

# 6: Providing A Good School Place For Every Child

All young people in London should have access to a high quality school place whatever the phase or type of education. The vast majority of schools in London are rated as good or outstanding, but there are still 97,000 pupils being educated in schools rated as less than good.<sup>198</sup>

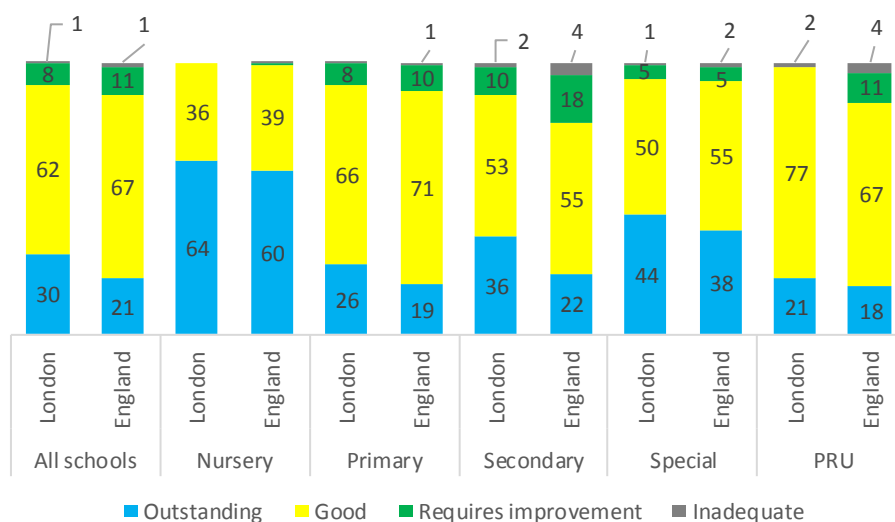
If London is to continue to deliver high quality education for its children and young people, it needs a school system that can continue to improve even as the overall size of the sector grows.

This section considers the school system in London in terms of school quality, pupil admissions, class sizes and school capacity. A detailed breakdown of the number and type of schools (including academies and free schools) is provided as a separate annex.

## The quality of London’s schools

Overall 92 per cent of London’s schools are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted, the highest of any region and an increase from 88 per cent in August 2015.<sup>199</sup> Despite this rate of improvement it is still the case that 8 per cent of schools are rated as requires improvement and 1 per cent as inadequate. This means that across the capital, 97,000 pupils are being educated in schools that are rated as less than good.<sup>200</sup>

**Figure 6.1: Ofsted outcomes for schools in London and England, August 2016<sup>201</sup>**



## Admissions

London has the lowest proportion of pupils who secured either their first, or one of their top three, preferred primary schools.<sup>202</sup> The relatively low rate of first preference offers in London does not necessarily highlight a particular issue. Pupils in London have access to a wider selection of high quality schools within a reasonable travel distance than the national average.

83.7 per cent of children in London secured their first preference, compared to a national average of 88.4 per cent.<sup>203</sup> Pupils in Outer London were slightly more likely than pupils in Inner London to secure their first choice, with 84.0 per cent achieving this in Outer London compared to 83.1 per cent in Inner London.<sup>204</sup>

Just over **four-fifths of primary** aged pupils and **two-thirds of secondary** aged pupils were given their first preference of school. Well below the national average.

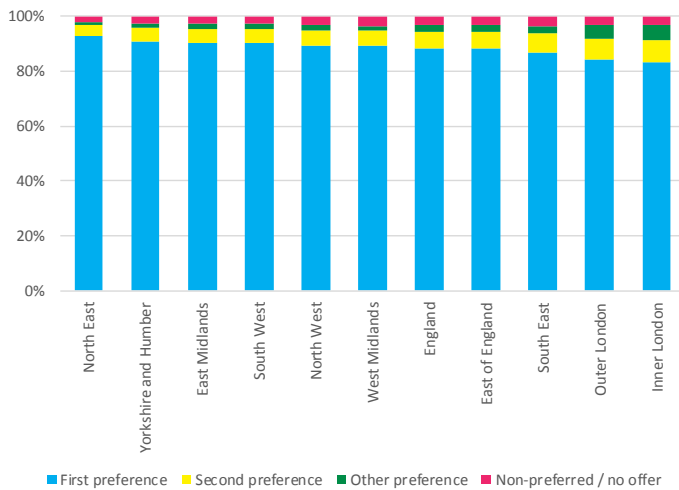
Across London, only children in Barking and Dagenham and Newham were more likely to secure their preferred primary school than the national average.<sup>205</sup> Across all London authorities, only two Inner London boroughs (Haringey and Tower Hamlets) feature in the top ten. The areas in which the lowest proportion of pupils secured their first choice primary schools were Kensington and Chelsea (68.3 per cent) and Hammersmith and Fulham (71.9 per cent).<sup>206</sup>

Around two-thirds of pupils in London secured their first preference of secondary school.<sup>207</sup> The average across London boroughs was 68.8 per cent, compared to an average of 84.1 per cent nationally. Again, Outer London performed better than Inner London on this measure (70.4 per cent compared to 65.6 per cent).<sup>208</sup>

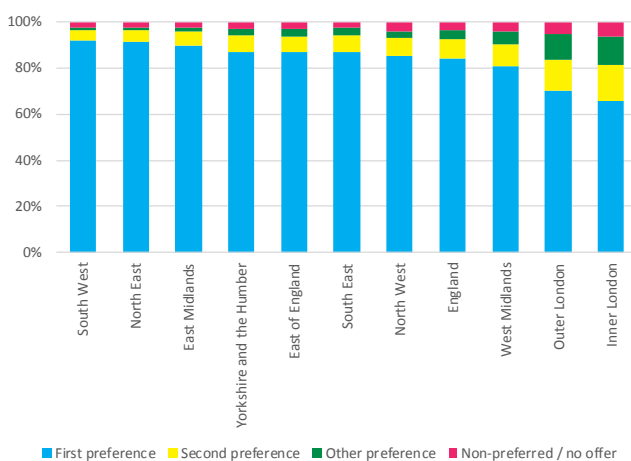
**A more pressing issue than securing a top preference is when pupils do not get a place at any school of their preference.**

**Over 10 per cent of pupils in Kensington and Chelsea and over 5 per cent of primary pupils in Hammersmith and Fulham were offered a non-preferred school, this is in sharp contrast to the London average of 2.9 per cent**

**Figure 6.2: The proportion of children being given their preferred primary school<sup>209</sup>**



**Figure 6.3: The proportion of pupils getting their preferred choice of secondary school<sup>210</sup>**



## An increasing child population

London has seen rapid growth in the number of children living in the city over the last decade. This has clear implications for the numbers of schools needed. By 2020 it has been identified by the GLA that an additional 60,000 primary places and 105,000 secondary places<sup>211</sup> will be needed in the capital.

## Primary School Class Sizes

The relationship between class size and educational attainment is weak. Studies have found that there is a small positive effect in the early years of schooling but that this tends to diminish amongst slightly older children.<sup>212</sup> However, parents consider class size to be an important factor in teaching quality and outcomes.<sup>213</sup> Furthermore, by law, infant class sizes should not exceed 30 pupils unless exceptions apply.<sup>214</sup>

**Infant class sizes are, on average, higher in London than in any other region.**<sup>215</sup> Data from the January 2016 school census showed that the average Key Stage 1 class size in London was 28.2 pupils, compared to a national average of 27.4; this is driven largely by bigger class sizes in Outer London, where the average class size was 28.7 pupils, rather than in Inner London where the average was exactly the same as the nationally. **Unlike the rest of the country, the average class size for older primary pupils (Key Stage 2) in London was smaller than Key Stage 1.**<sup>216</sup>

Children in inner London are less likely to be in large infant classes than in any other region, but in some outer London boroughs over 10 per cent of children are being taught in large classes.

Within London, Redbridge has the highest average class size for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, at 29.5 and 29.9 pupils respectively.<sup>217</sup>

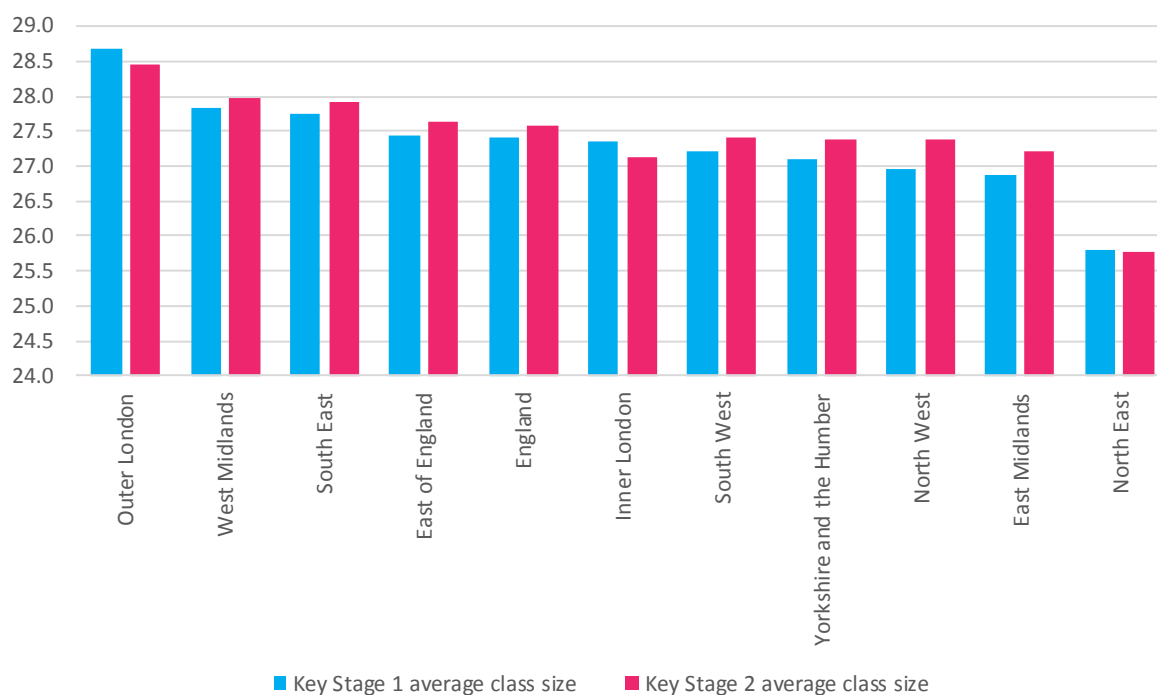
Whilst Key Stage 2 has no class size requirements, the proportion of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 class sizes that had 31 pupils or more in January 2016 have been considered. In both Key Stages, London had a relatively low proportion of classes with 31 or more pupils. Only 3.9 per cent of Key Stage 1 classes in London had 31 pupils or more, compared to a national average of 5.1 per cent.<sup>218</sup>

There is, however, considerable variation between Inner and Outer London, where 1.5 and 5.2 per cent (respectively) of Key Stage 1 classes had 31 pupils or more.<sup>219</sup>

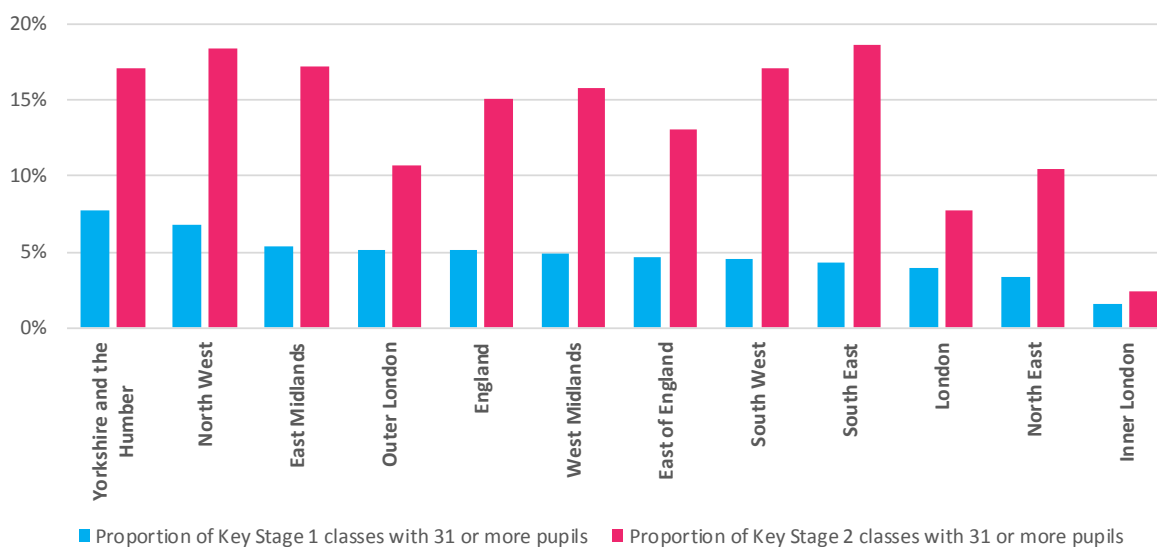
As London's population continues to grow there is an increased risk of the infant class size limit being exceeded unless additional capacity is introduced into the system. In Harrow, Redbridge, Bromley and Barnet, 10 per cent or more of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes had 31 pupils or more. In Harrow, almost 15 per cent of Key Stage 1 classes breached the infant class size regulations. In contrast, none of the Inner London boroughs had more than 4 per cent of primary class sizes with 31 pupils or more.<sup>220</sup>

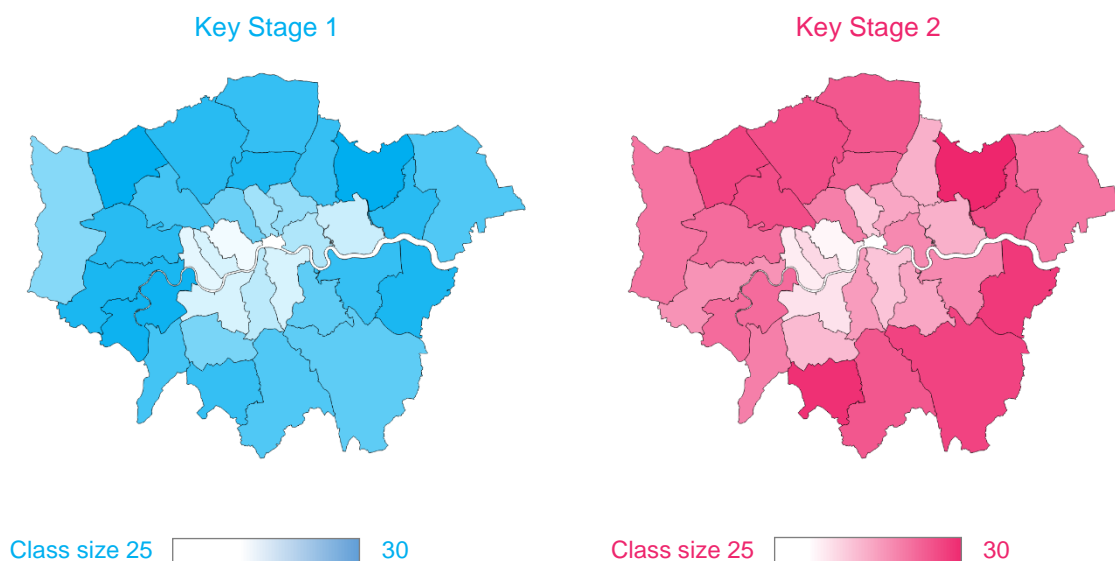
As set out above it is not necessarily the case that larger classes will lead to lower outcomes. Indeed, Harrow for example is highlighted as having a large proportion of large primary school classes yet attainment in the borough is well above the national average.<sup>221</sup>

**Figure 6.4: Average class size in primary schools<sup>222</sup>**



**Figure 6.5: Proportion of primary school classes with 31 or more pupils<sup>223</sup>**



**Figure 6.6: Average primary school class size by local authority<sup>224</sup>****School capacity<sup>225</sup>**

**Over 28 per cent of primary schools in Outer London are at or over capacity, over twice the proportion in Inner London** (where the equivalent figure was 11.6 per cent of primary schools)<sup>226</sup>. In each of Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Havering and Redbridge, over a third of primary schools were at or over capacity. In Sutton and Harrow this reaches nearly two-thirds. There are no Inner London boroughs where more than a third of primary schools were at or over capacity. Camden has the largest proportion, at just under 28 per cent.<sup>227</sup>

**London, while still close to the national average, has the third highest proportion of secondary schools at or over capacity in the country, at just over 16 per cent<sup>228</sup>.**

Secondary schools that are over capacity are more prevalent in Outer London but the difference between Inner and Outer London is far less stark – 13.8 per cent of secondary schools in Inner London were at or over capacity, compared to 17.8 per cent in Outer London. In each of Westminster, Bromley, Richmond upon Thames and Sutton, more than a third of secondary schools were at or over capacity, reaching over half in Kensington and Chelsea and Redbridge.<sup>229</sup>

### **London's key challenges**

London's pupil population projections indicate that more schools will be needed over the next decade, with greatest demand for secondary schools, and delivering on this will require close collaboration between a range of stakeholders.

Tough choices will need to be made about the use of land, the priority given to schools over other uses and the size and shape of new schools, as prerequisites of long-term financial sustainability.

The current review of the Mayor's London Plan, which sets the planning framework, provides an opportunity to place more emphasis on the importance of early years provision and the expectations for secondary schools to be provided within large development.