authority may wish to consider the following areas for improvement in its support for schools:
- pupils' progress in mathematics in KS3 and KS4
 - the quality of marking and feedback to pupils
 - the promotion of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
 - progress and attainment of higher ability pupils

Analysis of the most recent Ofsted inspection reports

7. Fourteen reports were analysed, dating from 2012 to late 2015. At their most recent inspection, two schools were judged to be outstanding overall, six were good and six required improvement. HMCI's Annual Report for 2014/15 reported that 74 per cent of secondary schools were good or better at their last inspection. Lewisham's equivalent proportion is only 57 per cent.
8. Most schools (9) maintained their overall effectiveness grade at their last inspection, two declined but only three showed an improvement. Of this latter group, two emerged from serious weakness and special measures.
9. Pupils' achievements were judged to be good or better in nine of the schools. Inspectors raised concerns about the promotion of literacy skills across the curriculum in three schools; either mathematics progress or numeracy across the curriculum in another four schools; and concerns about both literacy and numeracy in one more school.
10. The quality of teaching was found to require improvement in six of the 14 schools. It was outstanding in just two schools. The most consistent factor in why teaching was not of higher quality was that of marking. Inspectors reported that this was a weakness to a greater or lesser extent in 12 of the 14 schools; two of these references were linked specifically to marking and feedback in maths.
11. Behaviour and safety were reported as being good or better in 10 of the schools; in five of them they were outstanding. In two of these and a further two that required improvement, low level disruption was noted in some classes. This is clearly not a major issue for Lewisham where behaviour overall is good.
12. Leadership and management were judged to be good or better in 12 of the 14 schools. In four of them they were outstanding. Inspectors referred to a variety of strengths: the most often cited was effective governance (10 schools). Capacity for improvement was noted to be strong in six schools; in a further five, strong capacity for improvement was implied. In a minority of schools (mainly those requiring

improvement), the monitoring of teaching was noted to be weak; this was sometimes linked to the development of middle leadership.

13. In all the inspections, inspectors identified what the schools should do further to improve their effectiveness. The issues were varied but there was one issue that was identified in nine schools: that of the quality of marking. Progress or attainment in mathematics were cited in three schools as an area for development.

Scrutiny of performance tables

14. Lewisham’s performance using the 5 A*-C (including English and maths) measure has been below the national average for at least the last three years and the gap is widening. This is most pronounced when compared with state funded schools nationally. In 2015, the gap was 5.2 per cent, up from 4.8 per cent the previous year and 2.5 per cent in 2013. In 2015, five of 13 schools showed a decline in this measure from 2014.
15. Low and declining primary school average points score for the relevant years might explain this position, but this has not been the case. The table below shows Lewisham’s improving primary performance alongside the equivalent cohort’s GCSE performance five years on.

Figure 1: Relative performance from Y6 to Y11

Primary APS relative to national average for state funded schools		Secondary % 5 A*-C (E&M) relative to national average for state funded schools	
2008	-0.5	2013	-2.5%
2009	-0.4	2014	-4.8%
2010	+0.1	2015	-5.2%
2011	0.0	2016	
2012	+0.6	2017	
2013	+0.7	2018	
2014	+0.6	2019	
2015	+0.5	2020	

16. As primary performance has improved from a below average position, the same cohort five years later has declined in its performance becoming still further behind the national average. These figures do not take account of any inward or outward migration of Lewisham’s pupils in the intervening five years. Just two of the inspection reports referred to above noted high levels of pupil mobility.

17. Clearly, the upward trend in primary performance should impact positively on GCSE results five years later. This has not been the case up to 2015.

18. The performance table figures relating to expected progress in English and maths point to where there are some significant variations between schools and which might explain weaker overall attainment.

Figure 2: Expected progress in English and maths in Lewisham’s secondary schools over three years: relative difference in maths

	2015			2014			2013		
	En	Ma	Diff	En	Ma	Diff	En	Ma	Diff
National average	71	67	-4	72	66	-6	70	71	+1
LA average	70	62	-8	76	62	-14	72	71	-1
School									
Addey & Stanhope	61	52	-9	85	77	-8	77	74	-3
Bonus Pastor	75	74	-1	94	67	-27	68	72	+4
Conisborough	79	56	-23	80	53	-27	78	74	-4
Deptford Green	76	58	-18	81	67	-14	74	67	-7
Forest Hill	69	64	-5	75	74	-1	69	73	+4
HAHC	65	69	+4	75	74	-1	80	84	+4
HAKA	79	56	-23	80	60	-20	62	74	+12
Prendergast Ladywell Fields	45	53	+8	77	43	-34	56	59	+3
Prendergast	89	76	-13	88	79	-9	87	79	-8
Sedgehill	74	62	-12	67	57	-10	68	61	-7
St Matthew	61	68	+7	80	59	-21	81	64	-17
Sydenham	81	64	-17	71	65	-6	79	80	+1
Trinity CE	77	68	-9	69	49	-20	83	73	-10

Red – where the difference between En and Ma is greater than the national average

Green – where the difference between En and Ma is less than or reversed from average

19. This table shows some significant issues:

- The proportion of Lewisham’s pupils that make expected progress in English is similar to that found nationally
- The proportion of Lewisham’s pupils that make expected progress in mathematics is lower than average and the gap between progress in English and mathematics is wider than average. This has been the case for the last two years.

- In more than half of schools (9), the gap between expected progress in English and maths is wider than found nationally; in six the gap is in double figures.
- This maths issue has been the case in eight schools for the last three, or two out of the last three, years.

20. The performance tables also reveal another issue for Lewisham; this relates to the attainment of higher ability pupils. The national proportion of these pupils gaining at least 5 A*– C (incl En and Ma) has been declining slightly over the last three years. In Lewisham this proportion has also been declining, but at a faster rate than found nationally. In 2015, 86.8 per cent of Lewisham’s pupils reached this benchmark against 91.1 per cent nationally. The gap has widened tenfold since 2013. There are eight schools where higher ability pupils’ attainment in 2015 fell below the national average, and only two where it was higher. This is a weaker profile than in 2014 or 2103 where six schools had more able pupils attaining above the equivalent national average.

21. GCSE attainment (5A*– C EM) has declined in seven schools since their last inspection year, remained about the same in six. In only one school is attainment up since its last inspection.

Published inspection reports scrutinised as part of this review

Addey and Stanhope Secondary School (2012)
 Bonus Pastor Catholic College (2013)
 Conisborough College (2012)
 Deptford Green School (2014)
 Forest Hill School (2013)
 Haberdashers’ Aske’s Hatcham College (2014)
 Haberdashers’ Aske’s Knights Academy (2015)
 Prendergast Ladywell School (2014)
 Prendergast School (2013)
 Prendergast Vale College (2015; no GCSE results as yet)
 Sedgemoor School (2013)
 St Matthew Academy (2013)
 Sydenham School (2013)
 Trinity Church of England School, Lewisham (2014)

Appendix 4

Distribution of additional primary school places in Lewisham since 2008/09

School	2008 /09	2009 /10	2010 /11	2011 /12	2012 /13	2013 /14	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17
Primary place-planning locality 1: Forest Hill and Sydenham									
Adamsrill		√	√	√	√	Expanded			
Dalmain		√	√	√	Expanded				
Eliot Bank					√				
Fairlawn			√			√			
Haseltine					√	YR & Y1	√		
Horniman				√				√	
Kelvin Grove			√	√	Expanded		√		
Kilmorie		√	√	√	Expanded	√			
Perrymount			√			√			
Rathfern				√	√				
St Bartholomews					√	Expanded			
St George's			√					Expanded	
St Michael's						√			
St William of York				√					
Primary place-planning locality 2: Lee Green									
All Saints									√
Brindishe Lee			√			√			
John Ball		√		√					
Brindishe Manor			√						
Trinity CE						New provision			
St Winifred's						√	√	√	√
Primary place-planning locality 3: Brockley, Lewisham and Telegraph Hill									
Ashmead			√		√				
Beecroft Gardens	√				Expanded		√		
Brindishe Green									√
Edmund Waller			√					√	
Gordonbrock				√	Expanded				
Holbeach	√	√						Expanded	
John Stainer		√			√	√	Expanded		
Lucas Vale				√			√		
Myatt Garden				√					
Prendergast Primary							New provision		
Prendergast Vale					√				
St Stephens CE				√					
Turnham			√	√				Expanded	

School	2008 /09	2009 /10	2010 /11	2011 /12	2012 /13	2013 /14	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17
Primary place-planning locality 4: Catford, Bellingham and Grove Park									
Athelney			√	√					
Baring			√						
Coopers Lane				√	√	√	Expanded		
Elfrida					√		√	√	
Forster Park		√	√		√	√	√	Expanded	
Rushey Green			√	√	√		Expanded		
Sandhurst		√	√	√	Expanded				√
Torridon			√				√		
Primary place-planning locality 5: Deptford and New Cross									
Deptford Park		√	√				√		
Grinling Gibbons				√	√				
Kender			√	√	Expanded		√		
St Josephs				√	√	√		√	
Primary place-planning locality 6: Downham									
Downderry					√				
Good Shepherd				√					
Launcelot			√						
Marvels Lane						√			
Haberdashers Aske's Knights Temple Grove					√	Expanded			
Rangefield				√					

Appendix 5 Forecast of school places in Lewisham

Primary places - borough wide

Forecast year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
2014/15	3865	3708	3747	3545	3391	3231	2993
2015/16	3946	3877	3681	3683	3508	3390	3218
2016/17	3893	3968	3858	3628	3652	3514	3385
2017/18	3898	3921	3956	3807	3605	3667	3516
2018/19	3944	3921	3903	3899	3796	3613	3649
2019/20	4033	3957	3903	3877	3910	3777	3589

Primary places by planning area

Area name:	Primary place-planning locality 1: Forest Hill and Sydenham						
Forecast year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
2014/15	978	1025	1050	936	902	822	739
2015/16	1044	1009	973	950	885	848	761
2016/17	1035	1047	1001	956	939	884	844
2017/18	995	1040	1041	985	947	940	883
2018/19	1014	998	1031	1022	981	946	933
2019/20	1044	1018	998	1025	1026	977	942

Area name:	Primary place-planning locality 2: Lee Green						
Forecast year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
2014/15	390	401	317	345	363	341	309
2015/16	393	411	360	370	367	347	348
2016/17	391	397	411	353	368	370	348
2017/18	423	394	396	406	350	370	371
2018/19	431	427	396	394	408	355	370
2019/20	441	433	431	394	397	405	354

Area name:	Primary place-planning locality 3: Brockley, Central Lewisham and Telegraph Hill						
Forecast year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
2014/15	881	796	846	758	708	741	697
2015/16	943	923	853	830	737	748	714
2016/17	904	946	916	839	821	736	745
2017/18	961	907	940	903	830	822	735
2018/19	979	963	900	925	899	829	816
2019/20	1004	981	959	892	926	894	826

Area name:	Primary place-planning locality 4: Catford Bellingham and Grove Park						
Forecast year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
2014/15	695	602	669	637	640	575	510
2015/16	702	665	657	695	643	648	652
2016/17	698	705	660	647	688	639	645
2017/18	724	706	705	653	644	692	639
2018/19	710	727	703	694	649	645	689
2019/20	719	711	726	698	693	643	637

Area name:	Primary place-planning locality 5: Deptford and New Cross						
Forecast year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
2014/15	542	530	487	475	444	425	405
2015/16	512	467	479	467	478	419	413
2016/17	499	521	471	477	470	484	425
2017/18	453	508	525	469	480	477	490
2018/19	463	463	510	522	472	486	479
2019/20	477	469	459	509	526	473	485

Area name:	Primary place-planning locality 6: Downham						
Forecast year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
2014/15	379	354	378	394	334	327	333
2015/16	352	402	359	371	398	380	330
2016/17	366	352	399	356	366	401	378
2017/18	342	366	349	391	354	366	398
2018/19	347	343	363	342	387	352	362
2019/20	348	345	330	359	342	385	345

Secondary places - borough wide

Forecast year	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
2014/15	2360	2239	2330	2427	2087	1028	804
2015/16	2478	2372	2269	2332	2323	959	791
2016/17	2672	2501	2414	2282	2243	1078	749
2017/18	2816	2705	2554	2436	2204	1050	849
2018/19	2919	2843	2754	2569	2378	1043	821
2019/20	3038	2943	2890	2766	2509	1117	799
2020/21	2992	3063	2991	2903	2657	1167	847
2021/22	3130	3003	3074	3002	2913	1227	887