



## **Camden's Education Strategy to 2030**

### **Executive Summary**



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How are we going to  
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this strategy?

# Camden's Education Strategy to 2030

## Our ambitions for 2030

### An excellent school experience

- 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
- 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 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

### A fair start

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

### Flourishing lives

- Building a generation of changemakers who will work 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 Camden 'Life Futures Plan' for every young person at 16+

## Equity and Excellence

## Our foundations for success



### A strong place-based system:

that understands and reflects local demographics, histories and values.



### An ambitious inclusive system:

that breaks down the barriers to learning by calling out and addressing inequalities; 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:

where we use collaboration to motivate, learn and achieve better, taking collective responsibility for all our children, working together in partnerships, including federations, so they are served well.



### Think, test and learn:

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

We want all our young people to leave Camden schools as: ambitious, knowledgeable, intellectually curious; good communicators and collaborators; healthy individuals; creative and enterprising; socially and morally responsible changemakers.

# A watershed moment...

This is a unique moment – a once in a generation opportunity to refresh our ambitions for our education system in Camden. The pandemic, unprecedented in its nature and scale, has touched the lives of every child and every family and has laid bare huge inequalities and widening achievement gaps.

Yet, the pandemic has also highlighted the deeper strengths of the borough. Communities have come together to look after young and old; schools have been a bedrock of support to families in need; and public sector partners have proved the value of decades of collaborative working.

In Camden the crises created by the pandemic have beset an education system already under pressure. We are at the eye of the storm of London's fluctuating demographics with far fewer primary aged children now than 10 years ago. This creates additional financial uncertainty for schools, which have already suffered a 20% reduction in budgets over the last ten years.

The frameworks and policies that have delivered improvements for the previous generation of children, will not take us to where we need to be now. As part of this strategy, we have therefore reflected on the fundamental question of what education is for. What sort of education will 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 know that 'getting back to normal' is not enough – we need to use this opportunity to build back stronger.

“

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# The purposes of education

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 both individuals and society. But our definition of the purposes of education goes wider than this. Education can shape the values of future generations to create a fairer, more inclusive and sustainable society. Whether it's through combatting racial inequality, addressing climate

change, or campaigning for LGBTQ rights, the spirit of activism is alive in our schools, demanding a safer world, equal respect, participation, dignity and freedom from oppression. The diversity of our school population represents a new and very promising future where difference is a source of strength and a spur to creativity.

## We want all young people to leave Camden schools as:

- **Ambitious, knowledgeable and intellectually curious critical thinkers**, 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, stay safe, lead fulfilling lives and have positive relationships
- **Creative and enterprising**, able to think creatively and 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.

Achieving this vision demands a curriculum that is inclusive, inspiring, creative and horizon-broadening. As part of this, we have developed the Camden entitlement pledge. We see enrichment experiences as the right for every child, not just those whose families can afford it.

## Camden enrichment pledge: curriculum plus for all

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 physical and outdoor activities, including sports, 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



# Our foundations for success

Our vision for the future is based on the twin pillars of **equity and excellence**. Our schools do not have to choose between achieving excellence or supporting children who start from a position of disadvantage.

**A system which is better for disadvantaged children is better for everyone.** To achieve this vision, we need foundations on which to build our work together. These are:



## A strong place-based system:

A system that understands and reflects local demographics, histories and values.

We see schools as part of the glue that holds communities together. Schools have a leadership role in building a more place-based approach, requiring them, and particularly the young people within them, to think holistically as they care for their 'common home' and the communities within it. Over the last few years, the Council has invested in developing a place-based, school-led partnership: Camden Learning. The partnership has the potential to tackle local issues of quality and equity more effectively than individual schools working alone. In joining Camden Learning, schools recognise an overriding commitment to place and community. It means something to be a Camden school, a Camden teacher, a Camden pupil.



## 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.

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 discrimination. The pandemic has exposed inequities in our education system and underlined the fragility of children struggling with multiple disadvantages, for example refugees. Supporting these children and their families is not an optional extra. It is an investment in social justice and creating a fairer society that benefits all. We also recognise inequalities cannot be tackled without addressing racism and education should be at the forefront of this. Education is also key to improving life for our children looked after by the local authority. Finally, addressing inequalities means better supporting the increasing number of Camden children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), wherever possible in their local school, or within the Camden family of schools.



## 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.

Collaboration within, across and beyond schools is an essential element of change and is fundamental to the success of this strategy. Camden Learning brings all schools together in a way that strengthens the system while also maintaining the distinct and positive identity of each school. 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 growing challenges of falling rolls and squeezed finances, there is a pressing need for our schools to consider a range of collaborative arrangements, including federating, to ensure continued viability.



## 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.

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.

# Our ambitions for 2030

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



## A Fair Start

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



## 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. They will have 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.



## 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.





# A Fair Start

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 affect children's learning and, ultimately, their life chances. At the end of 2019, Camden Council invested in services to support a child's first 1001 days to strengthen the offer for all parents during pregnancy and in their child's first two years and provide additional, innovative opportunities to identify families needing support.

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

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 to good speech and language development and stronger social and emotional development – the foundations for education success. We recognise the critical importance of identifying SEND early and putting good support in place.

Through this strategy we will:

- Focus on building the **common skillset of the early years workforce** across all settings
- Further develop our multi-agency approach to intervening early to **identify and support children's speech and language development**
- Continue to be at the forefront of innovation in using **psychological support to strengthen the emotional and social development** between parent and child
- Strengthen our locality based **early years partnerships** across schools, childminders and nurseries to integrate support for children and families across the age ranges.

## 2 Rooting schools at the heart of their communities

The pandemic shone a spotlight on the critical role schools play 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.

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 offer of services from Camden Council and its partners.

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
- Bring together a range of services in a **team around schools**, empowering and establishing the school as a **gateway to support, help and guidance**
- **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.

## 3 Parents as prime partners in their children's learning

The pandemic has transformed **parents' relationships with school**, not least through more sophisticated systems of online communication and learning. We recognise that **when parents are involved in their education, children do better on a wide range of measures**. Parents of children with SEND are particularly important partners in their children's learning. The pandemic has opened a window for parents into teaching and learning which needs to be kept open.

Building on the current family learning programme, we will:

- Work with parents and schools to develop a structured programme of **opportunities for parents to know more about how best to support their children's learning**
- Support parents to develop a **good home learning environment** from the early years onwards
- Ensure **every parent has the opportunity to acquire basic digital skills**, as well access to a device and connectivity so they can use them.





# An Excellent School Experience

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. We know the pandemic has widened the poverty gap so now is the time to gear our education system to address this.

To narrow the gap, alongside a **relentless focus on improving academic performance**, we also need a **stronger approach to the development of broader skills** that are prized by employers – creativity, originality, team-working, problem-solving and the ability to learn. The world of work is changing before our eyes – while we cannot be certain exactly what these 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.

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.

Camden schools have welcomed the vision, values and aspirations of this strategy which is built on much that is innovative and excellent in our current system. Implementation rests on the impressive calibre of leadership in our schools and the quality of practice. Schools are at different points in their development needs and related planning and there is no expectation that schools will need to engage actively with all ten priorities.

## 1 A good, local school place available for every Camden child

We cannot ensure children and young people have an excellent school experience unless our schools are financially secure. In the face of falling pupil numbers, reducing school budgets and a high proportion of 11-year-olds who do not transfer from our primary schools into our secondary schools, we will need to think creatively and proactively about how we ensure that a good, and viable, school place is available for every child. Specifically, schools will need to consider a range of strategic, collaborative arrangements, including federating.

To support this, we will:

- Develop **training for school governors and headteachers on promoting collaboration**, proactive scenario planning and new organisational models
- Expand the scope of Camden Learning's annual standards' meetings with schools to address **future planning for collaboration**
- Expect all schools to produce **an action plan** addressing viability and collaboration opportunities, **rooted in Camden's School Places Plan** agreed by the Council.

## 2 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. 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. The strategy therefore identifies an ambitious target – that **every child should be a reader by the age of 7**.

We will:

- **Revisit the evidence** both from this country and internationally **about effective approaches to the teaching of reading**, with a focus on **support for and monitoring of implementation** within schools
- Organise a **Camden campaign** to encourage a **love of reading and a community of readers** involving a broad range of partners, for example business as well as libraries
- Build on success in reading with a major initiative to ensure Camden children can **speak and write with clarity and confidence by 11**.

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

We will not achieve our ambitions without 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.** We know too that support staff play a key part in helping schools and teachers thrive.

We want all staff 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 means having policies, practices and provision in place that **support their mental health and wellbeing.**

Research shows 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 and have enjoyed the creativity of working collaboratively to establish better practice, building social and professional capital.

We will build on this by:

- Supporting, and initiating, a range of collaborations within and across schools to **develop the quality of teaching and increase its impact on learning**
- Making sure that Camden Learning's work with schools is grounded in **research and evidence informed practice**
- **Testing new approaches to assessment** using teacher research to support the Rethinking Assessment movement
- Developing a sustainable **model that enables schools to support staff wellbeing.**

“ We want all staff working in our schools to enjoy their jobs. ”

### 4 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. Camden's **schools are a rich curricular resource for each other** with the practice in some schools attracting national attention. 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 and building digital literacy to enrich the curriculum. We also need to ensure there is sufficient flexibility to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

Going forward we will also:

- 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 schools' practice, for example, in using the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals** and **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
- Explore the possibility of a research project on **creativity in schools** with an academic partner.

### 5 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. However, the pandemic also highlighted opportunities. We know that teachers' skills and confidence in planning and providing remote learning, including the use of digital technology, grew. Many schools see **the possibilities of digital technology as an enabler of learning, both complementing and enriching teaching.** 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.

Harnessing technology in future will involve:

- Developing **Camden's potential for children learning together across schools, localities and even countries**
- Using Camden's **connections with tech industries** to support learning, develop career opportunities and stimulate innovation
- Using technology to help break down the barriers to learning, through stimulating thinking and action about **more imaginative models of inclusion.**

### 6 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. 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.

We are committed to:

- Improving **transition into schools, between phases and settings**, beginning with a focused and well-researched initiative on primary to secondary
- **Improving support for pupils admitted in-year or in-phase**
- **Integrating 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.



## 7 Children's health and wellbeing 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. After months at home, many children have lost the habits and routines schools would have established. The poorest will often have experienced the pressures of increasing poverty and stress, with some seeing family members become ill or die. 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 through a comprehensive mental health support programme for schools and embedding Trauma Informed Practice. It forms part of our determination to avoid exclusions and improve attendance, given the links between mental health problems, behaviour difficulties and school refusal.

Going forwards we will:

- **Build the improvement of health and wellbeing, especially mental health, into education renewal** 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 which help them manage pupils' learning behaviour within the classroom and which recognise the relationship between behaviour and wellbeing and mental health.**

## 8 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 discrimination and racism into policy and practice. 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.

Inclusive education must be inclusive of everyone. In Camden, there are a range of ways in which we focus additional resources on those who are at **risk of exclusion and underachievement.**

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**, and we are convinced that, if we meet their needs effectively, this will enable the overall system to be more successful for all children.

Building an ambitious, inclusive system will include:

- Recruiting and developing **headteachers and governors as leaders of social justice**
- **Increasing the diversity of governors** to better reflect the school population
- Establishing an **initiative to accelerate Black, Asian and minority ethnic teachers' leadership progression** in schools and keep under tight review
- Developing the **Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum**, particularly as it relates to **healthy relationships and sex education**, and addressing important issues such as **gender-based violence** and **transitioning**
- Developing a new SEND strategy which focuses on **making our local provision the right provision** in a coherent, connected system, **building knowledge, expertise and capacity** to meet increasing need and **identifying early and acting early** to support children and their parents.

## 9 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 those who do not. 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.

“ We want to use the pandemic as a springboard to better learning. ”

In close collaboration with schools, we will:

- Develop a **school-led network of high technology learning venues** – “Opportunity Centres” – across the borough operating at evenings, weekends and holidays to provide access, in the first instance, **for secondary age students to learning and technology** (including digital learning programmes); **small group tutoring**; **good information, advice and guidance**; and **enrichment activities**
- Explore the potential of **Opportunity Centres as places parents can come** to use devices or Wi-Fi or to attend more formal learning programmes, including those which help them support their children's learning
- Consider when and how to **involve primary schools and their pupils in opportunity centres.**

## 10 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 want to **strengthen professional accountability** within and across schools. We need a system which tells the *real* story of a school and **captures the voices of children, parents and employees.**

Through this strategy we are therefore committed to **developing and trialling a 'Camden School Report Card'** for each school, as a new system 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 with a more challenging journey ahead of them, such as refugees
- 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

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.** In a net zero carbon world, for example, 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. Not only do our young people need the skills that employers want now; they need the ability to be **lifelong, agile learners.**

In Camden, we have **unparalleled work opportunities** in the private and the public sectors. 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. 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 to deliver a **more coherent post-16 framework** which meets the full range of needs and secures progression for all.

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

## 1 Building a generation of changemakers who will work with impact in their communities

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. **The community should function too as a source of practical support for young people.**

We commit to:

- Working 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 *Think, Test and Learn*
- Using research and local best practice, to stimulate schools and youth groups to create **opportunities for young people to work together on the concerns facing them and their communities**, developing young people's **local leadership skills**
- Using **Camden's Climate Crisis Campaign** as a focus for young people's engagement and activism.

## 2 A post 16 education system that benefits all students

The **need to improve the quality, breadth and take-up of post-16 education** in Camden is pressing. We want all young people 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.

Twenty seven percent of our young people fail to achieve at least a standard GCSE pass in English or Maths; too many lack the skills to get on the employment ladder; too few Camden young people are accessing apprenticeships; and our participation numbers and outcomes in vocational and technical courses need to improve.

To deliver the change we need to:

- Establish a **new post 16 partnership** to develop a **coherent and more inclusive sixth form system** for Camden, **rationalise provision and improve the non-A level offer**
- Give greater priority to **developing technical and vocational education, including T Levels**
- **Develop links with Oxbridge and Russell Group universities**, exploring a boroughwide **'Flying High'** scheme
- Liaise with Capital City College Group so that local **FE provision aligns with the ambitions of this strategy.**

### 3 Greater access for young people to education, work, and opportunity

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. But young people need far more support to access skills and opportunities, including greater knowledge about existing initiatives, such as *Good Work Camden*. This supports more local people into 'good' work, but it is also driving longer-term reform of ways into work.

Our plans include:

- **Linking with employers** to give young people **work experience** opportunities especially **in local growth areas such as health and the digital, scientific and creative industries**
- **Increasing the number of apprenticeships** for young people, stimulating greater interest from local business and public services and **increasing understanding of the opportunities** with staff in schools, young people and their families
- 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 the development of employability skills.

### 4 Better information, advice, and guidance to support learning and job choices which lead to economic opportunity

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

We will:

- Develop **greater awareness in primary schools of the world of work**
- Give **every student in a Camden school** the opportunity to **have a mentor** or **support from a role model**
- Work with schools, Camden's Connexions and Careers Service and STEAM to share what works in providing **high quality IAG** and how **digital technology** can be used to improve the offer.

### 5 A Camden 'Life Futures Plan' for every young person at 16+

Finally, we believe all young people would benefit from a dialogue about their future plans which is recorded in an engaging way. 'Life Futures Plans' already exist for children who are looked after and for those with Education, Health and Care Plans, but we will extend this commitment to all young people. 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.

To this end we will:

- 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.**

“ We want to be sure that all young people... benefit from the many opportunities that exist in Camden. ”



# 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. It articulates a vision for education supported by a set of common values and aspirations that have been strongly endorsed through the process of consultation.

Nevertheless, the implementation of a wide-ranging and ambitious strategy can appear daunting. It is important to recognise that many parts of the strategy are making explicit the excellent practice evident in some of our schools which we want to nurture, develop and extend across our educational community.

This strategy will form the basis of Camden Learning's new strategic action plan which will operationalise many of the activities underpinning the Ambitions for 2022-2024. However, the reach of the strategy goes beyond Camden Learning, so it will influence planning in other areas too. The Council and Camden Learning will be accountable for ensuring the strategy is implemented and will provide governance for this through an Education Strategy Board, chaired by the Chair of Camden Learning. We will design an interactive, creative and formative evaluation process, involving both practitioners and users.

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. This system encompasses both schools as autonomous institutions and the local authority with its overriding legal roles and responsibilities (for example, for providing sufficient school places and for SEND). 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. But we start from a good place – of mutual trust, shared values and a shared commitment to Camden's children and young people.

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Sharing information transparently, working together to address challenges, taking collective decisions and holding each other to account. ”





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