

This report came out in September 2015, and I printed it off to read about a year after it was published; and I am only now sitting down to read through it now, so it is now 25 months old. Working in high performing inner city schools it was of interest (although obviously not that much interest as I would have read it sooner!).

The report looks at evidence that London is an educational success story, but this success is not new and was present from the mid-1990s. The difference in the ethnic mix compared to other disadvantaged areas can explain only one-sixth of this increase. Looking at all factors the change is mainly attributable to gradual improvements in school quality rather than differences or changes in the effects of pupil and family characteristics.

The report sets some context relating to London; it is the 23rd largest city in the world; and 45% of Londoners come from a White-British background, compared to 80% across England and Wales. London is very different from the rest of the country in ways that could influence trends in educational performance.

There are also differences in the school provision in London compared to the rest of the country; due to the higher population density there are higher levels of choice and competition compared with other areas of the country. Teachers are younger and less experienced; there are higher levels of teacher pay, to cope with the higher cost of living, and there is relatively higher funding, to cope with the higher costs associated with London. However, a study quoted Greaves (2014) states that most of these details are longstanding.

The report then goes on to present what they call 'basic empirical facts':

Fact #1 - The performance of disadvantaged pupils in London in exams at age 16 has improved substantially, starting from the mid-1990s onwards.

Fact #2 - The characteristics of disadvantaged pupils in London are very different from those outside of London, and in ways that matter for pupil attainment.

Disadvantaged pupils in inner London are much less likely to come from a white-British background, 13% in inner London, whereas 76% outside of London.

Fact #3 - Improvements in performance are not restricted to secondary schools; large improvements in primary school results can be seen from the late 1990s onwards.

Fact #4 - The London Effect is small at age 5, before growing between ages 5 and 11 when children are in primary school.

The next part of the paper goes into to provide statistical evidence to support these facts. The methodology is detailed and well laid out; though would be difficult for me to summarise in a meaningful way. The paper fails to provide a list of strategies or conclusive reasons for this increase; however, this is not the purpose of the paper.

The full paper can be read here: <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/wp21.pdf>.