

Education Panel – 25 February 2015
Transcript of Agenda Item 5 – Assessing the Performance of
London Schools and Future Global Challenges

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Welcome to our guests that have joined us here in London at City Hall and that is Munira Mirza, Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture. Thank you, Munira. John Kennedy, Senior Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) from the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). Thank you, John.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Joining us via a video link from Paris we have Andreas Schleicher, Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Andreas, we know that you are available for about an hour, so we are going to start and ask you to take part with us today. Our focus here is assessing the performance of London schools, especially in the context of future global challenges, and we know of your work.

We know that you want to make a presentation and we have a hard copy here with us, so would you like to take us through the presentation? Then we have some questions for you of course.

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): First of all, thank you very much for your interest in our international comparisons. Just to say a couple of words about our global comparisons, you see a map of the countries taking part in the current Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) round [slide 1]. China is still quite patchy with only provincial data, same for India, so I did not mark them on the screen. You have about 86% of the world economy now covered through this global test. In our last assessment we tested around 500,000 students, they represent the 15-year-olds in the countries taking part.

In addition to the 65 countries we also have over 100 sub-national entities. For some countries we do have representatives at city level data. If you wanted to know what the performance of Madrid is we could tell you. We cannot yet tell you that for London, let me be upfront. That is not yet reliably possible.

Students basically take a test that is quite innovative in the sense that it is not just looking at whether students can reproduce subject matter knowledge but we want to look at the capacity to critically apply and use knowledge creatively.

We cover mathematics, reading, science, problem-solving skills to some extent, also financial literacy. That is the focus of the assessment. It is quite a long test, a lot of assessment material, because we are not only looking at the global ranking but we want to actually diagnose in detail where the relative strengths and weaknesses of students are. Then we collect a lot of information on the background of individuals, of parents, teachers and principals to get a global picture of not only how well systems do but also why, what is behind that and what the factors that distinguish them. Also, for example, when we compare countries it is important often to take into account the social and economic context in which students learn, teachers work and schools operate.

The reason why we cannot give you a really good picture for London is, as you can see, the blue dots are the schools in Greater London and we only have a very limited number of schools. So far testing London separately has not been part of the United Kingdom (UK) survey design. Some countries have done it, the UK

has not, so we just have the schools that happen to be sampled in Greater London, which I have marked here in blue.

What you see on the slide [slide 3], on the vertical axis you see the performance of schools, and on the horizontal axis the measure of the socio-economic context in which schools operate. What you see essentially on this chart, as you know, some of the schools in London do a lot better than their peers. You can see when you compare them with schools in a similar socio-economic context they come out really, really well, but you see others which do a little bit less. I would not dare to make any inferences as to the international performance of London. We would not include, based on this rather thin data, London in any sub-national comparison. For that we have quite rigorous procedure. It is a rough picture on this chart as we can derive it from the schools that took part.

How to resolve it? The easiest way is to simply boost the number of schools that take part in PISA studies. That is basically how most countries obtain their sub-national results. For example, the countries that have city-level data typically just boost the number of schools that are taking part. You see here, that of course, takes more resources and costs. That is one way to do it. We also offer schools, local authorities and cities a special version of PISA that they can actually use themselves to benchmark themselves internationally. The advantage of this assessment is that you get individual school-level results. You do not only get results for London but you can actually break that up by schools. That is basically it. Some schools in England actually use that now. It is a different kind of model of participation. Of course once you have this data you can also aggregate this data.

That is basically in a nutshell what we can offer you for the teacher. I must disappoint you right from the start, our current data does not allow us to give you any reliable data on the performance of London.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you very much. On the data that you have for other countries, do you see much difference in the education performance and attainment of the students from the capital city to children from the rest of that country?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Absolutely, you do see that. It goes in two ways. If you look at the United States, typically students in large cities do a lot worse than in the average across the country. In other countries it goes the other way around. It is actually quite a varied picture. Typically large cities are more challenged socio-economically and there are many other factors, diversity, all the kinds of factors that make it quite difficult. So potentially you can see that reflected in student performance results. There are some very, very good examples. In Eastern Europe typically large cities do a lot better than the country as a whole. Then you have the top performers like Hong Kong or Shanghai or Singapore, that are essentially city states that have the world's most advanced education system. It goes both ways. We published a little report that was called *Are large cities educational assets or liabilities?* There you can find an analysis of how this works cross-countries.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you, we will pick that report up. It is stated here on numerous occasions the fact that London students are, if you like, performing and attaining results at a better percentage level to the rest of the country. From what you have said that fits in with many of the European countries that are, if you like, in 'our group'.

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Again it goes both ways. You have some European countries where actually the large cities are a drag on overall performance. If you are interested in that kind of data we will be happy to share them with you. We have a policy brief on that available. It goes really in both directions. Again, I have not international comparative evidence, but when I look at the historical evidence London is an interesting case where it has actually switched. Traditionally you

could say that London did less well than the UK overall. Today London does better than the UK. It is actually a great illustration that those things are not fixed in stone. They vary across countries, they vary over time. Typically you can say in Eastern Europe the picture is quite clear, because that is where they used to put the more prestigious schools but it is not true for the western or certainly not for the southern parts of Europe where it often goes the other way around.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. If we were talking, based on the PISA evidence, about English students, are there a couple of highlights you could give us in terms of English students' performance against other OECD countries?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Yes, unfortunately that is not such an encouraging picture, if you compare England a whole with other countries at a similar level of economic and social development. It is at best an average performer and we have actually seen very little change over the last period. Basically the picture today is, at best, as good as it was in the year 2000. Some people say there has been a decline in performance. You need to look at this in every nuance but certainly the picture has not improved and it is just so-so basically. Whereas, we have seen, for example, in other European countries, if you looked at Poland, if you looked at Germany, The Netherlands, Italy and Portugal we have seen really very significant improvements and we have not seen that in case of England overall.

That is just the results for England as a whole. We do see one encouraging development. It is generally the link between social background and learning outcomes that used to be very strong in the UK actually now is just around the average level. Another finding that is quite intriguing is that most of the performance variation that we find in England actually does not lie between schools but often lies within schools. About two-thirds of the performance variability lies within schools, which is very different from other European countries, which means that you find a lot of under-performing students even in schools that overall do quite well. You find a lot of well-performing students in schools that do not come out so great. Schools overlap to a large extent, and that is a picture that stands out quite a bit. The performance challenges for UK schools are often within schools rather than between schools.

The third factor is perhaps that you cannot say this is just about poor students from poor neighbourhoods. In fact, you find some of the schools that are in quite privileged areas, in terms of the socio-economic context of students in schools, are not so great in their results and some school in very difficult circumstances actually coming out really, really well. You could see that even on the chart for London with the few PISA schools that we have, that some of the schools are very similar on the horizontal axis in terms of the social background actually have quite different performance results. That is an interesting finding too.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That is excellent. In a way you are saying that we have no room to be complacent if we are so-so in the point with other OECD countries?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Yes, that is a fair assessment. Again if you look at national data you would probably have a much better story to tell about London, but that is not something I can speak about, because we do not have that measure internationally. What would be interesting is to see how well London performs against other world cities. That is the kind of comparison you cannot currently make but that would be quite interesting to see, not comparing London with the rest of England or the rest of the UK, but actually comparing London with whoever you consider your peer comparator is now.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): As a capital city, if we are in a competitive place with New York, Paris and with other world cities, that is a reasonable comparison to want to make, is it not?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Yes, absolutely. In fact that is why more and more countries in PISA collect up national data. When we started PISA we only had countries. Now, as I said, we have over 100 regions or cities or whatever that actually do want to make that kind of comparison. In some countries it makes a huge difference. The most prominent example is Belgium. You have the Flemish part of Belgium that is one of the world's best performing education systems, comes really close to the top, and you have the French-speaking part of Belgium that is below the OECD average. They both pay teachers the same salaries, they both have similar class sizes, they both have a similar economic context. There are sometimes very, very big performance differences between different entities.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): The point that you have made about the challenge within schools and how that is particularly relevant in England is one that has been raised in terms of you could recognise how much we ask our teachers. Because you are asking one teacher to be able in a classroom to work with the most gifted and children who need additional attention. Do you find that in other world capitals?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Absolutely. The socio-economic challenges that students in London and the UK face are not unusual at all. In fact, on a global scale you would consider many students in London, that you might from a national perspective consider disadvantaged, consider quite privileged. The one thing I can tell you, for example, the 10% most disadvantaged children in Shanghai, and they come from families that have no housing that work on construction sites and live in very, very difficult conditions, these 10% of children, who are still better than the 30% most privileged children in the UK. The challenges are similar but the way in which cities and education systems address the challenges varies hugely across countries. East Asia generally being very, very strong to leverage the talent of disadvantaged students.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. On that note thank you for your answer to my question. I want to hand over to my colleague Darren Johnson.

Darren Johnson AM: Yes. What does the OECD see as the main challenges facing the education sector over the next decade? Are there any specific challenges that London in particular faces?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): I cannot speak to the challenges of London because, again, we have no separate data. When you look at the challenges of England, or of the UK, overall, raising performance expectation, but a lot of that is now on track with development of new curricular. What we find is that often students in England get quite good marks, even if their performance on PISA is only so-so. Therefore, there is a gap between what is expected of students and what students actually deliver. It would be the other way around in many high-performing systems. I think that is part of the story, raising expectations, attracting the most talented teachers to the most challenging classrooms. Again I would think London is a great example of that with London Challenge and these kinds of policies that you have done very much what many high-performing education systems are doing. I do not think it is true for the UK as a whole, at least our data shows that there is often a regressive relationship between teacher quality and the socio-economic context of schools. Allocating human talent. One area where --

Darren Johnson AM: Sorry. Do you think that has been one of the key reasons why the situation has been turned around in London and why there has been that big improvement, comparative to the UK as a whole?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Yes, some of the countries that have aggressively used policies to allocate human talent have actually been very successful. That is part of the success of Shanghai in China. They have basically used a kind of London Challenge model in the whole system over long periods of time and they have been dramatically reducing the between school

variation and also have one of the most steeply rising performances. Making sure that the teaching capital is at optimum use is a big challenge.

One thing where a lot of changes happen is the UK school systems used to be highly prescriptive by international standards. Now with the academies there has been a lot responsibility devolved to the frontline and that is potentially freeing up a lot of energy to challenge. That is what you were asking for. The challenge now is more to build a system around that, because one thing that we see in high-performing education systems is that, yes, they give a lot of responsibility to schools to the frontline. They also do a lot to ensure coherence across the system in terms of school standards, in terms of career structures, in terms of curriculum implementation. That is one of the things I would think that is important to complement a high degree of autonomy with a very robust and strong system. You have a very good inspection regime, at least in comparison with other countries. The work that Ofsted does is really remarkable. Many countries look to this. Again, you have a lot more responsibility in the frontline, so that capacity is really more important in your case than it is in other countries.

That would be in a nutshell what we can derive from comparative data. Obviously people in your country will be able to give a much more enhanced picture.

Darren Johnson AM: That is really useful. We appreciate the difficulties of producing a London-specific score, but is there anything you can say about how London performs internationally.

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): The limited number of schools that we have actually turn out to be quite similar to schools in England. You can see the trend, for example, that schools in wealthier neighbourhoods of London do better. When you plot the blue dots against the red dots the picture comes out quite similar.

Darren Johnson AM: There is no real deviation in patterns at all between what is happening in London and what is happening in the rest of the country in terms of general trends?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Yes. Let me put it like this: the number of schools that we have for London is too small for us to detect such statistics.

Darren Johnson AM: To do something statistically significant. Yes, I appreciate that.

Do you have any views on which countries we should be comparing to London, as part of its place in the UK? Why should we be looking at particular countries, if that is so?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): There are two perspectives on that. The big question of course is: what are the socio-economic competitors of London? That is one important perspective. The other one is some of those other cities and nations tell you what is possible in education. You could compare London with other regions that operate under similar social, economic and other circumstances and then see what they show it is possible to achieve. One perspective is basically to say, "Well, how does London compare against a city that you compared?" The other perspective is to look at this through an educational lens and actually look at top performers of the most rapidly improving regions and cities and see what makes them different.

Darren Johnson AM: That is useful.

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): I have not specific --

Darren Johnson AM: That points the direction of where we should be looking, so that is hugely useful. Thank you very much.

Murad Qureshi AM: I just follow up on the theme about the challenges before I actually ask my own question? One of the challenges in the English education system, let alone London, is learning foreign languages. Is that something that you see a discerning pattern between different approaches in your survey?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): We know the volume of foreign language teaching across countries, but we do not have any assessment results of foreign language skills of students. What is clear is that England, by a large margin, does not make the same effort that you would have in countries like Denmark, Sweden, The Netherlands and Germany in foreign language teaching, but we have no data on the results.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you for confirming what I suspected, because it is often embarrassing when you come across --

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): If you wanted to know our publication *Education at a Glance* puts out a comparative table every year where you can look at the share of instruction time devoted to a foreign language, but again it is just volume, it is not accurate.

Murad Qureshi AM: You have confirmed what I suspected. When you come across many Europeans you can clearly see they have other languages, apart from being very well versed in English. Interestingly enough the French who are settling here are opting out of the British education system and are setting up their own schools. Given their preferences for bilingual teaching I think that is a strong indication of a particular community making their educational choices.

I hear what you are saying it is a small sample. Does the sample base include what we call public schools and fee-paying schools?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): The PISA sample covers all schools for 15-year-olds in the education system. Yes, of course you see quite big performance differences. We did these comparisons between fee-paying and public schools in two ways. We compared the absolute performance, and that is quite a large gap, but when you control for socio-economic background you will be surprised how similar the performance levels are. In fact, we can no longer often detect performance variation. Therefore, I would not actually put too much importance to this.

If you are a parent, of course you buy the advantage that comes from the social background. If you look at this from a family policy perspective the performance of fee-paying schools is almost not measurable, at least from the PISA data.

Murad Qureshi AM: Good, because that is another suspicion. You certainly see that in New York, a city that we often compete with.

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Yes.

Murad Qureshi AM: You have answered the question I was meant to be asking you, which is: do you think any London data can be produced by the OECD by your presentation? Can I turn it around another way? Is there any way that the Mayor and the Department for Education (DfE) can help you break down that data in that way and be more useful to us?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): It is really up to you. The easiest way to do this is like what other countries are doing. In 2015, this year, the next PISA round will take place and you just need to boost the sample to get a minimum number of schools to make those kinds of comparisons. Mechanically it is a straightforward process really. The DfE and agencies that run the PISA assessment in the UK should not have any technical difficulties with this. That is the easiest way.

The alternative that I presented, the PISA for School is more laborious. You would basically have to go separately to schools and so on. That has an advantage because you get individual school-level data, but it is a much more complex process.

Murad Qureshi AM: OK, so the DfE and London would have to essentially buy in to the PISA scheme and increase the sample size and make that comparison more worthwhile for us.

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): All right.

Murad Qureshi AM: Yes? OK.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Also, Andreas, can you just confirm the timescale? Because it feels to me like there are a couple of recommendations coming out of this meeting but we need to know more about timescales. What is the timeline that you are working to?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): The PISA 2015 assessment is going to take place in September this year. If you want to cover London in that you would almost have to immediately move to a decision for this because the samples are already drawn so you need to boost them now. This is something that is really quite critical to do.

If you wanted to use the PISA for Schools model you can do it at any time you wish, so you can make those comparisons a year later or two years later. I think there are many possibilities. If you want to stick with the easy way you just increase the sample size for London. Then a decision would really need to be imminent. We have asked our colleagues who actually run the assessment and they tell us it is in the middle of the process of drawing this up.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes. Regretfully, it sounds as if it is too late for that particular involvement, but hopefully for the future.

Andrew Boff AM: Could you tell me what would be the kind of sample size you would be looking for in London? The number of schools that would be?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): A very good number of schools is around 50. With 50 schools we can not only tell how well London performs but we can give you a lot of insights into the school factors that drive the success of London. We can tell you how a school success relates to social background, the school factors. 50 is a good number. Most OECD countries that assess regions or cities use that as a reference. Some have larger samples and get more resolution, but it is very good figure to do something useful with the data.

Andrew Boff AM: In your earlier presentation you gave a reference to the amount of time that it takes to do the tests themselves. What is the time commitment for that school that is selected to test?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Yes. That is a good question. You have a two-hour test. Basically the way we test a lot of material in only two hours is that we

distribute the material across students. The students do not get exactly the same test, it is a kind of rotated matrix-sampling approach. It is two hours for the test of the students plus three-quarters of an hour for a context questionnaire. You can basically budget for three hours of individual student time for 15-year-olds. Then we also have a questionnaire for the schools but that does not take a lot of time.

Andrew Boff AM: That is all 15-year-olds in those target schools?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): What we typically do is we select a sample of them. You can do all of them but it is not necessary. Typically it is enough to have 35 to 40 students sampled in a school. That gives you a good picture of the school results.

Andrew Boff AM: Right. That must take a fair amount of teaching time as well for the supervision of those tests?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Yes. Basically it is a two-hour block really. The burden is more on the students and less on the teachers. Typically we also have an external administrator, so the burden for a school is really picking students, sampling them and putting them in a classroom and then the rest is --

Andrew Boff AM: Picking students? It is not every student, it is a selective number of students who would be tested?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): That is your choice basically. We only require 35 students per school, but some countries choose to select a larger number.

Andrew Boff AM: OK, do you have rules about which 35? Does that have to be randomly tested?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Certainly. Both the schools and the students are randomly selected.

Andrew Boff AM: You alluded earlier to the various cultural differences that there are with regard to the outcome of these tests. Of course there are very, very different cultural practices in different parts of the world about education. Do you think it is fair to compare, for example, a 15-year-old in South Korea to a 15-year-old in London? Bearing in mind the huge cultural differences that there are with regard to education and the cultural practice of extensive out-of-school education that takes place in South Korea.

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): This is a good question, the question of fairness. You can ask the question: is it fair to compare a child from a poor family in London with a child from a wealthy family in London? I think the question of fairness is one you can ask, but I also think you can ask the question of relevance. At the end of the day the students in London compete for the same labour market, so it is not fair maybe to compare them but it is quite relevant. I believe the same holds globally.

The other argument, I would always be careful about culture. If culture could drive the outcomes we would see the same picture year after year after year. The remarkable improvement of performance in Poland or in Shanghai or in Korea, those countries did not change the culture over the last year, they changed what they did. In Germany, my country, they are closing their performance gap. They were able to reduce the gap between immigrant and non-immigrant students by half. That is really about policy. Therefore, I am very cautious about attributing things to culture, given the amount of change that we have seen across the world. Vietnam, ten years ago they would not be anywhere on the map of international comparisons. Today they do

pretty much as well as an average European country. Again, they leveraged their assets better than many European countries do. That is really my answer to that.

Andrew Boff AM: What value is the comparison?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): The comparison shows countries what is possible. You can benchmark your own performance against similar countries. Your education system today is your economy tomorrow. It is actually a very relevant comparison to see where your education system performs today. I think the comparative perspective is more important than a truly normative perspective. You can say we measure typically change by time - we become better than yesterday. I do not think that is a very relevant perspective. The more important one is: are we improving faster than anyone around us? That is only through comparisons that we can do that.

Andrew Boff AM: I see the point, but taking a measure of say, for instance mathematics, which England certainly is not the best in the world at, there still seems to be a popularity for the English education system, despite the objective data that says that the English education system, if you purely judge it in terms of scores in mathematics, language and science, is not as good as other parts of the world. Yet, for some reason, the English education system seems to be one that is quite attractive around the world. Can you explain that?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): I am not sure it is true for school education. Foreign participation in England's school education is around average. What it is true for is in university education. There we can clearly see that the UK system is one of the most attractive in the world, only second to Switzerland and Australia. About schools, that is not what our data actually shows.

Andrew Boff AM: Sorry, about? I missed that last piece of what you said.

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Yes. When you look at foreign participation in the English school system, England comes out on average where you do see a very attractive part of the education system with higher education. There you have a very high share of international students, much higher than many other countries.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you very much.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Andrew picked up some of what I wanted to understand. You are saying the sample size had to be 50. If I counted all your blue circles, we only have about 21 at the moment so we need to more than double the number of schools for it to be statistically significant.

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): That is right.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Do you use the same schools every time you do the survey, or are they always different?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): They are always randomly sampled.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You randomly sample them, you choose the schools. Do some schools say, "No, we don't want to take part"?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Yes, it happens but actually school participation is quite positive. In 2003 we had a big problem in the UK that there were too

many schools refusing to take part in the PISA results and then we could not use the results. Since then school participation is really very good, so we do not get a lot of refusals.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you. That is helpful.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Andreas, whilst you are with us I just want to bring the Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture into the debate.

Munira, you have heard what Andreas has said. One of the things that he has just said that stands out for me is “the education system of today is your economy for tomorrow”. The Mayor aspires to a world-class city, a world-class economy. What is the Greater London Authority (GLA) doing to estimate that we, if you like, are competing on a world-class basis? I was just asking the question about comparing ourselves to the world cities that we are competing about. What is the GLA’s take on how they make that assessment?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We have already stated that we would like to try to identify what London’s ranking would be in the PISA tables.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Oh good, are you going to sign up right away?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We have explored it and our team at GLA has been working with the DfE colleagues and with PISA officials as well. The method that has been suggested, which is to essentially increase the sample for London and go with the existing framework, we did look into that and the costs were actually quite prohibitively high. I would need to ask the team to explore the costs that are set out in this presentation. It may be that they are in fact lower. When we first looked at it we were told that it would be quite high, about £1 million, to do the administration, to recruit the schools etc. I accept that it may be that we need to look at it again, because it may be that that can be reduced. What we have done instead is explored with the DfE whether we can link the PISA results across the country and in London to the National Pupil Database and to infer from that what London’s rankings would be - which is a projection. It is not the same kind of analysis as directly sampling the schools. The early examination of that suggests that the London ranking would be about 17, the UK ranking is about 27, so London would be higher in the rankings.

The principle is one that we agree with, that it makes sense, where possible, to see how London compares with other world cities. Our view is that PISA is one important indicator and one important measure. Of course it is not the only one and there are other ways in which we assess the success of schools or otherwise. It is valuable and useful to know how in certain subject areas and in certain aptitudes London students perform. In that sense I think the international comparison is meaningful.

Andrew Boff AM: Can I just ask Munira a question, if that would be possible? We ask our teachers to do an awful lot of testing. Are you absolutely convinced that these figures are valuable enough to take even more time out of teaching and put into testing for something that is not going to be relevant for that school?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): It is interesting how many school have expressed interest in doing the test themselves, because actually they --

Andrew Boff AM: Schools might be, because you talk to the heads.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes.

Andrew Boff AM: The teachers are not so happy.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes, and that is possible.

Andrew Boff AM: Because they are the ones who are told to do it.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We are talking about a relatively small sample. It is open to question. The route that we were exploring would mean that you would not be asking any more schools to do the test, you would be inferring from the National Pupil Database. We have not really gone down that route up until now, but we could explore it. Obviously we would have to think about what the impact is on the schools and on the teachers. Would the data be qualitatively much more robust to do it that way, or would we be satisfied with the indirect way of doing it?

Andrew Boff AM: Teachers are often told, "It's only three hours. It's only another three hours" consistently, consistently, consistently another little thing they have to do.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I do understand that teachers are overworked, yes.

Andrew Boff AM: You have to be absolutely certain that this is absolutely going to be worthwhile if you are going to ask teachers to do any more. Sorry, point made.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes, point made.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: If it is only going to cost up to £75,000, which is what Andreas [Schleicher] has told us, to get the extra 29 schools that we need, is that something that you would commit to putting money in so that you can actually start to compare London on the world stage and to help this Mayor and future Mayors in terms of where we need to put some investment in?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We would certainly explore it. I cannot commit to anything right now, as you understand.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It does not sound that big a sum.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): It sounds like it may be worthwhile. The point about PISA is that lots of people do look at it, not just in the education system but generally when businesses are looking at where they might locate, what the skilled workforce is. These are things that add to our ability to promote ourselves as a city with a highly-skilled workforce and population and a dynamic forward-thinking education system. It does have a value. £75,000 is much lower than we had originally anticipated so we can have a look at it.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Andreas [Schleicher], I hope you heard that.

Andrew Boff AM: Munira, perhaps they will factor in the costs of the teacher time to administer the tests in the schools. It might be £75,000 going to PISA but it will also mean at least a day of a teacher's time, times 50 schools.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Andrew, I am sure that that is something that will be picked up by officers in their discussions.

Andrew Boff AM: Good, because I would like to see those costs worked.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That is the place where that discussion on those details will take place.

Back to you, Andreas. I was just saying that I hope you heard what the Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture had to say about they are currently exploring working with officers at the DfE to see if there is the possibility of some engagement with the PISA score. Is that encouraging news for you?

Andreas Schleicher (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD): Yes. It is really a decision that needs to be made in London, in England. We support all countries, all entities that want to do that assessment. We will do everything we can to actually facilitate it but really the decision in yours.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Members, any last minute --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: No. Fantastic. Thank you very much.

Darren Johnson AM: Thank you very much.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): I did ask our other guest if he had heard anything that he wanted to make reference to but he has not and we are going to go on and hear from Ofsted now about how London compares with other English regions. Thank you very much Andreas.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): I will write on our behalf and thank Andreas for his involvement today.

Let us go on to the second part of our conversation. John [Kennedy], thank you for joining us. As I said earlier, you are the Senior HM Inspector of Ofsted. I want to now ask Caroline Pidgeon to start our questioning about Ofsted's view of London schools' performance.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, John, for attending today. London does continue to outperform other English regions, but obviously performance there is quite widely across the city. What is Ofsted's view really of the strengths and weaknesses in London's performance?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): I would like to start by just saying a little bit about the structure within Ofsted in relation to London, because that might be helpful. I was introduced as the Senior HMI. We actually have four senior school HMIs in London. It is helpful to say that structurally there are 33 local authorities and we have aligned each of the four senior HMIs to different local authorities. For example, I have responsibility for 11 local authorities. I am in much more contact with those 11 than I would be with some of the others. That is an important point because it comes back to answering the question about what we are doing.

There is no doubt about that London is doing particularly well, and certainly over the last ten years. The interesting thing about London is the positive picture is a bit deceptive. I would say the two underlying areas that we are particularly looking at: the variation between local authorities and the variation within local authorities. I was quite interested in the comments about within school issues as distinct from 'between school' issues, because I think that is actually a similar point in relation to London. Certainly if I look at the local authorities I am linked to, there is quite a significant difference between performance in relation to different local authorities. I think some of that is linked to capacity. Some of it is linked to funding and how funding is directed. Some of it linked to the quality of the systems that different local authorities have set up. For example, the way schools work together, the degree of challenge and support, which is one of the reasons why London has done particularly well, that combination of challenge and appropriate support.

If I can just give you a couple of examples without naming specific authorities. One of our key focuses is on schools that require improvement and we have put a lot of energy into that over the last 18 months. It is quite interesting, in terms of the current picture, those schools are re-inspected quite quickly within 18 months to two years. The London picture for this year, for example, is about 78% of those schools or thereabouts, because we are inspecting as we speak, are actually converting to good. Therefore, a key question is: what is it that is bringing about a change in a fairly short space of time for schools that have not been doing well to be becoming good?

I can think of one local authority that is not one of my 11, where three of the primary schools have gone from 'requires improvement' in a short space of time to 'outstanding'. There is something about what they are doing that we need to capture more. They are just a couple of early thoughts really on this issue within London. There is significant variation. If I was to pick one group that I think are not doing as well as they should in London, and there is always a danger and naming groups, I think the white British and particularly the white British disadvantaged pupils are not doing as well as they should. It is quite interesting, when you look at some local authorities, the performance looks really good when you look at it in terms of the big picture. When you start looking at how individual groups are doing it is not as positive.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: When you say "white British pupils" is that often particularly boys?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): I do not actually think it is a gender issue. There are issues with white British girls in London and white British boys. I am not sure it is helpful to say it is a gender issue. The issue is that particular groups, who when you look at the performance of some schools just do not do as well. There are a number of local authorities where they do not do as well as they should, and that is part of our job, to challenge in terms of both inspections and the way we work with local authorities. Our inspections, for example, focus very strongly now on how groups are doing and the narrowing of gaps. That is a key focus in all our inspections nationally, but also in London.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: How are you looking at challenging local authorities to do much more to support these under-performing groups?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): Again, if I can just use my experience as probably the best example. With all of my local authorities we have, in the main, termly meetings, where I meet with representatives from the local authority. We look at their performance, we get their perspective on how schools are doing and we also have our perspective. We have quite a frank discussion about where things could improve, because sometimes it may not be a secondary school issue, it could be a primary school issue. More importantly, it could be an early years' issue. One of the points about disadvantaged, in particular, is if children start off very young with significant disadvantages, if it is not tackled quickly enough it then becomes an issue further down the road.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Can you give any specific example of how you have managed to improve the attainment gap for some the boroughs you work with?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): There is a danger here that I would be taking the credit for something that I am not wholly responsible for, but I can think of one local authority where the proportion of good schools, say, four or five years ago was far less than it is now. One of the discussions we have with them is the level of scrutiny that they exercise in relation to schools. One of the challenges with all that is, to some degree, depending on the structure within the local authority, they may have less of oversight because of the atomisation of free schools and so on. There are some issues within local authorities about the level of scrutiny that they can exercise, which I think is a much bigger issue.

Certainly probably the best example is the 'requires improvement' work that we are doing. To move over three quarters of the schools in a short space of time from 'requires improvement' to 'good' is actually quite a significant achievement and that is working together with local authorities, in terms of the level of challenge.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: When you are getting a significant improvement often it is the leadership of the school, it is the head. Is it sometimes that one of the issues why a school might be, I do not want to use this word, 'failing', but doing less well, is because of the leadership that is coming from the head. How often is it that you remove the head and put in a new and perhaps more dynamic head to make that change? Or can you work with existing heads, if the school is not doing so well, to make that transformation?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): You are touching on a really important point. I would say that there are a couple of key fundamentals in a school doing really well. The head is certainly one. I think it is the leadership of the school, sometimes it is the head teacher, and sometimes moving somebody on is helpful. However, it is leadership at all levels. I would say that one of the areas where some schools have struggled is around middle leadership, because it is how strong leadership is at all the levels, particularly middle leadership, and we focus very strongly on that in our inspections. I think that is one of the keys. The level of governance in the school is another key. I would not like it to be seen as one person in isolation, because take the head out of the picture and actually sometimes schools that may have seemed to be doing quite well are not actually when you take the head away from the picture. The quality of the teaching is at the heart of most schools that are really doing well.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Of course. Anyone want to come in on the back of that?

Andrew Boff AM: Just on that, how granular can you be with regard to those? I have heard feedback about how during an Ofsted inspection, when all teachers go positively bonkers, when an Ofsted is coming up. I have heard feedback to say that the Ofsted inspector is absolutely right in judging the school, but they also seem to be on, say, a quarter or a half-an-hour in a classroom inspection, seem to be judging the individual teachers as well. To what extent are you granular in those inspections?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): We have moved away quite significantly, I would say, in the last 12 months from totting up individual snapshot visits to lessons to arrive at a judgement on the quality of teaching. For example, we might pop into say 50 lessons during an inspection and the assumption might have been that we just add up the sum total of each 20 minutes that we spent in. There has certainly been a far greater emphasis on looking at teaching over time. In other words, what does the work scrutiny tell us about the impact of teaching over time? We actually have removed a single grade judgement on our evidence forms to grade a particular lesson in relation to teaching. We are looking at what is the sum total of, not just the individual 15 minutes we spend in a listen, but the impact of teachers over time. As you say, teachers do react differently because there is an inspection. That does not necessarily capture the essence of the teaching in the school. We look at a whole range of evidence to get a judgement and I think we have moved quite significantly away from totting up individual 15-minute snapshot visits.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: We know for London we have ended up with three Regional Commissioners. How are you working with them to ensure there is a really joined-up message on performance management?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): It is probably fair to say it is early enough days, but we have met with them a couple of times now and we are meeting with them individually and as a group. For example, we have a meeting pencilled in for March, when two of the Senior HMIs will be meeting with the three Regional Commissioners. It is early days to get that relationship right between the knowledge that they

have and the knowledge that we have, and the respective roles, their understanding of individual school issues and our understanding, that actually takes a bit of time to understand the relationships. We are working well, both in terms of individual issues, but more importantly for me is the big picture strategies to improve performance within London. There is no doubt about it there is still a way to go for London to sustain and improve and it is about how we can work together, particularly around the issues like economisation and atomisation and academy chains. We can hold local authorities to account at one level, but actually the whole area around groups of academies, for example, is something we are looking at much more closely.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Obviously you would expect as a London Assembly, covering the whole of London, we just think it is ridiculous to have three Regional Commissioners. We would rather have one focussed on London, because I do not think we feel, let us say, bits of London have that much in common with places like, for example, the Isle of Wight. Do you think that there also should be one London Commissioner? Would that make your work easier?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): I probably should not answer that question, but in trying to answer the question what I would say is there are four school Senior HMIs and we actually work extremely well together. The issue is the degree of communication we have with each other and the big picture strategy that we have between us four and the Regional Director. That is working well. I am not saying that is the model that would work well for Regional Commissioners but it is possible to have four people looking at aspects of London. The key is to ensure that the big picture is looked at in a coherent way. I do not think I could comment on whether or not there should be three or one.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is fine, thank you very much.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Can I just ask, when you talked about assessments being made, we heard from our previous witness that the socio-economic and personal background history of pupils can impact greatly on their education. How do you assess that? I am the Governor of a school where it could be argued that that could apply to a good 60% of our children. How do you factor that into the attainment and performance of these children?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): In answering that question I would just like to pick up your last couple of words, because it is not just attainment in isolation - it is the attainment and progress. The point is the starting points are really important to have a clear understanding of where young people are starting from, their context and their background. While academic performance is critical, what is also critical is the journey they make from those starting points. I could name a number of schools in London where I have quality assured inspections, because that is part of my job, I go out and inspect the inspectors, for want of a better word, for a day. I know of some schools in London that have very significant levels of deprivation and very significant challenges and yet their performance is outstanding. The reason for that is the way the school has understood what they need to do within their own resources to support families that are finding it more difficult.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That is why I wanted to ask you the question, because the school that I have just spoken about, my personal involvement, we are an outstanding school. It actually speaks to the fact that you can have a majority of young pupils who, if you like, live within circumstances that many of us just could not imagine, but they are performing well and attaining their results. We know that that is an excuse that is used by other schools and their pupils do not perform. What I am trying to understand is if you are seeking to find out what are the skills, what are the factors that apply in those schools with that sort of profile that are outstanding, so that that can be shared by other schools.

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): Two things I would say. The word 'expectations' comes to mind for me because I have been in a number of schools where the expectations of the pupils are not high enough from the word go.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Right.

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): Equally, the expectations of the teachers are not high enough. A culture of high expectations is critical. I would also say that the schools that do particularly well are those who use their funding particularly well, and actually scrutinise how it is used and its impact. For example, pupil premium funding is directed at schools. For me the critical thing on inspection is not how much money the school has and how they are setting up the balance sheet, but actually what difference it is making. There are significant differences between schools that have a similar profile, similar amounts of additional funding, and yet the impact is quite significantly different. It is about how they are using that resource in the most effective way.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes, expectations.

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): I would say it is critical.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes, especially if you can match that with parental expectation, because again there is this idea that within some cultures or groups the expectation of a parent is low. I do not find that so common as people would like to make it.

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): That is why I made the point much earlier about the early years because one of the critical factors in early years and school provision is the partnership with parents and how schools are tapping into that and supporting parents. Sometimes parents who actually really want to engage with the learning do not feel they can because of the way the school has set up their systems.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you.

Murad Qureshi AM: John, can I concur with something you said earlier about letting down white working class boys in particular. I belong to a generation where I saw a lot of them opt out at Easter in the fifth form. Then they had at least the safety of being a postman, a cabbie possibly or barrow boy. I do not think those options are possible now.

That is not what I have been asked to ask here. It is really about how schools can actually stretch the most able and also close the gap between the most able and those who may not be so able.

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): I mentioned the disadvantaged white British, but the other challenge is around the most able. While London is not doing too badly in that area comparatively speaking, as a region, it is still not doing enough. What we are doing very closely now on all our inspections is looking at the degree to which the curriculum first of all is matched and hitting the most able. I mentioned teaching and leadership as key factors but actually the quality of the curriculum is also a key dimension.

For me - because I do a lot of secondary inspections but do not do as many now with my senior role - often the issue is how quickly the school is picking up the information from primary in terms of the most able and tapping into that in terms of the quality of the curriculum at Key Stage 3, but also ensuring that young people coming in Year 7 are not just marking time and going back over stuff they did when they were in primary. One of the key challenges is just not the curriculum at the tail-end where at Year 11 additional support goes in but

throughout secondary, from start to finish, that actually there is a very strong focus on how each pupil is doing.

Certainly when it comes to inspection we look at what we call the conversion from different levels, from primary. The aggregate score can be deceptive. You might say they are doing pretty well, but actually when you start unpicking those who did really well in Year 6 are they converting? Those who got a Level 3 are they -- whatever. I think that is one of the key challenges.

Murad Qureshi AM: There was historically a lot of streaming in schools. There were many schools that were supposedly comprehensives but clearly streaming people on their internal ideas of attainment. Is that something that you think is continuing and should be encouraged? Is there scope still in the classroom to actually have the mixed ability teaching which I remember the Local Education Authority (LEA) being very keen on in my time?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): Again, there is a danger in plumbing for a particular type of model, just as much as there is a danger in saying there is a particular type of teaching. We have moved significantly away from implying that. There is also a danger in saying a particular model of class structure will make a difference. I have inspected schools and popped into lessons where there has been a mixed range and the teacher's school has been able to pull out the strengths in different groups. I have been equally in classes where it is all the same set, all the same ability set, and actually some of them were struggling.

For me it is about the skill in a teacher and those other adults in a lesson in identifying how each individual is doing, irrespective of their ability, in relation to their skill set, knowledge and experience. It is quite difficult in my view because I taught before became an inspector. I taught in Ireland. It is a really difficult skill to do but some teachers are particularly skilled at doing it. Therefore I do not think it is just a simple answer about mixed ability or not. That would be my view.

Darren Johnson AM: Yes, obviously we are getting a much more diverse system of schooling now. Whatever our views on academies, free schools and so on there is a real diversity. What role do you see for the Mayor in challenging the different providers to ensure a consistent high quality education service?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): My view, and it would be fair to say it is consistent within the Ofsted, is there are a couple of critical things really in any oversight arrangements. One is the quality of the data and information that you have about providers. What is essential for anybody overseeing performance is to have accurate granular data about how schools are doing in different areas. I think that is one.

Darren Johnson AM: Do you see a specific role for the Mayor there or are you comfortable that that is dealt with by Ofsted?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): There is a lot of information around. The question often is how you are pulling that information to identify the key issues. Going back to the point about white British, for example, the RAISEonline information for a local authority will give you quite specific information about how different groups are doing. Sometimes the issue is not so much the data is not there, it is the level of scrutiny and what areas are being looked at. It is about identifying who are the groups that we want to pay particular attention to; which kind of groups are we most concerned about; and is the data giving us the picture we need as regularly as we need to have it to challenge.

Darren Johnson AM: Of course, the GLA can look beyond specifically education data and look at the wider demographic context and so on. Is that a useful role for --

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): Sometimes it is not just education data, it is about other data that fit into that. For example, the engagement of young people in education, represented by their attendance figures. It is not just about academic stuff. It is about tracking people through it from start to finish because that is sometimes where there are weaknesses. You look at Key Stage 2 data, you look at Key Stage 3 and 4 data. You look at beyond secondary data. The journey of the child is not analysed in the way possibly it could be to look at how many young people who have done particularly well in primary in London schools, have gone on to do equally well in secondary, and have gone on beyond that.

Darren Johnson AM: In terms of training and further education and so on.

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): It is that journey. Data does not really look at that journey in the way that possibly could be done.

Darren Johnson AM: As the system has become more fragmented do you see that there is more of a leadership role for the Mayor now on education compared to say 2000 when the GLA was first set up without any specific educational function within its statute?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): I would say that with greater fragmentation and diversity within any system there needs to be greater accountability, however that is translated into practice. There is a role within any city where there is fragmentation within schools and different systems set up to ensure that there is accountability for performance.

Darren Johnson AM: Are there specific things that Ofsted would like to see the Mayor and the GLA doing in terms of supporting the education sector in London?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): We already have some very good links with the GLA. Mark Phillips, one of my senior colleagues, works quite closely around what is being with schools. Often the issue is schools will say, "Can you point me to where there is particularly good practice?" Some of the schools that I am linked to where there might be an issue, for example, about say Key Stage 4 English, they might be saying, "Look, we are struggling. Can you point me to a school that is in similar circumstances to us who have actually managed to succeed?" Regarding those schools I was talking about in Hounslow who have moved from 'requires improvement' to 'outstanding' I think there is something that can be captured there that could be beneficial to other schools. While recognising that every school is different there are some things that can be transferred.

Darren Johnson AM: Thank you.

Andrew Boff AM: How can we be sure that it is not a change of the inspection regime? An awful lot of schools have flip-flopped from one to other, better, worse, worse, better. In that time has the inspection regime remained absolutely constant or have you changed any of your criteria about how you assess schools?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): That is a fair question. If I go back to the 'requires improvement' example within the space of 18 months that is within the same framework actually. It is fair to say that example shows that within the same framework, with a particular focus on improvement, you can bring about change.

You are right, there have been different frameworks. What has been constant is the emphasis on teaching and the emphasis on outcomes. There will be a new framework in September.

Andrew Boff AM: There seems to be a whole lot less 'excellent' schools than there were, is that right? Is that just a perception?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): I do not have the exact statistics in front of me. I certainly know, because I look at the --

Andrew Boff AM: 'Outstanding' not 'excellent'.

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): I look at the London data. I can think of a school in London that was judged to be 'outstanding' in November that I inspected about six years ago that was 'good' and knocking on the door of 'outstanding'. There are a number of examples of schools in London that actually are 'outstanding', irrespective of the changes in framework.

It comes back to what are the key common factors in all the frameworks. The emphasis on teaching without question of a doubt. The emphasis on leadership that was mentioned earlier. There is a stronger emphasis on governance. There is a stronger emphasis on the gaps and looking at how different groups are doing which might make it more difficult for some schools to be 'outstanding' that maybe in the past might have been, because we are looking at how all the groups are doing as distinct from the big picture in terms of every school can be doing really well but masking the fact that as small group are not doing so well. These are some changes. Safeguarding has been a constant feature in all of our inspections and that does make a difference to how we judge some schools as well.

It is the case that something like 69% of schools in London some years ago were judged to be 'good' or 'better' and it is now around 80%. It is not just about changing frameworks. There is a far greater emphasis on performance. The data does not hide that.

Andrew Boff AM: Are your responsibilities to free schools exactly the same as they are to all other schools? There is no difference in regime, there is no difference in --

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): No difference. Free schools will be inspected after their fourth term of opening. It is one of my responsibilities to look at scheduling within London so I can assure you that the free schools due for inspection in the next few months are lined up for inspection. The framework is the exact same. The only difference is sometimes the size of the school affects the tariff, in other words the number of inspectors. Some of the free schools are actually quite small and some are quite big. There is a difference. There is less data for some of the free schools so you are not reliant on a historic pattern of data, emphasising all the more actually it is what you see on the ground that makes the difference.

The range of inspection outcomes for free schools in London has been from four to one, whether it is from 'outstanding' to 'inadequate'. The range of outcomes is not unlike the range of outcomes for other schools.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Whilst we are here can I ask you this question? I was recently having a conversation with Member of Parliament who is involved in education policy. I was a bit concerned about his comments in regard to London because he felt that London was doing so well that they could be left alone, if you like, because the issue was with the rest of the country. Given what we have heard that we are, as a country, so-so in the international league and we cannot compare our capital city with other capital cities, do you not think that is a very complacent view? Would you share my view that is really complacent and a possibly dangerous view to hold about London's education?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): I cannot comment on the view. However, I would say there are two dangers for London, in my view. One is complacency and the second is not recognising that

there is significant variation between how different local authorities are doing. We have just carried out, and it has been published, a review of school improvement services in a London local authority. That is the first we have done in London. They have been done nationally. The very first one we have done in London has just been published last week. That is indicating that we recognise there are some local authorities that can do better. We identified strengths but we also identified that it could do more for the young people in the local authority. We have continued to do that.

Even though London is doing well -- if you look again at the disadvantaged white British, a significant number of them do not do as well as their peers in other regions. It is not the case that in every level of performance London is doing better than the other regions. That is not accurate.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): There is really as much to do in London for its specific issues of variation as there is to do with the rest of the country?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): Yes. London is different, obviously, because of the nature of local authorities and the geographical closeness of some makes it more difficult sometimes to do things. There are also greater opportunities, actually, for local authorities to work together, for example.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): I certainly welcome hearing about your officer link with the GLA because with the Mayor's leadership, led by Munira [Mirza], there has been a number of initiatives that have clearly been well received. Are you aware of those? If they were to be repeated is there worth in closer collaboration with Ofsted to ensure where that money or resource is going to the specific area, guided if you like?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): I suppose what would be helpful is annually we look at our priorities on the basis of the previous year's performance and where we are at. There is probably some sense in looking at what we have identified from our inspection work as key priorities just to make sure there is coherence between them. I am not saying there is not, but just to make sure. For example, we are identifying schools that require improvement where there is really good practice. It is helpful to look at how we might use that information together. I am not implying that we do not work together but there is probably more we could do, I would say.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That synergy would be welcome because it would make sense. If something makes sense then people then can look to it and say that is good practice, wherever that practice is.

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): We have had three secondary schools that have gone to 'outstanding' from 'requires improvement' in 18 months. It is much more difficult to turn a secondary school around in a short space of time. It is quite interesting to look at what was it in those three schools that was quite significant. One of those schools was inspected not that long ago.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): One of the things that is missing is case studies, is it not? Not particularly identifying the schools, but again giving others encouragement. There is not a lot of that about, is there? Schools want to keep --

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): In our annual report actually we did pick one of those schools in the local authority which had gone from 'requires improvement' to 'outstanding'.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Good.

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): It is in there because it is in the public domain. It is a school in Hounslow. It was quite interesting looking at the factors that brought about change. The loose

federation with another school was quite instrumental in bringing about change. We have named schools but obviously we have to be careful about how we do that, and we got agreement from the school for that fact.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): You have talked about governance and you did not mention governors. You mentioned that governance and governors are part of the governance of a school. Do you think enough support is given to support governors in their role? For instance, I will give you an example, I find RAISEonline excellent because it gives me an idea about the questions I should be asking. If I did not know I would be going there and going all over the place. Nobody told me about that, or they did and I did not hear it. Do you think there is enough support for governors so that they can be a player for the better part in their role with the governance of a school?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): I would say it probably varies from local authority to local authority if I am being frank about that. I do think there is a greater scrutiny on governance and governors when we inspect. That has a knock-on effect because there is no doubt that when we focus on something in a school inspection it does bring about a greater focus on it at every level. We are reporting on governance in a way we did not say three years ago. There is quite specific reference to governance in all our school reports. There is a conference, for example, coming up reasonably soon in London where I am speaking at about how we can work more effectively with governors. Sometimes it is about governing bodies being clear about their responsibilities and asking what is their role because sometimes there is confusion about is the role strategic or is it, sometimes, too operational. When we inspect we put some quite focused questions on the nature of the governance in the particular school. There has been greater emphasis on it and it is making a difference. Certainly in any of the work we do with schools requiring improvement there is a very strong focus on governance.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you very much. Any other questions? No. I have just got one other. Can a school be too big? We, as Members of this panel --

Darren Johnson AM: When we went to Barking.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): -- we were enthralled because we went to the glorious Gascoigne Primary School - and the rest of the country knows about Gascoigne now because they have been featured on a television programme - and it is over 1,000. What was the number?

Darren Johnson AM: It was a primary school with over 1,000 in Barking and Dagenham, was it not? Yes.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): A primary school with over 1,000. Does Ofsted think large is good or small is better?

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): I have seen some very, very good small schools and some not so good small schools and vice versa. I inspected, a few years ago, one of the biggest secondary schools in London, 2,100 something, they had that kind of number. It is not so much the size, it is actually --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): How it is run.

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): -- the structure and particularly the layers of leadership, how well constructed they are. It is much more difficult and challenging the bigger the school is. I would not want to imply for a moment that a big school cannot deliver the goods. It is about the structures that provide support.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): We were inspired by what was going on at glorious Gascoigne. John, can I thank you very much. So informative.

John Kennedy (Senior HM Inspector, Ofsted): Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): All the best with the important work that you do. Thank you.

Now to our Deputy Mayor, thank you. You have been informed as well, have you not?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes, very interesting.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Very interesting. You are so polite though.

Andrew Boff AM: Ms Mirza, what does the Mayor see as the key future challenges to improving the educational attainment of all children in London? Are his programmes sufficiently well targeted to help both stretch the most able and to close the gap between the less and the most able?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Just to echo what John [Kennedy] has already said, obviously London has performed extremely well in recent years. The particular issues are about narrowing the gap between usually the most socially disadvantaged and most advantaged. That is something that has narrowed over the years. London has a much narrower gap than the rest of the country. We know that continues to be a problem. That has knock-on effects in terms of the economy and workforce and so on.

There is a particular challenge around stretching the most able. That is something that our education inquiry really emphasised. Up until recent years the emphasis had, for understandable reasons, been about trying to raise those at the lowest level of attainment. One of the things that we believe strongly in London is that the education system has to cater for the most able, partly because that is what parents look for. Parents do expect schools to be able to cater to all abilities. Also those are the students who then become the ones that go on to further education and higher education. We have placed a lot of emphasis on that.

Then there are particular challenges around certain types of students. Those in alternative provision (AP), special schools and so on, which are areas that we have looked at and we are doing a bit more work on which I have to talk about.

In terms of our programmes generally, you are aware because I have talked about them at length, the majority of the programmes that we work on are about trying to address teaching in the classroom and improving the grassroots network between teachers to help them to share good practice, the things that John [Kennedy] has just been talking about. The London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF) is about focusing on the ten core subjects. Some of those projects, there are 106 in total, are about raising literacy and numeracy, particularly for those who are struggling at the bottom. A large number of them are also about stretching ability for those at the B, C level and getting them to As and A stars. Our programmes - LSEF, the Gold Club, the London Curriculum - are about trying to support everyday teachers in the classroom, as well as the leadership of the schools. Of course, there are more things that we would like to do. We have limited resources like everyone else. We are targeting those areas where we can probably achieve the most, recognising that GLA is one of a number of players who are supporting schools. We think that is where we can add the most value.

There are other programmes that we are working on regarding resilience amongst young people, as well youth programmes, music, sport, mentoring. There are other projects that we are developing around careers advice and linking businesses with schools, which we are working on with the London Enterprise Panel (LEP) which, again, I am happy to talk about.

Andrew Boff AM: I am checking, you have just answered one of my questions. A number of your LSEF funded projects have been running for a couple of years now. Has it given you time to form an indication as to how they are doing, how that money is being performed, the benchmarking, the achievements over that period of time?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We are not talking about results yet because it is too early. Lots of the projects will have started but they would have taken time to recruit schools. According to our timeline they are still in the middle of delivery so it is premature to start talking about results. We have monitoring meetings. We go along and visit projects. We know how well they are recruiting. We get some initial feedback. We have consultants whom we have brought in to do the meta-evaluation as well as evaluating individual projects. The projects are recruiting at the numbers we hoped for. Some are exceeding their targets. Some of them will need some support which we have expected. We feel confident that it will have a real impact. The anecdotal feedback, and feedback from our partners and stakeholders, is that these projects are being well received. They now reach 1,200 unique schools in London which is a very large number of schools that are benefitting from it.

Andrew Boff AM: What is the monitoring regime for the spending of -- obviously this is government money. Who monitors how that money is being spent?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Sorry, the monitoring regime?

Andrew Boff AM: Yes.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We have a team at City Hall. Like any other fund we would --

Andrew Boff AM: How many in that team?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I cannot off the top of my head --

Andrew Boff AM: A guess, ballpark. If you have two either side it does not matter.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Ten.

Andrew Boff AM: About ten.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Fifteen. There are -- I am trying to get a signal from my colleague.

Caroline Boswell, Head of Education and Youth, GLA: There are four people in the team.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): There are four people in the team. There are 17 in total in the team. In terms of actually working on the Fund there are four.

The thing that I would say is there are dedicated staff working on the Fund and the monitoring. Actually it is a project that has involved pretty much everyone in the whole team. We work very closely with a lot of partners as well.

Andrew Boff AM: Of course.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We have an expert advice group which Mark Phillips from Ofsted sits on who are also involved in the overview of the whole programme, and helped us when it came to making decision very early on. There is quite a considerable infrastructure around the project.

Andrew Boff AM: How many schools benefit from LSEF funding?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): 1,200 unique schools are benefitting at the moment.

Andrew Boff AM: 1,200?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes.

Andrew Boff AM: I am going to ask you a question about one particular one then. Do you provide funding to the Cuckoo Hall Academies Trust?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes, we do. They are part of a project regarding, I believe, literacy and core knowledge.

Andrew Boff AM: How is that monitored financially? Is that working OK?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): It is monitored like all the other schools.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Why have we gone to an individual school?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): If you wish to explain or I can. There has been some --

Andrew Boff AM: Please.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, we need on record why you have chosen this school, Andrew.

Andrew Boff AM: I want an idea of the monitoring regime.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Why this particular school?

Andrew Boff AM: I will come on to that.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Can we have it before the answer, please?

Andrew Boff AM: It has obviously received a letter from the DfE with regard to its financial controls.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That is fine. We have got that on the record.

Andrew Boff AM: I want to know whether or not any London based funding that we are awarding is at any risk there?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): It is monitored like all the other schools. All our monitoring so far means we think the money has been spent properly. Obviously because of what has

happened we are keeping a very close eye on it. At the moment, as far as we know, there is no reason to be concerned about the money that we have invested. The project seems to have met the requirements so far.

Andrew Boff AM: Right. Of those 17 they would be actively looking around the 1,200 projects that there are and ensuring that money is being spent properly? It is just that team of 17 looking at the 1,200 schools and monitoring the money for those 1,200 schools?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Just to explain. The Fund is going towards 106 projects. Those projects will include a number of schools. They are based often around a hub model. There may be a lead school or a lead organisation. Imperial College, for instance, is leading a very extensive programme with schools on science education. We will monitor the delivery of the project. There are four dedicated people in the team who are allocated projects. They monitor them. They do the visits. They check the financials, the due diligence etc. That is probably about the right structure. It is comparable to other GLA administered funds.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you for that. A couple of questions about Championing Careers Guidance. An interim evaluation report has found some supportive evidence of the value of the Mayor's intervention which is great news. Do you have anything else to add to that given that was just the interim evaluation?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): This is just an interim so the full results are due out. There are a number of different lessons to come out of it. One of the most interesting ones is that each school has a different model which suits them. This points to the fact that careers advice and engagement with business is not a one-size-fits-all model. Often schools have to think about their particular circumstances, the kinds of partnerships they have already, how they want to grow them. The funding that we have provided has enabled a lot more schools to focus in a more dedicated way on this area. It has given them capacity so they have been able to pay for resource to actually focus on career support which is quite difficult if you have got full-time teaching staff for them to do that. We have been heartened that the results so far seem to be positive but we await the final report.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): I was able to visit one school and for a small amount of money it was absolutely amazing how important that specific extra bit of funding was in enabling the pupils to actually be informed about career choices which was fabulous. The funding, remind me, was it LSEF or was that European Social Fund (ESF)?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): For Championing Careers Guidance?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): That was actually our funding originally set aside for the Academies Programme.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That is coming to an end, is it not?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes. That was always intended to be a three year programme, actually four years, sorry. You are right, we are developing a programme with ESF funding potentially to expand on some of the lessons in that programme to expand it to a wider cohort of schools.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): This will not then just stop once that Academy pot dries up, you will be doing some extra work using ESF funding?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes. Our intention is to do more strategic work across London. That is why we are working with the LEP on using the ESF to develop more extensive links between schools and business.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That particular project --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): That was always time limited. That was a four year programme. It has been a very useful learning experience and exercise.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): The components of that project will go on, it might be called something else but you have plans to fund that type of activity?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That is good to hear.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): It may be slightly different because obviously we have to evaluate how the project has gone, we have to learn the lessons, and we may want to refine the models. We are exploring with the LEP and with the London Councils and others how a more strategic intervention might look. The sentiment, the spirit of it, we would hope to continue in some way.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That is in the absence of really no national career guidance being available.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): There is national career guidance available but for young people it is not quite face-to-face and there is no additional funding for schools. It is our response, in a way. How we wish to respond in the London context, because there are so many opportunities we think it makes sense to join things up because of the role of the Mayor.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): It is good to hear that some work is being done to identify good practice and roll that into funding proposals for the ESF.

In terms of your advice to the Mayor, what is your thinking about what the GLA education 'ask' is for the next comprehensive spending round? You were able to get a valuable amount of money that did some good work, the LSEF. Are you proposing to go to government to get similar amounts?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): You are asking me to give away all my secrets.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): I mean a, "Yes, we are thinking about" would be encouraging.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Of course we are. Of course, we are in an ongoing conversation with the DfE about what is happening in London, what the needs are. We made it very clear all along that the Excellence Fund was always intended to be a three year programme. We have asked all our projects to look at how they might continue in the longer term, so how they embed the principles of their learning and make them sustainable. We will have some extra GLA funding to further support the legacy of that fund. Of course, we will go back to government and we will share with them the lessons from the evaluation. Depending on what happens in the next parliament we would like them to continue to support

what is happening in London. There will be other 'asks' that we will make around capital funding and school places and so on. That will be part of it.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): A last question from me on this subject. You will know the questions I have raised with the Mayor during Mayor's Question Time. The answer from the Mayor on most things to do with funding these areas is that there is working with the LEP. What I cannot find is what specific discussions the LEP is having around those things. If you follow the information coming from the LEP they do not talk about education, they talk specifically about skills.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We are having conversations with members of the LEP and their sub-group on this, particularly around a careers offer or a careers programme. I am very happy to send more details about that. It is not just vocational, although that would be a big part of it. It is more about the strategic links between businesses and schools and children at a younger age, not just at the age they are making decisions about GCSEs and so on. There are quite a lot of conversations happening. There are quite a lot of designs of programmes which we can share with you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes, because you have picked up a point that we got from John [Kennedy] that it is not just at the last two stages of senior years that you need that link. Links should be starting at that handover period between primary and secondary because that is where you are going to capture their hearts and minds.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We have very good examples of schools that do that. We also have a website called London Ambitions which we want to develop and turn into a sort of shop window on what businesses offer to schools and vice versa. We know there is a lot of goodwill in the business world in London. People do want to work with schools and want to offer mentoring or work experience and placements. Sometimes, because it is a very large and very fragmented system, it is not so easy to know how to approach schools.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. I have got some questions about work that we have done in the last two sessions, just a couple of questions for you.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you, Chair. I just want to come back to the career advice point. For a number of years I have been going to an event held by the Bangladesh High Commission celebrating the achievements of the lads and lasses in GCSEs and A levels. There will be an event this Sunday in Camden. I have seen over a number of years kids in Tower Hamlets do spectacularly well in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and Advanced levels (A). When it comes to getting into a job there is another barrier there. I am not sure that has been opened. Even though the schools are near Canary Wharf, and what have you, they are not getting in. That is actually the reality. I do not want to fob them off, pat them on the back and say, "You are doing well and you will have a great future". I do think there is a critical role there for a persuasive mayor to open those doors. I have not seen the evidence in this case. I dare say this weekend's event is going to be taken over by other events. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government [Eric Pickles] will be down there.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): I want the question.

Murad Qureshi AM: The question is can I see evidence that has happened in this end of town? It is not a part of town I know particularly well but I can certainly see a picture in a number of years where the kids who have done what you can realistically expect of them in their circumstances and it has not materialised in jobs that you would normally attain if you had those qualifications if you were somewhere else.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Can I just understand the question. Are you asking for evidence that they have not achieved the jobs, or evidence of --

Murad Qureshi AM: Yes, the jobs. I think I have got Andrew here agreeing with me.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I just want to understand the question so I can answer it.

Andrew Boff AM: One at a time.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Munira is right in the sense of this panel's work. What was that question about? That is a question that we can address in another committee.

Murad Qureshi AM: True, it is about career advice.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Certainly careers advice is very important. The ability to experience certain types of working environments and recognising that there are doors open to young people. All those things matter. The best kinds of school business partnerships can do that. The best kinds of schools can offer the broadest type of careers guidance.

There are other issues as well about the choices that young people make and the choices that they make at GCSE and A level which affect the kinds of degree choices they make, the universities they go to which are then able to go on and get certain types of jobs.

It is a piece of research we have not done extensively in London but I know that there are other organisations that have looked at this. We know for instance that a lot of ethnic minority students will prioritise certain types of degree over others. Those are highly competitive at universities. Therefore they are at a slight disadvantage because of the choices that they are making. It is not their fault but we recognise that there are factors. These are all things that good careers guidance can help those young people with, we hope.

Andrew Boff AM: Really? I actually think that careers advisors contribute about the same to society as telephone sanitizers. I cannot --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I am not saying careers advisors. Sorry, can I clarify? I mean schools that do careers guidance. That does not necessarily mean you have a professional careers advisor, although some schools might choose to have one.

Andrew Boff AM: They are a complete waste of money, an absolute total waste of money and they have been decades. I have never seen the role of careers advisers and what they are supposed to do. What you have described in the scheme that you have here is somebody who is doing a mentoring project who needs guidance on to further education. I totally see the sense of that. What I do not see the value of, and spending any more money on at all, is careers advice because those places that they are going to, whether or not is further education or a job in the city, they are all going to be out looking for staff. They are going to pay for their own careers advice. They are going to be pitching to the young people who have got the qualifications. What proof have you that careers advice is any use whatsoever? I have never ever seen any.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Have we not just --

Andrew Boff AM: Mentoring I get but you have called this support for careers advice.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): The Championing --

Andrew Boff AM: This really is the question, why are you calling it careers advice when actually it is about one-to-one mentoring which I totally see the point of. I just do not see the point of the wider careers service and never have.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): If I can explain?

Andrew Boff AM: Yes.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I am not suggesting that our money is paying towards full-time careers advisors who do that professionally, although some schools might choose to do that for various reasons. There is, for example, a very good case for schools to ensure that the teachers in the physics department have interactions with businesses and can introduce their students to work experience in a relevant business organisation. That is the kind of connection and role that schools can play in introducing students to opportunities.

Andrew Boff AM: Why are the businesses not doing that? If they disappeared the vacuum would be filled by something supported by those businesses. Businesses are looking for staff. Are they not going to go to the local school --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We are talking about 14, 15 year olds. They might not necessarily go and recruit a top level chemist in a school at the age of 14.

Andrew Boff AM: Why not? We are stopping them doing that, are we not?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Sorry, why?

Andrew Boff AM: Surely those companies are looking to the future. Not to this year's employees but the employees they want in five years' time. Surely they should be building up those links themselves. Why --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): They would like to but going into a school cold is not so easy actually. Therefore there is a role for -- some schools and academy chains actually have very proactive careers --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Teams.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): -- teachers, people who go out and do this. What we are saying is that across London it is quite patchy. Some do it very well. Some do not. We think that we, because of the Mayor's role, have a very good connection with the LEP and businesses who want to work on a more pan-London level. I am happy to explain a bit more at length to you, if you want, about how this would work.

Andrew Boff AM: I would not mind.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): A lot of schools would agree, careers advisers and the old structure was quite staid and did not necessarily inform students about the full range of opportunities in London. There is definitely --

Andrew Boff AM: I know it has moved on.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): -- a good case for reforming it which I agree with.

Andrew Boff AM: I do not know it has moved on it is just that my careers advisor at school just advised everybody to join the army. That was his job. I know --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I am sure we all have individual personal anecdotes about terrible --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Members, can you stay with evidence-based questions?

Darren Johnson AM: In the Devolution Working Group last week, Chair, we heard evidence from the Deputy Chair of the LEP that careers service was something that he felt should come within the ambit of the LEP where it could be better co-ordinated. What would your response be to that?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I am sorry I am not familiar with those remarks. He was suggesting that it should be run by the LEP? The LEP is not a delivery organisation --

Darren Johnson AM: No, not run by it but co-ordinated and built-in with their wider skills work and so on.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): What is happening now is that a number of things are coming into the Mayor. The fact that we have more involvement with further education (FE) because we now have FE capital within the GLA. There was an announcement last week about skills devolution. The Mayor has a role now with schools. We obviously have an existing set of relationships with businesses. There is a coming together. There is a convergence. We have to work out through this process I have described of working with the LEP on what it would look like in London. For us the key points are that schools are not uniform. They do have different requirements. They work in different contexts in London. A one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate. They certainly need some challenge in this area. The idea that you just pay a careers advisor, a lot of schools recognise that is not sufficient but they also do not have resources to invent, individually, some whizz bang scheme. They would like to be part of something bigger. That is what we are proposing we do.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Can I say that certainly I was at the meeting yesterday where Caroline [Pidgeon MBE AM] got support from other Members about understanding the work of the LEP in more detail. I personally would like to take some questions about our findings to that meeting.

Andrew Boff AM: Chair, Darren put it much better than me.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): He did.

Andrew Boff AM: Much better because it is about whether or not schools should be --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: We are not offering training you know.

Andrew Boff AM: -- doing this and whether or not industry should be doing this. You did it so well.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): We will have an opportunity to get some further information from you and then put together a series of questions for when we have that session with the LEP in our next year following our annual meeting (AGM).

Thank you. That brings to an end the questions about a particular theme for today. Munira, if you can bear with us and just let me say I have got a couple of follow-up questions re sessions on complex needs that we did in our session on AP. Following our session on complex needs with experts on the support available for children with complex needs we wrote to the Mayor with a number of suggestions. His response acknowledged the longstanding challenge to effective multi-agency work in meeting the needs of children with complex needs. He noted in his response that there are so-called pathfinder local authorities for special educational needs (SEN) provision in Bromley, Bexley and Enfield. Do you have sight of any results from those boroughs, and if there is any more support the GLA could be offering the sector?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We have been engaging with those three boroughs for some time. They have shared with us some of the early evaluation of the work that they have done. There are a number of different interesting points. We are looking at whether we should develop our own work stream in collaboration with them. We are looking at that over the next month or so, so I am happy to report back when we have got a clearer picture on what we do. We think there is probably a role for us in disseminating some of the findings from those pathfinders to the other boroughs.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you for that. With regard to the Mayor's support for free schools, in particular those where he makes available a property, are you going to ensure that their admissions criteria are inclusive and that the building is suitable so that all children have access to facilities and they can participate in the learning environment effectively? This is one of the issues that came through from our inquiry on the needs of children with complex needs.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We make the sites available for free schools that have been approved by DfE so they have to comply with the national regulations to do with access inclusion. We do not have separate published criteria on those areas.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): To see really whether the admission criteria that are discussed between the free school applicants and the DfE you would have to look at each individual free school then, would you not, to see if their service is going to be --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes, they would not be approved by the DfE were they not to have those criteria. The DfE would be responsible for monitoring them, or Ofsted. They would fall into the same national monitoring framework as any other school. It would not be our responsibility to check that they had complied. There are other ways of doing that in London.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): We will go back on that one because there were some concerns raised about that.

In terms of our session on AP, again in our discussion with experts from the alternate provision sector we heard that attempts to re-engage pupil referral unit (PRU) students into college at 16 often ends up in early drop out. Experts argued that it would be more effective to provide AP until they are 18. This is likely to be a fairly niche provision, so is there an argument that this could be commissioned? Would you be supportive of an argument that says that this could be commissioned at a pan-London level?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We would have to look at it. We have very good relationships with the AP sector. We could talk about this with them. It is likely that there would be quite an implication in cost and resource so I could not say right now what I think our position is on it actually. There is a broader issue in London about high drop out at the age of 17 and people taking courses and it not being appropriate which we could wrap this up into. A more strategic look at the post-16 field.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you for that. Again, we will continue to keep an eye on that.

We also heard that the Commissioners sometimes do not have the confidence to engage with some alternative providers because not all can meet high standards as set out in the Ofsted framework. They wanted the GLA to support the sector to create a pan-London AP quality assurance guide mark. Is this something that you would be prepared to look into?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): There are many alternative providers in London. What is being suggested is quite an extensive role for the GLA which would be unusual. We are not an inspector and we are not a quality assurance agent. We have, through our Gold Club, developed some criteria for outstanding alternative providers this year. That will take place this year. We can identify very good provision. The work that we are doing so far with APs is to share good practice and to support other providers to learn from those outstanding providers. Perhaps it is something we could raise with this London Education Group which we are now participating in which various agencies like London Councils and London Leadership are on. We can talk to them about a strategy around AP and I can report back.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Lovely, or we can drop you a note about that.

My last question is the --

Andrew Boff AM: Can I just come in on that note, please?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes.

Andrew Boff AM: I am hoping if you do entertain the idea of setting any kind of guide mark testing or anything else, just to go back to my previous contribution, you think about the impact that is going to have on the workload of teachers. That any additional regime does not result in our teachers being asked, once again, to justify politicians' actions by devoting time to filling out figures rather than teaching kids.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I have to take issue with that. The testing regime is partly for the benefit of those students, for schools and for parents. I do not think they are simply just a result of a politician trying to justify their decisions. I feel strongly about that. I have to record that.

Andrew Boff AM: All right then, but I would ask you to consult widely before you come to that conclusion because teachers --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Anything like that, of course we would.

Andrew Boff AM: Teachers are sick to death of being told that they have got to change the regime again, a new batch of systems to fill in, and a new batch of tests. None of these things are about educating kids. They are all about fulfilling politicians' vanities.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): A sidebar from comments from Andrew, that does not reflect on the question that I asked on behalf of the sector in terms of what we heard them say and your response to that is on the record.

Our report response to *London Learners, London Lives*, which I suppose you saw the Mayor's answer to and wrote it yourself no doubt. We welcome the fact that the four action recommendations have been received and the Mayor agreed to follow them up. What the letter did not tell us about was any timescales. Once you

have thought through the plan we would welcome a copy of that so that we can then see how we can monitor those recommendations. Is that something you would be willing to do?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes, we will be doing a kind of monitoring progress report about our whole education programme around April time anyway. In advance of that we can set out what our milestones will be.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): What the process is?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes. Thank you very much. Any other questions to Munira? No. Munira, thank you as ever. Really, some really good news and praise to be given where praise is due, thank you for your work in this area.