

Making Camden the best place for education

Camden Education Commission: Final report

December 2011



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Contents

Contents

Foreword	3
1. Executive summary	4
2. Introduction	7
3. Partnership for improvement	9
4. Shared ambition	14
5. Enrichment	20
6. Early years	22
7. 14 to 19 provision	24
8. Vulnerable children	26
9. Parental engagement	32
10. Place planning and admissions	34
11. Transition	36
12. High quality training and development	38
13. Governance	40
Appendix A: Education Commission recommendations	42
Appendix B: Evidence taken by the Education Commission	49
Appendix C: Proposed content for a Camden enrichment programme	51
Glossary of terms	52

The Education Commission's interim report was published in September 2011 and included an appendix of data about Camden. The interim report can be found at www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/education/schools/camden-education-commission.en?page=2

Front cover photo: Primary pupils in Camden joined a relay walk along the Regent's Canal from Camden Lock as part of the Big WoW celebration of International Walk to School Month in October 2011 and the Olympic Games in 2012

Foreword

All young people want to look ahead to adulthood and see a world of opportunity opening out before them. But they are now facing some of the toughest challenges for a generation and, for many of those living in Camden, a borough in the heart of the nation's capital, the opportunities that appear to exist on their doorstep seem to some inaccessible. Our recommendations are designed to enhance the opportunities available to all. It is because the borough is already building from a strong base that we believe the ambition stated in the title – for Camden to be the best place for education – could be achieved. We have come across many who share this ambition in Camden and we believe that all involved could, and should, rise to the challenge – the Council, schools, parents, governors and the many partners who support education in Camden.

How should Camden's education system best prepare children and young people for this rapidly evolving world, while it faces radical changes itself, with shifting responsibilities, new policy directions and funding cuts? That is the question that Camden Council, together with Camden schools, courageously put to us upon establishing the Camden Education Commission earlier this year.

Over the last six months we have been privileged to spend time amongst the people and organisations of Camden, hearing from them about their aspirations for, and experience of, education in the borough. We are grateful for the input we have had, and have found much that is positive, even excellent; strong schools, committed teachers, lively and opinionated children and young people, high aspirations and supportive partners. Given Camden's historically high level of resources and the rich environment it has to draw upon, education should be outstanding not just for some but for all. But not all of the borough's young people are served well enough by the current system, and there is an urgent need for it to move with the times and ensure that they are all given the best chance to compete and thrive, whatever the conditions they face.

This then leads into the key priority of the Camden journey, which now requires an increase in ambition, pace and rigour to secure outstanding educational opportunities and outcomes for all children and young people. This report makes a number of recommendations that we believe will move the borough in this direction. They are aimed at securing an education system in Camden that is built upon the following four cornerstones:

- **high expectations:** for Camden's young people, and of their parents, schools, providers and partners;
- **a thirst for learning:** in pupils, teachers and institutions, and evident in a willingness to look upwards and outwards, to seek out and share the very best practice, to take risks and to plan for the future;
- **collaboration and partnership:** taking action in the interests of all Camden's young people;
- **transparency and accountability:** empowering parents and young people, and enabling strong and frank relationships between partners.

We believe that by building upon current good practice and these four cornerstones, Camden schools can achieve the very highest ambitions for its young people.



Sir Mike Tomlinson CBE (Chair)



Professor Geoff Whitty CBE



Geethika Jayatilaka

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 We have proposed long-term goals to make Camden the best place for education, so that it is the best place to be educated and trained and the best place to work in education. This will require all schools to gain at least 'good' or 'outstanding' judgements by Ofsted and for the local authority and schools to accelerate the rate of improvement in outcomes to match and then exceed those of similar areas (known as Camden's 'statistical neighbours'). In addition, the gaps between the performance of individual schools and of particular groups of students needs to be narrowed as a matter of urgency, by raising the attainment of those performing below average at a faster rate. Only when all this is achieved will all young people in Camden be equipped to succeed in adult and working life.
- 1.2 Changes in education policy, particularly the drive to give institutions greater autonomy and the diversification of types of schools, the raising of the education participation age to 18 by 2015, along with budget reductions, make the present structure and operation of the local authority and its schools in need of revision. The local authority and schools need to be more outward looking, more ambitious and ready to accept different roles within this landscape.
- 1.3 We propose the establishment of a Camden Partnership for Educational Excellence (CPEE) to bring together at a high level all the partners concerned with the education, training and well-being of young people in Camden. This must not be just another board with meetings, but a partnership with the resources and determination to commission activity that will lead to a step change in performance. We believe a structural change is necessary both to better support bottom-up collaboration and to ensure a much more co-ordinated approach to future challenges.
- 1.4 While the overall performance of many Camden's schools has been justifiably a matter of pride in the past, there is a need for all phases to improve further and faster than at present. We want to see more challenging targets set for all age groups, including higher proportions gaining the highest grades. We also wish to see particular emphasis given to narrowing the differences in attainment between schools and between different groups of pupils. The ultimate targets must be to have all pupils reading at least at their chronological age, competent in basic maths and to have every young person aged under 19 in education, employment or training.
- 1.5 While much of the curriculum offered to pupils from early years to the age of 14 is dictated by the National Curriculum, we believe there is scope to build on current practice of some primary and secondary schools to ensure enrichment activities are available for all pupils. This would involve the world-class organisations in and around Camden. Indeed Camden is rich with public, private and charitable bodies and there is clear evidence that many organisations wish to develop stronger links with the Council and schools. We recommend much greater emphasis is placed on establishing and sustaining such partnerships, led by the CPEE.

- 1.6 The Commission believes that the Council, in conjunction with the CPEE, should prioritise investment in early years provision and monitor the impact of current changes on different groups of children and families, so that action can be taken to mitigate any differential negative effects.
- 1.7 Alongside wider enrichment of the curriculum, the greatest need for change is for students aged 14 to 19. There needs to be a more comprehensive choice of pathways for students and parents, in particular vocational routes, a greater exposure to the workplace, the development of employability skills and those higher level skills said by higher education and businesses to be missing in their students. Provision at levels 1, 2 and 3 is required, particularly the opportunity for students to ‘finish off’ level 2 in mathematics post-16 (GCSE). These changes will require much greater co-operation between schools, further education (FE) colleges, alternative providers, work-based trainers and employers than at present. Students and their parents need objective, independent and well-founded information, advice and guidance to help them make the best choices for their future.
- 1.8 We spent a considerable time, particularly of the second phase of our work, considering the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and looked after children. We think there needs to be greater transparency in the SEN system as a whole and have suggested a number of ways of doing this, including strengthening oversight and understanding of how funding for special needs is spent within schools. It also includes the suggestion that schools agree a “core offer” for children with predictable special educational needs in mainstream settings, and that this should be clearly communicated to parents to help develop a shared understanding of inclusive practice. We also feel that there is a need to strengthen knowledge and learning transfer from specialist resources in the borough to improve support for children with SEN in mainstream schools.
- 1.9 We are proposing a number of actions that the CPEE and schools should take to support vulnerable pupils. These focus on the need to close the attainment gaps for vulnerable groups, including maximising opportunities from the pupil premium. We have suggested a greater focus from all partners involved in CPEE to support the raising of aspirations for key groups who have underachieved such as looked after children, those from some black and minority ethnic groups and white working class children.
- 1.10 Parents and carers need to have an increased say in thinking and decision making about their children’s education. For this reason we wish to see further development of the Parents’ Council to have all schools with parent representatives, to be able to support parent governors with training and information and to be involved in arrangements for the transfer of their children between the different phases of education, particularly the move from primary to secondary school. The transition arrangements at present are not consistently good enough and we propose that there should be common dates across all schools for pupil visits and possible summer sessions to help pupils prepare for secondary school. All this will require schools and parents to work more closely together and to have parents more actively involved in their children’s learning.

- 1.11 The approach to places planning needs to take greater account of parents' wishes and the geography of any need. Filling the additional places planned for South Camden Community School (SCCS) has, in our view, always posed a considerable challenge. The establishment of the UCL Academy may result in the school having even more unfilled places, and this would be exacerbated further if the proposal to establish a secondary free school south of the Euston Road is approved. It is our view therefore that there is a case for considering carefully the opportunities to maximise the use of this additional capacity and so the most appropriate future for SCCS. Admissions remain a matter of concern to parents and we recommend further work be done to identify possible means of meeting these concerns in various parts of the borough.
- 1.12 The present provision for professional development of school staff has many strengths. That said, we believe the arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers, heads of department/subject leaders (current and aspiring), teachers of vocational courses and improvement leaders in schools can be strengthened. Teaching schools and training schools need to be considered with clear progression pathways and higher education (HE) accreditation available to all staff. This should include teaching assistants who should have opportunities to become qualified teachers where that is appropriate. We also think that greater use needs to be made of other providers, particularly the high quality HE providers in the borough such as the Institute of Education. Such a package, we believe, will help make Camden the best place to work in education and improve the recruitment, retention and performance of staff.
- 1.13 Governors are key people in the school system. Good governance is important to having an outstanding school. We propose strengthening the role, selection, training and support for governors. Camden is fortunate in having a waiting list of people wanting to become governors, but not all schools yet have governors with the necessary range of skills. We also wish to see governors having automatic access to all key documents and data about their schools' performance and improvement needs. This is vital given that responsibility for school improvement now rests with the governing body.
- 1.14 The implementation of the recommendations made in this report will depend on the many organisations, employers and public bodies making available their knowledge and facilities. This will require strong working partnerships formed with clear objectives and buy-in from all partners.

2. Introduction

2.1



The education system is at a point of transition: national policy is heading in a new direction, relationships are changing and the world it is preparing young people for is evolving rapidly. The demands upon schools and education providers, the local authority and their partners to adjust to these new realities are both significant and urgent.

2.2

Already, radical changes to school organisation have been made, with the promotion of academies and the creation of free schools, university technical colleges and university training schools, all of which sit outside the local authority framework. A 3% reduction in schools' spending power this year could be followed by further reductions of up to 10% given proposals to reduce the gap between the highest and lowest funded authorities - Camden currently has the fourth highest per pupil funding in the country. In addition, steps being taken nationally to bring funding for school sixth forms in line with that for colleges could lead to a funding reduction of up to 16% to school sixth forms over the next three years. Reductions to the Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital programmes have had a significant impact on the availability of capital funding; sizeable reductions in funding to local authorities and other public sector bodies are impacting on the provision of support services to schools.

2.3

Alongside these changes, further responsibilities and funding are being devolved to all schools, including, for example, the provision of information, advice and guidance. Importantly, the government has made it clear that schools are now responsible for their own school improvement. As a result, schools have even more freedom to choose how to purchase the support they need, introducing greater competition for existing service providers like the local authority. Again, in Camden, the full impact of these changes is yet to be seen, as a relatively high level of buy-in to council services has been sustained. However, this could change as more providers enter the market.

2.4

Taken together, these policies mean that the role of the local authority in education has fundamentally altered, as has that of schools, which now have much more autonomy in terms of how they provide and purchase services. All parties will need to make adjustments: with the Council moving to a more strategic role as its provider role diminishes, and schools stepping up to support each other, through joint commissioning and school-on-school improvement, and to take more collective responsibility for outcomes in the area.

2.5

An early challenge will be meeting the demands of legislation that is raising the upper age for compulsory participation in education and training to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015. Of the Central London Connexions Group (eight local authorities in inner London), Camden currently has a high proportion of 16 to 19-year-olds in education, employment and training, but that still leaves 280 who are known to not be in employment education or training and others whose activity is unknown. In

September 2011, 13.7% or 1,240 16 to 24-year-olds in Camden were unemployed and that has been increasing steadily since February 2011.

- 2.6 We are also beginning to see the results of analysis and deliberation over the August public disorder. Camden Council has held a series of summits and engagement activities aimed at assessing the causes and consequences of the disorder locally. Clearly, any impact of growing youth unemployment on wider public order will need to be closely monitored for some time.
- 2.7 The funding, policy and wider economic pressures outlined above make it clear that the education system will look different in five to 10 years, the horizon that we have been asked to consider. But we do not believe that Camden, either the Council or schools, is yet recognising the scale of change required and fully grasping the opportunity to fashion the new system to maximise the benefits for its young people. We hope that through the recommendations we make here, partners will make faster progress on this journey, and step up to the demands being placed on them, both collectively and individually.
- 2.8 Making Camden the best place for education - both to be educated and the best place to work in education is in no single person or agency's power, but is increasingly shared, between the young people themselves, their parents, teachers, heads, governors, funders, the Council, diocesan boards, other service providers, public sector partners, businesses and organisations, who all have resources and expertise to offer. In order to have the greatest impact, these partners need to come together with a shared sense of ambition for education in Camden, and do their utmost – both independently and collectively – to ensure that every young person in the borough has access to the opportunities and support they need to thrive in the wider world.

3. Partnership for improvement

3.1. Current partnership arrangements

- 3.1.1 Camden schools have always worked with a range of partners on both a formal and informal basis. However, in the present context of resource constraints, policy changes and shifting responsibilities outlined in the introduction to this report, even greater engagement in education by a whole range of partners will be essential if our ambitions for the borough are to be realised.
- 3.1.2 The interim report highlighted schools' commitment to a collaborative approach, and the desire of a wide array of partners to engage more extensively and effectively in joint work in the interests of the borough's children and young people. However, it is our view that the present structural arrangements to support partnership work on education are in need of revision and that more needs to be done to strengthen drivers for improvement.
- 3.1.3 A multiplicity of partnership arrangements currently exist in Camden. Some of these are led by schools or dioceses and driven by the 'bottom up' identification of a need for collaboration and relevant partners. Examples include the three highly effective federations of primary schools, Hampstead School's partnership with two Barnet schools on their sixth form, the La Swap sixth form consortium of four schools, and the Church of England schools 'All Saints' consortium which operates across borough boundaries to drive up standards and provide mutual support.
- 3.1.4 With responsibility for improvement moving to schools, and resources and responsibilities removed from the local authority, a bottom-up approach holds many advantages, not least that it is driven and designed according to schools' needs. There is also evidence across London of the effectiveness of school to school support in leading improvement. The risks of an exclusively bottom-up approach, however, are that it could lead to overlaps and gaps that may leave some issues unaddressed, some schools and young people left out, and fail to share lessons learned or provide external partners with a navigable way of contributing to joint work.
- 3.1.5 The Council currently supports a variety of stakeholder groups, for example for parents, governors and supplementary schools, and hosts strategic partnership forums such as the Children's Trust and the Employment and Skills Network, with a view to ensuring that all groups are represented and that the space is provided to enable effective collaboration between partners. While many of these groups are able to make an impact in their own right, their scope to do so is limited by the lack of any coherent overarching structure that would enable emerging issues from each one to be more systematically shared, prioritised and addressed at a strategic level.
- 3.1.6 There are however some very good examples of partnership working and services operating across different partners within Camden. These are as varied as the baby feeding service, the fair access panel and the police youth engagement team. We believe that a new partnership could usefully draw upon the experience of these examples to encourage partners to work together.

3.1.7 Though there are some areas of very good practice, the interim report highlighted a number of areas in which wider partnership links could be strengthened, including around employers' and voluntary and community organisations' links with schools, strategic engagement between the Council and the dioceses, easier access between schools and health services, links between services within the council, and more sustained involvement in education from higher education and cultural institutions. A number of these issues are already being addressed, for example through the current development of a joined-up 'family pathway' that implements findings of the Munro report. The new arrangements for bringing responsibility for public health within the local authority, including the Health and Well-being Board, may also help. However, there is clearly an opportunity to enhance wider partnership work to support education at the same time as strengthening links between schools themselves.

3.2. Camden Partnership for Educational Excellence (CPEE)

3.2.1 We believe that there is a need for a partnership structure that is focused on achieving shared ambitions for education in Camden. This should complement, support and encourage bottom-up collaboration, while ensuring that its risks are mitigated and that all partners are constructively involved in working together in the interests of all of Camden's children and young people.

3.2.2 We therefore recommend the development of a Camden Partnership for Educational Excellence (CPEE), which would become one body with the Children's Trust and give the trust a significantly strengthened role overseeing education in Camden. Bringing education closer together with other services to support children and families will reap benefits across the partnership agenda.

3.2.3 The body would have an expanded membership to reflect a wider set of partners and act as a high level strategic body and commissioning agent on behalf of the range of partnership and stakeholder forums that would underpin it. The Council should engage early with any new proposals to establish further academies or free schools and encourage them to become members of the CPEE and the appropriate operational groups. However, the CPEE may feel the need to specify conditions for such membership, such as adherence to the admissions code and participation in the behaviour and attendance partnership.

3.2.4 In the first instance the CPEE would incorporate existing groups, ensuring schools, FE and training providers, diocesan boards, governors, parents, HE, employers, voluntary and community organisations, public sector and other partners have a role, as appropriate. Over time, however, the aim would be to streamline existing structures and reduce meetings in order to eliminate duplication and maximise the impact of resources. The wider Partnership would be supported by a secretariat provided by the local authority, with support through the secondment of head teachers and others, say for a day a week. The Council should seek to provide funding for the CPEE to support its work and promising innovative projects proposed by the schools and their partners. The Council would have senior representation on the CPEE either at Chief Officer and Cabinet Member level or Chief Executive and Leader.

- 3.2.5 The CPEE would encourage and support bottom-up joint working arrangements, while also identifying the areas in which top-down intervention or co-ordination would be beneficial. The remit of the CPEE could include:
- reviewing progress and actions needed to meet ambitious Camden-wide targets;
 - overview and administration of any funds made available by the local authority or partner bodies;
 - discussion of areas for joint commissioning across education providers;
 - overview of quality assurance of Council services and kitemarking others;
 - review of data to identify areas of provision needing further improvement;
 - being outward looking to find the best practice elsewhere from which Camden young people ought also to benefit.
- 3.2.6 We believe that through this work partners would align strategic interests and better support operational integration and multi-agency working, thereby helping to drive up educational standards in the borough and ensuring no individual, group or school is overlooked. The CPEE should lead to a better use of resources by identifying opportunities to collaborate and bring in best practice elsewhere to improve commissioning. It would also bring in new partners, and develop more compelling ways for all partners to contribute to improving education in the borough. For example, the Commission has received a submission from Argent and University of the Arts as developer and new resident in King's Cross to take a role in working with schools. In the first instance, we hope that the partnership will review the recommendations of this Commission and drive forward agreed priorities. We would particularly recommend a focus on 14 to 19 provision and provider-employer links in the initial stages.
- 3.2.7 This will require the Council to exercise its responsibilities in a different way, working with partners through the CPEE to develop policy and collective strategic leadership. The CPEE and the operational groups will need to be outward looking, particularly in relation to good practice elsewhere and possible joint provision with neighbouring councils, but also in establishing strong partnerships with a range of bodies able and willing to support the required improvements in educational attainment, training and well-being of all young people in Camden.
- 3.2.8 The CPEE should produce an annual report setting out progress towards targets, successes of the institutions and students, and details of new targets and areas identified for improvement. The body would report to the Council's Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee and through this mechanism be accountable. The Council and its partners on the CPEE should consider the appointment of an independent chair for the CPEE.

Recommendation 1

Camden Council, together with schools, providers and partners should develop the role of the Children's Trust into a combined Children's Trust/ Camden Partnership for Educational Excellence (CPEE), bringing together all key partners to make better use of resources and achieve shared ambitions for education in Camden.

The CPEE should:

- a) be outward-looking, bringing in best practice from elsewhere;
- b) enable schools to develop new partnerships to drive improvement;
- c) have access to resources delegated to it by its partner members;
- d) bring together existing partnership and stakeholder forums in the first instance with a view to streamlining decision-making structures over time.

3.3. Role of the Council

3.3.1 In the context of our proposals for CPEE, we have identified that the Council role needs to change significantly as the wider partnership takes shape. Our interim report proposed a threefold role for the local authority in the future; that of champion, enabler, and broker. Feedback has confirmed that this is an appropriate framework for the Council's role in education, and that it should be used to prioritise not only what it should do, but also how it should do it. The Council should seek to develop each of these roles as a key partner within the CPEE. The role of elected Councillors, including the role of the Scrutiny Committee, needs to support the delivery of these roles within the CPEE.

3.3.2 The role of champion is, in effect, the primary one, with enabling and brokering as the two key levers it has to fulfil that. The three dimensions of its role could be summed up as:

- Champion, promoting the interests of young people and parents, particularly the most vulnerable, and the wider community in Camden, and acting as the guardian of high standards for all, drawing on its position as the single democratically accountable body in the local area.
- Enabler, supporting the delivery of efficient and effective education provision in the borough, through the strategic use of resources and influence.
- Broker, facilitating and building relationships between schools, between schools and wider stakeholders, and between boroughs, in the interests of young people, parents and the wider community in Camden.

Recommendation 2

The Council's responsibilities are changing and reducing. In this context it should have three key roles going forward, and these should be clearly articulated to all relevant partners and used to inform strategic planning. The roles are:

a) a champion for children and young people's opportunities and the high standard of education they should

receive;

b) an enabler of more effective joint use of resources;

c) a broker of new partnerships that drive improvements, in particular to lead the establishment and support the ongoing activity of the Camden Partnership for Educational Excellence.

4. Shared ambition

- 4.1 If Camden is to be the best place to be educated and the best place to work in education, improvement work needs to be driven by a unifying ambition that motivates all partners.
- 4.2 The Commission's terms of reference asked it to identify what it thought that common ambition might be. The interim report identified seven themes emerging from the evidence; namely, that all young people should:
- have access to a good school or education provider in each phase;
 - have equality of opportunity and be enabled to achieve their full potential;
 - have both the qualifications and personal skills to make them employable;
 - possess the life skills to make them independent and resilient;
 - have the confidence and aspiration needed to thrive;
 - have enjoyed a broad and enriching education;
 - have developed positive values making them constructive contributors to wider society.
- 4.3 It is clear that the people and organisations of Camden have high expectations of the education system and that in reality achieving these outcomes is not the role of formal education alone, but also of the home and wider environment in which children are raised. The Commission recognises that there are already many expectations and measures imposed on schools' performance. But we believe that a complementary set of ambitious, measurable outcomes, agreed upon by relevant partners, would demonstrate commitment to meeting these expectations, provide an agreed focal point for all providers, and their partners, and make local provision more accountable to parents and young people.
- 4.4 Any set of agreed outcomes for the borough needs to be based both on current strengths and weaknesses in Camden, but also on the level of ambition required to satisfy both the wider community's expectations for education, and the demands likely to face Camden's young people in the future. While much of aggregate performance is good, the data on differences between schools and between different groups of students point to variations which need to be eliminated as far as possible, by raising the performance of those below average at a faster rate. Figures 1 (below), 2 (page 15) and 3 (page 16) provide a helpful snapshot of Camden's comparative performance at inspection and at each of the key stages.

Figure 1: Comparison of inspection results in Camden and nationally

Inspections	Good or outstanding		Outstanding		Inadequate	
	National	Camden	National	Camden	National	Camden
Primary	53%	93%	8%	35%	7%	0%
Secondary	49%	56%	13%	22%	10%	0%
Special	78%	67%	33%	50%	4%	0%
PRU	63%	100%	18%	0%	7%	0%

(This table shows the percentage of schools achieving different judgements in their latest inspection. Schools are judged outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate.)

Figure 2: Comparison of Camden's results at each of the key stages, against its 'statistical neighbours'				
Comparison with statistical neighbours		2009	2010 (provisional)	2011
Age 5	Reach 'good'	9/11	7/11	3/11
	'Gap'	8/11	7/11	7/11
Age 7	Reading	9/11	4/11	4/11
	Writing	8/11	7/11	7/11
	Maths	10/11	8/11	8/11
Age 11	English	5/11	6/9	1/10
	Maths	5/11	5/9	4/10
	English and maths	5/11	7/9	4/10
Age 16	5+A*-C GCSEs including English and maths	6/10	6/10	6/10
	5+A*-C GCSE	10/10	10/10	8/10
Age 18	Average points score per candidate	6/10	4/10	3/10
	Average points score per entry	5/10	4/10	4/10

NB: This table shows the ranking of Camden in a group of areas considered demographically to be comparable, generally 11 areas, but in some cases there is insufficient information from some areas to be included. At age 5, the measures are the proportion of children reaching what is termed a 'good level of development across particularly communication, language, literacy and personal and social development and the gap between the median and the lowest 20%. At ages 7 and 11, the measures are the proportion of children reaching nationally expected standards known as level 2B and level 4 respectively. At 16, the measure is the proportion of young people achieving GCSEs. At 18, the measure is the points score on 'A' levels or equivalent qualifications. The comparative areas are statistical neighbours': Barnet, City of London, Greenwich, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Manchester, Wandsworth and Westminster.

Figure 3 – Comparative performance of schools at different key stages/ levels (2011)

Foundation Stage Profile	% good level of overall development	Number of schools (not including special schools)	Camden average	National average	Number of schools that are:		Highest school result	Lowest school results	Gap
					10% above Camden average	10% below Camden average			
Key Stage 1	% achieving L2B+ in Writing	39	58%	59%	10	7	93%	27%	66
Key Stage 2	% achieving L4+ English and Maths	38	78%	74%	13	6	86%	33%	53
Key Stage 4	% achieving 5+ A*-C including GCSE English and Maths	9	60%	58%	2	1	100%	49%	47
							77%		28

4.5 Current education provision in the borough provides a good starting point. Key outcomes for pupils at the end of primary school (achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at 11), at age 16 (5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths), and at A-level (points per entry and 2+ passes), are above the national average. Camden also compares very well to its statistical neighbours for English at Key Stages 2 (ranked joint first of 10) and for A level points score (ranked third of 11). Ofsted rates a very high proportion of the borough's primary schools as good or outstanding, and an increasing proportion of its early years providers and secondary schools, and post-16 provision is also rated above the national average. All of this is achieved with a highly mobile school population that is more ethnically diverse and has more children on free school meals and with special educational needs than the national average.

4.6



Although for most key stages, the Camden average is in line or better than the national average, there are variations between individual schools. Recent improvements by some schools at Key Stage 4 have narrowed the difference between highest and lowest results (the 'gap') to 28 percentage points; these differences are still large for primary schools, particularly at age five, the end of the Early Years Foundation

Stage, where the difference is 66 percentage points. Additionally, the proportion of students achieving Level 5 combined English and maths at Key Stage 2 varies from 2% to 48% across the primary schools. For Key Stage 4 in 2010, Camden had two schools in the top 20% of schools nationally and two schools in the bottom 30% of schools nationally. The borough as a whole had a value added score of 994.4 (at the 69th percentile).

4.7 However, when considered in light of the historically generous funding from which Camden has benefited – the fourth highest per pupil funding in the country – the picture is not as strong as it should be. While the borough may not have access to such comparatively strong funding in the future, we see no reason why it should not continue to strive for the very highest outcomes. The Commission believes that any outcomes framework should include a focus on:

- **ensuring all have the basics** - the Wolf Review of Vocational Education highlighted the critical importance of literacy and numeracy. Almost one in five Camden primary school pupils have already fallen behind the expected reading standard by the age of 7. At 16, 28% of Camden secondary school pupils fail to achieve a grade C or above in English, and 38% fail to achieve a grade C or above in maths and of those retaking these subjects post-16 in a Camden school sixth form, 80% fail to achieve a grade increase in maths, and 40% fail to do so in English, with smaller proportions passing the threshold into A*-C in these subjects (GCSE);
- **pushing the 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths standard** - when compared with its statistical neighbours, outcomes on this measure are only average, with the top performing comparable local authority seeing a fifth more of its pupils achieving this benchmark than Camden (12% higher);
- **stretching performance at the top end** - the Commission has heard of concerns from parents about provision for the highest achievers in some Camden schools. Fewer pupils leave Camden's sixth forms with top-notch

results (3+ A*/A A-levels) than nationally, and while attainment at Level 5 at 11 in English is strong, attaining level 5 in maths compares poorly with Camden's statistical neighbours (though in line with the national average);

- **leaving no-one behind** - a consistent theme since the launch of the Commission has been concern that vulnerable pupils in particular should be protected and provided for by the system, and that no individual or groups of pupils should be overlooked. At present, however, there are some that are overlooked:
 - 7.3% of 16-19 year olds are known to be not in education, employment or training;
 - data shows attainment gaps for some groups compared with the borough average (60% in 2011) for 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths, especially looked after children (12%), those with special educational needs (27% in 2010), white British children entitled to free school meals (31%), and Congolese (36%) and Black Caribbean (46%) pupils.
- **ensuring consistently strong provision** - there is too much variation in the performance of Camden schools. This needs to be minimised by bringing all provision up to the standard of the best. In particular:
 - while no schools in Camden are judged inadequate by Ofsted (nationally there are 7%), it is already clear that 'satisfactory' is not considered enough for all children to succeed. All schools should aim to be an outstanding school.
 - figure 3 (page 16) highlights the differences in outcomes achieved within different schools, particularly at primary level. This needs to be addressed by ensuring that performance of those currently below average is raised at the fastest rate.

4.8 The Commission believes that Camden's schools and education providers should be encouraged to sign up to a small number of agreed outcomes reflecting these areas, which they, and the borough as a whole, will track and report on over the coming years. The level of ambition inherent in each one should be kept under review, so that it is continually stretched. Those within recommendation 3 are proposed as a starting point.

Recommendation 3

The CPEE should agree targets for improving key outcomes for children and young people educated in Camden and Camden residents, which are reviewed annually and reported on every six months. These should include:

- a) all schools to be rated by Ofsted as at least good, with outstanding being the aim for all;
- b) increases in the percentage of 16 to 19-year-olds classed as in education, employment and training and simultaneous increases in the proportion of Camden young people achieving Level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications by the age of 19;
- c) all pupils* reaching their chronological reading age - we suggest that this is monitored at the ages of seven and 12;
- d) improvements in the proportion of young people gaining five+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths, to move Camden to the top of London and statistical comparator league tables. This should include a floor target for each school and an overall target for the borough. We believe that a target of 75% needs to be set as a matter of urgency, building on the 60% currently achieved;
- e) reductions in the gap between the lowest performing schools and the average, and between the lowest performing groups at Key Stage 4, and the average;
- f) all Camden schools achieving the Camden Award for Inclusion within the next three years.

* It is understood that some children with special and/ or additional needs will not be able to achieve this, but the Commission believes that a target of around 95% should be possible. For children with SEN, the inclusion of the Camden Award for Inclusion target aims to ensure their outcomes are addressed by looking at a basket of relevant indicators.

5. Enrichment

- 5.1 It is clear from submissions to the Commission that expectations of a ‘good local school’ go beyond very good teaching of the curriculum to include access to a much wider range of experiences and support. Many Camden schools are already committed to imaginative ways of broadening pupils’ experience and ensuring they benefit from the rich set of local resources. A great school provides outstanding academic achievements but much more too. However, the picture is variable, and there are still children in Camden, as elsewhere in the capital, who are reluctant to stray out of their immediate neighbourhood and who have little opportunity or encouragement to experience the wider opportunities that Camden and London hold.
- 5.2 If Camden is to be the best place to be educated and the best place to work in education it needs to have an offer that is distinctive, while also supporting institutional diversity and innovation. The borough of Camden can boast access both within and near its borders to one of the richest collections of organisations – businesses, higher education institutions, cultural institutions, voluntary and community bodies – in the world. Many of them have engaged with the Commission and expressed their commitment to extending their expertise, assets and energy to benefit Camden’s young people. A distinctive Camden education offer should focus then on opening up children’s minds and horizons through these broader experiences and, in turn, on ensuring they are equipped to take full advantage of them when leaving education and training.
- 5.3 We recognise that schools are already subject to many frameworks, programmes and expectations, and that the suggestion of an additional commitment may put some schools off. However, the Commission has heard from other schools who would welcome a common programme, believing that it could drive improvement, collaboration and aspiration (of schools, parents and young people) and promote cross-phase continuity.
- 5.4 The Commission believes that Camden’s young people will benefit from a guaranteed minimum enrichment in their curriculum, because it is not yet available to all. To minimise the perception of constraint and increase impact, we have significantly reduced the proposals here from the suggestions made in the interim report. Those now included are set out in Box A in Appendix C, and draw on imaginative input from head teachers, as well as on feedback from young people who strongly endorsed the suggestions around skills for adult and working life. They also reflect the Commission’s strong belief that all schools should be able to provide access to the English Baccalaureate and triple science (Key Stage 4) for those for whom these could be appropriate options.



- 5.5 We recommend that the aim would be to achieve the maximum possible sign-up from Camden schools to the ambition. Information on the framework would be published on Council and school websites, for parents and young people's benefit, and it would form part of the conversation with each school's Camden Professional Partner. There could be light-touch reporting on progress, and monitoring at the individual level for pupils.
- 5.6 We believe that CPEE as a strategic partnership will be well placed to encourage operational partnerships between its members which would support this enrichment work. For example, many Colleges of the University of London, the recently relocated University of the Arts and London Metropolitan University are on the doorstep of Camden schools. Curriculum enrichment activities and interaction with student mentors could help raise aspiration and achievement for all Camden children, as well as widening participation in higher education. We envisage each Camden primary and secondary school having a link with a local higher education institution. The CPEE should approach London Higher, which represents HE institutions throughout London, with a view to taking this forward.
- 5.7 As well as world class universities, Camden has a wealth of other cultural organisations, such as the British Library and the British Museum. These organisations have told us they are keen to exercise local corporate social responsibility in addition to their national and international roles. Many such organisations already work closely with particular Camden schools, but this contribution is not well coordinated and not all schools benefit equally from the richness of the offer. In our interim report, we floated the idea of a website that would provide information on what is available to Camden schools. In time, this might provide the basis of a clearing house for requests from schools and offers of support from partners. This idea has generated considerable support and we hope the CPEE will convene a meeting of relevant partners to take it forward with schools.

Recommendation 4

Drawing on the rich resources available locally, the CPEE should seek to provide a shared minimum set of experiences and opportunities from which all children and young people educated in the borough can benefit, by:

- a) promoting an enrichment programme for Camden pupils by developing, in consultation with schools and partners, the proposed content we have listed in Box A in Appendix C;
- b) challenging each institution to endorse this programme;
- c) devising a website to provide information on what is available to Camden schools from the wealth of local cultural organisations;
- d) taking forward, perhaps via London Higher, the proposal that each primary and secondary school in the borough should have a link with a local university.

6. Early years

- 6.1 The early years service in Camden, in common with every other local authority area in the country, is facing a significant funding shortfall and consequent upheaval as services are restructured and policies amended to meet the new budget constraints.
- 6.2 The Commission recognises the necessity of scaling back the early years offer in the current funding climate, and notes the Council's efforts to do so in a way that retains as many of its benefits as possible. But we must also stress our strong belief – one we know the Council itself agrees with – in the profound value of high quality education and childcare in the early years, particularly for vulnerable families and children.
- 6.3 Thanks to historic investment in early years within the borough, provision will continue to exceed that available in many areas. But when contrasted with the original, ambitious vision for the service, there is no doubt that the new offer will fall considerably short – a profound disappointment for parents and providers alike.
- 6.4 As a result, the focus in recent months has been on battling to preserve existing provision. But this has left the sector focused on the loss of services and it now needs a coherent sense of purpose for the future. The Council, providers and parents need to accept that the future offer will necessarily be different, and reinvigorate the sector with a refreshed vision for early years that both suits the present times and provides direction for the future.
- 6.5 Camden has been one of the pilots on extending the free nursery offer to 'disadvantaged two year olds' and should be well placed to take on the very significant additional expectations of this widened offer for possibly 1,000 children in 2013-14. This expansion should not be underestimated – it is many times larger than the Building Schools for the Future expansion in secondary schools.
- 6.6 The Commission believes that the Council, in conjunction with CPEE, should prioritise investment in early years provision at the earliest opportunity, and in the meantime monitor the impact of current changes on different groups of children and families, so that action can be taken to mitigate any differential negative effects.

Recommendation 5

The CPEE should develop a strategic vision that can provide the early years sector with a renewed sense of purpose and future direction. This will help drive further improvements, which will include:

- a) supporting the Council, with other partners, in considering how best to use the resources available, including those to extend the nursery offer to two year olds;
- b) ensuring that further developments for children's centres are based on developing the integrated working between the Council, health and other partners to provide targeted services within early years and childcare provision;
- c) maintaining the link between high quality early years provision and the aim to reduce child poverty through both improved outcomes for children and by targeting resources to provide affordable childcare for working parents that most need help.

7. 14 to 19 provision

- 7.1. We start from the ambition to have every young person in Camden leaving education and training with the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to be competitive and succeed both in the workplace and in higher education, whatever the economic context. To achieve this goal, provision should be available to enable every young person to achieve to their maximum potential. Currently, Camden's provision does not measure up to this ambition, as demonstrated in some detail in our interim report.
- 7.2 A number of common concerns have been raised in submissions, meetings and visits. In particular, parents, governors, students, young people including those who are not in education, employment or training, employers and higher education institutions have indicated that:
- the extent, quality and objectivity of information, advice and guidance (IAG) provided to students in Year 8 and subsequently are inadequate;
 - the provision of vocational courses at 14 is inadequate overall despite some notable exceptions, thus limiting student and parent choice;
 - there is insufficient exposure of young people to the workplace and to the development of employability skills;
 - level 1 and 2 post-16 provision, particularly for students with SEN, is limited as is the opportunity for many to successfully complete level 2 in English and maths; and
 - those in higher education are concerned that some students do not have the skills to work independently, research topics or write at length.
- 7.3 It is recognised that considerable change is under way around this phase of education. The raising of the education leaving age to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015, changes to post-16 funding, responsibility for information, advice and guidance being passed to schools, the loss of Educational Maintenance Allowance and increase in university fees, and the government's decisions on vocational courses following the Wolf review and on what will be included in performance tables, are all creating significant challenges for providers. That said, there needs to be meaningful leadership on the 14-19 agenda in the wake of the withdrawal of BSF, and a replacement vision and strategic thinking about the consequences of these challenges.
- 7.4 While there are pockets of valuable practice, we consider it vital that the Council, schools, governors, further education, training providers, employers, alternative providers and higher education tackle together the issues outlined as a matter of urgency on behalf of all young people. The Commission has heard from many local employers and higher education institutions which are keen to bring their assets and expertise to bear with regard to these challenges, and an important role for the CPEE will be harnessing their support. We propose that the CPEE addresses 14-19



education and school-employer partnerships as one of the most important priorities from this report and that the Camden enrichment programme contributes to the improvements recommended here.

- 7.5 Responsibility for independent, objective advice and guidance passes to schools from the local authority during 2012. We believe attention needs to be given to information about all routes from 14 to 19, including employment trends, and that this should start at the latest in Year 8. It is important that education providers, parents and young people have access to up-to-date, digestible information on local, regional and national labour markets to inform choices around curriculum offer and choice. We believe that there should be a common information, advice and guidance package across schools and providers to be made available online to parents and students.

Recommendation 6

The CPEE should oversee a programme of change and development for students aged 14 to 19, which provides real opportunities to develop employability skills and higher level skills. This should:

- a) ensure a more strategic approach to education, training and employment pathways for young people from 14 to 24;
- b) develop a real and lasting improvement in the relationship between schools and businesses and institutions to support the development and progression of all young people. This includes independent, objective advice and guidance about all routes from 14 to 19, including employment trends - this should start at the latest in Year 8;
- c) establish more vocational pathways at 14 and that all providers ensure that all post-16 learning includes successful completion of level 2 in English and maths and explore the effectiveness of alternatives to GCSE retakes;
- d) create a local drive to extend opportunities for Camden's young people to prevent long term risks associated with unemployment and under achievement;
- e) establish, working with partners across Camden, a Bursary Fund to support poorer students to pay for university fees.

8. Vulnerable children

8.1 The Commission was given a specific remit to consider the needs of vulnerable children and young people. Our findings in this area focus on children and young people with special educational needs (SEN), and the support provided for wider groups of children and young people that move in and out of vulnerability because of circumstances (e.g. family break up) for whom it is vital that any extra support needed during this time is identified and put in place. The partnership arrangements we are proposing should explicitly consider the needs of this group of young people.

8.2 Children and young people with special educational needs (SEN)

8.2.1 In Camden 23% of pupils are on the SEN register – this is in line with figures nationally. However, whilst the proportion of pupils that have a moderate learning difficulty is less than the national average (12% in Camden, compared with 24% nationally), the proportion is higher than the national average for pupils who have a behavioural, emotional and social difficulty in secondary schools (39%, compared with 30% nationally) and a speech, language and communication need in primary schools (36%, compared with 27% nationally). In January 2011, there were 991 pupils with a statement maintained by Camden. Of these 702 were in Camden schools i.e. 71%, and 289 were in schools outside Camden i.e. 29%. Attainment of pupils with SEN in Camden schools is above that of SEN pupils nationally for KS2 and KS4, though there has been no sustained improvement over the last three years.

8.2.2 Provision for children with SEN within the borough includes support for pupils in mainstream schools and a mix of special school provision, resource bases within mainstream schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) across the key stages. Additional provision has been put in place more recently to meet the needs of those on the autistic spectrum. The Council has an explicit strategy to support a greater number of children to be educated within the borough where possible, and that local provision is being developed and improved to accommodate this strategy.

8.2.3 Partnership is vital between parents and schools in getting the right support for children with additional and/or special educational needs and disabilities. Many parents and school staff spoke of the adversarial nature of the SEN system in which parents feel they have to fight for what their child needs. There are no simple ways of overcoming the challenges in this relationship, so we highlight in this section key areas of good practice which we believe will lead to improvements and strengthen practice.

8.2.4 We received positive feedback about the pilot Achievement for All programme which promoted better communications between parents and teachers through 'structured conversations' and improvement in the achievement of SEN pupils. Camden schools should continue to embed the learning from this programme. The statutory Parent Partnership has a key role in advocating for parents of children with SEN. The CPEE should support this service to have a higher profile within schools to advocate on behalf of parents and support schools in meeting the needs of their pupils.

- 8.2.5 To support parents and schools in having a greater understanding of what children and young people are entitled to across the spectrum of SEN, the Commission recommend that there is an entitlement drawn up that sets out what should be 'ordinarily available' for all schools in Camden. This should set out what parents can expect/schools can provide, and would include good practice for example, around transition.
- 8.2.6 Heads and SEN stakeholders highlighted the importance of strong leadership in creating a culture of inclusion and aspirations to meet better children's needs within individual schools. Schools and the Council identified the Camden Award for Inclusion as an important tool in recognising inclusive practice, which requires schools to share their best practice. We strongly endorse this award and suggest that all schools, including secondary schools, should aim to achieve this within the next three years.
- 8.2.7 The partnership between specialist and mainstream resources plays an important role in ensuring children and young people are able to reach their full potential. As part of the Commission's work, we heard from a number of parents of sensory impaired children who raised concerns about reductions in specialist teacher posts. Going forwards, there is little doubt that the tough financial climate will place additional pressures on specialist resources across the piece. In addition, the range and complexity of special needs means that Camden should seek to make better use of the expertise available in order to influence policy and practice in the mainstream.
- 8.2.8 More can be done to maximise opportunities for Swiss Cottage special school – particularly in its role as a teaching school, as well as sharing the work and learning from the PRUs around behavioural, social or emotional difficulties and from the various resource bases around the borough in order to influence policy and practice in the mainstream. Opportunities for further working across boroughs, particularly to deal with complex or specialist needs should also be explored. A flexible training offer should be available, tailored to the specific needs of schools, including a focus on training in the autistic spectrum, which has already been identified as an area to strengthen.
- 8.2.9 There is a need for more transparent about numbers of SEN pupils in schools, and greater clarity about how resources are being used to support them. Special needs' coordinators in schools (SENCOs) need to have a better understanding of how funding is being used to support pupils with SEN in their schools. Governors with responsibility for SEN need to have an oversight of how their schools' SEN budget is being used. We recommend developing a network for governors to support them in this work.
- 8.2.10 We were interested to hear about continuing developments across health services, including the Council's role in joint commissioning the health services for children, including speech and language therapies, and the opportunities to look at the roles of school nurses, for example, under the new arrangements. This should help schools in getting support services at the time they need them. The CPEE should also consider developing a health portal to enable schools to know what services are available, with better signposting. Greater strategic focus through bringing health and other partners together through the CPEE will also help.

8.2.11 The Commission endorses the Council's strategy to look, where appropriate, to support their children with SEN or complex needs within borough boundaries. However, we recognise there is a tension between the role of the Council as a champion of parents and children with complex, additional and special educational needs, and as holders of limited budgets trying to manage resources in the most efficient way possible. We note that comparative budget information for 2011/12 shows Camden ranks second highest of London authorities for spend on external placements (Camden pupils in other authority schools). We recommend better information exchange for parents of children in out of borough schools and improving support for those struggling to access services in these schools – possibly through the Parent Partnership.

8.2.12 Parents and young people have fed back a view that options for 16 to 19 provision continue to be limited for young people with SEN. We recommend that as part of an improved post-14 strategy proposed in this report that the CPEE specifically looks to improve the opportunities within the FE/HE landscape in Camden for those with special and additional needs, building on research evidence and the best practice that exists elsewhere.

Recommendation 7

Camden schools and the CPEE should aspire to an education system that meets the needs of children and young people with SEN, with a clear collective commitment to inclusive practice, and effective partnership with parents. The CPEE should seek to:

- a) improve, define and implement a core offer of provision that is 'ordinarily available' for children and young people with special educational needs, in schools and that this should be widely communicated to parents;
- b) have all schools achieve the Camden Award for Inclusion within the next three years;
- c) improve the opportunities and options within the FE/HE landscape for pupils with special and additional needs, as part of an improved post 14 strategy;
- d) enhance the development of community health services, such as speech and language therapy services, so that services are accessed when and where they are needed;
- e) ensure a flexible, co-ordinated training offer is available to meet the specific needs of schools, supported by effective use of school on school learning, using excellent outreach expertise from the Swiss Cottage Teaching School and the PRUs;
- f) have the Council oversee improved information exchange between out borough schools and parents as part of an overall strategy to better meet the needs of these parents;
- g) have a review undertaken of the role of the Parent Partnership to enable it to champion the needs of young people and their parents with schools.

8.3. Other vulnerable groups

- 8.3.1 In addition to children with SEN, there are other vulnerable groups who do not achieve in line with their peers. These include looked after children, key ethnic groups, those young people attending the PRUs or in alternative education who find it difficult to do well in mainstream schools, and those in hospital schools. There are also those children who may be in mainstream education and move in and out of ‘vulnerability’ depending on their circumstances, and whose needs have to be met promptly. Across these different groups there are a number of factors that can impact on poor educational attainment, many of which are intrinsically linked to poverty, such as housing conditions, overcrowding, poor health and parents’ own education. .
- 8.3.2 The Commission noted the relatively low attainment of looked after children with only 15% (2011, 6% in 2010) achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths compared with a borough average for all Camden pupils of 60%. The CPEE needs to support the local authority in the discharge of its corporate parenting role and to prioritise support to raise the attainment of this group. This should include considering how best to support sharing of best practice through the “designated teacher” role and a collective responsibility to provide appropriate school places for looked after children – in particular taking action through the fair access panel to reduce the numbers excluded and ensure alternative provision is secured where needed. As well as continuing to focus at a school level, there must be better support for those caring for looked after children to support children’s education and to raise aspirations for this group.
- 8.3.3 The next biggest attainment gap from the borough average of 60% is among white British children entitled to free school meals (31% achieving five or more A* to C GCSEs, including English and maths in 2011). A number of the recommendations of this report including a stronger vocational offer, improved parental engagement, the enriched curriculum aimed at widening horizons and supporting skills development, should also benefit this group.
- 8.3.4 However, it is also clear that a more targeted approach is needed. The Commission welcomes the work of the Council’s Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee working group that has been looking into this in more detail and endorses the recommendations made in their submission. In particular, it is clear that individualised support to parents is key to supporting better outcomes for this group, as is the need for appropriate role models as parents’ own negative experience of education can affect their children’s attainment. Again, these may be areas where CPEE partners can help, providing mentors for parents and children, as well as opportunities to raise aspirations and broaden horizons which may help to break a cycle of low aspiration.
- 8.3.5 A number of key black and minority ethnic (BME) groups continue to perform below borough averages. Congolese pupils are the consistently the lowest performing BME group out of the key groups (36% compared with 60% achieving 5+ A*-C GCSE including English and maths), followed, in 2011, by black Caribbean (46%). Bangladeshi, black African and Somali pupils saw a good increase in their average attainment this year, so that over 50% are now getting five or more good GCSEs, including English and maths.

- 8.3.6 Positive results within these groups draw on effective strategies pursued within schools combined with local voluntary and community support. This includes, for example, the work of supplementary schools. These can be invaluable in developing school-home links, as well as in providing education that supplements that available in schools. Whilst supplementary schools have historically had strong links with the Council, links between supplementary schools and mainstream schools remains patchy. The Commission believes that further efforts should be made to support the development of these relationships so that the two groups are able to work together to develop a shared agenda.
- 8.3.7 In addition, we also recommend that schools should continue to offer extended services where possible and use all opportunities to open up schools to the local community, building on current discussions to deliver after school childcare in partnership with local voluntary sector groups.
- 8.3.8 Similarly, the Commission endorses the work of the family learning service who work closely with more vulnerable parents to help support both their education and that of their children. Its courses focus on the most excluded parents as identified by schools or children's centres. Many learners are from ethnic minority groups but there is also a focus on the white working class.
- 8.3.9 Schools are used to external professionals attending their 'swift and easy access' meetings (where they discuss students of concern). Changes to the Connexions service, along with changes to a range of support services, including social worker support time, may impact on these meetings. These have formed the basis of a joined-up 'team around the child' approach for those who are having difficulties, and so provide an integrated approach to problem solving. We believe that schools should consistently use best practice in the 'team around child' approach, support the lead professional, and engage other services to draw on additional support for the child/family even where there is less external resource available.
- 8.3.10 The value of additional social work to support vulnerable children was highlighted in visits to a number of schools. This service was previously provided by the local authority but was a casualty of the recent cutbacks. In light of the positive feedback from schools about this service, this seems the sort of service that schools might consider jointly commissioning on a locality basis with the support of the CPEE.
- 8.3.11 The introduction of the pupil premium will have a mixed impact on school budgets across Camden. However, whatever the impact, one of the key features of the Premium is that it is up to individual schools to decide how to allocate this money to support children. In light of this, there would seem a useful opportunity for the CPEE to support schools in Camden coming together to share evidence and approaches and in particular the impact of different interventions in raising attainment for some of the groups we have discussed in this report.

Recommendation 8

The CPEE should champion the needs of vulnerable groups to close the attainment gaps for key groups particularly looked after children, those from particular black and minority ethnic groups, and white British pupils entitled to free school meals. It should work to support schools to better meet their needs and improve their outcomes. This should include:

- a) committing to providing the very best school place for each looked after child and drawing up a plan for supporting educational attainment of looked after children including looking at how the resources of partners (HE/employers) can be used to help raise the aspirations of these children, develop a pool of education mentors for looked after children and providing effective support for foster carers;
- b) sharing best practice through networks of teachers with responsibility for looked after children and the virtual head teacher role;
- c) supporting improved links between community groups such as supplementary schools and individual schools, to support the needs of particular communities;
- d) reviewing the findings of the Council's Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee working group on raising the achievement of pupils from white families with low incomes;
- e) encouraging all schools to use every opportunity to open their doors to the local community, building on good practice existing in some schools to support the needs of their local communities;
- f) the CPEE bringing together schools to discuss the use of the pupil premium and share best practice and impact in the medium term.

9. Parental engagement

- 9.1 Parents play a central role in their children's education, and not only in terms of the wider outcomes that have been highlighted here, such as skills for adult and working life. There is also clear evidence that effective engagement of parents in their child's schooling can have a significant impact on results. However, not all parents feel equally able to engage confidently in their child's education, and poor school-home communication is a frequent complaint of those parents from whom the Commission has heard.
- 9.2 The Commission believes that parents should be given a stronger role in partnership arrangements to deliver educational excellence in Camden and that the local authority, as parents' champion, together with schools, have shared responsibility for ensuring this.
- 9.3 There are a number of important areas where parents' views have been heard in this process, and we feel they need to have a stronger voice. In section 10 of this report, we indicate that parents' find the admissions process unfair and confusing; the Council needs to review its communication with parents to maximise the transparency of that process. Parents also expressed concerns about the transition of their children between schools, particularly vulnerable children, including children and young people with SEN. In section 11 of the report we propose strengthening the transition process in response to the concerns we have felt from parents and schools. More broadly in the area of SEN a number of parents expressed frustration about the SEN process overall and concerns about the adversarial nature of the process. In section 8 of the report we are proposing the continued need for strengthening communication with parents including reviewing and strengthening the statutory parent partnership service to ensure it has a higher profile within schools.
- 9.4 Across all of these areas we believe that there should be development of a more systematic approach to parental representation at school, and Parents' Council level, building on good practice elsewhere. This should be coupled with targeted work to encourage the participation of less engaged parents, including through engagement with community groups, use of adult and community learning provision, and improvements in communication with parents including foster parents of looked after children. Parent governors also have a key role to play in schools, and we feel the proposals above should also involve exploring the option of developing training for parent governors, and potentially involving the Parents' Council in providing support for parent governors.

Recommendation 9

The Parents' Council and other parent groups, as part of the CPEE, and supported by the CPEE, should develop and implement a joint action plan to ensure parents take on an increased role in decision making about their children's education.

This should include:

- a) more systematic representation of schools and parents on the Parents' Council;
- b) greater transparency over decisions about place planning and deployment of resources to support pupils with special educational needs;
- c) having each school create and service an online 'parent portal' providing parents with regular information on their child's work and progress;
- d) targeting support to parents who are less engaged in their children's education.

10. Place planning and admissions

- 10.1 In our interim report we observed that parents' overwhelming concern was that they should have access to a good local school for their children, and this has been widely endorsed since publication. While many Camden parents do have such access, we remain concerned about the notable number who do not feel that they have.
- 10.2 In terms of place planning, the Commission believes that the Council's approach has focused on balancing the numbers and has given insufficient attention to the location of provision and parental concerns. As a result, parents are pursuing a number of free school applications in areas with the greatest dissatisfaction, leaving the Council on the back foot with regard to the development of new schools in the borough.
- 10.3 At present South Camden Community School (SCCS) does not fill all its places. It currently has 850 students in a school with 1050 places and its capacity will increase to provide up to 1500 places by 2020 as a result of the £25m being invested to provide redeveloped buildings. Although there is some evidence that the opening of new school buildings can impact positively on recruitment, the Commission believes that for the school to fill these additional places poses a considerable challenge in the context of current parental choices, the impact across the borough as a whole of the opening of The UCL Academy and, potentially, the proposal to the Department for Education, now at business case stage, to establish a secondary free school south of the Euston Road.
- 10.4 Taking these factors together, it is our view that there is a case for considering carefully the opportunities to maximise the benefits to Camden of the new building with its cutting edge facilities and the additional capacity it will provide. For this reason we propose a serious study be undertaken of possible alternative configurations. Five opportunities are suggested:
- a) the current plan which includes further continued improvement and a new building. Together this should attract more parents to choose the school for their children;
 - b) the creation of a 3-19 campus incorporating SCCS and one or more local primary schools in a federated structure;
 - c) the development of SCCS as a centre of excellence in vocational/technical education serving all Camden's young people, ideally in partnership with the FE college, one or more local universities and a range of local employers. This would have the added benefit of meeting the gap identified by the Commission in terms of the vocational offer in Camden;
 - d) a partnership with a nearby prestigious HE or research institution such as the Francis Crick Institute or the University of the Arts;
 - e) a federation with the free school south of the Euston Road, if established.
- 10.5 If the building permits, a professional development centre might also be accommodated in collaboration with one or more local HE institutions and building on the existing, nationally acknowledged work of Camden City Learning Centre on the SCCS site. An opportunity to develop SCCS itself into a professional development school might prove attractive if plans for a University Training School elsewhere in the borough do not come to fruition.

- 10.6 The provision of places for boys in secondary school is currently problematic. The likely conversion of Maria Fidelis to a co-educational school and the new UCL Academy which opens in 2012 should gradually improve matters. We recommend more attention is given to boys' attainment and progress throughout Camden as these changes are implemented.
- 10.7 A further area of concern focuses on the admissions process and criteria. We have heard considerable concern from parents about the impact on choice in some areas with several voluntary-aided schools. The Church of England's London Diocesan Board for Schools recommends that governing bodies consider providing 50% of places on the basis of living locally rather than church attendance. A number of Camden schools are moving towards this already.
- 10.8 Parents continue to report finding the admissions process unfair and confusing. The Council, as parent champion, needs to review and improve its engagement and communication with parents through the admissions service on this difficult area and maximise the transparency of the process. If successful, and alongside further improvements in standards, Camden should find that an increasing proportion of Camden residents attend Camden schools, and we believe that the Council and schools should set a target to this effect.

Recommendation 10

The CPEE should encourage schools and the Council to improve place planning and admissions. This would include the following:

- a) reviewing the place planning areas, as well as communications around admissions, in conjunction with parents and schools, to develop a more community-centred approach;
- b) encouraging more voluntary aided schools to consider open admission criteria;
- c) setting a target for increasing the proportion of Camden residents

- that choose to have their children educated in a Camden school. We suggest this could be in the order of 70% (from circa 60%) of parents making a first choice preference for a Camden secondary school place;
- d) drawing up, in consultation with stakeholders, an alternative plan to make full use of the committed investment at South Camden Community School;
 - e) undertaking an independent audit of admissions arrangements.

11. Transition

- 11.1 The interim report noted that while the Commission is aware of individual examples of good practice, and more effective processes around transition from early years to primary, there is general dissatisfaction with how transition between phases in Camden is managed, particularly at the point of primary-secondary transition.
- 11.2 The concerns revolve around two key issues: the extent to which the young people themselves are prepared for the next phase of their education; and the need to improve understanding and transfer of knowledge between professionals within the different phases. Transition is also highlighted as particularly challenging where children have SEN. Parents spoke of “going back to the beginning” when their child starts a new school. Some good practice exists in this area such as the ‘information passport’ for transition for young people with complex needs but this needs to be consistently used and enhanced by better conversations with parents prior to transition.
- 11.3 In order to ensure that all children start secondary school with the right skills and knowledge to enable them to stay engaged and make the most of the opportunities available we have suggested the enrichment programme proposed in recommendation 4. This should include making additional provision for those whose mastery of English and mathematics is below the level required. The detail of when this might best be provided (at the end of year 6, at a ‘summer school’ or during year 7) warrants further discussion but should be a partnership between primary and secondary colleagues, reflecting their joint commitment to the children in their care at this crucial time.
- 11.4 There has also been some practical progress such as agreement on having a single set of dates on which all secondary schools arrange visits/ joint work for their future Year 7 pupils which will enable more primary children to participate in these important preparatory steps.
- 11.5 Improving the transfer of knowledge about children between primary and secondary schools was also recognised as important and we have suggested supplementing the current process with opportunities for face to face contact or other ways for teachers to ‘handover’ their knowledge of year 6 children to secondary colleagues.
- 11.6 More broadly, a better understanding between year 6 and 7 teachers of the pedagogy and practice of teaching and learning in each other’s institutions would assist them in both preparing students for success and in supporting students to flourish in a new environment. Although difficult to make time for such interactions, we think it will have an impact on the attainment gap at Key Stage 3. We also noted in the interim report a perception amongst parents and teachers that progress was slower than necessary at Key Stage 3 (ages 11-14), and we would hope that improved understanding between the phases would help to address this.

Recommendation 11

The CPEE should work to ensure sustained progress and consistency across phases by developing an action plan to improve the management of transition, including for the most vulnerable pupils. This should include:

- a) steps to improve teachers' mutual understanding of the curriculum and teaching methods of Year 6 and 7 pupils, for example arranging visits between institutions, creating opportunities to moderate each others' work and establishing a working group to develop a joint approach to curriculum planning;
- b) improving systematic communication regarding individual pupils between phases, including: (i) a process to improve how information about a pupil is fed upwards to support their transition, ideally involving face-to-face contact between teachers and drawing on good practice within early years/ primary transition; and (ii) establishing a system whereby every provider provides the previous phase with feedback on the attainment of their former pupils, such as Year 7 reports and GCSE results for primary feeder schools;
- c) agreeing a single set of dates for transition events;
- d) setting up a small study to gather structured feedback annually from pupils and parents on their experience of transition to monitor the impact of the actions taken;
- e) making use of the parent portals to help support children and their parents through transition.

12. High quality training and development

- 12.1 We want all Camden schools to aspire to be great schools and we know that great schools need the very best leaders, teachers and support staff. So we want Camden to be considered the best place to work in education. A number of issues covered elsewhere in this report will be important in achieving this: strong and supportive school leadership; access to good support and supplementary services; manageable pupil behaviour and supportive parents. But access to relevant and inspiring workforce development opportunities will be critical, and not just for teachers, but for the full array of school staff who all make a contribution to the quality of children's educational experiences. This, in turn, will be key to securing sustainable school improvement.
- 12.2 As in other areas of education policy, a great deal of change is currently underway in this field, such as schools' new responsibilities for school improvement and plans to give them a leading role in initial teacher training. Camden's training offer will clearly need to evolve to take account of these changes. Schools and providers, together with the Council, need to ensure that throughout this period the borough can boast a high quality and distinctive development package that attracts the very best teachers and other school staff. Areas that need particular emphasis at this time include the induction of newly qualified teachers, the preparation of middle leaders and the management and leadership of school improvement. As indicated in Section 7, more emphasis needs to be put on effective ways of teaching vocational courses in Camden schools. Ensuring that teaching assistants are used to best effect is also vital, as is providing opportunities and support for those among them who wish to become qualified as teachers.
- 12.3 The current high take-up of Council provision for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) amongst schools reinforces much of the feedback we have received regarding the quality of existing provision. However, we have also heard that more could be done in the short term to make it more flexible and responsive to schools' needs, for example by providing more bespoke training and incorporating a variety of opportunities including staff exchange, placements, shadowing, and exposure to practice in other boroughs and phases. For example, exposure to the work of Pupil Referral Units and the local FE college could benefit staff in other Camden institutions, particularly in relation to behaviour for learning.
- 12.4 We believe these ambitions could best be achieved through the development of a coherent Camden framework for professional development. In addition, the CPD offer would benefit from greater integration with school improvement work. This could help support, for example, the development of a 'resident inspector' role for one of the senior managers within every school and complement the work of the professional partners, and bring together work to facilitate better sharing of good practice in the borough. We have also been concerned by the lack of effective use of workforce data to inform policy and development planning in the borough and believe this should be rectified.

- 12.5 As emphasised elsewhere in this report, the Commission is anxious that Camden makes the most of national policy developments to benefit the borough. Swiss Cottage Special School's teaching school status is one such example, but the Council and schools should be proactive in identifying additional opportunities, making use of outstanding primary and secondary schools to benefit the whole of education provision in the borough. Similarly, the presence of The UCL Academy and the possible location of a university training school in the borough could provide exciting opportunities for all Camden schools to benefit from the latest developments in research-based professional practice.
- 12.6 We have some doubts about whether the current Camden approach to the organisation of CPD and school improvement will be sustainable in the medium term, as funding is put under increased pressure and new forms of provision develop in response to the changing educational landscape discussed elsewhere in this report. We believe that now is the time to explore how schools in Camden might draw more systematically on support from local world leading institutions in the field of educational research and professional development, such as the Institute of Education, King's College London, the Central School of Speech and Drama and the Wellcome Trust. It may be that the CPEE could encourage the development of a consortium of leading providers to support professional development in Camden schools along the lines of a Deanery for medical education. Such a consortium could devise the Camden framework for professional development, act as a clearing house for the growing range of CPD offers that will be available to schools, quality assure provision and provide accreditation leading to recognised qualifications for teachers and other members of the education workforce.

Recommendation 12

The CPEE should develop a distinctive and high quality training and development offer for teaching and school staff in order to make Camden the best place in London to work in education. This should include:

- a) building on the opportunities provided by Swiss Cottage School becoming a Teaching School, and identifying and developing similar approaches with suitable primary and secondary schools and other partners;
- b) integrating CPD provision with school improvement work, including through the development of a 'resident inspector' role within the senior staff of every school, and through work to extend the sharing of good practice across Camden schools;
- c) establishing a Camden professional development consortium with the Institute of Education and other leading training providers, which would actively promote high quality CPD programmes and accredit them;
- d) maintaining funding for the early years CPD offer in order to continue to embed practice and raise qualification levels across the workforce;
- e) reviewing and improving the collation, analysis and use of school workforce data to inform recruitment and retention policies and the workforce development offer.

13. Governance

- 13.1 Governors play a critical role in education in Camden, and we believe this needs to be more fully reflected in the support they receive from the Council. We believe that development of a more strategic relationship between the local authority and governing bodies, and particularly their chairs, should be an important element of the Council's role as champion and enabler. It is important that all schools have equal access to governors with the requisite skills, and it is also crucial that they play a role in the partnership arrangements for the borough.
- 13.2 Parent governors also have a key role to play in schools, and within our overall recommendations for improving parental engagement, we feel there is a need to explore the option of developing training for parent governors. Within the area of special educational needs we have also identified that governors with responsibility for SEN need to receive greater support to assist their oversight, potentially through a governor network.
- 13.3 We are pleased that the Council has already instituted termly meetings with chairs of governors in response to the concerns we raised in the interim report. The suggestions we made in that report have, on the whole, been warmly welcomed by governors and form the basis of the recommendations made here. In addition, we have received further evidence highlighting concerns about the quality of clerking and the existing support for governing bodies, which we have aimed to address in the recommendations below.

Recommendation 13

The Council, in consultation with schools, should strengthen the strategic support it provides to local authority school governing bodies to empower them to lead their schools to outstanding status. This should include:

- a) encouraging the partners involved in the CPEE to identify a pool of potential governors with the requisite skills;
- b) developing a more joined-up, strategic, focus on governors' needs including providing stronger steers on key issues and agenda-setting, and improving systems for recording and monitoring information on governing bodies;
- c) making clear the importance of governors having access to a suitably qualified and independent clerk;
- d) pro-actively finding ways to engage with those governing bodies that are not currently taking part in Camden-wide discussions and support;
- e) agreeing a minimum set of information to be shared with chairs of governors to ensure they have a full picture of their school's performance, including assistance with interpreting more complex data (such as RAISE online);
- f) exploring the option of developing training specifically for parent governors and involving the Parents' Council in providing support for parent governors;
- g) drawing up a protocol to which new and existing local authority governors would be expected to sign up as a condition of their appointment;
- h) providing tailored support to those appointed to schools in difficulties;
- i) strengthening the learning and development programme for governors through:
 - (i) governing bodies making completion of induction training an explicit expectation of new governors, and monitoring take-up;
 - (ii) facilitating a mentoring scheme that links new chairs with existing ones;
 - (iii) establishing virtual networks for specialist governors (for example child protection, SEN) supported by relevant briefings and training opportunities; developing a 'future chairs' programme;
 - (iv) varying the governor training offer such as at school or cluster level to maximise relevance and attendance; and
 - (v) ensuring governors have similar access to information on good practice elsewhere as heads and teachers.

Appendix A: Education Commission recommendations

Recommendation 1

Camden Council, together with schools, providers and partners should develop the role of the Children's Trust into a combined Children's Trust/Camden Partnership for Educational Excellence (CPEE), bringing together all key partners to make better use of resources and achieve shared ambitions for education in Camden.

The CPEE should:

- a) be outward-looking, bringing in best practice from elsewhere;
- b) enable schools to develop new partnerships to drive improvement;
- c) have access to resources delegated to it by its partner members;
- d) bring together existing partnership and stakeholder forums in the first instance with a view to streamlining decision-making structures over time.

Recommendation 2

The Council's responsibilities are changing and reducing. In this context it should have three key roles going forward, and these should be clearly articulated to all relevant partners and used to inform strategic planning. The roles are:

- a) a champion for children and young people's opportunities and the high standard of education they should receive;
- b) an enabler of more effective joint use of resources;
- c) a broker of new partnerships that drive improvements, in particular to lead the establishment and support the ongoing activity of the Camden Partnership for Educational Excellence.

Recommendation 3

The CPEE should agree targets for improving key outcomes for children and young people educated in Camden and Camden residents, which are reviewed annually and reported on every six months. These should include:

- a) all schools to be rated by Ofsted as at least good, with outstanding being the aim for all;
- b) increases in the percentage of 16 to 19-year-olds classed as in education, employment and training and simultaneous increases in the proportion of Camden young people achieving Level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications by the age of 19;
- c) all pupils* reaching their chronological reading age - we suggest that this is monitored at the ages of seven and 12;
- d) improvements in the proportion of young people gaining five+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths, to move Camden to the top of London and statistical comparator league tables. This should include a floor target for each school and an overall target for the borough. We believe that a target of 75% needs to be set as a matter of urgency, building on the 60% currently achieved;

- e) reductions in the gap between the lowest performing schools and the average, and between the lowest performing groups at Key Stage 4, and the average;
- f) all Camden schools achieving the Camden Award for Inclusion within the next three years.

* It is understood that some children with special and/ or additional needs will not be able to achieve this, but the Commission believes that a target of around 95% should be possible. For children with SEN, the inclusion of the Camden Award for Inclusion target aims to ensure their outcomes are addressed by looking at a basket of relevant indicators.

Recommendation 4

Drawing on the rich resources available locally, the CPEE should seek to provide a shared minimum set of experiences and opportunities from which all children and young people educated in the borough can benefit, by:

- a) promoting an enrichment programme for Camden pupils by developing, in consultation with schools and partners, the proposed content we have listed in Box A in Appendix C;
- b) challenging each institution to endorse this programme;
- c) devising a website to provide information on what is available to Camden schools from the wealth of local cultural organisations;
- d) taking forward, perhaps via London Higher, the proposal that each primary and secondary school in the borough should have a link with a local university.

Recommendation 5

The CPEE should develop a strategic vision that can provide the early years sector with a renewed sense of purpose and future direction. This will help drive further improvements, which will include:

- a) supporting the Council, with other partners, in considering how best to use the resources available, including those to extend the nursery offer to two year olds;
- b) ensuring that further developments for children's centres are based on developing the integrated working between the Council, health and other partners to provide targeted services within early years and childcare provision;
- c) maintaining the link between high quality early years provision and the aim to reduce child poverty through both improved outcomes for children and by targeting resources to provide affordable childcare for working parents that most need help.

Recommendation 6

The CPEE should oversee a programme of change and development for students aged 14 to 19, which provides real opportunities to develop employability skills and higher level skills. This should:

- a) ensure a more strategic approach to education, training and employment pathways for young people from 14 to 24;
- b) develop a real and lasting improvement in the relationship between schools and businesses and institutions to support the development and progression of all young people. This includes independent, objective advice and guidance about all routes from 14 to 19, including employment trends - this should start at the latest in Year 8;
- c) establish more vocational pathways at 14 and that all providers ensure that all post-16 learning includes successful completion of level 2 in English and maths and explore the effectiveness of alternatives to GCSE retakes
- d) create a local drive to extend opportunities for Camden's young people to prevent long term risks associated with unemployment and under achievement;
- e) establish, working with partners across Camden, a Bursary Fund to support poorer students to pay for university fees.

Recommendation 7

Camden schools and the CPEE should aspire to an education system that meets the needs of children and young people with SEN, with a clear collective commitment to inclusive practice, and effective partnership with parents. The CPEE should seek to:

- a) improve, define and implement a core offer of provision that is 'ordinarily available' for children and young people with special educational needs, in schools and that this should be widely communicated to parents;
- b) have all schools achieve the Camden Award for Inclusion within the next three years;
- c) improve the opportunities and options within the FE/HE landscape for pupils with special and additional needs, as part of an improved post 14 strategy;
- d) enhance the development of community health services, such as speech and language therapy services, so that services are accessed when and where they are needed;
- e) ensure a flexible, co-ordinated training offer is available to meet the specific needs of schools, supported by effective use of school on school learning, using excellent outreach expertise from the Swiss Cottage Teaching School and the PRUs;
- f) have the Council oversee improved information exchange between out borough schools and parents as part of an overall strategy to better meet the needs of these parents;
- g) have a review undertaken of the role of the Parent Partnership to enable it to champion the needs of young people and their parents with schools.

Recommendation 8

The CPEE should champion the needs of vulnerable groups to close the attainment gaps for key groups particularly looked after children, those from particular black and minority ethnic groups, and white British pupils entitled to free school meals. It should work to support schools to better meet their needs and improve their outcomes. This should include:

- a) committing to providing the very best school place for each looked after child and drawing up a plan for supporting educational attainment of looked after children including looking at how the resources of partners (HE/employers) can be used to help raise the aspirations of these children, develop a pool of education mentors for looked after children and providing effective support for foster carers;
- b) sharing best practice through networks of teachers with responsibility for looked after children and the virtual head teacher role;
- c) supporting improved links between community groups such as supplementary schools and individual schools, to support the needs of particular communities;
- d) reviewing the findings of the Council's Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee working group on raising the achievement of pupils from white families with low incomes;
- e) encouraging all schools to use every opportunity to open their doors to the local community, building on good practice existing in some schools to support the needs of their local communities;
- f) the CPEE bringing together schools to discuss the use of the pupil premium and share best practice and impact in the medium term.

Recommendation 9

The Parents' Council and other parent groups, as part of the CPEE, and supported by the CPEE, should develop and implement a joint action plan to ensure parents take on an increased role in decision making about their children's education. This should include:

- a) more systematic representation of schools and parents on the Parents' Council;
- b) greater transparency over decisions about place planning and deployment of resources to support pupils with special educational needs;
- c) having each school create and service an online 'parent portal' providing parents with regular information on their child's work and progress;
- d) targeting support to parents who are less engaged in their children's education.

Recommendation 10

The CPEE should encourage schools and the Council to improve place planning and admissions. This would include the following:

- a) reviewing the place planning areas, as well as communications around admissions, in conjunction with parents and schools, to develop a more community-centred approach;
- b) encouraging more voluntary aided schools to consider open admission criteria;
- c) setting a target for increasing the proportion of Camden residents that choose to have their children educated in a Camden school. We suggest this could be in the order of 70% (from circa 60%) of parents making a first choice preference for a Camden secondary school place;
- d) drawing up, in consultation with stakeholders, an alternative plan to make full use of the committed investment at South Camden Community School;
- e) undertaking an independent audit of admissions arrangements.

Recommendation 11

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- a) steps to improve teachers' mutual understanding of the curriculum and teaching methods of Year 6 and 7 pupils, for example arranging visits between institutions, creating opportunities to moderate each others' work and establishing a working group to develop a joint approach to curriculum planning;
- b) improving systematic communication regarding individual pupils between phases, including: (i) a process to improve how information about a pupil is fed upwards to support their transition, ideally involving face-to-face contact between teachers and drawing on good practice within early years/ primary transition; and (ii) establishing a system whereby every provider provides the previous phase with feedback on the attainment of their former pupils, such as Year 7 reports and GCSE results for primary feeder schools;
- c) agreeing a single set of dates for transition events;
- d) setting up a small study to gather structured feedback annually from pupils and parents on their experience of transition to monitor the impact of the actions taken;
- e) making use of the parent portals to help support children and their parents through transition.

Recommendation 12

The CPEE should develop a distinctive and high quality training and development offer for teaching and school staff in order to make Camden the best place in London to work in education. This should include:

- a) building on the opportunities provided by Swiss Cottage School becoming a Teaching School, and identifying and developing similar approaches with suitable primary and secondary schools and other partners;
- b) integrating CPD provision with school improvement work, including through the development of a 'resident inspector' role within the senior staff of every school, and through work to extend the sharing of good practice across Camden schools;
- c) establishing a Camden professional development consortium with the Institute of Education and other leading training providers, which would actively promote high quality CPD programmes and accredit them;
- d) maintaining funding for the early years CPD offer in order to continue to embed practice and raise qualification levels across the workforce;
- e) reviewing and improving the collation, analysis and use of school workforce data to inform recruitment and retention policies and the workforce development offer.

Recommendation 13

The Council, in consultation with schools, should strengthen the strategic support it provides to local authority school governing bodies to empower them to lead their schools to outstanding status. This should include:

- a) encouraging the partners involved in the CPEE to identify a pool of potential governors with the requisite skills;
- b) developing a more joined-up, strategic, focus on governors' needs including providing stronger steers on key issues and agenda-setting, and improving systems for recording and monitoring information on governing bodies;
- c) making clear the importance of governors having access to a suitably qualified and independent clerk;
- d) pro-actively finding ways to engage with those governing bodies are not currently taking part in Camden-wide discussions and support;
- e) agreeing a minimum set of information to be shared with chairs of governors to ensure they have a full picture of their school's performance, including assistance with interpreting more complex data (such as RAISE online);
- f) exploring the option of developing training specifically for parent governors and involving the Parents' Council in providing support for parent governors;
- g) drawing up a protocol to which new and existing local authority governors would be expected to sign up as a condition of their appointment;
- h) providing tailored support to those appointed to schools in difficulties;
- i) strengthening the learning and development programme for governors through:
 - (i) governing bodies making completion of induction training an explicit expectation of new governors, and monitoring take-up;
 - (ii) facilitating a mentoring scheme that links new chairs with existing ones;
 - (iii) establishing virtual networks for specialist governors (for example child protection, SEN) supported by relevant briefings and training opportunities; developing a 'future chairs' programme;
 - (iv) varying the governor training offer such as at school or cluster level to maximise relevance and attendance; and
 - (v) ensuring governors have similar access to information on good practice elsewhere as heads and teachers.

Appendix B: Evidence taken by the Education Commission

Written submissions received

Schools and providers: Secondary heads (3), early years head, Westminster-Kingsway FE College, Camden Job Train, governors/ governing bodies (10).

Individuals: parents (4), teacher (1), pupils (4), other (7), anonymous (6).

Voluntary and community organisations and campaigns: Ambitious about Autism, Caraf Centre, BME Alliance, Tavistock and Portman, The Holborn School, Age UK, Origin Housing, Butterfly Consultancy, The North London Local Deaf Children's Society, Kentish Town City Farm, The Somali Cultural Centre, Campaign for State Education (CASE), Parents Together, Coram Life Education, White British Low Income Group, Camden Parent Council.

Partners including businesses: NHS Camden Public Health, Central Connexions Inmidtown, Argent Estates Ltd Camden Service for Young People (Therapy), Royal Free Hospital, Whittington Hospital, Central North West London NHS Trust.

Higher education institutions: Institute of Education, UCL, Central Saint Martins of Art and Design, Central School of Speech & Drama.

Political parties/ councillors: Camden Liberal Democrats, Camden Labour Party, Conservative Councillors (2), Camden Green Party, Liberal Democrat Councillor, Labour Councillor.

Council officers: School inclusion team, adult and community learning, admissions team, 16–19 team, intergenerational officer, housing needs group, school support service, parent partnership service, alternative education providers (PRUs), assistant director, parks and open spaces team, strategy, partnerships and performance team, education welfare service, school improvement service, looked after children social work team, commissioning and partnerships team, customer care and complaints team.

Schools and other education settings visited by the Education Commission

1. Acland Burghley School	16. Our Lady's Primary School
2. Argyle Primary School	17. Parliament Hill School
3. Brecknock Primary School	18. Richard Cobden Primary School
4. Camden Jobtrain	19. Rhyl Primary School
5. Camden School for Girls	20. Royal Free Hospital School
6. Edith Neville Primary School	21. South Camden Community School
7. Eleanor Palmer Primary School	22. Swiss Cottage Special School
8. Haverstock School	23. St Alban's Primary School
9. Hampstead School	24. St Eugene de Mazenod Primary School
10. Institute of Education	25. St Paul's Primary School
11. Kentish Town Primary School	26. Thomas Coram Children's Centre
12. King's Cross Construction Skills Centre	27. The UCL Academy
13. Kingsgate Primary School	28. Westminster Kingsway College
14. La Sainte Union School	29. William Ellis School
15. Maria Fidelis School	

Group discussions held by or on behalf of the Education Commission

With partners: businesses, public health, police, Children's Trust, Local Strategic Partnership seminar including HE, FE, voluntary and community sector, institutions, diocesan boards, NUT.

With schools/ providers: children's centre heads, head teachers' conference, Early Years Advisory Group, chairs of governors forum, alternative education providers, Schools' Forum, primary heads' meeting, secondary heads' meeting

With parents and young people: Parents' Council; Parent Partnership Forum; Special Parents Forum; group of 16-19 young people; young people at schools and meetings with the Youth Action Groups; discussions at Camden Jobtrain; parents of SEN children and young people in our of borough placements, parents of children with sensory impairments.

With councillors and officers: Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee; staff conference; briefings on school improvement, place planning, workforce, SEN, Chief Executive, Leader, Cabinet Member.

Appendix C: Proposed content for a Camden enrichment programme

In recommendation 4 the Commission recommends that the CPEE should promote an **enrichment programme for Camden pupils** that provides a shared minimum set of experiences and opportunities from which all children and young people educated in the borough can benefit. Below in box A is the proposed content for a Camden Enrichment programme.

Box A: Proposed content for a Camden enrichment programme

Experiences

By the end of the **primary phase**, every child to have been given the opportunity and support to:

- perform on stage;
- take part in a sporting event beyond school;
- participate in a residential trip;
- have a position of responsibility;
- sing in a choir;
- play an instrument;
- begin to learn another language;
- become an 'expert' at something;
- participate in public speaking;
- learn outside for at least 20% of their time at school;
- be involved in enrichment work with a local university.

By the end of the **secondary phase**, every student to have been given the opportunity and support to:

- visit at least one museum and gallery and theatre;
- visit at least one of each of an FE college, university and employer;
- take part in voluntary work;
- become an 'expert' at something;
- participate in public speaking;
- perform on stage;
- take part in a sporting event beyond school;
- participate in a residential trip;
- have a position of responsibility.

Skills for work and adult life

Between the end of Year 6 and during Year 7, for pupils not achieving level 4b by the end of Year 6:

- appropriate catch-up provision to be made to ensure competency in reading, writing and number by the end of Year 7.

In secondary school, every pupil to have access to:

- a curriculum that explicitly promotes and assesses skills for adult and working life;
- from Year 8, a programme of independent and objective information, advice and guidance that includes the opportunity to attend a range of taster days;
- from Year 10, access to a new, more creative programme of work experience that includes at least a two weeks of structured and relevant placement(s) with an employer, embedded into the wider curriculum;
- from Year 10, access to an appropriate curriculum pathway, which could include the opportunity for pupils in all schools to study for the EBAC and triple science.

Glossary of terms

BME	Black and minority ethnic
BSF	Building Schools for the Future
CPD	Continuing professional development
CPEE	Camden Partnership for Educational Excellence
CSF	Children, Schools and Families directorate
CT	Children's Trust
EBAC	English Baccalaureate
FE	Further education
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institutions
IAG	Information, advice and guidance
Key Stages (1-4)	The four blocks of years in which the National Curriculum is divided: KS1 – aged 5-6 at the start of the academic year KS2 – aged 7-10 at the start of the academic year KS3 – aged 11-13 at the start of the academic year KS4 – aged 14-15 at the start of the academic year
NHS	National Health Service
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SCCS	South Camden Community School
SEN	Special educational needs
SENCO	Special educational needs coordinator
UCL	University College London

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For further information on the Commission and how to respond to the issues and suggestions raised in this report, visit the Commission's web pages at www.camden.gov.uk/educationcommission.

You can email your comments to camdeneducationcommission@camden.gov.uk or take part in the online discussion at www.wearecamden.org

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