

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-primary-schools-breathing-in-filthiest-air-in-the-country-a3087756.html>

Children at seven primary schools in and around London are breathing in some of the filthiest air in the country, a study has revealed.

Schools in Holborn, Hammersmith, Hounslow and Slough are among the 10 most polluted in the country, with more than 150 tons of nitrogen dioxide pumped out annually in the square kilometre surrounding each.

The Sunday Times reports up to 3,000 schools are in areas where annual NO₂ emissions top 25 tons per square kilometre, which is six times the national average.

The newspaper crunched government data released by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to create the league.

Although Moat Community College in Leicester tops the list, the next seven positions are all occupied by schools in or near the capital.

More than 200 tons of NO₂ are released into the air near Pippins School in Slough, which is in the shadow of Heathrow airport and a motorway junction.

St Paul's C of E Primary School and Larmenier and Sacred Heart RC Primary School in Hammersmith are next, followed by St Joseph's RC Primary School in Holborn, St Clement Danes C of E Primary School and St George the Martyr C of E Primary School, all within the same hotspot.

Cranford Primary School in Hounslow is just behind with 164 tons of NO₂ per square kilometre per year.

Air quality expert Frank Kelly, professor of environmental health at King's College, told the paper: "It is clear that children attending very many schools are breathing polluted air for all the years they are a pupil."

Defra appeared to lay responsibility for dealing with air quality at the door of headteachers.

“Schools must have a health-and-safety policy for which the head teacher is responsible,” the department told The Sunday Times.

St Joseph’s RC Primary School and the two around it are in the centre of TfL’s ultra-low emission zone, set to impose new lower emissions limits for vehicles in and around the City from 2020.

But the other London schools fall outside it.

Cllr Wesley Harcourt, Hammersmith and Fulham's environment chief, said: "It is critical that air quality improves in Hammersmith and Fulham, particularly around schools.

"We have set up a resident-led commission that is proposing local solutions, but we urgently need action from the Mayor and the government. We have some of London's busiest roads and we're under the heavily-polluting Heathrow flight path. We're pushing the Mayor to replace Hammersmith Flyover with a tunnel and we're fighting the government all the way on plans to expand Heathrow, both of which are critical decisions for air quality."

Camden Council has been contacted for comment.