

# Summary

Delivering a world-class education system is at the heart of London's ambition to continue to grow as a global hub of innovation, culture and economic activity. Achieving this ambition requires great teachers and leaders, outstanding schools, and a seamless, high quality experience for young people from early years to adulthood.

London has a lot to be proud of when it comes to education. Schools in the capital have improved significantly over the last fifteen years and pupils in London are now consistently amongst the highest performers in the country. London's success has been well-documented, attracting interest from researchers and policy-makers from across the globe, who are keen to understand and replicate the capital's educational transformation.

However, London must continue to improve the educational outcomes of young Londoners so that the city can compete as part of a global economy. London must look to international comparisons and use this information to help shape the priorities and challenges that the city faces.

In April 2016, the Education Policy Institute set out a series of world-class education standards<sup>1</sup> derived from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which measured how the UK would need to perform if it were to match the results of leading countries such as Finland and Canada<sup>2</sup>.

This suggested that in order for England's secondary schools to be world-class by 2030, 85 per cent of pupils would need to leave primary school having achieved the equivalent of level 4B or above in reading, writing and mathematics by 2025 and 75 per cent of pupils leaving secondary school with an Attainment 8 score in excess of 50. Currently London is somewhat off these aspirational targets.

There is an ongoing debate about the comparability of outcomes across different jurisdictions with variability in school systems, approaches to assessment, and the economies in which they are situated. But what is clear is that continuing the journey of improvement in London is vital if the UK as a whole is to continue to compete on a global scale.

The Mayor's Annual Education Report sets out the strategic areas of focus required over the next few years to continue the journey to become a world class education system.

## **London's key challenges**

### **Ensuring young Londoners get the best start in life**

In 2016, 86 per cent of 3 and 4 year-olds took advantage of their free part-time place, compared to 95 per cent nationally. In addition, only 57 per cent of disadvantaged 2 year-olds in London accessed their free part-time place, compared to 68 per cent nationally<sup>3</sup>. Children

eligible for free school meals are already almost three months behind their more affluent peers by the age of five<sup>4</sup>. Achieving success in the early years is crucial to a child's future development and narrowing the attainment gap. There is inconsistency in who has access to high quality early years. It is often children from disadvantaged backgrounds who are missing out<sup>5</sup>. London needs to increase take-up by disadvantaged families of the free childcare offer for two year olds and continue to increase childcare provision overall. Despite some weaknesses in the sector, the proportion of London's 5 year-olds achieving a good level of development has been increasing rapidly in recent years and now nearly three-quarters of children achieve this threshold<sup>6</sup>.

### **London pupils to continue to achieve significantly better than the national average at all key stages**

There are over 3,000 schools in the capital, and 92 per cent of state-funded schools are good or outstanding<sup>7</sup>. Although nearly all schools in London are high performing, 97,000 pupils are being educated in schools rated by Ofsted as less than good<sup>8</sup>. In 2016, 57 per cent of pupils in London met or exceeded the new expected standard in all three of reading, writing and maths by the end of Key Stage 2, compared to a national average of 52 per cent<sup>9</sup>. These new standards are, intentionally, tougher than in previous years and so the challenge now for London primary schools will be to support the remaining 39,000 pupils to reach these standards over the coming years<sup>10</sup>. At Key Stage 4, London had the highest Attainment 8 score of any region in 2016 (51.9 points compared with a national average of 50.1)<sup>11</sup>.

### **Every pupil to have the opportunity for continuous improvement, especially the most vulnerable young Londoners**

The attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers is lower in London than elsewhere in the early years, at the end of primary school, and at the end of secondary school<sup>12</sup>. However, the attainment gap increases with a child's age and at the end of secondary school is around a third larger than at primary school<sup>13</sup>. Pupils from black backgrounds are the lowest performing major ethnic group at each Key Stage and the attainment of black Caribbean boys is particularly low. Amongst smaller ethnic groups, children from Traveller or Irish Heritage and Gypsy Roma backgrounds perform lower still<sup>14</sup>. London has improved overall attainment for white working-class pupils, but it has done so at a slower rate over the past decade than other parts of the country<sup>15</sup>. The most persistently disadvantaged children are twelve months behind non-disadvantaged children by the age of sixteen, and this has barely changed since 2011<sup>16</sup>.

### **Preparing Londoners for life and work in a world city**

92 per cent of young Londoners went on to Sixth Form or Further Education Colleges after school<sup>17</sup>. In 2015 nearly a third of students in London did not achieve the A\*-C threshold GCSE in English with a slightly larger proportion in mathematics<sup>18</sup>. This creates a large burden on the post 16 sector for students to retake exams. Although by age 19, nearly nine in ten (88 per cent) of London's young people are educated to level 2 – the equivalent of five GCSEs at grades A\*-C, slightly above the England average, and nearly two thirds hold the equivalent of two A-levels<sup>19</sup>. There is considerable variation across London in young people's level 3 qualifications<sup>20</sup> and take up of apprenticeships. From A-levels through to higher education and employment, gender gaps appear and deepen. In 2015, just 12 per cent of entries to A-level computing in London were from females and just a fifth of entries in physics<sup>21</sup>. Despite a fall in recent years, one in ten 16-24 year olds (89,000 young people) is not in education,

employment or training<sup>22</sup>. One route to address this is through apprenticeships; but take-up in London is low, as are completion rates<sup>23</sup>.

### **Excellent teaching and leadership, building capacity in London's education system**

Schools in London are struggling to fill teacher and headteacher vacancies. Over half of London school leaders report that they face a shortage of teachers<sup>24</sup>. Nearly a third of secondary schools in the city have teacher vacancies<sup>25</sup>. 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<sup>26</sup>. 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)<sup>27</sup>. Although leadership is strong in London, 48.8 per cent of primary and 57.6 per cent of secondary school head teachers are aged 50 or over<sup>28</sup>. More headteachers will be needed to address this looming demographic pressure alongside the increase in new schools. In addition, there will be an increase in demand for teachers to staff the planned new schools.

### **Providing a good school place for every child**

London has seen rapid growth in the number of children living in the city over the last decade, which has already led to a significant increase in school pupil numbers and new schools, particularly primary schools. Pupil population projections over the next decade mean that significantly more school places will be required, especially at secondary school. Projected demand for state school places will reach 737,000 primary and 498,000 secondary places by 2025. This constitutes a rise of 60,000 places in the primary sector (8.8 per cent) and 105,000 places in the secondary sector (26.5 per cent) above current levels<sup>29</sup>.