



Building Back
Stronger

**Camden's Education
Strategy to 2030**

Draft for consultation

October 2021

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A watershed moment...

This is a unique moment as we come out of the pandemic - a once in a generation opportunity to **refresh our ambitions for our education system in Camden**. The nature and scale of the pandemic mean its impact is already profound. We know that it has touched the lives of every child and every family, but it has also revealed great differences between families' lives and laid bare huge **inequalities** and widening achievement gaps. Overcoming those inequalities – ensuring that no child is left behind - is a fundamental element of this strategy.

The pandemic has also highlighted the deeper strengths of the borough and the rich diversity and resources of our young people and their families. Communities have come together to support young and old, while our schools have risen to this unprecedented challenge with creativity and urgency. Working at the heart of their communities, schools have mobilised and built on their strong ties with parents, supporting home learning, but also providing and signposting support for families. Remote learning has not only created new platforms for teaching and learning, but virtual meetings have also given parents, teachers and other professionals more direct ways of working together. Camden Learning, our school led partnership, the council, public health and our voluntary and community sector have worked together collegiately to support schools and co-ordinate services around them effectively. No school is an island. The pandemic has taught us the importance of **strong collaboration** between schools, with their communities, with parents, and with the Council and other services.

Children's health and wellbeing, which have been threatened by the experience of lockdown, have also come to the fore. The need for a more **empathetic approach** to teaching and a holistic approach to children's wellbeing, where mental health, children's and youth services work collaboratively with schools, has been recognised by the Youth Safety Taskforce¹. This was set up in 2017 in response to the rise in knife crime in Camden. This proactive approach is also recognised in the Resilient Families Framework which sets out Camden's approach to supporting children, young people and families and it underpins Camden's Early Help Strategy. This education strategy argues for a continued focus on building resilience and wellbeing as the basis for learning.

Now is the time to reflect on how we can build on the strengths that have sustained education during the pandemic and address the challenges that it has revealed.

A system under pressure

In Camden the crises created by the pandemic came on top of existing challenges caused by falling school rolls. We are at the eye of the storm of London's fluctuating demographics. A few years ago, we had rapidly rising student numbers with future increases predicted. More recently, there has been a dramatic reduction in pupil numbers due to a national fall in birth rates, compounded by Brexit, benefit changes and the specific nature of the central London housing market. Camden's birth rate has fallen by nearly 20% since 2011². This adds to financial uncertainty when all our schools are already facing a challenging funding regime. Camden schools have suffered a 20% reduction in budgets over the last ten years and this trend is likely to continue. In common with the rest of the country, the number and complexity of children with special educational needs and disabilities is also increasing.

¹ Camden Youth Safety Taskforce Report 2018

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/0/download+%288%29.pdf/3b1a64e6-31db-01cc-c7c9-4d04b5450bc6>

² Camden School Place Planning Report 2020

<https://democracy.camden.gov.uk/documents/s91048/1.School%20Sufficiency%20September%20Cabinet%20Final%2019-8%20003.pdf>

To manage falling school rolls Camden has removed 7.5 classes per year group from our primary sector over the last three years and reluctantly agreed the closure of three schools. However, our concerns about falling pupil numbers continue. There is a clear need for a strategy that will build a **sustainable school system** that encourages much stronger collaboration, including federation, between schools to overcome financial pressures and to continue to ensure the highest educational standards.

Our schools also face an uncertain policy landscape in which it is unclear what the direction of national policy might be. We cannot be certain how permanent and transformative the pandemic will be, but the fault lines that have been increasingly evident in our national system have widened. It is clear that the frameworks that have delivered improvements over the last twenty years, will not take us to where we need to be now. The impact of the pandemic on the examination system raises questions about the narrowing of the curriculum, the dominance of the national system of assessment and testing, and high stakes accountability³. The compatibility of excellence and equity as twin goals is again being discussed. **The premise of this strategy is that excellence and equity must go hand in hand.**

As part of this strategy, we have therefore reflected on the fundamental question of what education is for. What sort of education will really foster young people's ability to stretch themselves, to fulfil their potential, to be confident in themselves and their identity, to lead happy and fulfilling lives, to find rewarding work and to contribute positively to society? We are also conscious of the impact of new social movements such as Black Lives Matter, Me Too, Everyone's Invited and Climate Change on the lives of young people in the next decade. We know that 'getting back to normal' is not enough – we need to use this opportunity to come back and build stronger.

This strategy sets out our vision for 2030.

To develop this vision, we have worked together – our family of schools, Camden Learning, Camden Council and our communities. We have created Camden Conversations, an opportunity for the whole educational community to come together regularly for an hour's Zoom session to learn from respected education thinkers. We have been guided by a specialist strategy board, a schools' stakeholder group and meetings with heads and governors. We have listened hard to the voices of young people, parents and education professionals. We have also made connections with other areas of work and initiatives in Camden including the Renewal Commission, the Youth Review, the Resilient Families Framework and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. We see these networks and connections as crucial in developing this strategy but equally in its delivery. We hope they will be part of a new collective educational endeavour, which will be a fundamental component of its success.

³ A high stakes accountability system is one where there are explicit sanctions or rewards to those been assessed or judged, while low-stakes accountability provides information to stakeholders but there are no direct actions linked to results.

Building a vision for 2030 that works for everyone

The purposes of education

As part of the process of developing this strategy, we have reflected on **the purposes of education**. For inspiration, we went back to basics: Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴. We then turned to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) initiative on the Future of Education and Skills 2030⁵ and developed a model reflecting our values in Camden.

Education has the power to transform lives. It nurtures and develops individuals, allowing them to thrive. In Camden, we believe it also has an essential role in **helping individuals grow as good citizens, ambitious for change, and able to contribute positively to their communities and society**. We recognise the importance of high academic achievements to individuals but also to society. It is vital that we nurture the potential of our young people to attain the highest qualifications and progress to the top universities – but our definition of the purposes of education goes wider than this. Even the most 'academic', high achieving child needs to be educated more broadly throughout their school career.

Education can shape the values of future generations to create a fairer, more inclusive and sustainable society. Whether that's through combatting racial inequality, addressing climate change or campaigning for LGBTQ and disability rights, the demand is for a safer world, equal respect and dignity, equal participation, and freedom from oppression. The spirit of activism is alive amongst the children and young people in Camden's schools, showing that education is at the forefront of breaking down the barriers to social justice.

The young people in our schools are amongst our greatest assets. The diversity of our school population represents a new and very promising future where difference is a source of strength and respect, and diversity creates innovation and creativity

We want all young people to leave Camden schools as:

- **ambitious, knowledgeable, intellectually curious** and ready to continue learning throughout their lives so they can live, work and manage the challenges of an uncertain world with confidence and skill
- **good communicators and collaborators** able to put across their thoughts, feelings and ideas, working well with other people
- **healthy individuals** able to manage their own physical and mental well-being and lead fulfilling lives
- **creative and enterprising**, ready to participate positively in life and succeed in work
- **socially and morally responsible changemakers**, who not only understand their rights and respect the rights of others but are also able to contribute actively to their community and to the planet.

⁴ United Nations Human Rights – Office of the High Commissioner – Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

⁵ OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 - <https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/>

To achieve this, we will provide an excellent education for every child in our schools. We also recognise the importance of home learning and early childhood development and we want to ensure that *all* young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, move into adulthood as confident learners. Our vision, therefore, is for:

- **A Fair Start**
- **An Excellent School Experience**
- **Flourishing Lives.**

To achieve this vision, demands a **curriculum that is inclusive, inspiring, creative and horizon-broadening**. There is widespread commitment to this from Camden schools, which all provide a core curriculum designed to develop a broad range of knowledge, skills and attributes that will enable children to thrive. Camden has supported the enrichment of this core curriculum through investment in initiatives such as STEAM⁶, which works with our dynamic business community to drive skills and careers education. Even in the face of financial challenges, we have proudly continued the activities that enrich young people's education and lives, for example Camden Music and Camden Summer University.

As part of this we are committed to providing **enrichment experiences for every child**. All Camden schools add to the core curriculum to ensure that young people get the chance to develop and pursue passions and interests, benefiting their wellbeing as well as their job opportunities. We have developed the **Camden entitlement pledge** based on the model used for many years in Christopher Hatton Primary School. We see this enrichment as a right for every child, not just for those whose families can afford it.

Camden entitlement pledge

This pledge promises every pupil in a Camden school the opportunity to:

- See themselves in the curriculum and feel a strong sense of belonging to the school community
- Perform music, drama and dance and experience performances not only in Camden but also in London's theatres and music venues
- Learn to express themselves visually and creatively, often inspired by visits to London's museums and galleries
- Understand Camden's and London's histories and cultures through local visits
- Meet inspiring role models from a wide range of jobs and professions
- Participate in sports and outdoor activities, including teams and competitions
- Learn how to achieve and maintain good physical and mental health
- Know how to eat healthily, including how to cook and grow food
- Take a position of responsibility and demonstrate leadership skills both in school and in the wider community
- Develop enterprise skills, for example through support for a charity or local enterprise
- Understand and feel part of a global and diverse world
- Care for the environment and our planet

⁶ Camden STEAM (which stands for science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) is a programme launched in 2017 designed to ensure that the borough's young people benefit from the global organisations working in Camden.

Equity and Excellence

The three ambitions of our 2030 education strategy are to achieve a **Fair Start, an Excellent School Experience and Flourishing Lives**. These are each based on the **two pillars of equity and excellence**. Our schools do not have to choose between achieving academic excellence or supporting children who start from a position of disadvantage. **A system which is better for disadvantaged children is better for everyone.**

Our foundations

Underpinning our pillars of equity and excellence are four foundations to enable us to achieve the change set out in this strategy.



A strong place-based system: a system that understands and reflects local demographics, histories and values



An ambitious inclusive system: a system that breaks down the barriers to learning by calling out inequalities, acting to address them, making sure children and young people feel a strong sense of belonging to school and community so that no one is left behind



A collaborative and federating system: a system where we use collaboration to motivate, learn and achieve better, taking collective responsibility for all our children, working together in formal and informal partnerships, including federations, so they are served well



Think, test and Learn: a system where we are constantly developing ideas and new practice and approaches, learning from research and staying at the leading edge of new and effective practice in education by trialling new ways of working.

Building a strong place-based system

We believe that schools work better if they know and are embedded in their local community. We see schools as part of the glue that holds communities together and helps develop mutual support and solidarity across communities.

Big issues confront us locally, such as the condition of the planet or community cohesion. Schools have a leadership role in building a more place-based approach, requiring them, and particularly the young people within the schools, to think holistically as they care for their 'common home' and the communities within it.

Through all the difficulties of the pandemic, we saw many examples of schools working closely and practically with families as pressures mounted at home. They mobilised ties with parents, communities and organisations that could help. School leaders understood that some families needed intensive support before they could focus on home learning. As a result, we recognise the important role schools can play as gateways to services for families in need.

Over the last few years, the Council has invested in developing a place-based, school-led partnership: Camden Learning. It saw the potential of a school-led partnership for increasing coherence and reducing the risks of fragmentation – so that no school is left to struggle alone. The Council continues to work closely with Camden Learning, using its commission, collaborative working and influence to strive for the good of all children in the borough. The partnership has the potential to tackle local issues of quality and equity more effectively than individual schools working alone. By promoting equity, fostering well-being and nurturing the educational growth of their local community, schools in their turn make an important contribution to the civic leadership of Camden.

In joining Camden Learning, schools recognise an overriding commitment to place and community, taking a shared responsibility for all our young people. They feel a sense of belonging to, and pride in, the area. It means something to be a Camden school, a Camden teacher, a Camden pupil.

Building an ambitious inclusive system

We are determined to create a more inclusive education system, which will: remove the barriers limiting participation and achievement; respect diverse needs, abilities and characteristics; and eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environment⁷. We know our strategy must help schools do more to meet the ambitions of this vision and the ideals we set out below:

In Camden, to be inclusive we must:

- Value all students and staff, along with their communities and cultures, equally
 - Increase the participation of students in, and reduce their exclusion from, the cultures, curriculum and communities of our schools
 - Restructure our cultures, policies and practices so that they respond to the diversity of our students, with students seeing themselves in curriculum and role models
 - Reduce barriers to learning and participation for all students
 - Overcome barriers for particular students and learn from these changes for the benefit of students more widely
 - View the differences between students as positive resources to support learning rather than problems to be overcome
 - Acknowledge the right of all students to an education as close to home as possible
 - Improve schools' inclusiveness for staff as well as students
 - Emphasise the role of schools in building community and developing values as well as increasing achievement
 - Foster mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities
 - Recognise that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society
- Adapted from The Index for Inclusion⁸*

The pandemic crisis has exposed even more starkly the many inequities in our education system and underlined the fragility of children struggling with a concentration of disadvantages. If we are to close the gap that has widened this past year, the strategy must provide poorer and more vulnerable children with additional opportunities to access learning and develop skills. Supporting these children and their

⁷ UNESCO (2020) Inclusion in Education <https://en.unesco.org/themes/inclusion-in-education>

⁸ Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow 2000 Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools <http://www.csie.org.uk/resources/inclusion-index-explained.shtml>

families is not an optional extra. It is an investment in social justice and creating a fairer society that benefits all.

A focus on poverty encompasses disadvantaged children from all ethnic backgrounds but inequalities cannot be tackled without addressing racism. The Black Lives Matter movement gave voice to deep inequalities and raised issues about the racism Black⁹ people continue to face. Education should be at the forefront of breaking down barriers established by racism. It has never been more important for schools to improve progression opportunities for Black, Asian and minority ethnic teachers. Given educational leaders' power, they are uniquely placed to demonstrate leadership in action for anti-racism and social justice. The strategy will support the development of headteachers and governors as leaders of social justice.

The number of Camden children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is increasing. We are ambitious for these children and want their needs to be met wherever possible in their local school, or within the Camden family of schools. We believe that the best opportunities for children arise when they are educated near their families and near their communities. Camden's current review of its SEND strategy will continue to build on this approach.

Our children looked after by the local authority are our most vulnerable and they benefit from the intensive support provided by the Virtual School, acknowledging the importance of education if their lives are to be turned around.

Building a collaborative and federating system

No school is an island. Every child's success depends on the whole education system with families, schools, other settings, the council, diocesan boards, voluntary sector, academy trusts, local employers and local communities working together. The pandemic has also underlined the need to connect with other services that support children and families. Children cannot learn if they are hungry, for example, or subject to the stresses of domestic violence.

Collaboration within, across and beyond schools is an essential element of change and is fundamental to the success of this strategy. Educational research indicates that collaboration invariably yields better results for individuals, for leaders and for organisations. This is the case for both children and adults. A collaborative system needs collaborative processes, practices and structures to support it.

We also see collaboration as a skill that can be learned and developed. When employers talk about the importance of problem-solving for school leavers, they are invariably talking about collaboration. If these skills are to be as rigorous as we need them to be, they must be supported through professional development and practical experience.

Camden Learning brings all schools together in a way that strengthens the system while also maintaining the distinct and positive identity of each school. All Camden schools have chosen to belong to this partnership, including academies and hospital schools as well as all the Church schools, voluntary controlled, foundation and community schools. This is 'union by agreement' through which each school retains its own autonomy, authority and responsibilities but has also committed to a shared responsibility for the wider education community. So, Camden Learning itself can be described as a federated system, a family of autonomous schools operating together with shared moral purpose.

⁹ We use the term Black when specifically referring to people of African descent. Furthermore, we use the term Black as an inclusive term for people of African and Caribbean / South American/ South-Asian descent who identify as Black and share a common racialised experience in the United Kingdom based on their skin colour.

School leaders are at the heart of this collaborative work and we want all our leaders to be experts in collaboration. The partnership must involve teachers and support staff as well as headteachers and governors. If we are to grow the professional capacity that we need for a thriving education system, the strategy needs to create more opportunities for collaboration within and across schools. This will enable us to move knowledge and expertise round the schools and our education system more effectively.

Given the wider value of collaboration and the growing challenges of falling rolls and squeezed finances, some of our schools have already pursued new models of organisation and joint working that have enabled them to improve the quality of the education provided while also achieving economies of scale. To ensure continuing viability, the need for our schools to consider a range of collaborative arrangements, including federating, is pressing.

The pandemic has underlined the need for connecting well with others both within and across school. Any one school can be part of many collaborations either within or beyond Camden Learning: for example, geographical clusters, subject networks, one to one school collaborations or more formal collaborations to address a need or interest. The new strategy will continue to raise awareness across the system of the benefits of collaboration not only for deepening motivation, learning and achievement but also for efficiencies of scale. It will provide powerful support to school leaders in driving this change, including ways that involve young people themselves.

Examples of collaboration

- **135 Cluster**¹⁰ a local, self-directed partnership initiative, where detailed collaboration between four schools- including reviews called ‘collaborative enquiries’- has resulted in very practical improvements in practice.
- Working closely with the Council and community, **Rhyl Primary School** is currently planning new provision that takes full account of the benefits of cross-service collaboration.
- Over recent years, all Camden infant and junior schools have been successfully amalgamated into primary schools.
- **Torriano School and Brecknock Primary School** have collaborated intensively, bringing improvements within both schools. They are now embarking on a soft federation *with* an executive headteacher and two ‘heads of school’.
- **An executive headteacher** leads five Camden Church schools and one from Westminster with considerable operational benefits for all of them.
- A single group of governors oversees **Camden Centre for Learning** with its 3 schools on 2 sites
- **William Ellis School** has a **residential centre for outdoor learning** called the Mill in the village of Forest Green. It uses this converted watermill as part of the personal development programme for their students but collaborates with Camden primary schools so they can make use of this inspiring resource too.

Whilst much of this strategy focuses on providing a great school experience, it is impossible to achieve our ambitions of a fairer start and a fair future without looking at education before and after the compulsory years of schooling. **A child’s journey begins pre-birth and should carry on through childhood into adulthood with smooth transitions** between phases and settings. Families should be able to access extra support when they need it.

¹⁰ 135 Cluster – A cluster of schools formed in 2018 comprising Rhyl, Gospel Oak, Carlton, Primrose Hill and Fleet Primary Schools <https://www.rhylprim.camden.sch.uk/school-info/cluster-of-schools/>

In addition, the success of our youth programme in bringing hundreds of children into the work of the Youth Council (for which just over 5000 votes were cast), Shout Out events, the work of our youth MPs, the Summer University all demonstrate a strong sense of social justice and engagement with change amongst our young people. The dignity, compassion and activism of the campaign on food poverty, set in train by Marcus Rashford, are mirrored in the new generation growing up in Camden.

The ongoing review of our Youth Services presents an opportunity to bring their work into closer alignment with our schools. The Summer in Camden programme is an example of integrated programme between schools, youth services, the voluntary and community sector which can be a model for future collaboration.

Think, test and learn

A key part of our approach will be to introduce a **Think, Test and Learn framework** to develop ideas and new ways of working, with a focus on greater use of experimentation and evidence. This will put Camden at the leading edge of change and effective practice in education by trialling new ways of working to support learning. We will convene a conference with schools to discuss how the strategy will be implemented, in particular how *Think, Test and Learn* will work and the methods that support it. The approach should strengthen collaboration across the education community by developing both our collaborative skills and relationships. We will also discuss the development of a research and innovation programme, with projects to support delivery of the ambitions in this plan. It will be important to involve schools in prioritising these projects, including those that might lend themselves to *Think, Test and Learn*.

We will seek expressions of interest for funded *Think, Test and Learn* initiatives by the end of 2021, so that a series of projects can be given the green light once the Council's Cabinet has agreed this strategy in January 2022.



We will think:

keep in touch with the latest ideas and evidence, using and extending our networks for discussion and debate, including engaging more creatively with young people, parents, universities and local business.



We will test:

Try out new ways of working in our schools and services as well as within the community, and evaluate using quantitative and qualitative techniques.



We will learn:

Disseminate and develop scalable and transferable ways of working, in ways that develop our local system but also learn from initiatives that did not work as anticipated.

Our ambitions for 2030

We will build on these foundations by setting our ambitions for 2030. We want our young people to enjoy:

A fair start An excellent school experience Flourishing lives

These ambitions are not based on narrow ideas of attainment but come out of what we see as the core purposes of education. In the next section, for each ambition, we explain the context and set out specific priorities, linked to key actions that we will take over the next two years to progress our goals.

 <p>A Fair Start</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thriving children who are ready to learn• Schools rooted at the heart of their communities• Parents as prime partners in their children's learning	 <p>An Excellent School Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A good, local school place available for every Camden child• Every child a reader by 7• Knowledgeable and skilled leaders and teachers who love working and learning in Camden• An inclusive, inspiring, creative and horizon-broadening curriculum in all our schools• Harnessing technology to improve learning, schools and our local system• Successful transition between settings and phases for every child• Children's health and well-being are supported through the ethos, curriculum and practices of school life• Ambitious inclusive schools• Opportunity Centres to facilitate learning beyond the school day• A Camden accountability framework which captures the real story of the school	 <p>Flourishing Lives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building a generation of changemakers with impact in their communities• A post 16 education system that benefits all students• Greater access for young people to education, work and opportunity• Better information, advice and guidance to support learning and job choices which lead to economic opportunity• A 'Life Futures Plan' for every young person at 16+
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A Fair Start

By 2030, we want every child to have a more equal start in life, so will ensure that they have the support and skills necessary to succeed in education, and that the outcome gap between children growing up in disadvantage and poverty in Camden and the national average will be narrowed.

Where are we now?

We know the most important period of a child's development is the first five years of their life. But this is also where poverty first starts to impinge on children's learning and, ultimately, their life chances.

Camden has a proud history of supporting families in their children's early years, understanding the importance of giving children the best start in life. Nevertheless, this support has not always had sufficient impact. In 2019, only 73% achieved a 'a good level of development', as judged by national standards at the end of the early years' foundation stage. This percentage represented an improvement on previous years but was still below the London average.

At the end of 2019, the Council decided to invest a higher proportion of available funds in services to support **a child's first 1001 days** (pregnancy and the first two years). This enabled resources to be used to strengthen the universal offer for parents in the perinatal period (the months before and after birth), providing additional and innovative opportunities to identify families needing support. This was an important shift in approach, and we believe it will enable more children to thrive and be ready to learn in school.

Our ambition of **a Fair Start** for all Camden children builds on this work and rests on **three development priorities**:

- ① **Thriving children who are ready to learn in school**
- ② **Rooting schools at the heart of their communities**
- ③ **Parents as prime partners in their children's learning**

Our shared vision is that all Camden children have the best start in life, have access to high quality early education and are **ready to learn well in school by age 5**. Our approach is intended to prevent later problems and lead not only to good speech and language development but also stronger social and emotional development – the foundations for education success.

The importance of emotional and language development in the early years cannot be over-emphasised. This strategy seeks to take our work a step further with its focus on building the **common skillset of the early years workforce** across all settings. It also highlights our developing multi-agency approach to intervening early to **identify and support children's speech and language development**. These are areas of work where we must be at the forefront of innovation as we are with our work to use **psychological support to support emotional and social development** between parent and child.

Parent and Child Psychological Support Programme (PCPS)

PCPS is a clinical-based programme to support healthy growth and development of infants with particular focus on parent-child interactions, bonding, attachment and infant social and emotional development. It is a universal programme which means that the service will be available to all Camden families:

- It monitors and supports physical and cognitive progression
- It observes, analyses and records babies' relationships with caregivers
- It provides feedback about fostering healthy parent-infant relationships
- It is a space for parents to talk about their own well-being, allowing for the referral to and provision of additional services as required
- Families attend an introductory visit and six programme visits which take place every three months between 3 and 18 months of age, each lasting 60-90 minutes
- At each programme visit, parents and infants attend three stations in sequence led by PCPS trained nursery nurses, health visitors and child psychologists.
- Cases requiring more support are discussed in monthly meetings, and reviewed based on strengths and concerns to identify strategies and interventions

The Council's shift in policy in 2019 has led to the development of the borough's **five early years localities** and within them, the **early years partnerships** across schools, childminders and private and voluntary nurseries to enable joint work to improve quality of provision. These localities also enable work to tailor services to local needs and develop creative, collective solutions, for example, training parents so they can provide peer support for other parents who are struggling. We want to build on this to involve schools better in integrating support for children and families across the age ranges, as set out in Camden's Resilient Families Framework.¹¹

The second priority, *rooting schools at the heart of their communities*, is key in supporting a fairer start for young children but remains important throughout all stages of education. During the pandemic **schools' role as an anchor was strengthened, providing support for families and some stability through using their knowledge of local communities and trusted relationships**. They became more socially involved in their families' problems and issues, often acting as brokers with the local council or other agencies. They sometimes influenced local action in response to needs and concerns. Responses to this crisis have highlighted a leadership role for schools in building a more place-based approach across their local community, particularly in bringing people together. This role is about making connections, sometimes acting as a convener, but all the time building relationships and trust.

In Camden, the building blocks are already in place to grow and deepen the role of the school in the heart of its community. Schools typically know their communities very well and have established trusted relationships with parents, carers and families. There is a wealth of vibrant community-led resources in the borough and there remains a rich and high-quality support offer of services from Camden Council and its partners in health, the police and the voluntary/community sector. Schools need to be able to signpost these better and in a more personal way to parents.

To embed this approach, we need to improve information and guidance to schools and families to clarify the 0 to 25 pathways for support, enabling a better shared understanding of how to navigate the system for both professionals and service users. Through this and **locality-based working**, we believe we can

¹¹ The Resilient Families Framework was signed off by Camden's Cabinet on 2 September 2021. [Link to be added once added to early help web pages]

bring together a range of services in a **team around schools**, empowering and establishing the school as a **gateway to support, help and guidance**. This will enable us to offer earlier support and swifter resolution of issues and to reach families who may not attend other access points. More importantly it will grow the skills of school staff to work with more vulnerable children, including strengthening the links between family support workers employed by schools and early help services. We want to trial this approach of building a locality team round schools through *Think, Test and Learn*, working with schools and partners.

The pandemic has shone a new light on **parents' relationships with school** and we saw many schools giving considerable help to parents in supporting home learning. Systems of online communication with parents have become more sophisticated and have enabled some interesting examples of peer support to get underway. Parents of children at Gospel Oak School, for example, not only communicated with the school through the system set up during lockdown but also with each other and this included using it to trigger powerful peer support for their own learning.

We need to build on this sort of approach, recognising that **when parents are involved in their education, children do better on a wide range of measures**. This remains important throughout children's entire time at school.

The pandemic has opened a window for parents into teaching and learning which needs to be kept open, including through Camden's continued commitment to family learning. The strategy will **build on the current Family Learning Programme**. Parents have told us they want structured **opportunities to know more about how best to support their children's learning** and we will work with them and schools to develop a programme or programmes to do that. Our early years work will include support to parents for developing a **good home learning** environment in line with national research¹². We also want to find ways of ensuring **every parent has the opportunity to acquire basic digital skills** as well access to a device and connectivity so they can use them.

The Family Centre at Edith Neville Primary School

The Family Centre runs daily sessions for local families with children from birth to five. The sessions are focused on developing partnerships between home and school to raise attainment, supporting families to access services they need to reduce inequalities, improving early communication and promoting mental and physical health (including oral health). The results have been transformational – tracking of children's achievement and their wellbeing show they relate directly to families' participation. A key focus is helping parents to become independent and enabling them to support themselves and the community.

- **OFSTED**, 'The Centre's arrangements to provide support and care for families are outstanding. The family support team and the family liaison worker provide an excellent and exceptionally well-integrated package of care and support for families.'
- **Laura, family liaison worker** 'Parents and children need somewhere to come and share ideas, talk to other parents and trained workers who can support them. They know we care ... they don't feel they are being judged ... Invest, and they come.'
- **Participating parent** 'The [programme] has saved me. I am always welcome and have made friends and learnt how to enjoy my child ... I...am not alone now.'

¹² DfE publication (November 2018) Improving the Home Learning Environment: A behaviour change approach https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/919363/Improving_the_home_learning_environment.pdf

Working with University of the Arts London, **Camden Family Changemakers Expert Parent Group** (April 2021) have developed '**The Good Help for Families Manifesto**', a design vision of what good help for families looks like post-pandemic. From this we have drawn a pledge or standard for how schools and the services supporting parents, will work with them.

How we'll work with parents

Our schools will be friendly and welcoming places for parents and carers

When you speak to staff or access services in school, we aim that you will feel:

- **Respected** not judged
- **Valued** – your experience matters
- **Listened to**
- **Cared for and supported**
- **Communicated with** to understand what you and your child needs – different people have different needs
- **Assured** that you are being helped by skilled professionals
- **Understood** – the pressures and stresses in your life acknowledged
- **Empowered** to help yourself and to help others
- We want to **get to know you, build trust, build confidence and connect you and your child to the services that you need**

Goals	Initiatives 2022/4
<p>Thriving children who are ready to learn in school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to shift resources to provide both universal and additional support for a child’s first 1001 days, through the network of children’s centres and the specialist services they connect with • Support the early years workforce across all settings to develop a common skillset to help children’s speech and language development, emotional development, healthy lifestyles and the early identification of need for additional support • Create a more consistent approach to the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage across the network of providers to improve EYFS outcomes • Refresh our locality-based early years partnerships so that services and settings work together at a local level to tailor services to local needs and develop creative, collective solutions as well as supporting settings to improve their quality • Support the development of the early years’ speech and language strategy, a concerted and high profile, multi-agency and population-based approach to intervening early to identify and support children’s speech and language development • Support early years settings to develop consistent approaches to supporting children and families’ health and wellbeing
<p>Schools rooted at the heart of their communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate a range of council, health and voluntary sector services in a locality team around schools, better establishing the school as a gateway to guidance for support, advice and help and linking with a remodelled and broadened Family Information Service. This will enable us to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Offer earlier support and swifter resolution of issues, so that barriers to learning are reduced – Be more successful in bringing support to families who are harder to reach, building on the trusting relationships established by schools – Grow the skills and confidence of school staff to work with more vulnerable children
<p>Parents as prime partners in their children’s learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-design a central programme with parents and schools, both primary and secondary, providing opportunities to help them support their children’s learning more effectively, including supporting their child’s physical and emotional wellbeing • Support parents to create a good home learning environment for their children from birth¹ • Organise a series of opportunities for parents to increase their own basic digital skills, including offering a free course to develop their understanding of and competency in digital literacy skills, leading to a Digital skills Certificate Level 1 • Continue our commitment to family learning, developing further joint delivery with schools • Launch a standard for ‘how we work with parents’ based on ‘<i>The Good Help for Families Manifesto</i>’, a design vision of what good help for families looks like post-pandemic, developed by a group of Camden parents (Camden Family Changemakers) with University of the Arts service design students.

An Excellent School Experience

By 2030, we will ensure that all young people leave Camden schools as knowledgeable, intellectually curious and collaborative learners who drive change for social good, with skills and achievements in a broad range of areas, including outstanding academic performance; and, through a relentless focus on inclusion and equity, we will improve the learning and outcomes of children from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups so there is no gap between them and national averages.

Where are we now?

There is much to admire about schools in Camden. Ofsted has judged them all to be good or better. They perform well, measured against the public accountability framework, and their results are above national averages. Their leaders are inspiring and the people working in them are committed and passionate. Nevertheless, as elsewhere in the country, children from poorer families continue to perform less well than those from homes with more obvious advantages. In 2019, 56% of the Key Stage 4 GCSE cohort were classified as disadvantaged. Too many of these young people go on to become part of what's described nationally as the **'forgotten third'**¹³This is the percentage of the post 16 cohort **who fail to achieve at least a grade 4 standard pass in GCSE English and maths at the end of 12 years of schooling**. Too many of these young people do not progress in education or work.

Camden has had success in working with communities to improve the performance of Somali pupils, while groups such as Caribbean pupils and white working-class pupils are still too often overrepresented among the lowest achievers, as they are nationally. We know the pandemic has widened the poverty gap so now is the time to gear our education system even more to closing the attainment gap.

To narrow the gap, alongside a relentless focus on improving academic performance, we also need a stronger approach to **the development of broader skills**. Evidence¹⁴ shows us employers value qualifications as indicators of achievement and ability, but they identify attitudes, behaviours and skills as the biggest drivers of success in work. Employers prize creativity, originality, team-working, problem-solving and the ability to learn – skills that no machine can replicate.

Employers want 'character' and broader skills to be embedded in the school timetable. Many argue¹⁵ that the government should rethink GCSEs and reform the EBacc to ensure it encompasses a 'broad and balanced' curriculum, especially in relation to creativity. These are reasons Camden established its STEAM initiative in 2017. There is also growing evidence that it is too often our most disadvantaged young people who do not develop the broader skills that employers need.

Immense changes to the world of work, mainly as a result of technological change and innovation, have been predicted for a long time. Longer life spans and increasing pension age will see not just new

¹³ Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) September 2019 – The Forgotten Third - Report of the Commission of Inquiry https://www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/Our%20view/Campaigns/The-Forgotten-Third_full-report.pdf

¹⁴ CBI/Pearson (2018) Education and Skills Annual Report 2018: Educating for the modern world www.cbi.org.uk
CBI/Pearson (2019) Education and Skills Survey Report 2019: Education and learning for the modern world www.cbi.org.uk

¹⁵ Times Educational Supplement 13 March 2020 <https://www.tes.com/news/reform-or-scrap-gcses-say-86-cent-heads>

types of work but new ways of working too¹⁶. While we cannot be certain exactly what those changes will be, we know that the future won't be like the past. **Educating young people for this level of uncertainty cannot all be done inside classrooms.** They also need **experiential learning** through social action and volunteering activities. As part of our implementation of this strategy, can we persuade the local community, including businesses, to provide community or work-based experiences for all young people? Our STEAM programme gives us a good base for mobilising business resources to support this initiative.

We have identified **ten priorities for development** to progress our ambition **An Excellent School Experience**. These benefit all children but give disadvantaged children in particular, access to the skills, experiences and networks that they don't necessarily get at home. They are also intended to ensure that fewer children are excluded from school. We want the quality of our education system to stretch our high achievers across their academic work but also across areas such as music, the arts and sports too. **Governors are key people in our school system** and their involvement will be vital in driving forward many of the actions.

The ten development priorities are:

- ① **A good, local school place available for every Camden child**
- ② **Every child a reader by 7**
- ③ **Knowledgeable and skilled leaders and teachers who love working and learning in Camden**
- ④ **An inclusive, inspiring, creative and horizon-broadening curriculum in all our schools**
- ⑤ **Harnessing technology to improve learning, schools and our local system**
- ⑥ **Successful transition between settings and phases for every child**
- ⑦ **Children's health and well-being supported through the ethos, curriculum and practices of school life**
- ⑧ **Ambitious inclusive schools**
- ⑨ **Opportunity Centres to facilitate learning beyond the school day**
- ⑩ **A Camden accountability framework which captures the real story of the school**

¹⁶ Gratton, L. and Scott, A (2017) *The 100-year life: Living and working in an age of uncertainty*. London: Bloomsbury.

A good, local school place available for every Camden child

To ensure continuing viability, there is a pressing need for our schools to consider a range of collaborative arrangements, including federating. The scale of the financial changes, when combined with reductions in pupil numbers, can seriously threaten the viability of individual schools, because of their size or other local factors. Camden Council, with its overall responsibilities for school place planning, has made changes through school closures, changes in leadership and admissions caps in recent years but we want to strengthen our strategic and collaborative approach. In addition to the challenges identified earlier, we need to address the high proportion of 11 years olds who do not transfer from our primary schools into our secondary schools. Camden's Annual School Place Plan [add link when published] deals with the strategic issues, following work with schools both borough wide and in localities.

School governors are key players in ensuring schools meet the financial and organizational challenges so it will be important to target training specifically to promote collaboration, proactive scenario planning and new organisational models. At the beginning of each academic year Camden Learning organises an annual Standards Meeting with every school (the headteacher and the chair of the governing body). We are expanding the scope of these meetings. These will continue to review past performance and identify needs and priorities for the future. They will also identify areas of expertise which might prove a resource for the system. However, in line with the new strategy we shall also add **Future Planning for Collaboration** to the agenda of these meetings. This will enable us not only to strengthen collaboration across the system but also to identify emerging concerns about viability and work to address these co-operatively sooner rather than later.

All schools with potential viability issues will be expected to produce **an action plan, rooted in Camden's School Places Plan**. Each individual school's plan will consider a range of collaborative arrangements to address its viability issues, including federating. The plan will need to be agreed by the Council, which has statutory responsibilities for place-planning and sufficiency of provision.

Every child a reader by 7

In Camden, although our primary schools perform well above both national and London averages, 20% of our children still do not reach the expected levels in reading and writing by 11, but this figure masks significant disparities between schools. These are the children who go on to be least successful at GCSE and often join the national group, 'the forgotten third'¹⁷

The strategy therefore identifies an ambitious target – that **every child should be a reader by the age of 7**. So why zero in on reading? It is the best proxy measure we have for what's needed to break the link between family income and educational attainment. We want every child to be confident about reading by 7 so they are strong in all three key strands of literacy by 11- reading, writing and oracy. This would set them up for success and make a difference to their social, educational and mental well-being. Evidence suggests there is a positive relationship between reading frequency, reading enjoyment and attainment. Indeed, an international study (OECD, 2002) reported reading enjoyment as more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status¹⁸. Reading is therefore an essential building block, not just for academic success but for ensuring fulfilling and rewarding lives.

¹⁷ Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) September 2019 – The Forgotten Third - Report of the Commission of Inquiry https://www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/Our%20view/Campaigns/The-Forgotten-Third_full-report.pdf

¹⁸ Quoted in Department for Education: Research Evidence on reading for pleasure May 2012 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284286/reading_for_pleasure.pdf

Knowledgeable and skilled leaders and teachers who love working and learning in Camden

We are committed to a **Camden system** which will inspire a **strong sense of pride and belonging in all our children and young people and the staff who work with them**. We want our schools to be **outstanding centres of high-quality teaching and learning** where all children achieve well in line with the purposes we described earlier. This means deep and long-term support to build the quality of leadership and teaching, **investing in teachers as the system's most precious resource**. **High performing systems value their teachers**¹⁹

We want those working in our schools to enjoy their jobs, have the knowledge and skills to do them well and feel appreciated for all they do for the children in our schools. This also means having policies, practices and provision in place that support the mental health and wellbeing of all staff working in our schools.

Research shows²⁰ that **teachers participating in impactful professional development tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction**. Teachers in Camden have spoken with enthusiasm about the opportunities afforded by co-designing improvement initiatives through the Learning Hubs but also by other initiatives, such as the Richard Reeves Foundation initiative on secondary Maths. They have enjoyed the creativity of working collaboratively to establish better practice, building social and professional capital.

Camden Learning Hubs

Camden Learning has established various professional networks and communities of practice to encourage collaboration. These include **Learning Hubs**. These are teacher-led and are funded to address a system need or priority. Since 2017, 22 Hubs have been set up, all very different in task and often style. However, they all work across schools to engage teachers and to accelerate progress and impact.

For example, **the Primary Maths Hub** has run for several years across schools and its work has been a key driver behind a dramatic improvement in Key Stage 2 results, as well as increasing children's enjoyment of Maths. It has built a strong and collegial team of Maths teachers across primary schools who love their jobs and see cross-school collaboration as enriching their work and professionalism.

The **Mental Health Hub** presents a different but equally successful example. It has produced a range of engaging material to be used in supporting mental health issues in schools. An early focus was on the importance of sleep and involved children, parents and their schools. More recently, it has focused on issues raised as a result of the pandemic, supporting children and indeed, adults in schools to manage their health and well-being more effectively.

¹⁹ OECD, (2020) TALIS 2018 *Volume 2-Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals*, www.oecd.org

²⁰ OECD (2019), *TALIS 2018 Volume 1- Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners*, www.oecd.org

We have invested in the appointment of two expert school leaders, one from the primary sector and one from secondary, who will work together to ensure Camden Learning designs and brokers high quality, school-led professional development. They will ensure we manage the introduction of the new national framework well but also design a local one to complement it.

An excellent workforce requires excellent professional learning and development for leaders, teachers and all staff in our schools. In Camden, we have been keen to provide opportunities to enable schools to plan, work and learn together across schools. We have found this system-wide collaboration has motivated and inspired them, building both professional and social capital and a deep commitment to Camden. This will continue to be an important part of the strategy's approach to change

An inclusive, inspiring, creative and horizon-broadening curriculum in all our schools

All Camden schools are committed to a broad and balanced curriculum designed to develop the range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable children to thrive in the 21st century. Ofsted's focus on the curriculum, through the inspection framework introduced in 2019, led to most schools reflecting on the design of their curriculum to ensure they were clear about 'intent, implementation and impact'. Most schools have a strong focus on enrichment as reflected in the Pledge set out earlier.

Camden Learning will continue to provide powerful support to schools in driving curriculum change, particularly in ways that build children's agency. Now children are back at school, leaders are focused on 'Renewal', ensuring their curriculum supports both the quality of students learning and their well-being. This includes adapting the curriculum to bridge equity gaps. The skills needed when children were being taught at home has led to a greater focus on making the curriculum as inclusive as possible. Digital literacy is now a feature of the curriculum in all schools in a way it was not a year ago and we will build on this to enrich the curriculum.

Belonging Strategy at Parliament Hill School

The school developed the Belonging Strategy with the vision of empowering all students to lead globally and locally as well as impacting on curriculum in the school. Firstly, students set up The Sustainers, a climate change action group which advocated and presented their ideas in order to obtain a grant from the Camden sustainers programme. They in turn inspired other students to form a much larger group called the Parli Climate Action Group which:

- Lobbied for practical changes in school such as plastic free catering
- Presented to the school governors to support their campaign for a climate change curriculum
- Hosted a series of documentary film screenings and led assemblies for all year groups on the importance of climate action and reducing single use plastics
- Ran a staff training event on how to reduce our waste and include climate change in the curriculum, influencing schemes of work across the school including for the STEAM curriculum
- Fundraised for and planted a Feminist Orchard with each tree dedicated to an inspirational feminist – and are now launching this as a contemplation and wellbeing space
- Created a Parli Climate Action re-useable water bottle to be sold in the canteen and inspired the Parli People to create a water bottle to sell in the community.

Camden's schools are a rich curricular resource for each other with the practice in some schools attracting national attention. One of Camden Learning's key roles is to move knowledge around the system, and this will continue to be an explicit feature of the new strategy. We will develop more ways of encouraging schools to reflect on their own practices and learn from the experiences of others, both within and beyond Camden.

Music and the arts in Camden schools

Camden is renowned for its rich arts and musical history, and has produced numerous successful artists and actors (such as Dua Lipa and Daniel Kaluuya) reflecting the strong and innovative offer in our schools:

- **Camden's Music Service** that works closely with schools, young people and parents. The offer to schools includes free whole-class instrumental lessons in every primary school, a range of grants and subsidies for young people eligible for Free School Meals and networks that forge collaboration and professional development between schools – for example, with a focus on decolonising the music curriculum
- The **broad and exciting range of weekend and holiday ensembles** to nurture all interests and abilities, including orchestras, jazz/rock/samba bands and choirs, with frequent performances at venues across Camden and London. A particular highlight is a performance at the Royal Albert Hall which has taken place biennially since 1998 and features performances from over 2000 Camden pupils
- **Acland Burghley School's unique partnership with the internationally renowned Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE)**. The collaboration offers not only unparalleled enrichment opportunities for the students but also interdisciplinary links across the curriculum, for example in physics and maths, and promotion of inclusion through projects such as "Musical Connections" – a collaboration between Acland Burghley, the OAE and Swiss Cottage School
- **Central Saint Martin's College of Arts and Design projects with Regent High School** which encourage students to understand the creative industries and support progression onto higher education within the arts
- **Haverstock School's work as a Centre of Excellence for Modern Music Education** having won £100,000 from Restore the Music, the CMS Foundation and the Roundhouse. Music scholars receive free instrument hire, subsidised tuition and performance and recording opportunities at the Roundhouse
- **Camden Spark** is the borough's cultural education partnership which connects schools with the plethora of cultural institutions in the borough. Current projects including engagement with public art and sculpture and a network of schools working on equity, inclusion and creativity, including workshops with The Black Curriculum.

Harnessing technology to improve learning, schools and our local system

During the pandemic, the digital divide between families came into stark relief. Unequal access to devices, connectivity, space to study, and access to adults with the time and skills to support children in their learning all contributed to widened inequalities. Targeting resources to support the poorest children and their families is an important investment in closing that gap. Using the leadership expertise in schools, Camden Learning is already leading the design of **initiatives to support 'renewal'** after the pandemic. **Harnessing the use of technology** is key here and will be a priority for support within the strategy.

We know that teachers' skills and confidence in planning and providing remote learning, including the use of digital technology, grew during the pandemic. Many schools are convinced that blended learning will become a feature of education in the future and many parents argue that it should. They see **the possibilities of digital technology as an enabler of learning, both complementing and enriching teaching**. As we have seen through the pandemic, it also has the potential for engaging parents better.

A parent's view, January 2021

I have a very happy daughter in Year 8 who much prefers remote learning. She was telling me today that her lessons are now better than at school - a sometimes live, sometimes recorded session to teach concepts, a central section of self-practice, and finally a gated test²¹ to see how the lesson went. She can do these lessons at her own pace and isn't gated so much by the speed of others.

Building in-house education with remote learning could liberate schools from a Victorian mindset that 30 children need to sit in a room together and enable specialist resources that single schools couldn't afford to be spread over multiple sites.

Education must **prepare children for a future of universal digital access**. A focus on developing **digital competence** for students, teachers and even families is central to this. In preparing children, we know that it will be important to develop their skills in developing independent learning and critical thinking.

Beyond that, the strategy will seek to develop Camden's potential for **future use of technology** that will generate **opportunities for children learning together across schools, localities and even countries**. Digital technology is a great enabler of collaboration.

The experiences of using **digital technology** to support learning and communication during the pandemic were a game-changer for schools, their pupils and in many instances, parents. We have a unique opportunity to build on this experience, especially given our unrivalled connections with tech industries through our STEAM programme. The strategy will inform the steps to help schools use technology to improve the quality of education, including assessment, reduce staff workload and achieve cost savings. We plan to draw on the nationally accredited expertise in our schools, such as Gospel Oak, Kings Cross Academy, La Sainte Union and The Children's Hospital School at Great Ormond Street and University College Hospitals as well as the support provided by the Camden Learning Centre (CLC), to **develop knowledge and skills across the system**.

We recognise too that **digital technology has the potential to help break down many barriers to learning** to meet the needs of individual children and young people. It also stimulates thinking about more imaginative models of inclusion, such as we are seeing in the collaboration between The Children's Hospital School at Great Ormond Street Hospital and University College Hospital, and the Royal Free Hospital Children's School. Camden School for Girls uses online technology to offer the specialist subject of Ancient Greek as a two-year extracurricular GCSE course to their own KS4 and sixth form students as well as students from other schools. This collaborative approach demonstrates the potential for greater efficiency and enrichment, giving some students access to subject learning and collaborative networks they might not otherwise have had.

²¹ In this context, 'gated' means that the test can only be undertaken if the student has, for example, completed particular online modules or fulfilled some other specific requirements.

We anticipate that our new *Think, Test and Learn* approach will attract a range of initiatives about the use of technology for learning.

Getting back to nature at Hampstead School: a teacher's view

With the incredible changes brought about by Covid-19, there has arguably never been a more important time for programmes like WildWEB. All of us have come to realise the benefits of slowing down, spending more time outdoors and noticing nature all about us. But how will we keep this up when 'normality' returns and how will we remember the lessons learnt during the lockdown? This is where WildWEB comes in and will be so powerful for students – the topical monthly themes will force them to think, reflect and take action regarding some of the biggest challenges facing us as a society. I can't wait to hear how our students get on with the programme and what they learn – this will undoubtedly be something significant to build upon when we return to school!

Successful transition between settings and phases for every child

Change is an inevitable part of life. It can generate opportunities for growth, but it is particularly important that children are supported to manage change well. A major factor locally in the below average attendance at some of our schools post lockdown has been children's anxiety about transitioning back.

Even before the added stresses of returning to school after lockdown, it was evident that when children and young people move from one phase in their lives to the next it can be unsettling. We have long known that these **experiences of transition can impact on children's emotional well-being and academic outcomes** and this issue emerged again in discussions about the strategy. A focus on refreshing our approach to successful transition and building that into Camden's education system is therefore a priority in our new strategy. This is particularly important given we have no understanding yet of the long-term psychological impact of the pandemic.

Key transition points that we need to focus on include:

- Pre-school to reception
- Primary to secondary
- Secondary to further or higher education, training or work
- Pupils admitted in-year or in-phase.

In addition, there are groups, particularly the most disadvantaged or the more vulnerable, who need additional support. We know that transition at 16 and 19 is especially challenging for young people with disabilities and their families.

We will ensure that Camden's education system recognises the importance of transition and builds that into practice across all schools. The most successful systems are those with close links and coordination between individual schools and other settings and organisations. These take account of the social and institutional adjustments that need to be supported as well as curriculum continuity.

We intend to use the *Think, Test and Learn* approach to support the development of guidance and excellent practice on transition.

Children’s health and well-being supported through the ethos, curriculum and practices of school life

In the wake of the pandemic, the **physical and mental health of our young people** is more challenged than ever. Many parents and young people themselves raised this as a significant issue. Young Minds²² found that 67% of young people said that the pandemic would have a long-term effect on their mental health. Camden partners’ work to develop a new Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy has identified the importance of school in mental and physical recovery for young people.

After months at home, many children have lost the habits and routines schools would have established as a matter of course – how to listen, how to study well, how to work, talk and engage with others, for example. Children will have lost the face-to-face responsive support they would have had from their teachers. The poorest will often have been stuck inside poor and overcrowded housing with little scope for outside play. They will have experienced the pressures of increasing poverty and stress, with some seeing family members become ill or die. The learning gaps between most disadvantaged and other children will have widened. To make real impact in this area of work, health and well-being needs to be built into the ethos, curriculum and practices of school life.

Camden has led the way in developing mental health services for children and young people, for example, the Trauma Informed Practice in Camden programme. It has also developed a comprehensive Mental Health support programme for schools, including peer support and wellbeing sessions for staff that developed out of the DfE ‘wellbeing for education’ return.

Trauma informed practice in Camden (TiPiC)

The council has commissioned Camden Learning to roll trauma informed practice out across all Camden’s secondary and primary schools. Over 1000 teachers have attended training to enable them to recognise trauma and its impact and so gain greater insight into children and young people’s behaviour. A trauma informed approach enables teachers to adjust their approach to teaching and in particular management of behaviour. It is designed to reduce the extent to which schools resort to fixed-term and permanent exclusions of pupils who have challenging behaviour and to enable staff to better meet the needs of children who have experienced trauma. Initial evaluations show that schools are seeing a shift in the way children behave and staff respond.

This and other work to improve children’s mental health forms part of our determination to avoid exclusions and improve attendance, given the links between mental health problems, behaviour difficulties and school refusal. The next stage of development of our work to support mental health involves continuing to engage more schools in TiPiC, further development of mental health training for schools and support for whole school approaches, including staff wellbeing so that schools review and strengthen their mental health provision and approach.

²² Young Minds: The impact of Covid-19 on young people with mental health needs – January 2021 Survey
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/about-us/reports-and-impact/coronavirus-impact-on-young-people-with-mental-health-needs/#main-content>

Ambitious, inclusive schools

Many schools in Camden have built a strong focus on **equalities and human rights** into all aspects of school life, but we know that school culture can unintentionally embed racism into policy and practice. Following the protests about racist violence by the Black Live Matters movement, many local schools challenged themselves harder about their approach to anti-racism by involving young people and staff in those discussions. The racial disparities evident in the pandemic also raised fundamental questions for schools. As a consequence, Camden Learning set up an Anti-Racism Learning Hub to give direct support to schools.

Anti-Racism Learning Hub

Camden Learning established and resourced an Anti-Racism Learning Hub, led by a teacher from a local secondary school and partnered with the Black Curriculum, a social enterprise. Its purpose was to both stimulate awareness and interest and to share and develop practice. An early focus was on the curriculum within schools. Through the Hub, 22 of Camden's schools worked with the Black Curriculum to address the lack of Black and global histories achievements and cultures in the curriculum. Schools looked radically at their curriculum to ensure it did more to create a fuller understanding of our history and to foster quality and respect. This work continues with a new group of schools in 2021/22.

As indicated earlier, the strategy sets out an explicit role for education leaders as leaders of social justice. They are uniquely placed to accelerate change in their schools and across Camden. A top priority must be a focus on the progression of Black, Asian and minority ethnic teachers and the need to see more in senior leadership roles. The work already underway to make governing bodies more representative of their communities should continue.

A social justice leader:

- Understands the material, economic and social differences between different groups
- Actively tries to right the wrongs inflicted on marginalised groups
- Uses their position to create safe spaces and opportunities that promote equity between individuals and groups
- Changes systems, processes and structures to respond better to the needs of students
- Works to create fairness and inclusion in schools for all who study and work in them
- Interprets their role as working towards student and staff empowerment and equity for all

(Adapted from Professor Paul Miller's model-see Miller et al (2019)

Social Justice Work as Activism: The Work of Education Professionals in England and Jamaica ²³

²³ See also, Miller, P. (2020) BAME Teacher Progression in England: Towards a conceptual model, *International studies in Educational Administration*, 47 (3), 18-35.

Inclusive education must be inclusive of everyone. For children, this includes disabled and non-disabled children, children of different heritages, nationalities, sexual orientations and more. In Camden, there are a range of ways in which we focus additional resources on those who are at **risk of exclusion and underachievement**, realising that for some pupils with the most complex issues, the best outcome may be achieved by involving more than one school and several services and organisations working together. This multi-agency approach to preventing exclusion needs to be a continuing focus of the strategy.

Our children and young people who have **special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)** make up 11% of our school population and include some of our most vulnerable learners. How we enable them to thrive is **a litmus test of our approach to inclusion**, set out in our definition above - and we are convinced that, if we meet their needs effectively, this will enable the overall system to be more successful for all children.

We have great strengths in our SEND provision both in our own specialist and mainstream provision and in the collaborative work our schools do, such as the excellent work with the Autism Education Trust. We need however to develop our overall offer so that there is greater capacity to meet children's needs, wherever possible, in their local school or in the Camden family of schools. We want to improve mainstream provision for SEND and where necessary develop local specialist provision, with an extra 'additionally resourced provision', specialist base for SEND pupils in a mainstream secondary school.

Autism, as well as **social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs are particular focuses for the development of both provision and workforce skills** since these are the most rapidly growing areas of need and complexity in Camden. We have tremendous expertise within the borough but need to turn this into a more coherent network and menu of in-reach and out-reach support. As part of this network, we are extending the support of the Virtual School to all children with SEND who are allocated a social worker to speed their catch up following the pandemic.

The newly established **SEN Strategy and Improvement Board** has brought key partners together to **refresh the current strategy and drive change**. In planning for the new strategy, it is focusing on four key areas:

- Developing additional local capacity to meet needs
- Supporting the skills of our workforce
- Targeting funding towards earlier intervention
- Working with parents to develop their understanding of what is available locally

The Board will provide greater clarity about strategic direction, including medium term provision planning. It will also improve transparency about spending and decision making. It is considering issues such as the redesign of funding mechanisms and more ways that we can ensure support is both sufficient and effective.

Opportunity Centres to facilitate learning beyond the school day

The pandemic has shown us the wide gulf between those who have good housing, IT equipment and connectivity and too many who live in overcrowded spaces, without the broadband or kit to manage home schooling. We have worked together to provide devices and Wi-Fi access in the emergency and enable home learning, but we know that every child needs to be able to learn beyond the school day – so we want to use the pandemic as a springboard to better learning for all our children and some families.

In close collaboration with schools, we will develop a proposal for a **school-led network of high technology learning venues** across the borough operating at evenings, weekends and holidays to provide:

- **access for secondary age students to learning**, targeted at those who most need it but with wide access
- **access to technology**, digital and Artificial Intelligence (AI) learning programmes designed for students individualised and personalised use, particularly in subject areas, such as mathematics and languages, where many of our students need to develop their skills
- **small group tutoring**, especially for those who need it most
- **access to good information, advice and guidance** about the world of work and opportunities
- **signposting** to a range of other services.

We also want to explore the potential of Opportunity Centres as places parents can come to use devices or Wi-Fi or indeed, to attend more formal learning programmes, including those which help them support their children's learning .

If these Centres are successful, we will extend the provision at the Centres through, for example, greater access to mentors, enrichment activities, signposting other services, holiday programmes for Year 6 and closer links to services such as Camden Adult Community Learning and Youth and Community.

Year 7 Transition Summer School at Acland Burghley School

In the summer of 2021, the school used allocated government funding to provide a summer school for pupils transitioning from Year 6 to Year 7. This reflected their experience in 2020 - that the normal academic challenges and personal anxieties of transition were exacerbated by the experience of the pandemic. The school therefore provided a week's summer school for the whole Year 7 intake. More than 80% of the cohort attended the sessions, run by school staff and a group of 'Year 8 Ambassadors' also assisted on the first day. The sessions run were for curriculum subjects but delivered primarily through group work. There was an emphasis on introducing the idea of the 'Creative Dispositions', especially persistence, which sit at the heart of the school's curriculum and pedagogical approach. This enabled staff to identify students who would need extra support as well as acclimatising students to the school's ways of working. They also spent a day at an Adventure Centre doing challenging activities - the first school trip in 18 months for many. Students who attended the summer school have shown a better ability to settle into school than those who did not attend, and the observational feedback from staff has been positive. Attendance has been very high. It is too early to assess whether it directly helped address learning loss from the pandemic. In any case, parents reported that their children felt less anxious about starting Year 7, and learning gains are therefore anticipated in the medium to longer term.

A Camden accountability framework which captures the real story of the school

Exam league tables, Ofsted and other high stakes accountability have given a transparency that has helped generate a significant improvement in education over the last 30 years. However, it has also encouraged a compliance culture that hinders the radical changes our schools need if young people are to manage an uncertain future with confidence and a love of learning. We need an accountability system which tells the *real* story of a school and **captures the voices of children, parents and employees**.

A new system must recognise the importance of the breadth of education on offer. We also need to incentivise inclusion as, currently, accountability systems often penalise those schools with high numbers of children with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The system also needs to recognise the achievements of pupils who do not always show up positively in exam league tables or who arrive in school with a more challenging journey ahead of them, for example refugees or looked-after children. In this strategy, we have highlighted the value that we put on children and young people’s health and wellbeing. Schools’ contribution to this should be recognised and **an ethical, principled stance by schools should be incentivised by the accountability framework.**

We commissioned research into models of school report cards in this country and globally and are developing a model with Camden headteachers, governors and parents. The intention is to develop this model further with the intention of running a pilot through the *Think, Test and Learn* initiative.

Goals	Initiatives 2022/24
<p>A good, local school place available for every Camden child</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness across the system of the benefits of collaboration for deepening learning and achievement and for economies of scale • Include a discussion on future planning for collaboration on the agenda of every school’s annual Standards Meeting • Organise training and scenario-planning workshops for headteachers and governors to develop thinking and planning • Ensure schools with potential viability issues are supported to produce an action plan, in the context of Camden’s School Places Plan, that considers a range of collaborative arrangements, including federating • Establish a task group, involving school leaders and parents across both the primary and secondary sectors, to consider ways of increasing the percentage of children transferring to Camden secondary schools at 11
<p>Every child a reader by 7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit the evidence both from this country and internationally about effective approaches to the teaching of reading but individual school context is all important, so our detailed focus will be on support for and monitoring of implementation within schools • Organise a Camden campaign to encourage a love of reading and a community of readers • Build on success in reading with a major initiative to ensure Camden children can speak and write with clarity and confidence by 11

<p>Knowledgeable and skilled leaders and teachers who love working and learning in Camden</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to embed a culture of school-led improvement • Develop a distinctive and structured Camden offer of high-quality professional learning opportunities bespoke to individual schools and across schools, supporting the delivery of this strategy • Ensure Camden leaders are well supported and developed • Support, and initiate, a range of collaborations across schools to develop the quality of teaching and increase its impact on learning • Make sure that Camden Learning’s work with schools is grounded in research and evidence informed practice, through close monitoring of the work of the Education Endowment Foundation, partnerships with a research school and with local universities, and through creating opportunities to develop teachers’ confidence in using evidence and research • Test new approaches to assessment using teacher research to support the Rethinking Assessment movement • Develop a sustainable model that enables schools to support staff wellbeing
<p>An inclusive, inspiring, creative and horizon-broadening curriculum in all our schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give active support to schools in developing an inclusive, inspiring, creative and horizon-broadening curriculum, in line with our definition of the purposes of education • Share the work underway in some Camden schools who use the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals to inspire others about their potential for transformational change • Share schools’ practice in tackling climate change to encourage curriculum development and student agency • Establish an initiative for students to work more creatively beyond their school walls by creating experiential opportunities to learn about the world of work or social action, including volunteering • Provide opportunities for schools to share and develop their PSHE curriculum ensuring pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to manage their lives, now and in the future • Explore the possibility of a research project on creativity in schools with an academic partner
<p>Harnessing technology to improve learning, schools and our local system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop skills, confidence and the possibilities of digital technology as an enabler of learning as well as a tool to reduce staff workload and effect cost savings, through drawing on support from nationally accredited expertise in our schools and the Camden Learning Centre(CLC), as well as the findings from national research • Reduce the digital divide by focusing resources on those most in need • Develop Camden’s potential for children learning together across schools, localities and even countries, stimulating interest through <i>Think, Test and Learn</i> initiatives

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Camden's connections with tech industries through the STEAM programme to support learning, develop career opportunities and stimulate innovation • Use technology to help break down the barriers to learning, through stimulating thinking and action about more imaginative models of inclusion
<p>Successful transition between phases and settings for every child</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Camden Learning's Recovery and Renewal Plan is responsive and well-targeted to help schools support their pupils' transition out of the pandemic • Improve transition into schools, between phases and settings, beginning with a focused and well-researched initiative on primary to secondary • Improve support for pupils admitted in-year or in-phase using the <i>Think, Test, Learn</i> initiative • Integrate the Transition to Adulthood initiative into the 16+ curriculum to support students' health and wellbeing as they transition to further or higher education, training or work
<p>Children's health and well-being are supported through the ethos, curriculum and practices of school life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build managing health and wellbeing, especially mental health, into education recovery from Covid through joint working across health and education, building on our trauma informed work • Continue to provide and further develop mental and healthy lifestyle improvement programmes including targeted interventions, for pupils in most need • Support teachers with pedagogical strategies to manage pupils' learning behaviour within the classroom which recognise impact on wellbeing and mental health • Develop approaches to food in school which link up with boroughwide work on food poverty and health • Strengthen pupils' involvement in the development and provision of health and wellbeing approaches and activities in schools and locally • Develop a wide range of opportunities within and outside of the curriculum that inspire children and young people to be physically active, including promoting active classrooms • Engage more schools in TIPiC and embed a trauma-informed approach to supporting children and young people's wellbeing • Engage more schools in completing a review of their whole school approach to mental health and prioritising identified actions • Use the pandemic as an opportunity to review the system-wide approach to improving school attendance, linking with the work underway on children's health, wellbeing and safety

**Ambitious,
inclusive
schools**

- Recruit and develop **headteachers as leaders of social justice** using the definition developed in Camden (see page 27)
- Increase the **diversity of governors** to better reflect the school population through targeted recruitment, training and development
- Extend the work of the **Anti-racism Learning Hub** to all schools so they can be stimulated to review their curriculum to foster equality, participation and respect
- Establish an **initiative to accelerate Black, Asian and minority ethnic teachers' leadership progression** in schools and keep under tight review
- Support schools through Camden Learning to **review their PSHE curriculum**, particularly as it relates to healthy relationships and sex education, learning from the national response to disclosure on the 'Everyone's Invited' website and addressing issues such as gender based violence and transitioning
- Produce a **research report** capturing the work of schools in Camden accredited with the **UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award**, in particular the impact of this initiative on:
 - attainment and attendance
 - behaviour and well-being
 - reduction in prejudice and discriminatory attitudes
 - improved teacher recruitment and retention
- Develop a **new SEND strategy for 2022-2027** which focuses on:
 - **Making our local provision the right provision** in a coherent, connected, consistent system, including increased Additionally Resourced Provision in the secondary phase
 - **Building knowledge, expertise and capacity** right across the system to meet increasing need (e.g. autism)
 - **Identifying early and acting early** to support children and their parents
 - Developing a revised funding mechanism, **putting financial resources where they are most needed** in a fair and transparent way and increasing resources in mainstream schools
- Support all children with SEND who have an allocated social worker through the Virtual School to support post pandemic catch up

**Opportunity
Centres to
facilitate
learning
beyond the
school day**

- Establish, in collaboration with schools and using *Test and Learn*, a network of **Opportunity Centres** operating at evenings, weekends and holidays to provide:
- **Access for secondary age students to learning**, targeted at those who most need it but with wide access
 - **Access to technology**, digital and AI learning
 - **Small group tutoring**, especially for those who need it most
 - **Access to good information, advice and guidance**
 - **Enrichment activities** to incentivise attendance and develop personal passions

**A Camden
accountability
framework
which captures
the real story
of the school**

Trial a 'Camden School Report Card' as a **new style accountability system for schools** which:

- Recognises the value of **the breadth of the education children experience**
- **Incentivises rather than disincentivises inclusion**, recognising schools' achievements with pupils who do not show up well on exam league tables or who arrive in school late or with a more challenging journey ahead of them
- Recognises success in **improving children and young people's health and wellbeing**
- Takes into account **the views of young people, parents and teachers**
- Understands the importance of **young people's contribution to the community** and opportunities to demonstrate leadership

Flourishing lives

By 2030, all young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, will move into adulthood as confident lifelong learners, able to relate well to others, drive change for social good and making progress towards fulfilling lives in work, training or education

Where are we now?

There are **five major priorities for development**:

- ① **Building a generation of changemakers who will work with impact in their communities**
- ② **A post 16 education system that benefits all students**
- ③ **Greater access for young people to education, work, and opportunity**
- ④ **Better information, advice, and guidance to support learning and job choices which lead to economic opportunity**
- ⑤ **A Camden 'Life Futures Plan' for every young person at 16+**

The debate about the purposes of education recognised the value of academic attainment but it also emphasised experience, quality, inclusion, and active citizenship. These all underline **the importance of relationships and developing the skills of collaboration**. In Camden over the last few years, our young people have spoken loudly to the wider community and those in power, highlighting urgent priorities for change, for example the climate emergency, Me Too, Everyone's Invited and on Black Lives Matter. **This spirit of youth activism is one of our great strengths** and the strategy will build on this.

Torriano and Brecknock Primary Schools

Torriano and Brecknock Primary schools have developed work to ensure that their children are change makers in their community whilst, preparing them better for life and learning. They describe the centrality of place and how the power of partnership underpins their ambitions - securing access and opportunity and driving community change. Young people articulated that, following social seclusion, they wanted healthy, sustainable environments. The two schools, who are in an improvement partnership where Torriano is supporting Brecknock, have set about 'greening the grey' of their community. Through working with Camden STEAM, they have developed a focus on careers education, raising aspirations through curriculum and partnership with employers, who are focused on carbon efficiency, health and wellbeing. This project evaluated the potential for community sustainable power generation and aimed to 're-wild' the school inside and out. On the journey staff, students and parents have learnt skills in technology for good and tackled immediate issues such as air pollution. Community voice has been at the heart of this – utilising child agency and parental activism to work with Camden to redesign pavements, traffic systems and creating greener environments.

A key part of this new strategy will therefore be to explore **how schools can think and operate creatively beyond their walls**, better equipping and empowering young people to become socially responsible change-makers, with ideas and impact in their local communities²⁴. Camden STEAM is supporting schools to work in this way, but we need other initiatives too.

Camden STEAM

Camden is home to world-leading organisations in the tech, scientific and creative industries. Our STEAM programme ensures that these are not just places young people walk past on their way to school, but places where they gain inspiration and opportunity. Camden STEAM builds strong relationships between Camden schools and the many employers signed up to the STEAM Pledge, ranging from Google, Facebook and the Francis Crick Institute to Ted Baker, UCL and Central Saint Martins. Employers develop bespoke career activities for Camden's young people including summer business challenges, mentoring, and virtual work experience. The STEAM Hub brings teachers and employers together to co-design curriculum projects rooted in local challenges – for example, a project to reimagine a local high street, working with the engineers, architects and artists involved in the real project. This embeds authentic industry expertise in the curriculum and provides a meaningful way for young people to have a voice in shaping their local area.

The **community should function too as a source of practical support for young people**. As part of our implementation of this strategy, we want to encourage all parts of the Camden community to offer **experiential opportunities** to learn about the world of work or social action, including volunteering and we anticipate *Think, Test, Learn* initiatives in this area.

One concern voiced by many in the development of this strategy has been that the **education system is not keeping pace with the changes in our world**. The pandemic has shown how quickly whole industries can change. In a net zero carbon world, workers will need to be more skilled and with higher levels of qualification²⁵. An estimated 3.2m workers in the UK will need to increase their skill level or retrain in a new qualification to meet the government's commitment to decarbonise the economy in 2050. This is just one change of many in our world, showing that not only do our young people need the skills that employers want now, but they also need the ability to be lifelong, agile learners. They will need constantly to develop and reskill, able to have a fulfilling life in an uncertain, competitive and fast-changing world. These skills and qualities are developed through their entire school career but particularly in 16 plus education where young people are preparing to go to university, training or work.

In Camden, we have **unparalleled work opportunities** in the private and the public sectors, such as in health and within our world-leading local hospitals. We know that our education is best when it is connected to these. For example, through STEAM, teachers and employers have collaborated on projects ranging from architects working with Early Years pupils to design an eco-city for the future, to a Facebook mentoring and leadership development programme for sixth form girls. We know many parts of our public services, local employers and higher education providers are keen to bring their assets and expertise to bear in support of young people in Camden and we will harness their support in implementing this strategy.

²⁴ UNODC (2019) [Empowering students for just societies: a new resource for teachers](#)

²⁵ Ted Christie-Miller Getting to Zero -A practical policy commission to deliver decarbonisation in the UK – For Onward <https://www.ukonward.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Net-Zero-.pdf>

STEAM Hub Curriculum projects

The STEAM programme developed a series of experiential learning projects focused on local change (e.g., homelessness, designing a new high street) and recent initiative all have a focus on young people shaping local change:

- “How can nature inspire the social and ecological evolution of the public realm in Euston?” (KS3 teachers with Lendlease, Arup, Soundings, Museum of London Archaeology and Central Saint Martins)
- “Renewal in the Drummond Street area for the benefit of local residents” (KS3 teachers with Lendlease, Euston Town Business Improvement District, ACME urban designers, Jan Kattein Architects and Central Saint Martins)
- “The Camden Highline: repurposing to connect people and their communities” (KS2 teachers with Camden Highline and Central Saint Martin’s)
- “Changemakers and the Ecocity” (EYFS/KS1 teachers with Bennetts Architects and Central Saint Martin’s)
- “Building connections and communities” (KS2 teachers with SCS Railways and Softwire and Central Saint Martins)

A key part of the development of this strategy is the **need to improve the quality, breadth and take-up of post-16 education** in Camden to meet the needs of every young person. We want them to leave education or training with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them succeed in work or further education and training. Currently, we fall far short of this ambition.

During the 2020/21 academic year, Camden Learning commissioned a post 16 review, that found our provision was variable, had significant gaps and course duplications, with some sixth forms too small to be viable and with inconsistencies, especially for the non-A level cohort. This leads to 27%, a figure slightly smaller than the national ‘forgotten third’, not having the basic qualifications in English or Maths or required skills to get on the employment ladder.

Too few Camden young people are accessing apprenticeships (currently 1% compared with 4% across England) and our participation numbers and outcomes in vocational and technical courses need to improve. The current Camden offer ranges across school sixth forms, including LaSWAP and Westminster Kingsway College (part of the large Capital City College Group). These all wrestle with unwieldy national frameworks, a challenging funding regime and a fragmented and increasingly competitive system which can too often pit institutions against each other. This works against our most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people who deserve a better offer as part of their post 16 education experience. We know there is more we should be doing to build a post 16 system that benefits all young people, including creating a more coherent offer. We are therefore establishing a more formal post 16 partnership to drive change.

The longer-term impact of the pandemic on employment in Camden is not yet clear but we know that young people are amongst the groups hardest hit. We have supported a range of employment and training opportunities, such as Google certificates to develop tech skills, or work experience opportunities stimulated by the government’s Kickstart scheme. But young people need far more support to access skills and opportunities, particularly if the Renewal Commission’s Mission that ‘*by 2025, every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure*’ is to be achieved. We believe young people need to have greater knowledge about existing initiatives, such as *Good Work Camden*. This programme supports more local people into ‘good’ work, but it is also driving longer-term reform of ways into work, such as the ‘hyperlocal’ initiative *Good Work Camden Job Hubs*, which provides a range of personalised services.

In developing this strategy, a common concern raised by young people, parents and employers is the extent, quality and objectivity of the **information, advice and guidance** (IAG) offered in secondary schools and beyond. Schools freely admit they cannot afford to buy in as much IAG as their students need and few can afford to employ their own specialists.

Careers at Netley Primary School

Some of our primary schools, such as Netley, have long understood the importance of children beginning to understand the world of work as early as possible. Netley Primary School runs an annual Careers Week as part of its Future You Festival, with the 'whole school question' for children, '*Who do I want to be?*' One such week focused on Gender Equality and Reducing Inequality. Children were inspired to think about a range of jobs traditionally associated with either men or women and move beyond stereotypical views. The children were able to host an exhibition and a series of talks presented by a panel of speakers from the business community to their peers, parents and friends. By working closely with its local community, the school has been able to encourage young minds to begin to think about their future, challenge ideas of a career, inform and broaden their understanding of different pathways and sustain this experience for its pupils.

There is good practice across secondary schools. For example, Maria Fidelis Catholic School, invests in an extensive careers programme. They link their curriculum to the world of work so students have the skills, knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions. They also use the rich resources on their Camden and London doorstep- a range of different organisations and employers -to provide encouragement to students and opportunities. UCL Academy has an initiative, *Big Ideas and Grand Challenges*, to develop students' independent research skills, so they can make good use of information and guidance.

The Gatsby Benchmarks have led to an improvement in career guidance programmes in the secondary sector but schools themselves told us they lacked current specialist knowledge and understanding, for example, about apprenticeships. The strategy will focus on ways in which IAG can be improved across Camden, drawing particularly on the stronger skills and confidence in using digital technology developed during the pandemic. **We want to develop a better understanding of the information people need and how a digital experience can help.**

We also want to work with schools and young people to devise and pilot a Camden **Life Futures Plan** for every young person at 16+. Such plans already exist for our children who are looked after and for those with EHCPs, but we think that all young people would benefit from a dialogue about their future plans which is recorded in a succinct and engaging way. The expectation is that each school would work with their students to help identify opportunities to help them progress. This collaborative planning process should provide inspiration, motivation and assistance with decision-making. We want to be sure that all young people, but particularly our most disadvantaged and vulnerable, benefit from the many opportunities that exist in Camden.

All the way through this strategy, we emphasise the value of place-based collaboration in putting young people first. Nowhere is this collaboration needed more than in the post 16 arena to deliver a more coherent framework which meets the full range of needs and secures progression for all: from those choosing to move into the world of work or training to those who progress to Oxbridge and Russell Group universities. It is crucial that we develop more informal and formal collaborations to improve provision, building on, for example, the success of the LaSWAP sixth form partnership between Acland Burghley, La Sainte Union, Parliament Hill and William Ellis Schools.

Goals	Initiatives 2022/3
<p>A generation of changemakers with impact in their communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with schools, employers and community and voluntary organisations to stimulate ways of designing experiential opportunities for young people’s engagement in work, social action or volunteering, through STEAM and <i>Think, Test and Learn</i> • Use research and local best practice to stimulate all schools to create opportunities for young people to work together on the concerns facing them and their communities • Collaborate with the Youth Council and local youth groups to run initiatives designed to make change happen by developing young people’s local leadership skills • Use Camden’s Climate Crisis Campaign as a focus for young people’s engagement and activism, including work on tackling air pollution and changing home to school travel
<p>A post 16 education system that benefits all students</p>	<p>Develop a post 16 action plan and strategy which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a new post 16 partnership to develop a coherent and more inclusive sixth form system for Camden • Uses the partnership to rationalise provision and improve the non-A level offer • Gives greater priority to developing technical and vocational education, including T Levels • Develops links with Oxbridge and Russell Group universities, exploring a co-ordinated ‘Flying High’ boroughwide scheme • Liaises effectively and urgently with Capital City College Group so that local FE provision is more closely aligned with the ambition set out in this strategy and better meets the changing needs of young people in Camden
<p>Greater access for young people to education, work and opportunity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link with employers, particularly through the STEAM initiative, to give young people work experience opportunities especially in local growth areas such as health and the digital, scientific and creative industries • Increase the number of apprenticeships for young people, not only by stimulating greater interest from local business and public services but also by increasing awareness and understanding of the opportunities with staff in schools and with young people and their families • Research the potential for establishing more innovative choice of pathways at 14-19 that would provide not only a balanced education but also greater exposure to the workplace and develop employability skills

<p>Better information, advice and guidance to support learning and job choices which lead to economic opportunity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share knowledge across the secondary sector of how some schools provide access to good information, advice and guidance at the right time • Develop greater awareness in primary schools of the world of work and support initiatives through <i>Think, Test and Learn</i> • Give every student in a Camden school the opportunity to have a mentor or support from a role model • Work with schools, and draw on the expertise of Camden’s Connexions and Careers Service, STEAM and digital technology, to design a strategy that draws on recent experiences of digital technology to provide more extensive and high quality IAG for individuals • Support young people to understand and have access to the career opportunities available in Camden’s thriving tech sector, and to develop the digital skills that will support a range of future careers
<p>A ‘Life Futures Plan’ by for every young person at 16+</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with schools, other providers and young people themselves to develop and pilot a format and process for developing a ‘Life Futures Plan’ for every young person at age 16.

How are we going to work together to implement this strategy?

This strategy is rooted in a strong moral purpose and sets out a clearly articulated model for improvement. This requires us to develop a culture of openness and trust which makes people feel that change is possible. Trust is also built on competence. We have to be good at implementation. This means we must listen hard, learn and adapt and we must ensure we have processes to help us do this.

The Council and Camden Learning will be accountable for ensuring the strategy is implemented and provide governance for this through an Education Strategy Board which will:

- meet at least termly
- engage with all key players to review and evaluate progress.
- produce an Annual Report of achievements and progress.

We will also design an interactive, creative and formative evaluation process. This process will involve both practitioners and users. On a regular basis, there will be an open meeting to shine a light on one of the Priorities set out within each of the three Ambitions. These 'spotlight' sessions will be designed to support and drive progress towards that priority and will:

- draw attention to the positive elements of implementation and impact
- always include practitioners and/or service users
- invite creative thinking about next steps.

While all the organisations involved in delivering this strategy have their own governance and decision-making processes, the process of developing this strategy has shown that to improve educational outcomes we have got to make a complex system work for our young people. Good relationships are central to this and are built over time.

Throughout this strategy, we've made the case for collaborative working. This involves sharing information transparently, working together to address challenges, taking collective decisions and holding each other to account. This is not easy. It requires many of us to take up leadership roles beyond our organisations which is difficult in these pressured times. This will at times require us to renegotiate power relationships and navigate the tensions of our different governance environments and statutory duties. But we start from a good place – of mutual trust, shared values and a shared commitment to Camden's children and young people.

Appendices

Appendix 1 The role of Camden Learning

Appendix 2 Glossary of terms

Appendix 3 About Camden – borough profile

Appendix 4 Children and their education in Camden – facts and figures

Appendix 5 Camden’s labour market – impact of the pandemic

Appendix 1 - Camden Learning

Camden Learning is a school-led partnership, established as an independent company in 2017. It is a joint enterprise between Camden schools and the Council set up for the benefit of local children and local schools. All Camden schools have chosen to belong to the partnership, so members include academies and hospital schools as well as Church schools, voluntary controlled, foundation and community schools. They are committed to working together for the good of all Camden children.

Camden Council played a leading role in establishing Camden Learning. It saw the partnership as a good way of addressing local issues of quality and equity which could not easily be tackled by autonomous schools working alone. The Council commissions Camden Learning to deliver a range of services and outcomes on its behalf and holds it to account for successful delivery through a formal contract. The company is overseen by a board of directors from schools, the community, higher education and the council.

Schools lead and drive Camden Learning but they do so in a strong spirit of partnership and active collaboration. Relationships are central to the success of the partnership. Through Camden Learning, schools have taken responsibility for their own collective performance, supporting each other and helping to improve outcomes for children and young people. This is not traditional top-down accountability but lateral, shared responsibility, rooted in local vision and professional networks.

At their best, local practitioners act not just as the deliverers of change but also as the professional creators of it. From this strong base, Camden Learning builds professional and social capital and so system capability and capacity. It does this by energising schools, motivating leaders and practitioners to work together and by developing ways of sharing knowledge across the system. This blend of democratic accountability with its focus on social good, as represented by the Council, and the professional and moral accountabilities of schools underpins the work of Camden Learning and gives powerful legitimacy to its work. This has proved a major force in the design of the new strategy and will be even more important in driving its successful implementation.

To support the effective implementation of the strategy, Camden Learning will:

- provide bespoke hands-on support, including challenge, to schools
- share and integrate knowledge about effective practice, both within and beyond Camden, across schools and other services
- stimulate and pump-prime system development
- inject energy and encourage motivation locally to build professional capital to support learning and achievement
- broker connections across schools, services and the community keeping the system under review, providing regular progress reports to the Council and community
- communicate and celebrate success.

Appendix 2 Glossary of Terms

ARP	Additionally resourced provision for children with special educational needs which is part of a mainstream school
Attainment 8	Accountability measure introduced in 2016. This calculates how well each pupil did across 4 elements (or 'buckets'): English – double weighted and best result of English Language or English Literature; Mathematics – double-weighted; English Baccalaureate (EBacc) – three EBacc GCSEs (best results in science, humanities (history / geography) and languages); and Other – best results in 3 other subjects.
Brexit	British Exit from the European Union: the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union
CL	Camden Learning: is the education partnership created for the benefit of children and schools. It enables local schools, which are members of Camden Learning , to work together for the good of their pupils – sharing expertise in teaching and learning to drive improvement across the borough.
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CLC	Camden Learning Centre: a centre which supports schools to deliver the computing curriculum
DfE	Department for Education: a department of the UK Government responsible for child protection, education (compulsory, further and higher education), apprenticeships and wider skills in England
DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant: is a ring-fenced grant of which the majority is used to fund individual school budgets in maintained schools, academies and free schools
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions: government department responsible for employment and benefits
EBacc	English Baccalaureate: a set of subjects designated by central government as giving a collection of qualifications at GCSE which gives young people wide and flexible career choices. In 2021 this is English language and literature, maths, the sciences, geography or history, a language
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan: a document setting out the education, health and social care needs of a child or young person for whom extra support is needed in school
EAL	English as an additional language
ESOL	English as a second or other language
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EU	European Union: an economic and political partnership between 27 countries now excluding the UK following its departure. The EU is the most recent form of European integration, within which the single market allows goods, capital, services and people to move freely across the national borders of the member states.
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education: main qualification at year 11 (age 16)
GLD	Good level of development: as assessed at the end of early years foundation stage
IAG	Information, advice and guidance: to assist in career, training and academic choices and pathways
IT	Information technology
KS1	Key Stage 1: school years 1 and 2 (infants) (ages 5 to 7)
KS2	Key Stage 2: school years 3 to 6 (juniors) (ages 8 to 11)
KS3	Key Stage 3: school years 7 to 9 (ages 12 to 14)
KS4	Key Stage 4: school years 10 to 11 (ages 15 and 16)
KS5	Key Stage 5: school years 12 and 13 (sixth form)
LaSWAP	LaSWAP is a unique sixth form consortium comprising four small but closely linked sixth forms that all work together to create a distinctive 'campus' feel. Schools include: La Sainte Union , William Ellis , Acland Burghley , and Parliament Hill .
LGBTQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning
NEET	Not in employment, education or training post 16
NHS	National Health Service: Government-funded medical and health care services that everyone living in the UK can use without being asked to pay the full cost of the service.
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development: intergovernmental economic organisation with 38 member countries founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade

OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Inspects services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. It also inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.
ONS	Office for National Statistics: the UK's largest independent producer of official statistics, and the recognised national statistical institute of the UK. It is responsible for collecting and publishing statistics related to the economy, population and society at national, regional, and local levels.
PCPS	Parent and Child Psychological Support Programme is a clinical-based programme to support healthy growth and development of infants with particular focus on parent-child interactions, bonding, attachment and infant social and emotional development, based on a model developed in Spain
PRU	Pupil referral unit: provision for children excluded from mainstream school or in need of specialist provision because unable to attend school
PVI	Private, voluntary or independent early years setting
SEMH	Social, emotional and mental health: a designation for a type of special educational needs setting or an individual young person's needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability: terminology used in legislation and in particular the SEND Code of Practice
STEAM	Science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics: Camden's partnership with local employers
UCL	University College London is a public research university in London.
UK	United Kingdom: comprising four nations of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund: An international charity

Appendix 3 – About Camden – Borough Profile

Camden has a rich history, and is renowned for its vibrant cultural scene, impressive educational sector and flourishing start-up community. But behind these well-known features of our community, Camden is home to a diverse population facing a variety of challenges.

Camden's Population

Comprising almost 22 square kilometres in the heart of London, Camden is a borough of diversity and contrasts. The latest estimate of Camden's resident population is 270,000 at mid-2019. Camden is only 1.4% of Greater London by area, but it is the fifth highest borough for population density and home to 7.1% of London's employment (compared to 3% of London's population).

Camden's population changes regularly – with the 6th largest population churn in the UK. Between mid-2018 and mid-2019, ONS estimates a total migration inflow to Camden of 40,700 people and a total outflow of 34,200 people. The majority of both those moving in and out of the borough are moving within the UK, and a significant number of those moving in and out are students. Camden is home to 11 higher education institutions and the largest student population in London, with more than 27,600 higher education students living in Camden: 59% are women and 57% are from overseas. This large student population also contributes to the age distribution of Camden's population, as is typical of a metropolitan, university city, with 35% of Camden's residents aged under 30, and 65% under 45. According to the 2011 census*, 34% of Camden residents were from black or minority ethnic groups, and a further 22% non-British white residents including Irish and others originating from other English-speaking countries, the EU and Eastern Europe. After English, the most commonly spoken languages were Bengali (13%), French (8%), Spanish (6%), Italian and Somali (5%), German, Arabic, Portuguese and Polish (4%).

Housing, income and employment

According to the 2011 census, 32% of Camden's households live in private rented accommodation. More households own their home outright (17%) than own with a mortgage or loan (15%). 85% of households live in purpose-built or converted flats, compared to 15% living in houses. And households often have less space in their homes compared to the rest of the UK – 19% of households in 2011 had more than 1.5 persons per bedroom, ranking 12th highest amongst local authorities in England and Wales.

Estimated equivalised median household income in Camden in 2019 was £36,053. There are significant differences across the borough – ranging from a median household income in St Pancras and Somers Town of £24,674 compared to £47,748 in Hampstead Town. 19% of households in Camden have a median household income of less than £20,000 a year. This income variance is in part contributed to by the inequality some residents of Camden find in accessing the labour market. In 2019, 61% of disabled Camden residents were in work – compared to 54% in London. Compared to non-disabled people, this is an employment gap of 12%. As of 2019, Camden had a comparatively small gender employment gap, 5% compared to the London average of 11%. In contrast, Camden has a concerningly high ethnicity employment gap – with 51% of non-white Camden residents in work, 30% lower than white Camden residents. This employment gap is felt particularly acutely by black residents, who are half as likely to be in employment than white residents.

Appendix 4 – Children and their education in Camden – October 2020



Our children

- 22,053 children in schools
- 2,471 children in nursery class/childminder settings
- 65% of children and young people are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.
- 45% of pupils learn English as an additional language
- 42% of all pupils are eligible for free school meals (October 2020)
- 44% of pupils in Camden are eligible for the pupil premium grant
- 43% of all children in Camden live in poverty once housing costs are accounted for



Our provision

- 40 primary schools, including 2 free schools and 1 academy
- 10 secondary schools, including 1 academy
- 3 special schools
- 3 pupil referral units
- 2 hospital schools
(The Children's Hospital School [Gt. Ormond St. and UCH] and Royal Free Hospital)



Our teachers

- 1,885 teachers
- 1,265 teaching assistants, professional and support staff
- Plus 113 newly qualified teachers



Our governors

- 739 governors in post
 - 147 of those are parent governors

Primary attainment in 2019²⁶

Early Years

- **73% of pupils achieved a 'good' level of development** in Camden settings (including schools and PVI sectors). This **above the national average (72%)**

Key stage 1

- **77% of children reaching their expected standard in reading** which is above the national average (75%)
- **70% of children reaching their expected standard in writing** which is above the national average (69%)
- **75% of children reaching their expected standard in mathematics**, slightly below the national average (76%)

Key stage 2

- **73% of pupils achieved the expected combined standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics**, which was well above the national average (65%)
- **80% of children reached their expected standard in reading**, well above the national average of 73%
- **82% of children reached their expected standard in writing** which above the national average of 78%.
- **86% of children reached their expected standard of mathematics** which is well above the national average of 79%.
- **Camden was ranked joint 9th nationally** out of 151 local authorities for the combined measure at the expected standard and joint 8th nationally at the greater depth (Camden at 16%, and compared to national average of 11%).

²⁶ As part of steps taken to fight the spread of coronavirus, the government announced that all exams due to take place in schools and colleges in England in summer 2020 and 2021 were cancelled and that it would not publish any school or college level education performance data based on tests, assessments or exams for 2020.

The DfE did not publish (and did not collect in) any national, regional, local or constituency statistics for any primary school assessments for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic year. This includes:

- Early years foundation stage profile
- Phonics (though a subsequent collection happened in Autumn 2020)
- Key stage 1
- Key stage 2

Secondary attainment 2020

Key Stage 4

GCSEs

Indicator	Pupil group	Camden	National
Attainment 8	All	52.1	50.2
	Disadvantaged	46.5	40.2
	Non-disadv.	58.2	53.7
GCSE Maths and English Standard Pass (Grade 9-4)	All	73	71
	Disadvantaged	65	53
	Non-disadv.	82	78
GCSE Maths and English Strong Pass (Grade 9-5)	All	54	50
	Disadvantaged	42	30
	Non-disadv.	66	57
English Baccalaureate: Entered for all components	All	57	40
Achieved all components at grades 9-4	All	41	30
Achieved all components at grades 9-5	All	29	21

Post 16 – Key stage 4 destinations

- 90% of the 2017/18 KS4 cohort went on to **sustained education destinations** in 2018/19, which is 3% higher than national.
- 62% of the cohort went on to a **school sixth form**, which is much higher than the national averages (due to the nature of provision in Camden, with all secondary schools having a sixth form).
- 6% **did not sustain** their destinations, which is more than national averages.
- 4.8% of 16-17 year olds in Camden were **not in education, employment or training (NEET) or their activity was not known** (November 2020). This is lower than national averages (8.2% nationally).

Key Stage 5 – Average Point Score (A-Levels)

The **average points per entry** of pupils in Camden school sixth forms was 36.4 for all Level 3 qualifications and 38.8 for A- levels only, which remains close to national averages

Post 16 - Key stage 5 destinations

- 80% of school students **went onto university over a two-year window** having taken A levels in 2015/16 and 2016/17 (taking into account students taking gap years and deferring their entry to higher education) which is much higher than the national average. (2016/17)
- 54% of Level 3 school students **went onto Higher Education straight after finishing their A Levels**, which is lower than national averages(2017/18)
- 81% of students **sustained an education or employment destination**, which is lower than national averages, but does not take account of the relatively high number of deferred entries to HE from Camden schools. (2017/18)
- Less than 2% of Camden's young people are **starting Apprenticeships at Level 3 between 16 and 18**, compared to 4 - 6% nationally.

Appendix 5 – Camden’s Labour Market – impact of the pandemic

In London:

- The number of people claiming unemployment benefits in London rose sharply between January and May 2020, increasing by 2.5 times.
- 30 per cent of London jobs have been furloughed at some point since the introduction of the scheme.
- The number of people claiming benefits has more than doubled. The number of people on Universal Credit is rising faster in Camden than Central London and Great Britain with an increase of 8,289 people on Universal Credit since the crisis.
- This includes a rise of 1,100 people who are working but have a low income which requires them to look for new work or increase their hours/pay.

In Camden:

- One third of 18 to 24-year-old employees (excluding students) lost jobs or were furloughed, compared to one in six 25 to 49-year olds since the start of the pandemic
 - 35% of non-full-time student 18 to 24-year-old employees are earning less than they did prior to the outbreak, compared to 23% of 25- to 49-year-olds
 - In Camden, DWP figures confirm that approximately 1,600 residents aged 16 to 24 are currently in receipt of Universal Credit, 130 of which are care leavers.
 - As at June 2020, 25,400 Camden based employees had been furloughed.
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