Research into religiously selective admissions criteria

About the Fair Admissions Campaign

The Fair Admissions Campaign wants all state-funded schools in England and Wales to be open equally to all children, without regard to religion or belief. The Campaign is supported by a wide coalition of individuals and national and local organisations. We hold diverse views on whether or not the state should fund faith schools. But we all believe that faith-based discrimination in access to schools that are funded by the taxpayer is wrong in principle and a cause of religious, ethnic, and socio-economic segregation, all of which are harmful to community cohesion. It is time it stopped.

Supporters of the campaign include the Accord Coalition, Humanists UK, Professor Ted Cantle and the iCoCo Foundation, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, British Muslims for Secular Democracy, the Campaign for State Education, the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, the Christian think tank Ekklesia, the Hindu Academy, the Green Party, the Liberal Democrat Education Association, Liberal Youth, the Local Schools Network, Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign, the Runnymede Trust, the Socialist Educational Association, and the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.

Introduction

The aim of this review is to present the diversity of contemporary information, evidence, and research on 'faith' schools and religious selection in a digestible and easy to access form. It is our hope that the document will be of assistance to researchers, journalists, campaigners, policy-makers, and members of the public alike and will promote a considered and informed debate.

Sources date from 2001 to the present day, with the majority in the last five years, and have been arranged below in reverse chronological order. Bold emphases have been added throughout.

If you would like any further information about the contents of the report, are aware of any research that should be included, or are interested in hearing more about the work of the Fair Admissions Campaign, please contact us at info@fairadmissions.org.uk. New research will be added to the review on a rolling basis.

Overview

Religious selection

Religiously selective state secondary schools in England and Wales account for 19% of all mainstream state secondary schools. The vast majority are Roman Catholic or Church of England and Church in Wales, while there are a smaller number of generically 'Christian', Jewish, Muslim, and other minority religious schools that employ religious selection.

In 2013-14 and again in 2014-15 we examined all these admissions policies in order to establish, for the first time ever, the extent to which their oversubscription criteria permit religious selection. This research was published in December 2013.[1] It found that 72% of places at these schools (430,000), or 13% of all mainstream state secondary school places, are subject to religious selection if the schools are oversubscribed. From this we estimated that 17% of all mainstream state primary school places, or 770,000, are similarly religiously selective.

We found large variations in the degree of secondary religious selection. 99.8% of places at Roman Catholic schools are subject to religious selection, as were over 90% of places at both Jewish and Muslim schools. On the other hand just 10.9% of generically Christian and 49.7% of CofE places were religiously selected, owing to the fact that many generically Christian and Church of England schools have their admissions criteria set by their local authority, who may or may not allow for religious selection. If we just focus on those CofE schools that have not had any external restrictions on how religiously selective they can be[2] then the figure rises to 68%.

We also found large variation by location. For instance, 59% of secondary places in the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea are subject to religious selection, and a number of local authorities in the North West have around 40% of places selected in this way. On the other hand, eight local authorities have no such selection at all.

We also saw large variation by Church of England diocese, with the percentage of secondary places subject to religious selection ranging from 84% in Liverpool down to 3% in Leicester. The Diocese of London, despite its commitments to ensuring all existing schools are at least 50% inclusive and all new schools are fully inclusive, in fact has 68% of places subject to religious selection.[3]

Overall this comes to 16% of mainstream state school places being subject to religious selection – or 1.2 million in total. This is more than the number of places at private, single-sex and grammar schools, or places selected by ability or aptitude, combined.

The figure is also striking in how it compares to weekly church attendance. Whilst 16% of places are subject to religious selection, almost all at Christian schools, weekly church attendance by those of

[1] 'Groundbreaking new research maps the segregating impact of faith school admissions', Fair Admissions Campaign, 3 December 2013: http://fairadmissions.org.uk/groundbreaking-new-research-maps-the-segregating-impact-of-faith-school-admissions/
Accompanied by the Fair Admissions Campaign's map: http://fairadmissions.org.uk/map/

[2] i.e. not Voluntary Controlled schools, but Voluntary Aided (VA) and Foundation schools and Academies that were formerly VA or Foundation schools.

[3] See Diocese of London entry at http://fairadmissions.org.uk/our-supporters/what-others-say/

parent age stands at about 4%.[4] Indeed, for the first time in 2016, the number of people attending a CofE service each week fell below the number of children who attend CofE schools.[5]

It should be noted also that research has suggested that religious selection can drive church attendance. Sutton Trust research has found that 6% of parents, and 11% of London parents, have admitted to 'Attend[ing] church services so that [their] child(ren) could enter a church school'. Similarly, a 2015 OnePoll survey for ITV's 'Tonight' show found that 36% of parents had lied or would lie about their religion in order to get their children into school.[6] Those from higher social grades were also more likely to admit to having done this.[7]

These figures imply that school admissions is a large factor in driving attendance amongst this demographic. Indeed, over the last few years the Church of England conducted a major research programme called the Church Growth Research Programme, in order to identify what successfully causes churches to grow, so that this knowledge can be used to stimulate further growth elsewhere.[8] Academics carried out 'a purpose-built survey of growing, stable and declining churches across all dioceses'. One of the questions asked was 'Is this church linked to a Church of England school? [If yes] Is it over-subscribed?' Analysing the results, the academics wrote that 'The results for church growth are interesting. Here the Church school has a key role… The most direct impact on attendance may be felt in areas where a popular C of E school is over-subscribed. Some churchgoing is clearly motivated by a desire to qualify for school admission, but the boost to attendance may last into the longer term if families decide to stay.' This was found to be statistically significant; the academics concluded that 'Middle class suburbs with church schools… offer great opportunities [for growth].'[9] Elsewhere they wrote that 'Being connected with an over-subscribed school is helpful, if not easy to engineer!'[10]

Socio-economic selection – our findings

For all mainstream state secondary schools in England, we also examined the proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals (a key indicator of deprivation) and who speak English as an additional language, and compared this to the schools' local population.[11]

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[4] Siobhan McAndrew, Church Attendance in England, 1980-2005, British Religion in Numbers, 23 March 2011: http://www.brin.ac.uk/news/2011/church-attendance-in-england-1980-2005/ - shows weekly church attendance amongst all ages in 2005 was 6.3%. Church attendance has fallen since (as demonstrated by, for example, the Church of England's annual *Statistics in Mission*), and is lower amongst younger adults than those 65+, hence the estimate of 4%.

[5] Analysis by the Humanists UK, January 2016: https://humanism.org.uk/2016/01/14/44689/

[6] 'How to Get into a Good School', ITV 'Tonight', OnePol, May 2015: http://fairadmissions.org.uk/new-poll-shows-more-parents-than-ever-lying-about-faith-to-manipulate-school-admissions-process/

[7] Francis, Becky and Hutchings, Merryn, *Parent Power? Using money and information to boost children's chances of educational success*, Sutton Trust, December 2013: http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/1parentpower-final.pdf

[8] 'About the Programme', Church Growth Research Programme: http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/about_the_programme

[9] Voas, David, and Watt, Laura, *Numerical change in church attendance: National, local and individual factors*, The Church Growth Research Programme Report on Strands 1 and 2, February 2014: http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/Report_Strands_1_2_rev2.pdf

[10] Voas, David, *Numerical Change in Church Attendance: National, Local and Individual Factors*, presentation at the Faith in Research: From Anecdote to Evidence conference, January 2014: http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Presentations/CGRP_Voas.pdf

[11] You can see more details about this, including what we mean by 'local', at 'Groundbreaking new research maps the segregating impact of faith school admissions', Fair Admissions Campaign, 3 December 2013:

We found that:

- Comprehensive secondary schools with no religious character admit 11% more pupils eligible for free school meals than live in their local areas. Comprehensive Church of England secondaries admit 10% fewer; Roman Catholic secondaries 24% fewer; Jewish secondaries 61% fewer; and Muslim secondaries 25% fewer.
- A clear correlation is found between the degree of religious selection and how socio-economically exclusive schools are. Comprehensive schools with no religious character typically admit 11% more pupils eligible for free school meals than would be expected given their areas. Religious comprehensives that do not select by religion typically admit 3% more, but those whose admissions criteria allow religious selection for all places typically admit 27% fewer.
- The correlation between religious and socio-economic selection holds even if we focus on comprehensive CofE schools alone: those that don't select admit 4% more than would be expected, while those that fully select admit 31% fewer.
- The most segregated local authority as a result of religious selection is Hammersmith and Fulham. While 15% of pupils nationally are eligible for free school meals, the segregation between the religiously selective schools and other schools is almost double that (27 percentage points).
- Only 16% of schools select by religion but they are vastly overrepresented in the 100 worst offenders on free school meal eligibility and English as an additional language. They make up 46 of the worst 100 schools on FSM eligibility and 50 of the worst 100 on EAL. (If grammar schools, University Technical Colleges and Studio schools are excluded, religiously selective schools account for 73 of the worst 100 on FSM eligibility and 59 of the worst 100 on EAL.)

Much is written about the extent to which grammar schools socio-economically select. Our map suggests that each individual place at a grammar school causes almost twice as much socio-economic selection as each individual religiously selected secondary school place. But as there are more religiously selective secondary school places, *overall* religious selection causes more socio-economic selection at the secondary level than grammars do. And this is to say nothing about the primary level, where there is even more religious selection but no grammars. It is therefore likely that across both phases of the English state system, religious selection causes over twice as much socio-economic selection as grammars.

Socio-economic selection – the wider academic literature

The wider academic literature supports our findings.

In 2012 Shepherd and Rogers found similar patterns of low numbers of pupils eligible for FSM in English faith schools.[12] 76% of Catholic primary schools and 65% of Catholic secondary schools were found to have a smaller proportion of pupils eligible for FSM than was representative of their postcode. The same was true in 63.5% of Church of England primary schools and 40% of Church of England secondary schools. Both Catholic and Church of England secondary schools were therefore significantly more likely than secondary schools without a religious character to have student bodies which under-represent students eligible for FSM.

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http://fairadmissions.org.uk/groundbreaking-new-research-maps-the-segregating-impact-of-faith-school-admissions/ and the FAQs of the Fair Admissions Campaign's map: http://fairadmissions.org.uk/map/

[12] Shepherd, Jessica and Rogers, Simon, 'Church schools shun poorest pupils', *The Guardian*, 5 March 2012: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2012/mar/05/church-schools-shun-poorest-pupils

Extensive research on this issue has also been conducted by Dr Rebecca Allen and Professor Anne West. In August 2011, they reported that 'schools with a religious character (or faith schools) have fewer FSM pupils and more top ability pupils and that, in general, they are more affluent in their intake than the neighbourhoods they are located in.'[13] In 2009, they concluded that 'It is clear from our analysis that many religious secondary schools in London are not serving the most disadvantaged pupils. Overall, religious schools educate a much smaller proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and their intakes are significantly more affluent than the neighbourhood in which they are located.'[14] And in 2008, when being interviewed by the House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee, Rebecca Allen noted that 'In my most recent research… I was able to show that religious schools have higher ability and lower free school meal intakes compared with the neighbourhoods in which they are located. To give you an idea of the magnitude of those effects, if we take a community school and a voluntary-aided religious school, both located in a neighbourhood with exactly the same levels of deprivation, the community school is likely to have about 50% more free school meal children than the voluntary-aided school... We can show that there really is a direct correlation between the number of potentially selective admissions criteria that schools use, and the extent to which their intakes are advantaged.'[15]

More recently, in 2016, statistical analysis conducted by the education data website SchoolDash revealed that school admission policies are playing 'a greater part than local [residential] deprivation in the uneven distribution of poorer pupils' between schools. The analysis found that while many 'faith' schools are disproportionately located in poorer areas, they tend to cream skim and cater to children from more affluent families within those areas. This is especially the case, the research concluded, in 'those [schools] affiliated with Roman Catholicism and the small number associated with various non-Christian faiths'.[16]

Many studies have also found evidence that faith schools that are their own admissions authorities (which are more likely to be religiously selective) exhibit a greater degree of socio-economic selection than other faith schools, and this is corroborated by our findings on faith schools that have not had any external restrictions (i.e. from their local authority) on how religiously selective they can be. In 2007 Tough and Brookes found that 'Faith schools which are their own admission authorities are ten times more likely to be highly unrepresentative of their surrounding area than faith schools where the local authority is the admission authority.' They also found that 'Non-religious schools which are their own admissions authorities [which, at the time, were predominantly grammar schools] are six times more likely to be highly unrepresentative.'[17] This factor has become increasingly relevant in light of the drive towards academisation, which sees schools that have converted to academies become their own admission authorities.

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[13] Allen, Rebecca and West, Anne, 'Why do faith secondary schools have advantaged intakes? The relative importance of neighbourhood characteristics, social background and religious identification amongst parents', *British Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 37, 4, pp. 691-712, August 2011: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/32192/

[14] Allen, Rebecca and West, Anne, 'Religious schools in London: school admissions, religious composition and selectivity', *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 35, 4, pp. 471-494, August 2009: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/25635/

[15] Oral evidence by Rebecca Allen to the House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Select Committee on Diversity of Schools: Faith Schools, 12 March 2008: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmchilsch/c311-iii/c31102.htm

[16] 'Poverty of opportunity?', SchoolDash, August 2016: https://www.schooldash.com/blog.html#20160802

[17] Tough, Sarah and Brookes, Richard, *School Admissions: Fair choice for parents and pupils*, IPPR, June 2007: https://www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=546

Responses from the churches to the evidence on socio-economic selection

The main response to this evidence from religious groups is that our and others' 'local' comparisons look too locally. The catchment areas for religiously selective schools are geographically wider than other schools – even than local authorities. Therefore schools are being compared to geographic areas that are too small. In fact, the Church of England likes to compare its schools to national statistics, where the disparity between its schools and the overall picture differs less and where nuance between its religiously selective and other schools is ignored.[18]

In response to this defence, the Fair Admissions Campaign compared the FSM eligibility within schools to the FSM eligibility within local areas that are far wider than have been used previously (and, incidentally, far wider than any catchment area a 'faith' school can claim to draw from). These areas were the school's local authority, the school's local authority and all neighbouring local authorities, the school's region, and the country as a whole. The figures reveal that 100% religiously selective Church of England schools are socio-economically exclusive to a similar extent at all these levels, and the same is true for Roman Catholic schools (except when you look at national level) and Jewish schools. In sum, the figures show that religiously selective schools are socio-economically exclusive regardless of how wide an area you compare them to.[19]

The Catholic Education Service likes to cite a figure other than free school meal eligibility, namely the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), which ranks children based on how deprived their local areas are (measuring this against the same range of indicators as determines whether a pupil is eligible for free school meals). It points to the fact that more pupils at their schools come from the 10% most deprived areas than do so at other schools.[20]

However, this fails to consider that religiously selective secondary schools are more likely to be in cities, where the percentage of the population that is eligible for free school meals is higher. Therefore one would expect, if they were taking a proportionate share of pupils thus eligible, for the schools to take more children eligible for free school meals and in the most deprived areas than the average school. However, the Fair Admissions Campaign looked up all schools themselves on IDACI, and found that actually Catholic schools are even more likely still to be in the most deprived areas than the pupil figures suggest – i.e. even the IDACI figures show under-take of the most deprived pupils by Catholic schools.[21]

Ethnic selection

The evidence around ethnic selection is more complicated as it is tied up to a greater extent in religio-ethnic demographics. There is strong evidence that minority faith schools are the most

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[18] See e.g. 'Fair Admissions Campaign response to John Pritchard's comments on the inclusivity of Church schools', Fair Admissions Campaign, 19 November 2013: http://fairadmissions.org.uk/fair-admissions-campaign-response-to-john-pritchards-comments-on-the-inclusivity-of-church-schools/

[19] 'Faith schools and socio-economic selection: when comparing schools to their local areas on free school meal eligibility, are we looking too closely?', Fair Admissions Campaign, September 2015: http://fairadmissions.org.uk/faith-schools-and-socio-economic-selection-when-comparing-schools-to-their-local-areas-on-free-school-meal-eligibility-are-we-looking-too-closely/

[20] See e.g. 'Catholic schools and the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index', Fair Admissions Campaign, 1 May 2014: http://fairadmissions.org.uk/catholic-schools-and-the-income-deprivation-affecting-children-index/

[21] *Ibid.*

racially segregated state schools,[22] though this may well be primarily a result of parental choice and not religious selection *per se*. In Christian schools, however, research suggests that the inclusivity of schools of their local minority ethnic populations (particularly Asian populations) is determined to some extent by how religiously selective the schools are. For example, research carried out in 2013 found that Church of England secondaries that don't religiously select took an average of 0.7% *more* pupils from Asian backgrounds than their local areas, while CofE schools that selected 100% of their places on religion took an average of 1.5% *fewer*. Similarly, Roman Catholic schools (which virtually all select 100% of their places on the basis of religion) were found to have an average of 4.4% fewer 'Asian' pupils than would be expected given their local areas. Schools with no religious character on the other hand (none of which select on the basis of religion, of course) have an average of around 1% more 'Asian' pupils than would be expected given their areas.[23]

More recently, in 2016, analysis of official data taken from the School Census found that Christian schools that select 100% of their places on the basis of religion took far fewer children from Asian backgrounds than schools which selected either none or only half of their pupils on the basis of religion. According to the analysis, in Church of England schools that are fully religiously selective, only 6% of pupils come from Asian backgrounds, while at Church of England schools that leave at least half of their places open to **all** local children 15% of pupils come from Asian backgrounds. The same is true in other Christian schools, where just 3% of pupils are Asian in fully selective schools, compared to 19% in schools that are less religiously selective.[24]

Furthermore, many reports in the wake of the racially motivated summer riots of 2001 claimed that the ethnic divisions between schools were a key cause of the riots. For example the *Cantle Report*, commissioned by the Home Office, noted how riots had not arisen in diverse areas, such as Southall and Leicester, where pupils learnt about different religions and cultures in local schools, and was concerned that some schools appeared to be 'operating discriminatory policies where religious affiliations protect cultural and ethnic divisions'.[25] At the launch of the 2009 *Cantle Report* on Blackburn, Professor Ted Cantle said that faith schools are 'automatically a source of division which have to be overcome.'[26] Professor Cantle is now on the steering group of the Fair Admissions Campaign.

Popularity of religious selection

A November 2012 survey by ComRes commissioned by the Accord Coalition found that 73% of British adults think that 'state funded schools should not be allowed to select or discriminate against prospective pupils on religious grounds in their admissions policy'. Only 18% think that they should,

[22] 'Religious schools most racially segregated state schools, new findings show', Humanists UK, 18 October 2013: https://humanism.org.uk/2013/10/18/religious-schools-racially-segregated-state-schools-new-findings-show/

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] *Ethnic diversity in religious Free Schools*, Humanists UK, September 2016: https://humanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016-09-15-FINAL-Ethnic-diversity-in-religious-Free-Schools.pdf

[25] The report suggested that schools 'should offer, at least 25%, of places to reflect the other cultures or ethnicities within the local area.' Cantle, Ted et al, *Community Cohesion: A Report by the Independent Review Team chaired by Ted Cantle* (Home Office, 7 December 2001): http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2001/12/11/communitycohesionreport.pdf

[26] Moseley, Tom, *Cantle report: Blackburn a divided town* (*Lancashire Telegraph*, 8 May 2009): http://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/4351852.Cantle_report__Blackburn_a_divided_town/

whereas 9% are unsure. This means that opposition to such selection stands at more than four to one.[27]

A more specific poll was also published recently, asking for views on the current 50% cap on religious selection, which since 2007 and has required all new academies and free schools to leave at least half of their places open to all local children irrespective of religion or belief. The poll found that 80% of the public favour keeping the cap in place, while just 20% of the public think it should be dropped, as has been proposed by the Government.[28]

Many people find the unpopularity of religious selection counter-intuitive, as they think of their local religiously selective schools and see them as popular. But as a matter of fact, not many parents at all pick a school based on religion. One survey a few years ago asked parents to pick their top three factors from a list of twelve for choosing which school to send their children to, and only 9% picked religion.[29] Performance was far and away the most important factor, with location, facilities, class sizes and curriculum also being important. Another survey asked something similar and got similar results. 'Ethical values' was considered important by 23% of respondents, although not every respondent who picked this would have meant religious values by this; just 5% picked 'Grounding of pupils in a faith tradition' and 3% picked 'Transmission of belief about God'.[30]

Religious selection – impact on school performance

In 2009 the House of Commons Research Library concluded that any difference in academic performance between faith schools and other schools is solely due to the different intakes of each school, which, it said, is 'due to parental self-selection and selection methods used by some faith schools.'[31] This conclusion has been reinforced since by Steve Gibbons and Olmo Silva whose 2011 paper 'Faith Primary Schools: Better Schools or Better Pupils?' found that 'pupils progress faster in Faith primary schools, but all of this advantage is explained by sorting into Faith schools according to preexisting characteristics and preferences… there is no unambiguous performance advantage that cannot be attributed purely to pupil-side sorting into these schools or to school-side selection of pupils likely to show the fastest progress.'[32]

Allen and Vignoles' 2010 study of faith schools' effect on local areas finds significant evidence that religiously selective schools are associated with higher levels of pupil sorting across schools, but no

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[27] 'Nearly three quarters of the British public disagrees with religious selection in admissions at state funded schools', Accord Coalition, 12 November 2012: http://accordcoalition.org.uk/2012/11/12/nearly-three-quarters-of-the-british-public-disagrees-with-religious-selection-in-admissions-at-state-funded-schools/

[28] 'Overwhelming majority of the public want to maintain the 50% religious selection cap for new faith schools', Accord Coalition, May 2017 http://accordcoalition.org.uk/2017/05/29/overwhelming-majority-of-the-public-want-to-maintain-the-50-religious-selection-cap-for-new-faith-schools/

[29] YouGov / Daybreak Survey Results, 13 September 2010: http://cdn.yougov.com/today_uk_import/YG-Archives-Life-YouGov-DaybreakReligion-130910.pdf

[30] YouGov/University of Lancaster Survey Results, 5-13 June 2013: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/4n6d3tnayp/YG-Archive-University-of-Lancaster-Faith-Matters-Debate-results-180613-faith-schools.pdf

[31] Bolton, Paul, and Gillie, Christine, *Faith schools: Admissions and performance - Commons Library Standard Note*, House of Commons Library, 10 March 2009: http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN04405

[32] Gibbons, Stephen and Silva, Olmo, 'Faith Primary Schools: Better Schools or Better Pupils?', *Journal of Labor Economics*, Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 589-635, July 2011: http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.1086/659344?uid=3738032&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21102555699737

evidence that competition from faith schools raises area-wide pupil attainment.[33] Even the Christian think tank Theos, in their report *More than an Educated Guess: Assessing the evidence on faith schools* concluded that 'The research seems to support the claim that students in faith schools, generally do fare better academically than their counterparts in non-faith schools. At the moment, the body of evidence appears to suggest this is probably primarily the outcome of selection processes.'[34]

In addition, in November 2016, the Education Policy Institute published its report *Faith Schools, Pupil Performance and Social Selection*. The report found that when compared to schools with no religious character at a national level, 'faith' schools ' educate a lower proportion of disadvantaged children' and 'a lower proportion of pupils with special educational needs' , and 'enrol a larger proportion of high attaining pupils'. It also finds that the difference in attainment between faith schools and schools with no religious character 'is largely eliminated after controlling for prior attainment and pupil characteristics', which tend to be skewed by religious selection.

By way of illustration, the Fair Admissions Campaign conducted analysis on the intakes of the top performing state-funded 'faith' schools in terms of GCSE grades. Discounting grammar schools, such schools make up 47 of the top performing 100 schools, meaning that 'faith' schools, which account for 34% of the total number of state-funded schools, are disproportionately represented on the list. However, analysis of the Free Schools Meal eligibility of the intakes of these 47 schools found that they took on average 44% fewer pupils eligible for Free Schools Meals than would be representative of their area. When looking only at the top ranked 10 of these schools, the figure is 56% fewer.[35]

So: religious selection is not popular. High-performing schools are popular. And the socio-economic selection brought about by religious selection often leads religiously selective schools to be high-performing schools.

[33] Allen, Rebecca and Vignoles, Anna, *Can school competition improve standards? The case of faith schools in England*, Department of Quantitative Social Science, Institute of Education, 29 June 2010: http://repec.ioe.ac.uk/REPEc/pdf/qsswp0904.pdf

[34] Oldfield, Elizabeth, Hartnett, Liane, and Bailey, Emma, *More than an Educated Guess: Assessing the evidence on faith schools*, Theos, 30 September 2013: http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/files/files/More%20than%20an%20educated%20guess.pdf

[35] 'Academic success of religiously selective schools rests on back door social selection', Fair Admissions Campaign, January 2014: http://fairadmissions.org.uk/academic-success-of-religiously-selective-schools-rests-on-back-door-social-selection/

Timeline of academic research

Diversity and Social Cohesion in Mixed and Segregated Secondary Schools in Oldham

Miles Hewstone et al (University of Oxford), commissioned by the Department for Education (August 2017)

Commissioned by the Department for Education to assess the extent to which mixing in school can 'improve attitudes towards outgroups and intergroup relations', this study examines the contact between young people from White-British and Asian-British pupils at secondary schools in Oldham.

The report's key findings are as follows:

- 'Attitudes were more positive and, as would be expected, mixing was more frequent in mixed than segregated schools'.
- 'Mixed schools do result in more social mixing between ethnic groups over time, and mixing is reliably associated with more positive views of the outgroup'
- 'Attitudes of pupils who mix with other backgrounds were more positive compared to those who remain with their own ethnicities'

In addition, the study examined the outcomes of a merger of two ethnically segregated schools into a single mixed school, finding that 'over a four-year period, intergroup anxiety significantly decreased, and liking and outgroup contact significantly increased for both Asian-British and White British pupils.'

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/634118/Diversity_and_Social_Cohesion_in_Oldham_schools.pdf

Understanding school segregation in England: 2011 to 2016

The Challenge, SchoolDash, Institute for Community Cohesion Foundation (March 2017)

The report examines the level of segregation within schools by comparing the ethnic make-up and free school meal eligibility of their intake to those of the ten schools closest to them, finding that 'faith' schools are significantly more segregated along both ethnic and socio-economic lines than other types of school.

The report's key findings are as follows:

- 'Faith schools at primary are more ethnically segregated than schools of no faith (28.8% of faith schools compared with 24.5% of those of no faith) when compared with neighbouring schools. This is particularly pronounced for Roman Catholic schools'.
- 'At primary level, faith schools are more likely to cater to more advantaged students, with 4.4% of faith schools having a high FSM intake compared with nearby schools, versus 11.4% for non-faith. This is particularly pronounced for Roman Catholic schools (of which 38.3%

have a low FSM intake, versus 17.1% of non-faith)… The relationship at secondary level is similar but not as strong, with 23.8% of Catholic schools having a low FSM intake, compared with 17.2% of non-faith schools.'

- 'The collective impact of faith schools, particularly the predominant Catholic and Church of England schools which are by far the most numerous, needs to be examined. As an example, in one London Borough the 17 faith primary schools that have somewhat diverse intakes, take between one and five times the proportion of White British [pupils] compared to the area and this substantially reduces the potential for other schools to become more mixed.'

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxL3m2uvdxMea2F1X0liT2JMSG5kYjJKaVN1akpSWjBLSEh3/view

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Selective Comprehensives 2017

Carl Cullinane, Jude Hillary, Joana Andrade, Stephen McNamara, Sutton Trust (March 2017)

The report examines admissions to high-attaining non-selective schools for disadvantaged pupils, and makes an important distinction regarding the comparison of schools' social selectivity, one that is often lost on the proponents of 'faith' schools/religious selection. It notes:

'While faith schools in the top 500 [by GCSE results] have only marginally lower average FSM intakes than those with no religious affiliation, if you compare faith schools with their catchment area [clearly the right comparison to make] , a much different picture emerges…

Faith schools are among the most socially selective category of top school, more than three times as socially selective compared to their catchment area than non-faith schools'.

The report concludes that lifting the 50% cap is 'likely to make [faith schools] even more unrepresentative of their local areas, reducing the number of good school places available to pupils across the socio-economic spectrum. The admissions process for faith schools should instead be opened up so that their admissions are fairer and begin to reflect their local population'**.**

http://www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/selective-comprehensives-2017/

Faith Schools, Pupil Performance and Social Selection

Rebecca Johnes and Jon Andrews, Education Policy Institute (November 2016)

This research was carried out in response to the Government's proposal to remove restrictions on 'faith' schools, which since 2010 has limited the use of faith-based admissions to 50% of places. It analyses the overall attainment and progress made by pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in 'faith' schools, as well as the characteristics of pupils in 'faith' schools, including levels of deprivation and special educational needs.

The research finds that when compared to schools with no religious character at a national level, 'faith' schools ' educate a lower proportion of disadvantaged children' and ' a lower proportion of pupils with special educational needs' , and 'enrol a larger proportion of high attaining pupils'. It also

finds that the difference in attainment between faith schools and schools with no religious character 'is largely eliminated after controlling for prior attainment and pupil characteristics' . The report concludes that:

'while encouraging more faith schools to open may help the government to meet its requirements to provide sufficient school places, the proposed policy is unlikely to yield school places that are of a significantly higher quality than that offered by non-faith schools. Furthermore... there is a risk that these small gains would come at the price of increased social segregation'.

http://epi.org.uk/report/faith-schools-pupil-performance-social-selection/

Ethnic diversity in religious Free Schools

Humanists UK (September 2016)

Drawing on the same underlying data used by the Department for Education in their green paper *Schools that work for everyone*

https://humanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016-09-15-FINAL-Ethnic-diversity-in-religious-Free-Schools.pdf

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Poverty of opportunity?

Analysis conducted by Timo Hannay for education data website SchoolDash (August 2016)

The analysis looked out how different types of school affect opportunity for children from poorer families, finding that faith schools are a major source of socio-economic disadvantage and segregation in England's state-funded schools system.

The figures reveal that 'school types in which poorer pupils are under-represented *after* taking into account the level of poverty in their local areas include:… certain faith schools, particularly non-Christian faith schools and Roman Catholic schools [almost all of which are religiously selective]'. The analysis also finds that while many faith schools are disproportionately located in poorer areas, they tend to cream skim and cater to children from more affluent families within those areas and, again, this is especially the case in schools 'affiliated with Roman Catholicism and the small number associated with various non-Christian faiths.'

The research finds the Church of England school sector to be more inclusive than most other types of faith school, but less socio-economically inclusive than non-faith schools.

https://www.schooldash.com/blog.html#20160802

Secondary school admissions in London 2001 to 2015: Compliance, complexity and control

Anne West and Audrey Hind, Education Research Group, LSE (May 2016)

This research provides analysis of London secondary schools' admissions criteria and practices between 2001 and 2015, examining admission policies at both local and individual school level. The analysis finds that whilst admissions arrangements are required to be clear, fair, and objective, 'some individual schools that are responsible for their own admissions – especially those with a religious character but also some academies with no religious character – have complex arrangements'. According to the authors, such 'complexity raises concerns that schools are choosing pupils rather than parents choosing schools for their children', and 'opportunities to "select in" and "select out" are particularly great when parents complete supplementary information forms' (as is the case in virtually all religiously selective schools).

The report therefore concludes that 'no schools should carry out their own admissions' and that 'admissions arrangements should be simplified.'

http://www.lse.ac.uk/socialPolicy/pdf/SECONDARYSCHOOLADMISSIONSLONDONREPORTFINAL2016.pdf

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Primary schools, catchment areas and social selection

Report for the Sutton Trust by Dr Rebecca Allen and Dr Meenakshi Parameshwaran, Education Datalab (April 2016)

The study compared the profits of pupils attending all primary schools in England with that of primary school aged children that lived locally to all the schools. It found a strong correlation between popular and highly rated schools having in takes that were socio-economically exclusive and unrepresentative of their local area. It found that these schools tended to operate more complex pupil admission criteria, and were very often religiously selective religious schools.

The academics found a significant difference in the pupil profile of faith schools that operated a religiously selective over-subscription policy with those that did not. The report noted:

'It is generally true that non-religious schools are not particularly socially selective and that Roman Catholic and other religious primary schools are, regardless of governance status. This reflects the fact that these religious schools consistently apply religious admission criteria. The pattern of social selection in Church of England primary schools is quite different, reflecting the variety of stances towards religious selection that dioceses have taken. They are far less likely to be socially selective than other schools with a religious denomination because many (particularly voluntary controlled) act as defacto community schools and do not apply any religious criteria.'

http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Caught-Out_Research-brief_April-16.pdf

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Projection position in 2030

Report commissioned by the Archdiocese of Dublin (February 2016)

This investigation commissioned by the Archdiocese of Dublin, and carried out by the international consultancy firm Towers Watson, draws attention to the link between the number of baptisms that

the Church conducts and the practice of rewarding pupil places on the grounds of baptism in its schools. The report noted:

'We have assumed that the annual number of baptisms will remain stable over the period to 2030. It should be noted that some of the strong correlation between baptisms and birth rates is likely to be due to the preference given to children who are baptised when enrolling in Catholic primary schools. If this requirement is removed at any point prior to 2030, we believe there is likely to be a decline in the number of baptisms each year.' (p7)

http://www.dublindiocese.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Results-meeting-unprotected.pdf

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Racial discrimination by religiously selective faith schools: a worsening problem

Accord Coalition on behalf of the Fair Admissions Campaign (December 2015)

This report highlights the effect that religious selection can have on racial segregation through case studies of four religiously selective schools whose admission policies were objected to by the Fair Admissions Campaign and which indirectly discriminate against local children of South Asian heritage. It finds that due to the local interplay between religion and race, selection by faith is serving as a proxy for selection by race in many ethnically mixed areas of Britain, and the segregation this causes will only worsen as the demographic make-up of England continues to change.

The report's recommendations include encouraging schools to make at least 25% of their places available to those from other denominations, though a stronger recommendation is also made urging the Government to extend its current cap of 50% religious selection in admissions at Free Schools to all existing schools too.

http://accordcoalition.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Racial-discrimination-by-religiously-selective-faith-schools-a-worsening-problem.-FAC-Accord.-Dec-2015.-1.pdf

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Office of the Schools Adjudicator annual report: September 2014 to August 2015

Elizabeth Passmore OBE, Chief Schools Adjudicator (December 2015)

As in previous years, this report notes that schools that are their own admission authority continue to fall short of complying fully with what the Chief Schools Adjudicator describes as the 'relatively modest requirements' of the school admissions Code. Taking aim specifically at religiously selective schools, it is claimed that this is at least in part due to the fact that the admission arrangements of these schools are often 'unnecessarily complex and lack transparency', with many going 'far beyond what is appropriate for admission arrangements'.

Furthermore, the report states that 'the guidance provided for schools designated as having a religious character by the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination is of variable availability and quality'. This leads to the recommendation that the Department for Education should provide advice setting out what is expected by way of guidance from the relevant religious authority of a school that can give priority on the grounds of religion.

Finally, the report recommends that the DfE limits those who can make an objection to the arrangements for a particular school to those with 'proper standing', which is taken to mean those

residing in the locality of the school. The recommendation is made in response to what the Chief Schools Adjudicator describes as 'instances of pressure groups and individuals making use of the provision to object when it appears to be more about trying to influence a policy matter than concern about the arrangements of a school'.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/484942/Office-of-the-Schools-Adjudicator-annual-report-September-2014-to-August-2015.pdf

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Living with Difference: Community, Diversity and the Common Good

Report of the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life (December 2015)

Established by Cambridge's Woolf Institute and chaired by Baroness Butler-Sloss, the Commission spent two years gathering 200 written evidence submissions and held a number of oral witness sessions across the UK in order to make its recommendations, calling for a 'new settlement' in relation to how policy and practice on religion and belief in the UK should develop.

In its chapter on education, the report states that 'selection by religion segregates children not only according to religious heritage but also, frequently and in effect, by ethnicity and socio-economic background. This undermines equality of opportunity and incentivises parents to be insincere about their religious affiliation and practice.' The report therefore recommends that:

'Government should recognise the negative practical consequences of selection by religion in schools, and that most religious schools can further their aims without discriminating on grounds of religion in their admissions and employment practices, and requires bodies responsible for school admissions and the employment of staff to take measures to reduce such selection'.

https://corablivingwithdifference.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/living-with-difference-community-diversity-and-the-common-good.pdf

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An Unholy Mess: how virtually all religiously selective state schools in England are breaking the law

Humanists UK on behalf of the Fair Admissions Campaign (October 2015)

This report details the rulings of the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) on the admission arrangements of a sample of religiously selective state secondary schools in England, to which the Fair Admissions Campaign submitted formal objections in 2014.

The rulings revealed 'near-universal noncompliance' with the School Admissions Code, with widespread violations found in almost every case, confirming public concerns, many of which are voiced in this review, about the way in which religious selection is carried out in 'faith' schools. In total, the OSA identified 1,163 Code breaches in the 42 survey schools, or around 27 per school.

Particularly notable findings of the report include:

- Almost one in five schools were found to **require practical or financial support to associated organisations** – through voluntary activities such as flower arranging and choir-singing in

churches or in the case of two Jewish schools, in requiring membership of synagogues (which costs money).

- A number of schools were found to have **broken the Equality Act 2010 in directly discriminating on the basis of race or gender**, with concerns also raised around discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and socio-economic status.
- A majority of schools were found not to be sufficiently prioritising **looked after and previously looked after children** (LAC and PLAC) – in most cases discriminating in unlawful ways against LAC and PLAC who were not of the faith of the school, and in a few rare cases not prioritising LAC and PLAC at all. A quarter of schools were also found to not be making clear how children with statements of **special educational needs** were admitted.
- Almost 90% of schools were found to be **asking for information from parents that they do not need**. This included asking parents to declare their support for the ethos of the school and even asking for applicants' countries of origin, whether or not they speak English as an additional language, and if they have any medical issues.
- Nearly every school was found to have **problems related to the clarity, fairness, and objectivity of their admissions arrangements**. This included a lack of clarity about the required frequency of religious worship and asking a religious leader to sign a form confirming religious observance, but not specifying what kind of observance is required.

The report makes a number of recommendations in light of these findings, ranging from specific revisions of the Code and the establishment of an independent monitoring service to enforce better compliance of it, to the abandonment of the system of religious selection altogether.

http://fairadmissions.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/An-Unholy-Mess.pdf

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'Faith' schools and socio-economic selection: When comparing schools to their local areas on free school meal eligibility, are we looking too closely?

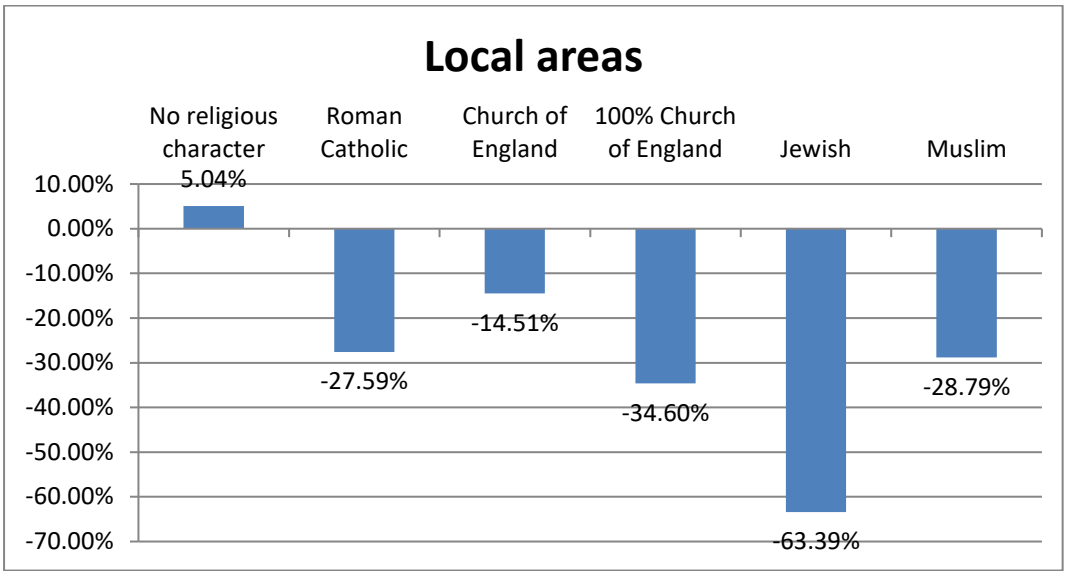
Fair Admissions Campaign (September 2015)

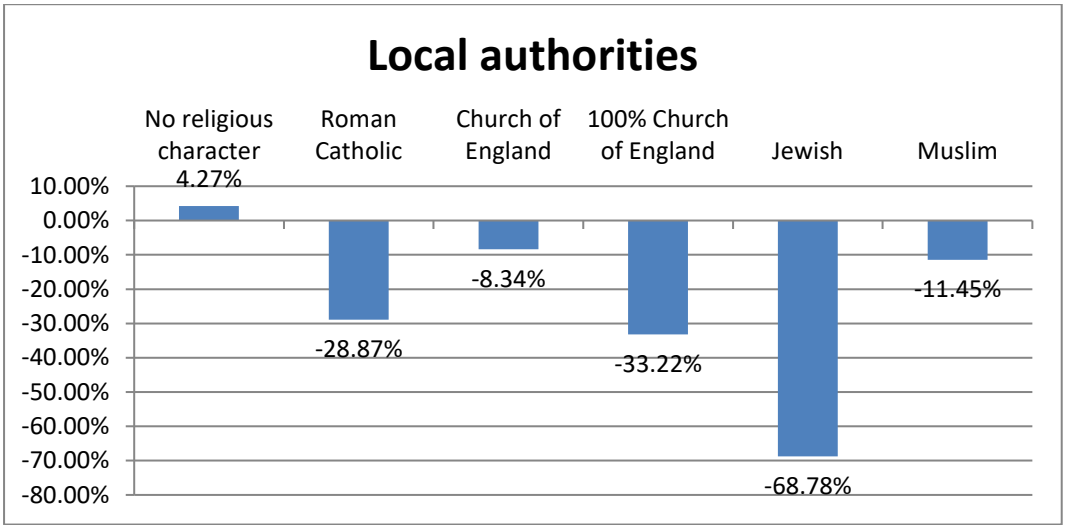
This piece of research examines the charge that when the Fair Admissions Campaign (FAC) compared religiously-selective schools to their local areas on the number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), it looked at too local an area in making its comparison. This is particularly a problem for 'faith' schools, it is claimed, because they often take from a wider geographical area.

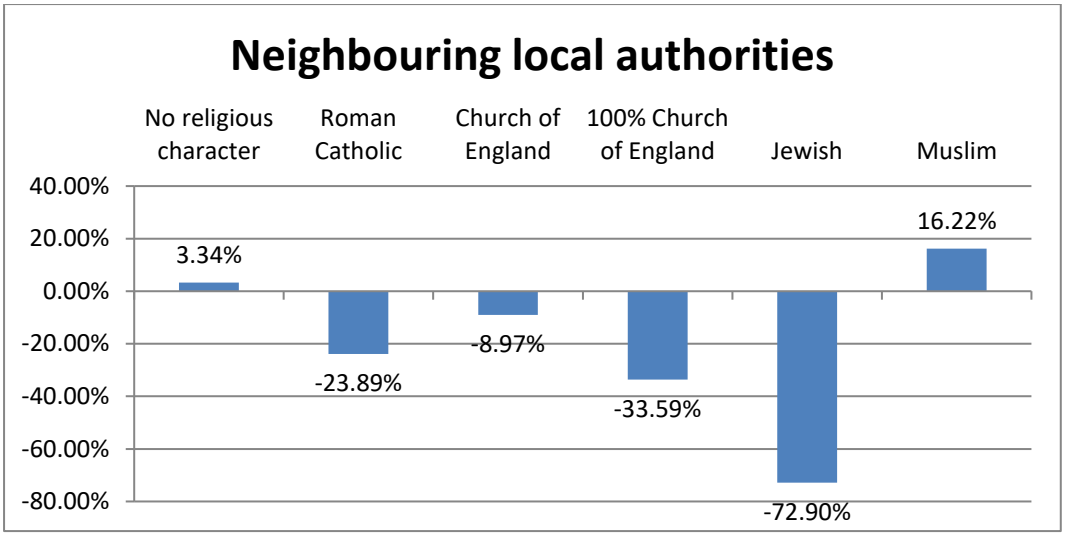
The research therefore compares schools to wider areas to assess whether or not this critique is valid. The results below compare the percentage of FSM eligible pupils within a school to the percentage of FSM eligible pupils in a given area, in each case showing the percentage difference. By way of an example, in the first graph (which are the original FAC results), schools with no religious character take, on average, 5% more pupils eligible for free school meals than would be expected, given their local area. Catholic schools take 28% fewer, Church of England schools take 15% fewer, and so on.

The results show that there is little change in how inclusive religiously selective schools are as you 'zoom out'. The exception to this is in the case of Muslim schools, which may reflect the fact that all nine Muslim secondary schools are in northern or Midlands cities, where the cities themselves are a lot more deprived than the surrounding countryside, meaning the schools will seem more inclusive in a wider area.

A full explanation of the results, including the reasons for some of the more dramatic fluctuations, can be found here:






Neighbouring local authorities
No religious character
Roman Catholic
Church of England
100% Church of England
Jewish
Muslim
40.00%
20.00%
0.00%
-20.00%
-40.00%
-60.00%
-80.00%
3.34%
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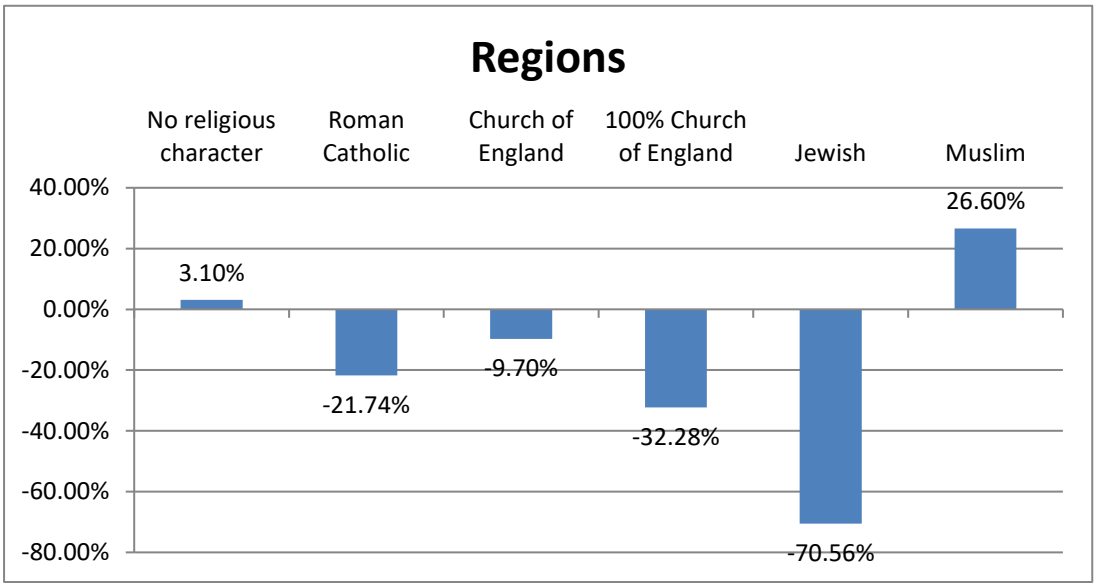
-8.97%
-33.59%
-72.90%
16.22%


Regions
No religious character
Roman Catholic
Church of England
100% Church of England
Jewish
Muslim
40.00%
20.00%
0.00%
-20.00%
-40.00%
-60.00%
-80.00%
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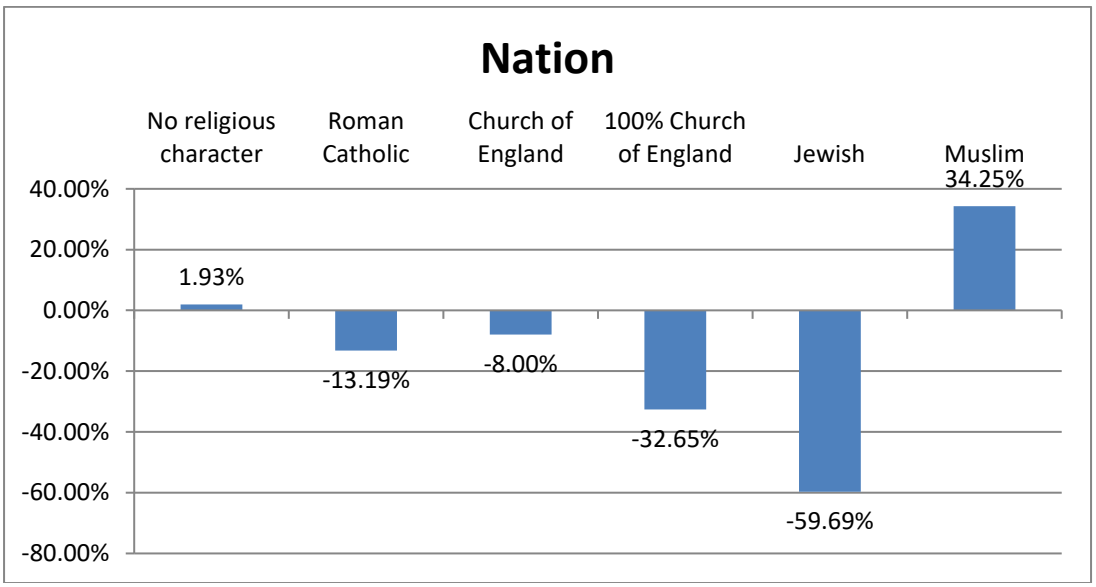
-21.74%
-9.70%
-32.28%
-70.56%
26.60%


Nation
No religious character
Roman Catholic
Church of England
100% Church of England
Jewish
Muslim
40.00%
20.00%
0.00%
-20.00%
-40.00%
-60.00%
-80.00%
1.93%
-13.19%
-8.00%
-32.65%
-59.69%
34.25%

http://fairadmissions.org.uk/faith-schools-and-socio-economic-selection-when-comparing-schools-to-their-local-areas-on-free-school-meal-eligibility-are-we-looking-too-closely/

Survey on manipulation of faith-based admissions policies

OnePoll on behalf of ITV's 'Tonight' programme (May 2015)

This survey, conducted by OnePoll for the ITV's 'Tonight' programme, entitled 'How to Get into a Good School', is the latest to highlight the extent to which parents are willing to lie about their religion in order to get their children into a local or good school. The survey also asked how willing parents would be to lie more generally in an admissions form, as well as whether they had or would be willing to move house specifically to get their child into a good school.

The results are as follows:

2. Would you be willing to practise a religion you don't believe in to get your child into a good school?

Choice	%
Yes - I have done this	12.60% 126
Yes - I would do this if I had to	23.70% 237
No	63.70% 637

4. Would you/ have you had your child baptised just so they are eligible to go to a better school?

Choice	%
Yes - I have done this	13.70% 137
Yes - I would do this if I had to	25.30% 253
No	61.00% 610

5. Would you/ have you pretended that your child has been baptised into a particular religion to get into a better school?

Choice	%
Yes - I have done this	11.10% 111
Yes - I would do this if I had to	23.00% 230
No	65.90% 659

http://fairadmissions.org.uk/new-poll-shows-more-parents-than-ever-lying-about-faith-to-manipulate-school-admissions-process/

Kingdom United? Thirteen steps to tackle social segregation

Social Integration Commission (March 2015)

This report makes a series of recommendations as to what the government as well as councils, businesses, schools, civil society organisations and individuals could be doing to create a more integrated and cohesive society.

In its chapter on schools and colleges, the report expresses concern that 'the recent drive to open free schools has led to increased numbers of children being educated in peer groups dominated by a single faith group or community'. The report's recommendations include:

- Only approving new 'faith' schools when petitioners have a plan for pupils to meet and mix with children from other faith backgrounds and communities
- Investigating the benefits of requiring schools to devise a 'social mixing strategy'
- Building new facilities for shared use by schools catering to different religious communities
- Encouraging schools with different religious characters to collaborate in providing interfaith workshops
- Using assemblies to teach children about other religions

http://socialintegrationcommission.org.uk/images/sic_kingdomunited.pdf

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The Ins and Outs of Selective Secondary Schools: A Debate

Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain, Rev. Nigel Genders, Gillan Scott for Civitas (March 2015)

This book gathers a range of politicians, academics, campaigners and commentators to discuss the complexity of secondary school selection, with chapters on ability, fee, faith and stealth, among others.

There are three chapters on faith-based selection in schools.

In his chapter '*Divisive Faith Schools Urgently Need Reform'* (p.233), the Chair of the Accord Coalition for Inclusive Education Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain argues that schools should be used as a means to promote social cohesion and bring together children and parents from different faiths and ethnic backgrounds. Citing evidence from a range of sources, including the Fair Admissions Campaign, relating to the socio-economic and ethnic segregation that religious selection can result in, he asserts that 'if we have schools that are restrictive and segregated, there is reason to fear that society will develop likewise'.

Two chapters seek to defend both 'faith' schools and religious selection, *'Church of England Schools for the Common Good'*, by the Church of England's Chief Education Officer Nigel Genders, and '*In Defence of Faith Schools and Religious Selection'*, by Gillan Scott. Nigel Genders argues that whilst religious selection is not used by most CofE schools, where it is used it can be helpful in producing a healthy mix of children within a school or for providing places for children outside of a popular school's immediate expensive housing area. However, this assertion runs counter to the evidence which demonstrates a clear correlation between religious selection and socio-economic segregation in Church of England schools. Data collected by the Fair Admissions Campaign shows that Church of England comprehensives that don't select on faith admit 4% more pupils eligible for free school meals than would be expected given their location, while those whose admissions criteria allow full selection admit 31% fewer.

Gillan Scott takes a different tack, claiming that the use of free school meal eligibility to establish socio-economic inclusivity in schools is flawed since comparing 'faith' school intakes to their local areas on free school meals fails to account for the larger catchment areas that most 'faith' schools have. However, while a larger catchment size might negatively affect the inclusivity of an individual school, it seems just as likely that it could positively affect it, especially given that house prices go up (and hence free school meal eligibility goes down) around successful schools. This explanation therefore falls short in justifying the socio-economic selectivity of Catholic Schools in aggregate.

http://www.civitas.org.uk/pdf/theselectiondebate

Social attitudes among British Muslims survey

ComRes poll for BBC's Today programme (February 2015)

Survey question on Muslim attitudes to 'faith' schooling

Table 25

Q3. Do you agree or disagree with these statements about life in Britain ...?
Base: All respondents
I would like my children to go to a Muslim state school if I had the choice

		Gender		Age			GO Region		
	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35-44	45+	North	Midlands	South
Unweighted base	1000	530	470	463	308	229	273	239	487
Weighted base	1000	530	470	530	220	250	266	241	492
Agree	309	178	131	172	61	77	82	66	160
	31%	34%	28%	32%	28%	31%	31%	27%	33%
Disagee	656	333	323	340	154	162	173	169	315
	66%	63%	69%	64%	70%	65%	65%	70%	64%
Refused	4	3	1	2	1	1	3	1	-
	0	0	0	0	0	0	1%	0	-
Don't know	31	16	15	16	4	10	9	5	17
	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%	3%

The figures show that a substantial majority of British Muslims (66%) would not send their children to 'faith' schools if given the choice, suggesting 'faith' schools are not as popular within Muslim communities as perhaps is sometimes portrayed.

http://comres.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/BBC-Today-Programme_British-Muslims-Poll_FINAL-Tables_Feb2015.pdf

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Do Ethnically Mixed Classrooms Promote Inclusive Attitudes Towards Immigrants Everywhere?

Germ Janmaat (January 2015)

This study assessed survey data collected from over 100,000 13 and 14 year olds in 38 countries to ascertain whether or not more diverse classrooms make pupils more tolerant towards immigrants and those from different backgrounds.

Whilst the focus of the research is not on 'faith' schools specifically, the conclusions clearly have a contribution to make on the subject. Janmaat states that 'schools should be as inclusive in their admissions policies as possible' and finds that more diverse classrooms do produce more tolerant students. However, he emphasises the need to positively encourage meaningful inter-ethnic contact and friendship within schools and classrooms.

Abstract available at: http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/21124/

Office of the Schools Adjudicator annual report: September 2013 to August 2014

Elizabeth Passmore OBE, Chief Schools Adjudicator (December 2014)

This report criticises the complexity and lack of clarity of some faith-based admissions arrangements, the failure of some religious authorities to comply with the School Admissions Code and the reluctance of some schools to admit children with medical or social needs until after places had been allocated to those sharing the school's faith.

It notes that the extensive faith-based oversubscription criteria of some schools means parents study the arrangements for 'sometimes several years before applying for a place, to ensure that their child will have a realistic chance of gaining a place at the school'. This is despite the School Admissions Code clearly stating that 'admission authorities must ensure that parents can easily understand how any faith-based criteria will be reasonably satisfied.'

Sections of particular interest include:

'60. The **complexity** of some schools' admission arrangements continues to be a matter of concern… The complex arrangements compared with the clearest have some or all of: numerous oversubscription criteria and sometimes subcategories within them; different categories of places; more than one catchment area; feeder schools; tens of points available and needed to gain priority; banding and therefore tests to be taken; aptitude assessment; and several faith-based oversubscription criteria.'

'62. Schools designated as having a religious character may include **faith-based oversubscription criteria** that can be applied if the school is oversubscribed. The relevant faith body has an important role in ensuring that the guidance it gives about admissions, especially about the oversubscription criteria, takes account of the requirements set out in the Code. There are examples of clear and precise guidance that includes a limited faith requirement and a short, clear specimen supplementary information form. Other examples of guidance have not been amended following the publication of the 2012 Code, and offer supplementary forms of several pages that include matters which do not comply with the Code. There have been many objections and referrals concerning the admission arrangements of faith schools this year. Some cases have been about matters other than the faith-based oversubscription criteria, for example, priority for children attending the school's nursery; others have been to the faith criteria and whether the practice specified complies with the Code; others have queried exactly what is required to meet the faith-based oversubscription criteria so that a child can gain priority for admission to the school. Some of the schools with a religious character have faith-based oversubscription criteria with faith requirements that are extensive and require a parent to be well organised and study the arrangements carefully, sometimes several years before applying for a place, to ensure that their child will have a realistic chance of gaining a place at the school. The Code at paragraph 1.37 says, "*Admission authorities must ensure that parents can easily understand how any faith-based criteria will be reasonably satisfied.*" Admission authorities need to look carefully at their faith-based oversubscription criteria and ensure they comply with this requirement.'

'99. As in previous years a number of local authorities express concern that some schools designated as having a religious character give priority, as permitted by the Code, to looked after, previously looked after and all other children of the faith before looked after and previously looked after children not of the faith. This may result in it being difficult, or even impossible, for a looked after or previously looked after child other than of the faith to be admitted to some popular, high achieving faith schools.'

'102. Some local authorities express concern at the lack of or in the level of priority given to children with disabilities in the arrangements of own admission authority schools. In a substantial number of these schools, the priority may be second only to looked after and previously looked after children, whereas many faith schools in particular give priority to all children of the faith before giving priority to other children not of the faith who have social, medical or physical needs. The situation is thus similar to that described above concerning looked after and previously looked after children. If the school is oversubscribed with children of the faith then children with social, medical or physical

needs who are not of the faith of that school may not be offered places, irrespective of the suitability of the school for their particular needs.'

'112. [With respect to the fair access protocol] a number of local authorities report that not all schools are cooperative and that there is active resistance to the protocol from some. At one end of the spectrum, this resistance may be a relatively mild expression of disquiet when a school feels that, because it is not oversubscribed, it has been approached more frequently than other schools and so admits a high number of children who pose challenges. At the other extreme, there may be a more fundamental unwillingness, for example in a faith school, to admit children not of the faith through the protocol ahead of those of the faith who are on the waiting list.'

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/393886/OSA_Annual_Report_2014.pdf

http://fairadmissions.org.uk/chief-schools-adjudicators-annual-report-criticises-complexity-of-some-faith-based-admissions-policies/

Digest of Census Data for Catholic Schools and Colleges, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014

Catholic Education Service for England and Wales (most recent November 2014)

Five publications, each reporting the Catholicity of pupils in Catholic schools, as well as basic figures on Free School Meals

2009: 'In 2009 three-quarters of the pupils in Catholic maintained primary and secondary schools were Catholic, defined in the Guidance as '(those who) have been baptised or received into the Catholic Church'. Proportions were lower in Wales at about two-thirds and much lower in Catholic independent schools, where on average fewer than half of pupils were Catholic. In sixth form colleges about half the students were Catholic: they differed in this respect from school sixth forms, where proportions pre- and post-16 did not generally vary much from the 75% average.'

2010: 'In 2010 slightly more than 70% of pupils in Catholic maintained schools were Catholic, according to the definition given in the Guidance: '(those who) have been baptised or received into the Catholic Church.' The figure was slightly higher than this in England and significantly below in Wales, at about 62%. In independent schools the proportion was substantially lower, at about 40%. The figures for maintained schools seem to show a slight decrease from 2009, evenly spread across all school years. Varying response rates from year to year may be a factor here but are unlikely to account totally for the decrease.

'In England the proportions in primary and secondary schools were very similar and the proportion in sixth form colleges was, as in previous years, much lower at about half. In Wales the proportion of Catholic pupils was slightly higher in primary schools than in secondary schools, which again replicates the finding of previous analyses.'

2011: 'The proportion of Catholic pupils in Catholic maintained schools was almost identical to the figure for 2010, at 71%. In Wales, the proportion was 60%, lower than in England, as in previous years. In independent schools the proportion was 38%, lower than the 41% in 2010, but the variable rate of response from independent schools suggests caution in interpreting this apparent decline.

'…in England proportions in primary and secondary phases were very similar. In Wales, secondary schools tended to have a rather smaller proportion. Sixth form colleges had the lowest proportion of all in both England and Wales, fewer than half of students being described as Catholic in England and just over half in Wales.

'Scrutiny of the data by year group seems to show that the proportion of Catholic pupils was slightly lower in the earlier years of each phase (the secondary phase generally begins with year 7). The reasons for this are not clear, but if the trend continues the effect could be a further slight decline in the proportions of Catholic pupils overall. (Proportions in nursery classes are N1 60% and N2 66%, which might seem to confirm this, but the numbers in nursery classes are quite small and vary greatly across the regions.)

'Figures for the dioceses showed the same characteristics as in previous years. Westminster, Brentwood and Liverpool had the highest proportions of Catholic pupils in their primary and secondary schools, while Plymouth had the lowest. As has been noted previously, the proportions did not differ much between phases in most dioceses, but in a handful the difference was substantial. These were Arundel & Brighton, with 79% Catholic pupils in primary schools but 67% in secondary schools, Hallam (53%/67%), Portsmouth (71%/55%), Menevia (64%/50%) and Wrexham (62%/50%). Appendix 2.2 gives details for all the dioceses.

'Analysis of the distribution of non-Catholic pupils shows a pattern almost identical to last year. Almost 20% of schools had more than half non-Catholic pupils and a slightly higher proportion (22%) had fewer than 10%. Once again, almost half of the schools had more than 30% non-Catholic pupils.'

2012: 'The proportion of Catholic pupils in Catholic maintained schools in England and Wales was 70.4%, virtually the same as the figure for 2011 (70.6%). The figure for England was 70.8%, while in Wales the proportion was 59.6%. This difference repeats the pattern of previous years. In independent schools the proportion was 36.8%, which seems to continue the slight decrease noted last year (41% in 2010, 38% in 2011).

'…In England the proportions in primary and secondary phases were similar, but with a slightly higher proportion in primary schools. A similar but less pronounced difference between phases was reported last year: primary 72.4%, secondary 70.9%. This aspect merits careful monitoring. In Wales, proportions of Catholics tended to be lower in secondary than in primary schools, as in previous years. Sixth form colleges had the lowest proportion of all in both England and Wales, the proportions being almost identical for the first time at 44-45%.

'Scrutiny of the data by year group confirms that the proportion of Catholic pupils was slightly lower in the earlier years of each phase. The reasons for this are not clear and the phenomenon deserves further study.

The figures for the dioceses showed similar characteristics to previous years. Westminster had the highest proportions of Catholic pupils with 85% and Brentwood and Liverpool had around 80%. Plymouth had the lowest with 43%. Of the Welsh dioceses, Cardiff had higher proportions than average and Wrexham lower proportions. As has been noted previously, the proportions did not differ much between phases in most dioceses, but in a handful the difference was more than 10%. These were Arundel & Brighton, with 80% Catholic pupils in primary schools but 67% in secondary schools, Clifton (62%/77%), Menevia (64%/50%), Portsmouth (71%/57%), and Wrexham (61%/48%). Appendix 2.2 gives details for all the dioceses.

Analysis of the distribution of non-Catholic pupils shows almost no change from 2011 and continues to demonstrate that the national averages, while useful, summarise a wide variety of very different situations . Once again, almost 20% of schools had more than half non-Catholic pupils and a slightly higher proportion (22%) had fewer than 10%. As in previous years, almost half of the schools had more than 30% non-Catholic pupils.'

2013: 'The proportion of Catholic pupils in both maintained and independent sectors was slightly lower than in 2012: 70.2% compared to 70.8% in 2012 in maintained schools and 36.4% compared to 36.8% in 2012 in independent schools. These differences are... worth considering since they seem to confirm the downward trend from 2007, when figures of 73.6% for maintained schools and colleges and 39.3% for independent schools were reported for a comparable sample of schools (97% compared to 98% for 2013).'

'It should however be noted that the actual number of Catholic pupils increased in 2013: the slightly lower percentage figure is in part due to the total number of pupils increasing at a slightly greater rate.'

There was an uneven decrease across phases: 'more significant in secondary schools, where the figure in 2012 was 69.9%, and in sixth form colleges (44.0% in 2012), but negligible in primary schools, where the figure was 73.0%.' As in 2011, this suggests 'slightly lower proportions of Catholic pupils in the earlier primary and earlier secondary phases. This suggests that the decrease identified in the previous paragraph is likely to continue at least in the medium term (the next 5-7 years).'

In Wales: 'The proportion of Catholic pupils in the Catholic sector overall was 57.9%. The overall figure showed a decrease since 2012, when the proportion was 59.6%'. 'The decrease was spread across all phases but was much more substantial in the secondary phase.'

2014: 'The proportion of Catholic pupils in maintained schools and colleges decreased slightly once again, to 69.5% compared to 70.2% in 2013. If only the schools are considered, the figure was 70.5% (71% in 2013). For the independent sector, the proportion was 36.7%, hardly different from the figure for 2013. As for last year the percentage figures do not tell the full story: in the primary phase the number of Catholic pupils recorded actually increased by about 9,000, but the total number of pupils recorded also rose, by about 12,000. In secondary schools the number of Catholic pupils was almost identical to the figure for 2013, but the total number of pupils whose affiliation was recorded rose by about 7,000.' The survey recorded 'no change in the primary phase: the overall decrease was caused by lower proportions in secondary schools and the colleges.' While proportions in the earlier secondary years, particularly in year 7, were lower than in subsequent years; if this continued the overall proportion in the secondary phase would continue to decrease.'

'In the national census the overall percentage of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals was 16.3%, down from 17.1% in 2013. The overall figure for Catholic schools was 13.9%, compared to 14.1% in 2013, showing that the gap between Catholic schools and the national average has narrowed from 3 percentage points to 2.4 percentage points.'

2009: http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/catholic-education/publications/item/download/18301_ba1cb95a050274a8baa256b154ab3d93
2010: https://www.cesewcensus.org.uk/images/CESEWCensusDigest2010.pdf
2011: https://www.cesewcensus.org.uk/downloads/CESEWCensusDigest2011.pdf
2012:https://www.cesewcensus.org.uk/downloads/Digest_of_2012_Census_Data_for_Schools_and_Colleges.pdf

2013 – England: http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/ces-census/item/download/18977_2e3811c1c451ea06087e02cf7a00ef9d
2013 – Wales: http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/ces-census/item/download/18978_95259350c7ac0d4a30d32b7ce828cf64
2014 – England: http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/ces-census/item/download/11103_13b76d91950c7db43b0867ea4a7ac6cc
2014 – Wales: http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/ces-census/item/download/11104_6b8e6b8c7b4c7b092c4ff2317d3a5f47

What Parents Want: School Preferences and School Choice

Simon Burgess, Ellen Greaves, Anna Vignoles and Deborah Wilson (August 2014)

This paper examines a number of questions surrounding parental choice and preference in the school system, including which school attributes families value and how these preferences differ across socio-economic groups.

The data implies that whilst parents' preference for academic quality and proximity of a school vary between socio-economic groups, the majority of parents across socio-economic groups prefer schools without a specified religious denomination.

http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ecoj.12153/epdf

Attitudes towards School Choice and Faith Schools in the UK: A Question of Individual Preference or Collective Interest?

Stratos Patrikios and John Curtis (July, 2014)

Support for faith schooling and religious group identity

This paper draws on surveys in the constituent countries of the UK regarding public attitudes towards parental choice in school age education and a diversity of school providers. It finds widespread support for the principle of school choice in general, but only minority support for parents being able to choose faith schools.

TABLE 1. Attitudes towards school choice and diversity of provision throughout the UK

	England	*Scotland*	*N. Ireland*	*Wales*
% support school choice in general (quite a lot/a great deal)	82	76	84	81
% support choice of specialist school (support/strongly support)	60	56	50	58
% support choice of faith school (support/strongly support)	31	24	32	36

Source: British Social Attitudes 2007 (respondents living in England only); Scottish Social Attitudes 2007, Northern Ireland Life and Times 2007; Wales Life and Times 2007.

The paper finds stronger support for faith schools among denomination members in countries where their denomination has a significant presence in school age education. For example, there is a widespread provision of Catholic schools throughout the UK, but only a widespread provision of non-Catholic Christian schools in England and Wales. The paper notes the lower level of support for faith schools among Protestants in Northern Ireland and Scotland, and among the non-religious throughout the UK.

TABLE 5. Support for faith-based schools by religious identity

	% support faith-based schools (support/strongly support)			
Religious identity	*England*	*Scotland*	*N. Ireland*	*Wales*
Catholic	58	68	54	67
Protestant	33	16	17	41
No religion	22	18	16	29

Source: British Social Attitudes 2007 (respondents living in England only); Scottish Social Attitudes 2007, Northern Ireland Life and Times 2007; Wales Life and Times 2007.

The paper concludes that by 'drawing on social identity theory, we suggest that attitudes towards faith-based schools reflect social (religious) identities and group interests associated with those identities rather than beliefs about the merits of individual choice ... We conclude that rather than reflecting a supposedly a-social concern with choice, support for diversity of educational provision may be rooted instead in collective – and potentially antagonistic – social identities.' (Abstract, p1)

http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=9281487&jid=JSP&volumeId=43&issueId=03&aid=9281483

Summary of faith school OSA decisions under the 2012 Admissions Code

Fair Admissions Campaign (April 2014)

The first systematic compilation of its kind, this research into religiously selective admissions criteria presents and summarises the complaints against faith-based schools made between July 2012 and

April 2014. The research provides a window into the range of different strategies employed by faith-based schools in an effort to skirt the government admissions policy. It also details the more innocuous violations, such as schools' failure to publish admissions criteria on time. In each case, it summarises the nature of the grievance made by the complainant and gives the decision of the adjudicator.

http://cdn2.fairadmissions.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Summary-of-faith-school-OSA-decisions-under-the-2012-Admissions-Code.pdf

http://fairadmissions.org.uk/how-religiously-selective-schools-have-been-found-to-break-the-admissions-code/

The Church Growth Research Programme

Church of England (February 2014)

This series of five reports published by the Church of England is intended to identify what successfully causes churches to grow, so that this knowledge can be used to stimulate further growth elsewhere.

http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/progress_findings_reports

The following reports contain relevant findings:

The Church Growth Research Programme Report on Strands 1 and 2: Numerical change in church attendance: National, local and individual factors

(David Voas and Laura Watt, February 2014)

This research was conducted for the Church of England in order to identify what successfully causes churches to grow, so that this knowledge can be used to stimulate further growth elsewhere.

Academics carried out 'a purpose-built survey of growing, stable and declining churches across all dioceses'. One of the questions asked was 'Is this church linked to a Church of England school? [If yes] Is it over-subscribed?' Analysing the results, the academics write that 'The results for church growth are interesting. Here the Church school has a key role… The most direct impact on attendance may be felt in areas where a popular C of E school is over-subscribed. Some churchgoing is clearly motivated by a desire to qualify for school admission, but the boost to attendance may last into the longer term if families decide to stay.' This was found to be statistically significant; the academics concluded that 'Middle class suburbs with church schools… offer great opportunities [for growth].'

http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/Report_Strands_1_2_rev2.pdf

In a summary of his report on strands 1 and 2, Voas writes that 'Being connected with an over-subscribed school is helpful, if not easy to engineer!'

http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Presentations/CGRP_Voas.pdf

Church Growth Research Programme Strand 3: Structures

David Goodhew with Ben Kautzer and Joe Moffatt (October 2013)

In this report, about counting the number of people on electoral rolls, it is written, 'it is dubious judgement to say that those who 'just' join an electoral roll for reasons of schooling/matrimony should be discounted – their motives may be mixed, but they are not ignoble per se and may shift faithwards over time.'

http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/AmalgamationsandTeamsReportFINAL130214.pdf

See also http://fairadmissions.org.uk/new-church-research-shows-growth-is-strongest-where-there-are-oversubscribed-schools/

Banding and Ballots: Secondary school admissions in England: Admissions in 2012/13 and the impact of growth of Academies

Philip Noden, Anne West and Audrey Hind, The Sutton Trust (February 2014)

'A small but growing number of schools, mainly sponsored academies, are using ability banding or random allocation (ballots) as part of their admissions criteria, according to new Sutton Trust research published today. '

A 2007 Ipsos MORI public opinion poll from 2007 of nearly 2000 adults revealed that...'ballots are thought by a third of people to be a fairer 'tiebreaker' than other methods for deciding places at over-subscribed schools.' Full results of the poll can be found below under the entry for **Ballots in school admissions, Sutton Trust, May 2007** (p.73/74).

As of 2012, 93% of comprehensive voluntary aided secondary schools use religious selection in their admissions, alongside 8% of sponsored Academies, 10% of converter Academies, 1% of foundation schools, 1% of community/voluntary controlled schools and 4% of grammar schools [p15-17].

Also looked at was the number of religious criteria used by VA schools and religious Academies [p17]:

Type of school	**No religious criteria**	**Number of religious criteria**					
		1	2	3	4-6	7-16	N
Voluntary aided	9	2	3	9	45	32	360
Academy religious character	39	7	9	6	27	12	161

'Notably nine of the ten schools not operating banding were faith schools – reflecting their greater interest in the religious affiliation of applicants than in creating balanced intakes.' [p23]

'while some schools and headteachers view themselves as serving their local community, some do not. This contrast is exemplified… by religious schools admitting pupils on the basis of religious adherence.' [p31]

'Some schools with a religious character do not admit pupils on the basis of religious adherence although these represent a minority of denominational schools. Concerns remain because schools with a religious character are, in general, more likely to admit pupils who have higher levels of attainment and are less likely to be eligible for free school meals… schools with a religious character were less likely to use banding, reflecting the diversity of mission across different schools.' [p34]

The research is based on the admissions policies of England's 3,000 state secondary schools and academies in the 2012/13 school year.

The Sutton Trust's review of the research: http://www.suttontrust.com/news/news/ballots-and-banding/
http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/banding-and-ballots-report.pdf

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Youth On Religion: The development, negotiation and impact of faith and non-faith identity

Nicola Madge, Peter J Hemming and Kevin Stenson (January 2014). Routledge

Madge et al.'s research indicates that young people value mixed education over single-faith. The research is 'based on a survey of more than 10,000 13 to 17-year-olds and interviews with around 160 17 to 18-year-olds'.

It was found that most young people 'stress how multi-faith schooling, providing opportunities to get to know other pupils with a range of faith values, is good preparation for later life, including going to university. Mixing at school or college also encourages an interest in diversity and helps to reduce prejudice.'

The report also found that 'Multi-faith schools do not, however, provide any guarantee of integration. Reports of religious and cultural groups clustering together, and clear indications that pupils are particularly likely to choose best friends from similar faith and cultural backgrounds, emerged from the study. Nonetheless serious clashes between faith groups at school or college seemed rare. Arguments and name-calling were reported but did not appear to be predominantly about religious values, even if religious labels were used as forms of abuse.'

Pupils also 'emphasised how effective religious education is enhanced by relevant, practical experience. Greater active involvement from pupils with first-hand knowledge of particular faith groups… was suggested.'

http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415696708/

See also:

- the project's website: http://www.brunel.ac.uk/shssc/research/ccyr/research-projects/yor
- an article by Nicola Madge: http://www.sec-ed.co.uk/news/study-reveals-teens-views-on-faith-and-re

- comments by the Fair Admissions Campaign upon publication: http://fairadmissions.org.uk/report-sees-young-people-endorse-mixed-schooling/

'Academic success of religiously selective schools rests on back door social selection'

Fair Admissions Campaign (January 2014)

This research finds that 'Top ranking religiously selective faith schools have been found to be some of the most socio-economically segregatory schools in the country'.

'The Government's latest league tables on GCSE performance, released today, show that religiously selective secondary schools comprise 47 of the 100 best performing non-grammar schools. This is when religiously selective schools comprise only 16% of state funded secondary schools. However, findings from the Fair Admissions Campaign show that the 47 schools admit 44% fewer pupils entitled to free school meals than would be expected if they instead admitted their nearest local children. For the top 10 ranked religiously selective schools the figure is 56% fewer.'

Religious schools' preference for students of high socio-economic standing could easily explain their success.

Of the top five worst performers in terms of socio-economic inclusivity, three are Roman Catholic, one is Muslim, and one Jewish.

The Campaign's source was
http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/download_data.html

http://fairadmissions.org.uk/academic-success-of-religiously-selective-schools-rests-on-back-door-social-selection/

Are minority status children's cross-ethnic friendships beneficial in a multiethnic context?

Sabahat C. Bagci, Adam Rutland, Madoka Kumashiro, Peter K. Smith, and Herbert Blumberg (January 2014). The British Journal of Developmental Psychology, Volume 32, Issue 1, pp. 107–115, March 2014

This research has found that cross ethnic friendships in schools make children more resilient to perceived ethnic discrimination. This supports existing findings indicating that there is a positive effect on community cohesion from ethnically mixed schools, as they allow more cross ethnic friendships' to develop ; however, it covers new ground in suggesting that ethnically mixed schools also have a direct and positive effect on the psychological well-being of pupils themselves.

The report supports the argument, put forward by the Fair Admissions Campaign and numerous academics, that religious segregation in schooling manifests at a later stage among the community, and that this can be mitigated by inclusive schools.

http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bjdp.12028/abstract;jsessionid=F7D2E9268E1233DAF9AB578D91B4967C.f02t01

See also http://fairadmissions.org.uk/ethnically-mixed-schools-help-pupils-overcome-discrimination-2/

Latest Catholic and Pastoral Statistics

Pastoral Research Centre Trust (December 2013)

Catholic baptisms moving away from birth and towards school admission deadlines

Recent statistics produced by The Catholic Pastoral Research Centre Trust reveal that the number of baptisms of children under the age of one is in long term decline, and the number of baptisms of those aged over one has risen dramatically over the past decade. This might reflect parents baptising their children in order to gain an advantage in securing places in religiously selective Catholic schools.

In total, the number of Catholic baptisms of children under one fell by 5% from 44,130 in 2001 to 41,937 in 2012, with half the fall happening in the last year. Conversely, the number of late baptisms (almost all by age 13) rose 29% from 19,528 in 2001 to 25,225 in 2012 – although there was a 5% fall in the last year.

http://www.prct.org.uk/ / http://www.freezepage.com/1392915197FZFFNRNHTJ

See also http://fairadmissions.org.uk/church-baptisms-move-away-from-birth-and-towards-school-admission-deadlines/

Parent Power? Using money and information to boost children's chances of educational success

Becky Francis and Merryn Hutchings, Improving Social Mobility through Education, The Sutton Trust (December 2013)

This research looks into the strategies parents use to aid their children's educational outcomes, and how this varies across social class. The research is based on data from a YouGov poll of 1173 parents of children aged 5-16 years, conducted in November 2012.

The most popular source utilised by parents in assessing probable educational outcomes was discussion with other parents. Those parents that used multiple sources of information, moreover, tended to be from the middle class. Among some working class groups (Group E), up to 40% of parents used only 1 or 0 sources. The 'informed choosers', who relied on up to 1 documentary source, were composed of 60% middle class parents.

The 5th popular strategy employed to get children into better schools was 'attending church services to gain entry to a church school' (6%). This is comparable to national church attendance figures (also 6% of the population, or 4-5% of the parent-age population).

'In 2004, more than a quarter of respondents to a YouGov survey said that they would consider £at least one dishonest measure£ to ensure that their child gained entry to a specific school; one in five said that they would lie or exaggerate their religious beliefs… (BBC News website, 2004).'

'Informed' and 'hyper' choosers were more likely to attend church services in order to improve educational outcomes – these groups contain mainly middle class parents, but the differences were not very significant.

This 'research shows that those who adopt the choice behaviours anticipated by government policy – the "informed choosers" and "hyper choosers" – are disproportionately, though by no means exclusively, middle class'. There are clear inequalities along financial and class lines in terms of the resources parents are able to employ in order to improve their children's educational outcomes. Parents from lower classes are far less likely to be involved in their children's schooling. 'An additional concern for the Government is the number of parents – more than half in each social group – who had not made direct use of school attainment data in choosing schools.'

http://www.suttontrust.com/our-work/research/item/parent-power/

'Groundbreaking new research maps the segregating impact of faith school admissions'

Fair Admissions Campaign (December 2013)

This research presents in map form how religiously selective, socio-economically inclusive and ethnically inclusive every mainstream state secondary school in England is. It also provides profiles for each school and local authority, allowing users to see levels of segregation between denominations, local authorities and dioceses. Using data from 5 sources and hundreds of admissions directories, the research details the proportion of pupils each school is allowed to religiously select in its oversubscription criteria; how many pupils at the school are eligible for free school meals (FSMs) by comparison with its local area; and how many speak English as an additional language.

It is revealed that 19% of all mainstream state secondary schools are faith-based, and that among the 16% that religiously select, 72% of places are subject to religious admissions criteria. Therefore 13% of secondary school places are religiously selected. It is estimated that 17% of primary school places are similarly religiously selected, or 1.2 million places between both phases. This is significantly more than children at the secondary level in grammar schools (5%), single-sex schools (5%), or independent schools (7%).

Roman Catholic schools religiously select for 99.8% of places, while Church of England schools only do so in 49.7% of places; however, this figure rises to 68% in cases where schools are in control of their own admissions policies and in recent years always have been. The variation among Anglican dioceses is considerable, ranging from religious selection rates of 3% (Leicester) to 84% (Liverpool).

Comprehensives with no religious character admit 11% more pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) than would be expected given their areas. Comprehensive Church of England secondaries admit 10% fewer; Roman Catholic secondaries 24% fewer; Jewish secondaries 61% fewer; and Muslim secondaries 25% fewer. Additionally there is a clear correlation between socio-economic segregation and religious selection, with those that don't select according to faith admitting far more students eligible for FSMs. CofE schools that don't select admit 4% more FSM-eligible than would be expected, while those that fully select admit 31% fewer. The most segregated local authority as a result of religious selection is Hammersmith and Fulham.

Despite only accounting for 16% of the total, religiously selective schools represent 46% of the top 100 most segregated schools as judged by eligibility FSMs and 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) criteria.

In conclusion, the research strongly suggests that religious selection decreases levels of inclusion, segregating communities along socio-economic, ethnic and religious lines.

http://fairadmissions.org.uk/map/

http://fairadmissions.org.uk/groundbreaking-new-research-maps-the-segregating-impact-of-faith-school-admissions/

http://cdn1.fairadmissions.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Fair-Admissions-Campaign-map-in-depth-briefing.pdf

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Office of the Schools Adjudicator annual report September 2012 to August 2013

Elizabeth Passmore OBE, Chief Schools Adjudicator (November 2013)

'Another concern for adjudicators has been the complexity of some admission arrangements. Some secondary schools have determined arrangements that are complicated and require a parent to be well organised and study the arrangements carefully, sometimes several years before applying for a place, to ensure that their child will have a realistic chance of gaining a place at the school… there may… be… faith criteria to be met if the school is one designated as having a religious character. The complex arrangements, especially some with points systems, risk falling far short of meeting paragraph 14 of the Code which says, "Parents should be able to look at a set of arrangements and understand easily how places for that school will be allocated."

'For schools designated as having a religious character, the relevant faith body has an important role in ensuring that the guidance it gives about admissions and especially the oversubscription criteria takes account of the requirements set out in the Code currently in force.' [p23]

'Once more there are references to some schools designated as having a religious character giving priority, as permitted by the Code, to looked after, previously looked after and all children of that faith before other looked after and previously looked after children. This can mean that there are schools, often popular, good schools, where it is impossible for a looked after or previously looked after child other than of the faith to be admitted.' [p32]

http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/o/osa%20annual%20report%201213%20final%20word%20version.pdf

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Religious schools most racially segregated state schools, new findings show

Humanists UK (October 2013)

- 'Out of the five Sikh state schools for which data is available, four have no pupils at all that are classified as "white British", compared to 30 percent of their local populations.

- ‘Out of four Hindu state schools, two have no pupils classified as “white British”, compared to 45 percent of their local populations.
- ‘Out of 15 Muslim state schools, eight have no pupils classified as “white British”. On average, over a third of the local populations are “white British”. Overall, Muslim schools have on average 34 percentage points fewer “white British” pupils than would be expected for ethnically diverse schools in the areas in which they are located.
- ‘Out of 44 Jewish state schools, 29 have no pupils who are classified as having an “Asian”, compared to 12 percent of their local populations – with one school having a majority ‘Asian’ population in its immediate vicinity. Jewish schools have on average 13 percentage points fewer ‘Asian’ pupils than would be expected for ethnically inclusive schools located in their areas.
- ‘Out of 1,985 Roman Catholic schools, 245 have no “Asian” pupils. Catholic schools typically have 4.4 percentage points fewer “Asian” pupils than would be expected for schools located in their areas.
- ‘Out of 13,121 schools with no religious character, just 18 have no “white British” pupils. 2,344 have no “Asian” pupils, but less than 1 percent of these schools’ local populations are “Asian”. Schools with no religious character have on average 0.8 percentage points more “Asian” pupils than would be expected for schools located in their areas.’

https://humanism.org.uk/2013/10/18/religious-schools-racially-segregated-state-schools-new-findings-show/

State of the Nation 2013: social mobility and child poverty in Great Britain

Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (October 2013)

‘*School choice and admissions*

‘Future progress on life chances depends on more poor children going to good schools… The Commission supports school choice as a means of achieving its school improvement objectives but believes it has to be made to work for children from all backgrounds. Critically, choice should be about parents from all backgrounds being able to choose schools and not schools being able to choose pupils…

‘Research has shown that school choice matters more for low-attaining and disadvantaged students than for their more advantaged peers. Students who do well at the end of Key Stage 2 (age 11) are more likely to achieve eight Bs at GCSE, regardless of which local secondary school they go on to attend. By contrast, the GCSE results of students who do poorly at Key Stage 2 are more likely to vary widely – from lower than 8 Es to as high as 8Cs, depending on which school they attend. Making the right choice of school matters more for the group of students who are less likely to live in the areas with the best schools and whose families are less likely to access the best local schools.

‘The Commission is concerned about the potential risk to fair access if high-performing schools use their greater autonomy to actively pursue admissions which fail to represent the areas they serve. The Commission is concerned, for example, that exclusionary practices have become more common in recent years. **Examples include parents attending church for the sole purpose of securing a place at a local high-performing religious school, and schools targeting specific groups of parents with social activities and information.**’

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/292231/State_of_the_Nation_2013.pdf

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More than an Educated Guess: Assessing the evidence on faith schools

Elizabeth Oldfield, Liane Hartnett and Emma Bailey, Theos (September 2013)

Review of the evidence base underpinning public debate about faith schools

Theos' paper concluded that faith schools' contribution to community cohesion in relation to race, ethnicity and minority religious communities 'does not seem to be problematic' and 'at worst their efforts would appear to be on par with the broader education system'. It also concluded that 'the use of faith-based selection criteria in oversubscribed schools may indirectly privilege pupils from higher socio-economic backgrounds, [but] there is no evidence that this conclusions is the intention of schools', and that 'the evidence that the higher academic attainment of faith schools is due to something other than pupil selection criteria is weak.'

The report recommended that supporters of faith schools move 'away from a justification on the basis of academic outcomes and instead developing a stronger understanding and articulation of the value of an education in a school with a religious character, possibly in relation to ethos, a more holistic approach and development of character'. It also noted 'for Christian schools in particular, there seem to be good reasons to reassess policies around pupil selection. The most pressing concern should be to ensure that applicants from less privileged backgrounds are fairly represented in the school's intake. Secondly, some schools may wish to explore ways to maintain their religious character whilst broadening their selection basis because of their historic ethic of hospitality and concern for the poorest in society'.

The Humanists UK (BHA) produced a critique of the Theos paper, called 'Worse than an education guess', which took 'a detailed look at its flaws':
https://humanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Worse-than-an-educated-guess-British-Humanist-Association-response-to-Theoss-report-on-faith-schools.pdf

Theos wrote a response to the BHA's critique at:
http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/files/files/Reports/More%20than%20an%20educated%20guess%20-%20Response%20to%20the%20BHA%20-%20final.pdf

'More than an Educated Guess: Assessing the evidence on faith schools' available at:
http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/publications/2013/10/02/more-than-an-educated-guess-assessing-the-evidence-on-faith-schools

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Westminster Faith Debates survey

YouGov (June 2013, published September 2013)

Various survey questions about public attitudes towards faith schooling

Q. If you were thinking about sending your child to a school in your local area, which two or three, if any, would influence your choice? (Please tick up to three)	
Academic standards	**77**

Location of the school	**58**
Discipline records in the school	**41**
Ethical values	**23**
Prestige of the school	**19**
Grounding of pupils in a faith tradition	**5**
Transmission of belief about God	**3**
Something else	**5**
Don't know	**9**

Q. A faith school is a school that provides a general education within a framework of a specific religious belief. Imagining now that you had a child and were choosing a school for them… How likely or unlikely would you be to send your child to a faith school?

		Age			Social Grade	
	Total	**18-24**	**25-39**	**40-59**	**ABC1**	**C2DE**
Very likely	**9**	6	8	9	9	9
Fairly likely	**15**	14	15	13	17	12
TOTAL LIKELY	**24**	**20**	**23**	**22**	**26**	**21**
Fairly unlikely	**21**	27	21	20	23	20
Very unlikely	**38**	36	39	41	37	41
TOTAL UNLIKELY	**59**	**63**	**60**	**61**	**60**	**61**
Don't know	**16**	16	17	17	14	18

Q. State-supported 'faith schools' make up around a third of schools in Britain. Most are church schools (e.g. Church of England, Roman Catholic) and the rest (around 1%) are non-Christian (e.g. Jewish, Muslim, Hindu). Do you think the Government should or should not provide funding for the following faith schools?

	Total	**Voting intention**			**Age**			
		Con	**Lab**	**Lib Dem**	***18-24***	***25-39***	***40-59***	***60+***
The Government _should_ provide funding for these	**32**	34	35	36	*43*	*31*	*28*	32
the Government _should NOT_ provide funding for these	**45**	47	42	51	*36*	*40*	*47*	50
Don't know	**23**	19	22	13	*20*	*29*	*25*	18

Q. Faith schools are allowed to give preference in admissions to children and families who profess or practise the religion with which the school is affiliated. Do you think this is acceptable or unacceptable?

Acceptable	**49**
Unacceptable	**38**
Don't know	**13**

Q. Some people have suggested that all faith schools should admit a proportion of students who follow a

different religion or no religion at all. Do you think…?	
All faith schools should have to adopt this policy	**23**
It is up to the school to decide whether to adopt this policy	**30**
It is better for faith schools to admit pupils only of the same faith	**11**
There should be no faith schools at all	**26**
Don't know	**11**

The poll questions show that, of those who expressed an opinion, a majority of people in Great Britain were against public funding for 'State-supported "faith schools"' (but for young people the reverse was the case). Similarly, and perhaps counter intuitively, a majority of those who expressed an opinion also thought it acceptable for faith schools to select pupils on faith grounds. However, as respondents were previously asked their view on 'State-supported' faith schools, arguably many may have believed they were being asked their view about all faith schools, including fee paying ones. In addition, and perhaps more importantly the latter was likely construed as advocating a 'quota' system, whereby a fixed number of places must go to pupils of a different religion or no religion. The Fair Admissions Campaign simply advocates open admissions. This may explain the difference between the results here and ComRes's survey of November 2012, which showed the public opposing faith-based admissions to state schools by more than four to one.

The survey also indicates that in contrast to a school's academic standards and location, for many parents the religious or philosophical ethos of a school was of a relatively low importance.

Press release:
http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/news/show/new_poll_reveals_what_people_really_think_about_faith_schools
Data: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/4n6d3tnayp/YG-Archive-University-of-Lancaster-Faith-Matters-Debate-results-180613-faith-schools.pdf

Weighted sample of 4,018 adults in Great Britain.

Muslim Group Solidarity and Schooling

Shamim Miah, for the Runnymede Trust's Runnymede Perspectives – The New Muslims, Edited by Claire Alexander, Victoria Redclift and Ajmal Hussain (July 2013)

This article could be interpreted as saying that Muslim group solidarity is the only effective way of dealing with anti-Muslim prejudice, and that this justifies the existence of Muslim faith schools. The author does not say this explicitly, but his emphasis on 'Muslim group solidarity' and his sceptical attitude towards integrated schooling imply that this could be the opinion which he is trying to get across.

Miah says that the idea of Muslim group identity has come to be seen as problematic in the post-9/11 era, with a particular focus on young Muslim men as constituting a 'problem'. He says that integration and community cohesion have usually been seen as the correct way to deal with this, but he instead argues for an approach based on Muslim group solidarity.

Miah claims that educating pupils from different ethnic groups in the same school does not necessarily lead to social integration, because the segregation of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds can persist within integrated schools. Miah mentions the concept of 'Asabiyya' (which means Muslim group solidarity), and says that it 'becomes a way of resisting anti-Muslim prejudice in the broader context of the War on Terror'. Miah argues that 'Group solidarity can then be seen as playing an important role in achieving group protection, generating support and nurturing feelings of stability in a climate of hostility.'

Miah concludes that 'For Muslim pupils, in the aftermath of 9/11 and 7/7, racist experiences are increasingly seen as a fact of everyday life or even a rite of passage that Muslim pupils inevitably have to undergo. Any debate on integration and segregation of schooling must first factor in experiences of anti-Muslim racism; second, recognize the importance of group solidarity as a mundane and potentially positive feature of school life; and finally, recognize and respond to the ways in which international and national events shape local Muslim spaces and experiences within schools.'

http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/Runnymede_The_New_Muslims_Perspective.pdf

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Fair access: Making school choice and admissions work for all

Rebecca Allen, for IPPR's 'Excellence and equity: Tackling educational disadvantage in England's secondary schools' (June 2013)

Allen argues for stricter regulation of school admissions in order to make the system fairer, and makes proposals for how to do that:

'Religious schools should continue to be allowed to admit up to 50 per cent of their pupils on a faith criterion (and substantially less where it is clear the religious community is not large enough to support this level), but I would severely restrict the terms of criterion. The current system enables religious schools to ask questions – such as marital status and place of child's baptism – to help them put a family on a 'continuum' of religiosity. This by its nature reveals information about the social background of the family and could enable 'covert' selection. Even without explicit cream-skimming taking place by religious schools, the complexity of their current admissions criteria may discourage low-income families from applying, or alternatively they may apply but be less skilled at meeting a specific school's criteria for religiosity. One way to simplify the admissions process for all families would be for the churches themselves to establish a nationally agreed binary criteria of 'religious adherence' that families are deemed to have either met, or not met. Once this is established, religious schools could then rely solely on the presence of a signature on a form from a religious leader to decide who has priority in the admissions process, so avoiding the need for the schools themselves to collect family background information.

'The number of places made available to those of faith will be fixed by an independent monitor based on a count of the number of eight-year olds taking part in religious worship in a week chosen at random. The allocation of the remaining places at religious schools would depend on existing patterns of attendance. Most faith schools (particularly village primary schools) would be allocated a catchment area where parents are guaranteed a place. Any other places would be allocated by lottery, open to anyone of faith or otherwise who wishes to attend the school.'

She goes on to conclude that 'by removing large amounts of selection by religious or academic tests, I do believe that the system will be less stratified overall.'

http://www.ippr.org/publication/55/10897/excellence-and-equity-tackling-educational-disadvantage-in-englands-secondary-schools

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School organisation and the educational achievement of children in poverty in England

Ruth Lupton, Philip Noden, Anne-Marie Brady and Anne West, London School of Economics, for Ofsted's 'Access and achievement in education 2013 review' (June 2013)

This paper systematically looks at each of grammar, single sex, faith, Academy and boarding schools in turn, considering how much we can conclude that selection skews exam results (although not whether they are socio-economically selective). On faith schools it has one paragraph saying:

'**Conclusions that can be drawn with confidence**

'None. Faith schools tend to perform relatively well in terms of raw attainment. However, studies that examine whether this is due to the composition of faith school intakes or to something that faith schools are doing do not come to a consensus (Benton et al.,2003; Schagen et al., 2002; Schagen and Schagen, 2005, Morris 2009, Gibbons and Silva, 2011). Morris, using Contextual Value Added (CVA) scores, showed that Catholic schools were more likely than other schools to have a combination of high attainment and high CVA, and less likely to have low attainment and low CVA. However, Schagen and Schagen (2005) using a multi-level approach, found that, controlling for other prior attainment and pupil and school characteristics, faith schools had slightly higher total points scores at GCSE and slightly high examination entries, but not higher average scores, suggesting perhaps that the higher total points were accounted for by entry into an extra GCSE in religious education. Gibbons and Silva's (2011) study attempts to provide stronger controls for pupil background and characteristics by additionally considering family residential choice and positive selection into faith schools throughout the school career. Taking these factors into account they find no faith school effect at primary school: differences in rates of progress at Key Stage 2 in faith and non-faith schools were entirely explained by pre-existing differences in pupils' characteristics.'

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141124154759/http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/access-and-achievement-background-papers

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Fair Admissions Campaign research into socio-economic selection by different schools

Fair Admissions Campaign (June 2013)

Religious schools are more socio-economically selective than others in their area

Extending on the *Guardian* research from March 2012, this research establishes the overall levels of socio-economic selection of different types of English state school, when compared to their local authority and the first half of their post code. This was established using the latest performance data published by the Government.

Secondary schools without a religious character have on average 26% more pupils eligible for free school meals than the first half of their post code and 30% more pupils eligible than their local

authority. In contrast, Roman Catholic secondary schools have 20% *fewer* pupils in receipt of free school meals than the average for their postcode and 23%*fewer* for the average for their local authority. Voluntary Aided Church of England secondary schools have 8% and 18% *fewer* than the average for their post code and local authority respectively.

The below table summarises the situation for all schools:

	Average percentage compared to first half of post code		**Average percentage compared to local authority**	
Type of school	**Primary**	**Secondary**	**Primary**	**Secondary**
No religious character	117	126	117	130
Church of England	88	98	74	93
Church of England (excluding VC and Academies)	83	92	72	82
Roman Catholic	74	80	76	77
Methodist	96	N/A	84	N/A
'Generic' Christian	69	92	77	113
Jewish	22	41	19	25
Muslim	114	67	119	78

http://fairadmissions.org.uk/schools-map/

Selective Comprehensives: The social composition of top comprehensive schools

The Sutton Trust (June 2013)

High performing faith schools more socio-economically selective than other schools

An analysis of the 500 best-performing secondary comprehensive schools, using the 2012 school census data.

'Categorising schools in the top 500 list by their religious nature or whether or not they are single-sex, shows again that they are not representative of these types of school nationally. Schools in this group are more likely to have a religious character: faith schools account for 19% nationally, but make up 33% of the top 500.' [p4]

'There are 122 voluntary aided schools – largely Catholic or Anglican – in the top 500. Such faith schools are nearly twice as likely to be in the top 500 than their proportion of all state-funded secondary schools. While faith schools are slightly more likely to take FSM pupils than other schools in the Top 500, on average their FSM intake nationally is still well below the national average.' [p7]

'While voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools are usually faith schools, an increasing number of academies also have a religious affiliation. Around a third of the top 500 schools is faith-

based, compared with just below a fifth state-funded schools. Faith schools in the top 500 have a slightly higher FSM intake than those with no religious affiliation, whereas faith schools generally have a significantly lower FSM intake than the national average.

'As a result, there is a lower gap between faith schools in the top 500 and the average for all faith schools than there is between schools without any religious character in the top 500 and other non-faith schools. The gap is 3.8 percentage points for faith schools and 9.7 percentage points for those without a religious character.' [p8]

http://www.suttontrust.com/our-work/research/download/219

Narrowing down the determinants of between-school segregation: An analysis of the intake to all schools in England 1989 to 2011

Stephen Gorard and Rita Hordosy, Journal of School Choice: International Research and Reform Volume 7, Issue 2, 2013 (May 2013)

'This paper continues an on-going investigation of the social and economic "segregation" of students between schools in England, and of the likely causes of the levels of and changes over time in that segregation'. Faith schools are not the central subject of this paper, but they are mentioned several times.

'This means that it is the more malleable factors leading to the underlying levels of poverty segregation that should be addressed by any state wanting a fair and mixed national school system. In England, these controllable factors include the use of proximity to decide contested places at schools, the growth of Academies, and the continued existence of faith-based and selective schools.'

'Of course, some separation of students between schools is quite deliberate...But the subject of this paper is the more widespread phenomenon of unintended clustering within a national state-funded system of mainstream schools. For example, a school that selects its intake in terms of religion may also tend to increase segregation by ethnic origin (Harris 2012), parental income and education (Allen and West 2011), or social class (Shepherd and Rogers 2012).' [p2]

'The most malleable factors identified as associated with segregation relate to the types of schools in each area...The simplest pattern is for FSM. It is as simple as that segregation by poverty is highest in areas with fewest "bog standard" schools, and lowest in areas with fewest independent, special, selective, faith-based, Foundation, CTC or Academy schools.' [p14]

'[F]aith-based schools… tend to exacerbate local levels of segregation where they appear, but… have not changed much in prevalence since 1989.' [p15]

'A national school system, intended to have mixed intakes, should be comprehensive in nature. It should not select by attainment or aptitude. It should not select by student background, or by faith.' [p17-18]

Abstract available at
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15582159.2013.791182#.UlHJ6cZwqSq

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The Admissions Arrangements of Faith Schools and the Equality Act 2010

Dan Rosenburg and Raj Desai (May 2013)

Admissions criteria contravening the Equality Act 2010

This piece considers several cases in which the admissions criteria of some religiously selective schools results in indirect yet clear discrimination on grounds of disability and race. In one disability case the school changed their decision on an appeal but another (the *JFS* case) was taken to the High Court which ruled that the school's matrilineal test of membership of the Jewish faith amounted to a test of ethnic origin and was therefore unlawful.

However, on race, the implications could be wider than this. The authors contrast the relatively homogenous era in which faith schools were first established with the increasingly diverse age we are in today, arguing that 'faith based admissions criteria may place individuals from a racial group at a particular disadvantage compared to persons without this protected characteristic. Unless this indirect discrimination can be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, such arrangements will also be unlawful pursuant to [the Equality Act].' This could have far reaching implications for popular religiously selective schools and especially those in densely populated or racially mixed areas.

http://fairadmissions.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2013_Ed_Law_93.pdf

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Statistics for Mission 2011

Archbishops' Council, Research and Statistics, Central Secretariat, Church of England (May 2013)

The number of Church of England baptisms of children under one fell 26% since 2000 to 83,850 in 2011. The number of baptisms of children aged 1-12 (the vast majority being at ages 2-3) rose by 18% since 2000 to 45,260. This might reflect parents baptising their children in order to gain an advantage in securing places in religiously selective Church of England schools.

http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1737985/attendancestats2011.pdf

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Christ at the Centre: why the Church Provides Catholic Schools (2nd edition)

The Catholic Education Service (January 2013)

Role of Catholic schools

'Catholic Schools are provided by the Church for Catholic children and young people... To ensure that Catholic children are given priority in the allocation of school places and benefit from this provision, the admission criteria of Catholic schools should be formulated in such a way that Catholic children and young people are always given priority in the allocation of school places over and above all other applicants.' [p14]

http://web.archive.org/web/20140709130223/http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/catholic-education/publications/item/1000085-christ-at-the-centre-2nd-edition

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Office of the Schools Adjudicator Annual Report September 2011 to August 2012

Elizabeth Passmore OBE, Chief Schools Adjudicator (November 2012)

'A minority of local authorities point out that while all the own admission authority schools give priority to looked after children, some schools designated as having a religious character give priority, as permitted by the Code, to looked after and all children of that faith before other looked after children. One local authority is of the view that this stance, although lawful, has the effect of excluding looked after children not of the faith from attending high performing schools.' [p23-24]

http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/o/annual%20report%202012%20final%20version_001.pdf

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Should faith schools be allowed to discriminate in admissions on religious grounds?

ComRes survey commissioned by the Accord Coalition (November 2012)

73% oppose religious selection

A poll by ComRes for the Accord Coalition found 73% of British adults thought that '*state funded schools should not be allowed to select or discriminate against prospective pupils on religious grounds in their admissions policy*'. Only 18% thought that they should.

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/9670234/Selection-by-religion-should-be-banned-in-state-schools.html

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School desegregation and the politics of 'forced integration'

Shamim Miah, Institute of Race Relations, Race & Class, October-December 2012, vol. 54, no. 2, 26-38 (September 2012)

The politics of creating mixed schools in areas with segregated Muslim and 'indigenous white' populations

This paper looks at attempts to make schools less segregated on ethnic and racial by mergers and reorganising school structures in areas of northern England that have suffered from racial and ethnic tensions, especially in 2001.

The author fears attempts to promote integration and 'socially engineer' in this way are based, in part, on a demonisation of Muslims and a perception that Muslims are a threat to community cohesion, are the ethnic group unwilling to integrate, and that such measures ignore the reluctance of 'white' people to accept Muslims, as well as lead to greater distrust between ethnic groups.

Abstract available at http://rac.sagepub.com/content/54/2/26.abstract

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Religion or belief, equality and human rights in England and Wales

Alice Donald of the London Metropolitan University for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (August 2012)

Faith schools and Article 2 of Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights

This wide-ranging study looked at issues surrounding equality and human rights in relation to religion and belief in England, and paid special attention to education. It undertook a large number of interviews and also a thorough literature review, and highlighted how the legality of religious discrimination in admissions had been brought into question, observing that:

'According to Hepple (2011: 119), an unresolved issue is whether the fact that the law allows publicly funded schools to use faith-based admissions criteria is compatible with Article 2 of Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (the right to education) and Article 14 ECHR (prohibition of discrimination). Sooner or later, Hepple argues, the government is likely to be called upon to provide evidence to support a defence that this discrimination because of religion or belief is necessary and proportionate in a democratic society for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others under Article 9(2) ECHR. Such concerns have become more acute, he argues, in the context of the envisaged growth of academy or 'free' schools which are not accountable to local authorities.

'The Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) expressed concern about faith-based admissions in its scrutiny of the Equality Bill (JCHR, 2010). It noted that the government's principal justification for permitting schools with a religious character to discriminate on religious grounds in their admissions policies is that it is necessary in order to protect the right of parents (under Article 2 Protocol 1 ECHR) to access education for their children in accordance with their religious convictions (JCHR, 2010: 7-8). The JCHR was not persuaded by this justification because Article 2 Protocol 1 does not, in fact, impose a duty on the state to establish schools with a religious character; for example, it cannot be relied upon by Muslim parents to require the state to establish Muslim schools in areas where only schools of other faiths exist.' [p163-65]

'Overall, the JCHR (2010: 9) concluded that the exemption permitting faith schools to discriminate in their admissions on grounds of religion or belief may be overdrawn.' [p165]

http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/fms/MRSite/Research/HRSJ/Publications%20&%20reports/EHRC%20Religion%20%20Report%20300812.pdf

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'Faith in the system?' State-funded faith schools in England and the contested parameters of community cohesion

Claire Dwyer and Violetta Parutis, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Volume 38, Issue 2, pages 267–284, April 2013 (May 2012)

How faith schools have responded to the requirement to promote community cohesion and adhere to the school admissions code

The report helps set out ambiguity surrounding the term community cohesion by showing how it has been interpreted and defined slightly differently, especially by some faith schools – since 2007 all state funded schools in England have had a legal requirement to promote community cohesion. The report also charts some of the problems (sometimes unintentional ones) that the school admissions code has caused some faith schools by requiring them to operate transparent admissions policies.

Abstract available at http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2012.00518.x/abstract
N.B. Claire Dwyer also had published in September 2013 a short paper drawing upon similar points at http://www.publicspirit.org.uk/assets/Claire-Dwyer-Faith-Schools-5th-Sept.pdf.

Praying for success? Faith schools and school choice in East London

Tim Butler and Chris Hamnett (April 2012)

Faith schools' popularity among aspirational parents in East London

This paper looks at the attitudes of parents in East London and shows how many increasingly want to send their children to faith schools, observing that '... perceptions of good behaviour standards, the reproduction of social privilege and educational attainment rather than religious faith have become their main attraction'. [p2]

However, the authors note that faith schools '…offer for parents who live out of the catchment [area] of a preferred non-selective school a way of avoiding being allocated to a less popular school. The dilemma is often posed in terms of attainment, standards, values and behaviour but this often came across in our interviews as an elaborate form of code for evading what was perceived as an unacceptable social mix based around the 'wrong' combination of class and ethnic background'. [p11]

Therefore a key driver for many parents in wanting to send their children to faith schools in East London appears to be because the schools themselves already admit more pupils with parents who share '... broadly similar values about the importance of behaviour, discipline, aspiration'. The authors further observed that when faith schools offered a quota of places to those not of the school's faith it also acted as a 'Trojan horse whereby the middle class of all ethnicities gain privileged access [to the school] because their ethos is perceived to equate with that of the school.' [p11]

Abstract available at http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S001671851200070X

Geographies of transition and the separation of lower and higher attaining pupils in the move from primary to secondary school in London

Richard Harris, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Volume 38, Issue 2, pages 254–266, April 2013 (April 2012)

This paper examines the transitions made by pupils from state-funded primary to secondary schools in London in 2008. It finds evidence that higher and lower achieving pupils separate from each other, with higher-achieving pupils being more likely to be enrolled in selective schools and some types of faith school. 'The separations are evident between locally competing schools but with no evidence they are worsening over the period 2003 to 2008. This apparent inertia suggests the paradox of promoting school choice within a system that imposes geographical constraints upon that choice and may, as a result, simply reinforce existing social divisions.'

On p.260-261: 'The implication is that where belonging to or sympathy for a faith group form part of the admissions criteria, that faith criterion acts as a filter between higher and lower attaining

pupils… Recruitment over greater distances will have a selection effect if distance is a barrier for some pupils… A counter-argument is that faith schools, by recruiting over greater distances, provide opportunities for pupils that they would not receive if they were constrained to attend a more local school… Whatever the validity of such an argument, in practice it appears not to be realised… Each of these school types is, on average, recruiting disproportionately few FSM-eligible pupils, with the proportion for VA CoE schools closest to the expected value. Insofar as FSM eligibility is a marker of economic disadvantage, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that selective schools especially but also faith schools, on average, are socially selective.' [p260-261]

'In regard to faith schools, the apparent social selection is not, as Allen and West (2011) show, because the faiths themselves are attractive to more affluent parents but because "children from higher income religious families are more likely to attend faith schools than children from poorer religious families" (2011, 707–8). Nevertheless, it should be recognised that these are only averages. Looking again at Table III, it is important to acknowledge there are faith schools of all types recruiting lower attaining pupils, as there are non-selective schools recruiting higher attaining pupils.' [p261]

'In their study of religious schools in London, Allen and West (2009) considered five "elite" RC schools in London (ones where the pupils are both high attaining and socially advantaged). They showed that those pupils who live close to an elite school but nevertheless attend another RC school are more likely to be low ability or FSM-eligible than those who do attend the elite school.' [p262]

Abstract available at http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2012.519.x/abstract
An earlier version of this paper is available at
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cmpo/publications/papers/2011/wp257.pdf

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Faith Schools: Enrichment or Division?

David Conway paper delivered to the London Society for the Study of Religion on 7th June 2011, Civitas (April 2012)

In this article, the author argues in favour of faith schools. He outlines three grievances that 'secular humanists' have against the role of religion in state-funded schools: that state-funded faith schools are socially divisive and undermine community cohesion; that faith schools lead to social segregation along class lines, due to their selective admissions policies which tend to discriminate against pupils from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds; and that faith schools (as well as some community schools) provide religious education which uncritically accepts one particular faith. He argues that none of these criticisms 'hold water', and claims to offer several reasons why 'the committed teaching and practice of religion should be restored to all the country's state-funded schools, allowing, of course, for the parents of their pupils to withdraw them from all of these activities on conscientious grounds.'

Conway argues that educating pupils of different faiths in the same school does not guarantee that they will mix together, citing studies of the relations between black and white schoolchildren in the US since the end of racially segregated schooling in 1957. He takes a similar line with regard to socio-economic selection, and argues that grouping pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds together in the same school will not necessarily get rid of the segregation between them.

He gives the example of a 30-month study which tracked the educational progress of 124 middle-class pupils sent to comprehensive schools in London and in two other English cities. This study

found that the middle-class pupils performed well academically, but tended to mix only with children from a similar class background to their own. However, it is difficult to find the details of this study. The source given in the footnote is a Daily Mail article (http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-517090/Middle-class-pupils-snub-chavs-comprehensives.html), which says that the study was carried out by 'academics from three universities – Cambridge, Sunderland and the West of England', but it does not name the academics or give the title of the study.

Conway argues that faith schools are better than community schools in promoting community cohesion, citing a study conducted by David Jesson of York University in 2009, which looked into Ofsted reports on how well different types of publicly-funded schools in England had discharged their statutory duty to promote community cohesion. 'Analysing the reports of 700 primary schools and 400 secondary schools, Jesson found that, while there was little difference between faith and community schools at the primary level, at the secondary level faith schools were consistently reported to have discharged that duty far more effectively and rigorously than had community schools.' The problems with this are discussed under the November 2009 entry for Jesson's research, *Strong schools for strong communities: Reviewing the impact of Church of England schools in promoting community cohesion*.

http://www.civitas.org.uk/pdf/Conway_FaithSchools.pdf

Church schools shun poorest pupils

Jessica Shepherd and Simon Rogers of the Guardian newspaper (March 2012)

English faith schools skewed towards serving pupils from middle class backgrounds

It is known that the faith schools sector admits fewer than the national average of pupils in receipt of free schools meals. The Guardian undertook detailed statistical analysis to find whether this discrepancy was because faith schools were located disproportionately in more affluent areas.

To try and establish this the paper compared the proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals at faith schools with other state funded schools in their local authority responsible for education, as well as compared the proportion of children in receipt of free school meals at faith schools with the proportion of children in receipt of them in the area covered by the first three digits of each school's respective postcode.

The paper's findings were damming and showed most faith schools had a lower proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals than both the average for their local authority area, and amongst children living in the school's local postcode. The paper found that:

'Some 73% of Catholic primaries and 72% of Catholic secondaries have a lower proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals than the average for the local authority. It is the same for CofE primary and secondary schools. Some 74% of these primaries and 65.5% of secondaries have a smaller proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals than is average for the local authority. In contrast, non-religious schools tend to reflect their neighbourhoods. Half (51%) of non-religious primaries and 45% of non-religious secondaries have a smaller proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals than is representative for their local authority.

'Faith schools fared no better when examined at a more local level. We compared the proportion of poor pupils in each postcode with the proportion of poor pupils in faith schools and non-faith schools studying in that postcode. The data shows 76% of Catholic primaries and 65% of Catholic secondaries have a smaller proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals than is representative of their postcode. This is the case for 63.5% of CofE primaries and 40% of CofE secondaries.

'Non-religious primaries and secondaries are far more likely to mirror the proportion of poor pupils in their postcode – just 47% of non-faith primaries and 29% of non-faith secondaries take a smaller proportion of free school meals than is representative for their postcode.'

The paper's lead article on this story can be found at:
http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/mar/05/church-schools-shun-poorest-pupils

An interactive map showing the proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals in England's faith schools, as well as links to the primary data that the paper used can be found at:
http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/interactive/2012/mar/05/faith-schools-free-school-meals

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The Church School of the Future Review, aka The Chadwick Report

Church School of the Future Review Group, Church of England (March 2012)

Setting out the Church's policy towards its schools

'Admissions arrangements continue to be contentious, with renewed attacks on the principle of foundation places from parties hostile to Church schools. The academies are committed to serving their immediate neighbourhood, and only a small number have foundation places. Revised advice produced by the National Society and Church of England Board of Education in 2011 reiterates the Dearing emphasis on all Church schools offering both open and foundation places.' [p11]

http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1418393/the%20church%20school%20of%20the%20future%20review%20-%20march%202012[1].pdf

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Local indices of segregation with application to social segregation between London's secondary schools, 2003 - 08/09

Richard Harris, Environment and Planning A 44(3) 669 – 687 (March 2012)

Spatial investigation of free school meals and segregation

'**Faith schools, too, tend to have lower proportions of FSM eligible pupils, on average.... It also cannot be due to location – the possibility the schools are located in areas of low eligibility – because they under-recruit FSM eligible pupils when compared to their local competitors. Instead, it is more a consequence of who is able or willing to demonstrate some sort of commitment to or practice of the faith.**

'It is notable that voluntary-aided Church of England and Roman Catholic schools - which set their own admissions criteria and can include commitment to the religious group or denomination

amongst these criteria - underrecruit FSM-eligible pupils, on average and relative to their competitors, whereas voluntary-controlled schools, which are faith schools that use the LA admissions criteria, actually slightly overrecruit on average.' [p681]

'There is, however, an important caveat. Between 2003 and 2008, the mean proportion of FSM-eligible pupils in the London schools rose by 26.6% (from 0.214 to 0.271); and the mean [LIC] score decreased by 19.6% (from 0.228 to 0.184). In other words, eligibility for FSMs is rising faster than the index of segregation (which is composition invariant) is decreasing. The suspicion must be that it is not so much that social segregation has decreased, but that the group of pupils who met the criteria for FSM eligibility broadened (those criteria are listed at http://tinyurl.com/6jr65r4).

'To reiterate: although it is widely used for school research, eligibility for FSMs is not a consistent measure of `the poor' or socially excluded. An alternative indicator is the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI); this is a fixed estimate of the proportion of children under the age of 16 years within the (Lower Super Output) census area in which the pupil resides who live in low-income households. From this it is possible to calculate the proportion of pupils in each school that is admitted from the upper quartile of low-income areas and then calculate the mean jLICj scores to consider whether differential rates of admission from those areas of highest income deprivation are increasing or decreasing over time.' [p684-5]

Abstract available at http://www.envplan.com/abstract.cgi?id=a44317
An earlier draft of this paper is available at
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cmpo/publications/papers/2011/wp260.pdf

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School Choice and Equity: Current Policies in OECD Countries and a Literature Review

Pauline Musset for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (January 2012)

OECD countries that permit religiously selective admissions criteria in their school system

This paper explored the different approaches of OECD countries towards parental choice and schools choosing children. The table below showed that England was one of only four out of 32 OECD countries looked at which permitted religious selection within its schools.

	Academic criteria	Financial criteria (family income)	Religious criteria	Gender criteria	Any criteria they wish
	Public primary schools cannot be selective				
Austria	No	No	No	No	No
Belgium (Fl.)	No	No	No	No	No
Belgium (Fr.)	No	No	No	No	No
Chile	No	No	No	Yes	No
Denmark	No	No	No	No	No
France	No	No	No	No	No
Germany	No	No	No	No	No
Greece	No	No	No	No	No
Hungary	No	No	No	No	No
Iceland	No	No	No	No	No
Luxembourg	No	No	No	No	No
Mexico	No	No	No	No	No
Netherlands	No	No	No	No	No
New Zealand	No	No	No	No	No
Poland	No	No	No	No	No
Portugal	No	No	No	No	No
Norway	No	No	No	No	No
Scotland	No	No	No	No	No
Slovak Republic	No	No	No	No	No
Sweden	No	No	No	No	No
Switzerland	No	No	No	No	No
Turkey	No	a	No	No	No
United States	No	No	No	No	No
	Public primary schools can be selective				
Czech Republic	Yes	No	No	No	No
England	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Estonia	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finland	Yes	No	No	No	No
Ireland	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Japan	No	No	No	No	Yes
Israel	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Spain	No	Yes	No	No	No
Italy	No	No	No	No	Yes
Korea	No	No	No	Yes	No

	Academic criteria	Financial criteria (family income)	Religious criteria	Gender criteria	Any criteria they wish
	Public lower secondary schools cannot be selective				
Belgium (Fl.)	No	No	No	No	No
Belgium (Fr.)	No	No	No	No	No
Denmark	No	No	No	No	No
France	No	No	No	No	No
Iceland	No	No	No	No	No
Italy	No	No	No	No	Yes
Korea	No	No	No	Yes	No
Luxembourg	No	No	No	No	No
Norway	No	No	No	No	No
Poland	No	No	No	No	No
Portugal	No	No	No	No	No
Scotland	No	No	No	No	No
Sweden	No	No	No	No	No
Switzerland	No	No	No	No	No
United States	No	No	No	No	No
	Public lower secondary schools can be selective				
Austria	Yes	No	No	No	No
Chile	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Czech Republic	Yes	No	No	No	No
England	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Estonia	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finland	Yes	No	No	No	No
Germany	Yes	No	No	No	No
Greece	No	No	No	No	No
Hungary	Yes	No	No	No	No
Ireland	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Israel	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Japan	No	No	No	No	Yes
Mexico	Yes	No	No	No	No
Netherlands	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
New Zealand	No	No	No	Yes	No
Slovak Republic	Yes	No	No	No	No
Spain	No	Yes	No	No	No

http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/school-choice-and-equity_5k9fq23507vc-en

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Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Schools and Children

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (January 2012)

England is among just 3 OECD countries that allow selection on religious grounds to secondary schools [p67]

http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/50293148.pdf

Office of the Schools Adjudicator Annual Report 2011

Ian Craig, Chief Schools Adjudicator (October 2011)

'27. The Select Committee was concerned that my report last year highlighted that many of our referrals relate to faith schools and asked a number of questions about why that was so.

'28. At the time of writing this report there are approximately 6000 separate admission authorities in England. Of these 152 are LAs (responsible between them for approximately 16,000 schools). There are 4246 Voluntary Aided schools which are their own admission authorities (most, but not all

of which admit children using faith criteria), and 1416 other types of schools which are their own admission authority, for example Foundation schools and Academies. Although this last category has increased significantly in number in recent months (at the time of writing there are now in excess of 800 academies) it is easy to see why adjudicators see such a large number of referrals relating to faith schools.' [p11]

'37. In the press, and at the Select Committee in February 2011, there was great interest expressed about objections to arrangements in faith schools. Of the 127 admissions cases this year, 23 (18%) related to faith schools.

'38. Faith schools are permitted by the Code (para 2.46) to use faith-based oversubscription criteria in order to give higher priority in admissions to "children who are members of, or who practise, their faith or denomination". It is clear that the faith authorities are generally providing clear and compliant advice, but there is evidence that some admission authorities are either still not consulting them, or ignoring advice when it is provided.

39. The Local Government Ombudsman has again this year referred some faith based oversubscription criteria to us with reference to their lack of clarity and transparency.' [p14]

'128. One very ethnically diverse LA reported that its faith schools, which are mainly Christian, had very low levels of children entitled to FSM in them, as non-Christian parents, who were (in this LA) most likely to be eligible, were unable to meet the faith criteria. In this authority the majority of FSM children were therefore attending non-faith schools.' [p30]

http://web.archive.org/web/20150410143205/http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120506052315/http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/o/osa%20annual%20report%202011.pdf

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Why do faith secondary schools have advantaged intakes? The relative importance of neighbourhood characteristics, social background and religious identification amongst parents

Allen, R. and West, A. (August 2011), British Educational Research Journal. Vo. 37, 4, pp. 691-712.

'This paper explores reasons why secondary schools with a religious character have pupil intakes that are of a higher social background and ability than their secular counterparts. This is especially true across all regions in England once the characteristics of the pupils living in the local neighbourhoods are taken into account. Data from the National Pupil Database and the Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England are combined to show that likely reasons for this are complex. Parents reporting a religious affiliation are more likely to be better educated, have a higher occupational class and a higher household income. We also show that higher-income religious families are more likely to have a child at a faith school than lower-income religious families. Policy implications regarding the state-funding of faith schools are discussed.'

Relevant findings:

- 'Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England (see below) show that **faith schools are no more popular than secular schools**, as measured by the proportion of parents who state that the school their child attends was their first choice of school.--> Around 1 in 10 parents with children at Roman Catholic schools (9.2%) and Church of England schools (12.3%) stated that their school was not their first choice school. This compares to 9.4 and 12.9% at foundation/CTC and community schools, respectively.' [p695]

- 'Religious sector has **fewer FSM** pupils**, more top ability** pupils, **fewer pupils in Asian ethnicity** and **greater numbers of Black African and Caribbean pupils**. These ethnic differences reflect the greater propensity for Black families to attend church, compared with Asian and White British families'. See figure 1 [p698]
- 'No faith schools are situated in a neighbourhood where over 40% of pupils are classified as top ability pupils, yet **13% of faith schools have over 40% top ability pupils in their actual intake**. Overall, twice as many faith schools than secular schools have an intake with more top ability pupils than the local neighbourhood (**62 versus 30%, respectively**). It **is London, the North West and the East of England where faith schools appear to be the most advantaged by prior attainment of intake, relative to local neighbourhood demographics**.'[p701]
- 'faith schools having more **top ability** pupils (**38% more than at secular schools**) and fewer low ability pupils, compared with their local neighbourhood' [p702]
- '**Significantly, within the groups of both Church of England and Roman Catholic families, children from top quartile households are statistically significantly more likely to attend faith schools**, though the differences are not very large (**9 versus 8%** for Church of England families and **52 versus 47%** for Roman Catholic families)' [p706]
- 'We show that secondary schools with a religious character (or faith schools) have **fewer FSM pupils and more top ability pupils and that, in general, they are more affluent in their intake than the neighbourhoods they are located in.**'[p707]
- 'LSYPE confirms that the children of **higher social class, higher parental education and higher income households are more likely to attend faith schools**, it is more interesting to note that **children from higher income religious families are more likely to attend faith schools than children from poorer religious families. Thus, there is sorting of pupils by social background amongst the sub-set of parents who report that they are religious.**'[p707]
- 'All of this analysis relates to school admissions **prior to the tightening up of the Admission Code in 2003, 2007 and 2009** to restrict some potentially selective practices, such as interviewing or extensive supplementary questions on family social background. It is possible that the differences between faith and secular schools have already become more muted; however, admissions reforms have not addressed either the number or type of religious criteria or the way in which they are used by schools to decide which pupils should be given priority." [p708]
- '**Given that the funding for faith schools is now predominantly from the state, there is a strong argument for access being less restricted and for faith schools to show a wider public benefit and not limit the beneficiaries in terms of parents' income, the child's ability or ethnicity/race.**' [p709]

Abstract available at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/32192/

Faith Primary Schools: Better Schools or Better Pupils?

Stephen Gibbons and Olmo Silva, Journal of Labor Economics, Vol. 29, No. 3 (July 2011), pp. 589-635 (July 2011)

'We estimate the causal effect of attending a state Faith school on primary education achievement in England using administrative student-level data and implementing various strategies to control for students' selection into Faith schooling. Our regressions control for fixed effects in prior achievement and residential postcode to compare pupils who are close residential neighbours and have identical observable ability. We also use information on future school choices to control for

preferences for Faith schooling. Results show that pupils progress faster in Faith primary schools, but all of this advantage is explained by sorting into Faith schools according to preexisting characteristics and preferences.' [p589]

'What then are we to make of these results? **One thing that seems clear is that Faith schools— and other schools that have autonomous admissions and governance arrangements— tend to admit "better" pupils, and there is no unambiguous performance advantage that cannot be attributed purely to pupil-side sorting into these schools or to school-side selection of pupils likely to show the fastest progress**…

'In any case, we find no evidence that Faith affiliation lies behind the test-score advantage commonly attributed to Faith schools in England.' [p619-620]

http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.1086/659344?uid=3738032&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21102555699737
Previous versions published at
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm/dp4089.pdf?abstractid=1369835&mirid=1 (March 2009)
http://cee.lse.ac.uk/ceedps//ceedp72.pdf (November 2006)
with a summary at http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cp228.pdf (July 2007)

Admissions to Church of England Schools

The National Society and Church of England Education Division (June 2011)

Religious discrimination in admissions at Church of England voluntary aided secondary schools

These guidelines on admissions policies were issued for state funded Church of England schools and Diocesan Boards of Education.

'**Church of England schools should be able to show how their Admissions Policy and practice demonstrates the school's commitment both to distinctiveness and inclusivity, to church families and the wider community.**

'The Church of England stands ready to give support to the small number of schools that currently only admit children from Christian families to enable them to provide some open places available to the local community.' [p6]

Appendix 2 on p11 of the report provides an overview of the level of religious discrimination in pupil admissions at Church of England state schools.

Unfortunately the appendix reveals little about the Church of England's approximately 4400 primary schools. It also incorrectly states that voluntary controlled Church of England schools do not admit pupils on religious grounds because their admissions are controlled by their local authority: these schools in fact have their admissions policies determined by their local authority responsible for education, who can allow their policy to include religious criteria. Research by the Accord Coalition in 2011 showed that 137 of 174 local authorities responsible for education in England and Wales had one or more voluntary controlled faith school in their jurisdiction, and that 44 of these authorities permitted religious selection in these school's admission arrangements of some kind.

However, there is very little data in the public realm on the extent that faith schools discriminate on religious grounds in their admissions and the table from appendix 2 below provides a rare and

meaningful snapshot of this in the Church of England's much smaller number of voluntary aided secondary schools in 2009.

% of pupil places allocated on religious grounds	**Number of Church of England VA schools** (out of 160)
0%	62
1-19%	10
20 – 49%	21
50 – 69%	20
70 – 89%	30
90 – 99%	6
100%	11

Note that this probably reflects how much schools are selecting *in practice* and not how much their admissions criteria allow them to select, if sufficiently oversubscribed. Research by the Fair Admissions Campaign suggests that Church secondary schools' admissions criteria are more restrictive than the above table.

http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1513919/nsadmissionsguidancejune2011final%20(3).pdf

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Value Added: the Distinctive Contribution of Catholic Schools and Colleges in England

Catholic Education Service for England and Wales (November 2010)

Based on data from the DfE National Census 2009, CESEW Census and Ofsted data, this report highlights the positive contribution of Catholic Schools to Education in England and Wales. It notes that exam results are above average in Catholic schools and that Catholic schools score well when prior attainment is considered in relation to exam results (Contextual Value Added). Claims that Catholic schools are more ethnically mixed than other schools are more problematic. While Catholic secondary schools do have more pupils registered as 'Black', 'Mixed' and 'White Other' it is worth noting that 'Asian' pupils are under-represented at Catholic schools and 'Irish' is included in their measure of ethnic diversity. Furthermore Catholic schools tend to be located in cities making a slight over-representation of some ethnic groups unsurprising. With regard to FSM and SEN the picture is mixed but it does appear amongst the schools with high proportions of SEN pupils and those on FSM there are fewer Catholic schools.

http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/content/download/19838/124279/file/Value_added.pdf

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Oldham lives: still parallel or converging?

Simon Burgess and Rich Harris of the University of Bristol's Centre for Market and Public Organisation for the journal Research in Public Policy (May 2011)

Continued ethnic segregation in English schools

The authors found that since Oldham was rocked by race riots in 2001 there was 'little evidence of change' in terms of the 'very high' levels of ethnic segregation in the town's schools, even though

'bold measures' had been undertaken since then to improve ethnic mixing in schools, such as the local authority taking the step of 'merging and re-opening some of its most ethnically segregated schools' and moving others to different areas 'to seek a mixed intake'.

The authors suggest that ongoing segregation could be caused by attitudes in Oldham against greater mixing in schools, and furthered by the '... prevalence of faith based schools ... [that include] demonstrable practice of a faith among their admissions criteria'.

Even more worryingly, the academics observed how their research showed that '... over England as a whole, there has been essentially no change in levels of ethnic segregation over the last ten years'.

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cmpo/publications/other/oldhambulletinarticle.pdf

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Children and Young People's View on Education Policy

Office of the Children's Commissioner (March 2011)

Opposition to religious discrimination in admissions among school pupils in England

'... only one in five (20%) children and young people felt that religion (a proxy for faith schools) should be used in admissions criteria and nearly two-thirds (64%) felt religion should not be part of school's selection criteria (and 16% were unsure). The focus group participants also tended to hold strong views against selection on religious grounds, as; *"you shouldn't be judged on your religion, and everyone should be treated equally"* (girl, Year 8). Various participants across the different focus groups described faith-based selection as *"racist"* and another described it as *"discrimination"* (girl, Year 10)' P27.

Q. Children and young people [from years 5 to 11] who felt it was right that secondary schools choose pupils to go to their school because of their religion ("weighted by pupil background characteristics")

Yes %	No %	Not sure %	Total %	Number
20	64	16	100	1925

A representative sample of 1957 children and young people aged between nine and 16 years old.

http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/force_download.php?fp=%2Fclient_assets%2Fcp%2Fpublication%2F483%2FChildrens_and_young_peoples_views_of_education_policy.pdf

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Secondary school admissions in England 2001 to 2008: changing legislation, policy and practice.

West, Anne and Barham, Eleanor and Hind, Audrey (February 2011) .Oxford review of education, 37 (1). pp. 1-20. ISSN 0305-4985 Oxford Review of Education Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 1–20

This paper focuses on **admissions criteria** and practices used by English secondary schools in **2001 and 2008** in light of changes to legislation and the regulatory context. In 2008, unlike 2001, virtually all schools gave priority to children in care and very few used interviews. In a minority of schools, predominantly those responsible for their own admissions, criteria designed to 'select in' certain pupils were used, with partial selection by aptitude/ability increasing over time. **An analysis of 'supplementary information forms' revealed that a minority of schools requested information that was prohibited and unrelated to admissions criteria. Notwithstanding some positive impacts, further changes could make the admissions process easier for parents/carers and enhance equality of educational opportunity.**

Method: 3134 secondary schools were included in the sample, virtually all those in England (non-grammar secondary schools only). For 2008 only, an analysis of supplementary information forms (SIFs) was carried out. Given that the sample was neither representative nor random, the results of the analysis cannot be taken as applicable for the entire population of schools using SIFs, but they are likely to give a reasonable indication of practice amongst the schools that use them.

School Prospectuses: '**Fewer foundation and voluntary-aided than other school types referred to this group of pupils [SEN]**, with academies followed by community and voluntary controlled schools being more likely than others to do so (see Table 3).'

'It might be argued that children with special educational needs **may be less likely to apply to particular schools because no mention is made of children with statements of SEN** in their admissions criteria. Indeed, **there is evidence that the proportion of children with statements of SEN is somewhat lower in Church of England and Roman Catholic secondary schools than in schools without a religious character (2.2% and 1.9% versus 2.4%)**' p11

Selection: 'Overall, we found that in 2008, 5% of secondary, non-grammar, schools selected a proportion of pupils on the basis of ability/aptitude in one or more specific subjects; this compares with 3% in 2001. The highest percentage of schools selecting in this way were academies/city technology colleges, followed by foundation and voluntary aided schools (see Table 6). **It is thus clear that the schools selecting a proportion of pupils by aptitude/ability were predominantly those that were their own admission authority. Some criteria suggest that the process of identification of 'aptitude' may be subjective and so open to discretion, or based on attainment**' p13

Religious schools: 'In 2008, the variation in the number of religious criteria used by schools of different types was examined (see Table 7). **The number of religious criteria was very high in some cases: over a fifth of voluntary-aided schools had at least four admissions criteria relating to religion and some as many as 11**. In addition, just over one in ten schools (11%) had criteria within broad categories (for example, open and religious places). **More voluntary-aided schools than other types of school used these nested criteria (34%). This of course adds to the complexity** of the admissions process to such schools; as noted in the case of one voluntary-aided school: 'A complex procedure applies when, in any band and any category, there are more applicants than there are places available'. **Amongst voluntary-aided schools, 46% gave priority to those from other denominations, 42% to those of other faiths and 4% to those of other faiths or denominations. In 2001, 23% gave priority to other faiths**.' p13

Supplementary information forms: 'For 2008 only, an analysis of supplementary information forms (SIFs) was undertaken. Of the 182 forms obtained, almost three quarters related to voluntary-aided schools (74%), just under a fifth to foundation schools (17%) and the remainder academies and community schools (four were specialist schools and one a school selecting a proportion of pupils on

the basis of ability). Thus, **it was principally schools with a religious character that utilised SIFs in order to obtain additional information about the religion, religious denomination or practice of prospective pupils/parents/carers...**

'**A significant minority of secondary schools asked questions that were either not allowed or sought information of a similar type: 29% (52 out of 182)** asked about **parental occupation, marital status, financial status, criminal convictions, whether the child had been excluded, ethnicity, nationality, refugee/asylum status, homelessness status, the applicant's birth place, when the applicant arrived in the UK, parents' hobbies (non-religious), child's hobbies (non-religious and non-specialist), sibling details, whether there was a previous sibling connection to the school or another family connection to the school (e.g. governors, cousins, parents)**. Three-quarters of schools asked parents/carers or external referees to complete a single form with around a fifth of the remainder (21%) asking for two forms to be completed. **The length of the total number of forms issued by each school ranged from 1 to 16 A4 pages (mean 2.7)**.' p14

Abstract available at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/41666/

Office of the Schools Adjudicator Annual Report 2010

Ian Craig, Chief Schools Adjudicator (November 2010)

Religious admission policies favour those from higher socio-economic backgrounds

Among the functions of the Office of the Schools Adjudicator is the determination of the outcome of complaints about the admission arrangements in state maintained schools in England. In his 2010 annual report the Chief Schools Adjudicator, Dr Ian Craig, found that religious admissions criteria at some faith schools indirectly helped pupils from particular backgrounds over others.

In an interview upon the release of his report Dr Craig observed that '... generally, you might have in a middle class area a lot of women who aren't going to work who might be able to go in and clean the church. It may well be in a more working class area there isn't that ability. We've come across some issues where that sort of thing, we feel, benefits the white middle class area and doesn't necessarily benefit some of the immigrant children that might live in the community... I don't generally think we've come across schools that have done that to skew their intake specifically, but our view is it has been skewing the intake.'

In his report Dr Craig noted the following:

'Issues have arisen again this year involving Voluntary Aided schools and diocesan authorities that are using faith criteria and associated points systems that fall outside this description, for example relating to involvement in activities that are beyond those that could reasonably be expected as part of religious membership or practise.'

'The main area of non-compliance [for primary schools that are their own admissions authority] regards clarity about how an admission authority will objectively ascertain whether a child meets faith related admissions criteria. This is especially so in relation to some Church of England schools. Unclear references are made to the importance of membership of a faith, the existence of links between a family and a church, being a practising member of a faith, regular attendance at services, commitment, support for a Christian ethos, and commitment to faiths other than that in the school's

formal designation... all of this is confusing to parents and is an area which would benefit from much clearer definitions.'

'In addition, a small number of [primary] faith schools [that are their own admissions authority] have a requirement that applicants demonstrate involvement in church activities beyond those that could reasonably be expected as part of religious membership or practice, as part of their faith based criterion. This is in breach of the [School Admissions] Code (para 1.78e).'

'main issues in relation to secondary OAAs [secondary schools that are their own admissions authority included] ... complex, points based oversubscription criteria, usually in 'faith' schools, that are not directly related to religious observance or practice and/or unlikely to be easily understood by parents'.

http://web.archive.org/web/20150410143315/http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120506052315/http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/o/osa%20annual%20report%202010.pdf

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Day Break Surveys Religion

ITV, You Gov (September 2010)

Faith not a factor in choosing schools

An online representative sample of over 2000 people asked a series of questions about attitudes to religion ahead of the Pope's visit to the UK. Overall, in selecting a school for their children, few (9%) attached importance to the religion of the school, Catholics (36%) and Londoners (17%) being the main exceptions.

Q. Which, if any, of the following are/ were important to you when choosing which school to send your child/ children to? (Please select up to three – parents only.)			
	Total		**Total**
Performance of the school	66%	Curriculum	22%
How easy it was to get to	34 %	**Religion of the school**	**9%**
The area the school was in	33%	Where my child(s) friends went	9%
Where my child/ children wanted to go	24%	Extracurricular activities on offer	7%
Facilities	23%	That it is a same/ mixed-sex school	4%
Class sizes	23%		

http://cdn.yougov.com/today_uk_import/YG-Archives-Life-YouGov-DaybreakReligion-130910.pdf

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The effect of changes in published secondary school admissions on social composition

Allen, R.; Coldron, J. and West, A. (September 2010), Department for Education

Suggests that tightening up of the admissions code in 2003/7 has had an impact with regard to reducing segregation in schooling (taking in to account local demographic changes).

‘We show that the 2003 and 2007 School Admissions Codes appear to have been at least in part responsible for changes in the social composition of pupils at schools with criteria and arrangements that were subsequently deemed inadmissible. Although the average impact is relatively small, the direction of the impact is consistent with the observation that **school segregation across England has declined a little at the same time that regulations were tightening**. Our regression analysis of changes in individual school compositions is able to show this relationship holds even when changes in neighbourhood composition are accounted for.’ [p349]

‘The analysis links surveys of school admissions brochures for 2001, 2006 and 2008 entry to year 7 (age 11) pupil attainment and socio-demographic data contained in the National Pupil Database (NPD).’ [p349]

‘Several studies have demonstrated that voluntary-aided and foundation schools, which control their own admissions, have arrangements that offer the potential for social selection (Woods, Bagley, and Glatter 1998; West, Hind, and Pennell 2004; West 2006; Coldron et al. 2008).’ [p350]

‘Nevertheless, policy-makers over the last decade have been persuaded of a dysfunction in the education market and of the need for regulation as opposed to guidance to promote equal opportunities and prevent schools covertly selecting more advantaged students. As a result the regulatory machinery has been progressively strengthened between 1999 and 2009 through five codes of practice governing what arrangements admission authorities can put in place (DfEE 1999; DfES 2003; DfES 2007, 2009, 2010).’ [p350]

[FSM not affected but ability is.] ‘The summary regressions in panel two suggest that schools using criteria that were to become inadmissible did indeed experience a change in their intake composition as a result of the implementation of the 2003 Code. Following the Code they experienced a greater growth than other schools in the number of low KS2 pupils and minority ethnic pupils and saw a greater decline in the proportion of top KS2 pupils they admitted for entry.’ [p357]

‘Once again, the overall results suggest that **schools using these potentially selective criteria in 2006 did indeed experience a significant change in the ethnic and ability profile of their intake (but not the FSM profile)**.’ [p358]

‘Previous studies (West, Hind, and Pennell 2004; West, Barham, and Hind 2011) have shown that schools that are their own admission authority are more likely to have admissions criteria that enable schools to be unfairly selective in their intakes and **there is therefore a case for moving admission powers away from individual schools** and putting them into the hands of an independent body that administers admissions across an area and ideally sets consistent admissions criteria across all schools. Moreover, **if admissions were administered by an independent body, it would increase the transparency of the admissions process and ensure that decisions are not made behind closed doors with no external scrutiny**.’ [p363]

‘Further tightening of the Admissions Code would also be desirable given that **there is still much room for discretion in the kind of information required in SIFs. It would be helpful if what is and is not acceptable were made more explicit;** indeed the Office of the Schools Adjudicator has proposed that the Department for Education with faith bodies draw up model SIFs (Office of the Schools Adjudicator 2009). However, the draft of an amended code released for consultation during summer 2011 (DfE 2011) suggests loosening some aspects of the Code, for example the role of Admission Forums to scrutinise the arrangements across an area.’

https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR038.pdf

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Unlocking the gates: Giving disadvantaged children a fairer deal in school admissions

Barnardo's Policy and Research Unit (August 2010)

Discrimination against recent Catholic immigrants in admissions at Catholic faith schools

'Barnardo's services in Bradford and Luton have found themselves advising increasing numbers of newly arrived eastern European families in recent years. While these families are often devout Catholics, so wish their children to attend a faith school, they can struggle to meet the priority admissions criteria for local Catholic secondary schools. In Luton for example, some have only recently arrived or have moved around the city and therefore have not had consistent enough attendance at a particular church to be able to gain the required reference from a priest; others are denied admission because they failed to gain entry (particularly if they arrived mid-year) into a Catholic primary school which operates as a 'feeder' to the secondary school.'

http://www.lgcplus.com/Journals/3/Files/2010/8/27/unlocking_the_gates.pdf

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Faith Schools Survey

Channel 4, ICM (August 2010)

Among questions posed, the survey asked respondents the following:

Q. Which one of the following statements do you most agree with?	**Total**
You cannot blame parents for doing whatever they can to get their child in their preferred school	37%
It is wrong for parents to pretend they belong to a religion in order to get their child into a faith school	60 %
Don't know	3%

Q. The government is expanding the number of state funded faith schools, including Muslim schools. Which one of the following statements do you most agree with?	**Total**
Faith schools are an important part of our education system and if there are Anglican, Catholic and Jewish state-funded schools there should also be Muslim ones	27%
Faith schools are an important part of our education system but the government should not be funding Muslim schools	10 %
Schools should be for everyone regardless of religion and the government should not be funding faith schools of any kind	59%
Refused	<1%
Don't know	4%

Weighted sample of 1,003 adults in Great Britain.

Is children's free school meal 'eligibility' a good proxy for family income?

Graham Hobbs and Anna Vignoles, Institute of Education, British Educational Research Journal Vol. 36, No. 4, pp. 673–690 (August 2010)

Abstract: 'Family income is an important factor associated with children's educational achievement. However, key areas of UK research (for example, on socially segregated schooling) and policy (for example, the allocation of funding to schools) rely on children's free school meal (FSM) 'eligibility' to proxy family income. This article examines the relationship between children's FSM 'eligibility' and equivalent net household income in a nationally representative survey of England (the Family Resources Survey). **It finds that children 'eligible' for FSM are much more likely than other children to be in the lowest income households.** However, only around one-quarter to one-half of them were in the lowest income households in 2004/5. This is principally because the receipt of means-tested benefits (and tax credits) pushes children eligible for FSM up the household income distribution. The implications for key areas of research and policy are discussed.'

Abstract available at
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1080/01411920903083111/abstract;jsessionid=6B5C2F1EE0CA5F9D0E056744D77945FB.d02t03

Bridging worlds: ethnic minority pupils in Catholic schools in England

Andrew Morris, Journal of Beliefs & Values: Studies in Religion & Education Volume 31, Issue 2 (August 2010)

Academic attainment of minority groups at Catholic Schools

This paper undertook statistical analysis, comparing the academic performance of state funded Catholic schools and schools without a religious character in England. It suggested that Catholic schools may have a comparative advantage over schools without a religious character when educating a large proportion of pupils from an ethnic minority, suggesting that the Catholic sector schools may be more effective in meeting the educational needs of ethnic minority pupils.

The paper offered several caveats:

- the analysis was based on data from only one academic year
- the profile of ethnic minority pupils in the Catholic school sector and at other schools were not homogeneous, but quite different (e.g. Catholic schools admitted an above average proportion of pupils from 'white' and 'black' minority groups, and a noticeably lower proportion from 'Asian' backgrounds)
- the data used did not look at any relevant pupil-based socio-economic information or pupils' gender, 'both factors known to affect levels of academic attainment' (p211).

The paper called for further investigation to take place.

Abstract available at:
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13617672.2010.503633#.UkwYGobIUgw

Can school competition improve standards? The case of faith schools in England

Rebecca Allen and Anna Vignoles, Department of Quantitative Social Science, Institute of Education (June 2010)

Religious selection leads to higher levels of pupil sorting across schools, without raising attainment

'This paper measures the extent to which the presence of religious state-funded secondary schools in England impacts on the educational experiences of pupils who attend neighbouring schools, whether through school effort induced by competition or changes in peer groups induced by sorting. National administrative data is used to estimate pupil test score growth models between the ages of 11 and 16, with instrumental variable methods employed to avoid confounding the direct causal effect of religious schools. It finds significant evidence that religious schools are associated with higher levels of pupil sorting across schools, but no evidence that competition from faith schools raises area-wide pupil attainment.' [p3]

'Religious secondary schools provide a potentially genuine and enhanced opportunity for some parents to choose between schools (without the cost of moving house) since they usually give priority in admissions based on religious affiliation of parents rather than solely proximity of home to school (although, as discussed later, proximity to faith school does play a role in admissions). Data show that faith schools do produce a large amount of sorting in local educational markets, thereby significantly reducing the proportion of pupils who attend their nearest secondary school (e.g. Allen, 2007).' [p4]

'[Religious] schools can best ensure they survive and prosper simply by concentrating their effort on securing an advantaged intake through the application of certain admissions policies and procedures (i.e. by cream-skimming more able or easier to teach pupils). This suggests that in the absence of strong regulation of admissions policies, a quasi-market for school places risks becoming quite stratified.' [p5]

'[Religious schools] use a wide range of rules (see West et al., 2004, for details), but the general pattern is that they prioritise their own religious denomination (e.g. Catholic families at RC schools), followed by related religious groups (e.g. other Christian families at RC schools), followed by any other religious families (e.g. Muslim families at RC schools), followed by non-religious families based on proximity to school.' [p9]

http://repec.ioe.ac.uk/REPEc/pdf/qsswp0904.pdf

Why are English secondary schools socially segregated?

John Coldron, Caroline Cripps & Lucy Shipton (January 2010), Journal of Education Policy, 25:1, 19-35

Assesses the causes for the socio-economic differences between faith and other schools

'It is likely that a number of factors operate together to generate the segregation. There is circumstantial evidence that Church schools may more often select covertly by social background. For example, about 8% of faith schools in 2006 asked for details that could facilitate social selection, for example personal information about the child, reasons for application, background details of

family or child and commitment to school (Pennell, West, and Hind 2007; Coldron et al. 2008). More often than other types of school their OSC omitted to prioritise children who are more difficult to educate (such as looked after children or those with special educational needs). At the same time they are much more likely than other schools to include potentially discriminatory OSC such as parental commitment. They also have markedly more complex OSC than any other type of school having more OSCs, twice as many items per OSC and twice as many items in total and this relative complexity is found to correlate with higher segregation (Allen and West 2007) although, as noted earlier, we need to be cautious about inferring a generalised incompetence of certain social groups. In addition, the criterion of religious commitment verified by reference from a priest is likely to favour parents who have more time and resources to demonstrate this in the community of the local church. Finally, if in particular contexts a faith school is already known to have a highly privileged intake, less affluent parents will, for the reasons already discussed, be less likely to apply.'

Abstract available at http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02680930903314285

Secondary school admissions in England: Admission Forums, local authorities and schools

Philip Noden and Anne West, LSE for Research and Information on State Education Trust (December 2009)

Pages 28-30 contain an extensive discussion of the different approach to admissions by Church of England and Roman Catholic schools, stemming from different educational missions (serving the local community vs passing on the faith). Interviews with heads are also contained.

Church of England head: 'It's about suggesting that the Christian principles are being applied, but are exercised in a spirit of hospitality for others. So it is not saying that this is a school that is there for the worshipping community, it is a school that is… supported by the Church within the community, which is different to being a [school] that is there for the worshipping community.'

Catholic head: 'The Anglican sort of raison d'être for admissions is different to the Catholic one. The Catholics are about passing on the faith, the Anglicans are about being a beacon to the community and so Catholics make a beeline for Catholics because it's about passing on our faith, whereas on the whole the Anglicans are about living the Christian gospel in an area, inviting the local people, some of whom will be Anglican.'

http://risetrust.org.uk/pdfs/forums.pdf

Strong schools for strong communities: Reviewing the impact of Church of England schools in promoting community cohesion

David Jesson, University of York for Church of England Education Division (November 2009)

Promotion of community cohesion in state funded schools

This research looked at Ofsted Inspection judgments relating to the contribution that different types of schools made towards promoting 'Community Cohesion'. It found that secondary schools with a religious character were on average graded higher by Ofsted on community cohesion than schools without a religious character. The same research found no difference between the Ofsted Inspection judgments of different types of school at primary level.

The Fair Admissions Campaign argues that this research is flawed since the inspection criteria used (http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/1103/1/The%20evaluation%20schedule%20for%20schools_Apr%202010.pdf) were inadequate. For example, there was no consideration given to how representative schools were of their local communities in terms of religion or belief, ethnicity or socio-economic factors. As a result, schools could have highly unrepresentative intakes in terms of religion, ethnicity and socio-economic factors, and yet still be classed by Ofsted as performing well on this measure by being cohesive within the school and having good links within the community – despite these having less of an impact than if the school was itself diverse.

Ofsted therefore did not find that religiously selective schools' net contribution to community cohesion was better than other schools, as it never asked this question. It merely found that this sector undertook more pro-active measures than other schools to try and promote better community cohesion. This might be seen as taking small steps to repair the damage to community cohesion they had caused in the first place by purposely segregating children on the basis of faith.

http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1204726/strong%20schools%20for%20strong%20communities%20-%20cofe%20report%20final.pdf

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Quasi-regulation and Principal-agent Relationships: Secondary School Admissions

Anne West, Hazel Pennell and Audley Hind (November 2009)

This paper examines the issue of school choice through the lens of the English market-oriented reforms; it focuses on the regulation of admissions to publicly-funded secondary schools.

It notes reforms implemented in the 1980s by Conservative administrations resulted in the introduction of market principles into the state-maintained school system, resulting in increased parental choice and greater diversity among schools.

The paper focuses on two issues:
1.The variation in admissions criteria between schools with responsibility for their own admissions and those where admissions are controlled by the local authority
2. Changes in admissions criteria and practices between 2001 and 2005.

In the first instance, it concludes based on an analysis of data on London schools from 2005 that increasing school admissions autonomy 'appears to allow "school choice" as opposed to "parental choice".' It is possible that the non-statutory nature of admissions guidance is partly responsible for some admission authorities failing to alter their practices to accommodate it. It posits that the central Government and schools responsible for their own admissions differ in their goals. The impact of market-based reforms means league tables offer a powerful incentive for schools to continue to select on the basis of aptitude, while it is hypothesised that faith schools may 'see themselves as agents for the church as opposed to the government'.

Schools with control over their admissions are found to be more likely to favour admissions criteria such as 'the pupil having ability/aptitude in subject area, having high general ability, being the child of a former pupil, having a strong family connection to the school, pastoral or compassionate factors, the child's primary school record and interviews/pre-admission meetings with pupil/parent.' This differs from instances where local authorities retain control of admissions, as they are likely to see themselves as agents of government. The authors argue that the incentive offered to schools by

improved league table results will be difficult to displace 'unless structures, legal instruments and incentives change radically.'

It also that finds revisions to the Code of Practice on School Admissions under Labour saw significant changes to admissions. In particular, 'in community and voluntary-controlled schools, the proportion of schools giving priority to children in care increased from 4 per cent to 95 per cent.' While for voluntary-aided schools, 'there was an increase in the percentage of schools giving priority to children in care (from zero in 2001 to 74 per cent in 2005), to medical/social needs (42 to 54 per cent) and to special educational needs (18 to 26 per cent).'

http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/25639/1/West_etal_Quasi-regulation%20and%20principal-agent%20relationships_2009.pdf

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Office of the Schools Adjudicator Annual Report September 2008-August 2009

Ian Craig, Chief Schools Adjudicator (October 2009)

'Faith groups nationally should take responsibility for drawing up model Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs) for use when determining the 2011 arrangements.' [p6]

'**Recommendation** - That the Department, in discussion with the faith authorities, draw up some model Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs) and that schools are encouraged to use these models.

'10. The DCSF reports that it has discussed this with the faith groups, which have agreed to work on models. The Department is rightly keen that this is something that is not led centrally, leading to a feeling by the faith groups that the result is something that is being imposed on them. As yet there seems to be slow progress in bringing forward suitable models.

'11. My experience over the past few months of looking at SIFs would suggest that this work needs doing quickly. I would recommend that the faith groups nationally take responsibility for drawing up some model SIFs for use when determining the 2011 arrangements.' [p9]

'95. The Code requires children in care (Looked after children (LAC)) to be given top priority in the oversubscription criteria of admission arrangements for all schools, although faith schools are permitted to distinguish between LAC of their faith and others. All LAs responding said that all schools in their area conformed to the Code's requirements, although a number expressed their regret that some faith schools continued to distinguish between groups of LAC on grounds of faith.' [p30]

http://web.archive.org/web/20150410143517/http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120506052315/http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/o/osa%20annual%20report%202009.pdf

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Contextualising Catholic school performance in England

Andrew B. Morris, Director of the Centre for Christian Education, Liverpool Hope University, Oxford Review of Education, 35:6, 725-741 (October 2009)

This paper compared contextual value added scores of Catholic schools with others: 'The CVA values themselves, that is, without taking confidence intervals into account, can be plotted on a graph having axes for the attainment scores and contextualised value added measures of individual schools from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, so placing schools into one of four 'performance quadrants'…

'When the data for both cohorts are quantified, it can be seen that, overall, Catholic primary schools have better CVA scores compared to the non-Catholic sector. In both years, a greater proportion of Catholic schools achieve high CVA scores, and half of the Catholic sector schools combine high CVA scores with high levels of academic attainment. A smaller proportion of the Catholic sector primary schools have relatively low levels of pupil attainment together with CVA scores below 100.

'The overall pattern of contextualised value added scores and attainment is very similar in the secondary sector, albeit with the same caveats outlined above. In this case, the CVA measures pupils' progress from the end of Key Stage 2 to the end of Key Stage 4. It compares their best eight GCSE and equivalent examination results with the typical performance of pupils with similar characteristics and results at the end of their primary education. If the results from the 2005 secondary school pilot are included, there are data for three years, all showing a consistent pattern of higher overall performance by the Catholic sector.' [p732-733]

'The evidence in this study suggests that, when all the relevant background factors are taken into account, Catholic sector schools may be more effective than those in the non-Catholic sector; at least for these particular cohorts. If the findings are indicative of a real phenomenon, they give some support to the long-standing speculation that there might be some sort of positive 'Catholic effect' that enables such schools to provide an academically supportive environment that others find harder to achieve.' [p735]

Abstract available at
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03054980903357301?journalCode=core20#.Ug4MzJLVAv0

Religious schools in London: school admissions, religious composition and selectivity

Allen, R. and West, A. (August 2009) – Oxford Review of Education. *Vol. 35, 4, pp. 471-494.*

This paper provides an empirical examination of how religious schools appear to select pupils and the resulting social, ability and religious segregation of pupils across schools. It does so by analysing the composition of London secondary schools with a religious character for a cohort who entered secondary school prior to the 2003, 2007 and 2009 School Admissions Code reforms. However, the unique character of London means these results cannot be generalised across England.

'Their pupils tend to come from more affluent families, with **just 17% eligible for FSM, compared to 25%** in non-religious schools. They educate a **smaller proportion of the lowest ability pupils (19% versus 31%**) and a **greater proportion of highest scoring** pupils in KS2 (**28% versus 25%).**' [479]

'However, within the group of **Black ethnicity pupils**, those who do attend religious schools are **less likely to be eligible for FSM** (**24% versus 37%** in non-religious schools), **less likely to be low attaining** pupils at KS2 (**27% versus 42%)** and **more likely to be high ability** pupils (**17% versus 12%).**' [480]

'Three-quarters of religious schools have FSM levels below the London average, with many having almost no FSM pupils. However, three religious schools have FSM levels over 50%.' [380]

'It is clear from our analysis that **many religious secondary schools in London are not serving the most disadvantaged pupils**. Overall, religious schools **educate a much smaller proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and their intakes are significantly more affluent than the neighbourhood in which they are located.**' [p489]

'Our view is that the sanctioning by the School Admissions Code of the collection of additional information from parents and religious leaders to determine the extent of religious adherence (e.g., via supplementary information forms) **ensures that religious schools continue to have a means to socially select pupils, should they wish to do so**.' [490]

'achieved by discouraging applicants who live in lower income areas and encouraging applicants (via school prospectuses, explicit marketing and other devices) from affluent areas.' [p491]

Abstract at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/25635/
2007 draft at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/167585.pdf

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Why are secondary schools socially segregated?

Coldron J, Cripps C, Shipton L (August 2009) Paper presented at the European Conference of Educational Researchers, Gothenberg

'This paper seeks an explanation for the persistent social phenomenon of segregated schooling whereby children from families with broadly the same characteristics of wealth, education and social networks are more likely to be educated together and therefore separate from children from more socially distant groups. The practices of more affluent and more highly educated parents coupled with the practices of poorer parents with less education are highlighted. The way in which these class mechanisms operate in England at the present time is illustrated by considering the different ways in which segregation is generated in selective, faith and community schools.'

Key Findings

'8% of faith schools in 2006 asked for details that could facilitate social selection e.g. personal information about the child, reasons for application, background details of family or child and commitment to school'

'More often than other types of school their over subscription criteria (OSC) omitted to prioritise children who are more difficult to educate (such as looked after children or those with special educational needs).'

'They are much more likely than other schools to include potentially discriminatory over subscription criteria such as parental commitment. They also have markedly more complex over subscription criteria than any other type of school having more OSCs, twice as many items per OSC and twice as many items in total and this relative complexity is found to correlate with higher segregation (Allen and West 2007) although, as noted earlier, we need to be cautious about inferring a generalised incompetence of certain social groups. In addition the criterion of religious commitment verified by reference from a priest is likely to favour parents who have more time and resources to demonstrate this in the community of the local church. Finally, if in particular contexts a faith school is already known to have a highly privileged intake less affluent parents will, for the reasons already discussed, be less likely to apply.'

http://www.shu.ac.uk/_assets/pdf/ceir-WhySecSchoolsSocialSegArticle09.pdf

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Accord Coalition Opinion Poll

YouGov (June 2009)

Community cohesion, religious discrimination in employment and RE

'A new poll released by Accord has revealed the depth of public concern about faith school practices. The survey, released to coincide with the committee stage of the Equality Bill, found that 57% of people "agreed or strongly agreed" that "state funded schools that select students by their religion undermine community cohesion", while only 19% "disagreed or strongly disagreed".

'The poll also found that:

- '72% "agreed or strongly agreed" that "all state funded schools should operate recruitment and employment policies that do not discriminate on grounds of religion or belief", with only 9 % disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.
- '75% "agreed or strongly agreed" that "all state funded schools should teach an objective and balanced syllabus for education about a wide range of religious and non-religious beliefs", with 8% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing"'

Sample size of 2083 adults in Great Britain.

http://iis.yougov.co.uk/extranets/ygarchives/content/pdf/RESULTS%20for%20Accord%20Coalition%20%28School%20Worship%29.pdf

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The Cantle Report into Community Cohesion in Blackburn

Ted Cantle, Daljit Kaur, Harris Joshua, John Tatam, Nadeem Baksh, Daniel Range and Sabira Ali for Blackburn with Darwen Council (Interim Findings) (May 2009)

Ethnic segregation in Blackburn schools

The report states that although the cohesion initiatives undertaken in Blackburn's schools in accordance with their legal duty to promote community cohesion are 'positive' and 'imaginative', they are insufficient. The 'level of segregation in schools is high, growing and more extensive than the level of residential segregation would suggest', with a number of faith schools 'a particular issue'. Although the report calls on faith schools to 'reconsider their admission policies in light of the impact on cohesion', some schools in the town made clear that they did not intend to change their polices. Without legislative change they cannot be compelled to do so.

http://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/blackburn/4351026.Cantle_report__Read_the_interim_report_in_full/

At the launch of the report, Prof Cantle stated that faith schools with religious admission requirements are 'automatically a source of division' in the town.

http://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/4351852.Cantle_report__Blackburn_a_divided_town/

The 'Religion or Belief' Equality Strand in Law and Policy: Current Implications for Equalities and Human Rights

A 'State of the Nation' Report Researched and Written by brap for the Humanists UK (April 2009)

The section entitled 'Religious Schools & Cohesion' (p.56-57) mentions the riots in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in the summer of 2001, and the Cantle report. It also mentions the ATL, which noted that 'higher levels of segregation are evident in local authorities with the highest number of religious schools, particularly those with restrictive admissions or curriculum'. In the following section, 'Religious Schools & Admissions Polices' (p.57), it says that 'evidence exists to indicate that where religious schools are their own admission authorities, they are ten times more likely to be unrepresentative of their surrounding communities, typically reflecting only one part of that community.'

On p.57: 'In a response to consultation by the Runnymede Trust, the DCSF [Department for Children, Schools and Families] stated that for schools to promote community cohesion they should aim to be community-based and focused, taking into account the different ethnic, religious and non-religious and/or socio-economic groups that make up the local demographic. While some religious schools have sought to address this issue, many have been less forthcoming. The Catholic Church, for example, has said that it will only consider "the scope" for new Catholic schools to admit pupils of other faiths, and no agreement has so far been reached with Jewish, Sikh, Greek Orthodox or Muslim schools. That being said, there are encouraging signs that voluntary aided schools are improving in this regard. Recent research found that more voluntary aided schools had an admissions criterion giving priority to children of "other faiths" in 2008 than in 2001 (42% versus 23%).' However this is, perhaps, a misunderstanding of the 'other faiths' criterion, which usually acts as a final delineator from those of no faith. Therefore not having it is more inclusive.

On p.57: 'there would seem to be existing structures in place that might be able to facilitate and improve equal access to religious schools including the establishment of admissions forums and the need for ethnic monitoring amongst others. However, early research undertaken by the DCSF into the implementation of the Schools Admissions Code has highlighted that religious schools are disproportionately likely to have used practices deemed unfair, including asking about parents' ability to contribute funds, refusing to admit children in care as a priority (despite legal obligations to do so), and refusing to admit children with "special needs".'

On 'Religious Schools & "Academic Achievement"' (p.58), the report mentions a Centre for Policy Studies report and data from the 2007 National Curriculum tests in England, which both showed that religious schools rank highly in terms of academic results. However, it then notes that 'the higher academic standards in religious schools could have other causes than simply the alleged "added value" of a "faith-based" education. A study by the London School of Economics (LSE) in 2003 found that church and foundation schools were 25 times more likely to select pupils who will boost their league tables, adding that OFSTED inspectors were recorded as saying that, "Selection, even on religious grounds, is likely to attract well-behaved children from stable backgrounds".'

On p.58: 'Other research has shown that religious secondary schools take significantly fewer pupils with emotional, behavioural and physical difficulties than other state schools; that 17.1% of children at non-religious state secondary schools have special needs compared to 14.1% at their religious equivalent; and that 18.9% of children at non-religious state primary schools have special needs compared to 16% at their religious equivalent. Church of England and Catholic schools have also

been found to take fewer children from deprived backgrounds. Similarly, recent figures from the school census suggest that 11.5% of pupils attending religious schools are eligible for free school meals, compared to 15.7% of other schools.'

On p.58: 'In conclusion, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) has argued that religious schools do well not because they have a particular approach to improving achievement, but because they control admissions and therefore attract more ambitious parents. Its analysis of 3,044 schools found no evidence to indicate that religious schools add more value than other state schools. Whilst religious schools may achieve higher academic results, many of them have lower "added value" in terms of the degree to which pupils improve. There is an obvious danger here that religious schools are "cherry picking" their student cohorts (or even without deliberately doing so, are ending up being selective in this way), and the potential for this to damage community cohesion is relatively unexplored.'

On p.63 faith school admissions are mentioned in the context of conflicting rights: 'In the case of R (E) v The Governing Body of JFS and Others an orthodox Jew claimed that oversubscription criteria at JFS, which gave priority to admitting the children of Jewish mothers (of which his child was not) was racially discriminatory. All claims were dismissed in relation to the discriminatory nature of religious entry requirements, apart from the claim under section 71 of the RRA. As Munby J noted, "it is important to realise that reliance upon religious beliefs, however conscientious the belief and however ancient and respectable the religion, can never itself immunise the believer from the reach of the secular law. And invocation of religious beliefs does not necessarily provide a defence to what is otherwise a valid claim. Some cultural beliefs and practices are simply treated by the law as going beyond the pale."'

Among the paper's recommendations which deal with education (p.79-80), the following relate to faith school admissions: 'Schools should not be allowed to design their own admission procedures. The most obvious body to perform this would be the local authority as with other maintained schools within its area'; 'More research needs to be undertaken to ensure that existing equalities legislation is being upheld by publicly funded religious schools in terms of their admissions…'.

http://www.brap.org.uk/component/docman/doc_download/20-religionbeliefequalitystrand%3FItemid%3D+&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk

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Secondary school admissions in England: Policy and practice

Anne West, Eleanor Barham and Audrey Hind, for RISE, LSE (March 2009)

Religious admission policies favour those from higher socio-economic backgrounds

An extensive study looked at admissions criteria of schools within the state sector in 2008.

'Admissions criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools are, in the main, clear, objective and relatively simple for parents/carers to understand. The situation is different with voluntary aided schools where there can be a high number of criteria relating to religion and religious practice, creating difficulties for parents/carers and allowing scope for discretion in many cases. There is a case for a simplified procedure for determining religion and religious practice.'

'Schools seeking information not allowed for by the Code were virtually all voluntary-aided or foundation schools.'

Key Findings

'Virtually all schools gave priority to children in care, as required by legislation, although a small minority of schools responsible for their own admissions did not.'

'**Over half of schools mentioned in their admissions criteria children with statements of special educational needs**. These were predominantly community and voluntary controlled schools and academies **as opposed to voluntary aided or foundation schools.**'

'In a significant minority of schools, **in the main voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies** which are responsible for their own admissions, **some criteria were used that are designed to select in pupils including partial selection by aptitude/ability in a subject area: more schools selected on this basis than did so in 2001 (5% versus 3%)**.'

'More voluntary aided schools had an admissions criterion giving priority to children of 'other faiths' in 2008 than in 2001 (42% versus 23%).' [p3]

'Supplementary information forms (SIFs) were used by certain schools. **Some of these requested information not permitted by the School Admissions Code. Others requested information unrelated to the school's admissions criteria; this information could be used to select in or select out certain groups of pupils**.' [4]

'The nature of the information required in the SIFs (in terms of the questions and length of the forms) may result in some parents/carers being disadvantaged during the admissions process and raises questions about the 'fairness' of the process.' [4]

Recommendations

'there can be a **high number of criteria relating to religion and religious practice, creating difficulties for parents/carers and allowing scope for discretion in many cases**. There is a case for a simplified procedure for determining religion and religious practice.'

'**Fair banding across a wide area on the basis of the range of ability of children in the area or random allocation are likely to be more effective if the overall aim is to widen access to particular schools and create greater social equity**'

'more schools asked other personal questions which have not been prohibited by the Code. Further guidance to schools as to what is and what is not appropriate to ask would help admission authorities to have a clearer understanding of how they should use their supplementary information forms.'

[See pages 21 and 24 for examples of VA schools with complicated admissions forms. One defines 3 types of Christian- 'at the heart of the church', 'attached' and 'known'. 16 places for those within 500m and 4 for other religions. They lack clarity – confusion.]

'However, **our research suggests that the system may not appear complex but be complex**. **This is highly likely to be the case with parents/carers who are not highly educated.** There is a strong case for admissions to all schools to be as simple and straightforward as the community schools (and some academies) identified in this report. Choice advisers may assist with the admissions process, but they do not address the inherent complexity and lack of clarity.' [35]

http://risetrust.org.uk/pdfs/secondary-school-admissions-mar-2009.pdf

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Faith schools: admissions and performance

Paul Bolton and Christine Gillie, House of Commons Library Standard Note (March 2009)

This paper gives an overview of the literature on faith schools in the UK. It covers the number of faith schools, which religions they adhere to, their type of establishment, their distribution in different parts of the country, the proportion of faith school pupils who are on free school meals and the proportion which have Special Educational Needs, the academic performance of pupils attending faith schools, and faith school admissions and their effect on community cohesion.

The paper's summary is as follows:

- 'Around one-third of maintained primary and secondary schools in England are faith schools and just under one-quarter of pupils attend such schools.
- Overall faith schools perform better in headline GCSE results, but they have a lower proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and lower rates of Special Educational Needs
- More advanced analysis of pupil progress to GCSE show that on average pupils at faith school progress slightly faster than similar pupils at non-faith schools.
- Results at Jewish secondary schools are better than those at any other type of faith school and consistently well above average even when pupil background and prior attainment are taken into account
- Specific research into the performance of faith schools has found that pupils at Church of England schools progress very slightly faster than non-faith schools in the first years of secondary school. Progress at Roman Catholic Schools was found to be very slightly slower than at non-faith schools at this stage and very slightly faster in the remaining secondary school years. Again performance at Jewish schools was found to be significantly better than at any other type of faith or non-faith school.
- Recent research on primary schools suggests that performance difference can largely be explained by prior attainment and background. The remaining differences are due to parental self-selection and selection methods used by some faith schools.
- Further analysis of GCSE results shows a different pattern of results for faith and non-faith schools with similar governance arrangements and control over admissions. Non-faith schools perform better in certain categories, faith schools do best in others and there is no clear difference in some.'

http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN04405

Church going and social class

Tearfund (January 2009)

Religious admission policies an automatic source of social division

A 2009 Tearfund survey found that 26% of British people attend church at least once a year, with 'AB social class (34%) and owner occupiers without a mortgage (32%) among the groups overrepresented and C2 social class (21%); DE social class (22%); single people (19%) and council tenants (19%) among those underrepresented'

It should also be noted that only 15% of adults attend church at least every month, but many school admissions policies require regular church attendance at a particular church over the course of several years. In an oversubscribed school, such policies will inevitably select out all but the most religious and/or most organised and determined parents.

http://accordcoalition.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Tearfund-churchgoing-survey-in-word.htm

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Faith-based schools: institutionalising parallel lives?

John Flint, chapter in the book Faith in the Public Realm: Controversies, Policies and Practices, edited by Adam Dinham, Robert Furbey and Vivien Lowndes (January 2009)

The chapter goes through the history of faith schools in different parts of the UK, looks at the debates on their effect on community cohesion, and mentions the Cantle Report and the evidence on integrated schooling in Northern Ireland.

'The chapter concludes by suggesting that state-funded faith-based schools may and should be accommodated within a multicultural society but that this necessitates a greater degree of pragmatism and compromise among faith communities.' [p163]

'The immediate catalyst for reignited concerns about faith-based schooling and community cohesion in England was the serious urban disorder in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in the summer of 2001 between Asian and white youths and the policy. The "Cantle Report" into the disturbances, although it did not directly link the disorders to faith schools, developed the powerful paradigm of "parallel" lives to depict the sociospatial segregation of ethnic and religious groups within "enclave" neighbourhoods and did implicate educational processes as contributing to this segregation (Cantle, 2001). This manifested itself in ethnically divided schools, linked, through school catchment geographies, to increasing residential segregation.' [p166]

'The charge that faith-based schools result in circumscribed cultures and fragmented social networks (Humanist Philosophers' Group, 2001; Meer, 2007) also faces the challenge of a limited evidence base (although, see Smith's 2005 study of school, neighbourhood and family influences on children's social interactions). However, research evidence on integrated schools in Northern Ireland does challenge proponents of faith-based schools. The research suggests that integrated schools have impacted positively on identity and out-group attitudes, with one study showing the proportion of pupils with "mixed friendships" rising from four in ten to two thirds before and after attending an integrated school. These contacts were maintained outside as well as within schools...These findings are supported by recent research in England that found that it was day-to-day contact between children that was required to break down barriers between communities. This can also bring parents together across ethnic/religious divides (Bruegel, 2006).' [p169]

Parts of this chapter can be viewed at http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=9QzFl_K-mYIC&lpg=PA163&ots=gIiiDoUFrD&dq=Faith-

based%20schools%3A%20institutionalizing%20parallel%20lives%3F&pg=PA162#v=onepage&q=Faith-based%20schools:%20institutionalizing%20parallel%20lives?&f=false

http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781847420299

Right to Divide? Faith Schools and Community Cohesion

Runnymede Trust report by Dr Rob Berkeley (December 2008)

A major report which focused on how faith schools operate.

The researchers examined religious schools in their full historical, cultural, political and educational context and consulted with over 1000 stakeholders (teachers, parents, students, educationalists, governors etc). Some of the recommendations of the report were:

- 'End selection on the basis of faith: Faith schools should be for the benefit of all in society rather than just some. If faith schools are convinced of their relevance for society, then that should apply equally for all children. With state funding comes an obligation to be relevant and open to all citizens'

- 'Children should have a greater say in how they are educated: Children's rights are as important as parents' rights. While the debate about faith schools is characterized by discussions of parental choice of education, there is little discussion about children's voice'

http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/RightToDivide-2008.pdf

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Faith in the Classroom: A report of the Sea of Faith Commission on Faith Schools

The Sea of Faith Network (November 2008)

'We recommend that no school within the state sector, including faith schools, should be its own admissions authority. Faith schools receiving state funding should therefore lose the right to select pupils on religious grounds.'

http://www.sofn.org.uk/docs/sof-faith-schools-commission-report.pdf

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Office of the Schools Adjudicator Annual Report September 2007 – August 2008

Sir Phillip Hunter, Chief Schools' Adjudicator (October 2008)

'1. In June, I asked local authorities to send me the determined admission arrangements for all schools in their areas. On receiving them, I sent a sample of them (about 3000 of the 5300 foundation and aided schools) to junior barristers in Leeds and asked for their advice on whether the arrangements complied with the Admissions Code. A colleague, June Brown, then sent reports to local and faith authorities identifying points of non-compliance with the Code and asking them to deal with those points. In September, I asked local and church authorities how they had dealt with the points we had identified.

‘2. Our advisers identified a very large number of issues that needed attention. Over half the points raised concerned the absence of a definition or the failure to specify the details of a process. Local and faith authorities have agreed that these can be dealt with simply by including “default” definitions in their admission booklets, informing parents that those definitions will apply where full definitions do not occur in individual arrangements. Governors of schools concerned were asked to regularise the arrangements in their normal meeting in the autumn term. There were then two further groups of points:

‘(i) Points within Supplementary Information Forms. Almost all of these arose simply because schools had failed to bring their forms up to date or because they had asked questions of applicants (such as place of work of parents) which were legitimate for children already on roll at the school but were not legitimate at the application stage.

‘(ii) In over 800 schools and 10 local authorities we identified more substantial contraventions. These included some that did not give the required priority to children in care. Others gave priority to parents who listed the school as first preference or gave priority to siblings not in school at the time of enrolment. Some did not include tie-breakers. Others did not spell out oversubscription criteria in a form that parents could easily understand.’

http://web.archive.org/web/20150410143825/http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100611023435/http://www.schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk/RMS_upload/ACF7347.pdf

See also http://www.teachingtimes.com/articles/illegal-admission-religious-schools.htm

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In Bad Faith: The New Betrayal of Faith Schools

Odone. C, Centre for Policy Studies (July 2008)

Odone’s rather hyperbolic work defends faith schools from a perceived attack by the Brown Government and calls for their expansion.

Introduction

Odone is dismissive of claims that parents have been ill treated by faith schools – ‘significantly, parents failed to step forward to confirm that they had been ill-treated by the various faith schools “named and shamed” by the Department’ [p2] and points to the success of faith schools: ‘15 of the top 25 performing primary schools are religious character – DFES, *School and College Performance Tables*, 2007.’[p8]

Cherry picking

‘It is true that in faith schools fewer students take up FSM compared with their catchment area. (A 2006 survey found that in church primary schools only 14% of pupils were on FSM compared with 19% in their catchment area)’ – Despite this concession Odone questions if FSM is a reliable measure of deprivation and goes on to argue that many in faith communities wouldn’t take up FSM due to stigma citing a Rabbi and a head of a Catholic school referring to Filipinos and Poles. [p11]

‘Banning interviews and simplifying admissions’ Odone fears will undermine the freedom of faith schools to ensure applicants adhere to its ethos – she cites a Jewish school ensuring both parents are genuinely Jewish. [p12]

'Rebecca Allen's latest research paper stresses that although faith schools could use information to cream-skim, "there is no proof that this is actually taking place in schools."' [p12] Whether evidence can be found regarding schools intentionally cream skimming, Odone ignores the reality that faith schools do not have reflective intakes!

'Indeed, research by Bristol University concluded that Christian schools tend to be more ethnically diverse than their secular counterparts, because they recruit their pupils from a wider area. Community schools, the researchers found, tend to be more polarised: white parents sent their children to "white" schools while ethnic minority families opted for schools where they were a majority'.

Looked after children

Of 80 local authorities 'In 2007, these authorities were responsible for transferring 1,517 looked after children from primary to secondary school. The local authorities tried to place 242 of these children in faith schools. 227 were successful. Only 15 children were turned down'. [p14] The 15 were not the same religion as the school. 227 out of 1,517 – why the others did not apply to the faith schools cannot be known, is this reflective of provision and preference, or is the number disproportionate to provision and if so why?

Divisive

'ICM poll of British Muslims in 2004 showed nearly half wanted their children to attend Muslim schools. Yet only 3% of Muslim students have a Muslim school to go to. [p21]... A recent paper by the Muslim Council of Britain, Towards Greater Understanding, highlighted 15 areas where Muslim school children (or/and their parents) may find themselves offended by secular state school practice. These include everything from the gym where their modesty is affronted to the school trip to a farm where they might come into contact with a pig.' [p22]

Odone argues that extremism can best be confronted by accommodating Islam in the state sector: 'Taj Hargey, who runs the Muslim Education Centre in Oxford, has warned: It is not the school that offers proper teaching of Islam that proves a training ground for terrorism, but the one where Islam is misunderstood or misinterpreted. [p22]... Madras's attached to Mosques are unregulated and more dangerous than Islamic schools would be'. [23]

Conclusion

'The Government needs to encourage, and copy, the existing ones rather than put obstacles in their way. Quite simply, we need more, not fewer, faith schools.' [41]

http://www.cps.org.uk/files/reports/original/111027170222-20080704PublicServicesInBadFaith.pdf

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School diversity and social justice: policy and politics

West, Anne and Currie, Peter (June 2008) Educational studies*, 34 (3). pp. 241-250. ISSN 0305-5698*

'This paper focuses on the long established diversity in the English education system – independent schools, grammar schools and religious schools – and in so doing explores tensions between education policy, politics and social justice. It explores the differential access to these different types

of school, their social composition and implications for social justice and for wider society. It is argued that if social justice is to be a goal of government, further policy changes are needed over and above those that have already been made. However, the political challenges, which have limited policy changes to date, would be significant.'

Faith schools are noted to have fewer pupils on FSM and are not more high performing compared to other schools when value added scores are considered. Ethnic segregation is also fostered by such schools by excluding those of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin in particular.

A range of financial and moral incentives to encourage faith and grammar schools to admit a more socially representative intake, and better monitoring of school composition is called for.

Abstract at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/19639/

The Composition of Schools in England

Department for Children, Schools and Families (June 2008)

Fewer children known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM), the key indicator of poverty, in Church of England and Roman Catholic schools than in schools without a religious character (**11.5 and 13.6% versus 14.7%)** (DCSF, 2008).

The level of segregation of those on FSM in a Local Authority is found to be slightly influenced by the proportion of those attending non-selective faith schools, provided that the LA does not follow its own admissions policy (Chart 5.8). An ordinary least squared regression analysis finds the 'proportion of pupils in self- governing schools, faith schools and grammar schools' are all significant in accounting for the segregation of FSM pupils (Chart 5.9).

The incidence of pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) in schools with no religious character is 2.2%, while the proportion of pupils with SEN without a statement is 16.8%. This is slightly higher than any other type of school, with the proportion of SEN pupils without a statement standing at 14.4% for Church of England schools and 14% in Roman Catholic schools.

For some faith school types, as little as 6.4% of their pupils are attending their nearest school, the 3 categories of faith school with the smallest proportions of pupils attending their nearest school are Jewish, other and Muslim with 6.4%, 6.8% and 11.4% of pupils respectively. For schools with no religious character, the figure is 50.4%

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080728192707/http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000796/TheCompositionOfSchoolsInEnglandFinal.pdf

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In Good Faith: The Report of the Executive's Task Group on Faith Schools

National Union of Teachers position paper (March 2008)

No religious selection in admissions by state faith schools

'**Fair Admissions and Community Cohesion**
'20. In order for there to be equality of access to education, there must be in place a fair and equitable pupil admissions process. Common admissions arrangements are the key to achieving this goal. The NUT has supported consistently the concept of local admissions forums. Initiatives such as the cross borough admissions forum in London are a step forward. Local admissions forums must have teeth. No admissions procedure should be in place which advantages one school at the expense of another, including faith schools.'

'**Diversity and Inclusion**
'38. In order to foster community cohesion it is vital that schools with a religious character are inclusive of all faiths (and none).
'39. In addition, faith schools must reflect the diverse nature of British society and their local community in relation to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability in terms of the school population and staffing. It is also vital that such schools promote diversity and equality in the day today activities of the school.
'40. Given that public money is used to fund schools with a religious character, the Executive believes that such schools must be open to the wider community in the interests of fostering social and community cohesion.'

'**Community Cohesion**
'49. It is essential that the requirement to promote community cohesion is applied equally through:
• the admissions process
• school ethos
• respecting cultural requirements
• the curriculum
• their staff recruitment policies'

'**The Admissions Process**
'**50. In determining the oversubscription criteria of admissions policies the entitlement of every child to a good local school must be paramount. The NUT is opposed to admissions policies which either privilege or discriminate against children on the basis of the beliefs, motivations or practices of their parents.**
'51. It is vital that all schools have admissions practices which are inclusive and which respect the diversity of the community they are situated in. See previous section on admissions (paragraphs 20-35).'

http://www.teachers.org.uk/files/In%20Good%20Faith%2028pp%20.pdf

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Compliance with the school admissions code

Department for Children, Schools and Families (April 2008)

'An investigation of the admission arrangements of 570 schools in three local authorities to assess their compliance with the School Admissions Code and associated legislation was also carried out (DCSF, 2008b). **Responses from 106 schools found that 96 had arrangements that did not comply with statutory requirements.** The most common type of non-compliance was failing to give top priority to looked after children. Other non-compliance related to schools **requesting information prohibited** by the Code on supplementary information forms. **A disproportionate number of schools with non-compliant arrangements were responsible for their own admissions.**'
(Quoted from http://risetrust.org.uk/pdfs/secondary-school-admissions-mar-2009.pdf)

In 2008 the then-Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) decided to investigate compliance with the Admissions Code by all schools 'in three local authority areas (Barnet, Manchester and Northamptonshire) in order to sample the level of compliance.' The findings were that 'across these three local authorities… the large majority of schools appear to be complying with the code, including an overwhelming majority of academies and schools where local authorities are the admission authority. However, a significant minority of schools in our sample appear not to be compliant with the code, of which a disproportionate number are voluntary aided or foundation schools' [1]. In fact, 96 schools were identified as being in breach of the School Admissions Code, 87 of which were religiously designated schools (all Voluntary Aided or Foundation, which were at the time almost the only religious schools with the ability to select in admissions) [2]. There were 137 religious VA and Foundation schools in these three local authorities, leading us to conclude that 64% of these were not compliant with the Admissions Code.

Breaches included failure to prioritise children in care correctly, interviewing children or parents, failing to comply with special educational needs legislation, only admitting children whose families shared the faith of the school, taking behaviour into account, requesting personal information (e.g. marital status of parents), requesting financial contributions, requiring practical support for the ethos of the school, prioritising siblings who formerly attended the school or children of employees, governors exercising discretion over admissions, incorrectly maintaining waiting lists, attempting to balance intakes by gender, publishing the wrong admission number, requiring completion of a supplementary information form, not defining distance from the school clearly or failing to publish admission arrangements at all [2].

The DCSF undertook this research after a statement from Ed Balls (then Secretary of State at the DCSF) in the House of Commons on 11 March 2008 [1]. The DCSF wrote to each of the three local authorities involved, and to the governing bodies of all voluntary aided and foundation schools in the three local authority areas, to obtain more information. The DCSF then presented the results of their research on 2 April 2008, which consisted of a ministerial statement on the issue from Ed Balls, and a set of documents which were deposited in the House of Commons Library [2]. These documents were: eight draft amendments to the Education and Skills Bill, a document summarising these amendments, three spreadsheets containing data on schools in the three local authority areas (which showed which schools had been complying with the Admissions Code and which had not), the guide to primary and secondary school admission and appeals for parents, a letter from Ed Balls to Dr Philip Hunter (who was then the Schools Adjudicator), and an explanatory note.

In the letter to Dr Philip Hunter, Ed Balls said that:

'The responses we received from the schools and local authorities have confirmed our original findings. The large majority of schools complied with statutory requirements in publishing their admission arrangements for 2008, but a significant minority published arrangements which failed to fully meet statutory requirements.

- We wrote to a total of 110 schools where we had concerns, across the three local authority areas.
- Of the 106 schools that responded by 1 April we are satisfied that 96 had arrangements that did not comply with at least one statutory requirement and of these 29 did not comply with more than one requirement.
- 58 failed to give children in care the clear and unequivocal highest priority in school admission arrangements as required by law.

- The admission of children with Statements of SEN is required by the Education Act 1996 but 13 schools sought in their arrangements to have discretion over the admission of such children.
- There were also examples of schools asking for information about parents' marital status or occupation, and 6 asked parents to confirm their willingness to make a financial contribution to the school at the time of application.
- Four schools did not respond to the verification exercise by 1 April 2008 and have been included in the aggregate figures for non-compliance in schools in the attached tables.'

The explanatory note also went through these findings. It said: 'On the basis of the examination and the verification exercise, officials concluded that of the 106 schools in the three areas that responded by 1 April, 96 schools had admission arrangements that did not comply with the statutory requirements in at least one respect. Of the 100 schools, 33 had admission arrangements which did not comply in two or more respects... Of all the schools examined in the three local authorities, 324 were community schools, 72 were voluntary controlled, schools, 135 were voluntary aided schools, 32 were foundation schools and 7 were Academies. A disproportionate number of the schools found to have non-compliant admission arrangements were voluntary aided schools and foundation schools, i.e. schools which have their own admission authorities. No voluntary controlled schools or Academies appeared to have non-compliant admission arrangements.'

[1] Balls, Ed, ministerial statement in the House of Commons on School Admissions (Strengthening the System) (Hansard via They Work For You, 11 March 2008): http://www.theyworkforyou.com/wms/?id=2008-03-11b.4WS.0&s=speaker%3A11740#g4WS.1

[2] Written ministerial statement on admissions code compliance and letter from ed balls to the schools adjudicator (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2 April 2008): http://web.archive.org/web/20110323204229/http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2008_0066 and the Department for Children, Schools and Families' deposit in the House of Commons Library of 2 April 2008: http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2008-0943/DEP2008-0943.zip

As well as in the zip file, the explanatory note is also at: http://web.archive.org/web/20150410143910/http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080728144543/http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode/pdf/Explanatory%20note%20to%20the%20tables%20for%20the%203%20LAs.pdf

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Prof. West and Dr Allen's oral evidence to Children Schools and Families Select Committee

(March 2008)

Religious admission policies favour those from higher socio-economic backgrounds

Dr Rebecca Allen: 'In my most recent research-I have written a paper on England, and a separate paper with Anne West on London-I was able to show that **religious schools have higher ability and lower free school meal intakes compared with the neighbourhoods in which they are located. To give you an idea of the magnitude of those effects, if we take a community school and a voluntary-aided religious school, both located in a neighbourhood with exactly the same levels of deprivation, the community school is likely to have about 50% more free school meal children than the voluntary-aided school**. There are big regional differences; the differences between voluntary-aided and community schools are very marked in London and quite marked in the north-

west, but the differences are much less in the rest of the country. Interestingly, I have also looked at foundation schools. Although they are located in relatively affluent parts of the country, on the whole they look much more like community schools than voluntary-aided religious schools in terms of their intake, relative to the neighbourhoods within which they are located. Part of my research links to Anne West's. She has completed surveys of school admissions policies, and I have been able to match the data that I have produced with her data sets on school admissions policies. We are trying to look at the association between particular types of admission criteria, and the extent to which schools have advantaged intakes. **We can show that there really is a direct correlation between the number of potentially selective admissions criteria that schools use, and the extent to which their intakes are advantaged**.' [bold our emphasis]

Prof. Anne West: 'We were not able to look at [methods most frequently deployed to select covertly under the old code] individually because each of them tended to be used in small proportions. We came up with the notion of criteria that were covertly selective or that allowed the potential to be selective. There was a range of such criteria. A lot of them were quite subjective, and some were still in place for 2005 admissions. There were criteria that allowed a degree of subjectivity and some that gave priority to certain groups of children, such as those whose parents attended the school, who had links to governors, and former siblings at the school. The criteria could include compassionate factors or recommendations. There is a huge list of such criteria.'

http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmchilsch/c311-iii/c31102.htm

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Secondary School Admissions

Coldron, J., E. Tanner, S. Finch, L. Shipton, C. Wolstenholme, B. Willis, and B. Stiell
(February 2008)

Sheffield Hallam 2006 admissions database provides a snapshot of admission arrangements for all maintained schools from the 2006 composite prospectus sent to parents by each LA in England (2007 prospectuses were used for 13 LAs). The research team wrote to all voluntary-aided and foundation schools and Academies requesting copies of their SIFs or confirmation that they did not ask for further information: 67% of these schools responded.

'*We identify a second group of schools from our 2006 database that were using policies shortly to become inadmissible under the 2007 School Admission Code. These policies include:*
(1) schools that give priority to those parents who list the school as their first preference on the common application form (used by 30%);
(2) schools that did not have child in care as the first oversubscription criterion for entry (54%);
(3) schools asking for evidence of parental commitment to the school or the child's education (9%);
(4) schools giving priority to pupils with some family connection to the school, for example, the relatives of employees, governors or former pupils (4%);
(5) schools holding interviews of the parents and/or the pupil to determine religious adherence or suitability for admission to school (used by less than 1%);
(6) schools requesting inadmissible supplementary information from parents (used by 10%)'

They also found that there had been an increase (from less than 1% to 4%) in the proportion of schools selecting 10% of their intake on the basis of aptitude. Voluntary-aided and foundation schools were more likely to select in this way than community or voluntary-controlled schools. They also investigated the use of supplementary information forms required by schools, finding that

around one in three non-community schools asked for additional information with voluntary-aided schools being more likely to do so than any other school type.

http://shura.shu.ac.uk/183/1/Sec_School_Adms_DCSF-RR020.pdf

Identities in Transition: A Longitudinal Study of Immigrant Children

Rupert Brown, Adam Rutland & Charles Watters from the Universities of Sussex and Kent (October 2007)

Positive effect of mixed schooling upon community cohesion and mutual understanding

'The effects of school diversity were consistent, most evidently on social relations: higher self-esteem, fewer peer problems and more cross-group friendships. Such findings show that school ethnic composition can significantly affect the promotion of positive intergroup attitudes. These findings speak against policies promoting single faith schools, since such policies are likely to lead to reduced ethnic diversity in schools.'

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-148-25-0007/outputs/Download/cd0ec735-e5b5-462c-9db0-5a202d161f8d

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Faith in the system

Department for Children, Schools and Families (September 2007)

'The Government continues to support the benefits to society that this system brings for parental choice and diversity and we recognise that with the changes in society, it is only fair that pupils of all faiths and none have the opportunity to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents'

'The Government recognises that faith schools are popular with parents and make a valuable contribution to the way in which this country discharges its duty under Article 2 of Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) to respect the right of parents to ensure education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.' [p3]

'The Government recognises the aspirations of these and other faith communities to secure more schools and school places to offer education in accordance with the tenets of their faith.' [p4]

http://www.religionlaw.co.uk/FaithInTheSystem.pdf

Faith Schools and Pupils' Progress through Primary Education

Tilaye Yeshanew and Ian Schagen, National Foundation for Educational Research, and Suzanne Evans, School of Economics, Mathematics and Statistics, Birkbeck, presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference (September 2007)

Faith schools have a positive performance on value added measures: 'The result of the multilevel modeling analysis that control for all the contextual background factors at pupil, school and postcode levels show that faith schools are positively related to key stage 2 performance.

'The analysis confirmed that all faith schools, in particular Roman Catholic and Church of England schools, made slightly more progress with their pupils than non–faith schools. It also showed that pupils with SEN attending faith schools performed better in key stage 2 than pupils with SEN in non-faith schools.'

https://bei.leeds.ac.uk/dbsql/AFreeQueryServlet?*id=30&*formId=30&*context=COLN&collection=&id=168092&*servletURI=https://bei.leeds.ac.uk/dbsql/AFreeQueryServlet

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School Admissions: Fair choice for parents and pupils

The IPPR, Sarah Tough and Richard Brookes (June 2007)

Religious admission policies favour those from higher socio-economic backgrounds

'Gordon Brown and David Cameron are being urged not to extend the number of Academies and Trust schools without making their admissions procedures fairer. New research published by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) shows that secondary schools which are their own admission authorities are much less representative of their local area. IPPR argues that **schools have no reason to be their own admissions authorities, other than to select students by ability or socio-economic background**.

'With both Labour and Conservative policy committed to increasing the number of Academies and Trust schools, IPPR warns that Labour's efforts to strengthen the Admissions Code of Practice and the Conservatives' new opposition to expanding grammar schools is not enough to prevent selection in state schools.

'IPPR's report cites research that shows:

- Faith schools which are their own admission authorities are **ten times more likely to be highly unrepresentative** of their surrounding area than faith schools where the local authority is the admission authority.

…

'Overall, secondary schools are twice as segregated by ability than they would be if they took the pupils living nearest to the school. IPPR's report also cites strong evidence of 'peer effects' on individual student performance and evidence that high levels of social segregation are associated with lower results overall.'

http://www.ippr.org/publications/school-admissionsfair-choice-for-parents-and-pupils

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Ballots in school admissions

The Sutton Trust (May 2007)

'An Ipsos MORI public opinion poll of nearly 2000 adults reveals that...ballots are thought by a third of people to be a fairer 'tiebreaker' than other methods for deciding places at over-subscribed schools.'

Specific findings include:

1: 'When given the specific scenario of an over-subscribed faith school, more people (36%) think that a ballot is the fairer way of deciding which pupils get a place than those who think the decision should rest on judgements showing which families are most committed to the Christian faith (20%).'

2: 'When given the specific scenario of an over-subscribed comprehensive school, nearly as many people (32%) think that a ballot is the fairer way of deciding which pupils get a place as those who think it is fairer to decide on how near families live to the school (35%).'

3: 'Among parents from the higher social classes, 45 per cent of respondents think that a ballot is the fairer way of deciding which pupils get a place at an oversubscribed comprehensive school.'

The majority of respondents struggled to say whether any (apart from geographical proximity) of the eight suggested oversubscription criteria were 'fair' or 'unfair'. However '**Selecting children on the basis of a certain religion or faith emerged as the way of allocating school places most frequently identified as unfair, with 40% of respondents saying it was unfair compared with 8% who said it was fair.**' This was much less popular than the other options. 52% considered prioritising people on the basis of distance from the school was fair, and 9% considered it unfair.

Sutton Trust's review (1 May 2007): http://www.suttontrust.com/news/news/ballots-in-school-admissions/

Research: http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/05/BallotsInSchoolAdmissions.pdf

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Religious Composition and Admission Processes of Faith Secondary Schools in London

Hazel Pennell, Anne West and Audrey Hind, Education Research Group, Department of Social Policy, LSE (May 2007)

This paper was commissioned by Comprehensive Future, and funded by the Joseph Roundtree Foundation, in order to examine the religious composition and admissions processes of publicly-funded secondary schools with a religious character in London. In addition to determining the religious composition of the study sample, the work aimed to discover the extent of faith-based discrimination in admissions. The research occurred in the context of the Labour government's effort to see the introduction of more faith-based schools.

It emerged that there were significant differences in the religious composition of schools that were Church of England, Roman Catholic, Jewish and of other Christian denominations. In CofE schools 71% were Christian, 8% were Muslim, approx. 7% had no-faith, and for 6% there was no data. In Roman Catholic schools 96% were Christian. In Jewish schools all pupils were Jewish. And in the schools of other Christian denominations 8/10 were Christian.

Schools that were inclusive of other faiths tended to set aside a proportion of places for those of other faiths/no faith, dividing places between 'foundation' and 'open places'. However, the CofE school that was the most inclusive did not operate in this way.

Where supplementary forms were found, 'All required a reference from a priest/minister/religious leader to confirm that the information provided by parents on their religious background and practice was accurate. Eight out of ten forms sought information on church attendance; half on involvement in the church and a third asked for proof that a child's religious milestones, such as baptism or first holy communion had taken place.'

Schools that were inclusive of other faiths were not necessarily inclusive in other respects; e.g., there was evidence that some schools employed social selection.

The authors conclude that greater community cohesion requires more inclusivity among schools with a religious character, and that there is currently a tension between the aim to increase the number of faith-based schools and inclusivity. In sum: **'given that public money is used to fund schools with a religious character there is a strong case to be made for such schools to be open to the wider community in the interests of enhancing social cohesion.'**

http://comprehensivefuture.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2003/07/RowntreeResearch.pdf

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ATL Position Statement on Faith Schools

Association of Teachers and Lecturers (March 2007)

This document sets out ATL's position on faith schools, and covers the state funding of faith schools, admissions, community cohesion, equality issues and the curriculum. The document does not say that faith schools should be abolished, but it does express criticism of them. In the introduction (p.1) it says that 'ATL believes that we need schools that embrace the diversity of the individuals within our community, not a diversity of institutions dividing pupils and staff on religious grounds.' In the conclusion (p.7), it says that 'faith schools should have flexible and reviewable admissions criteria which take account of school and local needs'.

On p.2: 'ATL is concerned with research findings that indicate higher levels of segregation in those local authorities (LAs) with the highest numbers of faith schools, particularly those with restrictive admissions… We know that this concern is shared by many others, both outside of and within, religious organisations and communities… The Cantle report (2001) stated that, "contact with other cultures should be a clear requirement for, and development of, the concept of citizenship education from September 2002, and possibly a condition of funding". ATL wants this duty, to ensure that pupils have contact with other cultures, placed on all schools. This is particularly important in faith schools where the risks of segregation may be higher...ATL calls for faith schools to implement measures, through their admissions, curriculum and employment practices, to ensure that they minimise the risk of segregation and to promote the goal of community cohesion.'

On p.3: 'ATL acknowledges that there are many faith schools in areas of high social deprivation which do not have selective admissions policies...However, other faith schools see their mission as the transmission of religious belief and culture from one generation to another, and have closed admission procedures with the majority of places allocated to those from their own faith

community. Recently, some religious groups have shown their determination to maintain autonomy over admissions. In autumn 2006, these religious bodies overturned government plans to oblige faith schools to reserve up to 25% of school places for pupils with other or no faith, where there is local demand.'

On p.3: 'The question of admissions not only relates to equality of access, but also the perceived academic success of faith schools. Research has shown that higher performance levels of faith schools occur in those with selective admissions procedures and that these higher rates of achievement are due to autonomous governance and admissions arrangements and not due to religious character. This is significant when we consider that one of the key drivers of government expansion of faith schools is the perception of their higher academic success. Compared to national averages, pupils in faith and autonomous schools are much less likely to be entitled to free school meals and are more likely to have English as their first language.'

On p.3-4: 'ATL proposes that criteria related to the promotion of community cohesion should be linked to the level of autonomy granted to schools, including faith schools, such as freedoms over the setting of admissions procedures… Schools would meet this criteria through evidence of a range of activities; from specific projects to promote community dialogue and increased understanding, to activity across the taught curriculum promoting values of community engagement and tolerance. Therefore, restrictive admissions could not be legally set by a school that does not show evidence of promoting community cohesion throughout its practices. All schools should be supported in this duty by the relevant bodies, including the Commission on Integration and Cohesion.'

Nowadays ATL is a member of the Fair Admissions Campaign.

https://www.atl.org.uk/Images/Faith%20schools%20PS%202007.pdf
https://www.atl.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/policy-library/Faith-schools.asp

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Selectivity, admissions and intakes to 'comprehensive' schools in London, England

West, Anne and Hind, Audrey (January 2007) Educational studies*, 32 (2). pp. 145-155. ISSN 0305-5698*

'This study focuses on admissions criteria used for 'comprehensive' secondary schools in London, UK. It was found that schools whose admissions were controlled by the local authority were more likely to report giving priority to children with medical/social needs and special educational needs than were schools that controlled their own admissions; the latter were more likely to report the use of various potentially 'creaming' criteria. There was also more 'selectivity' among London comprehensive schools with autonomy over admissions, with higher proportions using potentially selective admissions criteria than in the rest of England. Moreover, it was found that schools with responsibility for their own admissions had lower proportions of pupils with special educational needs and obtained higher scores in public examination 'league tables' than schools whose admissions were controlled by the local authority. The findings suggest that some schools, although nominally 'comprehensive', appear to restrict access to certain groups of pupils.'

It was found that secondary schools in London with responsibility for admissions were more likely than those outside London to use a number of potentially 'creaming' criteria such as interviewing pupils, interviewing parents (used only by voluntary-aided schools) and giving priority to the children of former pupils.

Abstract available at: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/15324/

Faith schools admissions poll

Populus (October 2006)

Faith schools admissions poll

Populus poll of **October 2006**, 62% agreed that 'Faith schools are divisive because they prevent children from different religious backgrounds from getting to know and understand each other'.

http://www.populus.co.uk/Poll/Faith-Schools-/

"Skimming the cream"? Admissions to charter schools in the US and autonomous schools in England

West, Anne and Ingram, Dabney and Hind, Audrey (September 2006). Educational policy*, 20 (4). pp. 615-639. ISSN 0895-9048*

'This article focuses on student admissions to charter schools in the United States and to autonomous (foundation and voluntary-aided) secondary schools in England. Analyses of the admissions criteria used by autonomous and nonautonomous secondary schools in England revealed that **more autonomous than nonautonomous schools reported using potentially selective criteria**. **Examination results were higher in autonomous than nonautonomous schools and even higher in those that used potentially selective admissions criteria.** Fewer students with special educational needs attended autonomous schools. The evidence is suggestive of both **"cream skimming"** and "cropping off" educational provision to particular groups of students. It is concluded that the introduction of market oriented reforms into public school systems requires monitoring and effective regulation to ensure that autonomous schools do not act in their own self-interest.'

'Voluntary aided and foundation schools are in a position to "skim the cream" if they are oversubscribed, that is, if there are more applicants than there are places available. This means that they are able, if they wish, via their admissions criteria or other practices, to select students who will maximize their test or examination league-table results, or who, for whatever reason, are likely to be easier to teach, or who match the school's profile.'

http://epx.sagepub.com/content/20/4/615.short

How much school segregation is due to post-1988 school choice policies?

Rebecca Allen, Institute of Education, Paper presented to BERA conference (September 2006)

'Table 8 shows us that **many schools that control their admissions are 'cream-skimming' to increase their proportion of pupils of higher ability, or alternatively limit the proportion of their pupils who are low ability or from low income families**. The dataset does not contain admissions criteria so we do not know whether cream-skimming can entirely be explained by explicit ability selection criteria, or whether more covert selection is taking place. This creamskimming analysis is also consistent with the results from all earlier analysis in this study, which has emphasised that the

role of VA faith schools in producing post-residential sorting is far greater than for foundation schools. VA schools appear to be responsible for well over half of all cream-skimming identified here, yet they make-up just 17% of comprehensive secondary schools.

'By contrast, LEA-controlled schools rarely appear to be cream-skimming, though it is notable that around one in ten voluntary-controlled schools – schools of religious character but where the LEA determines admissions – contain a much lower than expected FSM proportion. Can we use this finding to suggest that religious criteria are always likely to produce social stratification, but should not produce ability stratification provided a school is not covertly cream-skimming? This finding points to the need to explore why FSM pupils have been relatively unsuccessful at accessing their local faith schools, even where it is a nonadmissions controlling school. Are they less likely to want a religious education for their child, or simply less able to demonstrate their commitment to a specific church?' [p18-19]

Table 8: Cream-skimming by comprehensive schools: Proportion of schools identified as 'cream-skimming'

	Community	Community (Specialist)	Voluntary controlled	Foundation	Voluntary aided	Ratio value for cream-skimming schools
By free-school meals	4%	5%	11%	13%	30%	0.00 to 0.55
By KS2 ability	2%	5%	4%	12%	38%	1.03 to 1.20
By lowest 20% ability	3%	5%	3%	12%	36%	0.00 to 0.66
By top 20% ability	4%	4%	3%	13%	33%	1.42 to 15.33
Number of schools	1,630	281	76	432	480	

Note: Community (Specialist) identifies LEA controlled schools that were given Specialist status in or before 2000 (when these pupils entered secondary school). All Specialist schools could choose to select 10% of pupils by aptitude, though most did not.

https://bei.leeds.ac.uk/dbsql/AFreeQueryServlet?*id=30&*formId=30&*context=COLN&collection=%collection%&id=157441&*servletURI=https://bei.leeds.ac.uk/dbsql/AFreeQueryServlet

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Social Capital, Diversity and Education Policy

Irene Bruegel of the London South Bank University Families & Social Capital ESRC Research Group (August 2006)

Positive effect of mixed schooling upon community cohesion and mutual understanding

'The key findings were that:

- Friendship at primary schools can, and does, cross ethnic and faith divides wherever children have the opportunity to make friends from different backgrounds.
- At that age, in such schools, children are not highly conscious of racial differences and are largely unaware of the religion of their friends.
- The positive benefits of mixed primary schooling particularly for white children, extend into the early years of secondary school.
- There was some evidence that parents learned to respect people from other backgrounds as a result of their children's experiences in mixed schools.
- Parental prejeudices [sic], allied to a rhetoric of choice, reduce the chances of children from different backgrounds being in the same primary class.
- In the areas we studied this was particularly true of Catholic schools.
- Muslim children separated school and home more than other children, but their Muslim school friends did not come home with them any more than their other friends.
- Children in non-denominational secondary schools from all ethnic backgrounds were largely opposed to 'faith' schools.
- In the one case we studied, primary school twinning had little positive effect on white children's attitudes, fuelling indeed their community's sense of losing out on investment.

'**We conclude by arguing that day-to-day contact between children has far more chance of breaking down barriers between communities, than school twinning and sporting encounters**.

'This is in line with the thrust of social psychology research on prejudice which emphasises the importance of establishing contact between equals. We therefore think that if it is to address its remit effectively, the Commission on Cohesion and Integration should consider:

- How far policies of enhanced school choice and the retention of existing faith schools have hindered integration
- How best to ensure that local examples of school twinning and informal contact are independently and systematically evaluated for their impact on attitudes and behaviour.
- How the educational outcomes for white children from traditionally poor achieving backgrounds might be enhanced by learning alongside children from high aspiring ethnic groups'

http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/families/publications/SCDiversityEdu28.8.06.pdf

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The social composition of top comprehensive schools: rates of eligibility for free school meals at the 200 highest performing comprehensive schools

Sutton Trust (January 2006)

Faith Schools not reflective of FSM in their neighbourhood

This study looked at the top performing state comprehensive schools and compared rates of FSM eligibility within the school to the local area rates based on data from 2003. The local area was defined as the post code sector the school was located in -which is roughly the size of an electoral ward. This however does not take into account the wider locale of the school and isn't perhaps suitable for areas like London which can vary greatly between postcode sectors, furthermore post code sectors come in many different shapes and sizes, and schools may be situated at their edges. Despite reservations over the use of post code sectors as a measure the findings regarding the difference between schools who control their own admissions and schools who have their admissions controlled by the LEA are startling.

'Faith schools account for 18% of all secondary schools, but 42% of the top 200 comprehensives, including 59% of the schools which act as their own admissions authorities. At 6% they have approximately the same proportion of pupils on FSM as non-faith schools within the sample, but the gap between school and area rates is much higher for faith schools – 9 percentage points, compared to 3 percentage points for non-faith schools.' [p3]

'It is also worth noting that in the absence of a more accurate measure, FSM rates can be interpreted as being indicative of a school's overall social mix: in schools with high numbers of FSM pupils, for instance, there are also likely to be substantial numbers of pupils from families with low or modest incomes and few – if any – from affluent homes' [p3]

'the gap between the average FSM rate for a Voluntary Aided school and its postcode sector is 9 percentage points, ten times greater than for a Community school' [p6]

The schools in the top 200 who have their admissions controlled by the LEA are located in affluent areas 'are sited are notably more affluent than those of Voluntary Aided or Foundation schools, and – most likely because their selection processes are based principally on geography – their intakes reflect more closely their immediate areas, with FSM rates of 5.0% compared to 5.9% in their neighbourhoods, well below the national average of 14.3%' [p6]

'Again, there is a much higher proportion of faith schools in the top 200 (42%) than nationwide (17.9% at secondary level), and these tend to be found in areas with FSM rates close to the national average - in contrast to non-faith schools - and yet they are less reflective of their neighbourhoods' [p7]

http://www.suttontrust.com/our-work/research/download/75/

A statistical survey of attainment in Roman Catholic schools in England with particular reference to secondary schools operating under the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham

Morris, A. and Godfrey, R. C., Institute for Christian Education Research (2006)

This paper found that pupils at Catholic primary schools perform above average at English, Maths and Science, but the authors acknowledged that their findings did not prove the existence of a 'Catholic school effect' because the results relate only to the 2004 pupil intake.

http://create.canterbury.ac.uk/8923/

The Superior Educational Attainments of Pupils in Religious Foundation Schools in England

S.J. Prais, National Institute Economic Review, vol. 193 no. 1 102-105 (July 2005)

The paper looks at the higher academic achievements of pupils at faith schools, and looks closely at the performance of pupils attending state funded faith schools and schools without a religious character in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham in 2003. The paper suggests several causes for this which could be investigated in future research: whether faith schools were more socio-economically selective; whether 'home backgrounds' of pupils at faith schools were 'more

educationally and emotionally supportive'; whether schools without a religious character admitted more pupils with emotional and 'home' problems and whether the smaller size of the average faith school enabled them to better educate such pupils; the grouping of children of different learning abilities between the two sectors, and the difference in the standard of teaching.

Abstract available at http://ner.sagepub.com/content/193/1/102

Combining multilevel analysis with national value-added data sets—a case study to explore the effects of school diversity

Ian Schagen, Sandie Schagen, National Foundation for Educational Research, British Educational Research Journal, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 309–328 (June 2005)

This paper partly recaps earlier research from the same year (which we cannot source) but also covers new research. It looks at the performance of different types of school and then tries to explain it based on KS2 vs GCSE results for the same pupils.

After finding that faith schools performed slightly better, the research comments 'it has been suggested that, because specialist and faith schools are popular with parents, an informal system of selection will operate, leading to increasing 'polarisation' between these schools and the 'ordinary' comprehensives in neighbouring areas (see Gorard and Taylor, 2001). A 'virtuous circle' can be created, as the 'better' schools tend to attract the children of informed, supportive parents, and therefore obtain better results, which improves their reputation and makes them more likely to attract the children of informed, supportive parents... The corollary is that ordinary comprehensives will take fewer children from 'better' families, their results will drop and they may tend towards becoming 'sink' schools. We wished to discover whether there was evidence to support this theory.

'…LEAs were… classified according to the percentage of their pupils in religious… schools. **Schools in 'high' or 'low' religious LEAs obtained better results than those in non-religious LEAs** (i.e. LEAs with no religious schools. It should be noted that there are very few LEAs in this category, and they may not be a representative group)**, but again, the differences were not statistically significant.**' [p322-323]

Comparing to previous research, 'In the earlier research, different categories of faith schools (like different categories of specialist schools) were considered separately; this time, they were considered together, with Church of England schools as the default type. **The original findings showed a mixed picture; Roman Catholic schools performed mainly above expectations at GCSE, but below at key stage 3, while C of E schools performed in line with expectations on some outcomes, and ahead on others, at both key stages.** Only in English were church schools consistently ahead at both key stages (in line with findings from other research). Jewish schools, however, performed exceptionally well on all outcomes except key stage 3 science. Faith schools of all types obtained good results in terms of GCSE total point score, but (as with specialist schools) their advantage was much less clear in terms of average score, which again suggested that pupils were encouraged to take an additional GCSE (in this case, perhaps, compulsory RE).

'The findings from the latest research presented a broadly consistent picture, but with some variations. Taking key stages 3 and 4 together this time, faith schools as a whole were significantly ahead on only two outcomes: total point score and number of GCSE entries. This clearly confirms the hypothesis that pupils in faith schools are encouraged to take an additional GCSE. In this analysis, Roman Catholic schools performed above expectations in English, but other faith schools did not

(and even RC schools were only slightly ahead on this outcome). In addition to total point score and number of entries, Jewish schools were ahead in terms of average point score, but not in English, mathematics or science.' [p324-325]

The conclusion is that '**On the whole, faith schools seem to make very little impact**, although there are exceptions to this general rule: Roman Catholic schools perform above expectations in English, and Jewish schools in terms of average point score. The earlier research suggested that pupils in faith schools of all types were encouraged to take an additional GCSE; this was confirmed in the recent research, which showed that faith schools are ahead of ordinary comprehensives in terms of total point score (but not average point score) and number of GCSE entries.' [p326]

Abstract available at http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1080/01411920500082144/abstract
A version from September 2002 is available at
https://bei.leeds.ac.uk/dbsql/AFreeQueryServlet?*id=30&*formId=30&*context=COLN&collection=&id=124482&*servletURI=https://bei.leeds.ac.uk/dbsql/AFreeQueryServlet

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Parallel lives? Ethnic segregation in schools and neighbourhoods

Simon Burgess, Deborah Wilson and Ruth Lupton for the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion at the London School of Economic (June 2005)

Comparing residential ethnic segregation with ethnic segregation in England's schools

'Comparing segregation in schools and in neighbourhoods, it is clear that while the two are related, the two do not map one-for-one, and the two indices are generally not equal. For most of the ethnic groups, the weight of data generally suggests that the school-based indices are slightly greater than the neighbourhood-based indices, though the differences are sometimes marginal. That is to say, children are more segregated in school than in their neighbourhood. This seems more clearly true of children with Black Caribbean heritage, children of Indian ethnicity, Pakistani ethnicity and Bangladeshi ethnicity, and less true of children with Black African heritage. Our regression analysis shows that the ratio of school to neighbourhood segregation increases with the population density of the area.' P41

http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cp/CASEpaper101.pdf

Academic standards in Catholic schools in England: indications of causality

Andrew B. Morris for the Archdiocese of Birmingham Schools Commission, London Review of Education, Volume 3, Issue 1 (March 2005)

Exploring different in academic performance of Catholic and non-Catholic schools

'The findings of higher levels of academic attainment by Catholic school pupils, while not yet beyond doubt, seem to be well established. What is not at all clear are the causal reasons for those findings. It may be that the observed differences are a function of distinctive practices within the schools. They may be linked to the personal characteristics of their intake or, as the indications I have outlined suggest, are the product of a complex interaction of the above derived, in turn, from a specific world view and understanding of the purpose of education. There are indications that the values, attitudes and practices seemingly inherent in the traditional confessional model of Catholic

school can provide a particularly supportive environment for high academic attainment, especially by socially disadvantaged pupils. It is not clear whether the perceived benefits of such a model are easily transferable.
...
The majority of state supported Catholic schools serve, primarily, communities having a particular religious history and identity. Schools serving a specific cultural subgroup, or faith community, holding common attitudes and values, however consciously understood, are likely to have greater potential for achieving high levels of congruity with parental values and attitudes than schools serving more pluralistic and diverse communities whose main determining feature is physical proximity. In turn, the greater the level of social cohesion between home and school, the more likely it is that there will be a high degree of social harmony and of educational purpose within the school community, leading to high levels of academic effectiveness and productivity.' (p93-94)

Abstract available at
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14748460500036300#.UkxIjobIUgw

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School Admissions: A Report of the Social Market Foundation Commission

Social Market Foundation Commission (July 2004)

'The Commission feels able to support the continuing presence of faith schools in the state sector, even though there is little evidence to support the notion that faith schools educate children better. It feels that preventing religious schools from operating in the state sector would simply lead them to move into the private sector, as occurs in Australia. Allowing faith schools to continue, but with open enrolment and without any power to select on the basis of faith, is the favoured option. Parents choosing schools on grounds of religion is deemed acceptable – and there is a liberal argument that parents should be able to choose a religious education for their children if they so desire – whereas schools choosing parents on religious grounds is not. We note that this will lead to some self-selection by parents into religious schools, but this is considered acceptable since faith schools would have to compete on the same terms as other schools.' [p25]

http://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2004/07/Publication-Schools-Admissions-A-report-of-the-Social-Market-Foundation-Commission.pdf

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Parents 'lie' for best schooling

BBC report on YouGov survey for ITV's Tonight with Trevor McDonald (April 2004)

A YouGov poll of 1,232 British parents found that '20% of parents would lie or exaggerate their religious affiliations if they thought it would help them get into the school.'

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/3638713.stm

Education Law: The Right to Education & Admissions

Katie Scott, 39 Essex Street (April 2004)

http://www.39essex.com/docs/articles/Education_and_Admissions_KS_0404.pdf

This paper gives a factual account of the rules on school admissions, and on the right to education as outlined in European human rights law. However, the fact that it was authored in 2004 means that it is not up to date. In the introduction, the paper gives definitions of the relevant terms (e.g. maintained school, community school, voluntary aided school, etc.). The section entitled 'The Right to an Education' then goes through the rules which the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights have laid down on the right to education.

The next section, which is on admissions, goes through the duties of Local Education Authorities and then looks at admission arrangements. It describes the powers of admission authorities, the regulations which apply to them, the procedures which must be followed when an LEA or governing body seeks to change their admissions arrangements, and the rights of parents, governing bodies and the LEA to object to admissions arrangements. It also looks at prominent cases of judicial reviews of adjudicators' decisions, and appeals against admission decisions.

Study of the performance of maintained secondary schools in England

Tom Benton, Dougal Hutchison, Ian Schagen, Emma Scott, Report for the National Audit Office (November 2003)

This research compared how different types of schools do on value added measures. The conclusion is that there are small positive effects for other Christian, other faith and Jewish schools, but none for Church of England or Roman Catholic: 'For KS2-3 the categories with a significant relationship to outcome, controlling for other factors, are grammar, specialist, faith, Beacon and single-sex schools, with other Christian and other faith schools showing a differential effect relative to Church of England. There are positive relationships with KS3-4 progress, controlling for other factors, for specialist, Jewish, other faith, Beacon and girls' schools. Negative relationships appear for grammar schools and EAZ schools. Most of these 'differential slope' effects, however, are very small in magnitude.' [p77]

http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003494.htm

Secondary school admissions in England: selection by stealth

West, Anne and Pennell, Hazel and Hind, Audrey (October 2003) Management in education, 17 (4). pp. 18-22. ISSN 1741-9883

The Centre for Educational Research at LSE analysed the admissions criteria used by state secondary schools in England. VA schools were also found to be least likely to mention SEN in their admissions criteria and others explicitly mentioned the behaviour of older siblings as a factor in considering applications.

'Altogether, 1% of schools in our sample reported that parents were interviewed. All of these schools were voluntary-aided; overall, 10% of voluntary-aided schools reported interviewing parents. We also found that 2% of schools reported interviewing pupils. Again, the vast majority of these schools were voluntary-aided.'

'Admissions criteria that are not objective clear or fair continue to be used and there are clear opportunities for schools to select in and select out certain pupils on the basis of prior attainment or social background.'

http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/17352/

Secondary schools in London: admissions criteria and cream skimming

Anne West, Audrey Hind and Hazel Pennell (September 2003), LSE for RISE

'Overall, 27% of schools had admissions criteria related to religion; 94% of voluntary-aided schools had [religious] criteria, 17% of voluntary-controlled schools and 2% of foundation schools.

'If we focus specifically on voluntary-aided schools, we find that a minority (35%) made explicit reference in their admissions criteria to pupils from other faiths or another 'World Faith'.' [p9]

'More secondary schools in London than in the rest of England select pupils on the basis of religion (27% versus 11%); this is due to the fact that there are relatively more voluntary-aided schools in London than in England as a whole' [p12]

http://risetrust.org.uk/pdfs/london.pdf

Ethnic Segregation in England's Schools

Simon Burgess and Deborah Wilson of the Centre for Market and Public Organisation at the University of Bristol (August 2003)

'Our main findings are as follows. Levels of ethnic segregation in England's schools are high. In many local areas, over half the minority pupils would have to switch schools to produce an even spread of ethnic groups. Second, there is considerable variation across groups – segregation is higher for pupils of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin than for pupils with black Caribbean or black African heritage. Furthermore, in the former groups, segregation appears to be higher where they are (relatively) numerous, while for black pupils segregation is lower in areas where they are more numerous. Third, combining the dissimilarity and isolation indices, we identify areas of particular concern as scoring highly on both. For pupils of Asian ethnic origin, we find that these areas coincide almost exactly with the locations of the severe disorders in the summer of 2001. This is suggestive that either school segregation plays a direct role in the underlying causes of discontent (as suggested by the Cantle Report on the riots), or is related through a correlation with housing segregation.' [p3]

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cmpo/publications/papers/2003/wp86.pdf

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Secondary school admissions in England: Exploring the extent of overt and covert selection

West, A., and A. Hind. London: Research and Information on State Education Trust (March 2003)

'From this data we identify a set of non-grammar secondary schools that were using policies that were shortly to become inadmissible under the 2003 School Admission Code. These policies include:

(1) schools giving priority to pupils with some family connection to the school, for example, the relatives of employees, governors or former pupils (used by 11%);
(2) schools holding interviews of the parents and/or the pupil to determine religious adherence prior to admission to the school (2% interviewed pupils and 1% parents);
(3) schools using the academic record of the child from primary school or the academic record of an older sibling to determine priority (used by <1%).'

http://risetrust.org.uk/pdfs/admissions.pdf

The Ritchie Report

Oldham Independent Review Report (December 2001)

Positive effect of mixed schooling upon community cohesion and mutual understanding

The report commissioned by the Government, Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and the local police authority in the aftermath of the 2001 riots.

'Educational mixing: This is closely linked to residential, and in our view it is desirable in principle that as many schools as possible, should have mixed intake so that children growing up can learn one another's customs and cultural backgrounds and accept that stereotypes and racism are unacceptable.' (p7)

'Three faith secondary schools (Blue Coat, Crompton House and Our Lady's) admit no Muslims. This is divisive and in our view between 15% and 20% of places should be open to pupils of non-Christian backgrounds.' (p11)

http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2001/12/11/Oldhamindependentreview.pdf

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The Cantle Report

Community Cohesion: A Report by the Independent Review Team chaired by Ted Cantle (December 2001)

This much publicised report 2001 report was published after the riots in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley. One of its key recommendations was that faith schools reserve at least 25% of their places for those of different beliefs. (Pages 33, 34, 37 and 50)

http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2001/12/11/communitycohesionreport.pdf

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An analysis of the policies and practices of admission authorities in England

Williams, J. and Coldron, J. (September 2001)

On oversubscription – 'parents among whom the mother had a degree or higher qualification were three times more likely than those without any qualifications, and approximately twice as likely as those with lower qualifications, to say they knew how popular schools allocated; owner occupiers were approximately twice as likely to say they knew as were parents who were social renters; parents among whom the mother was of white ethnic origin were nearly twice as likely to say they knew as those with a mother of non-white ethnic origin.' [p10]

http://www.shu.ac.uk/_assets/pdf/ceir-berapaper20Jan0420DEF.pdf

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The Way Ahead: Church of England schools in the new millennium, aka The Dearing Report

Church Schools Review Group, Church of England (June 2001)

The Church of England's policy on its schools

'A recent survey of Voluntary Aided schools showed that rather more than three quarters of them had a religious affiliation in their admissions criteria, but only a third of them had a religious category as the first criterion. In at least half of schools there was no need to put their oversubscription criteria into practice.' [p19]

'When there have been expressions of concern by the [Diocesan] Chief Education Officers they have centred upon the issue of admissions policies. Some have said that the Code of Practice for Admissions (which requires admission policies to be clear and objective) is being contravened by some schools, with a degree of subjectivity being applied to selection, especially where interviews have been used to test religious affiliation. Another said that difficulties sometimes arise when the admission policy appears to discriminate against those for whom there is no realistic alternative, or appears to be used as a means of covert selection. Perhaps it would be a fair comment for us to add that such concerns could apply to all types of school when oversubscription occurs.' [p27]

'even in Church circles [an admissions] policy of total commitment to Christian families in the secondary school's wide catchment area may lead to some misgivings on the grounds that the school is not associating with its local community, and not giving an opportunity for non-Christians to experience what it is to learn in a Christian environment. These misgivings are the greater if the local children who do not get in are from disadvantaged sectors of the community whereas the pupils admitted from further away are from the better off districts. The misgivings can be especially strong if there is a racial dimension to this split. There is, therefore, both a community and an ethical reason, linked to the Church's position on poverty and inclusion as set out in paragraph 5.20, for offering a proportion of places for local children. We believe this can be an important factor in winning the hearts and minds of our prospective partners in discussing proposals for additional or expanded Church schools, as well as furthering the mission of the Church. In addition, it may further be argued that the life of the school would be enriched by the admission of some children from other faiths. We would therefore suggest that some places should be reserved for children of other faiths and of no faith. This could be achieved either through catchment or quota as appropriate to local circumstances.' [p29]

'In general, we recommend that new Voluntary Aided Church schools should aim to allocate 'open' and 'foundation' places, the ratio between the two reflecting the school's particular circumstances,

whilst ensuring strong distinctiveness and diversity. A degree of flexibility may be required in the allocation.' [p30]

https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1118777/way%20ahead%20-%20whole.pdf