

Trends and performance in the London and Greater Manchester education systems, 2006/07 – 2016/17

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Introduction

There has been considerable interest in trends in London's education over the past decade and a half, and the lessons that can be learnt for schools in the North (Burgess, 2014; Greaves et al., 2014; CFBT, 2014; Blanden et al., 2015; Weller, 2016). In order to provide an understanding of what Greater Manchester (GM) can learn from London, this report documents trends in attainment in GM and London from 2005/06 to 2016/17. We look at attainment at the end of three key stages of education: the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS; birth to age 5), Key Stage 2 (KS2; 8-11), and Key Stage 4 (KS4; 15-16). We compare GM, London, and the rest of England¹ (RoE) in attainment for all pupils at the end of each stage, and examine differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and relatively advantaged pupils.

Early Years

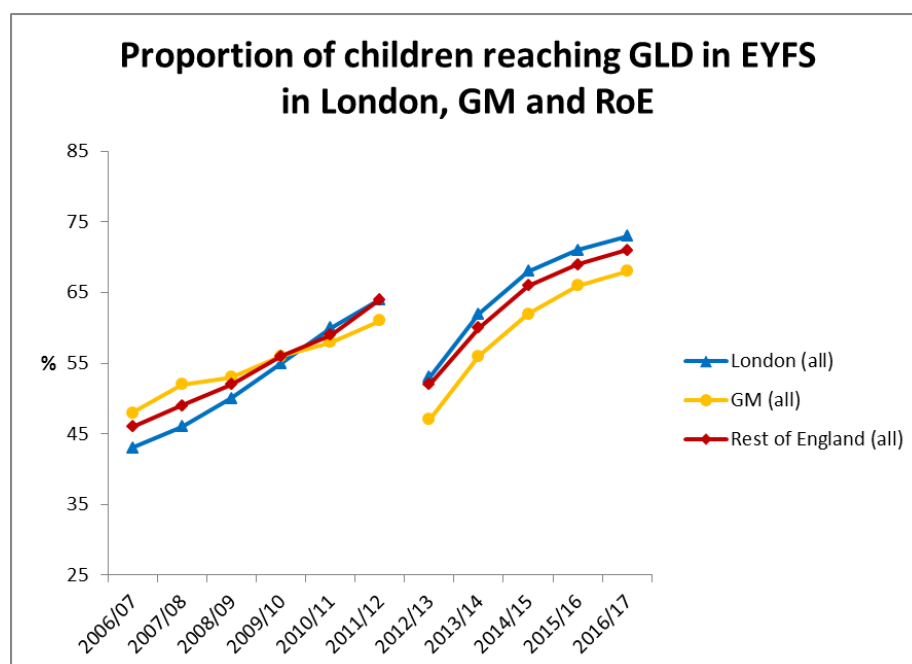
The Early Years Foundation Stage was introduced in 2008. At the end of reception, a child's development in key areas such as communication and language, literacy, and physical development is assessed. The development benchmark that early education providers aim for is a 'good level of development', commonly abbreviated to GLD. Below, Figure 1 shows the proportion of children in RoE, London, and GM achieving GLD over time. Breaks in the lines at 2012/13 are due to the introduction of a new framework of assessment.²

Figure 1 shows that the proportion of children reaching GLD has increased in all three locations. GM has not improved as much as RoE or London: for example in GM, the proportion of children reaching GLD has risen by 16 percentage points, from 52% in 2007/08 to 68% in 2016/17, whereas London has seen an increase of 27 percentage points, from 46% to 73%. GM was ahead of London and RoE by five and two percentage points respectively at the beginning of the period, but in the most recent year of assessment is behind London by five percentage points, and RoE by three. The steep rise shown in all locations for the two years following the introduction of the new framework is likely to be the effect of teachers and schools adjusting to the new measure; more modest increases are shown between 2014/15 and 2016/17, once early education providers accommodated to the new measure.

¹ Rest of England = England minus London and Greater Manchester.

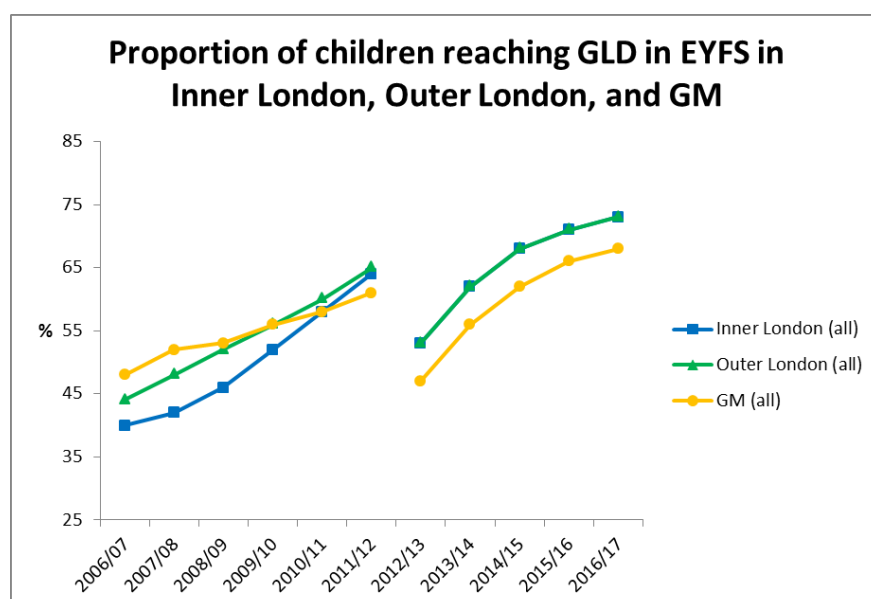
² The original EYFS had 69 early learning goals (ELGs) and 13 assessment scales. GLA equalled "... 6 or more points across the 7 Scales of PSE [personal, social and emotional development] and CLL [communication, language, and literacy] and who also achieves 78 or more points across all 13 scales". From 2012/13 the number of early learning goals was reduced to 17. For each goal, children were graded as meeting the expected levels, exceeding them, or as below the expected level. GLD equals "... at least the expected level in the ELGs within the three prime areas of learning and within literacy and numeracy".

Figure 1. Proportion of Early Years children achieving GLD.



Compared to that of RoE and GM, London's rise in the proportion of its children reaching the development benchmark is particularly steep between 2007/08 and 2012/13, coinciding with the introduction and first few years of the EYFS (and also the introduction of the London primary challenge which could conceivably had some effect on reception year practice). GM was overtaken by London during this period; however the gap between them has remained stable since 2012/13, under the new framework. Thus, London's progress relative to RoE and GM was faster for five years following the introduction of EYFS, but its advantage over RoE and GM has remained fairly constant for the most recent five years. Figure 2 takes a closer look by comparing GM to Inner and Outer London.

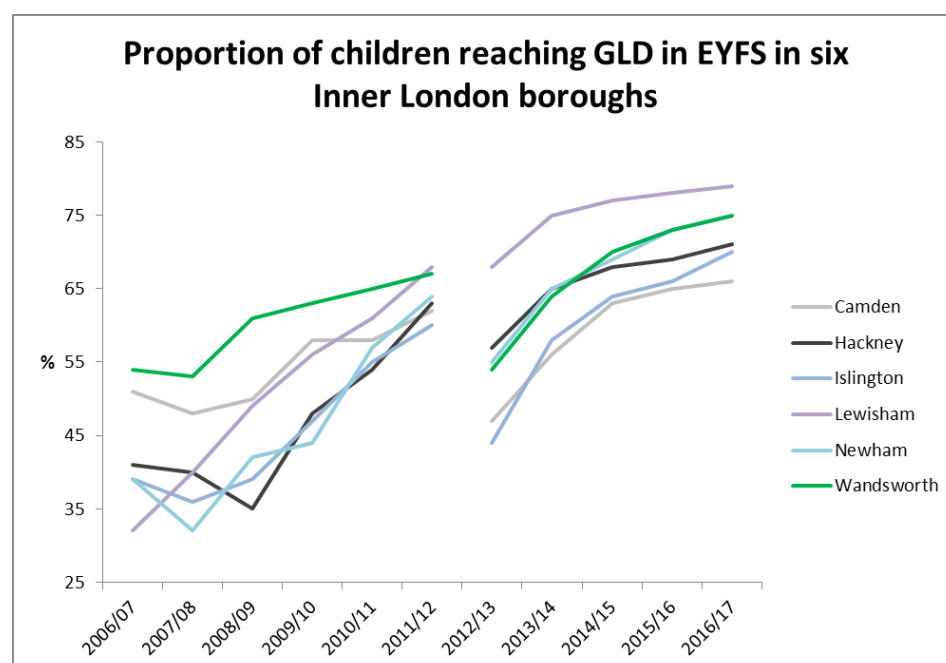
Figure 2. Proportion of children in EYFS achieving GLD in Inner London, Outer London, and GM.



The key finding here is the rapid increase year-on-year in the proportion of children in Inner London reaching GLD, during the five years that followed the introduction of the EYFS in 2007/08. In 2007/08, Inner London was six percentage points behind Outer London, and 10 behind GM. Five years later in 2012/13, and for the five years that follow, Inner and Outer London have the same proportion of children reaching GLD, both exceeding GM by six percentage points. Outer London also improved more rapidly year-on-year relative to GM; however, the real headline here is the closing of the gap between Inner and Outer London.

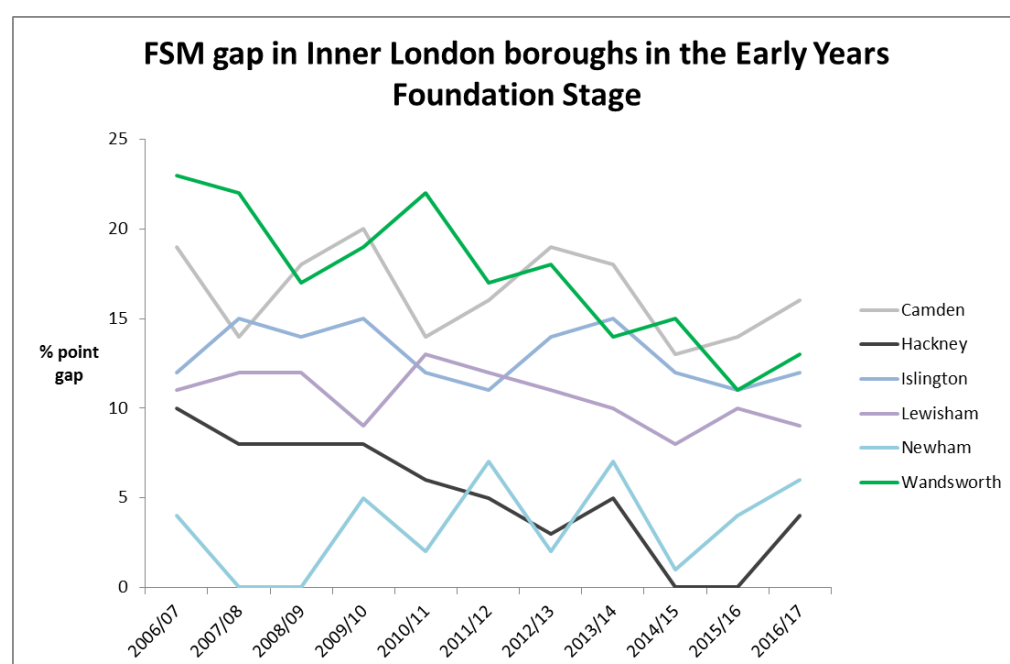
Figure 3 shows a breakdown for six of the 13 Inner London boroughs across the same timeframe. The period of most interest is 2007/08 to 2012/13, when Inner London increased its proportion of children reaching GLD above that of GM and RoE, and came in line with Outer London. All boroughs in Inner London raised the proportion of their children reaching GLD during this period. However, some boroughs did considerably better than others. Figure 3 shows that Lewisham, Newham, and Hackney were among the worst performing boroughs in Inner London in 2007/08, the year prior to the first assessment made under the EYFS profile (Southwark, not shown here, also made large gains). For the five years that followed, these boroughs came up through the ranks, and performed better than all other boroughs in 2012/13, at the start of the new assessment framework. The advantage of these boroughs was well sustained two years into the new framework in 2014/15, indicating that their improvements relative to other boroughs are robust to the changes in assessment. By contrast, Islington was a borough whose children showed similar levels of development in 2007/08, but did not rise through the ranks over the years that followed. In addition, Camden showed impressive figures relative to other Inner London boroughs in 2007/08, but slipped down the ranks considerably over the nine years that followed. Thus, the picture here is one of variation across Inner London's boroughs in year-on-year improvements: some boroughs were more responsible than others for driving Inner London's gains in EYFS.

Figure 3. Proportion of children in Inner London boroughs reaching GLD in EYFS.



It is also interesting to note differences between these boroughs in terms of their free school meal (FSM) gaps. Eligibility for FSM is often used as a binary proxy (yes or no) for a pupil's relative disadvantage/advantage in education³. Figure 4 shows the FSM gap for this selection of six Inner London boroughs. There are several points to note here. First, great variation exists across the boroughs in the size of their FSM gaps. For example, Wandsworth's FSM gap has been between 11 and 23 percentage points during this time, whereas Newham's has been between zero and seven. Both boroughs are below the nation's gap⁴; however the figures for Newham in particular are quite remarkable. Second, of this selection of six boroughs, the three that made the greatest gains across this period in the proportion of children reaching GLD are those with consistently smaller FSM gaps: Lewisham, Hackney, and Newham.

Figure 4. FSM gaps in six London boroughs in Early Years education.

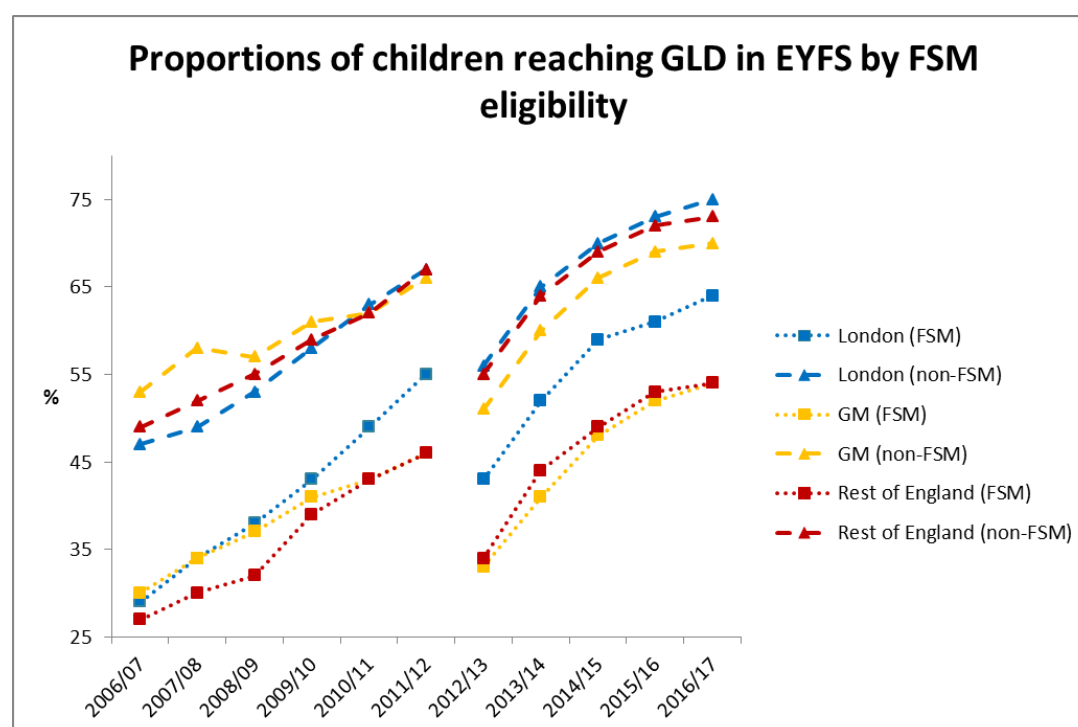


Now we examine change in the proportion of children in London, GM, and RoE reaching GLD by disadvantage. Figure 5 shows the proportion of children reaching GLD in London, GM and RoE by FSM eligibility. GM's non-FSM and FSM children were doing better than RoE until 2010/2011, but then GM slipped behind the nation from 2011/2012 onwards under the new assessment framework; more so for non-FSM pupils in GM, who maintain a deficit of around three to four percentage points to the nation's non-FSM pupils. In addition, Figure 5 shows that, at the introduction of EYFS in 2007/08, the proportion of FSM children in London reaching GLD was the same as in GM (34%): four percentage points higher than RoE. From this point, London's FSM pupils pulled ahead of GM and RoE year-on year for four or five years up until 2012/13, after which the gap between FSM pupils in London and that of GM and RoE was maintained at between nine and eleven percentage points. London's non-FSM pupils also made steeper gains year-on-year than RoE and GM throughout this period, however not to the same extent as its FSM children.

³ Proportions of children in EYFS eligible for FSM in 2016/17: Rest of England = 13.0%; Greater Manchester = 16.7%; London = 14.4%; Inner London = 19.5%; Outer London = 11.8%.

⁴ The average FSM gap for RoE in EYFS across this period was between 19-23%.

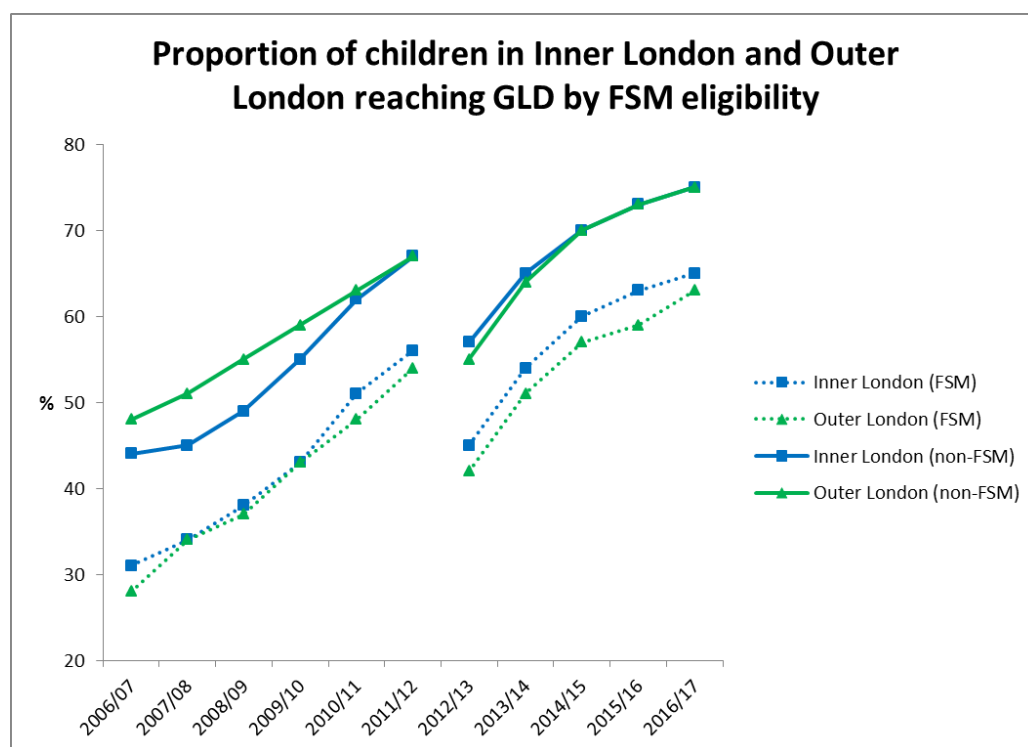
Figure 5. Proportion of children reaching GLD in EYFS by FSM eligibility.



Taking a closer look at London, Figure 6 shows development by FSM eligibility in Inner and Outer London. Firstly, the proportion of children reaching GLD increased year-on-year by the same amount for FSM and non-FSM pupils in Inner London – the FSM gap in Inner London has remained consistent at around 11 percentage points. This suggests that the spurt in Inner London between 2007/08 and 2012/13 not only occurred for FSM pupils, but also for non-FSM pupils. Additional analysis not shown here indicates that the four Inner London boroughs identified above as having ‘risen through the ranks’ between 2007/08 and 2012/2013 (Hackney, Newham, Lewisham, and Southwark) did so by improving the development of both their FSM and non-FSM children. This suggests that whatever caused the rise in development in these boroughs was not centred solely on bettering the development of FSM pupils, but had effect regardless of socio-economic background.

A different pattern is shown for Outer London. Whilst Inner London increased the proportion of both its FSM and non-FSM children in unison, Outer London has gradually closed its FSM gap from 20 percentage points in 2006/07 to 12% in 2016/17. Together with gains made by Inner London, this explains the large spurt in the development of FSM-eligible children between 2007/08 and 2012/13.

Figure 6. Proportion of children in Inner and Outer London reaching GLD in EYFS by FSM eligibility.



Key findings from EYFS:

- GM, London, and RoE increased the proportion of their children reaching GLD between 2006/07 and 2016/17.
- GM held an advantage over London and RoE between 2006/07 and 2008/09; however, London and RoE improved more rapidly than GM across the following decade. GM slipped behind London and RoE from around 2010/11 onwards.
- London experienced a steeper rise between 2007/08 and 2012/13 in the proportion of its children reaching GLD compared to GM and RoE. Inner London increased the proportion of its children reaching GLD considerably across this five-year period. This change occurred most in the Inner London boroughs Newham, Lewisham, Hackney, and Southwark.
- The proportion of FSM-eligible children in London reaching GLD rose more sharply during this five-year period than elsewhere. This increase is down to a gradual narrowing of Outer London's FSM gap, and year-on-year improvements in the development of Inner London's FSM and non-FSM children.

Key Stage 2

This section investigates KS2 attainment between 2004/05 and 2016/17. Children take their KS2 examinations at the end of primary school, at around age 11. For some time, the standard benchmark measure at KS2 has been 'achieving level 4 or above'. This was changed to 'reaching the expected standard' in 2015/16, which according to the Department for Education is roughly equivalent to reaching the higher benchmark '4b' under the older framework. Throughout this section we focus on attainment in mathematics exclusively, as this was the only subject for which data was available across all years of our period of focus.

Figure 7. Proportion of all pupils reaching L4+/reaching the expected standard in KS2 Mathematics.

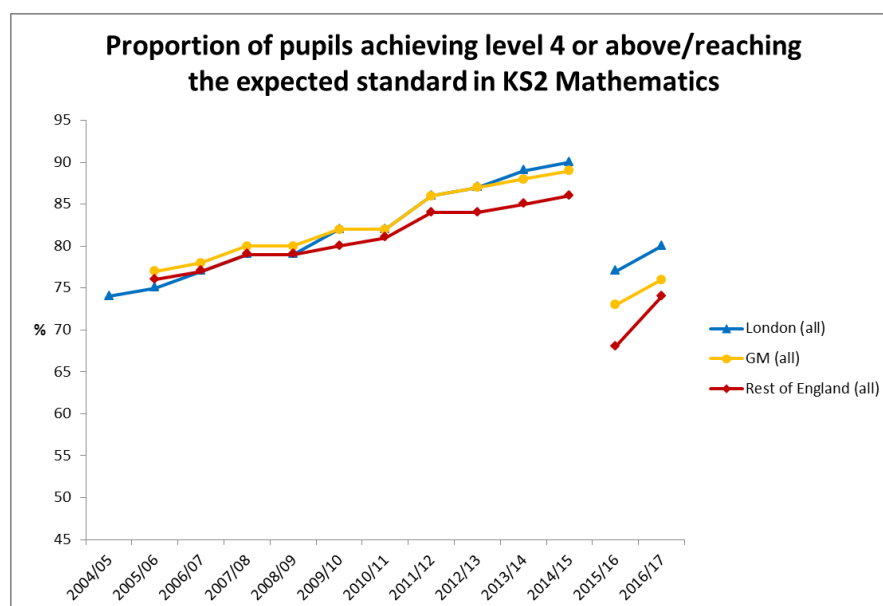


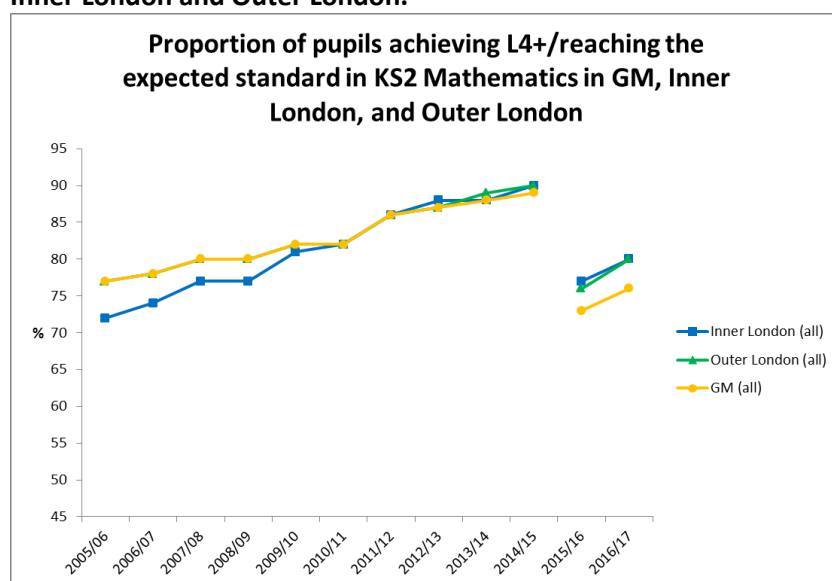
Figure 7 shows the proportion of all pupils in London, GM and RoE achieving level 4 or above/reaching the expected standard in KS2 mathematics. Overall, attainment has been rising year-on-year for each location. The sudden drop in attainment in 2015/16 is because fewer pupils nationwide achieved the more challenging 'reaching the expected standard' measure. It is interesting to note that London, GM and RoE become more spread out under the new measure in 2015/16 than the year before under the old measure. This suggests that GM and London figures in 2014/15 contained a greater proportion of high-performing pupils, the achievements by whom were drawn out under the 'reaching the expected standard measure' in the two years that followed (for the sake of brevity, from here onwards 'attainment benchmark' will be used to refer to the two benchmark measures).

A key point to note from Figure 7 is that GM has performed well overall compared with RoE and London across this period. GM had a slight advantage over London and RoE of around one percentage point between 2005/06 and 2008/09, but was later outpaced (only marginally) by London by one percentage point under the old framework 2012/13–2013/14, and by four for the two years under the new framework. GM has consistently outperformed RoE, and increased its advantage over the RoE from one percentage point in 2005/06 to three in 2014/15. Across the period, London improved slightly more year-on-year than GM or RoE: in 2005/06, London was one

percentage point behind RoE and two behind GM, and in 2016/17, London is four percentage points above GM and six above RoE.

Figure 8 shows that the modest gains made by London overall were mainly due to improvements in Inner London. In 2005/06, Inner London was behind Outer London and GM by five percentage points, but then had closed this gap completely by 2010/11. Figure 8 shows that GM was performing at a similar level year-on-year to Outer London, until the two most recent years (2015/16 and 2016/17), where GM performed around four percentage points lower than Inner and Outer London.

Figure 8. Proportion of pupils reaching the attainment benchmark in KS2 mathematics in GM, Inner London and Outer London.



Now we examine KS2 attainment by FSM eligibility⁵. Figure 9 shows the proportion of FSM and non-FSM pupils achieving the attainment benchmarks between 2005/06 and 2016/17. FSM and non-FSM pupils in both London and GM have done consistently better across these years than their counterparts in RoE. The gap between the attainment of FSM pupils in GM and RoE maintained itself at roughly between four to seven percentage points between 2005/06 and 2014/15. During this time, however, London's FSM pupils have improved their attainment year-on-year at a faster rate than GM and RoE: in 2005/06, 62% of London's FSM KS2 pupils achieved the attainment benchmark, which was one percentage point more than GM, and six above RoE; by 2014/15, 83% of London's FSM pupils reached the attainment benchmark, which was three percentage points above GM and eight above RoE. Thus, London's FSM pupils have made the most improvement year on year out of the three locations.

⁵ Proportions of KS2 pupils eligible for FSM in 2016/17: Rest of England = 14.3%; Greater Manchester = 18.4%; London = 18.0%; Inner London = 23.9%; Outer London = 14.9%.

Figure 9. Proportion of pupils at KS2 reaching the attainment benchmark, by FSM eligibility.

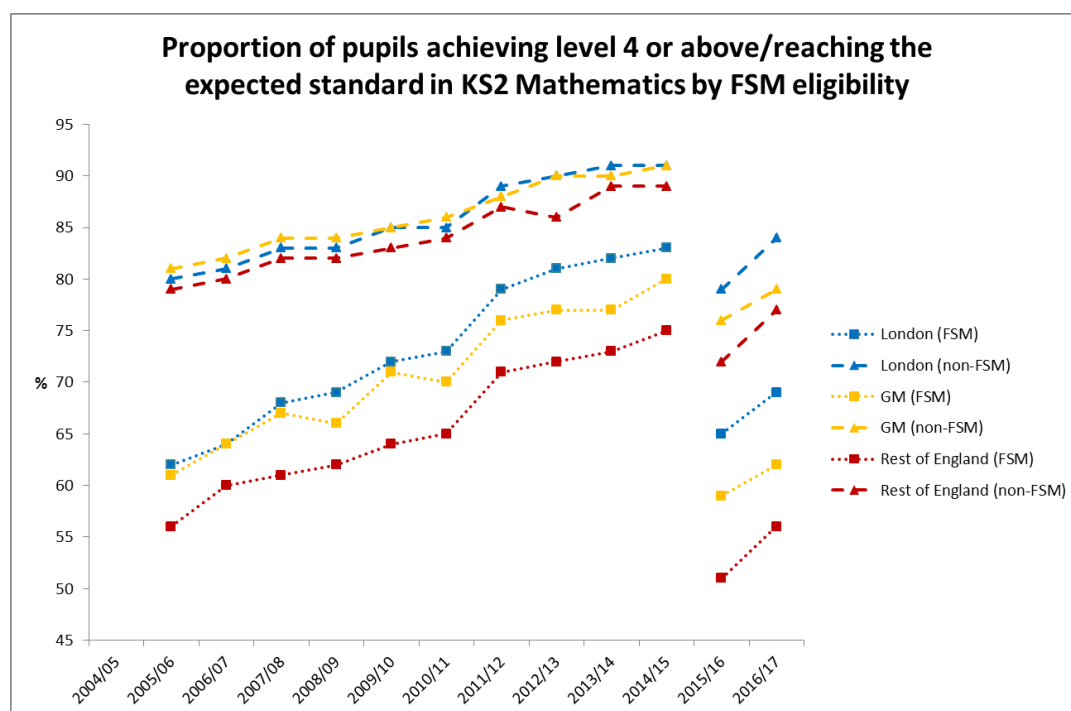
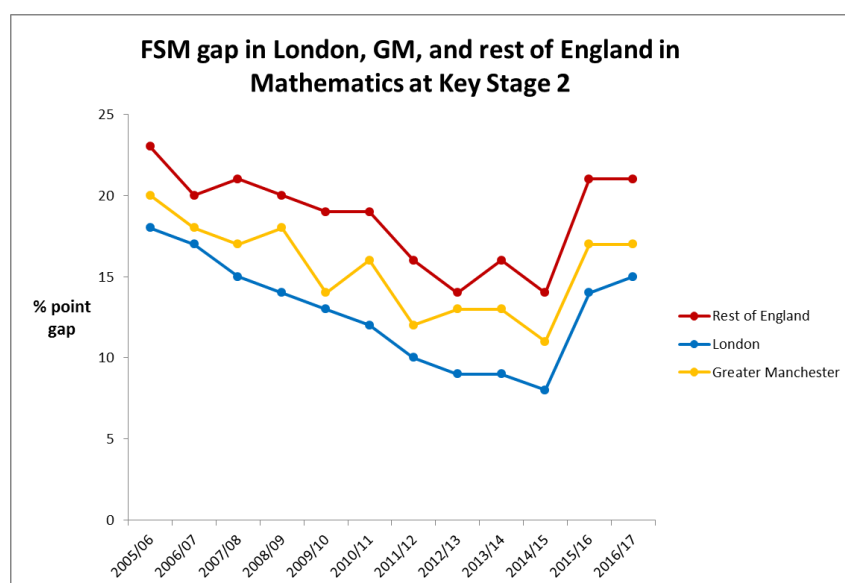


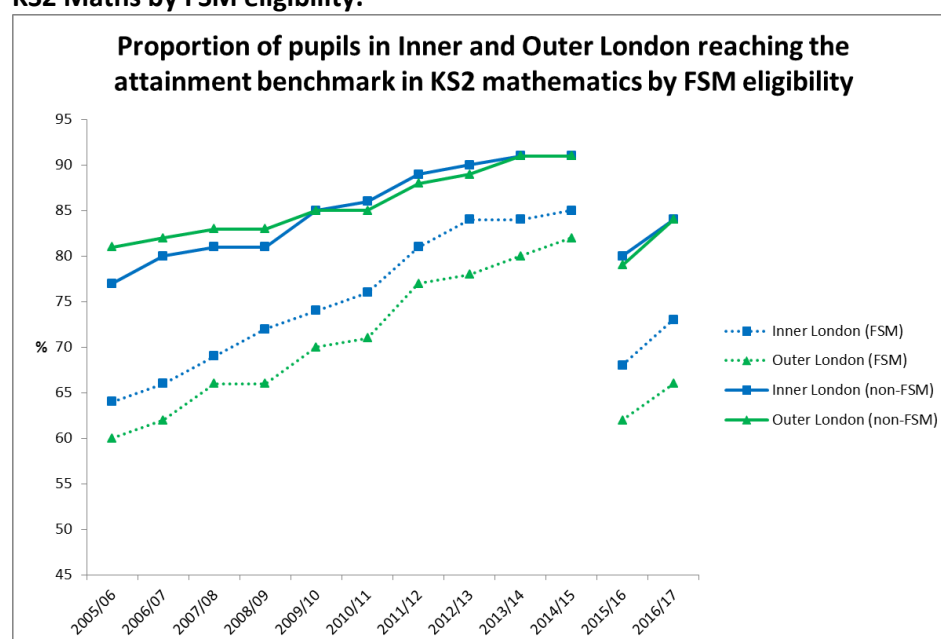
Figure 9 appears to show that FSM pupils in all locations have closed the gap on non-FSM pupils over time. However, this trend was disrupted by the introduction of the new benchmark. To show this a little more clearly, Figure 10 shows change in the FSM gap in London, GM, and RoE. Across the nine-year period 2005/06 to 2014/15, the gap decreased by between nine and ten percentage points in each location. The gap then widens markedly by six/seven percentage points in the most recent years, under the new measure, meaning that over the period as a whole, it narrowed by two to three percentage points in each location.

Figure 10. FSM gap in London GM and RoE in KS2 mathematics.



Now we examine change in Inner and Outer London more specifically. Figure 11 shows proportions of non-FSM and FSM pupils in Inner and Outer London achieving the attainment benchmark. Inner and Outer London's FSM pupils have improved year-on-year at roughly the same rate: Inner London's FSM pupils outperformed Outer London's pupils consistently by around four to six percentage points between 2005/06 and 2014/15. Inner London's non-FSM pupils have caught up with Outer London's non-FSM pupils: in 2005/06, Inner London was behind by four percentage points, and by 2009/10 this gap had closed. The figure also appears to show the FSM gap closing for both Outer and Inner London between 2005/06 and 2014/15; however, the FSM gap widens for both places under the new attainment benchmark. The FSM gap for Inner London and Outer London in 2016/17 (11% and 18%, respectively) is roughly where it was nine years before in 2007/08 (12% and 17%).

Figure 11. Proportion of pupils in Inner and Outer London reaching the attainment benchmark in KS2 Maths by FSM eligibility.



Key findings from KS2:

- The proportion of all pupils that reaching the attainment benchmark for KS2 mathematics has increased year-on-year between 2005/06 and 2014/15 in London, GM and RoE. GM performed better than RoE across this entire period, but was outpaced by London in more recent years. The slightly faster rate of improvement in KS2 mathematics in London is mainly down to gains made by Inner London.
- GM and London's FSM pupils outperform FSM pupils in RoE. However, London has pulled slightly further ahead year-on-year.
- The gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils appeared to close fairly well from 2005/06 to 2014/15 on the government's preferred measure; However, with the introduction of the new benchmark in 2015/16 the gap widened again.

Key Stage 4

Pupils take their GCSEs at the end of KS4, around age 16. Several reforms have taken place in recent years, represented in the breaks shown in Figure 12 below. In 2013/14, GCSEs were changed from a more modular system, in which pupils were assessed at intermediate points throughout KS4, to assessment at the end of the course by way of examination (for more, see Lupton & Thomson, 2015). Two benchmark measures were commonly used between 2005/06 and 2014/15. First, the government's preferred measure: achieving 5 or more A*-C grades including English and mathematics. The second was a less 'academic' measure: 5 or more A*-C grades. 2015/16 saw more reforms to assessment, and a new measure: Attainment 8 (A8). A8 is a pupil's average achievement across eight subjects, and includes English and mathematics, and six other subjects such as geography, the sciences, and vocational qualifications. Due to these changes, results are not comparable between the different periods of reforms (e.g., how has GM progressed between 2010/11 and 2016/17?); however attainment between locations within each reform period may be compared (e.g., how does London and GM compare in 2014/15?).

Figure 12. Proportion of all pupils in KS4 achieving 5+ A*-C grades (including English and mathematics)/average Attainment 8 score.

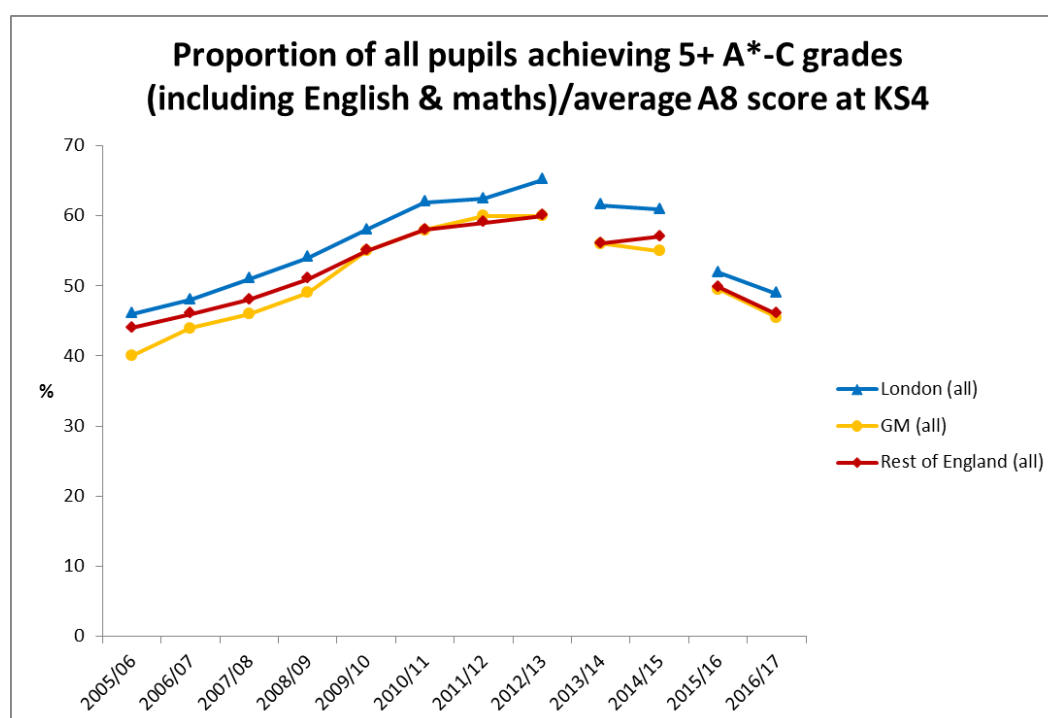


Figure 12 shows that the proportion of all pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades (inc. English and mathematics) rose between 2005/06 and 2012/13 in London, RoE, and GM. Across this time, London has consistently been ahead of GM and RoE in the proportion of its pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades (inc. English and mathematics)/average A8 score. London increased its lead over RoE throughout this period, from two percentage points in 2005/06 to five in 2012/13. GM also did well across this period. With 40% of its pupils reaching the benchmark measure in 2005/06, GM was behind RoE by four percentage points and London by six. However, GM made good progress over the next six years: GM was one percentage point ahead of RoE and only two behind London in 2011/12. From 2012/13 onwards, GM has performed at roughly the same standard as the nation.

Figure 13 shows KS4 attainment by FSM eligibility⁶. GM's non-FSM pupils overtook RoE in the proportion of its pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades (inc. English and mathematics) in 2008/09. In addition, FSM pupils in GM have performed better in general than the rest of the nation: their advantage increased from no difference in 2005/06 to five percentage points in 2012/13. GM in particular, and London to some extent, showed a step up in attainment from 2008/09 to 2009/10. A small lead was maintained by GM over RoE following the two waves of reforms.

Figure 13. Proportion of KS4 pupils achieving 5+ grade A*-C including English and mathematics/average A8 score by FSM eligibility

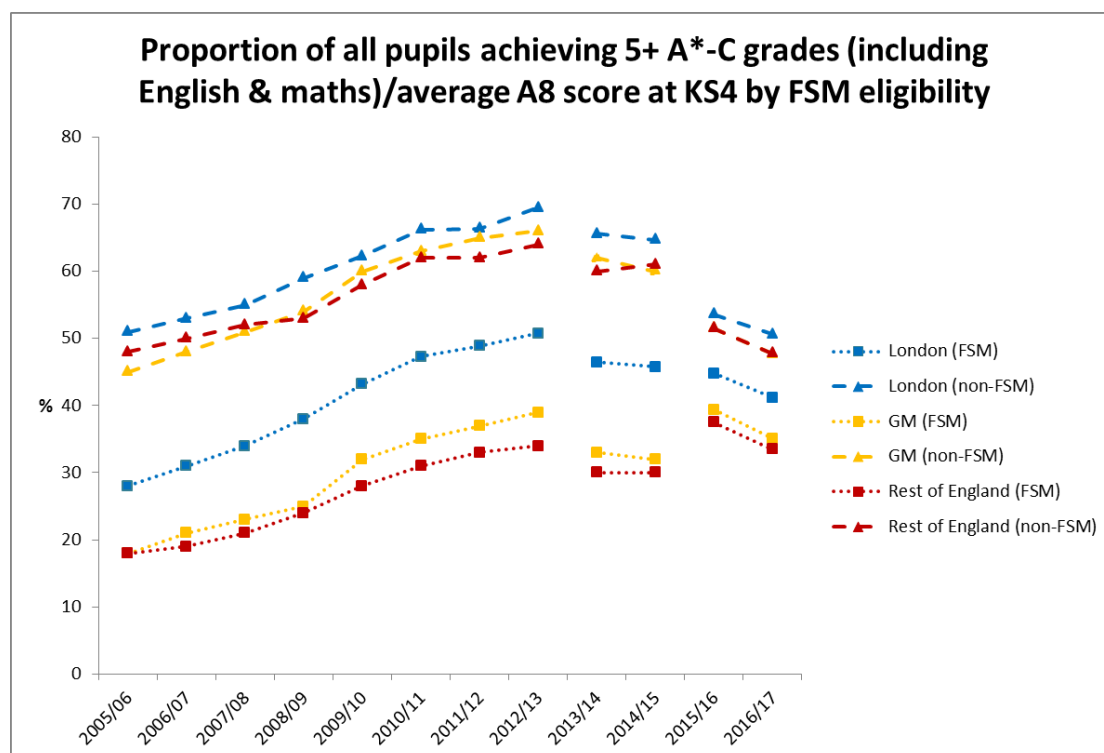


Figure 14 shows the proportion of all KS4 children achieving 5+ A*-C grades/average A8 score. Again, it shows that GM has done well at catching up London and RoE: in 2005/06 GM was behind London by three percentage points and RoE by two, and by 2012/13 GM was ahead of RoE by one percentage point, and performed at the same level as London. From 2013/14 onwards, London outperforms GM and RoE, and RoE and GM perform at around the same level. It is interesting to note that London shows less of an advantage over GM and RoE here than it does on the more academic measure, shown in Figure 12.

⁶ Proportions of KS4 pupils eligible for FSM in 2016/17: Rest of England = 12.0%; Greater Manchester = 17.0%; London = 18.0%; Inner London = 27.7%; Outer London = 13.1%.

Figure 14. Proportion of all KS4 pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades/average A8 score.

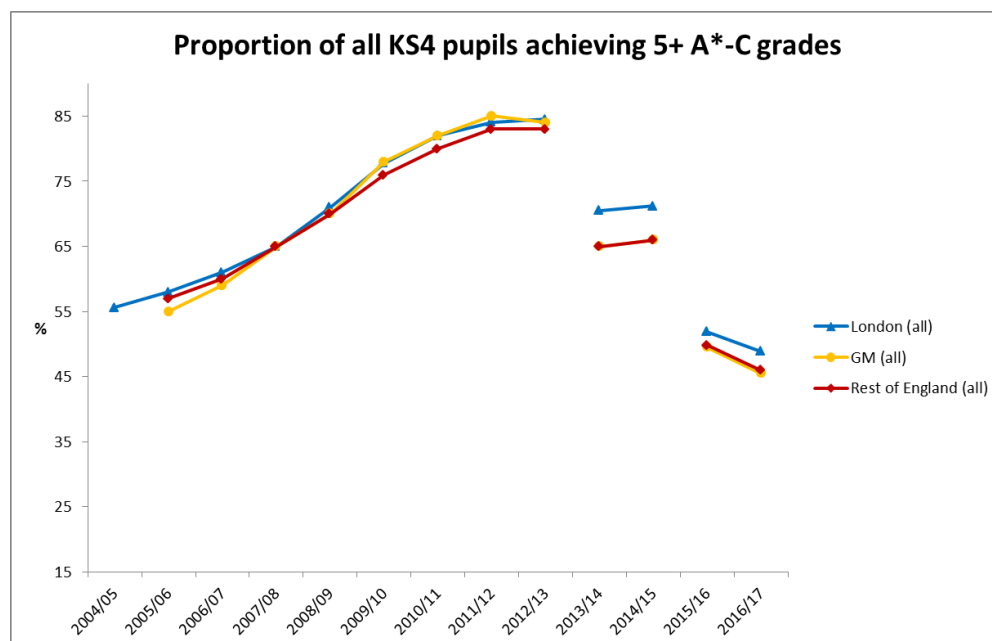
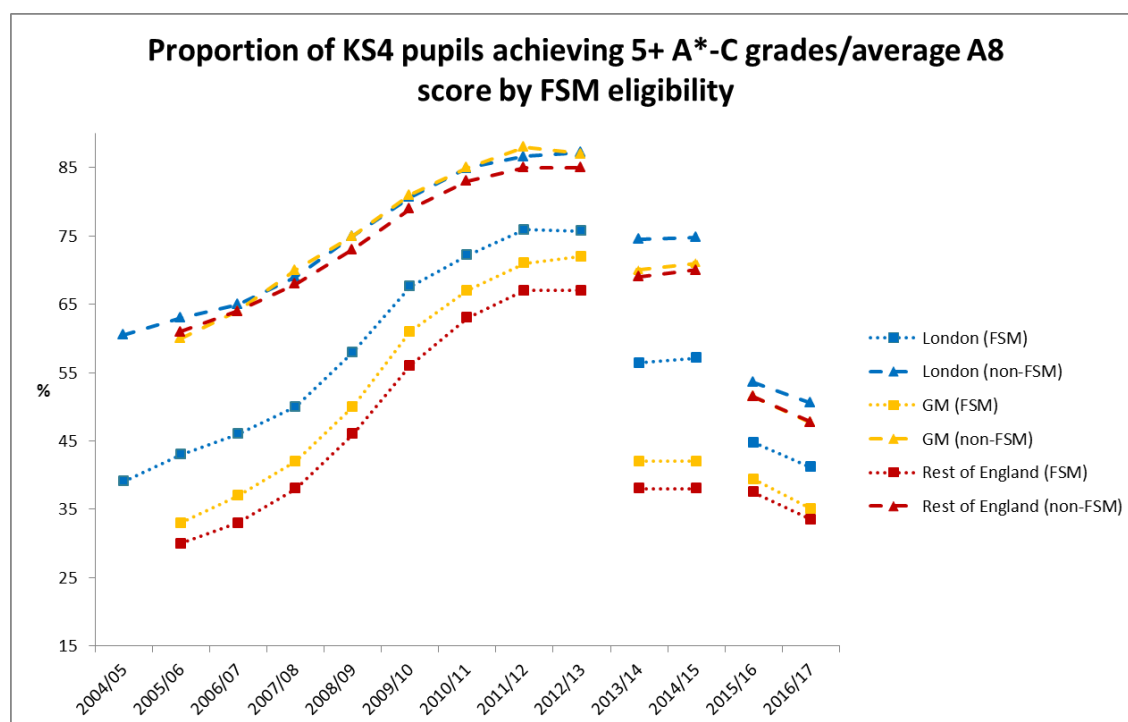


Figure 15 shows this measure by FSM eligibility. It shows year-on-year increases in the attainment of FSM pupils between 2005/06 and 2012/13. However, FSM pupils in GM and RoE closed the gap on London's FSM pupils between 2005/06 and 2012/13: for example, at the start of this period, 33% of GM's FSM pupils reached the benchmark, which was 10 percentage points behind London at 43%, whereas in 2012/13, GM closed this gap to three and a half percentage points. The gap, however, between London and GM/RoE widens dramatically after the first reform: before reforms in the year 2012/13, GM's FSM pupils were three and a half percentage points behind London, however one year later after the reforms GM fell to fourteen and a half percentage points behind. This indicates that London's pupils were better able to meet the more challenging benchmark than GM, and indeed the rest of the nation.

Figure 15. Proportion of KS4 pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades/average A8 score by FSM eligibility.



Finally, Figures 16 and 17 show change in the FSM gap on these two measures⁷. Firstly, in general the FSM gap in all three locations was narrowing to a greater extent on the less academic measure (Figure 16) than on the more academic measure, until the 2014 reforms, when it rose again (Figure 17). For the latter, the FSM gap narrowed in London across the period 2005/06 to 2014/15, by around five percentage points from 23% to 18%, although London's gap increased and then plateaued between 2011/12 and 2014/15. Gaps in GM and RoE on this measure remained at a similar level (around 28%) throughout the period. London's FSM pupils have caught up more advantaged pupils to a greater extent than in GM and RoE on the more academic measure.

⁷ Gaps not shown for 2015/16 and 2016/17, as average Attainment 8 score gaps are not comparable with gaps in earlier cohorts in the proportion of pupils reaching the outcome benchmark.

Figure 16. FSM gap in London, GM and England at KS2: 5+ A*-C.

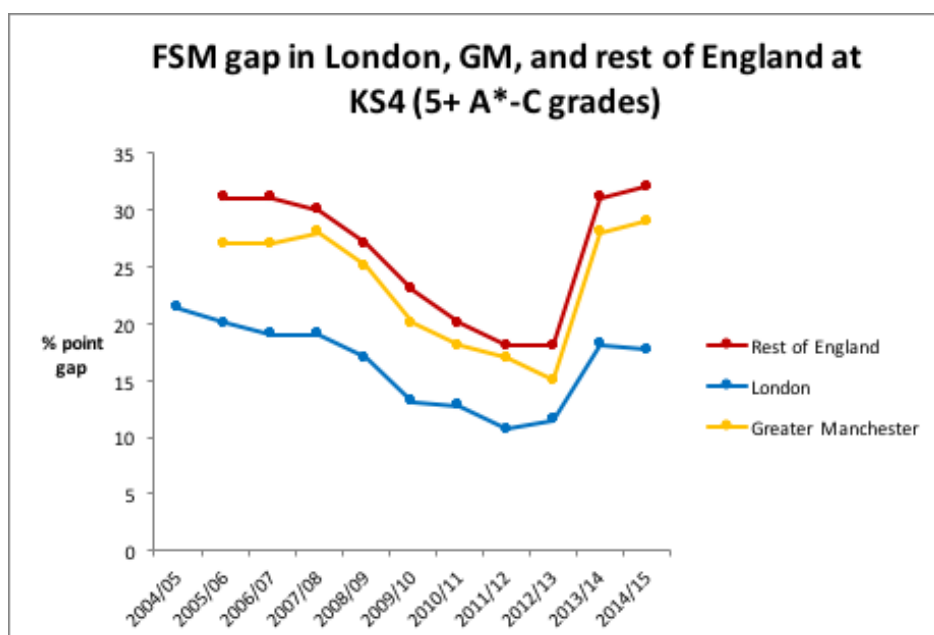
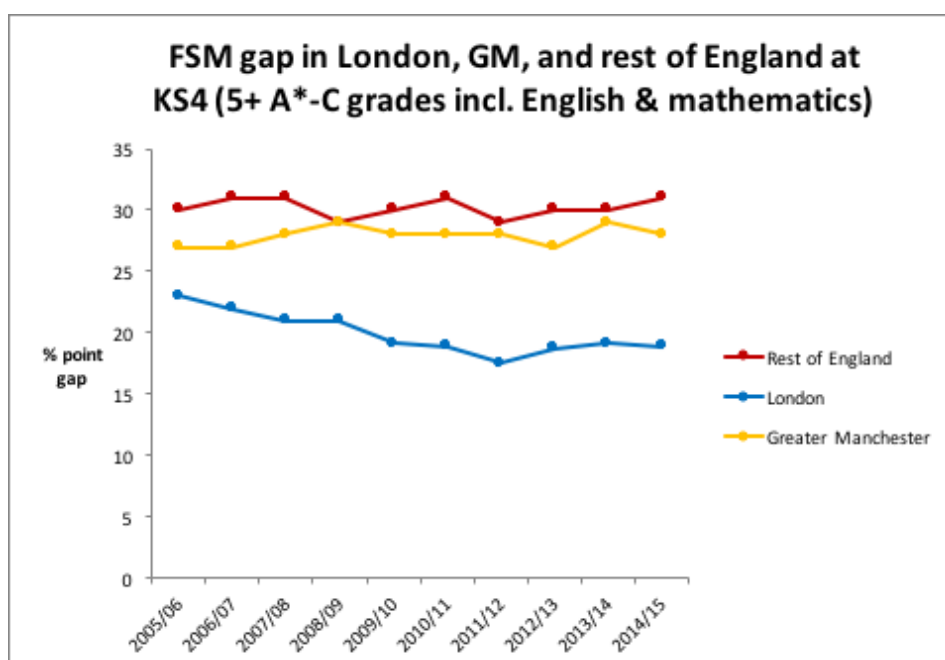


Figure 17. FSM gap in London, GM and England at KS4: 5+ A*-C inc. English and Maths.



Key findings from KS4:

- London does better on both measures at KS4 than GM and RoE.
- GM has mostly performed better than the rest of the nation at KS4. This is especially the case for FSM pupils.
- GM has consistently had a smaller FSM gap than the rest of England on both measures at KS4.