

MAYOR OF LONDON

Jennette Arnold OBE, AM

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Dear Jennette

Thank you for your letter of 13 November 2014 and for enclosing a copy of the London Assembly Education panel's report *London learners, London live: Tackling the school places crisis and supporting children to achieve the best they can*. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

Please find below my response to each of the recommendations from your report.

Recommendation 1

I agree that there is a need for strategic pupil places needs assessment. You will have seen the recently launched, updated and improved Schools Atlas <https://www.london.gov.uk/webmaps/lisa/>, which uses data to illustrate current patterns of demand for school places at a pan-London level. It also gives projected changes in school age population from 2012/13 to 2017/18, helping users to get an indicative picture of where pressure on places might be in the future. The Atlas now also features an expert-users version, which is aimed at assisting more technical users based in local authority planning teams. My Intelligence Unit has developed a proposal to build a more strategic Londonwide picture of future demand for state-funded school places of existing capacity, mapping down to ward level. They will be consulting with the boroughs and London Councils on this new approach over the next few months.

Recommendation 2

I agree with your second recommendation. The New Schools Unit already works closely with a number of London-based partners, including London Councils to assess land and asset availability for the creation of new school places. Updates on this continuing activity and the current review of the London Plan will be provided in due course.

Recommendation 3

I agree that London's need for new school places and a funding formula that takes account of higher costs in the capital is a pressing concern. The Intelligence Unit proposal outlined above will establish a pan-London methodology to identify the numbers required, cost implications and any revisions required to planning process. I would like to pursue this jointly with London Councils.

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Recommendation 4

I am keen that city level comparators are developed in line with the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) testing. I have investigated this and unfortunately the costs to commission a separate official measure from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is prohibitively high, approximately £1m, due to their strict sampling requirements and would not be available until children next sit the PISA tests. However, I intend to commission a city-level comparator based on research which links PISA test results in London to the National Pupil Database. Work is underway to obtain the requisite data from the Department for Education.

Recommendation 5

I hope you will have seen my Annual London Education Report 2014, which was published at my Education conference in November and draws together a range of performance data for schools across London. You can find it on the Greater London Authority website at <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/london-annual-education-report>. Performance data on individual schools is also already published through the DfE and is also incorporated into the Schools Atlas.

Recommendation 6

The Academies' programme Championing Careers Guidance in schools has been evaluated and I understand the final report has now been sent to you. Please accept my apologies for the slight delay in providing this to you in January rather than by the end of 2014 as the recommendation requested.

Recommendation 7

Munira Mirza has met with the Regional Commissioners on my behalf. My main concern is to ensure that the arrangements work effectively for London schools and pupils, and the specific schools which Commissioners have responsibility for. However, I also note that the Commissioners have responsibility over extremely wide geographical areas and may struggle to provide a London focus.

Thank you again for writing to me and congratulations on a successful report on school places and supporting school excellence.

Yours ever,



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London