



**THE ACHIEVEMENT OF POLISH PUPILS IN LAMBETH SCHOOLS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE -  
2023**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This paper considers evidence of Polish achievement in Lambeth schools.

The Polish population has had traditional centres in England, mainly since 1945 after the installation of a Communist government in Poland by the Soviet Union. Many service personnel remained in the UK after demobilisation, initially around Swindon and other military centres. The Polish Immigration Act of 1947, saw British Citizenship offered to over 200,000 displaced Polish troops. It was the first ever mass immigration legislation by a UK government. The 1951 Census showed the Polish population of the UK to number 162,339 people, with settlement in London being Brixton, Earls Court and Lewisham. In 2004 the expansion of the EU included Poland and granted free movement of workers. The 2011 National Census has the Polish population of England at c.614,000.

Data from the 2011 National Census, also shows that Polish is now the second language spoken in England after English.

Data from the ONS shows that 6,451 residents in Lambeth responding to the National Census had Polish as their main language. This is 2.2% of the Lambeth population. In England as a whole, 1% of the population spoke Polish as a main language; in London this figure was 1.9% and Inner London it was 1.7%.

Lambeth are ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in Inner London, and 8<sup>th</sup> in London overall in order of percentage of residents with Polish as their main language. Nationally, Lambeth are 23<sup>rd</sup> in comparison to other Local and Unitary Authorities.

## **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT**

The aim of the report is to examine the achievement of Polish pupils at all key stages. Specific objectives are:

- To study the achievement of Polish pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, and GCSE.
- To study the factors influencing the achievement of Polish pupils.
- To draw policy and research implications.

### 3. THE LA CONTEXT

#### Number of Polish Pupils in Lambeth Schools

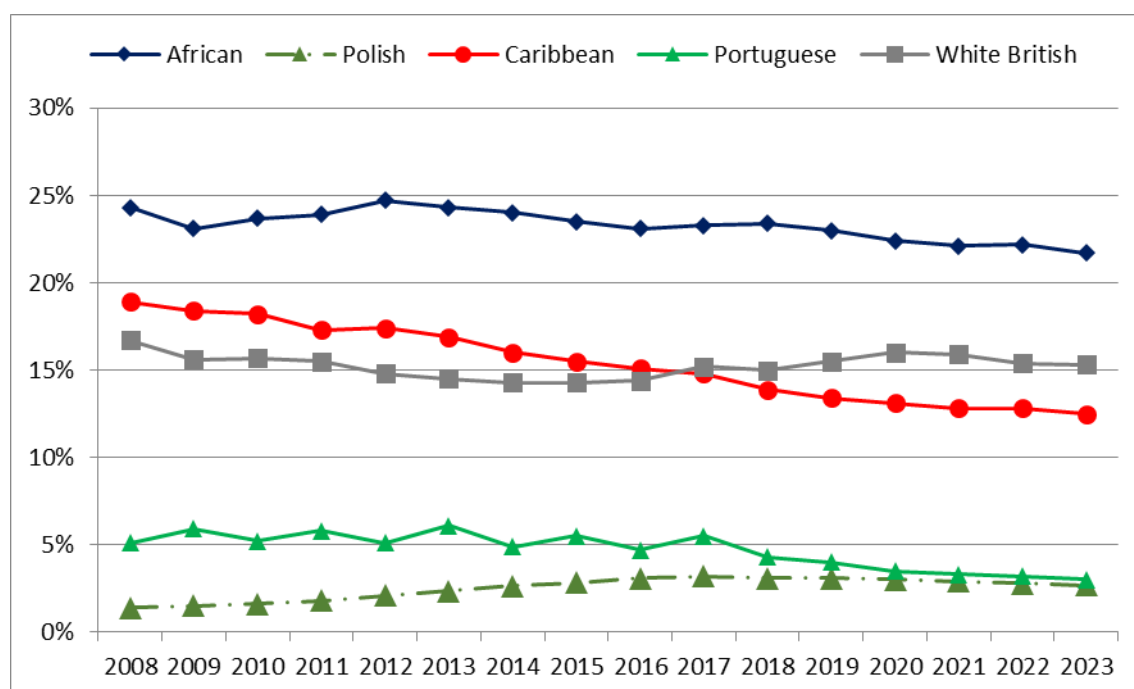
ONS data shows Polish to be the second most spoken language in England after English. Table 1, shows the top ten languages spoken in England as recorded in the 2021 National Census.

**Table 1. Languages other than English and Welsh recorded by Census 2021**

Pos.	Language	No.	Pos.	Language	No.
1	Polish	611,845	6	Spanish	215,062
2	Romanian	471,954	7	Arabic	203,998
3	Panjabi	290,745	8	Bengali	199,495
4	Urdu	269,849	9	Gujurati	188,956
5	Portuguese	224,719	10	Italian	160,010

This research paper considers evidence from Lambeth, an inner London Authority. Lambeth LA is one of the most ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse boroughs in Britain. Approximately 85% of pupils are from black and ethnic minority groups. The 2022 January Schools Census shows that there were 37,163 pupils in the LA's schools. Of these, African pupils formed the largest ethnic group with 22.2% followed by White British (15.4%), Black Caribbean (12.8%), White Other (11.4%), Mixed Other (7.1%), and Portuguese (3.2%).

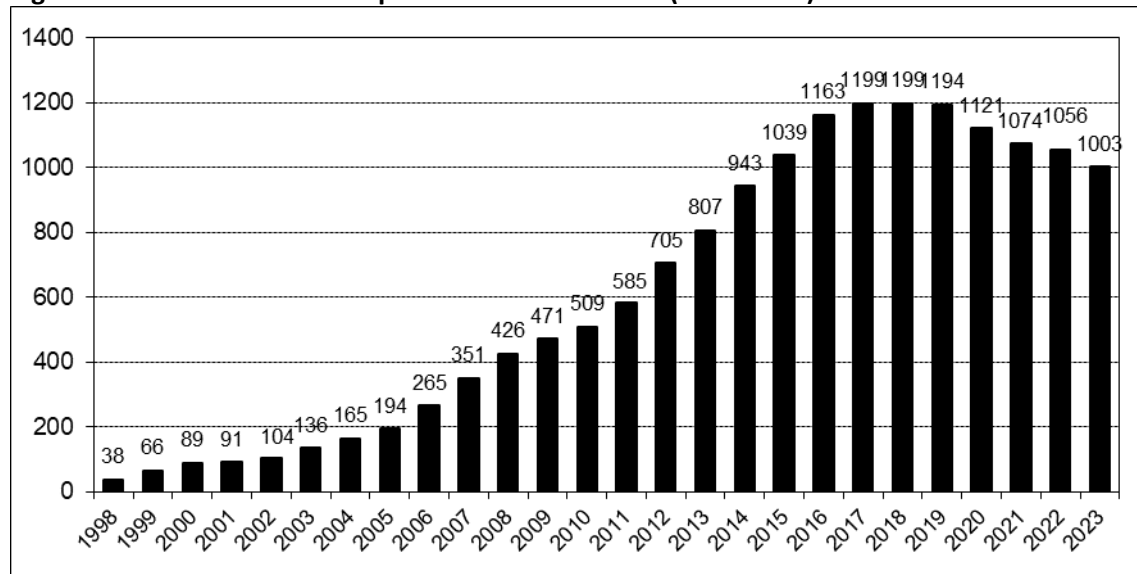
**Figure 1. Changes in the School Composition in the LA by Main Ethnic Group**



There has been a change in the overall composition of the black and ethnic minority population in Lambeth schools. The 1991 census showed that overall 66% of pupils in the LA's schools belonged to black and other ethnic minority communities compared to 85% in 2018.

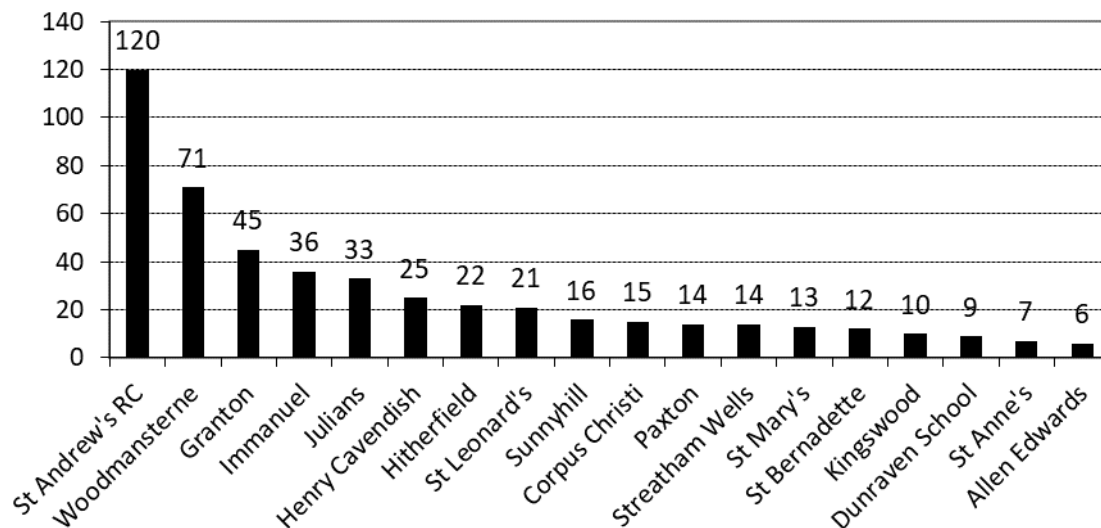
The number of Polish in Lambeth schools has shown a rise from 34 pupils in 1992 (0.1%) to 1003 in 2023 (2.7%).

**Figure 2. Number of Polish Pupils in Lambeth Schools (1998-2023)**



The focus of this research is Lambeth schools. Data on the number of Polish pupils in primary, secondary and special schools, as well as performance data relating to KS1, KS2, and KS4 was analysed. In addition all the LA's schools were asked to provide details of their pupils' backgrounds such as name, date of birth, sex, ethnic background, free school meal eligibility, date of admission or mobility data and level of fluency in English for contextual analysis. Where available we also drew evidence from national data published by the Department for Education (DfE).

**Figure 3. Number of Polish Pupils by Primary School, 2023**

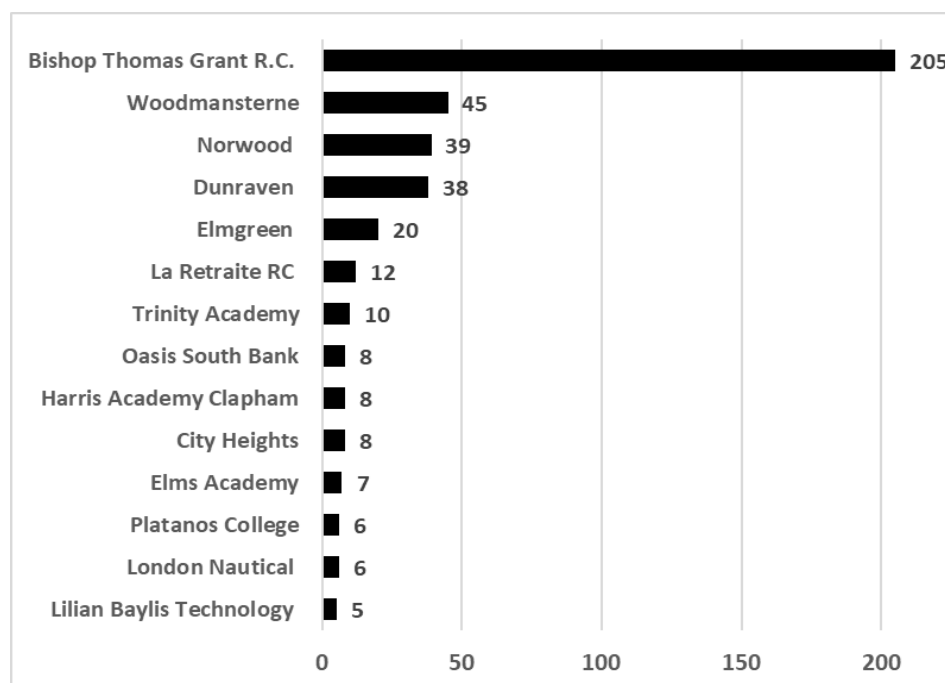


The main findings in figure 2 illustrate that overall numbers of Polish pupils attending Lambeth schools has increased since 1998 from 38 to 1003 in 2023, but peaked in 2018 with 1199 pupils. Figure 3 shows primary schools where six or more Polish pupils were on roll as at January 2023.

Of the top six schools (St Andrew's RC, Woodmansterne, Granton, Immanuel and St Andrew's, Julian's and Henry Cavendish), two are faith schools. And two, Granton and Woodmansterne, are in Streatham Vale, an area of high Polish residence.

The three secondary schools with the highest number of Polish pupils in 2023 (see figure 4) were Bishop Thomas Grant, Woodmansterne and Norwood.

**Figure 4. Number of Polish Pupils by Secondary School, 2023**



### The Dataset

The sample consisted of pupils who completed National Curriculum Assessment tests at the end of KS1, KS2, and KS4. In addition, all the LA's schools were asked to provide details of their pupils' backgrounds such as name, date of birth, sex, ethnic background, free school meal eligibility, date of admission or mobility data and level of fluency in English for contextual analysis. Where available we also drew evidence from national data published by the Department for Education (DfE).

### Measures of Performance

It is important to note that in the English education system, pupils aged 5 to 16 years are taught National Curriculum subjects and are tested in English, mathematics and science. These tests are age dependent and divided into three key stages: KS1, KS2, and KS4. They are intended to show whether children have reached the National Curriculum expected standards at Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2). At the end of KS4, most 15 and 16-year-olds also take General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams. These are the major qualifications taken by pupils at the end of compulsory schooling at the age of 15, and are a series of examinations in the individual subjects the pupils have been studying. In 2016, levels were removed from key stage assessments and instead, pupils' marks in tests indicate whether they have reached the expected threshold for other pupils of their age. Therefore the measure of performance used in the analysis is "expected" or above for KS1 and KS2, and 9 to 4 in both English and Maths, and Attainment 8 and Progress 8 for GCSE. An overall indicator of pupil attainment in KS2 was also derived by taking the average of the Reading and Maths tests (KS2) and pupils attaining the "expected" for all of Reading, Writing and Maths at KS2. At KS1 an overall indicator for Teacher Assessments was taken - English, mathematics and science.

## 4. THE ACHIEVEMENT OF POLISH PUPILS IN LAMBETH SCHOOLS

### Introduction

The next section examines the achievement of Polish students in Lambeth schools at the end of KS1, KS2, and GCSE. Two methodological approaches are used. Firstly, the study looks at the pattern of the performance in the LA to establish the achievement of Polish pupils in Lambeth schools compared to the other main ethnic groups in the UK. This is followed by detailed data analysis of factors affecting the performance of Polish pupils. The main questions posed are:

- How well do Polish pupils perform in Lambeth schools?
- What are the differences in level of attainment at the end of KS1, KS2, and GCSE between schools?
- What are the factors influencing performance?

Broadly speaking, Polish pupils are found within the wider definition of 'Other White' in national level data. As a result of this lack of data there are limitations in past research into Polish achievement in British schools. The absence of national comparative data which identifies patterns of children of Polish origin, places serious constraints on affecting targeting policy and practice developments at national and local level. It is also important to note that some LAs' Polish populations are very small and so any percentages are prone to large fluctuations. In all tables below, Polish results are also included in White Other results, and Somali included in African.

### KS1 and KS2 Trend Evidence

Despite the lack of national data on Polish pupil achievement, since 1990 Lambeth has collected data on this group via the Language Survey which has provided an interesting example in research evidence. The following section outlines outcomes and trends for Polish pupils and other ethnic groups within Lambeth over the past years.

**Table 2. KS1 Attainment by Ethnic Background (2013-2023)**

Ethnic Group	Key Stage 1 Average (Reading, Writing, Maths)									
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023	
African	77%	79%	81%	74%	78%	78%	77%	69%	67%	
Somali	72%	76%	78%	75%	77%	74%	75%	71%	63%	
Black Other	72%	74%	86%	71%	71%	66%	71%	57%	66%	
Caribbean	71%	73%	76%	71%	70%	73%	68%	55%	54%	
<i>Polish</i>	77%	78%	82%	72%	86%	79%	82%	73%	76%	
Portuguese	62%	64%	62%	63%	61%	69%	67%	59%	58%	
White British	83%	87%	86%	83%	85%	83%	84%	82%	82%	
White Other	78%	78%	80%	74%	79%	77%	80%	72%	72%	
<b>Lambeth -all</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>68%</b>	
<b>National</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>66%</b>	

*Note: For KS1 there are no levels after 2015 and pupils are calculated whether they have met the "expected" for their age group.*



The performance of Somali pupils has also been included in this table (and the other key stage tables), and this group is a subset of the African data. Polish is a subgroup of the White Other ethnic grouping.

The gap between Polish and White British (the strongest performers) is 6 percentage points in 2023. This is a change from 2023 when the gap was 9 percentage points. White British perform the highest at KS1 with 82%.

**Table 3. KS2 Attainment by Ethnic Background (2013-2023)**

Ethnic Group	Reading and maths average			RWM					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023
African	90%	90%	92%	60%	70%	69%	72%	60%	63%
<i>Somali</i>	92%	91%	92%	62%	71%	72%	68%	60%	63%
Black Other	91%	85%	94%	65%	67%	66%	61%	43%	55%
Caribbean	87%	86%	87%	51%	62%	57%	60%	47%	49%
<i>Polish</i>	98%	95%	94%	58%	62%	80%	78%	70%	84%
Portuguese	88%	85%	86%	43%	54%	55%	54%	52%	56%
White British	96%	95%	96%	79%	80%	82%	80%	77%	78%
White Other	92%	95%	92%	63%	71%	74%	74%	65%	73%
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>

From 2016 onwards there are no levels of assessment at KS2 with pupils calculated on whether they have met the “expected” standard for their age group.

**Table 3a KS2 Attainment by Ethnic Background (2022-2023)**

	2022				2023				RWM +/-
	Reading	Writ TA	Maths	RWM	Reading	Writ TA	Maths	RWM	
African	77%	71%	72%	60%	75%	75%	79%	63%	+3%
<i>Somali</i>	76%	83%	87%	60%	77%	72%	80%	63%	+3%
Black Other	63%	57%	57%	43%	68%	62%	72%	55%	+12%
Caribbean	70%	64%	58%	47%	67%	64%	62%	49%	+2%
<i>Polish</i>	84%	76%	85%	70%	87%	86%	92%	84%	+14%
Portuguese	71%	67%	73%	52%	73%	69%	76%	56%	+4%
White British	87%	83%	85%	77%	88%	85%	85%	78%	+1%
White Other	79%	73%	81%	65%	81%	79%	85%	73%	+8%
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>+3%</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>+1%</b>

The performance of Polish pupils has been above the national average in each of the last four years. Polish pupils are highest of the major ethnicities with 84% at the expected standard compared to White British 78%, White Other 73%, African 63% and Somali 63%.

## GCSE Results

**Table 4. English and Maths 9 to 4/A\*-C Attainment by Ethnic Background**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023	+/- 19-23
African	66%	61%	65%	64%	75%	69%	+5%
<i>Somali</i>	81%	60%	78%	59%	67%	67%	+8%
Black Other	62%	53%	62%	37%	57%	51%	+14%
Caribbean	45%	50%	43%	47%	52%	48%	+1%
<i>Polish</i>	68%	56%	76%	78%	81%	86%	+8%
Portuguese	59%	58%	47%	50%	72%	62%	+12%
White British	67%	60%	63%	64%	65%	68%	+4%
White Other	71%	65%	71%	67%	71%	70%	+3%
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>+4%</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>+1%</b>

From 2017 the grading system changed from alpha to numerical, so grade 9 to 4 is the equivalent to A\* to C. Results remain comparable year on year.

Polish pupils achieved 86% at 9 to 4 in English and Maths this year. This is an increase from 2022 of eight percentage points. The increasingly larger number of Polish pupils are above both Lambeth and the national average.

New GCSE indicators mean that “5 or more A\* to C including English and Maths” has now been superseded by new indicators so the DfE are no longer releasing national data at a socio-economic level. Instead, the new progress measures of Attainment 8 and Progress 8 have been introduced in 2016. Table 5, shows the achievement over the last 2 years of Polish pupils at Attainment 8 and Progress 8.

**Table 5. Attainment 8 and Progress 8 by Ethnic Background**

	Attainment 8				Progress 8			
	Lambeth		National		Lambeth		National	
	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
African	48.1	45.9	50.8	48.6	-0.02	0.14	0.35	0.37
<i>Somali</i>	44.2	43.6	47.8	45.4	-0.30	-0.03	0.24	0.25
Black Other	41.4	40.6	46.8	44.2	-0.41	-0.33	0.11	0.09
Caribbean	37.8	35.5	41.6	39.9	-0.73	-0.58	-0.33	-0.24
<i>Polish</i>	58.3	59.6	51.3	49.9	0.68	1.02	0.57	0.51
Portuguese	49.8	45.4	46.0	43.2	0.28	0.38	0.47	0.44
White British	47.8	47.9	47.6	44.8	-0.38	-0.03	-0.18	-0.18
White Other	50.8	50.4	50.7	48.3	0.48	0.55	0.49	0.46
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>46.3</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>47.2</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>-0.15</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-0.06</b>	<b>-0.06</b>

The Attainment 8 measure is calculated using a pupil’s best eight GCSE results, then averaging the results for the school, LA and different socio-economic factors. It is worth noting that if the Attainment 8 score is divided by 10 this gives an average grade. Therefore, an Attainment 8 score of 50 is equivalent to an average grade of 5 across all eight subjects. So, when we compare, for example in 2023, Lambeth’s score of 44.7 with the national of 44.6, they are practically the same average grade terms.

In 2023 Polish pupils scored above the Lambeth average of 44.7 with an Attainment 8 score of 59.6. Of ethnic groups with a cohort more than 30 pupils, the highest attainers were Polish at 59.6, followed by White Other (inc. Polish) 50.4, Portuguese 49.8 then White British 47.9.

Lowest were Black Caribbean with an Attainment 8 score of 35.5.

Progress 8 is a value added measure of the progress a student makes from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 by comparing the pupil's average grade and the average grade achieved by those pupils on a similar starting point/prior attainment. A positive score shows a higher progress than similar pupils. Likewise, a negative score shows lower progress. Nationally, Progress 8 is always statistically close to zero. When interpreting scores it is important to note that a score of +1.00 is equivalent to a pupil, institution or socio-economic group achieving on average one grade higher than pupils with a similar KS2 starting point nationally. Equally, -1.00 is one grade lower, +0.20 one fifth grade higher, -0.50 about a half grade lower etc.

Lambeth's Progress 8 score increased from -0.12 in 2017 to 0.00 in 2023, which is an increase in about a tenth of a grade per pupil.

Polish pupils scored 1.02 in 2023. Highest performers were Polish with 1.02 followed by White Other at 0.55. Lowest performers were Black Caribbean at -0.58, followed by Black Other at -0.33.

In interpretation, this may show good progress from a low starting point by Polish and White Other, and indeed African pupils, possibly due to language acquisition at KS2. However, it also shows not as good progress by White British and Caribbean.

Nationally, in 2023, White Other pupils, which include Polish, had a Progress 8 score of +0.46.

## 5. FACTORS AFFECTING ACHIEVEMENT OF POLISH PUPILS

Four factors that are helpful in understanding the effect of background factors on attainment of Polish pupils in schools were considered - eligibility for free school meals (FSM), gender, pupil mobility and level of fluency in English. The findings from table 6 show that Polish pupils are less disadvantaged. For example, the table shows that pupils eligible for FSM at each Key Stage are lower than the Lambeth average of 22%.

**Table 6. Social Characteristics of Polish pupils in Lambeth schools by Key Stage Cohorts 2023**

Key Stages	Total Cohort	Gender		FSM (%)	English Proficiency		Mobility rate
		Boys (%)	Girls (%)		Stage A-D Not fluent in English	Stage E Fully fluent in English	
Key Stage 1	71	44	56	14	83%	13%	8%
Key Stage 2	111	54	46	14	62%	35%	4%
Key Stage 4	69	54	46	13	65%	26%	0%

### Gender Differences and Achievement

**Table 7: Polish Pupils KS1, KS2, and GCSE Performance in Lambeth by Gender - 2023**

Key Stages		All Polish pupils	Boys	Girls	Gap Girls-Boys
1KS1 - Expected	Reading	75%	68%	80%	+12%
	Writing	73%	68%	78%	+10%
	Maths	79%	77%	80%	+3%
	Average	76%	71%	79%	+8%
KS2 - Expected	Reading	87%	87%	88%	+1%
	Maths	92%	93%	90%	-3%
	Writing TA	86%	85%	88%	+3%
	All RWM	84%	82%	86%	+4%
GCSE	Progress 8	1.02	0.59	1.51	+0.92
	Attainment 8	59.6	54.8	65.3	+10.5
	EBacc APS	5.69	5.16	6.30	+1.14
	9 to 4 EM	86%	78%	94%	+16%

For the Polish cohort, gender outcomes in 2023 show girls performing better than boys in all Key Stages.

Table 8 below, shows that the usual trend for most of the major ethnicities in Lambeth is for all key stages to be higher for girls.

**Table 8: Lambeth KS2 and GCSE Performance by Ethnicity and Gender 2018 to 2023**

Ethnic Group	Year	KS2 (Reading, Writing, Maths)				9 to 4 (A*-C) English and Maths			
		All	Boys	Girls	Gap	All	Boys	Girls	Gap
African	2018	69%	67%	72%	+5%	65%	62%	69%	+7%
	2019	72%	66%	78%	+12%	64%	57%	69%	+12%
	2022	60%	56%	63%	+7%	75%	67%	81%	+14%
	2023	63%	56%	69%	13%	69%	66%	71%	+5%
Somali	2018	72%	70%	74%	+4%	78%	74%	81%	+6%
	2019	68%	59%	75%	+16%	59%	47%	74%	+27%
	2022	60%	54%	64%	+10%	67%	62%	79%	+17%
	2023	63%	65%	61%	-4%	67%	69%	65%	-4%
Caribbean	2018	57%	54%	59%	+5%	43%	36%	49%	+14%
	2019	60%	55%	65%	+10%	47%	44%	50%	+6%
	2022	47%	39%	56%	+17%	52%	49%	54%	+5%
	2023	49%	46%	52%	+6%	48%	44%	51%	+7%
Portuguese	2018	55%	49%	61%	+12%	47%	47%	48%	+1%
	2019	55%	51%	60%	+9%	50%	45%	56%	+11%
	2022	52%	48%	55%	+7%	72%	71%	72%	+1%
	2023	56%	44%	66%	+22%	62%	60%	66%	+6%
Polish	2018	80%	70%	87%	+17%	76%	59%	90%	+31%
	2019	78%	85%	92%	+7%	78%	79%	76%	-3%
	2022	70%	70%	69%	-1%	81%	86%	74%	-12%
	2023	84%	82%	86%	+4%	86%	78%	94%	+16%
White British	2018	82%	76%	88%	+12%	63%	59%	66%	+7%
	2019	80%	82%	79%	-3%	64%	60%	70%	+10%
	2022	77%	75%	80%	+5%	65%	66%	64%	-2%
	2023	78%	73%	83%	+10%	68%	65%	71%	+6%
Lambeth	2018	70%	66%	74%	+8%	60%	57%	63%	+6%
	2019	71%	68%	74%	+6%	59%	55%	62%	+7%
	2022	61%	57%	65%	+8%	66%	64%	68%	+4%
	2023	64%	60%	68%	+8%	63%	60%	65%	+5%
National	2018	64%	61%	68%	+7%	59%	56%	64%	+8%
	2019	65%	60%	70%	+10%	60%	56%	64%	+8%
	2022	59%	54%	63%	+7%	64%	61%	67%	+6%
	2023	60%	56%	63%	+7%	61%	62%	67%	+5%

### Social Background and Achievement

The free school meals variable is often used as a proxy measure of the extent of social deprivation in pupils' backgrounds and has been linked to underachievement in a number of studies (Gillborn and Youdell, 2002; Demie, 2001). School level data demonstrates a clear relationship between the concentration of poverty levels in schools and tests and examination results. The proportion of Polish pupils taking KS2 in 2023 who were eligible for free school meals (FSM) was 14%, and for the GCSE cohort it was 13%. At the end of primary education, 69% of eligible Polish pupils achieved the expected KS2 result in Reading, Writing and Maths, whereas 86% of pupils who were not eligible achieved this standard. This leaves a gap of 17 percentage points. GCSE data shows 78% of pupils on free school meals gained grade 9 to 4 in English and Maths this year, compared to 87% of those not eligible. There were only 9 pupils eligible for FSM so it is hard to read into the gap of 9 percentage points. Overall, the findings

from the LA data confirm that pupils eligible for school meals often performed considerably below their more affluent peers.

**Table 9. Performance of Polish pupils by Free School Meal status (2022 & 2023)**

Key Stage		2022			2023		
		Free Meals	Paid Meals	Gap	Free Meals	Paid Meals	Gap
KS1 - Expected	Reading	67%	70%	+3	70%	75%	+5%
	Writing	67%	70%	+3	70%	74%	+4%
	Maths	67%	84%	+17	70%	80%	+10%
	Average	67%	75%	+8	70%	77%	+7%
KS2 - Expected	Reading	59%	89%	+30	81%	88%	+7%
	Maths	59%	90%	+31	88%	93%	+5%
	Writing TA	53%	80%	+27	75%	88%	+13%
	All RWM	41%	76%	+35	69%	86%	+17%
GCSE	Progress 8	-0.10	+0.84	+0.94	+1.47	+0.96	+0.51
	Attainment 8	46.1	60.1	+14.0	61.7	59.3	+2.4
	EBacc APS	4.42	5.75	+1.33	5.89	5.66	0.23
	9 to 4 EM	63%	85%	+22	78%	87%	+9%

There are also some striking differences within the main ethnic groups when the data is further analysed by eligibility for free school meals. Table 10, below shows that at GCSE, 53% of Black Caribbean pupils not eligible for free school meals achieved 9 to 4 in English and Maths, compared with 40% of pupils who were eligible; a gap of 18 percentage points. There was a much larger gap for White British pupils of 41 percentage points. This finding underlines the importance of treating any measure of school or LA performance which does not include the influence of background factors such as social class and deprivation, with scepticism. As we have argued in the previous section, our analysis is not complete because of a lack of data on social class. Care must be taken in generalizing the results particularly of White British pupils from this study to a wider context.

A number of studies have confirmed that London's white population is not representative of the social class composition of White pupils more generally in the UK and tends to be more skewed towards people with a working class background (Demie, 2001). Because of the social class profile, 'it is possible that in inner London, low attainment by white working class pupils is a particular issue, and that markedly different results might be found in a less disadvantaged rural setting. Further research into populations outside inner London is clearly required (Strand, 1999, p199).

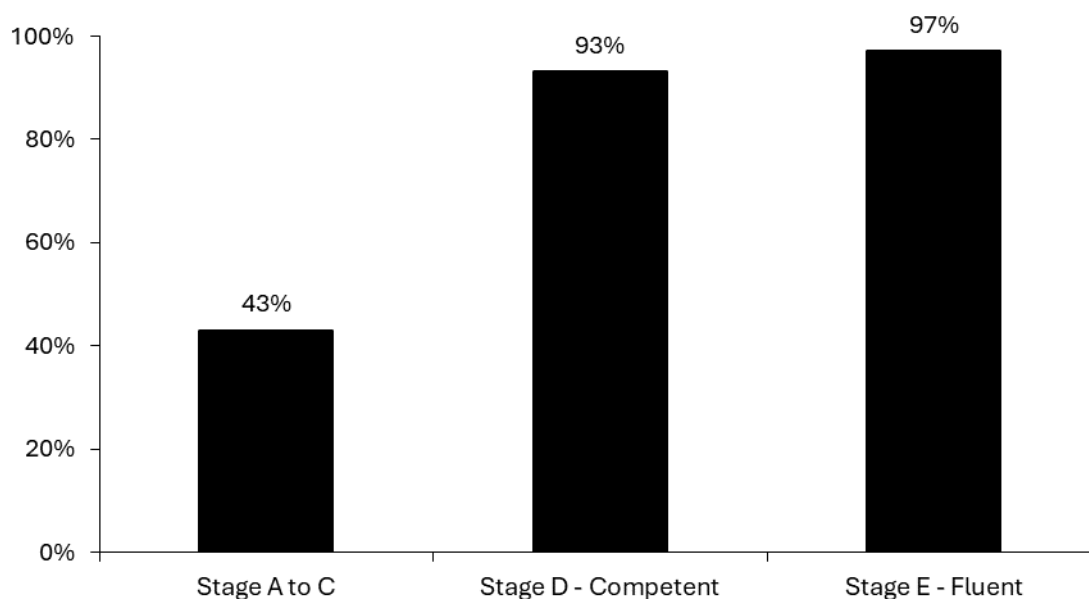
**Table 10. Performance by Key Stage, FSM and Ethnic Background in Lambeth, 2023**

	KS2 Reading Writing Maths (% Expected)			9 to 4 English and Maths		
	% of pupils eligible	Eligible	Not Eligible	% of pupils eligible	Eligible	Not Eligible
African	56%	61%	66%	45%	64%	73%
<i>Somali</i>	57%	60%	67%	46%	61%	72%
Caribbean	56%	60%	76%	53%	40%	58%
Polish	14%	81%	88%	13%	78%	87%
Portuguese	41%	62%	51%	39%	52%	69%
White British	20%	70%	92%	27%	38%	79%
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>70%</b>

### English Language Acquisition and Achievement

Another important factor relating to ethnic background and Polish achievement is English language acquisition. For students to have access to the curriculum it is clear that they need to be fluent in the language of instruction. Some students of Polish heritage are fluent in English while others may not be. A number of studies have explored the relationship between English fluency and pupil attainment. Demie and Strand (2005) examined the results at KS2 and GCSE whilst at the same time controlling for age, gender, free school meals, ethnic background and mobility rate. The results indicated that pupils who spoke English as an additional language scored significantly lower than those who spoke English as first language or were fluent in English.

**Figure 5. Key Stage 2 Attainment of Polish Pupils by Stage of English Fluency 2022**



Tables 11 and 12 give the performance at KS1 and KS2 by stage of English Acquisition. Polish pupils' performance at KS1 and KS2 increases as the stage of proficiency in English increases. Bilingual Polish speakers who were fully fluent in English were more likely to gain the expected standard than those at the early stages of English acquisition.

**Table 11. KS1 Average Attainment by Ethnicity and Fluency in English – 2023**

Proficiency	African		Polish		Somali		Portuguese		White British	
	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result
Stages A to C – Non-Fluent	228	58%	45	65%	59	57%	39	51%	12	47%
Stage D - Competent	73	80%	14	98%	9	85%	15	78%	6	89%
Stage E - Fluent	53	89%	9	96%	6	94%	6	78%	7	90%
English Only	143	67%	0	n/a	0	n/a	4	25%	416	84%
<b>All Pupils</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>82%</b>

**Table 12. KS2 Reading, Writing and Maths Attainment by Ethnicity and Fluency in English – 2023**

Proficiency	African		Polish		Somali		Portuguese		White British	
	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result
Stages A to C – Non-Fluent	126	48%	23	43%	43	49%	25	32%	2	100%
Stage D - Competent	180	66%	45	93%	46	67%	39	62%	5	80%
Stage E - Fluent	170	78%	39	97%	24	65%	23	74%	16	100%
English Only	114	52%	0	n/a	0	n/a	1	0%	425	76%
<b>All Pupils</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>78%</b>

Analysis of GCSE results also shows that fluency in English continues to have an influence on the performance of pupils with EAL (see table 12). Overall empirical evidence at the end of primary and secondary education from the authority suggests pupils in the early stages of fluency perform at very low levels, while bilingual pupils who are reasonably proficient in English perform better, on average, than English only speakers despite some yearly fluctuations. Polish pupils assessed as fully fluent in English tend to perform above the local and national averages at all key stages. It is also worth remembering here that many Polish children who have moved to the UK will have had some exposure to the English language whilst in school in Poland.

**Table 13. 9 to 4 English & Maths Attainment by Ethnicity and Proficiency in English – 2023**

Proficiency	African		Somali		Polish		Portuguese		White British	
	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result
Stages A to C – Non-Fluent	16	19%	4	0%	24	86%	7	57%	5	80%
Stage D - Competent	42	64%	11	45%	17	76%	15	67%	7	57%
Stage E - Fluent	203	74%	50	70%	18	89%	22	73%	13	46%
English Only	106	73%	0	n/a	0	n/a	1	0%	225	73%
<b>All Pupils</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>68%</b>

\*We do not have access to some Academy EAL fluency so figures may not add to total

There are also some striking differences within the main ethnic groups when the KS2 and GCSE data is further analysed by levels of fluency in English. Tables 11, 12 and 13 show that performance for all main ethnic groups increases when combined with improved English acquisition amongst the bilingual cohort. These findings support a number of studies that have explored the relationship between English fluency and pupil attainment. Demie and Strand



(2005) examined the results at KS2 and GCSE whilst at the same time controlling for age, gender, free school meals, ethnic background and mobility rate.

The results indicated that pupils who were at the early stages of fluency achieved significantly lower outcomes than those who spoke English as a first language, or were fully fluent in English. These findings offer much encouragement for policy makers and school improvement practitioners. They demonstrate that once the language barrier is overcome, it is possible to attain good levels of achievement for all key stages.

### Pupil Mobility and Achievement

It is now widely recognised that mobility can have an adverse effect on educational attainment. Mobile pupils are those who join or leave a school at a point other than at the age they would normally start or finish their education at a school. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector reported that high pupil mobility was one of the greatest problems, if not the greatest problem that any school can face.

**Table 14. Attainment of Polish Pupils by Mobility 2019 & 2022**

Key Stage		2022			2023		
		Non-mobile	Mobile	Gap	Non-mobile	Mobile	Gap
KS2 - Expected	Reading	84%	83%	+1	89%	50%	+39
	Maths	85%	83%	+2	93%	50%	+43
	Writing TA	76%	67%	+9	89%	25%	+64
	RWM	70%	67%	+3	86%	25%	+61
GCSE % achieving	A*-C (9-4) EM	81%	n/a	n/a	86%	n/a	n/a
	Attainment 8	57.7	n/a	n/a	59.6	n/a	n/a
	Progress 8	0.67	n/a	n/a	1.02	n/a	n/a

Non-mobile pupils were more likely than their mobile peers of the same ethnicity to gain the expected level. Tables 14 and 15 illustrate this point with, on average, Polish pupils who spent all of KS2 in the same school achieving better than the Year 4 and 5 arrivals. Those Polish pupils who joined late in the key stage have shown improvements in their attainment this year, although the small cohort sizes involved should be borne in mind. Only 4 pupils were mobile at KS2 and 0 at KS4. Only 1 pupil was mobile outside of year 7 entry at KS4.

**Table 15. Polish Pupil Average Attainment by Length of Time Spent in School, 2022 & 2023**

Key stage	Mobility by Length of Time Spent in School	Number		Performance	
		2022	2023	2022	2023
KS2 – Reading, Writing, Maths	Joined in Year 3 or before	93	107	70%	86%
	Joined in Year 4&5	4	3	100%	33%
	Joined in Year 6	2	1	0%	0%
A*-C (9-4) English and Maths	Joined in Year 7	45	68	84%	84%
	Joined in Year 8&9	2	1	0%	100%
	Joined in Year 10	0	0	n/a	n/a
	Joined in Year 11	0	0	n/a	n/a

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

### CONCLUSIONS

In this study we examined achievement of Polish pupils in schools. A number of conclusions can be drawn from key stages and GCSE evidence. The findings of the case study LA and national data suggest that:

- Data from Key Stage 2 to GCSE shows that over the last 7 years, Polish pupils have performed in line with or above the Lambeth average, apart from very occasional fluctuations.
- Polish children are amongst the highest achievers in Lambeth on average.
- Polish pupils are less disadvantaged than many of their cohort from other ethnicities and nationalities, with eligibility for FSM half that of the Lambeth average.

### Implications for Future Research

The LA data shows that Polish children are high achievers in Lambeth schools, despite English being a second language:

- Are some pupils born in the UK?
- How did they learn English; at home or school?
- Did those pupils who emigrated from Poland to the UK learn some English in Poland?
- To what extent was their understanding of English on their arrival?

The body of available research suggests that there is lack of research into factors that contribute to educational success and high academic achievement among ethnic minority groups in the United Kingdom. Recent research into other ethnic groups including Somali, Black African and Black Caribbean by the LA (McKenely et al 2003; Demie et al 2004 and 2007) has identified characteristics of successful schools and discussed in detail these features including strong and purposeful leadership, high expectation for all pupils and teachers, effective use of data, effective teaching and learning, and developing an inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of underachieving groups.

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**Appendix 3. Key Stage 1 - 4 Performance for Polish Pupils 2017 - 2023 - By Gender**

	KS1 Expected				KS2 Expected				GCSE			
	Read	Writ	Maths	Av	Read	Wri	Mat	RWM	Progress 8	Attainment 8	AC EM	EBacc APS
<b>Polish All Pupils</b>												
2017	85%	82%	90%	86%	74%	71%	86%	62%	+0.49	47.3	56%	
2018	80%	75%	82%	79%	86%	88%	91%	80%	+0.85	57.1	76%	5.44
2019	83%	78%	85%	82%	84%	87%	93%	78%	+1.09	57.8	78%	5.50
2022	69%	69%	82%	73%	84%	76%	85%	70%	+0.89	62.3	86%	5.97
2023	75%	73%	79%	76%	87%	86%	92%	84%	+1.02	59.6	86%	5.69
<b>Polish Boys</b>												
2017	79%	79%	92%	83%	75%	67%	94%	61%	-0.11	48.1	62%	
2018	83%	74%	83%	80%	76%	80%	93%	68%	0.33	49.5	59%	4.67
2019	80%	73%	85%	79%	80%	85%	91%	85%	+0.85	55.9	79%	5.09
2022	58%	58%	81%	66%	83%	77%	87%	70%	+0.35	51.1	74%	4.87
2023	68%	68%	77%	71%	87%	85%	93%	82%	+0.59	54.8	78%	5.16
<b>Polish Girls</b>												
2017	91%	85%	88%	88%	73%	76%	78%	62%	+0.68	46.5	50%	
2018	76%	78%	80%	78%	92%	92%	90%	87%	+1.28	63.4	90%	6.08
2019	87%	83%	85%	85%	89%	91%	96%	92%	+0.28	59.6	76%	5.87
2022	76%	76%	82%	78%	85%	74%	82%	69%	+0.67	57.7	81%	5.52
2023	80%	78%	80%	79%	88%	88%	90%	86%	+1.51	65.3	94%	6.30

