

Report on Visit to Tower Hamlets June 16, 19, 20
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Summary

Facts about Tower Hamlets

98 schools and 37,500 pupils

HWDSB projected 2007-08 enrolment FTE 50,599.

Major Findings:

1. **More resources make a difference**

Tower Hamlets schools are better funded than HWDSB. This is seen in their richer staff complement. Although the poorest borough in England, their 7 and 11 year old students are above the national average in reading and math..

Conclusion: HWDSB needs more resources!

Continue to lobby for more support for high needs urban board.

2. **Use of teaching assistants and support staff provides a rich support network for students.**

It allows them to employ many diverse people to support their high ESL population and at risk and special education students. They have more teaching assistants and support workers than they do teachers. They provide 20 workers to work solely with parents. Most classes we visited had at least two adults in them.

Conclusion: need to consider how we can better use support staff

3. **Children's services are closely integrated,**

The Director of Education is the Director of Children's services in the borough. So able to link to many services: specially strong for at risk groups such as children in care.

We cannot educate high needs students on our own: we need community services to actively support HWDSB students.

Consider:

- Education plans for all CAS students
- Identification and work with other agencies for students who care for adults
- Lobby for cohesive provincial and local social policy on children within local integrated setting.

4. **Special Education**

Practices we might emulate:

- Link Glenwood to pre-school services, and consider a pilot to serve students 2 to 3. 8 months
- Bring in again the lunch room assistants for feeding students at lunch time
- Invite developmental paediatrician to hold student medicals on Glenwood and other school sites
- Glenwood provide outreach support to similar population of students in other HWDSB schools
- Panel of community professionals to assist our system IPRC committees
- Parent Advisory Committee that supports special education families with direct advice:
- Multi-professional teams in schools that also work with parents and families.

- Work to get similar resources as exceptionally well resourced (special education school had more staff than students with best practice programs)
- Provide great sensory materials in our playgrounds for developmentally delayed students
- Lobby for all IPRC students to be part of a provincial register, so that seamless service for the student if move from one area to another.

5. **Caring and outreach practices we might consider**

- Visiting the home countries where large number of foreign-born students come from
- Greater links to all child care to support early literacy and particularly boys' development

6. **Parental programs:**

Practices we might emulate

A concerted effort is being made to reach and support a large number of families in Tower Hamlets, and work is conducted in a co-ordinated fashion with other branches of government and agencies.

- Consider parenting programs under two categories :
 - of engagement,
 - support to parents,

and add more resources to each

- Develop a conceptual framework of support available to families across all agencies in Hamilton.

1 High Need of students Recognised in Educational Funding

In Ontario, funding per elementary and secondary students is students varies chiefly if the students are rural, ELL, or for special education needs. In the UK, funding per pupil varies according to need. So Tower Hamlets students receive 60% more than the national average, as they are in the poorest borough in London, and have the highest number of students on free school lunches which are means tested. Forty-seven per cent of the children in Tower Hamlets lived in 2004 in a household receiving social assistance (source Family Support ad Parental Engagement strategy 2007-08 Tower Hamlets).The high funding allows them to have a large number of staff. There were at least two adults in every classroom in every school we visited. The Special Needs School had more staff than students. It also allows them to have successful students: in English and math at ages seven and eleven students were above the national average.

Funding per pupil 3 to 19 years real terms (pounds)

Taken from web site: dcsf.gov.uk

	97/98	2005/06	change in real pounds since 97	% change since 97
Tower Hamlets Local Authority	4,670	6,830	2,160	46.3
London Region	3,810	5,280	1,470	38.6
England	3,120	4,360	1,240	39.7

Tower Hamlets has been funded above the national and London Regional average since at least 1997. In 1997 they were funded 60 per cent, in 2005, 63%, above the national average.

Model of delivery depends on teaching assistants and support workers

Funding permits schools in Tower Hamlets to employ a large number of teaching assistants and support staff. In fact they have more of these than they do teachers. Many were from diverse communities and acted as supports for new English language learners, EAs, child and youth workers as well as working with parents and community. The teacher contracts have directed hours of child contact in them. The school work forces are becoming more fluid. Please note that pupil teacher ratios in primary grades in Tower Hamlets were higher than in HWDSB, about one teacher to 30 students.

No of teachers FTE maintained schools (Taken from web site: dcsf.gov.uk and 2007 HWDSB Budget

	97 primary	07 primary	97 secondary	07 secondary
Tower Hamlets	1,120	1,190	850	960
HWDSB		2,051.10		1,209.20

Teaching assistants and support staff taken from web site: dcsf.gov.uk and professionals and para-professionals, secretarial and clerical support, consultants HWDSB 2007-08 budget

	07 teaching assistants/EAs	07 other support staff
Tower Hamlets	1,390	730
HWDSB	521	380.50*

Nb, Tower Hamlets has a smaller student enrolment

2 Education part of Integrated Children's Services

When I visited the UK in 1981, I prepared a research paper on Families with Special Needs and their Supports, which looked at support available to families with a special needs child in Oxford UK and in Hamilton Ontario. Even in 1981 services were co-ordinated. I found a family which wrote one letter from overseas to the Medical Officer of health explaining that they were expecting to return to Oxford with a child with a disability, and this one letter activated health, education, and social services. There were quite strong links at that time between health and education. However, the integration of services has moved into a new level with the 2004 Children's Act. Local children's social services are now effectively all under the direction of the Director of Education.

The Act has five principles:

- *Government does not bring up children- parents do- so government needs to do more to back parents and families*
- *All children have the potential to succeed and should go as far as their talents can take them*
- *Children and young people need to enjoy their childhood as well as grow up prepared for adult life*
- *Services need to be shaped by and responsive to children, young people and families, not designed around professional boundaries; and*
- *It is always better to prevent failure than tackle a crisis later.*

Strategic objectives are:

Secure the Wellbeing and Health of Children and Young People;

Covers physical, mental, emotional and sexual health, healthy lifestyles, and choosing not to take illegal drugs

Safeguard the Young and Vulnerable

Covers maltreatment, neglect, sexual exploitation, accidental death and injury, bullying and discrimination, safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school, and includes work of the Children's Aid Societies.

System reform to achieve world class standards and close the gap in educational achievement for disadvantaged children:

Covers ready for school, transitions to and within the school system, achieving and stretching educational standards

Ensure that young people are participating and achieving their potential to 18 and beyond

Covers further education, employment training, ready for employment, and living in household free from low income.

“Every Child Matters: Change for Children” is a follow-up document that recognises amongst others the need for

- *Improvement and integration of universal services- in early years setting, schools and the health service*
- *The reconfiguration of services around the child and family in one place, for example, children's centres, extended (community) schools and the bringing together of professionals in multi-disciplinary teams*
- *The development of a shared responsibility across agencies for safeguarding children and protecting them from harm*

By 2010 most schools are to be Extended Schools or Schools as Hubs to provide:

- Better access to child care
- More support to parents
- Family and adult learning
- Access to specialist services
- Information and advice to families including employment

Emphasis on working together for at Risk Students

Municipalities need to ensure that all children in care have access to high-quality early-years education. School Boards need to make arrangements that provide stability and continuity of education. Plans for the child's care made by Children's Aid societies must not disrupt schooling. Each child in care needs to have a personal education plan, checked every six months by an assigned teacher, to monitor progress so their educational needs do not fall through the cracks.

Children who are Carers

Children who are carers are children who provide unpaid care looking after a relative or a friend who has some form of disability. The census for Tower Hamlets shows that there are 200 young carers providing 20 or more hours of unpaid care and a thousand youth providing less than 20 hours of care. This is thought to be an understatement of the real numbers. 150 children and young people are currently using the municipally funded provision for young carers.

4. English Language learners

ELL learners who arrive in year 3 achieve within 4 years national expectations in reading and math.

WE were impressed how well TH had been able to achieve a diverse workforce. One of the schools we visited had also sent teachers to Bangladesh for a visit where most of their students came from. While assessment of newcomers is done centrally in Hamilton at an assessment centre, which is linked to Community Settlement services, in TH there was a Mother Tongue team for 7 to 11 year olds who assessed reading, writing, speaking, and math in the first language. A teaching assistant may be allocated to the student after the assessment. The model in elementary schools

in TH is to provide a ten week program for an hour a day to 7 to 11 year old refugees through a coordinator and a teaching assistant who shares the refugee's language. Otherwise the students are not withdrawn from regular classes. There are ELL mainstream class teachers in 7 or 8 schools. There are Mother Tongue groups in schools where children are gathered together after school who share the same language to communicate with each other which is a great idea where you have sufficient students and some staff speaking the same language.

As TH has about a 100 newly qualified teachers a year, in-service training is provided every Wednesday afternoon. There is a session on English, reading and math in the ELL context. There is also training of teachers to provide differentiated curriculum. There are also Ethnic Minority Achievement Consultants each linked to two or three schools.

Special Education

Tower Hamlets has more students with a statement (IPRC students) in elementary schools than the national average, and more secondary students with IPRC and with needs but not identified than the national average. In comparison about 15% of all HWDSB students have special needs including non- identified students.

% of Pupils with Special ED Needs elementary schools

	97 with statement	07 with statement	% difference	97 without statement	07 without statement	percentage difference
Tower Hamlets	2	2	0	18	16	-2
London Region	1	2	1	18	17	-1
England	1	1	0	17	18	1

In elementary schools, students with statements (somewhat equivalent to an IPRC) in Tower Hamlets are above the London regional and English average. These are the students with the highest needs. The percentage of students without statements is below London region and English averages.

% of Pupils with Special ED Needs Secondary Schools

	97 with statement	07 with statement	% difference	97 without statement	07 without statement	percentage difference
Tower Hamlets	3	3	0	19	20	1
London Region	2	2	0	19	19	0
England	2	2	0	15	16	1

Special Schools

Tower hamlets has 6 special schools, two for behaviour, one for autism, and two for children with profound cognitive disabilities. In addition there is a boarding school for those with challenging behaviours, where there is also

family breakdown. This is not unusual in the UK, and in fact there were fewer students enrolled in special schools in Tower Hamlets than the national average.

% pupils in special schools

	97	07	% difference
Tower Hamlets	1.4	0.8	-0.6
London Region	1.2	1	-0.2
England	1.2	1.1	-0.1

We visited Stephen Hawkin Primary (elementary) serving children 2 to 11 years of age in a special needs school. Principal was Matthew Rayner. The school was set in an attractive building, built 1996 with interesting art work displayed through out the school. It is funded to provide schooling for 2 years olds. Prior to that the Portage program (an infant stimulation program originally developed in the States) is used in the home. 88 staff (including administrative staff and cleaners) to 73 children and in addition 20 health authority workers. 30 staff turns up in the lunch hour to feed the students. Some of these do additional casual hours in the school. Two community child nurses from the nursing team deal with post operative situations. Consultant paediatrician holds medicals on the school site so children do not have to miss school or be transported to another building.

Multidisciplinary team in the school consisting of school nurse, occupational therapists, speech and language therapist, and physiotherapists. Quoting from the school's document 2007-08, "specialist children's nurse is linked to the TH's Community Children's nursing team" Children's Occupational therapy may give" specialist equipment, individual therapy sessions, therapy programs and advice. WE also visit families at home. We help run parent/therapy groups with physiotherapy and speech and language therapy for our nursery children. Our aim is to teach and show parents how they can be involved in their child's therapy and carry over therapy ideas at home". Speech and language therapist may see children" for active Speech and Language therapy either individually or within groups, with communication targets being integrated into all areas of the child's curriculum". They may also" assess, treat and manage children who present with dysphagia (feeding difficulties).Physiotherapy service " aims to provide therapy and 24 hour management programs that form an integrated part o the child's life, both in the classroom-learning environment and in the context of their family and home life. In school this is achieved by the provision of

- Equipment as part of a daily positioning programs that enable the child to achieve positions that improve their ability to access their environment
- Children's daily stretching and exercise program fro class staff to follow
- Weekly targeted hydrotherapy session
- Regular home visits

In Hamilton these services are provided by two sets of agencies, and the school services do not work with the parents. The working together o f the different therapists is also noted.

The school provides an outreach team to other schools.

School receives \$33,000 per pupil, the maximum amount. Special education funding per pupil is on a sliding scale a through to e, e being the most high needs. The school has a \$1.9 million budget.

Observed a wonderful assembly. There was a great emphasis on sensory stimulation. The principal signed as well as spoke. And there were many songs and associated hand and body movements. Two students who will be leaving the school to go to secondary school were honoured. Both had a display of the things they like to do with their picture, which they had helped make. Each demonstrated what they like to do. The first likes climbing so a small climbing centre had been set up in the room, and he showed us all how he liked to climb, which indeed he did. The second boy liked swimming, and a video was shown of him in the water to his great pleasure. The children were given spray bottles and swimming toys to use.

Saw visual clues for students to the daily program in the classes on the walls. Emphasis was on care and on instruction. Snoozelen room and swimming pool in the school.

Principal was in the midst of dealing with a major issue. The health department had declared that food coming from home must list its contents as nurses were administering liquid food without knowing what the food consisted of. Otherwise they could not feed the children. However, they had given no notice to parents to comply with this new practice

The notice board at the entrance to the school indicated the staff working in the school included drama and music therapists. The school council had 15 members, half men and women.

If a teacher is away, the teacher is not replaced with a supply teacher, but the EA will run the class. This has been determined locally in the school, with such high needs students, to be the best practice for the students.

Common Assessment framework (CAF) consists of psychologists, key named worker, mental health team, medical health authority. This is the body that determines whether a student needs to be formally identified (provided with a statement which must be updated yearly). Children who have been identified go on a national register. Parents are given advice about this process through the Parent Advice Centre.

There are three stages for a student to be registered as having special needs:

The first stage initial concern, school actions, no outside EA. Paid for by school's special needs budget

The second stage involves school actions plus external support such as OT, Speech pathologist, Reading Recovery, Psychologist. Paid out of school' special needs budget.

Stage three is the formal stage where the student's case goes before a panel (IPRC) except the panel consists of wide range of workers: Social worker, psychologist, medical health authority mental health team. Student designated a band of support from A to E. E provides the students with the full range of support, with an EA all the time.

If parents do not agree with the decision of the CAF they can go before a tribunal. Again the Parent Advice Centre would help parents prepare for this.

Principal is the designated Child protection officer in each school, usually with training.

7 Parent Involvement

Has 20 staff in TH co-ordinated by head of Equalities and Parental Engagement. Have two elements: parental **engagement** in schools including family learning information and events; and family and **parenting support**, including parenting programs. (Source Family Support and Parental Engagement Strategy 2007-08 Tower Hamlets)

Tower Hamlets has developed in 2004-5 the Children's and Young People's Plan with a strategic plan to accelerate programs in delivering the outcomes across the five "Every Child Matters" themes. Same framework is used for parents and outline provision across all agencies supporting families in Tower Hamlets. Structures and services in place are listed as universal, targeted or specialist services. (Source Family Support and Parental Engagement Strategy 2007-08 Tower Hamlets)

Provision of Services

Passport to learning

Program encourages volunteering in schools, greater access to college and to paid work. Involves active recruitment of parents from the bilingual community.

Parent Training

Training parents to mentor other parents at key transition points in the school system

Training for parent governance (school councils which have greater authority in UK)

Parent Voice

Trained staffs work with schools to run events for parents.

Others

Residential week-ends and Away Days for parents and families (staffed by EAs)

Workshops

Family fun days

Interpreting courses

Family travel cards

Targeted work with parents of children in year 7 and 8

Parent Advice Centre

10 staff speaking several languages .Staff on phone line to give advice on admissions, on child care and after school care. Provide support to parents when their child is to be considered by a CAF and will help them write their statement of their children's needs. According to a survey in 2006, the service is valued by parents, and was awarded the Chartermark for Excellent Public Services (Source Family Support and Parental Engagement Strategy 2007-08 Tower Hamlets)

Parent Support Advisors act as Home/School co-ordinators.

Produce several documents for parents and agencies working with parents.

8.Literacy and Numeracy

Use Reading Recovery

Lead Teachers are made great use of. However, there are several levels or tiers. The first tier is the demonstration class teacher. Second tier lead teachers support a consultancy team with training in their own school. The third tier lead teachers carry our outreach work in a different school for short periods. Fourth tier lead teachers are used to pilot, write or develop local materials.

At the fifth tier, lead teachers are seconded for own their schools for one day a week or more to work alongside the consultancy team Source "Lead teachers in Tower Hamlets".

Pupil Referral Units

These are units for expelled students. A Home school liaison worker works as a mini social worker. The worker contacts the family, has to work with the child, and will help the family with such matters as getting rehoused.

Ideas Store

An offshoot of the public library and an attempt to make libraries more welcoming to adults with an adult education component. They are store fronts.

Child-care and early learning project

Program run by a seconded ECE worker and a teacher in all child care facilities in the borough. They performed an assessment using the Leaven Scale Observation (from Belgium) at the end of kindergarten about the emotional well being and language of boys and girls. Found a big difference between boys and girls. Boys shone in outdoor learning. Saw for example a boy who inside had no involvement, but was a dramatic change in behavior when the group moved outside. Set out to find settings the parent was comfortable with, in a mainstream approach, but the target was boys and to encourage more outdoor play more informally and also in child care settings. Have provided boots and rain coats to schools also that children can play outside in the rain. Saw many classrooms that opened out to the outdoors for play and work to happen seamlessly between indoors and outdoors. Provide workshops for parents and at Stay and Play sessions and chatterbox sessions for children less than 3 years. Have Mess workshops to encourage sand, mud and water play for children. "Super Hero" activity is aimed at dads. Set out to find parents who were not connected. Ofset (the English inspectorate) reported an outstanding children's service in TH and Shropshire.

Child-Care Provision

Child care is free in Tower Hamlets. (90% of all three year olds and hundred per cent of all four year olds are in free settings.)

Below 3 there are Stay and Play" and "Chatterbox "programs for parents and children. In addition there are 15 Sure Start Children Centres in the borough which offer ante-natal and post natal services. Each Centre has a midwife, public health nurse, children's psychologist, adult psychologist, occupational therapist, breast-feeding support staff, speech and language therapist, and physiotherapist assigned to them. They are informed about new births and newly arrived families with young children in their catchment area. All new mothers are visited within 3 weeks of the birth of their child. They support attendance at weekly Baby café run by midwives, where activities include antenatal support, breastfeeding and weaning advice, as well as home visits to mothers requiring breastfeeding support. Local mothers will be trained in as breastfeeding supporters. (Source Family Support and parental Engagement Strategy 2007-08 Tower Hamlets.

After school services.

Study in secondary schools showed that students who attended after school programs had positive attitudes and progress, as achieved higher points than expectations those who registered in one of more school support activity had an advantage of about a term's work over those who did not.