

5: Excellent Teaching And Leadership; Building Capacity In London's Education System

International research evidence consistently finds that the quality of teaching is a primary driver of educational outcomes.¹⁶⁶ England is no exception to this, with one study finding that being taught by a 'high quality' rather than 'low quality' teacher adds almost half of a GCSE point per subject to the attainment of a given student.¹⁶⁷ The same research confirms, though, that it is difficult to identify which teachers will be most effective.¹⁶⁸

The implications are that individual school senior and middle leaders play a vital role in recruiting, supporting and developing teachers and other staff to be effective, and that this has an enormous impact on pupils. In addition to developing the school workforce, school leaders play a vital role in setting and mobilising staff around a shared vision for their schools, and in developing the right cultures, practices and systems to improve attainment and progression.¹⁶⁹

The following sections assess the state of leadership in London, with a focus on school leaders' current challenge of recruiting and retaining effective teachers.

The supply of effective leaders in London

London's recent successes in improving educational outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, have been attributed to the actions of and support given to its school leaders. The evaluation of the City Challenges (including the London Challenge between 2003 and 2008) highlighted the role of National and Local Leaders of Education in delivering improvements in underperforming schools through the Keys to Success programme. Leadership improvement made a significant contribution to helping London's coasting and satisfactory schools; and in good and outstanding schools, a focus on motivating and sharing good practice among leaders was associated with significant benefits.¹⁷⁰

London's schools tend to have strong leadership compared to those in other regions, according to Ofsted inspection data.¹⁷¹ For primary schools, the proportion of schools rated outstanding for 'effectiveness of leadership and management' is 31 per cent, compared with 22 per cent nationally. For secondary schools the proportion is 45 per cent, compared with 28 per cent across the country. At the same time, London has the lowest proportion of schools which, according to Ofsted, require improvement or are inadequate on this aspect.¹⁷²

With population growth and the need for school expansion expected to be concentrated in the capital and wider South East, the task of finding high quality candidates to become middle, senior and system leaders will be especially great. It is already proving a challenge nationally: in a recent survey by The Key, a quarter of governors said they found it difficult to recruit a headteacher or other senior leader in the past 12 months and almost one in five was concerned about the recruitment of heads over the next two years.¹⁷³

Research by LKMCo, Kempton Consulting and Challenge Partners surveyed London and the rest of England's middle and senior leaders in 2015 and identified further specific issues:¹⁷⁴

- Although the majority of school leaders nationally (72 per cent) do not plan to leave the profession within the next three years, the age profile for London showed that 48.8 per cent of all primary headteachers and 57.6 per cent of secondary headteachers are aged 50 and above. With many head teachers retiring between the ages of 50 and 59, demographic pressures will add to the requirements for recruitment.¹⁷⁵
- There is currently a reactive approach to filling school leadership vacancies.
- Head teachers frequently plan to move out of the city due to concerns about the cost of living and quality of life.
- The quality of leadership development and support are variable. Currently, the provision for aspiring leaders in schools is focused on coaching and mentoring (provided by 43 per cent of schools in the survey), with less widespread opportunities for visiting other schools (19 per cent) or external training courses (10 per cent). For example, although 76 per cent of London middle and senior leaders who are interested in headship want access to secondment opportunities, only 17 per cent receive this support.
- Some headteachers place a low priority on developing their leaders due to perverse incentives to retain leaders within their own school.

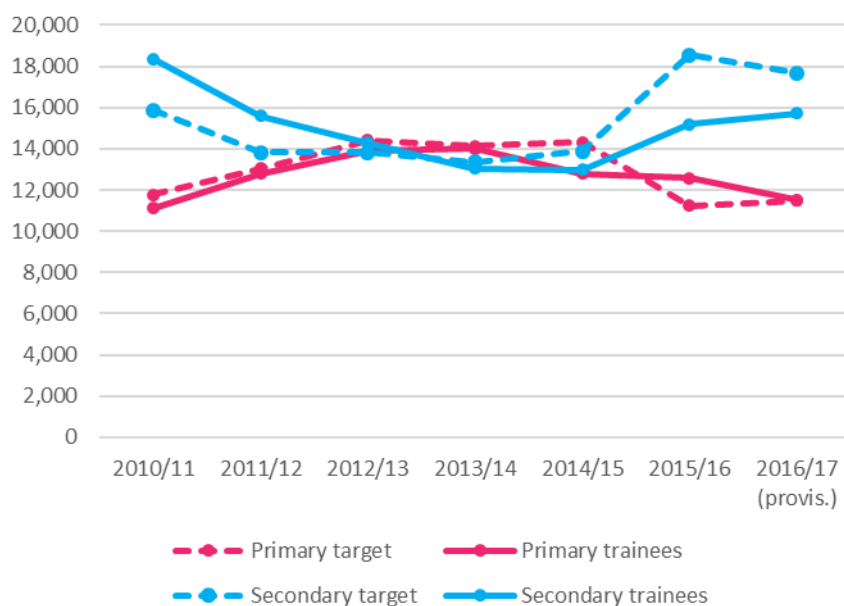
- Furthermore, the marketplace for leadership development is complex, fluid and hard for schools and individuals to navigate. There are significant gaps between the kind of support aspirant leaders receive and want to receive.

This suggests that, whilst London’s school leaders are the highest rated in the country, more work needs to be done to support London’s leadership development to sustain and improve school performance. In response to these challenges, the Mayor developed Getting Ahead London as a personalised coaching and work shadowing scheme to prepare the next generation of headteachers. The pilot year of the scheme in 2016/17 saw 60 participants being coached by headteachers of good or outstanding schools.

Recruitment of trainee teachers

Nationally, recruiting sufficient candidates to initial teacher training for secondary school teachers has become more challenging in recent years. The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) failed to meet its target for the number of postgraduate trainees to be recruited for training in secondary school teaching in 2016/17 (reaching 89 per cent of its target), despite a small (3 per cent) increase in recruits overall.¹⁷⁶ The target for primary teachers was met exactly, following an over-recruitment of 12 per cent the year before.

Figure 5.1: Initial teacher training new postgraduate entrants and training places in England¹⁷⁷



London is one of the leading regions for the number of teachers it trains relative to its number of pupils, behind only the South East and the North West. Around half of trainees are now recruited through school-led routes such as School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) and School Direct. Whilst this may provide additional teachers for London schools, many who train in London go on to teach elsewhere.¹⁷⁸

Outcomes for teaching trainees do not vary considerably across regions. The proportion of 2014/15 trainees achieving Qualified Teacher Status was slightly lower in London than

elsewhere (90 per cent versus 92 per cent), but this does not account for factors such as the subjects trained for.¹⁷⁹ However, recent research suggests that teachers who start teaching in London once becoming qualified have the lowest retention rate after three years (an estimate of 81-84 per cent).¹⁸⁰

Case Study: Teacher training and progression

Since Bromley Schools' Collegiate began in 1993, it has trained nearly 1200 teachers. Local schools work together to run Bromley Schools Collegiate, and are highly responsive to local needs. Their strategic approach includes excellent opportunities for teachers at all career points and pro-active planning for local and regional demand for teachers at all levels. The success of the Bromley Schools Collegiate is based upon:

- Schools working collaboratively, pooling resources to take a regional approach
- Quality training delivered by outstanding classroom leaders and senior leaders
- Forensic analysis of the trainees' progress
- Progression opportunities for trainees in the NQT year

Schools working collaboratively, pooling resources to take a regional approach

Bromley Schools' Collegiate is an "Outstanding" School Centred Initial Teacher Training provider based in Bromley. It also works across Greenwich and Lewisham to provide Initial Teacher Training at both primary and secondary level.

Quality training delivered by outstanding classroom leaders and senior leaders

Trainees work with experienced teachers, SLEs and NLEs to firmly embed what works in the classroom, to achieve outstanding progress for their pupils

To ensure trainees are prepared for the profession, Bromley Schools' Collegiate prioritises developing effective pedagogy. Trainees are then supported to apply this into the classroom.

Forensic analysis of the trainees' progress

Trainees that are part of Bromley Schools' Collegiate are provided with a tailored offering to aid their development. These include personalised interventions and support sessions for trainees who require additional assistance.

Progression opportunities for trainees in the NQT year

The NQT programme is devised by the teaching schools and also aims to meet the future workforce needs of their schools.

With a realistic appreciation of the demands of the role and the nurturing of emerging leadership talent, the Collegiate identifies potential early and develops this through their NQT leadership programme.

All trainees are provided placements in two schools, which is a valuable opportunity to see varying schools' practices.

Outcomes

Over the last 23 years, Bromley Schools' Collegiate trainees have progressed into middle and senior leadership roles including Headship, both within Bromley and across other London boroughs. The retention rate for their trainees is one of the best in the country.

Teacher vacancies in schools

There are significant difficulties in recruiting teachers at all levels in London.

London's particular challenges include a vibrant labour market (offering a range of competing careers) and the higher living costs. London school leaders are more likely than leaders elsewhere to report that their schools face a shortage of teachers (56 per cent compared to 37 per cent overall).¹⁸¹ Nationally, leaders were more likely to report this issue in secondary schools than in primary schools (49 per cent compared to 35 per cent).

The challenges in recruitment mean that London has some of the highest proportions of teacher vacancies. The proportions of primary schools reporting a vacancy in Inner and Outer London have increased from 11.0 per cent to 14.1 per cent and from 8.8 per cent to 16.0 per cent respectively between November 2010 and November 2015.¹⁸²

Over half of London school leaders report that they face a shortage of teachers. Nearly a third of secondary schools in the city have teacher vacancies.

The proportion of secondary schools reporting classroom teacher vacancies has also experienced an upward trend since 2010, with Outer London showing the highest rates – at 30.4 per cent in 2015 compared to 20.8 per cent in 2010 and a national average of 23.0. Inner London's rate in 2015 was in line with the national average, after a steep fall from a peak in 2014.¹⁸³

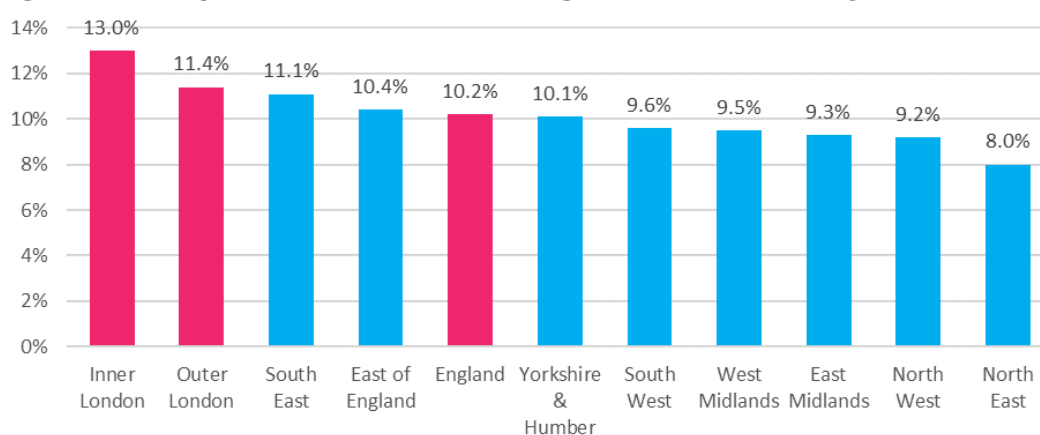
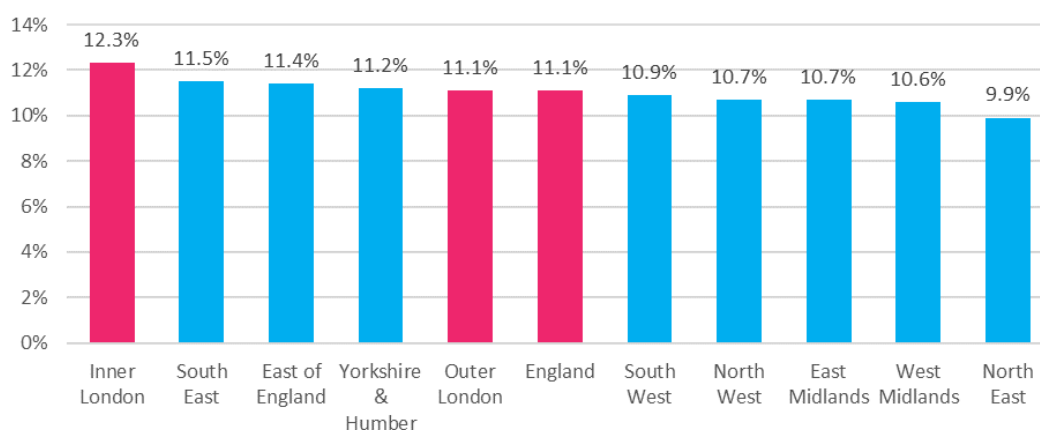
Teacher turnover

Notwithstanding the impact on overall teacher numbers in a given year, high levels of turnover can create additional burdens for schools in staff induction and training needs, and undermine continuity.¹⁸⁴ Whilst sometimes they can form a necessary part of school improvement, research suggests that periods of high teacher movement can have harmful consequences. For example, in one study of New York schools, high levels of turnover were found to have negative impacts on pupil achievement scores.¹⁸⁵ However, evidence also suggests that the actions of school leaders can make a difference in managing teacher retention.¹⁸⁶

In part, vacancy rates will reflect delays in appointing staff following moves between schools.

The relatively high vacancy rates in London, particularly for primary schools, may be associated with London's high level of teacher mobility. In 2015, Inner and Outer London had proportions of teachers moving to other primary schools (in or out of the capital) of 9.1 and 9.6 per cent respectively, compared to a national average of 8.1 per cent.¹⁸⁷ For secondary schools, the rates were 9.8 per cent for Inner London and 8.5 per cent for Outer London, compared to a national average of 7.9 per cent.¹⁸⁸

There are a number of ways in which teachers leave the profession altogether: moving to other jobs within the education sector, moving to other industry sectors, leaving the labour force, or retiring. Inner London has higher proportions of both primary and secondary teachers leaving the state-funded sector than any other region, and at secondary level Outer London had the second highest proportion.

Figure 5.6: Proportion of teachers leaving the state sector in year to 2015 – primary¹⁸⁹**Figure 5.7: Proportion of teachers leaving the state sector in year to 2015 – secondary**¹⁹⁰

The teacher leaver rates in London primary schools represent the greatest increases in the country in recent years, rising by 2.7 percentage points in Inner London and by 2.4 percentage points in Outer London since 2010.¹⁹¹ In secondary schools, increases have been more modest at 0.9 percentage points and 0.7 percentage points for Inner and Outer London respectively – lower than an increase of 1.1 percentage points nationally.

This increase in primary teachers leaving the state sector has come with a rise in the numbers entering, from ITT and from other educational or wider sectors of the economy. London's primary schools have the highest levels of teacher entrants as a proportion of overall teacher numbers (13.6 per cent and 13.2 per cent in Inner and Outer London respectively, compared to 11.1 per cent across England). Increases of around 2 percentage points between 2010/11 and 2014/15 in London have been driven by an increase in new trainees, rather than those who have taught there before.¹⁹²

Similarly, secondary schools in Inner (12.8 per cent) and Outer (11.8 per cent) London had a high rate of teachers joining the state-funded sector compared with the national average (9.8 per cent). There have been more modest increases in teacher entrant numbers over time in secondary schools than for primary schools, increasing by 0.7 percentage points nationally and by 1.1 and 0.5 percentage points in Inner and Outer London respectively.¹⁹³

In London, as in many other regions, the number of teachers returning to the sector to teach in its secondary schools has risen by slightly more than the numbers working in the sector for the first time or starting teaching careers after recently qualifying. This may reflect secondary schools finding alternative sources of new teachers in the face of the failure to meet initial teacher training recruitment targets.

Teacher numbers

Nationally, the overall balance of teachers and pupils has remained constant in recent years. Inner London is an exception, where there has been a reduction in the pupil:teacher ratio (PTR) from 19.3 to 18.2 between 2010 and 2015. Inner London's PTR compares to 20.3 in Outer London and 20.5 across England in 2015. In Inner London, this also corresponds to a low pupil:adult ratio (PAR) – including teaching assistants and other support staff – of 9.4 compared with 10.9 nationally in 2015. Outer London has a slightly lower use of teaching assistants than elsewhere, and as a result has a higher PAR, at 11.1.

PTRs have similarly remained stable in state-funded secondary schools between 2010 and 2015.¹⁹⁴ Again, Inner London has relatively low PTRs – 13.1 compared to 14.8 in Outer London and 15.2 across England. Outer London's ratio is 14.8. As for primary schools, taking into account support staff, Inner London's secondary schools have a lower PAR (9.5) than the national average (10.7), whilst Outer London's (10.8) is more in line with the average.¹⁹⁵

The differences between Inner London and elsewhere are likely to be associated with variations in funding, in part associated with higher levels of deprivation in Inner London and urban areas more generally. There is no robust evidence linking these differences to pupil outcomes; but it is likely that additional teachers have supported improvements.

In partnership with the Teaching Schools Council and other parts of the London education system, the Greater London Authority is designing a strategy to support a pan-London approach to improving teacher recruitment and retention. The planned three-year strategy will have multiple strands, including further research and deeper data analysis of the profile and nature of the teacher workforce in London and fine-grained modelling of teacher training supply provision from SCITT or HEIs, and demand needs.

Improving the quality of teaching in London

Whilst London's school leaders currently face great challenges in recruiting and retaining staff, as discussed earlier, it is the quality of teaching which ultimately matters most for pupil outcomes. One such programme that the GLA has co-funded to improve the quality of teaching is the London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF). The original programme was delivered over 2013 to 2015, with some legacy projects being delivered until August 2017.

The LSEF has supported teachers to work with universities, subject experts and professional subject associations to develop their teaching and subject knowledge. The activities have focused on priority subjects, at primary and secondary level, and more than 100 projects overall have been funded, supporting more than 13,000 teachers from all London boroughs.¹⁹⁶

The overall programme evaluation includes analysis of self-evaluations from 78 of the projects and separate qualitative studies of 15 of them. This evidence suggests that **the main successes of the LSEF have been in improving teacher confidence, subject knowledge and pedagogical skills, in line with the focus of the projects.** In addition, the evaluation suggests that the programme has:

- enabled schools to access a wider range of expertise and try out new approaches to teaching;
- altered school infrastructures and staff routines, experiences and attitudes, including teachers showing willingness to make use of peer observation to support improvement;
- supported the establishment of stronger peer-to-peer networks and inter-school collaboration;
- led to some signs of improvement in pupil attitudes and engagement, and in some cases increases in subject-specific skills.¹⁹⁷

London's key challenges

The need to move towards a more pro-active approach to school leadership has been recognised across the sector, including with the Mayor's Getting Ahead London programme. There will be a continued need for leadership development over the next decade to keep pace with headteachers retiring and the expansion of London's schools.

Teacher recruitment and retention research shows that London has higher levels of movement than elsewhere, and headteachers report staffing as their top concern. Planned new schools over the next decade mean increasing numbers of teachers will be needed in the workforce.

Developing a more attractive offer for teachers to start their careers in London schools and continue to develop their careers in the capital, will be essential to alleviate the current recruitment and retention pressures on many schools. Improved regional data on school recruitment and retention would enable the London education system to respond to this challenge and tailor regional solutions.