

London the capital of private tuition

Over two-fifths (43%) of young people in London reported having received private tuition in some form during their school years, an increase from 36% in 2005.

The finding comes from a survey of 2,447 11-16 year old students in state schools by Ipsos MORI, which revealed that the proportions of students taking private tuition has increased in five years from 18% to 22% nationally.

The scale of paid-for tutoring in London, though, is significantly higher than in any other area – the South East region is second with 28%, while Yorkshire and Humber is lowest with 11%.

The survey also found that double the proportion of pupils from urban compared with rural areas say they have received private/home tuition (24% compared with 12%). This is a slight increase since 2005, when almost one in five young people from urban areas (19%) - compared with 12% from rural areas - received tuition.

The majority of students reported that they had received tuition to help them do well in a particular exam or to improve their school work generally.

Sir Peter Lampl, Chairman of the Sutton Trust, commented:

"The fact that approaching half the children in London have received private tuition is staggering, and reflects the relative affluence of the capital, increased competition for school places and, perhaps, some parental concerns over the quality of their children's schooling.

The danger is that this boom in paid-for tutoring will widen the gap between the haves and have-nots. We already know that better-off parents are more likely to access private schools and to monopolise the highest-performing state schools. This survey suggests that some parents are also increasingly supplementing their children's education with extra lessons. With fees of £30 an hour or more, this is simply not an option for many families.

The survey also hints at what we might expect as the recession goes on – hard-pressed parents opting for the state rather than private sector, but paying for additional help, as well as families investing more in getting students past entrance exams into high-performing state grammar schools."