

GLA Oversight Committee – 17 July 2012

Transcript of Agenda item 7 - The Mayor's Education Inquiry

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): We welcome Dr Munira Mirza, who is Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture and a member of the Mayor's Education Inquiry; and we also welcome Caroline Boswell in her role as Manager for Children and Young People's Services at the GLA. Can I just say, thank you for waiting.

Munira, would you like to set the context for a few moments before taking questions on specific areas that Members have about the Education Inquiry?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Thank you. As you know, the Mayor has made jobs and growth a key plank of his second term and, as part of that, he sees education as extremely important to equipping young people to be able to compete in the economy, to go for the positions that are available in London, and so to that end, in November last year he launched the Education Inquiry, which is looking at strategic issues that face London over the coming years, and we have appointed an independent panel of people. I sit on that panel along with others from the education world, head teachers, academics, people from the further education (FE) sector, to look at some of the key questions, to consult widely in London.

They published their first report in February, just setting out the picture and some of the changes that have taken place, the various government forms. Obviously we are in a period of considerable change in terms of the role of local authorities, the way that schools operate, some of the wider social and economic factors. They published that first report just to set the context. Then we have had a period of public consultation; we have had responses in; we have held public evidence hearings here at the GLA with various experts. Over the summer we are compiling recommendations, we are pulling together the analysis, and Caroline's [Boswell] team are doing that with the panel. The final report will be out probably in the autumn, around October time, late October.

I can talk a bit about the key themes if you want now?

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): You may well be able to bring them into answers to questions. Thanks very much. So, we have a series of questions for you and so, if I can pose my question to you, Munira: the terms of reference for the inquiry allow the panel to examine any issue at all to do with education, and so for those of us who know education, whether we are parents, governors, or what have you, we just thought, "Wow, that is wide". What are you trying to achieve in that width of the scope?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I think the initial report that came out in February established some of the key questions that are on people's minds, and it has certainly not just come from City Hall. I think, in conversations with boroughs and with

teachers, some of the same issues are arising, particularly how schools are becoming increasingly autonomous, many of them are turning into academies; that raises questions about the local authority function and how planning for school places might develop in the future, how school improvement might happen in the future. So those are the kinds of questions we are looking at.

Another area is the need for more school places, which is on lots of people's minds. There is a considerable shortage; London Councils has identified that as a key challenge, and so our inquiry is looking at how the Mayor can play a role working with London Councils to lobby government to help address that shortage.

So even though the terms of reference are quite broad, I would say that we are looking at the kinds of issues that everybody would expect, and we have not encountered any complaint or grumble that we are looking at the wrong issues and that there are others that are more important, so that we are focusing on the right things.

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): OK. I think you will find that there are some concerns and maybe that is the role that we are playing here in outlining them. I would agree with you that one of the key issues is school places; this is one of the key things, and we brought this up with a discussion with London Councils some while ago, so welcome the fact that more focus is being placed on that. Really, I suppose, we will be waiting for the September report to see what the solutions, or what recommendations come out of that piece of work.

If I can just say, from the February report, school discipline was an issue. Can you just talk us through then, any idea what the September report is going to say about school discipline, which is totally within the remit of a school, the governors of that school, and the head teacher; what sort of intervention, and where are you in the thinking about school discipline, just as an example?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I can say something about the London context for that, which is, in terms of fixed term exclusions, London compares very well with the rest of the country, we have a lower number of fixed term exclusions, but we do have I would say a slightly higher number of permanent exclusions; that is something to note. It is also recognised that London has a quite challenging context in terms of people mobility, so children moving from boroughs to boroughs, schools to schools, and that creates a churn in the sense of a challenge for the teachers and schools. So that is something that has been identified as a particular London issue. The extent to which the Mayor or City Hall might do anything is questionable, it is more to identify that is a factor that concerns teachers, and it is part of a wider school improvement approach: how do schools deal with these issues and learn from each other in the context where perhaps their local authority is not playing the same school improvement function. I do not know if Caroline wants to say anything more particularly about the recommendations that might come out; we are still in that process of thinking and consulting.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): I suppose you are right, the themes are quite broad. I think the key challenge for the inquiry is identifying how we best maximise London assets in particular areas, and the strategic added value from the GLA.

In terms of behaviour, it is very much recognised that in fact good-quality teaching is really central, as we all know, to good whole-school behaviour. There are some issues that have been raised with us particularly from more vulnerable groups, for example children with special educational needs, looked-after children, some of those children can be more vulnerable to exclusions, as Munira has already identified. Pupil Referral Units have raised some concerns about funding going forward, and also potentially looking at how they are structured and funded. So I think the question there is, what are the key challenges? Are they any different for London? Is there particular added-value that the GLA can lever in through either convening, bringing people together, looking at the data, etc.

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): So you are saying that the statements that have been made over the years by the Institute of Education in numerous reports, the work of people like Dr Gus John with a London focus, you are saying that you are going to be updating this and this inquiry is, what, making all of that stuff contemporary? I do not understand the additionality. What I am struggling for is, as a school governor, as a parent, I want us to be able to reach some sort of concord. What I am, struggling with and what other people I have spoken to on the governing boards I sit on and the parents that I meet is they want to know what difference will the inquiry make, and the recommendations. You talked about school discipline in the February report and then you have come out and talked about exclusion, a key issue if you are a school governor. You know I sit on exclusion panels. That is the end of the road. So what are you going to do? Are you going to be providing more referral centres or recommending that? Do you know what I mean? So there are already recommendations and ideas that exist. What are you hoping to add to what is currently there?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): This context-setting report literally sets the context to inform the work of the inquiry; it is not meant to duplicate or stand instead of previous work by the Institute of Education or anyone else. We have met with the Institute of Education as we have been doing the work. As I say, it is very much looking at what are key challenges. The first report says that there is no evidence to suggest that behaviour that you picked out there is more of an issue in London than it is nationally, but we know that, certainly for teachers, and for good teaching, obviously good order is an issue, and we have had recent reports, for example, from the Children's Commissioner on exclusions, for example. So I have given you examples of some areas where there is a particular London element to it.

It is too early for me to say clearly the direction of travel in terms of what the emerging recommendation might be on that. I think this is informing the inquiry and the panel about what the particular challenges are for London; what the particular issues are; and where we might best focus in.

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): My last question then: you just used exclusion as an idea, so much of what I have read about and what I have experienced shows that there are children from ethnic minority communities, from certainly family units, that are more prone to be excluded. That is the reality of what I see as a governor and as other governors will tell you, and there is evidence to show that. So, will you be going to that level of understanding that there are some things that impact more greatly on some communities than others, some parts of

London than others? Are you going to go to that level or will you just leave it at some sort of high-level statement which does not take us further down the path?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): The Children's Commissioner actually produced a report about exclusion, which goes into quite a lot of that data, so we are not planning to duplicate that. What we want to do is to draw on the existing research and to ask the questions, as Caroline [Boswell] says, what impact does this have on London; is there something specific in London that we need to do differently, or is it just setting a context and just being mindful of that? So, it is not that we are trying to create new research when already quite a lot of those questions have been asked. We are very conscious of that.

Could I just make one more point? We talked a lot about the challenges in London. One of the things this report wants to do is look at the opportunities for London as well, and realising that London has an incredible wealth of businesses, arts organisations, opportunities that young people in many schools do not yet take advantage of. One of the things we would like to ask is, with a more pan-London approach in certain ways, certain areas, with the Mayor's involvement, could we create more partnerships? Could we help support schools to maximise the fact that they are in London, and whether --

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): I thought the Mayor's Fund was doing that sort of work.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): The Mayor's Fund looks at one particular aspect, which is raising funding to support child poverty, to tackle child poverty, but there are other things strategically that we might be able to do at City Hall, and so far we have had quite a positive response from the people that we have consulted with on that.

Andrew Boff (AM): It is about the remit of the report. It is entitled "The Mayor's Education Inquiry", but it seems to be the Mayor's schools inquiry. Can you match up for me what that -- for instance there is no mention of pre-school, no mention of Sure Start staff, and bearing in mind most of the kids who are going to have problems in later years you can probably identify by three and four, I am wondering why it is that we have called it an education inquiry when actually it is a schools inquiry.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We did call it an education inquiry, but we have not hid from the start that really the focus is schools. I think it is quite difficult to cover all aspects of education from nought to 18 in one inquiry, and the chances are you would make too many generalisations, you would not really get anything sensible from that. So we made a strategic decision that we would focus mostly on schools. That is the area where we think that we could add some considerable value. There are other inquiries that are taking place as well, which we have worked with, so the Young People and Educational Skills Committee in London Councils has been looking at 14-18, which covers some of the post-16 area, and we have linked up with them and recognise that there are other people doing good work that we need to join.

Andrew Boff (AM): So what you are saying is, despite the title, it is actually a schools inquiry, not an education inquiry?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We do have somebody from the Further Education sector on the panel, and that is to ensure that there is a read-across; that there is a link to other aspects of the education sector, but primarily we are looking at schools, yes.

Andrew Boff (AM): But nothing pre-school?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): No.

Andrew Boff (AM): Do you not think that is in the remit if the Mayor, who has spoken a lot about lack of educational attainment, that his spur for wanting to get involved is the lack of educational attainment, and when so much of the attainment issues are pre-school, and to leave that out seems to be an enormous hole in this review.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We are looking at pre-school in other programmes that we do, so we have done some literacy programmes looking at pre-school. The Mayor's Fund, which is an independent charity, has also looked at that area, so it is not that we are ignoring it completely, but I think for the sake of this inquiry, to produce a report with real concrete recommendations, to thoroughly understand the sector properly, we do need to narrow it down. It is very difficult to do everything. I would argue that, while pre-school is important, the experience in school is also extremely important and can overcome some of the problems found earlier. The evidence suggests that good teaching, good schooling, can help children overcome the disadvantages that they might experience in earlier life. I think it is reasonable to narrow the focus to schools. I mean schools are a very large area already; we are already consulting quite widely. I think that we would defend that choice.

Andrew Boff (AM): OK, I have other questions, but perhaps they are more appropriate in other areas.

John Biggs (AM): I think the problem I have with this is it seems like it is a very broad terms of reference and as a result of that it could be extraordinarily strategically thoughtful or it could just wander all over the place and lack focus. I guess the information I have in front of me tends me towards the latter of those perspectives on it. I know I am an opposition Member or whatever, but I am here to hold the Mayor to account. I defend absolutely the right of the Mayor to scrutinise education in London, but it does seem very vague.

So when I was reading through this, I was aware that in American cities, which London has copied from in many ways, they have inquiries into education in New York and Los Angeles, they have wide-ranging things, they talk about crisis in their schools, they talk about -- they have a very different relationship. The Mayor has a role in appointing the Education Board in those cities; in London we do not.

So you could just be so wishy-washy in this, and I am not persuaded that we have clarified it. So the question in my mind, I agree with what Andrew Boff said about other areas so if I was a thoughtful parent I would want to know whether our schools are equipping our kids for job

challenges in the economy, and that does not really feature as large, as I see it, in the terms of reference.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): May I ask if you have read the first report?

John Biggs (AM): I skim-read the first report, as is the role of Assembly Members, for which I do not apologise, and you can have a snapshot of everything but when we look at the five key things, and the executive summary of the report, it seems to be delightfully vague on a lot of this stuff. When you do something like this, what is the question that it is meant to be answering?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I think, as I said earlier, what are the key challenges facing London schools and what value could we add at the GLA to helping to address those? I think we would be criticised if we did not include a large number of things in that because obviously education is an extremely complex area. So to not include behaviour and discipline, I am sure also you would end up asking me questions about why we have not looked at that.

On the particular question you asked about training and skills, we held an evidence hearing here about two weeks ago, three weeks ago, with business leaders, asking them that question: "What do you think about the education system and whether it is equipping young people with the kinds of skills and knowledge that you feel they need to enter the workplace. We invited Grant Hearn, who is the head of Travelodge; he is also the chair of the London Enterprise Panel. We invited the managing director of Starbucks who had been in the media quite frequently, often criticised for not taking on enough British young people. He actually countered that claim and said that they do take on a proportional number of British young people. We also had Marcus Wareing who is a chef and he runs a small business, so a very different perspective. Also, Eddie Stride [CEO] from City Gateway, which is an organisation that works with young people to train them up in order to take jobs. They came back with very interesting perspectives, which were feeding into the inquiry. We are responding to that question and looking at that.

John Biggs (AM): Two other questions then. The first one is about whether you really think you have asked the right question with this inquiry. The Mayor does not currently have a role, so should not the question be: what, if any, role should the Mayor be developing? So you go away, you look and see if there are any gaps, if it is all OK, fine, if it is not then what is his strategic role?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I do think that is the question we are asking. In a sense we are asking about the context, the landscape, as it has changed, and what are some of the problems that are emerging, and is there anything additional that the Mayor can do, which is not currently being met. I would argue that, from our initial research, it does seem that there are things that the Mayor could do potentially.

John Biggs (AM): I am sure other Members will have questions on that.

There was a press release, an announcement by the Mayor, which gave the impression it was a sort of cross between a land grab and a fishing expedition. I think perhaps your inquiry was compromised by that perception.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Sorry, which press release were you referring to?

John Biggs (AM): The Mayor made a pronouncement a couple of weeks ago about his interest in education in London and how he was going to try and get stuff out of Michael Gove [Secretary of State for Education], I think.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Are you referring to the Evening Standard piece?

John Biggs (AM): I would not name that paper, but --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): It was not from a press release; it was from a conversation that I had, which I would say had been perhaps misinterpreted to some extent, and --

John Biggs (AM): That is the risk that Mayoral advisers have the world over I think. The other question is about resources, and maybe you could write to us about this: how much has been spent on this and who has been commissioned to do work on your behalf? Is it just Caroline Boswell? Presumably you have market research people interviewing 600 bods or whatever. What is the overall resource that you are spending on this?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Just to go back to your earlier point about focus, and it is a difficult timing to have this conversation because, without predicting the sorts of recommendations the inquiry might come up with, I can assure you that quite early on we agreed a number of areas where the inquiry panel felt there was potential for practical added value, where we have been developing work, and some of them are very much in line with what other boards have been raising as key strategic issues for London. We have already had joint meetings with, for example, the Young People's Education and Skills Board and with the London Enterprise Panel on taking forward some of that early thinking.

In terms of the resourcing, we have commissioned a review of schools in London to give us a sense of where they are in terms of the challenges they face at the moment around school improvement. We are very pleased with the response; we have had over 500 responses, which is very good. What was interesting about the survey is that, although some people saw the Inquiry as somehow a threat or standing on the territory of others, while some schools think that they may use local authority improvement services slightly less, others think that they will use those services slightly more, but in general there is very wide support for broader levels of pan-London support for education.

That was a piece of work that we commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) because they are well placed and they do these sorts of surveys all the time. The full report on that survey will be available at the same time that we publish the final report. Some of the things that were identified in the survey, as gaps or unmet needs, actually have some resonance with some of the issues that the panel were identifying. If you think, the panel includes directors of children's services and head teachers, that is not surprising. So they included things like curriculum richness, pupil development, for example. That piece of research, we had spent £30,000 on.

With respect to wider resources, obviously we have officers from within my own team, and other officers within the youth team, and we also have some support from a data person at the DfE and a part-time social policy person, who is able to access policy from the DfE side so that we are fully in tune with what national data is held and national policy. I am trying to think of other resource. I can send you a note perhaps on wider resource.

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): That would be useful.

Joanne McCartney (AM): I think the problem with having such a vague terms of reference, a such a broad sweep, is that what may be lost is specific recommendations where the Mayor can add great strategic value, and I see that in particularly being around the planning of school places in particular, which is probably the major crisis facing London at the moment. I think with regards, for example, there are concerns about the Mayor looking at behaviour and discipline in schools for the reasons that Jennette [Arnold] and others have mentioned, but I think also the fact that panellists are asking those that come to their -- the witnesses' views on corporal punishment, for example, which many of us would be extremely concerned about. But the fact that the Mayor's panel is asking those questions does obviously raise great concern.

Secondly, I want to point to what Andrew [Boff] said earlier about early years, because some of us have been looking at the Mayor's most recent forays into the education field before with our Time for Action panel, and three or four years ago, and again, we notified that actually early years was the major gap in the programme, and that has not been rectified. I know, Caroline [Boswell], you have great experience of early years, but that does seem to be somewhere where the Mayor could add great support. So I am disappointed that has not been looked at, because of course good early years provision will raise attainment and standards in schools, and seems to me an excellent starting point if you are going to be looking forward.

The other issue I particularly wanted to raise was the issue really with regards to the Mayor's track record in stepping on the toes, as you said, because previously when the Mayor, in his Time for Action programme, looked at discipline and truancy in schools under the Project Brody umbrella, he was told in no uncertain terms from London Councils that it was not his area and in fact we had Kit Malthouse [Deputy Mayor for Business and Enterprise] telling us actually they have really withdrawn from Project Brody because they could not add anything of value. So I am interested as to why you are looking at it again.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We will just take some of the questions that you have asked. On the school places planning, if you look at the first report

that we published in February, at the back it lists the call-for-evidence questions, and a couple of those questions do refer to school places planning, so you might see that some of the issues that you are raising are in here, and that is where the focus is. It might make it seem less vague than the terms of reference that you have.

Joanne McCartney (AM): That is the one thing I was saying was good in the report, yes.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): On the corporal punishment, I think you are referring to a question that the chair of the panel asked at one of the evidence hearings, and it was asked to one of the respondents, one of the people who had come, I think it might have been Marcus Wareing even. He had made some very strident comments about discipline in schools, and so it came out of more of a conversation. It is not something we are looking at in this report; certainly it has not been brought up anywhere else. I would not expect that to come out as any kind of recommendation, just to assure you.

On early years; I completely take your point that you think it is important and it might be there is something that we are able to look at in the future. I just would say again, I think that it is something we are mindful of but for the purposes of this report, which is only an eight-month inquiry that we did have to narrow it down to some extent. I do think that the school environment and that teaching and learning can have quite an important impact. So while early years is important, I would not dismiss that, it also makes sense to really understand the school environment and to try and get that right. I certainly take your point that it is something we may want to look at in the future as an additional area of research.

On the discipline and truancy in schools, I think we set the terms of reference quite broad in order to understand the context, but it is only one aspect of quite a number of areas and questions that we are asking, so we understand the limitations of what City Hall can do. The Time for Action scheme has gone into new territory for the Mayor and some of those projects have been very successful, some of them we understand that London Councils and schools feel that they can handle them themselves. I think this is a process of inquiry, hence it is called an inquiry, to understand better and to know what it is that we think we genuinely can do to add value.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Can I just add, the formal call for evidence, which we launched alongside the first report, we have had over 50 responses, including a number of boroughs, four individual boroughs. We have engaged with the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) early on. We did engage at officer level with London Councils. We are very, very alert to the notion that no one has the resource to duplicate activity here; this is very much about asking very frank questions about where we can add value. In fact the feedback we are getting is that the challenges are real and there is a sense of needing to come together to jointly work on some of those challenges. There are real challenges about funding; there are real challenges about school places; there are real challenges about how local children's services are operating in the present environment, and we are certainly not looking to take forward activity that would be seen as not useful and not adding value.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Yes, but you see those three challenges, I would want to think all of us would recognise as being where the Mayor can add issue, not some of the issues that are being looked at in this report.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): However, funding is in there and school places is in there --

Joanne McCartney (AM): Exactly, they are the three I think that you have highlighted.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): I would suggest there are areas already, traditionally the Mayor's Office, the GLA, has been more active around out-of-school provision, but there is an interface between good out-of-school provision, which has been reduced in lots of areas of London, good youth provision, because of the financial climate, and there is the interface between what happens in schools, and we know that you cannot look at one without the other. So it is not like a whole new environment that we have never looked at before in terms of good outcomes for children, and education is critical within that. I would suggest it is not a whole new arena, it is a development of previous work that the GLA has done.

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): Very recent evidence showed the unacceptable level of numbers of our children who are hungry; so they go to school hungry and desperate for their lunch, which means -- I mean I defy anybody who can say they can learn when they are hungry. Will you be picking up those sort of issues that have now been identified? Because I remember the Mayor recognising this was an issue and of course it is linked to poverty. So, one of the responses that some schools have made within their own resources is that breakfast clubs have been extended and that has enabled then the children to settle down; that has impacted on the school environment. Clearly that will aid their learning. Is that the sort of thing that you picked up?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Clearly, the interface with child poverty is critical and what a lot of people have said is that London Challenge really helped London schools overcome the assumption that child poverty equalled poor educational attainment. We have seen real strides and children on free school meals in London actually achieve better than those children nationally. In terms of specific issues around hunger and food, I would have to check, off the top of my head, in terms of the call for evidence, what specific input we received on that. What I can say is that what we have done recently is link with the health team who are doing some work around healthy schools, and the Department for Education have just launched a new national strategy around school meals. They have just commissioned Leon, the healthy food chain, to do some work on that. So again we will not want to duplicate what is being done nationally. Whether we will major on that I cannot say at this stage.

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): Will this fall into academies and non-academies? Will you be following through the responses to see if you need to make another call if you are not getting academies responding, because sometimes they live in their own world?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): The responses we had to the school survey included maintained and academy schools. We took evidence from the head of a major academy chain in London, and certainly what we know from a local area as well is that, whoever manages the school, it is important that there is a good local network with agreed policies and protocols on certain issues. So you cannot ignore the role of academies, and it is actually about how you get that better interface between the two sectors, if you like.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Can I just talk to you about something you have started addressing, which is like who is involved in this and how? You mentioned London Councils. Of course London Councils are collectively responsible for the education of the vast majority, certainly of primary children in London. You said there however that you have had engagement with officers at London Councils. What involvement have London Councils had in this inquiry?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): We approached senior officers to see whether they would like to have a formal role on the inquiry, and we were advised that they did not feel that they wanted to take that opportunity up. So we have directors of children's services, so senior leaders within the local authority on it, and we have been keeping in communication with officers of London Councils.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): But London Councils generally has been very critical, has it not, of this initiative? I mean Steve Reed, who is the spokesman there, is actually quoted as saying things like,

"This is a standard land grab extending the Mayor's role into areas where he currently does not have any responsibilities. It just doesn't make sense."

Did you not think there was a problem maybe with what you were doing or how you were doing it if London Councils was so critical?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): We have more recently had a meeting with Steve Reed in his role as chair of the Young People's Education and Skills Board on the particular issue and there was very common view around the table on the particular issue we were looking at. I think there was sensitivity about education being their responsibility and why the Mayor had launched the inquiry, hence in part our approach and our desire to engage them fully. It is their choice obviously whether they want to do that or not.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Also, a number of boroughs have responded to the consultation and welcomed the Mayor's inquiry and contributed ideas, suggested ways in which boroughs and the Mayor might work together more effectively in certain areas. So I think individual boroughs have been engaged --

Valerie Shawcross (AM): How many? Four out of 32?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Four boroughs gave formal evidence and we have two directors of children's services on the actual --

Valerie Shawcross (AM): How many organisations and schools were formally invited to take part in the consultation?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): How many schools?

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Yes, how many organisations, how many schools, did you actually formally invite to take part in the consultation.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): I would have to send you a note on that. We had a stakeholder engagement event and we have got several hundred people on our stakeholder engagement list, and events that we have had included borough representatives as well as schools and others. But I would --

Valerie Shawcross (AM): The survey?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): The survey was sent out to all head teachers; the survey that was conducted by the DfE.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): The National Union of Teachers say they were not formally asked to be involved at all. Is that true or did they miss something?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): I would have to check.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Could we have a list possibly of the people and organisations who were formally invited.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): To the stakeholder event?

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Yes.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): The call for evidence was open, so we welcomed responses from everybody and it was publicised quite widely.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Well you did specifically invite some people and organisations as well, though, did you not?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): We sent out invites to contacts, and anyone who got in touch with us was added to our stakeholder engagement list, so they continue to get updates and they will get the final report.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Did I hear you say you had 50 submissions?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Yes.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Just 50?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): It might have been slightly over 50.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Are you not disappointed by that?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): No, I think that is a good response for something like this, which is not transport, it is not a huge area where the Mayor has direct responsibility.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Exactly. Are you going to make those submissions publicly available?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): There will be a public report on the actual evidence and the nature of input that was given, which will be available on the website.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): So you are doing summaries and you will say who has been --

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): It will follow normal research good practice in terms of a report on the consultation input that we had.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): The panel members, we noticed that there were only I think three present at the second and third hearings that you did, and four at the original one, including you and the chair, Munira. What have the panel members been tasked to do? What are your expectations of them?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We only invited a small number for each panel because obviously these people have day jobs and they wanted to make sure that the evidence hearings, the conversation could flow, so we had to limit the number of people who could ask questions, and they volunteered.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): So you are keeping it small and manageable?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes, so --

Valerie Shawcross (AM): So what is actually the role of the panel members? What are your expectations of them?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): The panel have met a number of times, I cannot remember exactly the number of times, but usually once a month. They, at the beginning, helped define the terms of reference and focus down on those areas that they felt were the most important. They have helped to steer the research that we commissioned, provide guidance on the kinds of questions that we need to ask, steer on recommendations. We have asked them to -- certainly they helped draft the initial report and provide comments. They also help us to communicate with other people from outside the sector to feedback to us -- so

for instance the directors of children's services who are on the panel report back to ALDCS, the Association of London Directors of Children's Services, and get views from them, which is extremely helpful.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): So they will have some ownership of the report when it is finally produced.

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

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): I can send you the job descriptions if that is helpful?

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Yes, that will be interesting. You were doing some head teacher survey work and it says 600-700 interviews will be undertaken. How many did you manage to achieve?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): I think the total figure was over 500 but I might have to drop you a note with that figure.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): When do you think we will see that? Because, if you have managed to achieve 500 I think people will want to read what has been learned from that process.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Yes, there will be a report; there will be an initial report going to our panel at the end of July, but there will be a formal report published on the survey later in the summer, and I can give you a note on exactly how many we have.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): What do you think you have learned from the inquiry survey of head teachers?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): What we have learned is some of the challenges that they are experiencing at the moment; what the particular gaps are that they feel they have; whether or not some of the approaches that have been put in place around school improvement are actually reaching schools. So, for example, some of them have less contact with some of the new structures than you might anticipate. We have also learned what are the types of pan-London support that they might value.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Earlier on there was reference to the amount of cash that has gone into this exercise. Do you have any kind of log of the amount of GLA staff time that has been spent on this? When you write back with some more detail, could we see some information?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Again, I can give you an estimate in terms of actual people time, along with the note on resources.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Going back to the original GLA Act, there was a very tight limitation in the original GLA Act on the GLA's potential role in education. There was a prohibition, was

there not, of the GLA and the Mayor having any role in under-16s' education. How do you interpret that limitation?

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): There is a point of correction.

Jeff Jacobs (Head of Paid Service, GLA): The formal position relates to running educational services.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I think the Mayor is entitled --

Valerie Shawcross (AM): What way do you think you might run the danger of statutorily hitting the wall or do you think there is no limitation there?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I do not anticipate that we will. Certainly this inquiry is perfectly reasonable for the Mayor to scrutinise and ask questions which face the whole of London. He does that in areas where he does not have a formal statutory role. We would expect the Mayor to do that. He has a number of other social and economic responsibilities for London, on which education makes a considerable impact. So I think the inquiry itself does not breach any GLA Act and we certainly took advice on that.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): So do you think the recommendations will be framed within that context or would it potentially be seeking an extension of the Mayor's powers?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We do not know yet because we are still going through the process of consultation.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): But we are in touch with the head of public law who is advising us on this.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): OK, thank you.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): I had one point just picking up from Val's [Shawcross] questions as well. You talked about the schools and bodies that you have consulted and tried to engage with on this, but I was looking in this first report and one of the key questions is around improving literacy in London schools, and I am wondering, particularly around that and some of the other things, whether you have gone out to particularly the third sector in London, the charities sector. I am a trustee of Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE); I do not know whether you have gone out to them to ask for their evidence from the work they do in schools. If not, can I suggest you proactively go out to some of those groups to really make sure you get a broader range of responses, rather than just from the schools.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): As I say, we sent the original call for evidence, stakeholder engagement event, to all of our contacts. I have actually met with the chief executive of the organisation that you have named through previous work we have done on literacy it was primarily voluntary organisations that we have actually linked with.

CLPE did not actually give formal evidence, but not everyone chooses to give formal evidence, but clearly voluntary sector organisations and charities, we have engaged with them, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): That is good to hear that the third sector, who have a different perspective on this, are able to feed in. What I wanted to --

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): Caroline, before you go on, I think another Member wants to come in.

Andrew Boff (AM): It was just to pick up again from the line of questioning from Assembly Member Shawcross that I do not think anybody is denying the Mayor's right to do this inquiry, but the questions you have are so loaded. I should have declared an interest at the start because I am married to a teacher, so I realise I should have.

Tony Arbour AM: I have children.

Andrew Boff (AM): It might come under pecuniary, you never know, I am just not sure; but anyway I have said it. But the point is that you have questions there, things like, "What more can be done at a strategic level in London to support free schools?" What if actually the solution is doing less? When you are talking about all the other questions, there is nowhere there for somebody who has the opinion that they are being asked to do too much by local authorities already, and actually what they want is more power over the schools, not less. There is nowhere in those 17 questions that actually gives somebody an opportunity to say, "Hands off. Leave it in the control of the parents and the teachers working together and actually we want less intervention, not more".

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Can I just make the point on the question, "What more can be done at a strategic level in London to support pre-schools?" I think we do take it as a given, because it is Government policy, that we want to encourage pre-schools and we want to support them, that they are being set up. So that side of it I presume you do not have a concern about, the idea of supporting free schools?

Andrew Boff (AM): No, I have no --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): The question of what can be done at a strategic level does not necessarily mean what can the GLA do at a strategic level, it could be, what can local authorities do or what would anybody else do? It is obviously about interpretation, but it does allow for the possibility that other organisations might be empowered to do things.

Andrew Boff (AM): The answers you are going to get, you are attracting the comments that will say, "Actually, we could do with more co-ordination on such-and-such", on, I do not know, free meals, on something like that, or whatever. Because you are asking for what more can be done, that instantly establishes the precedent for more intervention on a strategic basis from the Mayor, or possibly from the local authority. I do not particularly want the local authority to have any more say over education, but I certainly do not want the Mayor to.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We have certainly had responses that have challenged and provided conflicting opinion, so I do not think people have been shy about giving their views based on the questions that we have asked. But the broad areas that we are looking at seem to be the ones that people are most concerned about.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): I can see the logic around school place planning issues, which kind of fits in with the Mayor's planning; I can see the logic around some of these issues, but some of it I just do not see why the Mayor would have a role in it. But all these areas, the panel is going to have all sorts of recommendations coming out of this huge body of work. Who are they actually aimed at?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Who are the recommendations aimed at?

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Yes.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Some of them will be aimed at the Mayor, some of them will be aimed at Government, so there will be a range aimed at a range of different audiences.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): So the Mayor and the Government, what about the boroughs, what about teachers, what about local authorities?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Potentially. Again, I cannot second-guess what the panel will choose to recommend --

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): You have a feel for it.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): I am sure the desire for joint working with London Councils on areas; that the Mayor absolutely exploits what strategic added value he can bring to bear; what we think national Government, if there are any changes in national policy we think might be helpful, etc. So who it is aimed at will obviously flow from the nature and the focus of the recommendations.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): So some of your objective of this is trying to get change in Government or to look at how you can implement Government thinking across London?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Clearly, for an inquiry that is looking at London, it will need to have recommendations, which in certain areas may well say, "We want flex to the policy here, we want a slightly different approach in London than you might have nationally". That would not be unusual.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): What is the outcome you are expecting from this whole piece of work?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Do you mean in terms of what are the recommendations?

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): When you started doing all this work, what is the outcome, what is the thing that you were expecting to come out of it?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): That is why we are going through the process of inquiry to understand --

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): You must have had an idea. You would not just set up a big piece like this thinking, "This is where we think we are going to go with this, we want to take evidence". What is the key outcome.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Genuinely we do want to answer the question and find out what people's views are. We do not have a specific recommendation that we --

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): No, I think we are also clear that it is linked to the Mayoral statement he made in 2012:

"In my view literacy and numeracy are the best places to start."

He then said that he would be looking to establish this Education Inquiry. So it comes out of the Mayor's wish, does it not, to get an understanding of the circumstances about education in London?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): One of the key deliverables, as I would see them, is some real advice on where the GLA and the Mayor's Office can really add value.

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): If it can add value.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Yes, if it can, and can it, and in which case, in which areas.

Tony Arbour AM: It is also a bit about, should it.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes, and it might be that there are certain areas where we would not be involved as a result of the inquiry. I think we are open to that, we are not assuming anything.

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): But that goes back to Andrew's questions in terms of how the questions were loaded, because there was no open statement there.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): There is a general open question at the end, "Are there any other issues or suggestions?"

Andrew Boff (AM): There is not a question, for example, “Is there too much admin? Are you satisfied with the level of administration that goes on in the running of your school?” There is no question to ask that, to identify what some people have viewed the problem, which is over-government, not under-government.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): I would just say to that, no one is suggesting more direct government of schools.

Andrew Boff (AM): It is implicit, come on, it is implicit in the questions.

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): It is really not. It is asking the question about strategic impact, it is looking at things like data, influence, brokerage.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We could have asked 20 more questions if we had gone into specific detail.

Jennette Arnold (Deputy Chair): We will go with what we have to date.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): So we are going to get these recommendations that are going to come out of this piece of work, they may recommend best practice or suggestions, how are you going to ensure that this is distributed amongst schools, amongst the voluntary sector in London? What is the plan for the next stage of this?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): We have a website, we can communicate with people we have direct contact with via email, we will issue a press release, we will send a report to everyone who requests one, and the website link. Those schools who were involved in the survey, who expressed an interest in keeping in contact, we will directly go back to them and tell them about next steps. We will absolutely look to engage as widely as we can in terms of what the conclusions of the inquiry are, so as broad as we can make it.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Yes, it just feels to me, it all stems back to the Mayor does not as such have a direct role here, but, fine, the Mayor can lobby for extra funding, he would be doing that in any case, he could do some of this planning stuff, but some of the nitty-gritty stuff that needs to be done in schools that your report might identify, I do not understand how you are going to distribute that really, a press release you can write up, but how are you going to make sure that happens, or is this just a nice report that is going to say things that we probably all know and it will sit on a shelf, which is what I fear it could?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): Again, on specifics, some of the boroughs as well as some of the schools have for example suggested that they would find it helpful to have networks, some of the schools perhaps coming together to look at different subject areas in education. Clearly, where people have expressed an interest in that sort of forum or network or opportunity to share ideas and thinking, we will have people who

have already said they are interested in that and we will build from that and make it as open as it can be. So it is not that we will not be looking to explore specific expressions of interest, whatever. But, as you say, you need to build it from those who are wanting to engage.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): It feels to me as a London Councils' borough role, not our role here, but our role.

Darren Johnson (AM): Thank you. In terms of this inquiry and some of the questions that you are putting, do you think there is a case where the Mayor may need new powers in education?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We do not know because we are going through the process of consultation. We are considering it. What I would say is that we do not come to this with the assumption that the Mayor should have new powers and we would not argue for new powers if we thought that they were not absolutely essential, because there is no appetite to empire-build just for the sake of it. We recognise that this is sensitive territory. We have tried very hard throughout to engage with London Councils, to engage with boroughs, to identify the gaps in the market, and there are many cases where we have done work without new powers and we have added value.

I will give you a completely different example in the area of music education, which I have been involved with in my first term as a cultural adviser, where the local authorities provide music education services, the GLA had no previous role in that area. We have worked, we developed a strategy for London, we worked collaboratively with boroughs, with arts organisations, with orchestras, with voluntary sector, and developed an independent fund that raises private money to support scholarships in London; that facilitates partnerships. That is all done without any new powers. That is done through the Mayor's Office and people recognise that it adds value. Those are the kinds of areas, those are the kinds of interventions that I think can be extremely helpful.

Darren Johnson (AM): So no powers from central Government, no powers from the boroughs, but there is a new structure involved, so could that be the way forward then? Is that how you are seeing things that there may be new London-wide structures that emerge, even if there is only --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I would say that the structure is extremely light-touch in that case because we are administering a fund and there is an independent fund that has also been set up. It is a model that we have looked at and we are looking at a number of different models, so we cannot say right now, because we do not want to pre-empt the panel's recommendations.

Darren Johnson (AM): But if you are going to do anything other than circulate best practice and make policy recommendations to local authorities and individual schools then you would need some sort of structure, however light-touch it was, even if it was just a fund and a board of trustees or whatever.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We would need some capacity, absolutely, and we do have some capacity existing in the GLA that is running this inquiry, for instance, but what that would look like, how much, whether it would be solid GLA, whether it would be in partnership with others is yet to be determined.

Darren Johnson (AM): OK and other areas of policy, the Mayor has set out clearly at the start that he does not see himself as taking powers from the boroughs but does want to take powers from central Government and have more of a direct say in administering things directly in London on behalf of Londoners. Do you see education would fit into that principle as well? Could that be applied here that the Mayor may not be taking powers directly from Government but he does want to take powers from Michael Gove?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): You mean taking powers from Government? Possibly he said that about a number of different policy areas. For instance, it's known publicly that the London Enterprise Panel would like more control over the skills and training budget; they think that makes sense. Again, we can't say right now whether that is the case with education but we recognise --

Darren Johnson (AM): In other areas, there have been clear principles set out at the start of the consultation process, discussion or whatever, but here --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I don't know if there has been a consultation process but I know that it has been said about a number of other areas of policy that the Mayor and partnership builds like the London Enterprise Panel have argued for more powers from Government rather than from the boroughs. We don't know yet how that will work in education because we don't want to pre-empt the report.

Darren Johnson (AM): Are you are not able to offer assurances to local authorities at the moment that you're not seeking to take powers from them, from central Government?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Well, I don't want to say anything definitive now because I think that would be pre-empting the process and that would not --

Darren Johnson (AM): OK. Can I just ask what conversations you've had with central Government at this stage and are they being receptive to the idea of the Mayor taking a more proactive role in education?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): The Chair of the Panel, Dr Tony Sewell and I and Caroline [Boswell] met Michael Gove MP last week. We have had a number of meetings with DfE officials throughout. I know that Tony Sewell has met with Michael before because Michael Gove has said that he is very interested in the report and the inquiry. They've provided resource and they are interested in what we will come up with.

Darren Johnson (AM): So would you expect the Government to be receptive to pending more powers to the Mayor?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I feel I can't speak on behalf of the Government about what they would or wouldn't say.

Darren Johnson (AM): But you've not had an indication at this stage. In terms of other discussions, other conversations in the run-up to the Localism Act and so on, the Government was saying, "Yes, bid for this. We're happy to devolve this function to you. We need to work out the fine details and so on but we're happy with the general train of the evolution". You've not had those sorts of conversations over education yet.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): No because I think we all recognise that more work needs to be done, more discussion needs to be had between our officials, their officials, with London councils on where the power should lie on certain areas, so we haven't agreed a principle and then we'll come up with a set of recommendations that fit that principle. We are still not clear yet because we are still talking to each other.

Andrew Boff (AM): Is the Mayor still pursuing his ambition to establish ten Mayoral academy schools and, if so, when do you expect him to achieve this?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We currently have three. We are in the process of taking on a fourth but that hasn't been formalised yet and there is another conversation about a fifth which is -- I do not know if I'm actually to say anything about that yet, to announce it. We recognise that this is an extremely ambitious programme and the intention was always to establish up to ten but we didn't set a time limit on it. I think any academy provider that takes on poor performing schools and tries to turn them round has to get the vision right and work through the process of engaging the new school, an entirely new set of staff, new arrangements, so it will take time. I am reluctant to set a deadline for the ten but I imagine that we will acquire more over the coming term.

Andrew Boff (AM): How much is being invested in these schools from GLA resources?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I can't remember off the top of my head. It's £400,000, isn't it, for each academy over the four years but actually, we've reduced this sum because as each academy is taken on, the economies of scale mean we would be able to give less to each academy over time because we would be able to share the staff. The GLA contribution pays towards a specific strand of work with each academy on engaging with those young people who are at risk of becoming 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) and to help them in terms of making their choices, in terms of then keeping them engaged in education. We then bring other support, which is not financial, but in terms of contacts, connections, advice, engagement with other partners with our schools.

Andrew Boff (AM): How do we judge whether or not this education intervention has been successful?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): One of the ways we would judge is the results. The first year, the academies have improved results, some quite

considerably, which we're very pleased about, but I think the task for us is to ensure those results keep climbing and that they continue to get good Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) inspections, that they continue to improve, that parents in the area want to send their children to those schools. These were certainly schools that had a reputation that takes time to turn around. It takes time to encourage parents to want to send their children there.

Andrew Boff (AM): How long are you going to give them to prove that?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Well, we set very challenging targets in the first year, which they've met. We continue to set more targets in the coming years, working with the partner trust that we have, the Academy Enterprise Trust, who have considerable experience in turning round schools. One of the targets that we set is to reduce the number of children who are leaving the schools NEET and we have already had some success there and that, as you know, is something that all schools will now be required to do to publish the destinations' data for children because schools are increasingly encouraged to take responsibility for where children go on to not just when they're in their doors, but when they graduate; when they go on to further education or university or jobs.

Andrew Boff (AM): Is there any end to the money that we will be pouring into these academies, I mean in terms of when we are going to stop supporting these particular schools over and above other schools?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes. There is a limit; it is a four-year agreement with each academy. I believe it is four years rather than three. That will be the end of our monetary, our financial input, but we will continue to have a relationship with them. They will still be called the Mayor's Academies. We would still partner them with organisations. There would still be a programme but we wouldn't necessarily need to give them any finance.

Andrew Boff (AM): Would you turn away a non-academy school that came to ask you for the kind of support you're giving to academy schools?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): We probably wouldn't be in that kind of relationship with them just because there are 2,200 schools in London; we wouldn't be able to do that with all of them.

Andrew Boff (AM): You wouldn't. That is the point, you wouldn't be able to give the support that you are giving to those special three schools, or four schools or however many there are going to be.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I think what we would say about the Academies Programme is that it's also an exemplary programme. We are trying to create beacons of excellence and that was the Mayor's initial vision for it that we would demonstrate that it is possible to have schools that achieve high academic standards that can also engage with new partners.

Andrew Boff (AM): Did the Mossbourne Community Academy not happen? Was that not a beacon --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Sadly we need more Mossbournes, don't we?

Jennette Arnold (Chair): Petchey Academy.

Andrew Boff (AM): Petchey as well. Sorry, yes. Did they not happen? They are already beacons, are they not? What you said you are trying to demonstrate has already been demonstrated. Will the Mayor be investing in coming up for a new design for the wheel because it has already been proven, has it not?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): There is a difference between the Academies Programme and some of the other excellent schools that you've mentioned, which is also trying to engage schools with the wider London business sector, cultural sector, sports and to ensure that young people in those areas have the skills and the knowledge to compete for jobs and we think that work experience is very important to that, good careers' advice, good engagement with businesses and others. So I think there is something that we are trying to do which is distinct, which has value and which can also be used to help support other schools. In fact, in the inquiry, we are using one of the academies as the case there I believe, or the model as a case to these to show that it is possible for schools to be more -- sorry, Caroline, do you want to --

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): I haven't been directly involved in the academies but having seen the reports and visited some of them, what I have seen is some really good practice, I think, that the London Development Agency (LDA) team put in place around good links with apprenticeship opportunities; very much more proactive career opportunities to focus on, ensuring that every young person leaves with education funds or training. I think it is that kind of learning which we might want to look to scale up, if you like, on the more strategic level around business brokerage, for example. So there is some useful learning there, so that is not about applying it directly step by step in every single school but it is about providing strategic opportunities and brokerage where you can provide those links with whether they are TfL or apprenticeships or some of the other links that the Mayor can lever in.

Andrew Boff (AM): I don't have a problem with the tunnelling that TfL sponsored the academy for; I do not have an issue with that. It is the generic ones that I see. I cannot see the point of the expenditure, that is where I'm at, and what is the point of the expenditure of GLA resources when these academies could have been set up anyway without the GLA intervention such as Mossbourne and Petchey?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): The Academies Programme also was developed in the first term at a time just before the Conservative Government came in and made it a policy that every school should eventually become an academy. It was created in a different context where that opportunity for schools to experiment to try new approaches was

not really as widespread. I take your point that the context has changed and that is one of the reasons why I am keen that we do not rush into taking on more academies without really understanding the distinct offer and the vision and to get that right. Obviously, I inherited the Academies Programme. It is not something I was involved with from the start and I do want to make sure that it is right, it works.

Andrew Boff (AM): Thank you.

Jennette Arnold (Chair): Looking through the panel membership, I welcome the place there of Anthony Morrell Little, Headmaster of Eton College. It is just that I have not seen him attending any of the evidential sessions and I just wanted to ask you, Caroline, what is he bringing in from that sector?

Tony Arbour AM: He has done rather well.

Jennette Arnold (Chair): Excuse me. If I can just say, personally, I know that a member of colleges like Eton have linked with schools and, in my constituency three or four of their top private schools have links; so I just wanted to know what is he bringing, what insights is he bringing to the work of the inquiry?

Caroline Boswell (Manager - Children and Young People, GLA): As we've already said, not all members of the panel attended all the hearings, so we very much had to go with people's availability for the individual hearings. I would say he brings a lot of insight interestingly and spoke particularly in an interview about his commitment to raising attainment and work with local state schools, particularly local to Eton. I think there is also a sense in which it is quite refreshing for people around the table just to ask the question quite broadly, "How do you this in your school?" and, in fact, there is some interesting research by the Education and Employment Task Force which looks at links with business as well as educational attainment and the sort of offer that you get in a private setting, which you may not always get in a state setting, but which indicates it is really important in terms of employability and the sorts of things you talked about earlier in terms of networks and so forth. So he contributes fully. He was part particularly of an event which was held with the cultural institutions organised by A New Direction which had science and cultural people attending and he is particularly linked at looking at how we maximise London assets in terms of London schools.

Jennette Arnold (Chair): It is just a request because I know that they are raising their network, and I think that should be promoted, and in going back to a school that is already quoted, Mossbourne and their ten and 12 young people who then went on to university; that came about by an absolutely fixed relationship with that university. So you can be bringing information into the public domain that is not there at the moment; if that was something you could consider given that you have found someone from that sector.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes. If there is particular information on the particular network, then --

Jennette Arnold (Chair): They do have a network where they absolutely --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes. Some of the other heads involved have good links as well, which they found helpful in terms of links with higher education. Joe, who is the head teacher of a school --

Jennette Arnold (Chair): I think you will find that there is a network which is supposed to be working very strongly. It is about their own commitment to access --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes, making playing fields available and so on. Those are reports I think --

Jennette Arnold (Chair): It was more than playing fields. It was actually access of children to those colleges.

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

John Biggs (AM): Yes. I have a question about the Mayor's Academies' Trust. Is it called the Mayor's Academies Enterprise Trust?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Sorry; the trust that runs the three academies is called the London Academies Enterprise Trust.

John Biggs (AM): All right but that is the Mayor's trust; he appoints trustees.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Well, yes; it is slightly complicated because of the legal restrictions on the GLA in providing statutory education. The independent trust was set up and we are not going to get the trust --

John Biggs (AM): You then created a company to appoint trustees for the trust.

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

John Biggs (AM): Yes, so you got around the law because you weren't allowed -- I do understand that and I understand why you did it. The problem I have is I have two problems I guess. The first is I think Andrew Boff is right but I defend the Mayor's policy insofar as it was hard to get things off the ground until the new Government came in and changed the policy. So if the new Government has changed the policy and it's easier to do them, why haven't you scrapped the arrangements and say, "Well, we don't need to do it anymore because the new Government is a lot more favourable and we don't need to help something to happen, which is going to happen anyway"?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Because there has been considerable investment in the Academies Programme in trying to get the model right and you achieve a great economy of scale if you have the model right and then you expand with other schools and there are many schools that will be looking for sponsors or will need sponsoring relationships. So there is an argument that if something is working quite well that you would

want to expand it because it also reduces the cost for those academies. We have embarked on a programme, in a sense, so we do want to consider how we can help it develop rather than just stop it dead because the political imperative is no longer there.

John Biggs (AM): You told us that you are up to three and you are having trouble getting the fourth; you are almost there but the fifth might be sort of in the corner of your eye somewhere; no date and the Mayor may have to do three or four terms to get up to ten from what you were saying. So they are not exactly --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): The fourth hasn't been trouble. It takes time inevitably. The fifth is the invested technical college that has been mentioned, which will be granted as part of the academies. As I said, we are in a period of trying to consolidate the vision and get the programme right, so I can't say if it will be by next year that we will be in a position where we want to take on more but I am fairly confident that there will be schools out there that would inquire.

John Biggs (AM): You did or did not consider scrapping it because the Government policy had changed and it was no longer necessary? You felt it was necessary and continued to be useful. Is that right?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Yes. We absolutely considered all options in light of new reforms and then decided that we shouldn't --

John Biggs (AM): I would be interested if you were to write to the Committee and explain how the change in Government policy affected your thinking about academies. The other question I had is about -- I always assumed this was a funding trust and it just gave the money and then disappeared but you're talking about continuing levers of influence over the academies. I know we need to get on; we've had a busy meeting this morning, but I think it would be helpful if you were able to write to the Committee and clarify what levers this trust, albeit the Mayor cannot control it directly, has over the schools because the question in my mind is the Mayor seems to be sort of saying, or through you, that he does not want to directly influence the education position in London and yet through this funding trust, which he indirectly appoints to, he is arguably influencing the way in which those schools operate, so he is.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): He appoints a board of people to govern the trust and they make decisions about the day to day running of the school. There is obviously a partner, the academy --

John Biggs (AM): There is a board running each of those three schools.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): He appoints just under half the members of the board, so the controlling share is really the Academies' Enterprise Trust, which is the partner. That is the academy --

John Biggs (AM): For any one of those academies, that board is the Board of Governors for that academy.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): Each individual academy has its own Board of Governors, which is not appointed by the Mayor; they are appointed separately. The trust itself has a board.

John Biggs (AM): What I want to hear about is the purpose of the trust board because either it does or it does not; either it just hands over money and/or it -- well, it does hand over money but does it also influence the policy and direction of those schools?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): It sets some strategic direction, yes, but the schools also have autonomy over other areas as well.

John Biggs (AM): All right but the schools have to take note of that, so there is a contractual arrangement which says, "If the Mayor says every pupil be caned every fourth day" or something, I am being ridiculous, and then the trustees would stipulate that and the school would have to do it.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): No because trustees would have to accept any recommendation of the Mayor and there is no guarantee that he would want to do that.

John Biggs (AM): They wouldn't have to?

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): No, they would not. The trustees, and bearing in mind that the Mayor only appoints under half of the trustees anyway, so he doesn't have the control over the board; it's an independent board, it's an independent trust.

John Biggs (AM): If the board has their own governors who set their own direction and policies subject to Government policy, this trust, I am very hazy about what its role is.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): It sets the strategic direction for all the academies that will be in the trust.

John Biggs (AM): But they may ignore that strategic direction.

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

Jennette Arnold (Chair): OK. Can I suggest --

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I am very happy to write a note that explains.

This is how other academy providers also operate, so it's not unusual to have this setup.

John Biggs (AM): I think it would be very helpful for us to understand how it works. I had a Mayor's Question, 2251, about specialist education needs and the influence of the Mayor's trust in ensuring that academies under his influence did not exclude pupils which some academies were doing. I had a reply saying that he would ensure, through his trustees, that that did not happen, so that indicated to me that the Mayor was using influence through his trust to affect the policies of those schools.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): I think he is entitled to scrutinise the board and to ask questions and push challenge, but all the academies are required to take on a proportional share of children with special needs, and so they should, and we would expect that from our academies.

John Biggs (AM): Without delaying things, there have been cases where schools have been excluding pupils or refusing to admit them with special needs.

Jennette Arnold (Chair): What we will do is we will clarify the specific questions that you want answers for and we will get them to you. At the same time, I just want to deal with a point was made when you, Assembly Member Biggs, made the comment about an action that was trying to get round legalities. I won't have that noted without a response, so can I ask the Head of Paid Service to give us an assurance that there are no areas of the activities of that or any other aspects to do with the academy that is, if you like, getting round any legalities that exist?

Jeff Jacobs (Head of Paid Service, GLA): I think, I may have this wrong, but I think I am right in remembering that actually the first academy was set up by the London Development Agency (LDA) and the powers that you are asserting slightly that the GLA got round were LDA powers albeit with Mayoral direction behind them. In terms of what is going on here, just to be absolutely clear, the prohibition in relation to what the GLA can run does relate, if I remember rightly, to providing educational services which can otherwise be provided by a London borough, or the City, and that is sitting behind whatever we do. We take considerable care and notice to make sure that we do not flout or break the law.

More generally, of course, and I think Caroline [Boswell], has already said it, that in relation to these recommendations, we will have to take legal advice as we go along to make sure that whatever recommendations come out are in accordance with the law. In relation to the academies, I think you will find this is on the record and explains very clearly the basis on which they run.

Jennette Arnold (Chair): OK and we may write to you formally for your written response to that, for the record. Anything else? No. Munira and Caroline, thank you very much. It was a long session but you set the remit, so we've gleaned some insight into the world of the inquiry and we look forward to seeing the September publication together with -- sorry, it is not September.

Munira Mirza (Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture): It will be later than September, in October.

Jennette Arnold (Chair): Late September, early October. Thank you very much.