



SCHOOLS UNITED

Ending the divide between
independent and state



Anthony Seldon
Researcher: Claudia Hupkau

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PREFACE: THE NEXT PHASE OF SCHOOL REFORM 2015–2030

During the years 2000–2015, two politicians dominated school policy: Labour’s Andrew Adonis, who powerfully shaped policy, initially from his role as a key adviser to Tony Blair within Number 10, and later as a Minister of State for Education. Second, the Conservative Michael Gove, who has been Education Secretary in the Coalition government since its formation in 2010. Although from different parties, both figures agreed on the need to raise standards and rigour in British schools, to focus particular attention on academic standards and opportunities for young people from the least advantaged backgrounds, and to drive reform from the centre, while at the same time granting increased autonomy to schools in the form of state-funded ‘academies’. The trend to greater autonomy has been increased since 2010 with the formation of ‘free schools’. Standards across the state sector have improved considerably since 2000, and much greater discipline and professionalism have been introduced into teaching and into the leadership of schools.

This Adonis-Gove agenda needs to be completed fully, but the direction of travel is clear. What is now needed is a new wave of reforms, which builds on this first phase, and which offers young people a more rounded education, enhances social mobility, ends the divide between state and independent schools, engages parents far more fully into their children’s education, and ensures all young people have much richer opportunities, regardless of family background. The proposals outlined here will widen access to private education, bring new money into the state system, incentivise state schools to perform better, enhance social mobility, boost the readiness of young people for work in twenty first century jobs and reduce the domination of places at the top state schools by children from well off parents. Ferocious attention to examination results, as well as to inspection, had the unintended consequence

(some might quibble at the word 'unintended') of narrowing down the range of educational provision by state schools. The gap in educational attainment between state and independent schools conceals a much wider gulf in all-round education, which explains why independent school alumni succeed so much better in careers than their state school counterparts.

Largely untouched in the period 2000–15 were the following: the status of grammar and independent schools; the marginalisation of parents, despite the clear evidence that school standards are enhanced by their active participation; social mobility, which arguably declined over the last 15 years; the status of teaching as a serious profession; and a clear sense of purpose of the qualities and character school leavers should possess. Despite formidable efforts to improve the standards in state schools in Britain, the gap between low performing and high performing state schools, as well as between the state sector overall and independent schools, did not narrow. Schools that merit it need to be given far more genuine independence, and the quality of the teaching profession, the most important factor in school improvement, needs to be raised to an altogether new level. The time is ripe for this second wave of reform.



1. A UNIQUELY BRITISH PROBLEM

Many countries have private, fee-paying sectors in education, but none have such a powerfully entrenched system of independent schools, with many of the greatest names internationally, which have had such a major impact on the perpetuation of social advantage, as Britain. Elites in all countries seek to grant advantages to their children, and in countries such as China, this educational advantage for the elites is perpetuated entirely amongst state run schools. The problem is thus not uniquely one of independent schools. Nor in Britain is the problem exclusively one of independent schools, as powerful middle classes dominate top state schools. The very success of independent schools, and their tenacity in outshining the competition, even in inauspicious political and economic climates, has created great problems for school-level education. By 2010, independent schools had few friends left amongst academics, commentators and virtually no friends in high places in politics.¹ Report after report, showing the advantage that an independent school education provides, has meant that most now would agree with the columnist David Aaronovich that the schools offer 'an immoral advantage that is getting ever more exclusive.'²

The existence of an independent sector in Britain nevertheless offers the country many benefits, including an outstanding quality of education against which other schools can be measured, and a supply of outstanding leavers who play a major role in public life and in the professions. The existence of a strong sector of education independent of government is a powerful guarantee of liberty and independent standards of excellence. But there are significant problems with maintaining the *status quo* in Britain, including the failure to make the most of talented young people who do not come from well off homes, and a perpetuation of social

1 An exception was the Daily Telegraph and Sunday Telegraph. The latter carried an editorial entitled 'Private schools deserve political praise' on 17.02.13.

2 David Aaronovich, 'The guilty secret behind a private education', The Times, 31.01.13.

disadvantage that weakens the unity of the country. Any solution must thus seek to preserve what is best about the independent sector in education while ensuring that talented young people from non-privileged backgrounds have far greater access to top quality schooling. The much praised right to choose must not be limited to the few who are well-off, but should be extended to the least fortunate in our society.

This chapter examines the extent of the problem in Britain, covering territory which has now become familiar. There are considerable inequalities between the state and independent school sectors in Britain. These differences start at the resources available to schools – expenditure per pupil, the number and qualifications of teachers employed in each sector, the facilities available to students and capital expenditure to maintain and improve these facilities. But inequalities reflected in the schooling system reach far beyond school up into university and work life, where independent school pupils are still considerably more likely than their peers from state schools to land a place at one of the top universities, and continue to be over-represented in the most prestigious and influential professions in this country.

THE FUNDING GAP: FINANCIAL AND HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE STATE AND PRIVATE SECTOR

Independent schools spend considerably more money on their pupils than the state sector. In the school year 2011–12, the median total expenditure per pupil at Local Authority maintained secondary schools was £5,502, and £6,058 for secondary academies.³ Although comparable data for the independent sector is not available, the average fees paid per year for a non-boarding place at independent boarding schools was about £27,612 and £12,153 for

3 Department for Education, Income and expenditure in academies in England: 2011/12, National Tables, SFR24/2013, 2013.

day schools.⁴ The difference between the state and private sector in terms of capital expenditure for the maintenance of buildings and for the construction of new facilities is equally stark. As the Independent School Council (ISC) census of 2013 reveals, capital expenditure by member schools totalled £771.1 million in 2012 for a total of 508,601 pupils, which is £1,516 per pupil. This compares to a total of £4 billion that will be made available to local authorities and academies for the year 2013–2014.⁵ Considering that in 2013 about 7.5 million pupils attended state maintained schools,⁶ the capital spending allocated by the government for the next year corresponds to about £530 per pupil, again only about a third of what is spent in the private sector.

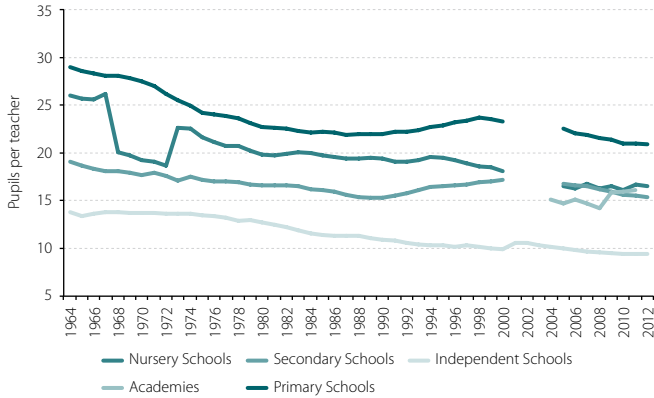
The higher level of financial resources available in private schools is reflected in lower pupil-teacher ratios in the independent sector, and generally higher levels of qualifications of teachers. Even though over the past five decades pupil teacher ratios have generally been falling across all sectors (see Figure 1.1), the average pupil teacher ratio at state secondary schools was approximately 16 to 1, while there were only about 10 pupils per teacher at independent schools in the same year. Academies, which started out with relatively lower pupil teacher ratios in the first years of their emergence are now approximately at the same level as other state schools.

4 ISC. ISC Census 2013. www.isc.co.uk/research/Publications/annual-census, 2013.

5 Department for Education, Capital funding allocations announced on 1 March, accessed 12 January 2014, available at: 2013 www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schoolscapital/a00222251/capital-fund-allocations-mar-13.

6 Department for Education, Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2013, National Tables, SFR21/2013, Table 2a, 2013.

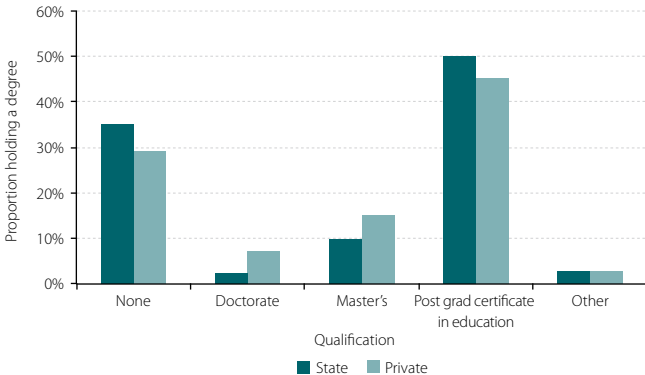
Figure 1.1: Pupil-teacher ratios at state and private schools in England 1964–2012



Source: Data for 1965–2000: Department for Education and Employment.⁷ Data from 2001 for state schools: SFR15/2013, Table 17, available at www.gov.uk. Data from 2001–2012 for independent schools: Independent Schools Council census, available at www.isc.co.uk/research/Publications/annual-census.

Because they are able to pay more, independent schools are able to attract generally better qualified and more specialist teachers. Figure 1.2 shows the distribution of the types of higher degrees held by secondary teachers in the UK.

Figure 1.2: Higher degrees held by secondary teachers, state and private sector, Jan–Mar 2013

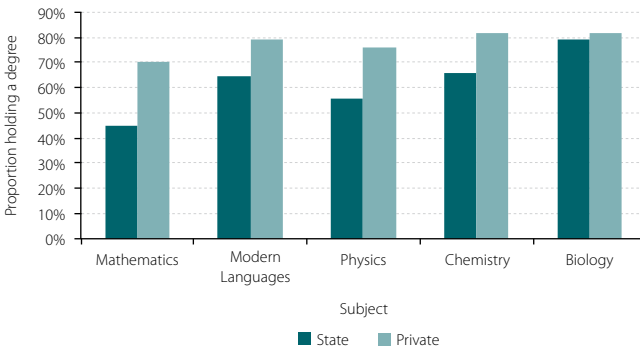


Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Jan–Mar 2013

⁷ Department for Education and Employment. Statistics of education: Class sizes and pupil teacher ratios in England. Issue No. 12/00, Department for Education and Employment, 2000.

Teachers in private schools are more likely to hold a higher degree, and among those that do hold a degree, they are more likely to hold doctorates or master's degrees. The latest Labour Force Survey Data for the UK shows that 7 per cent of private secondary teacher held a doctorate, while only 2.25 per cent of those in state schools held this level of qualification.

Figure 1.3: Share of secondary teachers with a specialist degree in England, by subject and sector.



Source: For state funded schools: Department of Education, School Workforce Census, SFR 15/2013, Table 13, 2012. For private sector schools: ISC Teacher Survey, 2010.8

Specialist teachers are a crucial factor for pupil achievement in key subjects including mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. Figure 1.3 reveals that the independent sector has a larger share of teachers with a degree in the subject they teach than the maintained sector. As of 2007, about 70 per cent of mathematics teachers in ISC schools had a degree in maths, and this number was 76 and 82 for physics and chemistry, respectively. In contrast, according to figures from 2012, only about 45 per cent of maths teachers in the maintained sector held a mathematics degree, and the figure was just over 50 per cent and 66 per cent for physics and chemistry, respectively. A reason why the private sector is able to attract more specialist and academically higher qualified teachers

is better pay, as well as the less stringent requirements of specific teacher qualifications such as Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

THE MIDDLE-CLASS ADVANTAGE: ACCESSING THE BEST SCHOOLS, OBTAINING BETTER RESULTS

Affluent parents clearly have an advantage when it comes to getting the best education for their children by opting for the private sector. But children from middle class parents also have an edge when it comes to accessing the most desirable state funded schools. Recent research by the Sutton Trust has found that in England's top 500 comprehensive schools, measured by the share of pupils with 5 GCSEs at A*–C, the share of pupils on free school meals (a measure of social disadvantage) is half that of the national average, namely 7.6 per cent versus 16.5 per cent.⁹ Parents are willing to pay a significant house price premium when it comes to moving into the catchment area of top state schools. Recent research from Lloyds Bank shows that the premium paid by parents to live close to top state schools is 12 per cent on average. What has long been believed anecdotally has now been shown to be true by a series of rigorous academic studies into the subject by the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) at the London School of Economics. Comparing prices of neighbouring houses on either side of local education authority (LEA) boundaries, Gibbons et al.¹⁰ for instance find that house prices in areas where top of the league table state primary schools are located are 12 per cent higher than in areas where the worst performing schools are located. Among the top comprehensive schools, faith schools are overrepresented: While they only account for 19 per cent of secondary schools nationally, they represent 33 per cent of the top 500 secondary comprehensives.¹¹

9 Sutton Trust. *Selective comprehensives: The social composition of top comprehensive schools*. Technical report, Sutton Trust, 2013.

10 S. Gibbons, S. Machin, and O. Silva. *Valuing school quality using boundary discontinuities*. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 2012.

11 *Ibid.*

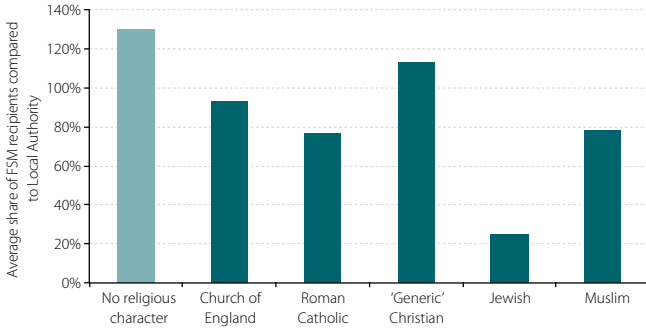
Parents are willing to go to great lengths when it comes to securing the best state school places for their children. Private tutoring is one of the ways in which parents prepare their children for entry into selective state schools or GCSE exams and A-levels. While all parents want the best for their children, the better-off are much more likely to be able to pay for private tuition, the cost of which averages £22 per hour in 2013 according to a recent survey.¹² The Sutton Trust found that 31% of students from better off families had received some private tuition, compared to just 15% from less well-off families.¹³ Less affluent parents make significant sacrifices to ensure that their children don't fall behind, but the poorest households will simply not be able to afford the ever-rising fees for extra help, increasing the gap between rich and poor children. Recent findings suggest that increasing numbers are turning to having their children baptised to gain places at sought after church schools.¹⁴ Children from affluent backgrounds also dominate many popular religious schools as has been shown by the Fair Admissions Campaign. Figure 1.4 shows the average share of pupils eligible for free school meals at schools of different religious denominations as compared to non-religious schools in the Local Authority. Roman Catholic schools, for instance, have 23 per cent less students on free school meals (FSM) than would be expected if there were no bias in the distribution of students across religious and non-religious schools. Non-religious schools on the other hand on average have 30 per cent more students on FSM than would be expected.

12 Survey by First Tutors, results are available at: www.firsttutors.com/uk/news/first-tutors-new-data-reveals-the-national-average-cost-for-private-tuition, 2013.

13 Sutton Trust, Press Release: Londoners most likely to pay for extra tuition as demand remains high, available at: www.suttontrust.com/news/news/londoners-most-likely-to-pay-for-extra-tuition-as-demand/, 6 September 2013.

14 G. Paton & C. Turner, 'Surge in Late Baptisms to get into top Catholic Schools', *Daily Telegraph*, 03 January 2013.

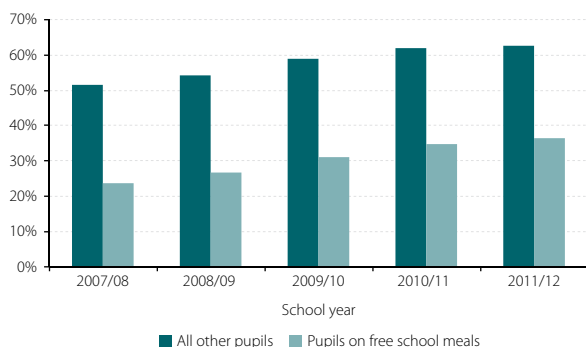
Figure 1.4: Average share of pupils eligible for free school meals at religious and non-religious secondary schools compared to Local Authority, 2012



Source: Fair Admissions Campaign, available at: <http://fairadmissions.org.uk/schools-map/>.

Access to better schools and more resources for learning manifest themselves in a sustained achievement gap between children from affluent and poor backgrounds. As Figure 1.5 shows, while the share of students achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*–C level has risen generally over the past five years, the gap between children on free school meals and the rest of pupils has remained stable at around 26 percentage points, with only about 36 per cent on free school meals reaching this level, compared to 62.6 per cent of those not on free school meals.

Figure 1.5: Per cent of pupils achieving 5+ A*–C grades including English & mathematics GCSEs – by free school meal eligibility



Source: Department for Education, GCSE and equivalent attainment by pupil characteristics in England: 2011–2012, Table 1, 2013. Notes:

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL GRIP ON THE MOST SELECTIVE UNIVERSITIES

Despite representing only some seven per cent of school pupils in the UK, students from independent schools are considerably over-represented in higher education, in particular at the most selective universities. The top independent schools typically have 90% of their students going on to higher education (HE).¹⁵ In contrast, of the 341,200 state-educated students who entered an A-level in the 2009/10 school year in England, only 164,640, that is 48 per cent, went onto HE in the UK. Only 8.4 per cent made it to Russell Group universities, and a meagre 0.7 per cent made it to Oxford or Cambridge.¹⁶

¹⁵ ISC. ISC Census 2012. www.isc.co.uk/research/Publications/annual-census, 2012.

¹⁶ Department for Education. Destinations of key stage 4 and key stage 5 pupils by characteristics: academic year 2010 to 2011. Underlying data KS5: SFR31/2013. Department for Education, www.gov.uk, July 2013.

Table 1.1: Top schools in access to higher education 2007–2009

Top 10 Schools in 'Progression to Higher Education'				
School Name	School Type	Exam points per student	% of pupils accepted at university	% of pupils accepted at selective universities
Bury Grammar School For Girls	IND	1005	99	72
Colchester County High School For Girls	SEL	1094	98	71
Magdalen College School, Oxford	IND	1055	97	91
The Kingsley School	IND	792	97	42
Queen Elizabeth's School, Barnet	SEL	1089	97	87
Norwich School	IND	954	96	75
Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College	SFC	934	96	60
Haberdashers' Aske's School For Girls, Elstree	IND	944	96	89
King Henry VIII School, Coventry	IND	966	96	64
Whitgift School, South Croydon	IND	1019	96	77
Top 10 Schools 'Progression to selective Higher Education'				
School Name	School Type	Exam points per student	% of pupils accepted at university	% of pupils accepted at selective universities
North London Collegiate School	IND	1099	96	92
Withington Girls' School	IND	1208	96	92
Magdalen College School, Oxford	IND	1055	97	91
Haberdashers' Aske's School For Girls, Elstree	IND	944	96	89
Guildford High School	IND	1014	96	88
Queen Elizabeth's School, Barnet	SEL	1089	97	87

King Edward VI High School For Girls	IND	1258	93	85
Merchant Taylors' School, Northwood	IND	1112	95	85
Haberdashers' Askes's Boys ' School	IND	947	92	85
King's College School	IND	1132	92	85

Source: Sutton Trust, HE destinations tables, available at: www.suttontrust.com/our-work/research/item/degrees-of-success-he-destinations-tables, 2011.

Notes: IND=Independent school, SEL=Selective state school.

Even those state schools that produce exceptional results, principally grammar schools and sixth form colleges, do not keep up with independent schools with respect to access to the UK's top universities. The upper grouping of Table 1.1 labelled 'Top 10 Schools in Progression to Higher Education' shows those schools most successful in securing HE places, while the bottom grouping of Table 1.1 focuses on access to the most selective universities for the years 2007 to 2009. Both are clearly dominated by independent schools. Striking is also that despite often having better results than independent schools, state schools are less successful at placing their students at selective universities even where they gain better grades.¹⁷ The independent Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls, for instance, had 150 average exam points less than Colchester County High School for Girls, a selective grammar school, but the former managed to place 89 per cent of its students in selective universities, while the latter only placed 71 per cent in the most selective universities.¹⁸

17 The most selective universities referred to in the text are the Sutton Trust 30 universities, a grouping of highly selective universities in England, Scotland and Wales. It includes Bath, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Imperial College, King's College London, Lancaster, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, LSE, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Oxford, Reading, Royal Holloway, London, Sheffield, Southampton, St Andrews, Strathclyde, Surrey, UCL, Warwick, York.

18 Exam Points per Student is the average point scores for A-levels or equivalent qualifications for pupils published annually by the Department for Education in school performance tables.

According to the Sutton Trust, 100 elite schools, accounting for only three per cent of schools with sixth forms in the UK (containing 84 independent schools and 16 grammar schools, secured almost a third of all admissions to Oxford and Cambridge between 2007 and 2009).¹⁹

Some of the success at gaining places at Oxford and Cambridge and other selective universities by independent school pupils can be attributed to the fact that the latter are more likely than state-educated pupils to apply. A recent inquiry by *The Guardian*, however, has shown that when state-educated pupils apply, private school students with the same A-level grades as state-educated pupils were 9 per cent more likely to be offered a place.²⁰

Social mobility is clearly handicapped by the low numbers of students from non-privileged backgrounds who gain access to highly selective universities. A recent Office for Fair Access (OFFA) report showed that the most advantaged students were on average about seven times more likely to enter one of the most selective institutions than the most disadvantaged.²¹ Among the 261,390 young first time university entrants in 2011/12 in England, 88.5 per cent came from state schools. At Oxford and Cambridge, the percentage admitted from state schools was only 58 per cent. Overall, only 10.2 per cent came from 'low participation' neighbourhoods, and this figure was only 3.1 per cent for Oxford (120 students) and 2.5 per cent for Cambridge (65 students).²² The advantage of independent school students has even *grown* over the past decade. While independent school entrants to LSE represented 26.2 per cent in 2002, this figure stood at 30.9 per cent

19 Sutton Trust. Degrees of Success – University Chances by Individual School. Sutton Trust, July 2011.

20 K. Parel and R. Adams. Oxford university data shows private school A-level pupils' advantage. *The Guardian*, www.guardian.co.uk, accessed: 3.9.2013, 15 August, 2013.

21 See Figure 6, p. 103, OFFA. What more can be done to widen access to highly selective universities?, OFFA, 2010.

22 HESA. Participation of under-represented groups in higher education: young full-time first degree entrants 2011/12. Table T1a. Higher Education Statistics Agency, www.hesa.ac.uk, 2013.

in 2011. In 2011/12 overall, 25.4 per cent of Russell Group entrants came from independent schools, compared to 24.4 per cent in 2002/03. Research by the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC), the dominant group within the ISC, supports this overall picture.²³

FROM TOP UNIVERSITIES TO TOP JOBS

In the last three decades, pupils from independent schools represented some 7% of all students, with little change in this proportion over time.²⁴ Despite their relatively small numbers, alumni from independent schools have a tight grip on positions of political, economic, social and sporting influence. Figure 1.6 shows the share of privately educated individuals in some of the top professions in England. Nine of the 12 Supreme Court judges in office as of October 2013 had been educated in independent schools.²⁵ According to research by the Sutton Trust, every seven out of ten judges and barristers were educated in the independent sector, and the figure was six out of ten for members of the House of Lords. Among solicitors, CEOs, top journalists and medics considered in the Sutton Trust study, a majority enjoyed private education, with more than half having attended an independent school.²⁶ While in most professions the share of privately educated individuals has declined since the 1980's and 1990's, other data suggests that particularly in the law profession the share is rising again.²⁷

23 HMC Weekly Newsletter w/e 25th October, 2013.

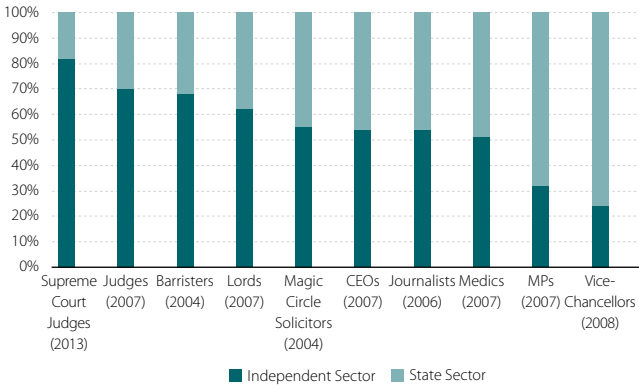
24 Department for Education. Statistics: school and pupil numbers. National tables: SFR21/2013. Department for Education, www.gov.uk, July 2013 and F. Green, S. Machin, R. Murphy, and Y. Zhu. The changing economic advantage from private schools. *Economica*, 79:658–679, 2011.

25 The Supreme Court. Biographies of the Justices. www.supremecourt.gov.uk, Date accessed: 10.09.2013, September 2013.

26 Sutton Trust. The Educational Backgrounds of Leading Lawyers, Journalists, Vice Chancellors, Politicians, Medics and Chief Executives: The Sutton Trust Submission to the Milburn Commission on Access to the Professions. Sutton Trust, 2009.

27 *Ibid.*

Figure 1.6: Individuals in top positions by educational background



Source: Sutton Trust (2009) and Supreme Court (2013). Number in parenthesis represents the year to which data is referring. All numbers but those for Supreme Court judges are based on a sample.

Individuals who attended independent school earn significantly more than their non-independently educated counterparts. Independent school alumni born in 1970 enjoy an income premium of about 34 per cent compared to their state-educated counterparts, and this difference has been *widening* over time. Even allowing for family background, and ability at early childhood, the earnings premium remains 20 per cent, indicating that there is an advantage above and beyond what is driven by the privileged socio-economic background of the individuals who attend independent schools.²⁸

CONCLUSION

The evidence above would have been even more revealing if it had taken into account regions, race and gender, all of which reveal a blatant squandering of talent and potential. The evidence presented above suggests that the divide in educational and economic opportunities between the rich and the poor has

28 F. Green, S. Machin, R. Murphy, and Y. Zhu. The changing economic advantage from private schools. *Economica*, 79:658–679, 2011.

been widening rather than declining over the past decades. Alan Milburn has produced a series of reports which has supported the findings of the Sutton Trust and other bodies to show conclusively that the existing policies of the 2000–15 period are no longer tenable.²⁹ From educational attainment, access to selective higher education, top positions and rewarding jobs, independent school pupils (as well as students from middle-class households in state schools) manage to outperform the rest. This is palpably unfair from an equality of opportunity perspective in a democracy; it is also hugely inefficient from the perspective of the optimal use of human talent in Britain.

29 Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, *State of the Nation 2013: social mobility and child poverty in Great Britain*, 2013. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-nation-2013.

2. A HISTORY OF ATTEMPTS TO ADDRESS THE INDEPENDENT/STATE SCHOOL DIVIDE

Given the glaring injustices in the hundred years since Britain became a democracy in 1918, the question arises why it has been allowed to continue? Why in particular did a Labour Party committed to equality of opportunity, and which has been in power for 33 of the last 100 years, not do more to limit or eliminate the power or indeed the very existence of the independent sector? Why equally did Conservative governments, concerned to maximise the competitiveness of the UK, not do more to address the squandering of talent by not doing more to encourage state schools to reach the same standards of excellence as independent schools? In fact, many attempts have been made over the last hundred years to address these very issues.

Broadly, four types of solutions have been proposed in the last one hundred years.

- Retain. Leaving the *status quo* is broadly the solution of the traditional right.
- Reform. Devising ways to make independent schools more 'open' to non privileged young people has been the solution offered by the moderate left and moderate right.
- Remove. Abolishing the independent schools altogether. This is the prescription of the far left.
- Replace. Replacing independent schools by ones which are 'needs blind' has been the solution favoured by the progressive centre.

POST FIRST WORLD WAR

Before 1914, the existence of a powerful private sector in education was not considered a problem. The nineteenth century had seen the sector flourish, with independent schools opening in virtually every

year of Victoria's reign.³⁰ Increasingly concerns came to be raised about these schools. The Clarendon Commission, established in 1861, was critical of the running of nine of the leading schools, and a subsequent act of Parliament reformed them, introducing boards of governors with administrative control. Many of the schools moved away from their narrow Classics curriculum and began to embrace the humanities and even science. In 1869, the Headmasters' Conference (HMC) was formed for the heads of these schools, and by 1914 it had 114 members. With alumni of the schools dominant at all levels of government, together with this new voice of their own, the sector had an unrivalled position of power and influence.³¹

The First World War changed everything. For the first time, men of all backgrounds fought side by side in close contact and women were involved in large numbers in factories, on farms, and caring for the wounded. The Fisher Education Act of 1918 brought in state funded education for all until the age of 14. Suddenly, the right to a good quality education for all British subjects, who had fought and died alongside each other and who were buried under equal gravestones in British war cemeteries, advanced significantly. The Representation of the People that same year introduced, for the first time, the vote to all men over the age of 21, and women over the age of 30. The existence of a 'two tier' system of education loomed glaringly onto the national stage.

A number of headmasters of HMC, fired by Christian zeal to care for all, became concerned by the narrow social base of their schools, which had, they knew, been founded to provide good education to members of the general public. Foremost amongst them was a figure of great charisma, Frank Fletcher, who became head of Charterhouse in 1911, having been previously head of Marlborough College. It was a loss to the schools, he believed,

30 Seldon, A, Walsh, D, *The Public Schools and the Great War: The Generation Lost*, Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2013, p. 11.

31 *Ibid.*

'that their boys come from a limited class, that a large and valuable section of the nation is excluded from them for financial reasons'. In his capacity as Chairman of the HMC he met H. A. L. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, on 3 April 1919, seeking Fisher's support to broaden the base of independent school entry. The plan did not meet with the approval of government. Money seems to have been the main problem. Fletcher requested government funding to subsidise places for young men from poor backgrounds to attend the private schools. Realizing that his quest was getting nowhere, he eventually diverted his energies elsewhere. Many years later, he wrote a letter to *The Times* recounting his crusade in elegiac tones, concluding that the private schools wanted to accept boys from poor backgrounds but that opposition had not come from the schools themselves but from practical and financial considerations.³² How far private school headmasters would have gone to accept such upheaval, with dramatic consequences for the nature of their schools, especially when demand picked up dramatically from fee payers in the 1920s, is far from clear.³³

THE FLEMING REPORT 1944

Concern over the 'two tier' school system in Britain dwindled in the interwar years but came back with a vengeance during the Second World War. The commitment to the war effort from all, regardless of class, led to a return to the questions about the rectitude of a privileged school education system exclusively for those from well-off backgrounds. Winston Churchill, in a speech to his old school, Harrow, in December 1940, declared:

"When this war is won, as it sure will be, it must be one of our aims to work to establish a state of society where the advantages and privileges which hitherto have been enjoyed by only the few

32 Seldon, A, Walsh, D, *Public Schools and the Great War: A Generation Lost*, Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2013, p. 222.

33 *Ibid*, p. 221.

*shall be far more widely shared by the many, and by the youth of the nation as a whole.*³⁴

It was against this background that a commission was set up, by RA Butler, the president of the Board of Education in July 1942, under Lord Fleming 'to consider means whereby the association between the Public Schools ... and the general education system in the country could be developed and extended'.³⁵ Its report in 1944 stated that:

*"They [the Public Schools] were, in fact, called into being to meet the demands of a society already deeply divided. But it may certainly be granted that once the division in the educational system had been completed, it made far more difficult the task of those who looked towards a breaking down of these hard drawn class distinctions within the society of the nation."*³⁶

Then, in a killer quotation, it continued: '*[i]t may almost be said that nothing could have been better devised to perpetuate them [class distinctions] than this educational development*'. The Fleming Commission can be regarded as the first attempt by government to address the power of independent schools. Its conclusion was to reform rather than remove the schools, a reflection of its terms of reference. The recommendations included the proposal to fill 25 per cent of places at certain independent schools with suitable pupils of 'modest background', whose fees would be paid by the local education authorities.³⁷

Ultimately, however, the Fleming Report failed to provide a boost to social mobility, or to build bridges between both sectors

34 Robert Rhodes James, ed., *Winston Churchill: His Complete Speeches, 1897–1964*, New York: Chelsea House, 1974, vol. VI, 6315.

35 Board of Education, *The Public Schools and the General Education System*, London: HMSO, 1944, p.1.

36 Fleming Report, 1944, para. 54.

37 The Fleming Report, *The Public Schools and the General Educational System*, Article 178. (iii), p. 66, London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1944.

of education. Independent schools, which had been in decline during the 1930s, saw their numbers steadily increase from 1942 onwards,³⁸ nullifying the schools' requirements for money from local authorities.³⁹ No national scheme of bursaries was established, and the recommendations were executed unevenly by local authorities on a case-by-case basis. The report failed to suggest an effective procedure for selecting pupils from humble backgrounds offering no clear guidance on who was eligible for such places.⁴⁰ This situation was compounded by a lack of political will – 42% of MPs were privately educated, and even those who were not, did not place this type of reform high on their agendas.⁴¹

EDUCATION ACT 1944

The Education Act of 1944 made the provision of secondary education by local education authorities mandatory and raised the compulsory school age from 14 to 15. For independent schools the new requirements were the introduction of registration and inspection. The Act however also included a legal provision empowering local education authorities 'to pay the whole or any part of the fees and expenses payable in respect of children attending schools at which fees are payable.'⁴² It thus provided the legal basis for LEAs to pay for places for deserving students at independent schools.

The Act set out the circumstances under which LEAs would pay fees for students at independent or 'direct grant' schools:

38 Spencer Leeson, *The Public Schools Question*, London: Longmans, 1948, p. 14.

39 O. Banks, *Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education*, Routledge, 1955.

40 J. Stuart Maclure, *Educational Documents*, London: Methuen, 1979, p. 212.

41 David Butler and Gareth Butler, *Twentieth-Century British Political Facts 1900–2000*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000, 190. and David Butler and Jennie Freeman, *British Political Facts 1900–1968*, London: Macmillan, 1969, p. 141.

42 Education Act 1944, para. 81. (b).

*“(i) Where the maintained school provision is insufficient in amount or educational character, and (ii) where the maintained schools are sufficient in these respects but parents’ wishes for their children to be educated at other schools can be met compatibly with the provision of efficient instruction and training and without unreasonable public expenditure”.*⁴³

The Act might have opened the floodgates to an exodus from state or maintained schools, in fact, according to the *Times Educational Supplement*, ‘by 1961, 9700 boys attending independent schools had their fees paid in full by local education authorities ...’⁴⁴

Pressure on public spending in the light of the massive expansion of the education sector, and an increasingly sceptical climate politically, brought this provision of the 1944 Act under increasing criticism. The prospects of the relatively small numbers of refugees from the state sector was most certainly enhanced. But little was being done for the overwhelming majority who remained in the state schools, and nothing was being done to bridge the divide between both sectors. A fresh approach was inevitable.

ABOLITION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN THE 1950s AND 1960s

Abolition of independent schools had been a popular cause within the Labour party since at least 1943.⁴⁵ That year Labour’s National Executive demanded the ‘Acceptance of the broad democratic principle that all children of school age shall be required to attend schools provided by the State.’⁴⁶ Anthony Crosland, later to be the Education Secretary under Wilson, argued in his celebrated 1956 book *The Future of Socialism*, that:

43 Ministry of Education, Administrative Memorandum N. 244, dated 5th September, 1947.

44 The *Times Educational Supplement*, December 8, 1961, pp. 793–794.

45 ‘Planning for Education’, *The Times Educational Supplement*, 6 March 1943, p. 114.

46 ‘Planning for Education’, *The Times Educational Supplement*, 6 March 1943, p. 114.

"This [system of superior private schools] is much the most flagrant inequality of opportunity, as it is cause of class inequality generally, in our educational system; and I have never been able to understand why socialists have been so obsessed with the question of the grammar schools, and so indifferent to the much more glaring injustice of the independent schools."⁴⁷

In 1961, a Labour pamphlet recommended that independent schools be cut down to pure sixth form schools:

"the [Educational] Trust [to be set up under the proposal] will recommend the form of integration that will enable each of them to make its best educational contribution."

But what was meant by 'integration' was very different from what was proposed by the Fleming Commission or later by the Newsom Commission, and included the transformation of the independent schools into:

"pure sixth-form schools, concentrating on the provision of three-year courses for boys and girls who have passed the General Certificate at 'O' Level. Others could remain as secondary boarding schools for children whose parents' circumstances make this type of education necessary ..."⁴⁸

Abolition of independent schools, while widely demanded by the left, never gained enough momentum to be seriously considered as an option. Indeed, the terms of reference of the Public School Commission set up under Labour in 1965, discussed below, did not even consider abolition as a possible solution to the problem.

47 C.A.R. Crosland, *The Future of Socialism*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1956, p. 191.

48 *Signposts for the Sixties*, London: The Labour Party, 1961.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMISSION AND THE NEWSOM REPORT, 1968

A third attempt at reform came with the setting up of the Public Schools Commission under the Labour government of Harold Wilson in 1965, promising in its terms of reference to advise 'on the best way of integrating the public schools with the State system.'⁴⁹ Two reports were produced, the Newsom Report which dealt with the independent schools, and the Donnison Report which addressed direct grant schools.

The Newsom Report, surprisingly in view of the *zeitgeist*, argued for an assisted places scheme: 'there should be a first condition that a school must admit assisted pupils from maintained schools to at least a half of its places – by the end of a build-up period of about seven years.'⁵⁰ Such places, it said, should be awarded according to the likelihood of the individual benefitting, rather than on their academic ability. It proposed that the funding be covered by LEAs who could be reimbursed by the Treasury, up to the average cost of education in a maintained day school. Any additional costs should be means tested. The recommendations were received with hostility from within the Labour party, and were never implemented.

The Donnison report, in contrast, was fully implemented and led to the abolition of the direct grant system with the phasing out of the direct grants in 1975. Of 179 direct grant grammar schools existing at the time in England and Wales, only 45 joined the maintained system, some closed, while the majority became fully independent and fee paying.⁵¹

49 Cabinet, Secretary of State for Education and Science. (1965). Public Schools. Circular distributed 19th November. London: Cabinet, C (65) 155, p. 6312.

50 The Public School Commission: First Report, 1968.

51 Parliamentary Debates, Direct Grant Schools, Hansard, HC Deb 26 January 1976 vol 904 cc52-5W, available at: http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1976/jan/26/direct-grant-schools and HC Deb 14 December 1966 vol 738 cc110-5W, available at: http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1966/dec/14/direct-grant-schools.

ABOLITION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS 1970s

Voices on the left of the Labour Party were angry that more had not been done to challenge or even abolish independent schools under the Labour government of 1964–70. One of the key critics was Roy Hattersley in 1973. When he was Labour Party's Shadow Education Minister, he spoke at a conference of independent heads. Quite openly, he told his audience that once Labour was back in government, his party would not make the same mistake again:

"I must, above all else, leave you with no doubts about our serious intention initially to reduce and eventually to abolish private education in this country."⁵²

During their time in government from 1974–1979 Labour found itself mired in other distractions, not the least economic and financial, and focused their reforming zeal on completing the abolition of direct grant schools. During its annual party conference in 1978, the policy objective was stated in favour of the: *"elimination of the socially divisive private education sector and calls upon the Labour Government to accord this objective high priority."⁵³*

But Labour fell from power in the wake of the 'Winter of Discontent' of 1978–79, with the independent schools untouched. It returned to the attack in a pamphlet on Public Schools published in 1980:

"The call for the abolition of the private school system is appealing and inspirational and the rational arguments against privilege means that the ending of purchased education is a continuing objective of democratic socialism".

52 John Rae, *The Public Schools Revolution, Britain's Independent Schools 1964–1979*, London: Faber & Faber, 1981, p. 13.

53 The Labour Party, *Socialism in the 80s – Private Schools – A Labour Party Discussion Document*, London, 1980, p. 35.

It was to be another 18 years before Labour was back in power and in the intervening period, the party was to change fundamentally. The objective of abolitions was to be pursued instead by a policy of retaining the system as is, and rested mainly on the idea that the withdrawal of public support would eventually lead to the decline of the private sector without actually needing to abolish it explicitly. This strategy included the end to the assisted places scheme introduced by Margaret Thatcher in 1997.

THE ASSISTED PLACES SCHEME 1980–1997

This programme was implemented by Margret Thatcher in her second year in office as Prime Minister within the Education Act of 1980. It envisaged subsidised places for bright children from ‘poor’ backgrounds. Starting as a relatively small-scale scheme, providing assistance to some 4,185 pupils in 1981, it had grown to support 34,000 students by 1997.⁵⁴

Widely criticised for its openness to middle class children elbowing out those from disadvantaged backgrounds, the scheme has recently been reappraised. A Sutton Trust report, published in 2013, testified to the remarkable success of the Assisted Places scheme.⁵⁵ It found that of the cohort studied, 88% were in professional or managerial positions, that they had a high degree of job security, and that they tended to maintain their social networks.⁵⁶ Furthermore, many who had been recipients of Assisted Places credited their schools with helping to develop the qualities such as self-reliance and self-discipline that were vital to their career success.⁵⁷ What this research clearly shows is that such a mass scheme can be highly effective: the question left hanging in the air is

54 The main elements of the Queen’s Speech on May 14, 1997, BBC Politics, 1997.

55 S. Power, S. Sims, G. Whitty, *Lasting Benefits: The Long-term Legacy of the Assisted Places Scheme for Assisted Places Holders*, Sutton Trust, October 2013.

56 *Ibid*, p. 6, p. 12.

57 *Ibid*, p. 19.

how far it genuinely helped the most needy children. Any successor scheme must thus be directly targeted at the most underprivileged.

The success of the scheme, at least in terms of the number of pupils who benefited, can in part be attributed to the fact that it did not depend on Local Education Authorities but was financed directly by the Ministry of Education, that it was less restrictive in terms of the schools that could participate (this time all independent schools, including girls' schools and non-boarding schools, were covered and not just the Public Schools), and that it was a statutory scheme rather than just the recommendation of a commission.

For all its marginalisation of red-blooded socialism, it was always clear that New Labour under Tony Blair would not continue with the scheme. Immediately when it came to power in 1997 it abolished the scheme, claiming it was a waste of public money, and that funds would be better used to reduce class sizes in the state sector. Labour produced evidence that the intended beneficiaries – pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds – were not taking up the programme. Less than 10 per cent of students who took up assisted places had fathers who were manual workers, and disadvantaged groups such as the unemployed and black and Asian families were underrepresented.⁵⁸

THE OPEN ACCESS SCHEME, SUTTON TRUST

A final proposal to be examined comes from the powerful Sutton Trust, a charity set up by educational philanthropist Peter Lampl in 1997. This is the 'Open Access' scheme, which proposes that a third of places at independent schools be part funded, and a further third fully funded by the state, with the remaining places funded entirely by the parents. A seven year trial (2001–2007) at

58 J. Edwards, J. Fitz, G. Whitty, *The State and Private Education: An Evaluation of the Assisted Places Scheme*, Falmer Press, 1989.

the Belvedere Girls' School in Liverpool was remarkably successful. Of the initial cohort of pupils, 30% were fully funded and 40% part funded.⁵⁹ Of these, 32.5% were on free school meals, a common measure of disadvantage. In 2005, the school went on to achieve the best GCSE results in Liverpool, with 99% receiving 5 good GCSEs compared to an LEA average of 49%.⁶⁰ Moreover, feedback from parents was exceptionally positive, and many felt that the school more accurately resembled the social mix of Liverpool itself.

The scheme has so far attracted the support of eighty schools, including Westminster, Manchester Grammar and Royal Grammar School in Newcastle.⁶¹ If the scheme were to be executed with these eighty schools alone, it could benefit over 30,000 pupils.⁶² There are further reasons for private schools to be excited by this project. According to David Levin, the former Headmaster of City of London Boys' School, and former HMC Chairman:

"Despite our extensive bursary programme, we have to turn away many highly able students from low and middle income homes who would thrive in our school. Open Access would allow us to be truly needs blind in our admissions. That is why the City of London Boys' School is fully behind the scheme and why so many other leading day schools support it too: like us, they want to educate the brightest pupils, irrespective of family background."

The official response from both main political parties, however, has been lukewarm. Whereas the Trust is highly regarded in Westminster and Whitehall, Open Access is considered politically

59 The Sutton Trust, Open Access, 2014. Available at: www.suttontrust.com/our-work/open-access/

60 The Sutton Trust, Open Access: Democratising entry to Independent Day Schools, March 2012, p. 20–21, available at: www.suttontrust.com/news/publications/open-access-democratising-entry-to-independent-day-schools/

61 The Sutton Trust, 80 Top Independent Schools back Open Access, available at: www.suttontrust.com/news/news/80-top-independent-day-schools-back-open-access/

62 Ibid.

and economically out of reach. Peter Lampl, nevertheless, recently told HMC that he hopes some of these proposals might find their way into the party manifestos in 2015.⁶³

WHY NOTHING CAME OF THESE REFORMS

Several factors explain why little or nothing endures of these various attempts at reform.

1. Unwillingness of government to commit the money

This has been the most enduring stumbling block to reform and it explains significantly why political parties are not willing to support the Sutton Trust's Open Access proposal. It explains why Frank Fletcher's proposals after the First World War came to nothing, and the demise of the Assisted Places scheme. Governments find it difficult to provide funds that are seen to be benefitting independent schools. What governments need to see instead is the benefit to the individual student, and to the school system as a whole.

2. The tenacity of independent schools

The traditional Labour recourse has been that independent schools would become superfluous once the state system had improved sufficiently and that the 'issue would wither'.⁶⁴ Labour has believed this consistently over the hundred years surveyed. During his first government, Blair said that his government would improve state schools so much that no parent would want to send their child to an independent school.

63 Richard Garner, Plan to open up top private schools to all, *The Independent*, 03 October 2012, available at: www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/plan-to-open-up-top-private-schools-to-all-8194796.html

64 Nicholas Hillman, *The Public Schools Commission: 'Impractical, Expensive and Harmful to Children?'*, *Contemporary British History*, 24:4, 2010, p. 525.

The truth was that independent schools (in particular the Public Schools) in the early 1960s possessed a quite unfavourable image in the public eye, and there was a drive that some of the myths surrounding independent school education be ‘scotched’.⁶⁵ Labour’s antipathy was partly responsible for triggering at this time, as the former headmaster and writer John Rae put it, ‘a revolution in the sector’. He cites the move towards co-education, the rise in academic standards, updates in the curriculum and a modernisation in the school ethos and methods.⁶⁶

During the period of economic turndown that began in 2008, and despite a lack of support and even warmth from the governments of Gordon Brown and David Cameron, the independent sector has continued to grow.

3. Flawed Reforms

The most promising moment, until the present time, for fundamental reform of independent schools, and their relationship with state schools, came in the middle of the last century. The Newsom Report of 1968 was an example. The Secretary of the Commission, Geoffrey Cockerill admitted in a departmental paper that the proposals were basically an ‘... attempt to carry out the terms of reference. But when analysed they reveal weaknesses

which were inherent in the terms of reference and can now be seen more clearly.’⁶⁷

A Labour Party pamphlet of 1980 said that “Nothing had been done about any of these [Public Schools Commission] recommendations by the time the government fell in 1970 because

65 John Rae, *The Public Schools Revolution, Britain’s Independent Schools 1964–1979*, London: Faber & Faber, 1981, p. 31.

66 *Ibid.*

67 TNA: ED 207/18, G. F. Cockerill, ‘Public Schools Commission—First Report’, Draft brief for the Secretary of State on the Public Schools Commission’s report, 3 May 1968, 4.

the NEC [National Executive Committee], endorsed by Conference, rejected them as inadequate.⁶⁸ Ted Tapper argues similarly in his analysis of the Fleming Committee of 1944 and the Public School Commission. They were created, 'not because governments lacked policy options or even the mechanisms to resolve policy differences, but because of a failure of political will'.⁶⁹

4. Recognition that abolition of independent schools is a denial of human rights

According to Crosland's adviser, AH Halsey, the former's 'greatest fear was that we might impose unfreedom on those who wanted to send their children to schools in the private sector'.⁷⁰ Indeed, despite the fact that Labour politicians were deeply uneasy with the social divide created by independent Schools, abolishing them seemed to some an unacceptable intrusion into the right of choice for parents.⁷¹

5. Lack of political will

Whatever the parties said in opposition, once they came to power, other priorities came to the fore. There are no votes in abolishing independent schools, nor grammar schools, nor in introducing major reform to the system, which can so easily be criticised by the opposition as the government looking after its own supporters only. The only way that the independent state school problem can be successfully resolved is by a cross party consensus. Such a consensus is now beginning to emerge.

68 Labour Party, *Private Schools*, 34.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 101.

70 A.H. Halsey, *No Discouragement: An Autobiography*, 1996, p. 131.

71 Salter and Tapper, *Power and Policy in Education: The Case of Independent Schooling*, London: Falmer Press, 1985, p. 113.



CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed the various efforts successive governments have undertaken to address the continued divide between state and private education, and laid out the reasons for why most of them have failed. Britain remains a divided nation in terms of educational opportunities, with persistent inequalities in opportunities and outcomes for the rich and the poor.

The next chapter looks at what lessons can be learned from other countries about how a more fruitful interaction between the private and state sector can be achieved.

3. INDEPENDENT AND STATE SCHOOL SOLUTIONS ABROAD

Many countries have a private schooling sector. The size of these sectors and the arrangements regarding funding and management of their schools can however vary substantially. While in Sweden, for instance, private schooling is entirely state funded, those opting out of the state-maintained sector in Britain have to pay the full fees for private education. In Italy, most schools are state managed but 30 per cent of the funding in the system comes from private sources, while in Finland all schools are both fully managed and funded by the state. Figure 3.1 shows a scatter plot of the share of state funding for schools and the share of schools managed by the state. The countries in the top left corner are those with relatively large private sectors where however most of the funding is provided by the state, like the Netherlands, Belgium or Ireland. Countries along the 45-degree line in Figure 3.1 are those where private schools are largely or 100 per cent funded privately, like Great Britain, the United States or Japan. Countries in the bottom right quadrant of Figure 3.1 are those with the majority of schools managed by the state, while being financed to a large extent by private sources.

With the emergence of better internationally comparable data on school outcomes from large studies such as PISA, researchers have started to evaluate the merits of different educational systems in terms of the interaction between the private and state sector and its impact on educational equality and overall performance. This chapter first turns to the experience from other countries and different forms of funding arrangements to improve performance among schools and deliver better education for all students. The second part looks at specific examples of opening up private schools to students from all backgrounds and discusses the impact this had on the beneficiaries and the systems as a whole.



THE OPTIMAL MIX OF STATE AND PRIVATE PROVISION AND FUNDING

Using school and country level data related to funding and management of schools and linking it to student outcomes in the PISA test on reading, maths and science, Ludger Wößmann⁷² shows that maths performance is highest in those countries that have a low share of state managed schools, but a large share of state funding (countries in the top left quadrant of Figure 3.1).

The magnitude at which these systems outperform largely state managed and funded systems is important: students from the former systems on average perform more than the equivalent of a whole grade level, 37.9 PISA test points in maths, better than students in mainly state funded and managed systems. Students from systems that are mainly privately funded and state managed perform the worst (countries in the bottom right quadrant of Figure 3.1): they score 36.6 PISA test point below students in largely state-run and funded systems.

Wößmann's analysis reveals striking interaction effects between state management and funding of schools. He shows that at the school level, the higher the share of state funds in overall resources, the more negative is the correlation between state management and test results. The positive effects of state funding thus mainly come from schools that are privately managed and publicly funded.

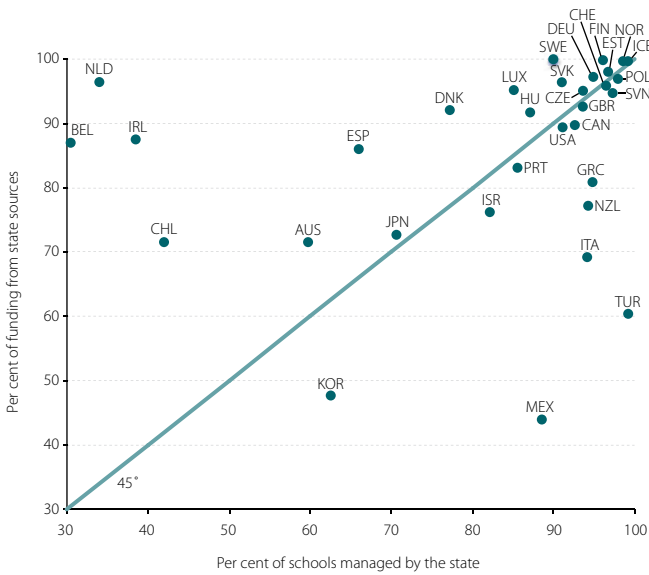
These findings provide evidence that national systems that have a higher share of privately managed schools perform better, which is an indication of the superiority of privately managed schools in delivering high quality education, and the positive

72 Public-private partnerships and student achievement: A cross-country analysis. In R. Chakrabarti and P. E. Peterson, editors, *School Choice International: Exploring Public-Private Partnerships*. MIT Press, 2009.

impact of competition from private schools on state schools, lifting up the performance of all schools.

In the next section we consider two cases of improved access to private schools through voucher systems in the US and Sweden and discuss the impact these had on the recipients' and non-recipients' outcomes.

Figure 3.1: Involvement by the state and private sector in funding and management of schools, OECD countries



Source: OECD, PISA 2009 Database, Tables B1.1 and B1.3

Notes: AUS=Australia, AUT=Austria, BEL=Belgium, CAN=Canada, CHL=Chile, CHE=Czech Republic, DNK=Denmark, EST=Estonia, FIN=Finland, FRA=France, DEU=Germany, GRC=Greece, HU=Hungary, ICE=Iceland, IRL=Ireland, ISR=Israel, ITA=Italy, JPN=Japan, KOR=Korea, LUX=Luxembourg, MEX=Mexico, NLD=Netherlands, NZL=New Zealand, NOR=Norway, POL=Poland, PRT=Portugal, SVK=Slovak Republic, SVN=Slovenia, ESP=Spain, SWE=Sweden, CZE=Switzerland, TUR=Turkey, GBR=United Kingdom, USA=United States.

THE MILWAUKEE PARENTAL CHOICE PROGRAM

In 1990, the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, enacted a means-tested voucher programme that allowed children from poor households to choose to attend a private school. For the 2013–2014 school year, the annual household income limit for a student coming from a family of four was \$70,947. The value of the voucher for the school year 2012–2013 for a full-time student was \$6,442, or the private school's operating and debt service cost per student, whichever was less. There were 112 private schools participating in the programme as of September 2012, with a total enrolment of 24,027 students.⁷³ Initially, the programme was limited to 1.5 per cent of the student population in Milwaukee, but was increased to 15 per cent in 1998, which effectively introduced real competition for the sector.

Caroline Hoxby⁷⁴ has looked at both the impact of increased competition from the private sector on the performance of the state sector, in terms of productivity and student attainment, and the effect on those children who took up the voucher programme. Using school-level data pre- and post-1998 on the share of students performing 'insufficient', 'basic' or 'proficient' and 'advanced' in a reading test, she finds a significant improvement of the performance of treated schools, that is, on those private schools that had the highest portion of poor students at the time the programme was introduced (and which hence faced the highest competitive pressure from private schools, as a higher portion of students would potentially leave the schools). After the introduction of the voucher programme the share of students whose performance was 'insufficient' declined by 9.3 per cent and the share of students whose performance was 'proficient and advanced' increased by 4.1 per cent compared to similar private schools who were not affected by the reform.

73 Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), MPCP Facts and Figures for 2012-2013. As of November 2012.

74 C. M. Hoxby, School choice and school competition: Evidence from the United States. *Swedish Economic Policy Review*, 10(2):9–66, 2003.

In terms of school productivity, that is, how effectively a dollar spent on a pupil was in obtaining better results, Hoxby finds that Milwaukee state elementary schools became significantly more productive after the introduction of the vouchers, with an increase in the national percentile rank between 0.9 and 1.7 percentile points per thousand dollars spent on a student.

When assessing whether the performance of students whose families took up a voucher programme one important consideration is to be kept in mind. If we find that the performance of those students who attend the private schools has not risen above that of students of private schools, this should not be judged as a failure of the programme. In fact, as Hoxby points out, we would judge a choice programme that raises the performance of *all* students more successful than one that only raises the performance of those students who take up the programme (as in the means-tested voucher case, poor children).

For the Milwaukee programme, Greene et al.⁷⁵ found that after 4 years, students who had taken up the programme improved their position in the national percentile rank by 10.65 percentage points in maths, and 5.84 percentage points in reading.

Overall, the Milwaukee voucher programme has raised not only the performance of the eligible students, but also increased attainment and productivity at state schools which had resisted the programme in fear of losing students and resources.

The concerns often raised about the redistributive consequences of introducing more choice, for instance that better-off parents are more likely to take up the newly available opportunities, thus crucially depend on the exact design of the policy. Programmes targeted in

75 J. Greene, P. Peterson, J. Du, L. Boeger, and C. Frazier. The effectiveness of school choice in Milwaukee. Harvard University Program on Education Policy and Governance research paper 97-01, Harvard University, 1997.

particular at the most disadvantaged students, such as the case in the programme discussed here, avoid these unintended effects.

THE VOUCHER SYSTEM IN SWEDEN

In 1992, the Swedish government introduced school vouchers and since then private and private schools alike have received the entirety of their funding from the state. The reform introduced by the Swedish government was radical, as it allowed any school, be it of religious denomination or run by for-profit corporations, to receive public funding equal to what private schools receive.⁷⁶ The generosity of the system induced a relatively large number of independent school providers to enter the market. According to the Swedish Association of Independent Schools, in 1990–91, only about 1 per cent of Swedish pupils in compulsory education (ages 6–15, approximately) were enrolled in independent schools, whereas in 2007–08 the figure stood at about 9 per cent. In secondary education (ages 16–18, approximately), the importance of independent schools has grown even more during this period: it rose from 1.5 per cent to 17 per cent.

Vouchers in Sweden are not means-tested, meaning that all children, no matter their financial background, receive the voucher.⁷⁷ The value of the voucher is equal to the average cost per student for each student from the municipality in which the school is located.⁷⁸

Studying the effect of competition across schools induced by the introduction of the voucher system and with it the establishment of more and more independent schools in Sweden,

76 See F. M. Sandström and F. Bergström. School vouchers in practice: competition will not hurt you. *Journal of Public Economics*, 89(2):351–380, 2005.

77 The only limitations to receipt of public funding for private schools are the prohibition of charging additional tuition fees to students and the inability of schools to select students based on ability.

78 G. H. Sahlgren. Schooling for money: Swedish education reform and the role of the profit motive. IEA Discussion Paper No. 33, December 2010.

Sandström and Bergström have found that an increased share of students attending private schools in the municipality of residence of a pupil significantly improved both the scores on a standardized maths test and grades in private schools.

In a recent paper, Bohlmark and Lindahl⁷⁹ looked at the long-run effects of growth in private schools induced by the Swedish voucher system on overall academic achievements. They find that an increase in the share of independent-school students is associated with higher achievement at the end of compulsory school, an increase in the proportion of students on academic track in high school, an improvement in mean high-school grades, and an increase in the proportion attending university. They also show that the growing share of independent schools had a positive impact on the outcomes of students in state schools in all the aforementioned categories, as well as leading to a reduction in overall expenditure per pupil.

CONCLUSION

In this section we provided evidence that shows that greater levels of funding provided to the private sector through subsidized places can have a positive impact on both the beneficiaries of such places as well as improving the performance of those not directly affected by the increased access. Besides providing higher quality education, such programmes are likely to improve accountability and introduce real choice for parents of low means. As will be argued in the next section, opening up the private sector to students from poorer backgrounds is not sufficient to achieve greater educational equality. Such policies must be accompanied by increasing fair access to the top performing state schools and raising overall standards. The following chapter outlines the proposal to revolutionise schools in Britain from 2015 to 2030.

79 A. Bohlmark and M. Lindahl. Independent schools and long-run educational outcomes: Evidence from Sweden's large scale voucher reform. Institute for Evaluation of Labor Market and Education Policy, Working Paper 2012:19, 2012.

4. THE FOUR-LEVEL SOLUTION

This chapter outlines four levels of change to help create a unified education system in Britain for the first time in our history, and to improve the educational performance of all and enhance social mobility. The four proposals are outlined below in tabular form, highlighting their difficulties of implementation and likely benefits.

Table 4.1: Likely difficulty and benefits of different schemes

Scheme	Administrative Difficulty	Political Difficulty	Cost	Likely impact
1. State Schools emulate the best features of independent schools	○	○	○	○○
2. Independent schools bond with state schools	○	○○	○	○○○
3. Independent schools open their doors	○○○	○○○	○○○○	○○○○○
4. Popular state schools to be means tested	○○○○	○○○○	○	○○○○○

Notes: Scores from ○-lowest difficulty/cost/impact to ○○○○○○-highest difficulty/cost/impact.

Scheme 1, which involves state schools emulating the features of the best independent schools has been taking place progressively over the last 15 years, notably in academies. It needs now to be given a decisive boost from ministers as well as from the academy chains and schools themselves. Scheme 2, involving organic links between independent and state schools, has been encouraged by both Labour and Coalition governments, but again needs a powerful push because of the reticence or incapacity of many independent schools to become involved in any ways beyond the

small scale or superficial. The third proposal, of the government subsidising places at independent schools, has precedents, not the least the Assisted Places scheme of 1980–97. The difference with the model proposed here is that all independent schools will be required to make a quarter of their spaces available, and that the places will be available only to students from households in the bottom quartile of the income distribution. Scheme 4, of means testing for popular state schools, breaks entirely new ground for schools, though the principle of means testing families has already been applied to higher education.⁸⁰

STATE SCHOOLS EMULATE FEATURES OF THE BEST INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Why should the advantages of an independent school education be available only to those who attend such schools? Some schools at the weaker end of state sector provision have begun to catch up significantly in the last 10–15 years, but in the *breadth* of education provided, independent schools remain far ahead, though the best state schools are already emulating features of independent schools.

Not all of these excellence attributes are exclusive to independent schools in Britain, and outstanding practice exists abroad. The ARK group, for example, has drawn particular inspiration from the American, Doug Lemov, with his revolutionary ideas about schools.⁸¹ The United States also provides inspiration through its Charter Schools, which advocate character education, and from a small number of independent schools in New England, foremost among them are Phillips Exeter and Phillips Andover

80 In fact, a means-testing of sorts has existed for quasi-state schools before: Under the Direct Grant System 25 per cent of places were entirely state funded, and a further 25 per cent was means-tested, with the remainder of places being fully fee-paying.

81 See for example Doug Lemov, *Teach like a Champion: 49 techniques that put students on the path to College*, San Francisco, 2010.

Academies which provide bursary support to a high proportion of students, and which champion the 'Harkness' for active learning.⁸²

Nevertheless, wider emulation at home of the best features of independent schools has a number of benefits.

- It addresses the narrow focus that education has in state schools.
- It will prepare state school students better for work.
- It will help build a more cohesive society.
- It will enhance parental involvement in state schools.

There follow ten facets common to the best independent schools that *all* state schools should be addressing:

1. **Holistic education.** The scope of education in state schools is often narrow, and indeed has been narrowing even more over the last ten years with the single-minded focus of government and OFSTED on exam passes and on assessment-related teaching and learning in the classroom above almost all else. The mission of independent schools is far more ambitious. In addition to often excellent academic education, they frequently devote a third or more of their time to the development of holistic all-round development, including sports and the arts. Sport in state many state schools has been in decline, with the sale of school pitches and the pressure of time on the school day being key factors. *All* young people should experience some form of exercise several times a week, in part for enjoyment and development of skills, as well as to improve wellbeing and reduce obesity. Schools should reintroduce physical training exercises, as used to be common in Britain until the 1960s. Harvard professor Howard Gardner has written about sensibly about people possessing not one,

82 See www.exeter.edu/admissions/109_1220.aspx.

but multiple intelligences.⁸³ At Wellington College, for instance, we have evolved Gardner's work and our mission – shared by some in leading state schools – is systematically to develop eight intelligences or 'aptitudes'. These consist of the traditional academic aptitudes, the 'logical' and 'linguistic', as well as three other 'pairs' of intelligences: the 'creative' and 'physical'; 'personal' and 'social'; 'moral' and 'spiritual'. If these eight faculties are not developed in people when young, they may remain dormant for the rest of life. Opportunities to develop them are more readily available to independent schools; yet all of the young have an equal entitlement to having their talents developed. Many state schools boast orchestras, choirs and teams, but traditionally they are for the talented and the keen. Will Hutton has written persuasively about a growth of equality in exposure to sporting and cultural enrichment of advantaged children compared to those less fortunate: 'it is not just the lack of money that undermines parents' capacity to support enrichment activities; they can't spend time with their children because of the irregular and anti-social hours they are forced to work.'⁸⁴ All young people, not just the talented and the keen, should enjoy these rich experiences.

2. **Character education.** Before the First World War independent schools placed the development of good character at the heart of what they did, long before those character qualities were put on test in 1914.⁸⁵ Traits including loyalty, determination, self-reliance, resilience, kindness and courage have all continued to be given great emphasis in the classroom and outside. Some state schools lay great stress on character development, including those who belong to chains to the ARK chain, or individual schools like West Kidlington Primary in Oxfordshire and Nursery Schools in Oxfordshire or Kings Langley School in

83 Gardner, H, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, New York, 2011.

84 Will Hutton, 'The Shocking Divide that casts adrift the children of the poor', *The Observer*, 15.07.12.

85 Seldon, A, Walsh, D, *Public Schools and the Great War: The Generation Lost* (London, 2013).

Hertfordshire. The work of the Positive Psychology department at the University of Pennsylvania and books such as Paul Tough's *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity and the Hidden Power of Character* show very clearly that character and resilience can be taught, and that they have great benefits both academically and socially.⁸⁶ The Jubilee Centre for Character and Values at the University of Birmingham, set up in 2012, provides a host of empirical data underpinning the benefits of character education.⁸⁷

3. **Leadership.** Independent schools have been grounded on the principle of leadership since the nineteenth century and before. The tradition grew of students at the top of the school looking after younger students, allowing adults more time to concentrate on teaching. Many independent schools have forged highly sophisticated traditions of leadership. Although open to abuse in the past, such traditions have been an overwhelmingly positive experience both for the leaders and the led. Combined Cadet Forces (CCF), common in independent schools, provide further opportunities for students to learn about self-reliance and to learn to master themselves in demanding situations and in outdoor environments. Some state schools have started to develop CCFs, but all should provide this outlet for young people. Scouts and Guides provide similar leadership opportunities for young people outside schools and have much to recommend them.
4. **House systems.** Houses are an integral part of almost all independent schools. They provide a focus and source of identity for the young within each school, allow staff attached to houses to get to know each young person individually as well as their families, provide opportunities for older pupils to mentor the young, and for competitions between houses in a host of areas, from chess and debating, to music and sport.

⁸⁶ Tough, P, *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity and the Hidden Power of Character*, London, 2012.
Seligman, M, *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Wellbeing*, New York, 2011.

⁸⁷ See www.jubileecentre.ac.uk.

Young people who might not have the chance to play in school teams can still play competitively in house competitions. Houses have their own systems of incentives, allowing many to experience rewards and recognition.

5. **Boarding.** Many independent schools have traditionally offered boarding which provides many extra hours for productive activity. It allows young people to grow in independence and to participate in communal activities, without wasting hours each day travelling to and from school. Looked-after children are by no means the only state school students who would benefit from boarding. Presently, some 37 state schools in England and Wales offer boarding, including the Wellington Academy in Wiltshire which has 100 boarding places. Boarding needs should be considered when building new state schools, and grants should be made available for existing state schools to build boarding facilities where these are deemed beneficial. Having boarders in schools enhances the sense of community and offers benefits well beyond those accruing to the pupils who board.⁸⁸
6. **A long school day.** The state school day typically finishes at 3 or shortly afterwards. The independent school day typically finishes at 5 or 6pm in order to accommodate a wealth of co-curricular activities as well as afternoon lessons and afternoon prep. All schools should follow a similarly rigorous routine of this nature. More activities should be offered in state school holidays as well as expectations raised of project activity, study and reading. The length of school holidays in state schools should not be reduced. Students, as well as teachers, need time away from school.
7. **Uniform and behaviour.** Many state schools have started to re-introduce school uniform over the last few years, but smart uniform and excellent behaviour are the standard expectations in independent schools. Independent schools lay far greater

88 The boarding school association is the body that oversees both independent and state schools.

stress on smartness including tidy hair and the absence of jewellery. Schools indeed should be smart and businesslike places with precise routines that all young people should follow. A common uniform instils common identity, pride in the school and a sense of ownership, all important qualities for the young. Poor behaviour, in the classroom or outside, should not be tolerated: in its January 2014 guidelines, OFSTED pledged to crack down further on low level disruption.⁸⁹

8. **Careers Advice.** Students from early ages at senior independent schools are commonly encouraged to think about their particular gifts in life and thus suitable careers. The aim is to help each child to discover what their true passion in life is. Psychometric tests, interviews, lectures and career events all help the students reflect on the careers that they might find the most fulfilling. The parallel emphasis on character development helps them when they come to interviews, and to perform well in whatever job they go on to fill. All schools can develop and maintain widely-drawn address books and contacts of the school's alumni to help leavers to acquire internships and jobs.
9. **Service and volunteering.** Since the 1960s and before, independent schools have offered 'community service' options for their students in afternoons, evenings and weekends. The tradition of working on service projects at home and abroad, in holidays and on 'gap' years, is well established. Volunteering and service are invaluable to helping all young people grow in confidence, to develop the caring side to their natures and to develop a sense of responsibility toward others, especially where they have no tangible value or advantage to the helper. Programmes such as the National Citizens Service (NCS), set up in 2011, trained 65,000 young people in volunteering and service over the summer holiday of 2013.

89 OFSTED, *The unlucky child: HMCI's Annual Report 2012/13*. Available at: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/ofsted-annual-report-201213-unlucky-child-hmci-speech

In November 2013, Prince Charles and the leaders of the three main political parties, David Cameron, Ed Miliband and Nick Clegg launched the ‘decade of social action’ with the aim of encouraging 1.7 million people between the age of 10 and 20 ‘taking on challenging opportunities to serve others in their community.’⁹⁰ All state schools should be giving their students abundant opportunities for volunteering including in the local community, or further afield. Opportunities also exist within the schools themselves, for example fluent readers helping those who find reading difficult.

- 10. Parental involvement.** The expectation as well as the reality in independent schools is that parents are closely involved in their children’s education, that they should support the policy of the school and their children’s learning, and that all attend parents’ evening and other events where their children’s education is discussed. They are paying the fees, so unsurprisingly they want to ensure that their money is being well spent. All schools need to be similarly demanding in insisting that parents attend parents’ evening, help form school policy and attend all events for parents at which their children’s progress is being discussed. We know much more than even 25 years ago about the key importance of parents to the learning of children. An American programme called Learning Dream argues clearly that the most effective ways to encourage children to perform in schools is to focus first on the parents.⁹¹ Parental involvement from the most ‘hard-to-reach’ home situations is a highly vexed question but, taken in combination, of all of the features outlined above, a school fully engaged with its pupils increases significantly the pride of children in their school and the likelihood that they engage with school values and activities. Their sense of

90 BBC News, 21.11.2013, available at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25019567 and Cindy Stockman, Prince Charles persuades party leaders to unite in support of young peoples charity, Royal Central, 2013. Available at: www.royalcentral.co.uk/politics/prince-charles-persuades-party-leaders-to-unite-in-support-of-young-peoples-charity-19575.

91 Andrew Rawnsley, ‘On Social Mobility’, Observer, 05.01.14. and www.learningdreams.org.

identity, self-knowledge and achievement will act as a motor for getting reluctant or uninterested parents involved in their child's education.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS BOND WITH STATE SCHOOLS

Independent and state schools need to work much more closely together as partners. In the twentieth century, they barely touched each other, operating largely in two separate spheres. Various gradations exist for state and independent relationships, which I described in *Partnership not Paternalism* published by the IPPR in 2002.⁹² It was written to address a popular misconception, that it was patronising for independent schools to imagine that they had anything to offer state schools, and that they were merely 'offering crumbs from the rich man's table'. It argued that the Independent State School Partnership scheme, set up by government in 1998 to encourage mutually beneficial links between schools in both sectors had only the most meagre of funding from the state, and that most partnerships were in fact being funded by the independent schools from their own resources. It argued for a dramatic boost in partnerships: the Independent School Council indeed reported in 2013 that 93% independent schools are involved in some kind of partnership with state schools.⁹³

These partnerships can consist of loose ties, for example where the independent school shares sports facilities with local state schools. A more meaningful relationship is where independent schools run master classes for state school students, or send their teachers out in to state schools. A more structural level of engagement occurs where independent schools join

92 Edkins, A. Seldon, A. *Partnership not Paternalism: A Personal Vision of the Future of Independent/State School Partnerships*, (IPPR, 2002). www.ippr.org/publications/55/1626/partnership-not-paternalism-a-personal-vision-of-the-future-of-independentstate-school-partnerships

93 ISC, *Links between Independent and State Schools*, Fact Sheet, 2014. Available at: www.isc.co.uk/research/Publications/fact-sheets/links-between-independent-and-state-schools

in formal confederations or partnerships with state schools, as with the government's 'teaching school' initiative, which was launched in 2012. This is a new model for teacher recruitment and professional and leadership development, and offers startling new opportunities for schools in both sectors to work together. Already, three independent schools, Edgbaston High, Guildford High and Wellington College, have become the lead schools in different teaching school alliances.

An even greater bond comes where the independent school sponsors an academy or sets up a free school. Prep Schools, which are junior independent schools, as well as senior independent schools, should all engage in this process. Andrew Adonis has argued for many years that independent schools should do just this. In September 2011, a decisive boost was given to his quest when Prime Minister David Cameron invited heads and governors of some leading independent schools into the Cabinet Room in Downing Street and told them he wanted them all to sponsor academies. Michael Wilshaw, head of OFSTED, added his own support to independent schools starting academies at the Sunday Times Festival of Education in June 2013 and at the annual meeting of the HMC group of independent heads in October 2013.⁹⁴ Michael Gove has consistently held up sponsoring academies as the most valuable way that independent schools can play a socially responsible part in modern Britain. At the Sunday Times Festival at Wellington, in June 2011 and June 2013 he warned independent schools not to stand on the touchlines: 'however insistent you might have found the Coalition government, there is no guarantee that whoever wins power in 2015 will not be a lot more emphatic urging you to become involved in the state sector at large'.⁹⁵

94 Angela Harrison, Wilshaw calls for end of private school 'splendid isolation', BBC News, 21 June 2013. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-23003988

95 Notes from the Festival of Education, 2011 and 2013.

A number of independent schools, including Dulwich College, King's Canterbury, Tonbridge and Uppingham have been involved as partners sponsoring academies. Radley in Oxfordshire, for example, works with Education Fellowship in their sponsorship of Desborough Academy, providing governors and staff on secondment. Winchester College works with Clarendon College another education fellowship academy. Dr Ralph Townsend, the Headmaster of Winchester, said that the partnership was a 'fusion of our respective DNAs to create something new'. Some groups of independent schools, including Woodard and United Learning, also run academies within their cluster.

Independent schools have been increasingly involved too with free schools. Milfield in Somerset is thus sponsoring Legatum Free School providing governors, staff and sports facilities, partnering with academy sponsor David Ross. The London Academy of Excellence, which opened in September 2012, is supported by a number of independent schools, including Brighton College, City of London School and Highgate. It is a competitive entry sixth form school, and secured six offers at Oxford and Cambridge in January 2014, its first year with an Upper Sixth.⁹⁶ In a similar vein, Westminster School in central London has partnered the Harris Federation to set up the Harris Westminster Sixth Form College, while Eton are the educational partner of Holyport College, a free school opening in September 2014.⁹⁷ Initiatives such as the London Academy and Westminster Harris, have much to commend them, though they are selecting young people who have already proven themselves to be academically bright, and taking them away from existing state schools. The real work is for independent schools to

96 Sian Griffiths, 'Oxbridge Triumph of East End Eton', *The Sunday Times*, 12.01.14.

97 Harris Foundation. See also www.etoncollege.com/HolyportCollege.aspx. www.harrisfederation.org.uk/25/academy-profiles/31/harris-westminster-sixthform www.clarendonacademy.com/news/editorial/Pages/default.aspx and Barnaby Lenon, *Independent-state school partnerships* January 2014, mimeo.

work with those who are not the academic elites, and to focus their resources at sharp end.

The various academy and free school initiatives to date are all highly praiseworthy, especially if they embolden independent school sponsors to go much further and to take the next step. The gold star policy recommendation here is that all independent schools go further and themselves sponsor an academy or start a free school which takes their *own name*. Doing so is more than symbolically important, it will make it clear to all that this is not a transitory arrangement but one that will continue in perpetuity. It will ensure that the reputation of the academy or free school will forever be tied to that of the sponsoring independent school. It will allow the alumni as well as the parent and student body to take pride in the new school. The students there should wear the same uniform and have the same policies and indeed expectations as those in the sponsoring independent school. To date, only Wellington College has given its name to an academy, Wellington Academy in Wiltshire, which is starting a new primary academy in September 2014. Wellington Academy opened in 2009, and the journey has not always been easy, because initially Wellington College ran it too much at arm's length. In September 2013 we took direct control of policy and strategy at Wellington Academy, and are progressively introducing the same systems as at Wellington College, to raise aspiration and achievement, offer a broad education, and enrich career prospects. We have learnt two great lessons which are tied into this policy recommendation. First, independent schools should work with proven academy providers as professional partners, offering expertise, professional advice and back office support. Second, government must provide a reasonable sum of money to ensure that the independent schools sponsoring the academy or free school should not be too far out of pocket. The academies and free schools initiated in this way should be all in areas of real need and should not be targeted on the academically gifted. The more deprived the community the new



academy or the free school is serving, the greater should be the level of government financial support.

Independent schools need to move on this proposal. For too long they have raised objections, including lack of expertise, lack of time and purported parental objections. None of these should be allowed to prevent such full sponsorship occurring. The independent schools need to realise that the twenty first century is very different from the past, and that the political, and indeed moral landscape has moved beyond an era in which it was acceptable for the better off to perpetuate their privilege by attending excellent schools without tangible expression of their wider sense of social responsibility. Moreover, independent schools, their students, teachers, parents and governors, have so much to learn from the state sector. The gain is very far from just one way.

The benefits of full and named sponsorship of an academy or free school are as follows:

- It breaks down barriers between independent and state school pupils, staff and parents.
- It improves learning in both state and independent schools, with both giving their expertise to the other.
- It entrenches the relationship in an enduring way and gives long term stability immune from the wishes of governors or the whims of politicians.
- It targets the support of the independent school on the most needy socially and academically.
- It enhances social mobility.

For too long an attitude of ‘Splendid Isolation’ has reigned in the independent sector. Social mobility in Britain has stagnated, as we have seen leaving British society uniquely polarised. Governing bodies in independent schools have not responded to the calls from politicians over the last fifteen years with the

generosity of spirit exhibited by their predecessors in years gone by when the schools were founded. If all independent schools start named academies, they have an opportunity for renewal, while consolidating their position for the next fifty or more years. Doing so will not jeopardize their independence, it will help guarantee it.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OPEN THEIR DOORS

For many years, independent schools have been offering financial support by means of bursaries to those who couldn't afford the fees, subsidising these places from accumulated reserves or from fee income. The Sutton Trust has long argued for 'open access' to independent schools on the basis, not on the ability to pay, but on ability and need. In 2011/2, the Springboard scheme, initiated by Rugby School, came into existence to encourage independent boarding schools to offer bursary places to genuinely underprivileged young people. The criticism of this scheme, as with others, is that they can take the brightest and best out of state schools. The criticism of the Assisted Places scheme of 1980 to 1997 was that it failed to target the places paid for by the state at independent schools on the most genuinely needy.

The proposal here is that all independent schools should offer a quarter of their places to those from the least affluent quartile in the country. This model is similar to the Assisted Places scheme, but the students benefitting would be guaranteed to be only those from the least privileged backgrounds. If oversubscribed, the independent school decides on the basis of competitive entry which young people it wants to take. To address the issue of ever rising school fees in independent schools, the government would cap the grant to the independent school at a maximum of 50% above what it would have paid for the child to attend state school, with the figure being fixed (adjusted for inflation) for ten years from the moment the scheme begins.

This proposal will have many benefits, including providing a top quality education for the least privileged young people in the country, and the benefit of social integration within the independent schools. The response to independent schools which do not like the proposal is that they will be guaranteed bright young people who will be, if they have selected them properly, well motivated. These are exactly the young who traditionally underperform in state schools, which is a riposte to those who argue that state schools will be deprived of their brightest young people. They will still be left with the full range of talent from the top three economic quartiles. Many independent schools have anyway to discount their fees significantly to fill their places. Filling a quarter of their places with guaranteed money from government and bright and willing young people, albeit in need of mentoring, is in fact a gain for them.

This proposal has the following benefits:

- It targets excellent education at independent schools at the most deprived in society.
- It combats the exclusivity of independent schools.
- It will remove from state schools some of the most socially needy while still leaving them a considerable majority of talented young people.
- It will boost social mobility very decisively.

POPULAR STATE SCHOOLS TO BE MEANS TESTED

The final proposal is the most radical of all because it breaches the principle of free schooling for all. Such provision was appropriate for the twentieth century, but is no longer in the twenty first century, least of all with so much pressure on government expenditure, and the need to focus spending on where the greatest need is. There is no longer any intellectually respectable argument for claiming that state schools should not be charging fees to those who can

genuinely afford to pay, especially when many of the top state schools are dominated by children from exactly these backgrounds. Higher education has had top up fees since the middle of the last decade. The status quo has so many anomalies, which need to be tackled by government during 2015 to 2030. Well off parents paying for their places in smart state schools through premium prices on property in catchment areas as well as by tutoring has long been regarded as unfair to those who can afford neither the house prices, nor the tutoring to access the best state-funded schooling. The continued existence of 166 grammar schools is another anomaly, a historical accident without justification, especially when these schools are so heavily dominated by the middle class. As Michael Wilshaw provocatively commented in December 2013, only 3% of students at grammar schools are eligible for free school meals: 'grammar schools are stuffed full of middle class kids'.⁹⁸ A report of the Sutton Trust, that month, revealed the full extent that middle class parents were going to move home or start attending church to gain access to top state schools: the 500 highest achieving comprehensive schools had half the proportion of pupils on free school meals as the national average. Peter Lampl, chairman of the trust said 'lower income students do better when there is a mix of students of all backgrounds in a school'.⁹⁹

The middle class stranglehold of top state schools – be they grammar, comprehensive, academy or free school, has not been lessened by a myriad of excellent initiatives over the last 15 years. It is time to get radical. At the start of that 15 year period, I argued in *Public and Private: The Divide must End* (SMF, 2001) that parents who could afford to pay for their children's education at popular state schools should do so. The time has come to revisit the arguments laid out at length in that publication. The proposal here is that those families with a combined income of over £80,000

98 Daniel Bofey, 'I know what's needed: Ofsted chief on pushy parents, staff clothing and canes', *Observer*, 15.12.13.

99 *Ibid.*

a year, approximately the average income of the top decile of households,¹⁰⁰ should be required to contribute financially for their children to go to a popular state school. The more the parents earn, the more they must pay. If families have a combined income of over £200,000, which would affect only the top 1 per cent of households in the UK,¹⁰¹ they should pay the full price of their children's education at popular state schools. The pamphlet argued further that the more popular the state school is, the more the parents pay, with grammar schools all falling into this category. The more in demand that the school is, the more parents pay, which makes grammar schools and popular academies and comprehensives the most expensive schools. Fees at these most popular schools should be the same for the affluent as the fees charged at independent day schools i.e. approximately £15,000 per annum for the most affluent at the top primary schools, and £20,000 at the top state secondary schools. This 'parent premium', which it is stressed would only come into place for the most affluent earning over £200,000 a year in combined income, will generate considerable surplus funds. A quarter of this extra money would be retained by the school themselves, while the remaining 75% would be put into a pot to be redistributed amongst state schools at large. This would provide additional incentives for state schools to perform above average, while at the same time generating funds for the currently deprived schools.

Even these most popular schools would however be free for those of very limited means. Less popular schools would charge less, while places in the least popular schools will be entirely free for all, even for the very affluent. This will encourage the well off to send their children to less popular state schools which will have the effect of improving quality by increasing the number of better

100 Office for National Statistics, The effects of taxes and benefits on household income, 2011/12 – Reference Tables, Table 16, 2013.

101 HMRC, Shares of total income (before and after tax) and income tax for percentile groups, 1999–00 to 2013–14, available at: www.hmrc.gov.uk/statistics/tax-statistics/table2-4.pdf.

off, articulate and demanding parents. The means test should be combined with the requirement that at least a quarter of places at the most popular schools should be non-fee paying, to ensure that at least 25 per cent of students at these school come from modest backgrounds.

This proposal offers the following benefits:

- It brings extra money into the state system.
- It enhances social justice by stopping powerful parents dominating top state schools.
- It will increase parental involvement in schools because many will now be making some contribution.
- It reduces the middle class dominance of top state schools.
- It will boost social mobility.

Britain will be in debt for many years to come. We should be looking for every possible source of extra funds to come into public services, and state schooling is the last great bastion holding out against the principle of payment. It is far more morally repellent to continue with the status quo than to start charging fees at top schools for those who can pay.

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During the years 2000–2015, Britain has seen major and far reaching reforms in its education system driven by two key figures: Andrew Adonis and Michael Gove. Motivated by the need to raise standards and rigour in Britain’s schools, and to create more and better opportunities for young people from the least advantaged backgrounds, their agenda led to the creation of ‘academies’ and, after 2010, ‘free schools’. Standards across the state sector have improved considerably since 2000, and much greater discipline and professionalism have been introduced into teaching and the leadership of schools.

The Adonis-Gove agenda needs to be completed fully, but the direction of travel is clear. What is needed now is a new wave of reforms, which builds on this first phase, and which offers young people a more rounded education, engages parents far more fully into their children’s education and ensures all young people have much richer opportunities, regardless of family background. More needs to be done to boost social mobility.

The proposals outlined here will end the divide between state and independent schools, thereby widening access to private education, bringing new money into the state system and reducing the domination of places at the top state schools by children from well off parents. These proposals are bold and above all they need political leadership and vision to bring them about.

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