



believing in children, learning together

Databank of Independent Evidence on Faith Schools (2010)

Introduction

This document has been produced to help researchers, journalists, campaigners and members of the public to find information about the policy implications of state funded faith schools and their practices. The aim is to bring together and summarise high quality research from reliable sources. With the exception of the 2009 poll commissioned by Accord from YouGov—itself a respected member of the British Polling Council—all evidence in the report is from sources independent of Accord and its members. The evidence is also recent - all of it dates from 2001 or later and the majority was produced in the last two years. Research and opinion polls have been organised in reverse chronological order below, followed by relevant parliamentary questions and statistics from the DCSF.

Topics covered include:

- The impact of religious admissions on social segregation (sometimes called “cream skimming” or social selection)
- Faith schools and school standards / attainment
- Faith schools and community cohesion
- The number of new faith schools
- Faith schools and homophobia
- Faith schools and recruitment
- The number of schools of different types, and their denominations

Although the scope of evidence surveyed here is wide and cannot easily be summarised, it repeatedly gives cause for concern about the way that many faith schools operate, and the consequences of this for wider society. The polls and surveys in the report demonstrate that many members of the public have similar concerns as Accord, which is convinced that only legislative change will bring about an education system free from religious discrimination.

If you would like any further information about the contents of the report or about faith schools policy more generally then please contact Paul Pettinger on 0207 462 4990 or by email to paul@accordcoalition.org.uk. The contents of the report will be updated occasionally, so if you have produced or are aware of any research that should be included in the future then please send it to the email address above.

Joint Committee on Human Rights: Report on the Equality Bill

The Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) is a prestigious group of MPs and peers from all parties. Its report on the Equality Bill (now the Equality Act 2010) argued that the rights of teachers and prospective pupils may not be adequately protected by laws on faith schools.

On teachers

The report argues that faith schools “may be in breach of” European employment law for the way that they discriminate against teachers. This is because – unlike other employers with a religious ethos – faith schools are able to restrict posts to coreligionists without needing to justify doing so on a case-by-case basis.

The report also questions whether changes made to the law in 2006 that extended the scope of religious discrimination permissible in certain posts in faith schools were legal under European law.

On school admissions

The report says that the current law allowing schools with a religious character to have religious admissions requirements “may be overdrawn” and that the government’s defence of this exemption is misguided. While the report does not argue that the whole principle of allowing schools to select by religion is wrong in law, it questions whether it is legal to allow faith schools to discriminate irrespective of whether doing so helps protect their religious character in reality.

The report makes the point that many Church of England schools already do not have religious admissions requirements and, in the opinion of the Church, this has not undermined their religious character. This fact undermines the case for religious admissions criteria in those schools where they remain.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt200910/jtselect/jtrights/73/73.pdf>

Strong schools for strong communities: Reviewing the impact of Church of England schools in promoting community cohesion (2009)

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 Accord Coalition argued that this research was flawed since the inspection criteria used by Ofsted take no account of school’s admissions policies or of the Religious Education provided in faith schools. Admissions and the RE syllabus are frequently considered among the most important issues around faith schools and community cohesion.

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/education/cocoresearch.pdf>

This paper by the Christian think-tank Theos and Christian educational charity the Stapleford Centre reviewed existing literature to assess whether the Christian ethos of schools had a measurable effect on their performance.

The researchers found some grounds to think that Christian schools have a positive impact, but cautioned that the evidence is “very limited” and that it is difficult to distinguish between the effect of schools and the impact that home and the family might have.

Trevor Cooling, the research supervisor for the report said:

“Given the high level of investment in Christian-ethos schools on the part of government, churches, religious organisations, and parents, the lack of available evidence is a cause of concern”.

The report’s main call is for more research to be done into the impact that Church schools have. The Accord Coalition argued that it is wrong to have a system which allows widespread discrimination if there is little proof that it is needed.

<http://campaigndirector.moodia.com/Client/Theos/Files/Mappingthefield.pdf>

YouGov Opinion Poll (2009)

“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”

<http://www.accordcoalition.org.uk/index.php/2009/07/22/57-think-faith-schools-undermine-cohesion/>

Can Competition Improve School Standards? The Case of Faith Schools in England (2009)

Dr Rebecca Allen and Dr Anna Vignoles,

Abstract

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.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2009/apr/23/religion-faithschools>

RISE and LSE: Secondary school admissions in England: Policy and practice (2009)

Prof. Anne West, Eleanor Barham and Audrey Hind

“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.”

- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/apr/18/faith-schools-standards-failing>
 - <http://www.risetrust.org.uk/Secondary.pdf>
-

Faith Schools: Admissions and Performance – A Report by the House of Commons Library (2009)

A review of the current evidence on the relationship between admissions and performance in faith schools.

“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/briefingpapers/commons/lib/research/briefings/snsg-04405.pdf>

Opinion Poll on Divisions in Britain, Commissioned by the EHRC (2009)

“Three in five (60%) of the general population and two in three (66%) of those in ethnic minority groups think religion is more divisive than race today.”

<http://uscmediareligion.org/?theGet&glD=601>

The Cattle Report into Community Cohesion in Blackburn with Darwen (Interim Findings) (2009)

The report states that although the cohesion initiatives undertaken in Blackburn's schools in accordance with the duty 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 have already made clear that they do not intend to change their policies. Without legislative change they cannot be compelled to.

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

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

http://www.thisislancashire.co.uk/news/4361331.No_policy_change_East_Lancashire_faith_schools/

http://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/blackburn/4351852.Cattle_report_Blackburn_a_divided_town/

Church going and social class, by Tearfund (2009)

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://www.tearfund.org/News/Press+releases/Church+is+where+the+heart+is.htm>

The Teachers' Report, by Stonewall (2009)

Direct quote from the report:

“Staff in secondary and primary faith schools are only half as likely to say that homophobic bullying is a serious problem in their schools compared to staff in non-faith schools. Two in five staff in faith schools say that homophobic bullying never occurs in their schools. However, gay pupils in faith schools are more likely to experience homophobic bullying than their peers in non-faith schools. Three quarters of young gay people who attend faith schools have experienced homophobic bullying (*The School Report*). Some teachers did explain that the religious ethos of their school or the beliefs of their pupils can be a barrier to tackling homophobia or addressing lesbian and gay issues in classrooms.”

<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/other/startdownload.asp?openType=forced&documentID=1695>

Faith Primary Schools: Better Schools or Better Pupils? (2009)

By Stephen Gibbons and Olmo Sliva, London School of Economics.

“ABSTRACT

We provide estimates for the effect of attending a Faith school on educational achievement using a census of primary school pupils in England. We argue that there are no credible instruments for Faith school attendance in this context. Instead, we partially control for selection into religious schooling by tracking pupils over time and comparing attainments of students who exhibit different levels of commitment to religious education through their choice of secondary school and residence. Using this approach, we find only a small advantage from Faith primary schooling, worth about 1 percentile on age-11 test scores.

<http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm/dp4089.pdf?abstractid=1369835&mirid=2>

Moreover, this is linked to autonomous admissions and governance arrangements, and not to religious character of the schools. We then go on to show that our estimates vary substantially across pupil subgroups that exhibit different levels of sorting on observable characteristics into Faith schooling, and provide bounds on what the ‘Faith school effect’ would be in the absence of sorting and selection. Pupils with a high degree of observable sorting into Faith schools have an age-11 test score advantage of up to 2.7 percentiles. On the other hand, pupils showing a very low degree of sorting on observables have zero or negative gains. **It appears that most of the apparent advantage of faith school education in England can be explained by differences between the pupils who attend these schools and those who do not.”**

23rd Annual Report of Senior Staff Appointments in Schools in England and Wales (2008)

By Education Data Surveys

“Church schools continued to face greater difficulties in recruiting a new head teacher than community schools. There was a small improvement amongst Roman Catholic schools in 2006/07 but a slight worsening of the situation for Church of England schools.”

Right to Divide? Faith Schools and Community Cohesion, a Runnymede Trust report (2008)

By Dr Rob Berkeley

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).

The recommendations of the report were:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. RE should be part of the core national curriculum

Provision for learning about religion is too often poor in schools without a religious character. Provision for learning about religions beyond that of the sponsoring faith in faith schools is also inadequate.

4. Faith schools should also serve the most disadvantaged

Despite histories based on challenging poverty and inequality, and high-level pronouncements that suggest a mission to serve the most disadvantaged in society, faith schools educate a disproportionately small number of young people at the lowest end of the socio-economic scale.

5. Faith schools must value all young people

People cherish facets of their identities beyond their faith, and these also need to be the focus of learning in faith schools – and valued within them. Similarly, religious identities should be more highly valued within schools that don't have a religious character.

6. If these recommendations are acted upon, faith should continue to play an important role in our education system

Faith schools should remain a significant and important part of our education system, offering diversity in the schooling system as a means of improving standards, offering choice to parents and developing effective responses to local, national and global challenges in education.

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

In Good Faith: The Report of the Executive's Task Group on Faith Schools, the National Union of Teachers (2008)

Direct quotes from the NUT position paper:

“Comprehensive education based on equality should enable the accommodation of beliefs within which faith groups and non-faith groups can attend happily.”

“In most cases the full civil rights of LGBT staff and pupils will not be inconsistent with the right to religious freedom. In cases where there is any conflict, however, the NUT unequivocally supports the right to race, gender and LGBT equality.”

“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.”

“The NUT has endorsed the recommendation of the IPPR research that no school should be its own admission authority.”

“In order to foster community cohesion it is vital that schools with a religious character are inclusive of all faiths (and none).”

“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. That does not mean to say that needs of communities with different faiths should not be provided for in within schools. In fact there is every argument for the curriculum and staffing to respond positively both to the diversity of faiths within schools and to the needs of those with no religious affiliation.”

“In dealing with sensitive issues especially those involving faith and education, an approach that emphasises pragmatism and establishing common understanding is essential. The needs and wishes of faith communities should be considered, including the diverse views within the NUT membership. The aim of achieving equity and community cohesion which takes into account the needs of religious groups

and those of no religious affiliation should be based on a reciprocal approach where all schools whatever their existing status play their part in achieving those aims. A convergence of “reasonable accommodation” from both the faith school and non-faith school sectors is essential.”

“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.”

“Reasonable accommodations should be made to meet the religious needs of all pupils. For many years now many schools have attempted to be inclusive of faith communities. Examples of such ‘reasonable accommodations’ include;

- provision of adequate private prayer space within schools;
- recognising religious holidays which embrace all faiths;
- flexible arrangements around school uniform to allow for religious and cultural differences;

and

- provision of suitable food in school canteens catering for all religious requirements.

All of the above actions can be seen as good practice and inclusive. The motivation behind schools making efforts to meet the religious and cultural wishes of parents and communities is often a desire to welcome diversity in the student/pupil population. Many schools wish to have an ethos that brings together children from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds whilst making accommodations to meet individual needs.”

“The Non-Statutory National Framework for RE and the requirements of local SACREs should apply equally to all schools and subject to the same inspection arrangements.”

“The issue of collective worship is in need of re-examining, particularly its requirement within the 1988 Education Reform Act to be ‘wholly or mainly of a Christian character’ in order to eliminate the need for withdrawal from school assemblies. Inclusive school assemblies must replace ‘collective worship’, with separate optional prayers and worship for those that require them.”

“In addition, schools must make provision for religious education to promote education about religion and learning from religion and to encourage respect and mutual understanding. Impartial, fair and balanced teaching about all major worldviews, including nonreligious ones, in RE, provide all children an understanding of the range of beliefs found in a multicultural society and the values shared by most religions and ethical worldviews.”

“No child should be exempt from receiving Sex and Relationships Education (SRE). This is an essential area of the curriculum. The teaching of Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) can occur within single-sex classes in order to allow teachers to cater for specific needs during SRE sessions. In addition SRE should be taught in a values framework.”

“Equal employment rights within schools are paramount to social cohesion. Schools must not discriminate against potential employees based on their religious or lack of religious affiliations, their sexual orientation, gender identity or their marital or civil partnership status. Schools should also take positive action to tackle any under representation of diverse groups.”

<http://www.teachers.org.uk/resources/pdf/InGoodFaith.pdf>

Prof. West and Dr Allen's evidence to Children Schools and Families Select Committee (2008)

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.”

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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Faith Schools Commission Report, by the Sea of Faith Network (2008)

Summary of Recommendations

1. 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.
2. We recommend that the requirement for compulsory school worship be abolished. All schools should be encouraged to hold regular assemblies promoting the values of the school and the social, moral, cultural and spiritual development of students. Faith-based schools would be free to include an act of collective worship as at present. This would make for a clear demarcation between non-faith-based and faith-based schools.
3. We recommend that the current system whereby the syllabus for religious education in state schools is set by local advisory councils (SACREs) be abolished and replaced by making RE a National Curriculum subject.

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

The School Report, by Stonewall (2007)

Direct quotes from the report:

“Almost two thirds of young gay people at secondary school, 150,000 pupils, have experienced homophobic bullying. In faith schools, that figure rises to three in four.”

“Lesbian and gay pupils who attend faith schools are significantly less likely (23 per cent) to tell someone than lesbian and gay pupils who attend non-faith schools. Only four per cent of gay pupils felt able to tell their local religious leaders about bullying.”

<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/other/startdownload.asp?openType=forced&documentID=1704>

School Admissions Report: Fair choice for parents and pupils, by the IPPR (2007)

By Sarah Tough and Richard Brookes

“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.
- Non-religious schools which are their own admissions authorities are **six times more likely to be highly unrepresentative** of their surrounding area than community schools for whom 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.”

<https://www.ippr.org.uk/pressreleases/?id=2728>

<https://www.ippr.org.uk/members/download.asp?f=/ecomm/files/schooladmissions.pdf&a=skip>

ICM survey: head teachers opposed to expansion of faith schools and academies (2006)

“The latest findings of the Headspace survey of primary and secondary headteachers, carried out by Education Guardian and EdComs, and administered by ICM, shows that many heads are deeply concerned about the effects of faith schools on the education system.. **Of the 801 headteachers who replied to the questionnaire - of whom 28% actually work in religious schools - 47% felt there should be either fewer or no faith schools**, while 32% felt there should be no change. Only 9% agreed with the government’s policy of increasing the number of faith schools.”

“Heads in the survey fear the long-term consequences of a faith school policy. Only 25% believe the presence of schools with a religious character creates more religious tolerance in society; 18% reckon they make no difference, while 45% think they actively contribute to less tolerance.”

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2006/dec/05/newschools.schools>

ICM faith schools poll (2005)

64% of people agree that “the government should not be funding faith schools of any kind”

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/aug/23/schools.faithschools>

SMF: School Admissions: A Report of the Social Market Foundation Commission (2004)

Edited by Moussa Haddad,

“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://smf.co.uk/assets/files/publications/SchoolAdmissionsCommission.pdf>

Young People in Britain: The Attitudes and Experiences of 12 to 19 Year, a survey commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (2003)

“64% of young people not religious”

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR564.pdf>

Oldham Independent Review Report 2001 (The Richie Report)

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>

The Cattle Report (2001)

Community Cohesion: A Report by the Independent Review Team chaired by Ted Cattle

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>

Parliamentary Questions

1. Question from Simon Hughes (Bermondsey, Lib Dem) on admissions to faith schools (27 Apr 2009)

Summary

Liberal Democrat Simon Hughes said that where there were lots of schools in a community that were ‘effectively their own admission authorities’, such as church schools where church attenders had priority, it was hard to give ‘a fair opportunity for all pupils to have access to all secondary schools’.

Responding, Children, Young People and Families Minister Sarah McCarthy-Fry said that all schools were obliged to abide by the admissions code, and said that with the work of the schools adjudicator – who was now entitled to look into all objections – would allow the Government to review the code and make improvements.

Contents

Simon Hughes (North Southwark and Bermondsey) (LD): Ministers have tried hard to amend the policy

to make it better, but is it not still the truth that in local authorities where many or all schools are their own admission authorities it is sometimes very difficult to have a fair and flat playing field for applications? For example, in areas where there are a lot of Church schools, people who go to church get a far better deal than people who do not. What will Ministers do to give all pupils a fair opportunity to have access to all secondary schools?

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: The first thing we have done is to make sure that all schools, whether they are their own admissions authority or part of the local authority, act in accordance with the current code. They have to abide by the admissions code. Through that mechanism and also in the fact that we are now allowing the schools adjudicator to look into objections from wherever they come, we can continue to update the code and ensure that it is fair.

2. Question from Adrian Sanders (Torbay, Lib Dem) on disadvantaged pupils in faith schools

Wed, 25 February 09 | House of Commons - Written Answer

Summary

The following question was answered on 25 February 2009.

Contents

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what the proportion of students in receipt of free school meals is in (a) religious and (b) non-religious schools. [253493]

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: The requested information is shown in the table:

Primary, secondary and special schools(1) : school meal arrangements by denomination of school(2-)
As at January 2008: England

Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

Religious schools(3) 11.5

Other schools 15.7

(1) Includes middle schools as deemed, CTCs, academies and non-maintained special schools. Excludes hospital schools.(2) Includes pupils with sole and dual main registration. Includes boarders.(3) Includes schools of all denominations and religions.

3. Question from Ashok Kumar (Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, Labour) on the number of new faith schools designated (12 Jan 2009)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many schools he and his predecessors have designated as being of a religious character in each of the last 10 years. [245852]

Jim Knight: The following table shows the number of brand new maintained faith schools that have opened in each of the last 10 years. All faith schools are designated as having a religious character under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Religious Character of schools (Designation Procedure) Regulations 1998.

Number of new faith schools

1998	3
1999	6
2000	3
2001	6
2002	10
2003	10
2004	14
2005	12
2006	7
2007	7
2008	6

DCSF Statistics on the status and religious character of religious schools 2009

Table 2b: Primary and Secondary Schools^{1,2}: Number of Schools by Their Status and Religious Character
Year: January 2009 (Final)
Coverage: England

	Primary Schools					Secondary Schools ²						
	Community	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Foundation	Total	Community	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Foundation	CTCs	Academies	Total
Total	10,425	3,715	2,522	402	17,064	1,860	545	103	717	3	133	3,361
No Religious Character	10,425	13	36	359	10,833	1,860	39	48	705	3	96	2,751
Church of England	0	1,947	2,433	42	4,422	0	133	49	9	0	14	205
Roman Catholic	0	1,685	0	0	1,685	0	331	0	1	0	2	334
Methodist	0	2	24	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Christian Faith ⁴	0	29	29	1	59	0	26	6	2	0	21	55
Jewish	0	29	0	0	29	0	9	0	0	0	0	9
Muslim	0	6	0	0	6	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
Sikh	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

Source: School Census and Edubase

Table 2c: Primary and Secondary Schools^{1,2}: Number (Headcount) of Pupils by the Status and Religious Character of Their
Year: January 2009 (Final)
Coverage: England

	Primary Schools					Secondary Schools ²						
	Community	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Foundation	Total	Community	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Foundation	CTCs	Academies	Total
Total	2,756,500	786,900	412,490	119,000	4,074,890	1,753,280	503,940	103,420	785,450	3,390	121,620	3,271,090
No Religious Character	2,756,500	1,950	6,430	109,100	2,873,980	1,753,280	39,960	58,170	773,080	3,390	91,010	2,718,880
Church of England	0	361,360	397,030	9,700	768,080	0	119,080	39,020	9,190	0	10,240	177,530
Roman Catholic	0	405,010	0	0	405,010	0	312,570	0	1,310	0	1,610	315,490
Methodist	0	410	4,030	0	4,440	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Christian Faith ⁴	0	6,140	5,000	200	11,340	0	22,780	6,240	1,860	0	18,760	49,640
Jewish	0	9,040	0	0	9,040	0	6,420	0	0	0	0	6,420
Muslim	0	1,930	0	0	1,930	0	2,300	0	0	0	0	2,300
Sikh	0	650	0	0	650	0	590	0	0	0	0	590
Other	0	430	0	0	430	0	250	0	0	0	0	250

Source: School Census and Edubase

1. Includes middle schools as deemed
2. Includes Academies and CTCs.
3. Excludes dually registered pupils.
4. Includes schools of mixed denomination or other Christian faith

Pupil numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. There may be discrepancies between the sum of constituent items and

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000843/SFR08_2009_NationalTables.xls