



Newsletter

News and Views from Campaign for State Education – South East London

Local Education News

Greenwich Maintained Primary, Secondary and Special Schools

The local authority has an enviable reputation in the standards of the schools for which it has had responsibility. In its 2015/16 Annual Report published in December, Ofsted has ranked Greenwich 2nd in London.

Remaining with the local authority remains an attractive option, even as local government is experiencing swingeing cuts in funding from April 2017 (for which see more below). The status quo IS an option and schools should not be under the illusion that conversion to academy will have great advantages, if any at all.

During 2016, particularly after the withdrawal of the Conservatives' enforced academisation plan, the council has continued to express a commitment to its own maintained schools. In June 2016 it gave 'a firm commitment to sustaining the positive relationship we have with Greenwich schools for as long as they want to remain community, voluntary controlled or voluntary aided schools.'

And in October the Council meeting resolved that 'this Council opposes the introduction of grammar schools.'

Recent Greenwich primary school inspections have resulted in good outcomes.

Month Published	School	Previous Rating	New Rating
Sep-16	Wingfield Primary School *	Requires Improvement	Good
Sep-16	Woodhill Primary School *	Requires Improvement	Good
Oct-16	Thorntree Primary School	Good	Good
Nov-16	Linton Mead Primary School	Good	Good
Nov-16	Discovery Primary School	Good	Good
Nov-16	Holy Family Catholic Primary	Good	Good
Dec-16	Ealdham Primary School	Good	Good
Jan-17	Plumstead Manor Secondary School	Requires Improvement	S8 Inspection - improvements noted
Jan-17	Wolsley Junior Academy *	N/A (academy converter)	Requires Improvement
Feb-17	Christ Church C of E Primary School	Good	Good

* Academies

Academies Update

Twenty-eight percent of English state schools are now academies – over half the secondaries, but only 21% of primaries. There is evidence that the rate of schools converting to academies has reduced. However, the reduction in the Education Support

Grant to local authorities will, combined with the cuts to school budgets, renew slippage away from local authority maintained status.

In inner London the picture is very varied. Greenwich as an outer London Borough has a higher percentage of academies than all but one of those in Inner London.

INNER LONDON	Total schools	OPEN ACADEMIES	CONVERTER PIPELINE	Open Academies or in pipeline
Camden L	62	2	0	3.2%
Hackney L	77	10	0	13.0%
Hammersmith and Fulham L	56	20	0	35.7%
Haringey L	84	16	0	19.0%
Islington L	65	4	1	7.7%
Kensington and Chelsea C	35	8	0	22.9%
Lambeth L	85	11	5	18.8%
Lewisham L	86	4	1 (sponsored)	5.8%
Newham L	91	11	9	22.0%
Southwark L	101	21	3	23.8%
Tower Hamlets NOC	96	5	4	9.4%
Wandsworth C	81	14	0	17.3%
Westminster C	57	15	0	26.3%
Greenwich L	83	12	11	27.7%

Free schools in Greenwich

Locally the picture may change soon, as the DfE has approved a number of free schools for the borough, which makes a mockery of the requirement for local authorities to plan places. These are:

- Canary Wharf College, Greenwich, - mainstream primary.
- Ideas College - alternative provision secondary
- Stationers' Academy, Greenwich - mainstream secondary
- Woolwich Polytechnic school for Girls - mainstream secondary
- The International Academy of Greenwich – mainstream secondary
- Gold Coast Academy - mainstream, all-through
- Royal Greenwich Trust School free school - mainstream secondary

As yet none of these has premises, and at least one has had approval for more than two years.

If Woolwich Poly Girls goes ahead that will give us four secondary girls schools, and only one secondary boys. The implications for the gender balance in our schools is obvious, and it may challenge the viability of some of our existing schools.

Less Funding

Greenwich Children's Services Finance Manager confirmed that it was anticipated that the Education Services Grant (ESG) would be reduced from £3.2million to £600k from September 2017. This equates to a reduction of per pupil funding for central services from £77 to £15.

Debunking academy myths

Henry Stewart of the Local Schools Network reported on 10 myths to do with academies <http://www.localschoolsnetwork.org.uk/2015/09/10-academy-myths-and-the-facts-that-disprove-them>

Myth 1: Local authorities are no good at helping schools improve. That's why "inadequate" schools must be converted to academies.

Fact: 331 primary schools were rated "Inadequate" at their previous inspection, did not become academies, and only two remained "inadequate" by the next Ofsted.

Myth 2: Sponsored academies are more likely to improve a school that is "inadequate".

Fact: sponsored academies are almost four times as likely to remain "inadequate", if secondary, and twelve times as likely if primary.

Myth 3: Forcing "inadequate" schools to become academies is the best route to fewer children remaining in "inadequate" schools.

Fact: the reverse is true.

Myth 4: Academies are responsible for 1 million more children being in "good" or "outstanding" schools.

Fact: there are over one million more children in schools rated "good" or "outstanding" but the majority (78%) are in primary schools, where there are few academies.

Myth 5: Sponsored secondary academies improve their GCSE results faster than non-academies.

Fact: For secondary schools with the lowest results (2012), sponsored academies' results grew by 3.6% while maintained schools improved, on average, more than twice as fast at 8.5%.

Myth 6: Sponsored primary academies improve their KS2 results faster than non-academies.

Fact: only in the already highest performing fifth of primary sponsored academies was this the case; in four-fifths of the schools it was not so.

Myth 7: Academy chains are generally high performing and a route to success.

Fact: of the 20 largest chains, only 3 had an added value above the national average.

Myth 8: Sponsored academies are particularly successful at helping disadvantaged students.

Fact: The Sutton Trust acknowledges that a minority of academy chains do well, but "a larger group of low-performing chains are achieving results that are not improving and may be harming the prospects of their disadvantaged students".

Myth 9: Sponsored academies lead to more pupils taking traditional subjects, like languages and humanities.

Fact: Students in sponsored academies are far less likely to achieve a History, Geography or Languages GCSE.

Myth 10: Independent research supports government claims for academy performance.

Fact: The Sutton Trust warned that low performing chains may be harming the performance of disadvantaged students; NFER research concluded that no significant improvement is seen in the rate of improvement of GCSE results for academy schools over and above the rate of improvement in all schools.

The Regional School Commissioner

Beware 'coasting'

Regional School Commissioners (**RSC**) gained powers on 18th April, 2016 to issue Academy Orders to local authority (**LA**) maintained schools, if the schools are inadequate or otherwise "Causing Concern" or, from December 2016, if a school falls into the "Coasting" definition. The DfE published a report in November 2016 estimating that 100 schools in the South East South London region will fall into this category. No Greenwich school is in this category. One questions how the RSC is going to deal with coasting schools when it cannot find sponsors for 60 LA maintained schools rated Inadequate (and in a few cases schools have been waiting for more than 2 years).

Beware applying for an academy order

Barrister David Wolfe's (davidwolfe.org.uk/wordpress/) warns that governing bodies have generally regarded the step of enquiring of the RSC about academy status as being an expression of interest, the first step in the process, not committing the school to conversion and with an intention of making the real decision *following* consultation. In fact, the only decision for governors to take would be whether or not to apply for an academy order. Once they have done so, the process would be entirely in the hands of the Secretary of State.

Beware the slippage from local MAT to national chain

If schools in the MAT are 'causing concern' or judged to be 'coasting', an Academy Order can be issued and placement into a national chain can result. No appeal.

Beware the loss of rights

In academies, the national curriculum need not apply, there is no requirement for qualified teachers or compliance with national conditions of service for teachers.

Commons Education Select Committee

Multi Academy Trusts

This has been a wide ranging inquiry taking evidence from the Head of Ofsted, the National School Commissioner, Lord Nash, CEOs of MATs, teacher union representatives, education researchers, the Education Secretary of State, and parents.

The idea that Multi Academy Trusts have been created to improve education standards is clearly not true when it is left to the CEO of the MAT to cherry pick which schools to take. A school that is not financially viable, ie operating a deficit and paying PFI, is not attractive to a MAT. This has left 60 LA maintained schools rated 'inadequate' without a sponsor. That said, those schools that have been waiting for a few years have managed to secure improvement resulting in improved Ofsted ratings. A recent report on the 60 "orphan" schools makes worrying reading at the individual school, LA and system level.

<https://schoolsImprovement.net/sixty-orphan-schools-shunned-academy-sponsors/>

What is CASE?

The Campaign for State Education has been a grass-roots, non-party political organisation since the 1960s. We believe that a good education is the right of all citizens and that this is best achieved through a comprehensive education system. We oppose segregation by '11-plus' or through covert means of selection.

What are we trying to achieve?

A properly funded, non-selective and locally democratically accountable school system that allows every child and young person to achieve their full potential. Visit the website: www.campaignforstateeducation.org.uk

To Join CASE: <http://www.campaignforstateeducation.org.uk>