

This Council welcomes the positive educational changes that have been achieved here in Merton over recent years through close partnership with the borough's schools, pupils, staff, parents and governors, and which have included:

- Providing sixth forms in all those secondary schools which didn't previously have them;
- Building a new Special Educational Needs Centre of Excellence at Perseid School in Morden; and
- Improving school buildings across the Borough and investing in enhanced facilities at Merton's schools.

In conjunction with the Government's clear focus on raising standards and the new, more rigorous OFSTED regime, Merton has seen a sustained improvement in results since 2006, and particularly in levels of attainment at GCSE.

However, this Council recognises that there is much more to do in order to ensure we provide world class opportunities for Merton's young people. Given the on going pressures facing the borough in meeting rising demand for both primary and secondary school places, this Council believes an ambitious plan is needed to expand our secondary schools and encourage other providers to set up outstanding schools in Merton, including academies, free schools and potentially a satellite grammar school.

This Council welcomes the innovative work of the recent Scrutiny Task Group on the Provision of Secondary School Places, which has recently published its wide ranging recommendations including on funding and maximising the use of assets.

In order to achieve the borough's twin goals of driving up educational standards whilst also increasing the number of school places available for families in Merton, this Council calls on Cabinet to:

- a) Accelerate any actions contained within the Action Plan for the Secondary School Places report which can potentially be implemented straightaway;
- b) Undertake a comprehensive engagement with parents, teachers and governors across the borough by way of public meetings, an on line forum and postal surveys to help develop a strategy for Merton regarding academies and free schools; and
- c) Given the support of the major political parties for the principle of parents' groups setting up their own schools, establish a Merton Free Schools and Academies Commission comprising an independent chairman and councillor, governor, parent and head teacher representatives, as happened last year in Wandsworth, in order to engage with and determine support for potential providers or sponsors of schools in the borough.

**Councillor James Holmes
Oonagh Moulton**

Councillor Debbie Shears

Councillor

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