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RESPONSE TO THE INTEGRATED COMMUNITIES GREEN PAPER CONSULTATION:

'General Overview' questions

The questions in this section relate to the Introduction: Building Integrated Communities.

1. We define integrated communities as communities where people - whatever their background - live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Do you agree with our definition?

Yes. Accord also welcomes that the strategy paper's introduction affirms integration is not assimilation and that integrated communities celebrate religious and cultural difference. Far from being a threat to diversity and difference, integration creates (among many other positive benefits) the conditions where diversity and difference is better accepted in society. Demands that minority ethnic groups assimilate are, thankfully, no longer part of mainstream public debate. However, anxieties about integration policies leading to assimilation still linger among some minority group members, so we believe these are useful clarifications to have made so early on.

Although poor integration can undoubtedly pose a threat to social harmony and security, we welcome that the introduction frames improved integration as 'a two way street' and a mutually enriching experience. Improving integration will require greater trust and stronger relationships between some groups and public officials. Strategies such as the Prevent agenda have been advanced in a way that makes some groups feel unnecessarily persecuted and under suspicion. The tone of the Green Paper does not make this mistake, which we believe is a more helpful foundation to build from.

2. We believe that the varied nature and scale of integration challenges means that tailored local plans and interventions are needed to tackle the issues specific to particular places. Do you agree?

Yes, although with caveats. Existing residential segregation and diversity in Britain means that different areas often face very different challenges. Some local variability in how integration is advanced therefore makes sense, as does the strategy paper proposing to select a group of five pilot areas to further explore different approaches and learn lessons.

Britain however suffers from government having taken a laissez faire approach to integration for too long. For integration to be taken more seriously requires consistent leadership to achieve broader cultural change. For this to happen we must avoid a situation where some public officials continue to think integration is something that only people in some other areas need to take seriously. We are concerned that the Green Paper is proposing a too localised approach that risks sustaining complacency about the need for integration to be taken more seriously right across government. **We therefore urge the Government to pursue, alongside targeted local measures, strong national approaches.**

Pursuing strong national approaches will help engender a sense that improved integration is a common endeavour. This will help lessen particular groups feeling victimised or stigmatised and will make it harder for such accusations to be made by those who would try and resist improved integration. We believe consistent and sustained national integration measures are especially important when it comes to schools.

Most importantly this is because - as we set out further below - school life is the setting that can have the greatest impact on integration. We also think it is important and appropriate given that the state funded school system has become more fragmented and local authorities' role in education has become more marginalised due to the process of academisation. Some bodies that may have previously been looked upon to take a lead, like local authorities, are not as influential as they once were.

3. Do you have any examples of successful approaches to encourage integration that you wish to highlight, particularly approaches which have been subject to evaluation?

The introduction (and chapter 3) rightly already mentions 'contact theory' (that contact between group members can serve as one of the best ways to improve relations between groups in society) and lists school segregation as one of the main issues affecting integration and which need to be tackled. We wish to provide further evidence in support of the Government making this a top priority.

Evidence base showing the positive impacts of ethnic mixing in schools and danger of segregation

Promoting ethnic mixing at state funded schools is the easiest way that as a liberal democracy we can help boost integration in a diverse society. We do not wish to undermine the promotion of greater residential mixing or mixing in workplaces. These should be important long term ambitions, and segregation in schools and other places often reflects pre-existing residential segregation. However, promoting mixing in schools should be a major short to medium term government objective as it can be achieved more quickly and easily. It also ensures mixing during childhood, which is the most important phase of life for people to experience it.

The evidence base around how ethnically mixed schooling can make a major contribution in creating the conditions where trust, mutual understanding and integration in society can further grow has become more compelling in recent years. For example, among the key findings of 'Social Capital, Diversity and Education Policy' (2006) by Professor Irene Bruegel of the London South Bank University was 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 ... There was some evidence that parents learned to respect people from other backgrounds as a result of their children's experiences in mixed schools.' (p2)¹

In the paper 'Identities in Transition: A Longitudinal Study of Immigrant Children' (2008) by Brown, Rutland & Watters from the Universities of Sussex and Kent found that:

'... 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 [that are religiously homogenous], since such policies are likely to lead to reduced ethnic diversity in schools' (p9).²

The study 'Do Ethnically Mixed Classrooms Promote Inclusive Attitudes Towards Immigrants Everywhere?' by Germ Janmaat (2015) 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. It found school mixing was especially beneficial in improving attitudes amongst indigenous communities. In conclusion the author stated that:

'On the whole, the results of this study are welcome news for the advocates of desegregation, as they suggest that ethnically mixed schools are well positioned to promote inclusive out-group attitudes among native students ... in sum, this study suggests that policy makers should consider ethnic mixing as a strategy to promote more inclusive out-group attitudes among the native majority.' (p819-820)³

Meanwhile in the 2014 study 'Contextual effect of positive intergroup contact on outgroup prejudice', Christa and Schmid et al. assessed evidence from 'across seven large-scale surveys' finding that:

'Contact does not merely change attitudes on a microscale ... Rather, contact also affects prejudice on a macrolevel, whereby people are influenced by the behavior of others in their social context. Prior research that has prioritized the interpersonal nature of contact has ignored its potential widespread impact. Even individuals who have no direct intergroup contact experience can benefit from living in mixed settings ... These findings demonstrate the policy potential of contact at the context level, because it can be implemented via macrolevel contexts such as mixed schools, neighborhoods, and workplaces.' (p3999-4000)⁴

¹ Available at <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/families/publications/SCDiversityEdu28.8.06.pdf>.

² Available at <http://accordcoalition.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Identities-in-Transition.-A-Longitudinal-Study-of-Immigrant-Children.pdf>.

³ 'Abstract available at <http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/21124/>.

⁴ Abstract at <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/11/3996>. Copy also available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260486355_Contextual_effect_of_positive_intergroup_contact_on_outgroup_prejudice.

'Are minority status children's cross-ethnic friendships beneficial in a multiethnic context?' (2014) by Sabahat C. Bagci Adam Rutland, Madoka Kumashiro, Peter K. Smith and Herbert Blumberg of The University of London surveyed two hundred and forty seven pupils of South Asian ancestry in London.⁵ It found that while friendship quality, rather than quantity, had direct positive association with children's psychological well-being, a higher quantity of cross-ethnic friendships moderated the negative effects of perceived ethnic discrimination. Earlier research had identified a positive contribution to wider community relations from ethnically mixed schools, whereas this paper emphasised direct benefits for individual pupils.

In 2017 the Department for Education commissioned study 'Diversity and Social Cohesion in Mixed and Segregated Secondary Schools in Oldham' was undertaken by a group of University of Oxford academics and assessed the extent to which mixing in schools can 'improve attitudes towards outgroups and intergroup relations'.⁶ The report's key findings included that:

- 'Attitudes were more positive and, as would be expected, mixing was more frequent in mixed than segregated schools'. (p12)
- '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' (p12)
- 'Attitudes of pupils who mix with other backgrounds were more positive compared to those who remain with their own ethnicities' (p14)

More recently, the study 'Inter-ethnic relations of teenagers in England's schools: the role of school and neighbourhood ethnic composition' (2018) by Burgess and Platt, for the Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration at the University College London, provided statistical analysis of the positive impact from ethnic mixing.⁷ To demonstrate the relationship, the authors noted that the recorded difference in warmth Black British teenage school children felt towards members of their own ethnic group and towards White British pupils was closed by 12% for each ten percentage points increase in the share of White pupils in their school. For White British pupils, the gap between the warmth they felt towards members of their own ethnic group versus Black British pupils was closed by 14 per cent for each ten percentage points increase in the share of Black British pupils in their school.

The study concluded that 'such changes endorse the role of schools in developing positive contact through mixing' (p27) and noted that 'in towns and cities with substantial ethnic minority populations, we have shown that a highly segregated school system will generate a lot of pupils with negative orientations towards other groups.' (p28)

Dangers from segregation were highlighted in 'The Cattle Report' (2001), which investigated causes of race riots in Oldham and other towns in Northern England that year. It identified religious and ethnic segregation in local schools to be one of the underlying causes and cited

⁵ Available at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bjdp.12028/abstract;jsessionid=F7D2E9268E1233DAF9AB578D91B4967C.f02t01>.

⁶ Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/634118/Diversity_and_Social_Cohesion_in_Oldham_schools.pdf.

⁷ Available at http://www.cream-migration.org/publ_uploads/CDP_07_18.pdf.

some faith schools as helping to perpetuate such division via ‘... operating discriminatory policies where religious affiliations protect cultural and ethnic divisions’.⁸

Further, the 2001 ‘Oldham Independent Review’ (otherwise known as the ‘Ritchie Report’) was commissioned by the Home Office, Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and the local police authority after race riots in the town.⁹ It found that ‘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)

Observations that ethnically mixed schools help integration and that segregation should be avoided are not new. In 1830, Dr James Doyle, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, said before a Committee of the UK Parliament that:

‘I do not see how any man, wishing well to the public peace, and who looks to Ireland as his country, can think that peace can ever be permanently established, or the prosperity of the country ever well secured, if children are separated at the commencement of life on account of their religious opinions. I do not know any measure which would prepare the way for a better feeling in Ireland than uniting children at an early age, and bringing them up in the same school, leading them to commune with one another, and to form those little intimacies and friendships, which often subsist through life. Children thus united know and love each other, as children brought up together always will; and to separate them is, I think, to destroy some of the finest feelings in the breasts [hearts] of men.’¹⁰

While Bishop Doyle's gender biased vocabulary has dated, it is hard to conclude that relations on the island of Ireland today would not be stronger and its history since more peaceful had his prescient comments been heeded. Over 95% of pupils in Northern Ireland today are still educated in either Roman Catholic or notionally protestant schools. The message from history and academia is clear - friendships among young people cross all social barriers when they grow up and learn together.

We believe ethnic and religious mixing and the avoidance of segregation in schools should be very actively promoted by central government as a public good. It is a very important way that we should help leave more secure foundations for future generations in our increasingly diverse society. We strongly agree with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration’s observation in its 2017 report ‘INTEGRATION NOT DEMONISATION’ (which the strategy paper cites as one of its influences) that:

‘Whilst ensuring that young people meet and mix with others from different cultures at school arguably represents our best hope of building a Britain in which we are truly capable

⁸ Available at <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2001/12/11/communitycohesionreport.pdf>.

⁹ Available at <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2001/12/11/Oldhamindependentreview.pdf>

¹⁰ Bishop Doyle's comments are recorded on p427 of the House of Commons publication 'Selection of Reports and Papers of the House of Commons: Poor in Ireland, Volume 46' (1836). A free version of the publication can be found at https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=5SIDAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

of looking beyond our differences, our country's school system too often reinforces and replicates division between communities.' (p43)¹¹

'Chapter 3: Education and Young People' questions

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 3: Education and Young People.

7. The Green Paper proposes measures to ensure that all children and young people are prepared for life in modern Britain and have the opportunity for meaningful social mixing with those from different backgrounds. Do you agree with this approach?

The significance of faith school admissions is not treated seriously enough

Overall, we welcome the paper's proposed measures, but do not believe they go nearly far enough in regards to promoting ethnic mixing and reducing segregation in the school system. Although segregation is unpopular, Britain suffers from a prevailing culture that nonetheless considers it 'okay' for state funded schools to be seen as belonging to and serving certain groups. Any serious attempt to promote greater school mixing must change this.

Part of achieving such a shift in attitude and practice must include tackling religiously discriminatory oversubscription criteria at faith schools. The admission policies of these schools should be of the highest concern because, firstly, of their sheer number. As the strategy paper notes, faith schools comprise over 34% of state funded schools in England, and religiously selective schools make the intake of nearby schools more segregated (even if those schools take seriously admitting pupils from all sections of their local community). Secondly, tackling religious selection of pupils should also be prioritised because it is found to lead to division on the grounds of socio-economic background and, increasingly, race.

Detailed research conducted by the Fair Admissions Campaign in 2013 found that faith secondary schools which operated a fully religiously selective admission policy admitted 30.43% fewer pupils entitled to free school meals than if they admitted local children. In contrast, faith schools that did not have religiously selective oversubscription criteria admitted only 1.40% fewer such children.¹²

In 2014 Connelly, Sullivan and Jerrim of the Centre for Longitudinal Studies at the Institute of Education published 'Primary and secondary education and poverty review' which looked at the evidence surrounding the nature and causes of disadvantage experienced by children in school age education.¹³ They concluded that 'faith schools generally serve pupils from more advantaged social backgrounds and children from disadvantaged families are less likely to

¹¹ Available at <https://the-challenge.org/uploads/documents/APPG-Integration-not-Demonisation-Report.pdf>.

¹² Further details on the findings are available under the drop down table in the 'How socio-economically selective are different types of secondary school?' section under the 'Overall averages' tab at <http://fairadmissions.org.uk/map/>.

¹³ Available at

<http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/librarymedia/documents/Primary%20and%20secondary%20education%20and%20poverty%20review%20August%202014.pdf>.

attend a faith school even if they come from a religious family. Therefore, faith schools are likely to exacerbate educational inequalities.' (p34/ 35)

Children and families of a South Asian background are currently especially disadvantaged by religiously selective faith schools because the vast majority of faith schools are Christian (over 98%), while the very large majority of people of such heritage are not.¹⁴ The disadvantage is so great that the English school system is systemically and indirectly racially discriminatory towards people of South Asian heritage. This phenomenon is explored in greater detail in the Accord Coalition's December 2015 report 'Racial discrimination by religiously selective faith schools: a worsening problem'.¹⁵

We welcome that the Government has recently announced it will continue with its policy of limiting faith free schools from not selecting more than half of their pupils by faith, but are very disappointed that it will be facilitating the opening of new voluntary aided faith schools to get around its own cap.¹⁶ Faith schools do not need to select by faith to uphold their ethos.

The UK is unusual in allowing any discrimination in admissions at state-funded faith schools.¹⁷ It also has numerous positive examples of inclusive faith schools to draw from. Stand out ones include the 2015 winner of the annual Accord Inclusivity Award - the Walthamstow Academy - which operates non-religiously discriminatory pupils admissions and staff employment policies and also has a highly inclusive curriculum.¹⁸ The Government should be building on our domestic consensus around the undesirability of schools segregating children and promoting good practice, not helping groups exploit routes around its existing social cohesion measures.

In this light, we are concerned that the strategy paper unpromptedly celebrates the academic success of faith schools and stresses that many admit a socio-economically diverse intake (p27), when the weight of academic evidence reveals the superior exam results achieved at faith schools can be largely or wholly accounted for by the ability and socially exclusive profile of their

¹⁴ Data from the 2011 Census breaks down religious affiliation by Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi ethnicities and shows that of the almost 3 million people in England and Wales recorded as having such an ethnicity, only 159,664 (5.3%) were counted as Christian. See

http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/DC2201EW/view/2092957703?rows=c_ethpuk11&cols=c_relpuk11.

¹⁵ Available at <http://accordcoalition.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Racial-discrimination-by-religiously-selective-faith-schools-a-worsening-problem.-FAC-Accord.-Dec-2015.pdf>.

¹⁶ Department for Education, 'Schools that work for everyone Government consultation response' (2018). Available from

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/706243/Schools_that_work_for_everyone-Government_consultation_response.pdf.

¹⁷ A 2012 study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) showed that the UK was one of only a very few number of OECD member countries that permit religious selection at state schools (see table 2.3 p15 at http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/school-choice-and-equity_5k9fq23507vc-en).

Accord is aware that in Germany a small number of private religious schools receive state funds and can religiously select. In the Netherlands, private faith schools that receive state funding can loosely require pupils and parents to support the mission/vision of the school. But Accord is not aware of any other countries. Countries with strong religious traditions, such as Italy, Spain, the USA and Poland, do not have religious discrimination in admissions to any state-funded schools

¹⁸ The annual Inclusivity Award rewards schools that work hardest at advancing equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and fostering good relations between people, and especially on the grounds of religion and ethnicity (details at <http://accordcoalition.org.uk/inclusivity-award-2018/>). The Christian Walthamstow Academy's inclusive curriculum included providing non-instructional RE that covered a range of world faiths and Humanism and, in several parts of the curriculum, tackling issues of racial discrimination and promoting LGBT equality.

pupils.¹⁹ Government should not be picking sides in a religious argument and perpetuating myths either for or against faith schools, but focusing on how to best advance integration. The evident bias brings into question its impartiality and commitment.

Existing proposals do not go far enough

The main ways that the Green Paper states it will promote mixing in schools is by promoting twinning arrangements in areas of high segregation and working with admission authorities in its local pilot area. On their own these measures are insufficient.

Twinning arrangements provide a bureaucratic and costly way of reproducing what is already freely and much more effectively achieved in mixed schools. In these settings children learn, live and grow with people from different backgrounds. They allow for meaningful cross-ethnic relationships to form and flourish, which provides very solid foundations for integration. While well meaning, twinning arrangements are superficial and, if not careful, will serve as a distraction from pursuing more challenging but much more effective measures.

We welcome efforts to be made with admission authorities in the pilot areas to ensure their schools better reflect the profile of their local community. We hope examples of good practice can be garnered and that it provides useful learning experiences. As this work in the pilot areas may highlight however, simply working with admission authorities to promote greater mixing is not going to be enough.

Admission authorities can face various conflicts of interest in becoming more mixed. Such moves might be resisted due to pressure from some parents, by (in the case of faith schools) misguided religious authorities, or by teachers and governors concerned that it could change the social and ability profile of pupils admitted (and so undermine a school's exam performance). This is especially a risk at religiously selective schools where, as noted above, selection by faith produces a more socially exclusive intake.

¹⁹ It has long been established that the stronger exam performance at faith schools is explained by the social and ability profile of their pupils:

- 'Can Competition Improve School Standards? The Case of Faith Schools in England' (2009) by Dr Rebecca Allen and Dr Anna Vignoles found '... 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'. (Abstract)
- 'Faith Schools: Admissions and Performance' (2009) by the House of Commons Library reviewed evidence on the relationship between admissions and performance in faith schools and found that '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'. (p2)
- 'Faith Primary Schools: Better Schools or Better Pupils?' (2009) by Professor Stephen Gibbons and Dr Olmo Silva concluded that 'results show that pupils progress faster in Faith primary schools, but all of this advantage is explained by sorting into Faith schools according to pre-existing characteristics and preferences ... 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'. (Abstract)
- The Christian think tank Theos acknowledged in their 2013 report 'More than an Educated Guess: Assessing the evidence on faith schools' that faith school's strong academic performances was '... primarily the outcome of selection processes.' (p41)
- The Education Policy Institute's 2016 report 'Faith Schools, Pupil Performance and Social Selection' found that the difference in attainment between faith and non-faith schools 'is largely eliminated after controlling for prior attainment and pupil characteristics'. (p7)

Recommendations

1. There is a need for strategic overview of admission policies and we suggest **new admission authorities be created for all state funded schools in a given area**. It is not clear what public policy outcomes are being served by allowing state funded schools to decide who they educate. The new admission authority could be the local authority, the regional school commissioner or another body.

Making a public body the admission authority of faith schools need not be a problem. A substantial proportion of state funded faith schools are voluntary controlled and already have their admissions policy determined by their local authority responsible for education. Although we do not advocate it, any religious selection that takes place in a faith school's oversubscription policy could still occur in accordance with guidance and the agreement of the school's relevant religious authority.

2. Given the role religiously selective schools have in making the school system more segregated, and making segregation seem normal and valid, we strongly recommend that the Government does not actively support the creation of new 100% religiously selective faith schools. Instead it should **extend its 50% religious discrimination in admissions cap to other types of state funded faith school**.

The Government has come under a great deal of misguided lobbying to drop the cap and allow fully selective faith schools. The topic has become entwined with the perceived self interest of some faith school providers groups, which we think this is a very regrettable situation. It creates an unhealthy environment in which to form public policy and - perhaps intentionally - makes it harder to forge a consensus. However, the government must recognise that many arguments in defence of faith discrimination in admissions are spurious.

For example, the Government has come under a great deal of pressure from domestic Catholic authorities to scrap the 50% cap because they state that they cannot operate schools that are inhibited in the extent to which they give privileged access to Catholic children. But this is despite most state funded Catholic schools in other developed countries not selecting pupils by faith;²⁰ most private Catholic schools in England not doing so either;²¹ and two Catholic free schools having been opened before Catholic authorities decided in 2013 to formally oppose the free school programme.²²²³ In November 2016 the Catholic International Education Office issued an inclusive and non-discriminatory mission statement for Catholic schools which defined them as:

²⁰ See footnote 16.

²¹ Humanists UK (September 9th 2016) 'Exposed: Catholic hypocrisy in calls for end to restrictions on religious selection in schools'. Available at <https://humanism.org.uk/2016/09/09/exposed-catholic-hypocrisy-in-calls-for-end-to-restrictions-on-religious-selection-in-schools/>.

²² Two former private Catholic schools joined the English state funded system by becoming Free Schools - St Michael's Catholic Secondary School in Cornwall and St Anthony's School in Gloucestershire. Trinity Academy in Brixton, South London, is not formally aligned with Catholic authorities but none-the-less operates as a 'Catholic ethos' free school.

²³ Confirmation of the boycott by the Catholic Bishops' Conference was provided on the Church of England and Wales' website November 2013. Please see the story 'Statement: Admissions to Catholic Schools', available at <http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Home/News/2013/School-Admissions>. The boycott came some three years after the free schools programme was launched.

*'a non-discriminatory school, open to all ... in conclusion, the Catholic school is anything but a communitarian school. It is open to all ... It must constantly promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue, if it is to continue its mission. This is in any case a motto of the OIEC, all over the world.'*²⁴ (p3-4)

These inclusive practices by Catholic educators highlight how skewed and sometimes misleading debate in Britain has become.

The 50% cap has worked well. Although many religiously selective schools are not so oversubscribed that a 50% cap would make them less selective, the cap sends an important signal to those schools which are subject to it that they should be bringing people from different religious backgrounds together. It is found to make faith schools especially inclusive of non-white pupils.²⁵ The government should build on and extend its 50% cap, in the best interests of integration.

Religious selection in admissions is not only out of step with international practice and damaging to community cohesion, it is also unpopular. A ComRes poll we commissioned in 2016 suggested it was opposed by 72% of the public, to 15% who supported it. It was also opposed by a majority of people of all major world faiths and Christian denominations in Britain.²⁶

3. If state funded schools are to be shared spaces that are open and accessible to families and young people from different backgrounds then they need to provide an inclusive curriculum. This should especially be the case in regards to the provision of school assemblies (which are valuable opportunities for schools to forge shared values) and Religious Education (which should broaden pupil's horizons about people from different religious backgrounds). However, it often is not and these two areas suffer from having been excluded from all major reviews of the curriculum in recent times. **We therefore recommend that the framework around school assemblies and Religious Education be reformed to be more religiously inclusive.**

Assemblies provide a school with a useful opportunity to advance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, but are one of the most overlooked aspects of the timetable. They have no subject association to act as their cheerleader, and assemblies are held back by repressive and outdated mandatory worship laws that require every state maintained school to hold a daily act of worship, which some schools find unworkable.

The provision of assemblies is declining. In 2004 Ofsted stopped asking its inspectors to consider Collective Worship, citing at the time that 76% of secondary schools were non-compliant with the law - either not having worship every day or not having worship at all.²⁷ A 2011 ComRes opinion poll commissioned by the BBC found only 28% of children took part in a daily act of

²⁴ Available at <http://accordcoalition.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2016-11-23-OIEC-paper-on-Catholic-schools.pdf>.

²⁵ 2016 findings from the charity Humanists UK suggests that if the 50% cap was rolled out across all state-funded secondary schools in England then hundreds of thousands of non-white pupils would gain access to Christian schools when they have not had access before. This tallies with Accord's December 2015 report 'Racial discrimination by religiously selective faith schools: a worsening problem' (see footnote 14). Humanist UK's analysis can be found in 'Ethnic diversity in religious Free Schools' at <https://humanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016-09-15-FINAL-Ethnic-diversity-in-religious-Free-Schools.pdf>.

²⁶ Available at http://accordcoalition.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/OmFaith-Schools_Q2.pdf.

²⁷ Curtis, P 'End daily worship in schools, says Ofsted head'. *The Guardian*, 11th June 2004. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2004/jun/11/schools.uk>.

Collective Worship at their school, while 60% of adults (to 36%) thought the Collective Worship laws should not be enforced.²⁸

It is perhaps not unsurprising that such a law is widely ignored, but this is an unhealthy position for a democracy, and we currently have some schools implementing repressive laws and others simply not providing assemblies. Anxiety about reforming the worship laws has meant the subject has not been reformed, but this longstanding inaction has simply allowed the provision of assemblies to wither further.

The feasibility of schools operating without traditional compulsory worship requirements has been demonstrated by a remarkably innovative approach pursued by Brent Council. Local authorities responsible for education in England and Wales can issue local community schools with a determination that frees them from providing daily Christian worship. The power was created to allow schools with a largely non-Christian intake to provide assemblies aligned to a different world faith which would be more appropriate to the background of pupils.

Brent Council however is open to all of its schools applying for a determination that permits the Collective Worship they provide to draw on material and practice that holds special meaning from different religions and non-religious views. Its determinations effectively permit schools to provide multi-religion and belief assemblies and operate within the law. The Council won the 2017 Accord Inclusivity Award for its approach.²⁹

Compulsory worship is out of step with mainstream values and theologically incoherent. As the then Chair of the Church of England's Board of Education, The Rt Revd John Pritchard, said while commenting on the Collective Worship laws in a BBC interview in 2014, 'worship is by definition a voluntary activity'.³⁰ We urge the government to **repeal the requirement for state funded schools to hold acts of Collective Worship and to replace them with guidelines for assemblies that draw upon a range of sources, but which are genuinely appropriate for all pupils and staff, regardless of their religion or beliefs.** In so doing the Government would help rescue an opportunity for more pupils to communally explore and build shared values, in a way that is workable and respectful.

While the standard of its school assemblies has been and is deteriorating, Britain is something of a world leader in the provision of comparative Religious Education (RE) in schools, but its provision in non-faith schools is declining. A September 2017 report by the RE Council of England and Wales and the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education revealed that a large proportion of state funded secondary schools in England are struggling to meet legal requirements on the teaching of RE. The report found that 25% of secondary schools did not provide a weekly RE lesson, rising in academies and free schools to 34% for Key Stage 3 pupils and 44% for Key Stage 4 pupils.³¹

²⁸ 'Worship in School Study' available at http://accordcoalition.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/BBC_Religion_Worship_in_schools_results_plus_regions_July11.pdf.

²⁹ Details on Brent's approach are set out in p4 of the Accord Coalition's 'Inclusive SACREs: findings from the 2017 Accord Inclusivity Award' (2017). Published by the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education at <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-665-inclusive-sacres-findings-from-the-2017-accord-inclusivity-award.pdf>.

³⁰ Accord reported on The Rt Revd John Pritchard's interview at <http://accordcoalition.org.uk/2014/07/14/bishop-of-oxford-calls-for-reform-of-collective-worship/>.

³¹ Available at <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/SOTN%20RE%202017%20Report%20web%20v4.pdf>.

Meanwhile, most state funded faith schools determine their own RE and are not required to teach about other religions and beliefs. Importantly, unlike other subjects, Ofsted does not inspect the teaching or content of RE in faith schools.

It is vital that children and young people receive a good quality education about the broad range of beliefs in society, partly for general knowledge and as a pathway to good citizenship. One way to ensure this is to **guarantee pupils a minimum curriculum entitlement for RE**. A wider review of RE by government is long overdue - like assemblies, it has been repeatedly been put in the 'a bit too difficult box', but to its long term detriment. Introducing some kind of a flexible national RE entitlement would help ensure all pupils receive good quality RE and learn about beliefs of 'others'. In this instance, faith schools could still provide instructional/ confessional RE or extra focus about its own faith or denomination, but in addition to a core entitlement to an education about the major belief systems in Britain today.

Fortunately there is a broad consensus about what RE in schools should provide. Paralleling the Government's last National Curriculum review (which ignored RE), the RE Council of England and Wales conducted its own two year long review into RE, culminating in October 2013 with the publication of a new subject framework.³² Its framework built upon 'The non-statutory national framework for Religious Education' (2004), which was produced for the Secretary of State for Education, with the support of England's main RE professional organisations and religion and belief groups.³³ Both documents offer widely accepted and popular templates about what primary and secondary schools should cover in RE.

We urge the government to **take seriously the final report into improving RE by the expert Commission on Religious Education**, which is expected to be published towards the end of 2018.³⁴ The report is looking into the legal, education and policy frameworks for RE in England and Wales and is being produced by a distinguished and diverse range of commissioners. Its findings should give Ministers a lot of impetus to act.

8. The Green Paper sets out proposals to support parents with their choice of out-of-school education settings. Do you agree with this approach?

We reserve judgment until more detailed plans are presented but, broadly, yes. We very much welcome the paper's focus on out-of-school education and especially that the paper commits to:

1. producing guidance about how public bodies can help ensure children attending unregistered independent schools and out of school settings are safe and are receiving a suitable education
2. reviewing Ofsted's powers in relation to unregistered schools
3. states it is essential that local authorities can identify children who are missing education or who may be neglected or taught to hate and be intolerant.

There is a long standing problem around unregistered schools. Some public bodies have overlooked or ignored the schools (including at times central government), while others have

³² Available at <http://resubjectreview.recouncil.org.uk/re-review-report>.

³³ Available at <http://www.mmiweb.org.uk/publications/re/NSNF.pdf>.

³⁴ The Commission's website can be found at <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/>.

sought to take action and found they lacked necessary powers. It is to this Government's credit that its Green Paper is talking about better advising and empowering public bodies in this area.

Similarly, successive Governments have not paid enough attention to guaranteeing rights of home educated children. The state has duties to all individuals, including children. It is vital home educated children are not neglected, including by being educated in illegal schools. The state should also ensure children's rights under the United Nation's Convention on the Right of the Child are being upheld. These include the right of children in education to 'seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds' (Article 13) and to be prepared for 'responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups' (Article 29).³⁵ We look forward to more details about the Government's plans.

'Chapter 8: Measuring Success' questions

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 8: Measuring Success.

14. The Green Paper proposes core integration measures for national and local government to focus on. Do you agree these are the right measures?

Yes. We specialise on schools policy and welcome the indicators related to schools that have been listed (namely 'Type and contexts of social mixing among pupils in segregated schools'; 'Better promotion of integration in schools (e.g. through curriculum and schools admissions policies)' and 'Better regulation of out of school educational settings'). We are concerned however that schools and other relevant public bodies lack information to measure problems and progress. We also do not think Ofsted has sufficient powers to fulfil the role it is being expected to undertake.

Neighbourhood level information on the profile of school pupils needed

Until 2010, the Department for Education produced annual data showing the number of children attending a state funded school by local Middle Super Output Areas (MSOAs), and further broke the data down by children's ethnicity, their entitlement to free school meals (a key government measure of poverty) and whether they attended a primary or secondary school. MSOAs are geographical areas that have a minimum size of 5,000 and an average of 7,500 residents.

We think this data was very valuable. The Government still collects data on the ethnicity and free school meal entitlement of pupils at state funded schools, but without neighbourhood level data to compare it with it is much harder for admission authorities, inspectors and policy makers to access the extent to which a school's intake reflects its local community. Having this data would further assist schools in adhering to their Public Sector Equality Duty. We therefore **urge the Department to regularly collect neighbourhood level information on the number, ethnicity and free school meal entitlement of school children.**

³⁵ The United Nations. 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (1989). Available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>.

Broader remit for Ofsted

In addition to committing to review Ofsted's powers in relation to unregistered schools, the Green Paper states that the Government will ensure 1) school 'inspectors will expect pupils to have an understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within school and further afield; and to show interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity' (p32) and 2) that there will be '... strong coverage of schools' promotion of fundamental British values and integration within Ofsted new inspection arrangements from September 2019' (p33). We welcome these commitments, but urge the Government to be bold.

In 2011 Ofsted had its own duty to inspect upon how schools promoted community cohesion removed. Ofsted's criteria for inspecting community cohesion were weak, as they ignored some areas where a school can have most impact upon cohesion, such as through its pupil admissions policy and RE curriculum (an error the strategy paper thankfully does not repeat).³⁶ It was understandable therefore that Ofsted's duty to inspect on the promotion of cohesion should be reformed, but scraping it was a backwards move.

Ofsted's community cohesion inspections were the primary means through which government tried to ensure schools met their own duty to promote community cohesion, and the change has made schools' duty far less significant. More generally, the information that Ofsted produces is an important way teachers, governors and public bodies can assess a school's progress. We therefore urge **that new and more tightly defined inspection measures regarding both integration and equality issues are included in Ofsted's revised criteria.**

Under existing arrangements, Ofsted inspectors are barred from specifically inspecting denominational RE or Collective Worship in faith schools and may only attend them as part of a general assessment of a school's contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of their pupils. Instead faith schools appoint their own inspectors for these areas. Given the number of faith schools and importance of RE and assemblies to boosting understanding between those from difference backgrounds, **we recommend that the Government enable Ofsted to inspect RE and Collective Worship in faith schools.**

Giving Ofsted this ability need not prevent faith schools being inspected by denominational or any other inspectors. We suggest this change is enacted as part of a wider change to the framework of RE following publication of the Commission on Religious Education forthcoming report.

Concluding remarks - a need for leadership

Overall, we find the strategy paper very encouraging. It reflects a genuine departure from the past and suggests the current Government could be the first to take integration seriously. We welcome the strategy's emphasis on schools, but are disappointed by its timidity in this area.

The Green Paper suggests the Government is still succumbing to misguided special pleading from some faith school providers, which risks significantly undermining attempts to ensure we do not leave future generations with a legacy of division. We appreciate debate in recent years

³⁶ Such as through its proposed performance indicators 'Better promotion of integration in schools (e.g. through curriculum and schools admissions policies)'.

about the role of religion and belief in education provides complexity for forming public policy. However, the Government should focus on what works and serving the common good.

As Accord has highlighted, there are positive examples to work from. They include international example regarding the inappropriateness of state funded faith schools selecting pupils by faith, the success of its 50% discrimination cap at faith free schools, and domestic consensus regarding the undesirability of compulsory worship and value of teaching pupils about a broad range of beliefs in society. We hope these, along with the importance of integration and weight of professional and public opinion, will give the Government further courage. If our schools are not inclusive and diverse then society cannot be.

For completeness, Accord's full list of recommendations are as follows:

1. Continue to advance integration as a mutually enriching experience and a common project that needs to be taken seriously by everyone
2. Pursue, alongside targeted local measures, strong national approaches
3. In so doing, extend the Government's 50% religious discrimination in admissions cap to all other types of state funded faith school (and do not help open schools that can be even more religiously discriminatory)
4. Reform the school admissions system and create new admission authorities for all state funded schools in their given area
5. Take seriously the forthcoming report into improving RE by the Commission on Religious Education and reform the legal framework around school assemblies and RE, so helping schools provide a more religiously inclusive curriculum and thus make it more likely that they will become more mixed environments
6. This should include repealing compulsory worship requirements, issuing guidance on providing inclusive assemblies and giving pupils a minimum RE curriculum entitlement
7. Press ahead with greater regulation of out-of-school education
8. Collect neighbourhood level information on the number, ethnicity and free school meal entitlement of school children, to allow the extent to which a school's intake reflects its local community to be better assessed
9. Ensure more meaningful Ofsted school inspection measures regarding both integration and equality
10. Enable Ofsted to freely inspect RE and Collective Worship in faith schools

About the Accord Coalition

Accord is a campaign coalition of civil society organisations, launched in 2008, that includes religious groups, humanists, teachers, trade unionists, educationalists and civil rights activists. Although Accord's supporters derive inspiration for their values from different sources, they are united in working together to ensure state funded schools respect and uphold civil rights and promote social cohesion, especially on the grounds of religion and belief. More information on its work and growing list of members and supporters can be found at <http://accordcoalition.org.uk/>.