THE TRANSFORMATIONAL SHIFT IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IN LONDON 2003 TO 2013: THE CONTRIBUTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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Introduction

The paper explores the transformational shift in educational outcomes in London between 2003 and 2013. London's schools have improved rapidly over the past decade, with primary and secondary schools now out-performing the rest of the country, at Key Stages 2 and 4, respectively. Improvements in many London boroughs have been staggering. London is now almost unique among countries in the developed world to have its capital city outperforming the rest of the nation.

Focus of the enquiry

Many reasons have been put forward for the transformational shift. National education policy over the last decade has impacted London as much as anywhere; the investment in facilities, the growth of academies, changes to the national curriculum and testing, developments in teacher training, school accountability and the relationship between central and local government have all played some part in shaping the educational outcomes of London's schools and the impact of the Department for Education's London Challenge, which ran from 2003-10, cannot be underestimated. There is little doubt that the London Challenge was an important lever in raising standards; however, this paper argues that there are many other reasons behind London's success and it specifically explores the role of local authorities and their perspective on, and contribution to, London's educational success.

Research methods and/or mapping of the literature

The research will review the current literature on the reasons being put forward for London's success. The main research method will be a survey of London Local Authority education research and statistics officers and the collation of feedback from a round of focus groups to be held during a workshop, jointly organised by the London Education Research Network (LERN) and the Greater London Authority (GLA).

Analytical framework

The research will include a quantitative analysis of the survey responses and a qualitative narrative based on the views expressed by individual local authority staff in the focus groups.

Research findings

The research will show that there are many reasons behind the transformational shift in educational outcomes in London and that local authorities were an important part of that process of change and that they contributed to the success.