

Selective, Comprehensive and Diversified Secondary Schooling in England: A Brief History

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This chapter traces the way in which national and local policies have at different times favoured selective or non-selective admissions arrangements in English secondary schools. It shows how, for most of the past century, the key issue of contention in political and educational debates was whether and how to select for a bipartite system on the basis of academic attainment or aptitude at age 11. The chapter goes on to discuss recent policies that have favoured a more diversified school system and parental choice, features that are sometimes criticised for introducing new forms of selection that may be less transparent and even more socially divisive.

The development of early state secondary education

Just as continental education systems of the nineteenth century were segmented, defining an academic and a social scale,¹ the people of Victorian England ‘knew that elementary education was for working-class children and that grammar schools were for middle-class children’.² Following legislation of 1902, maintained grammar schools were established in almost every major centre of population, where they were seen as the symbols of educational advance and the guardians of cultural excellence. For the working-class child, the acquisition of a highly-competitive grammar school scholarship or free place represented a considerable success. From 1917, grammar school courses were linked to School Certificate accreditation, strengthening links with the universities, and reinforcing the widely-held perception that a grammar school education could open doors that would otherwise remain firmly shut. In short, grammar schools provided an academic education for a minority – predominantly middle-class – destined for white-collar work or for university, followed by a professional career. The majority of children, by contrast, received only a basic education in an elementary school, occasionally followed by a short period in a lower status secondary institution.

It was not until after the end of the Second World War that free secondary education became a right for all children. However, the educational settlement ushered in by the 1944 Education Act did not seek to challenge the cultural *status quo*, and most of the post-war development plans produced by Local Education Authorities (LEAs) contemplated differentiated secondary schooling. The orthodoxy that intelligence was measurable by psychometric tests, offering ‘a neutral means of assessing the aptitudes of children from deprived backgrounds and of allocating them to appropriate schools’ had, by this time, dominated a generation of educational thinking.³ A tripartite arrangement of secondary grammar, technical and modern schools was widely envisaged, but it was *bipartism* that would prevail. Properly equipped technical schools proved too expensive for more than a handful of LEAs and, in any case, there were many reservations about identifying the ‘technical aptitudes’ of a child aged ten-and-a-half.⁴ The absence of technical schools militated against the realisation of ‘parity of esteem’ between all state secondary schools. Predictably, parental aspirations favoured the higher status grammar schools, notwithstanding the fact that, on average, 75 per cent of 11 to 15 year-olds were allocated to secondary modern schools, which were merely ‘an extension of the elementary school tradition’.⁵

Demands for comprehensive secondary schooling

Although the implementation of the 1944 settlement was presided over by the same Labour government that created the modern welfare state, egalitarian educational thinking was not to the fore.⁶ A British multilateral (or comprehensive) school lobby, consisting of some Socialist politicians and union officials is identifiable from the 1920s, but few arguments were voiced in favour of radical cultural transformation. Grammar schools, a number of which enjoyed reputations for excellence dating back to the sixteenth century, had been successful in producing a formidable generation of Labour politicians. Moreover, they aroused sentiments of civic pride that tended to push aside considerations of the less satisfactory secondary modern experience. Multilateral schools were untried, and their anticipated size – in excess of 1,000 pupils – was a cause of concern. Some critics viewed their possible introduction as a threat to the social order; writing in the *Times Educational Supplement (TES)* in 1947, Eric James, High Master of Manchester Grammar School,

expressed the fear that they might precipitate ‘grave social, educational and cultural evils which may well be a national disaster’.⁷

Despite its reputation as a landmark piece of twentieth-century social legislation,⁸ Kerckhoff and Trott suggest that there is ‘no basis to believe that the 1944 Education Act reduced the effects of socio-economic status on educational attainment’.⁹ Indeed, by the late 1950s and early 1960s, the conclusions drawn by a number of influential research studies were already being used to challenge the principle of selective secondary schooling. As Harold Silver notes, Floud, Halsey and Martin’s 1956 work on the relationship between social class and educational attainment ‘was followed by a considerable literature which analysed the nature of existing secondary school provision, the factors militating against working-class children gaining access to and succeeding in grammar school education, and pointed to the solution that was gaining political and educational ground – the comprehensive secondary school’.¹⁰ Selection, it was argued, was a major cause of ‘social waste’, as it advantaged the children of middle-class parents and was an impediment to equality.¹¹

Selection tests were also reported to be unreliable indicators of children’s potential. In 1957 a committee of leading psychologists, headed by P.E. Vernon and including Hans Eysenck (who was later to adopt a very different position), challenged the disciples of psychometric testing in arguing that human intelligence could be influenced by environment and by upbringing. The report concluded that ‘any policy involving irreversible segregation at eleven years or earlier is psychologically unsound, and therefore... in so far as public opinion allows – the common or comprehensive school would be preferable, at least up to the age of thirteen’.¹² In the same year a major National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) report noted that in some LEAs as many as 45 per cent of 11 year-olds proceeded to a grammar school, while the figure was as low as 10 per cent elsewhere.¹³ Even the most carefully devised selection procedures, it was maintained, had an error margin of ten per cent. This pointed to the conclusion that around 60,000 children per annum were allocated to the ‘wrong’ secondary school.¹⁴ Additional pressure came from the many middle-class parents whose children failed to pass the 11-plus.¹⁵

From the late 1950s a handful of local authorities began to establish ‘experimental’ comprehensive schools, and by 1963 a clear trend had developed – driven in part by mounting concerns that the rationale for and methods of psychometric testing were flawed. Originally, support for comprehensive schools was mostly to be found among individuals and groups associated with the Labour movement, but by the early 1960s it had become more widespread. In some localities Conservatives were content to support the removal of the 11-plus in order to facilitate the development of carefully-planned comprehensive schemes.¹⁶ Others revealed more audacious agendas, hailing comprehensive education as a panacea that might forge a less divided society and achieve cultural unification.¹⁷

Labour and Conservative policies 1964-79

The Labour government that came to power in 1964 sought to accelerate the drive towards comprehensive education. In keeping with the tradition of decentralised policy-making, it issued a non-statutory circular, requesting that LEAs provide comprehensive plans.¹⁸ Yet, while grammar schools and secondary moderns each had a clear sense of identity, the essential character of a comprehensive school proved more difficult to define. The ‘experimental’ comprehensives, built during the late 1950s in such places as London, Coventry and Bristol, had overwhelmingly been purpose-built institutions, catering for the full 11 to 18 age range and serving areas of new housing. While some of them had introduced innovative curricular features, their pupil intakes were characteristically similar to secondary modern schools.¹⁹ By the mid-1960s, the comprehensive movement could only proceed if LEAs were willing to close, merge or re-designate their existing selective institutions. A lead had been provided by such LEAs as Bradford, Croydon, Leicestershire and the West Riding of Yorkshire. The three latter LEAs each developed non-selective tiered patterns of secondary education that departed from the original conception of a very large comprehensive school. Others took a more piecemeal approach. As Labour’s policy accepted diversity as the price for rapid change – at least presentationally – the Department of Education and Science (DES) accepted a number of secondary reorganisation plans that sought only to soften selection, rather than remove it altogether. Though sometimes described as ‘interim’ solutions, a number of approved LEA proposals contemplated the preservation of at least one grammar school to cater for the most academically-able children

of the district.

Where state grammar schools continued to operate, comprehensives were ultimately ‘comprehensive’ only by aspiration. Some such institutions were, in fact, simply re-designated secondary modern schools. However, even where an LEA chose to adopt a ‘fully comprehensive’ solution, vestiges of the former selective system could sometimes be identified. For example, according to National Child Development Study data from 1974, comprehensive schools that had formerly been grammar schools were considerably more likely to have a sixth-form than ex-secondary modern comprehensives.²⁰ Clear statistical linkages were found between students in ex-grammar comprehensives having relatively high prior academic achievements, following a more traditionally academic curriculum, obtaining more public examination passes, proceeding to university and obtaining high status jobs.²¹

There followed several years of conflicting policy direction. In 1969, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Edward Short, introduced a Parliamentary Bill requiring those LEAs that had not put forward plans for a comprehensive system to do so. This Bill was lost, however, when Harold Wilson called a general election the following year. As Secretary of State for Education under the 1970 Conservative government, Margaret Thatcher withdrew Labour’s circular (though famously presided over more comprehensive school designations than any of her predecessors or successors) – only for Labour to reinstate the request for comprehensive plans on returning to office in 1974. By this stage Secretary of State Fred Mulley no longer shared the view of several of his predecessors that the remaining un-reorganised LEAs would fall into line.

A survey in 1975 indicated that only 20 LEAs were ‘truly comprehensive’, and that a quarter of ten year-olds still sat the 11-plus.²² Following the decision of seven LEAs to defy the government’s policy, and the decision of the Law Lords that he had acted unlawfully in attempting to abandon a scheme to end secondary school selection, Mulley introduced a Bill along the same lines as the abortive legislation from 1969-70. By the time this reached the statute book, in 1976, however, Shirley Williams had succeeded Mulley in James Callaghan’s government and the ‘Great Debate’ about the future of education was

underway. The continuing economic crisis, industrial unrest and doubts about the effectiveness of comprehensive education, including at Cabinet level, made it very difficult to enforce the 1976 Education Act.²³ Significantly, a 1978 DES report was more retrospective than forward-looking – confirming the Labour government’s unwillingness to differentiate between genuinely comprehensive arrangements and the partially comprehensive solutions adopted by a number of LEAs.²⁴

Conservative policies 1979-97

Following the Conservative general election victory of May 1979 under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, the 1976 Act was repealed by new legislation. In spite of this, the early 1980s witnessed a number of LEA secondary reorganisations along comprehensive lines, including Bolton, Tameside, Cornwall and Cumbria.²⁵ However, academic selection at 11-plus was once again officially sponsored at the margins via the new government’s Assisted Places Scheme, which funded academically able pupils to attend academically selective private schools.²⁶ More generally, over the course of the following decade the principle of comprehensive education was subjected to significant redefinition as a result of central government policies designed to promote ‘choice’ and ‘diversity’ under the banner of improving standards. In particular, the landmark 1988 Education Reform Act sought to promote two new types of self-governing secondary school, the city technology college (CTC) and the grant-maintained (GM) school. In some areas the GM school initiative proved to be a vehicle for the partial reintroduction of selection.²⁷ In the wake of the 1992 White Paper, *Choice and Diversity*, and further legislation the following year, an increasing number of specialist secondary schools emerged.²⁸ These schools were permitted to select according to pupil aptitude in such areas as technology, languages or music, rather than by ability.

During the early 1990s a small number of comprehensive schools introduced grammar streams, while in 1994, the Queen Elizabeth GM School, Penrith abandoned its comprehensive status to become a fully selective grammar school. No groundswell of support for these initiatives followed, but those who wanted to see more selection received an unexpected boost when in 1996 the Labour Party Shadow Health spokesperson, Harriet

Harman, opted to send her son to a grammar school outside her immediate locality.²⁹

A White Paper, published in June 1996 had been widely expected to make provision for a GM grammar school in every town. Instead, however, the document focused upon increasing the number of specialist schools and on permitting existing schools greater freedom to select. The White Paper proposed that GM schools should be able to select up to 50 per cent of their pupils, specialist schools 30 per cent and LEA comprehensives 20 per cent.³⁰ These thresholds featured in a Parliamentary Bill, published in October 1996. The Bill was before Parliament at the time of the Wirral South by-election of February 1997, during which the respective political parties' policies on selective and comprehensive education received close media examination. Six grammar schools were located within the Wirral South constituency, including one attended by the former Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. However, plans for Secretary of State Gillian Shephard's Bill to extend selection were sacrificed in the early spring when a general election was called and on 1 May the Conservatives lost power to a new Labour government, led by Tony Blair.

The approach of New Labour 1997-2010

For the Labour Party, comprehensive education had been a vexing issue throughout the 1990s. Party sound bites from the 1992 general election suggested a renewed commitment to the abandonment of selection within the state education system and the reassertion of LEA control over maintained schools.³¹ Following their fourth successive general election defeat, however, the party moved towards a position that accepted, and then embraced, diversity and choice. It was in the name of parental choice that the party side-stepped the grammar school question. As Blair told an audience in Birmingham during the 1997 general election campaign:

I have no intention of waging war on any schools except failing schools. So far as the existing 160 grammar schools are concerned, as long as the parents want them, they will stay... We will tackle what isn't working, not what is.³²

Accordingly, immediately after its election victory, New Labour published proposals to allow parents to decide the fate of existing grammar schools or of area-wide selection where it still existed. The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act thus included provisions by which local communities could petition for a ballot to end academic selection.³³ Several petitions were launched but only one received the signatures of 20 per cent of eligible parents, the threshold needed to trigger a ballot. In this ballot, which was for Ripon Grammar School, parents rejected an end to selection by a ratio of 2:1. There therefore remain 163 grammar schools in England, located in 36 of the 150 local authorities; of these 36, only the 15 fully selective local authorities have substantial numbers of pupils attending grammar schools.

In power, New Labour's position on selection remained ambiguous – certainly in the old terms of the debate. Although it did not support the creation of new state-funded grammar schools, and abolished the Assisted Places Scheme, it implicitly endorsed the principle of selection by other means. The 1997 White Paper, *Excellence in Schools*, and the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act that followed it, continued the previous administration's support for specialist schools;³⁴ while there was rather less emphasis on these schools' selective character, the Act nevertheless permitted any school to select 10 per cent of pupils on aptitude if the governing body was satisfied the school had a specialism.³⁵ There were continuing calls from organisations like the Campaign for State Education (CASE) and Comprehensive Future throughout the period of New Labour government – and indeed beyond – for the Labour Party leadership to tackle the remaining grammar schools. However, Labour chose to operate in the more ambiguous territory of 'choice and diversity'. Some in the party went so far as to dismiss the comprehensive school altogether as 'an institution of the past – part of the social democratic agenda of the sixties and therefore of no relevance to the world of the nineties'.³⁶ Contributions to the debate about selection by centre-left writers at this time included one by Adonis and Pollard, who argued that 'for all the good intentions, the destruction of the grammar schools... had the effect of reinforcing class divisions'.³⁷ Nevertheless, when Andrew Adonis became a policy adviser to the prime minister, and later an education minister, he chose not to take on the residual social democratic wing of the Labour Party over grammar schools but rather to pursue his ambitions for the reform of state education through other means – most notably, using

‘academies’ to tackle failing local authority run schools. The main aim behind these schools was to increase diversity and choice and thereby raise standards across academies’ local areas, which (under New Labour at least) were typically deprived areas.³⁸ Some academies were new schools, whereas others were existing schools deemed to be failing under local authority supervision, and that had not responded to earlier ‘turnaround’ initiatives. It was to academies (and later, under the Coalition government, free schools) that the vestiges of the comprehensive school lobby now turned their attention – and, specifically, these schools’ alleged role in reintroducing social – if not strictly academic – selection by the back door.³⁹

Selection within a diversified school system

Certainly under Tony Blair, New Labour continued to favour what it presented as the ‘modernisation’ of the comprehensive system through the differentiation of schools. Its rhetoric increasingly emphasised a supposed link between school diversity and higher standards for all. This is something that was made clear by Tony Blair in a 2006 speech, where he commented:

At first we put a lot of faith in centrally driven improvements in performance and undoubtedly without that we would never have got some of the immediate uplift in results. But over time I shifted from saying ‘it’s standards, not structures’ to realising that school structures could affect standards.⁴⁰

Accordingly, the amount of differentiation among schools increased under New Labour. As under the previous Conservative government, the key ingredient for linking differentiation to standards and excellence remained choice, as illustrated by the 2005 schools White Paper:

School improvement has been helped not only by the reforms introduced since 1997, but also by published data and inspection reports, and the ability of many parents to vote with their feet by finding a better state school. There are those who argue that there is no demand for choice; but this ignores the reality that the vast majority of parents want a real choice of excellent schools.⁴¹

New Labour chose to maintain something of the Conservative distinction between local authority and GM status, albeit under the new titles of ‘community’ and ‘foundation’ schools. In addition, it also retained the existing city technology colleges and greatly increased the number of specialist schools. To these were added (city) academies and trust schools. A new Schools Commissioner would act as a ‘champion’ of increased diversity and choice.

As Education Secretary, Estelle Morris stated that specialist schools were ‘only modern comprehensive schools’, implying that they had no special advantages.⁴² But at least until they became the majority of secondary schools, the specialist school label clearly differentiated them from what Tony Blair’s official spokesman, Alastair Campbell, termed ‘bog-standard’ comprehensive schools.⁴³ While the apparently superior performance of specialist schools added impetus to the policy of differentiation,⁴⁴ the fact that this performance may have been partly due to the nature of their pupil intakes was not always acknowledged.⁴⁵ Although it had always been the case that all sorts of schools that were nominally comprehensive lacked balanced intakes, either socially or academically, or indeed both, the charge was that school choice and school autonomy, including over admissions, would now make it possible for far more schools to select covertly as well as overtly.⁴⁶ Not surprisingly, academies became a particularly important category of school in this regard.

Thus, for a time, the debate about overt academic selection took second place to a debate about whether covert social selection, and by implication covert academic selection, was taking place in the new diverse school system.⁴⁷ A major issue of contention between the proponents and opponents of diversity was the effect of some but not all schools being their own admissions authorities. For example, Tough and Brooks found that schools that were their own admissions authorities had intakes that were far less representative of their surrounding areas than schools where the local authority was the admissions authority.⁴⁸ In 2005 and 2006, the Sutton Trust looked at the social composition of the ‘top 200’ comprehensives in England and identified a group of high attaining schools that were more socially exclusive than the national average and other schools in their areas.⁴⁹

This mismatch may be explained by a number of factors, including covert social selection.⁵⁰

Such covert selection was an area of concern for the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee in its review of the 2005 Schools White Paper, and its report to government prompted some significant concessions on admissions policy, mainly around the status of the admissions code.⁵¹ In an attempt to address covert selection (whether intended or unintended), the new code prohibited schools from giving priority to children on the basis of their interests or knowledge, and this was combined with free school transport to open up choice to less advantaged families and ‘choice advisers’ to assist these families in negotiating their child’s transition to secondary school.⁵² Later research by Allen et al. has suggested that the 2003 and 2007 admission codes did reduce social segregation between schools to a limited extent.⁵³

Nevertheless, left of centre opponents of New Labour continued to argue that such measures would not be enough to overcome covert selection and ‘playing the system’ by knowledgeable middle-class families, so they united around a call for ‘good schools in all areas, for all children’.⁵⁴ However, any attempt to return to traditional catchment areas after two decades of choice was unlikely to be attractive politically. An attempt by one local authority, Brighton, to run admissions lotteries as an alternative way of dealing with covert selection proved even more contentious,⁵⁵ although the Sutton Trust has recently suggested that ballots and banding arrangements are now becoming more acceptable to parents.⁵⁶

The Coalition Government, 2010-

The Conservative-led Coalition government that replaced New Labour in 2010 has maintained an emphasis on school autonomy, competition and choice – as its driving force for school improvement, closing the socio-economic achievement gap and enhancing social mobility. Whereas the academies policy of the Blair government used Academy status mainly to prioritise the replacement or improvement of failing schools in disadvantaged areas, the Coalition invited all schools highly rated by the schools

inspectorate, Ofsted, to apply for this status. As a result, at the time of writing nearly 60 per cent of secondary schools are academies or free schools. The latter are a further new form of school, set up by parents or other interested parties, and like academies they are their own admissions authorities. Although some of these schools are in disadvantaged areas or where there is a shortage of school places, others are in middle-class areas and where there is already a surplus of places. Those free schools located in disadvantaged areas have not necessarily attracted disadvantaged children.⁵⁷

Under the leadership of Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education from 2010 to 2014, these policies took precedence over any formal return to grammar schools, despite pressure from some of his backbench colleagues. His Liberal Democrat Coalition partners would anyway not have countenanced a return to academic selection at age 11. However, the numbers attending existing grammar schools have increased over the years and, in 2013, the Government agreed to allow oversubscribed schools, including grammar schools, to set up satellite schools on separate sites. Although an initial bid by Kent County Council to open annexes to two grammar schools in Sevenoaks was rejected on the grounds that they seemed to be entirely new schools, Gove was reported to be ‘genuinely open’ to another application that could not be dismissed on such grounds. Those close to Gove were also reported to be critical of a strong attack on grammar schools by Sir Michael Wilshaw, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector, who argued that ‘demands for more grammars should be ignored, as they serve the top 10 per cent of the population at the expense of the poorest’.⁵⁸

Reflections and conclusions

Can we draw any conclusions from this history about which type of school system – selective or comprehensive or diversified – is most effective? While this appears to be a straightforward question, a succession of research studies over a period of more than 50 years has failed to produce a consensus on the selective versus comprehensive issue. This is partly, of course, because we cannot begin to answer the question without first answering a series of prior questions. The obvious one is ‘effective for what’? Should we make judgements on the basis of the contribution of different types of school system to academic

attainment (and then for all, for some or for ‘closing the gap’?) or to well-being, employability, social mobility, social cohesion – or what? All these considerations and more have figured in debates about the policies described here.

Despite all the emphasis we hear today on the importance of evidence-based or evidence-informed policy, the policies set out in this chapter have been driven much more by social and educational aims and values that are by no means a matter of consensus. For some, of course, the right to choose – for good or ill – trumps all other considerations.

Sometimes the issues at stake are a matter of such intense emotion that an appeal to evidence may be beside the point. Certainly the language used by proponents of the different systems is hardly conducive to the careful weighing of evidence. For example, in 1991, the psychometrist and former opponent of selection, Hans Eysenck, suggested that comprehensive schools were responsible for ‘millions of uneducated, practically illiterate and innumerate youngsters who are almost unemployable roaming the streets, making up the legions of football hooligans, and making Britain the laughing stock of Europe’.⁵⁹ Later in that decade, one of the most passionate supporters of comprehensive education, Labour peer Roy Hattersley, launched the CASE ‘Say No to Selection’ campaign in October 1998 by condemning what he called the ‘educational apartheid’ of selection.⁶⁰ David Willetts’s careful weighing of the evidence on grammar schools and conclusion that they have not in fact been a driver of social mobility, did him few favours.⁶¹ None of this is to say that evidence should not be part of the debate, but it is unlikely to ever be the decisive determinant of policy.

In our earlier publication, *The Grammar School Question*,⁶² we reviewed what research evidence could tell us about the impact of competing systems.⁶³ We concluded that, overall, that exercise had been ‘disappointing’ for those looking for decisive evidence to support one side of the debate or the other. According to Jesson, later reviews of research evidence, such as that by Coe et al.,⁶⁴ also brought ‘no conclusive finding justifying one position over another’.⁶⁵

In 2000 we also suggested that academic selection had become less politically contentious

than it had been ten years earlier (or certainly that the terms of the debate had changed). We pointed out that a number of influential journalists who might at one time have been assumed to be supporters of comprehensive education, including Melanie Phillips and Will Hutton, had spoken and written in support of secondary school selection. Hutton though subsequently backed the way in which comprehensive schools were being interpreted by New Labour.⁶⁶

A key issue in recent debates has been the extent to which existing state-funded grammar schools can be justified when they recruit so few students from disadvantaged backgrounds even when they are academically able,⁶⁷ so there are currently moves to encourage such schools to change their admissions arrangements and to give priority to pupils whose record of receiving free school meals makes them eligible for payment of the Pupil Premium.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, no major political party has embraced a full-scale return to academic selection as part of its platform in recent times. At the time of writing, only the UK Independence Party (UKIP) is expected to include the creation of more grammar schools in its manifesto for the 2015 general election. Instead, there exists something of a consensus that diversity and choice should be the hallmark of the English secondary school system and some degree of selection by aptitude, if not academic attainment, permitted within it. In view of this, future governments may just try to tinker with the existing diverse system to encourage more or less selection within it. If a future government does actively sponsor a more overtly selective system of state-funded education, this is perhaps more likely to emerge at age 14 or 16 than age 11. A majority Conservative government might conceivably consider a return to some form of Assisted Places Scheme, along the lines of the needs blind admissions system currently being advocated by the Sutton Trust.⁶⁹ There certainly seems to be no appetite among any of the mainstream political parties to take on the overt academic selection that remains a crucial feature of the elite private sector of education in England. That remains far too hot a political issue to contemplate.

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- ⁴ A.C. Kerckhoff, K. Fogelman, D. Crook, and D. Reeder, *Going Comprehensive in England and Wales: A Study of Uneven Change*, London, Woburn Press, 1996, p.136.
- ⁵ D. Lawton, *Class, Culture and the Curriculum*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p.3.
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- ⁸ M. Barber, *The Making of the 1944 Education Act*, London, Cassell, 1994.
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- ¹⁹ See, for example, London County Council, 1961.
- ²⁰ A.C. Kerckhoff, K. Fogelman, D. Crook, and D. Reeder, *Going Comprehensive in England and Wales: A Study of Uneven Change*, London, Woburn Press, 1996, p.201.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² B. Simon, *Education and the Social Order, 1940-1990*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1991, p.439.
- ²³ C. Chitty, *Towards a New Education System: The Victory of the New Right?* London, Falmer, 1989, p.69.
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- ³⁰ Department for Education and Employment, *Self-Government for Schools*, London, HMSO, 1996.
- ³¹ See, for example, *The Independent*, 26th February 1992.
- ³² T. Blair, speech at the Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, 14 April, 1997.
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- ³⁴ Department for Education and Employment, *Excellence in Schools*, London, HMSO, 1997.
- ³⁵ The distinction between aptitude, ability and attainment was somewhat blurred and aptitude was sometimes seen by critics of such policies as a proxy for selection by academic ability (see T. Edwards and G. Whitty, 'Specialisation and selection in secondary education', *Oxford Review of Education*, 23(1), 1997, pp.5-15; J. Coldron, B. Willis, and C. Wolstenholme, 'Selection by Attainment and Aptitude in English

Secondary Schools', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 57 (3), 2009, pp. 245-264: stated that, although the great majority of specialist schools did not use selection, the potential was there to do so.

³⁶ Cited in C. Chitty, 'Thirty Years On', *Forum* 36, 3, 1994, p.89.

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³⁸ National Audit Office, *The Academies Programme*, London, TSO, 2007.

³⁹ Although most such schools were technically non-selective, over 80 per cent of the remaining 163 grammar schools had adopted academy status by 1 January 2013.

⁴⁰ T. Blair, speech at the Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, 14 April, 1997.

⁴¹ Department for Education and Skills, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*, London, TSO, 2005.

⁴² E. Morris, 'We Need Your Help to Make a Difference', *Education Review* 15, 1, 2001, p.4.

⁴³ A. Campbell, *The Blair Years: Extracts from the Alastair Campbell Diaries*, London, Hutchinson, 2007.

⁴⁴ D. Jesson and D. Crossley, *Educational Outcomes and Value Added by Specialist Schools—2005*, London, SSAT/iNet, 2006.

⁴⁵ The Sutton Trust, *The Social Composition of Top Comprehensive Schools: Rates of Eligibility for Free School Meals at the 200 Highest Performing Comprehensive Schools*, London, The Sutton Trust, 2006.

⁴⁶ S. Gewirtz, S. Ball, and R. Bowe, *Markets, Choice and Equity in Education*, Buckingham, Open University Press, 1995; P. Newsam, 'Diversity and Admissions to English Secondary Schools', *Forum*, 45, 1, 2003, pp.17-18.

⁴⁷ J. Coldron, B. Willis, and C. Wolstenholme, 'Selection by Attainment and Aptitude in English Secondary Schools', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 57, 3, 2009, p. 261 argues that 'selection to grammar schools by prior attainment is currently also largely selection by social background'.

⁴⁸ S. Tough and R. Brooks, *School Admissions: Fair Choice for Parents and Pupils*, London, IPPR, 2007.

⁴⁹ The Sutton Trust, *The Social Composition of Top Comprehensive Schools: Rates of Eligibility for Free School Meals at the 200 Highest Performing Comprehensive Schools*, London, The Sutton Trust, 2006. In a more recent study, The Sutton Trust, *Selective Comprehensives: The Social Composition of Top Comprehensive School*, London, The Sutton Trust, 2013 found that the overall rate of free school meal uptake at the top 500 comprehensives measured on the five good GCSE scale was just below half the national average. They further found that schools controlling their own admissions policies were overrepresented in this top 500.

⁵⁰ Selection by faith schools was also an issue raised at this time but it is not directly addressed in this chapter (see G. Penlington, 'Why New Labour Found Itself Converted to Church Schools', *Parliamentary Brief*, 2, 2001, pp.42-3).

⁵¹ Department for Education and Skills, 'The Government's Response to the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee Report: The Schools White Paper: Higher Standards', *Better Schools for All*, London, TSO, 2006; Education and Skills Committee, *The Schools White Paper: Higher Standards, Better Schools For All*, London, TSO, 2006.

⁵² Department for Education and Skills, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*, London, TSO, 2005.

⁵³ R. Allen, J. Coldron, and A. West, 'The Effect of Changes in Published Secondary Schools Admissions on Pupil Composition', *Journal of Education Policy*, 27, 3, 2012, pp. 349-366.

⁵⁴ For example Education Alliance, 'A Good Local School for Every Child: Will the Education Bill Deliver?', Conference report, Institute of Education, University of London, 25 March 2006.

⁵⁵ S. Laville and R. Smithers, 'War over School Boundaries Divides Brighton', *Guardian*, 2007, p. 4.

⁵⁶ The Sutton Trust, *The Sutton Trust Mobility Manifesto*, London, The Sutton Trust, 2014.

⁵⁷ F. Green, R. Allen, and A. Jenkins, *The Social Composition of Free Schools after Three Years*, London, Institute of Education, 2014.

⁵⁸ D. Boffey, 'Ofsted Chief Declares War on Grammar Schools', *Observer*, 15 December 2013.

⁵⁹ H. Eysenck, 'Equality and Education: Fifteen Years on', *Oxford Review of Education*, 17, 1991, p.164.

⁶⁰ BBC News, 'Saying "No" to Selection', 24 October 1998.

⁶¹ D. Willetts, speech to the CBI Conference on Public Service Reform, 16 May 2007.

⁶² D. Crook, S. Power, and G. Whitty, *The Grammar School Question: A Review of Research on Comprehensive and Selective Education*, London, Institute of Education, 1999.

⁶³ At that time we reviewed studies by Benn and Simon (1970), Steedman (1980), Marks et al (1983), Steedman (1983), Gray et al (1983), Gray et al (1984), Department of Education and Science (1983 and 1984),

Marks and Pomian-Szrednicki (1985), Marks et al (1986), McPherson and Willms (1987), Reynolds et al (1987), Marks (1991), Benn and Chitty (1996), Kerckhoff et al (1996) and Marks (1998). Subsequently, the wider political emphasis on social mobility and ‘closing the gap’ under New Labour (and, to an even greater extent, the Coalition Government) has been reflected in the emphasis of more recent studies, such as Jesson (2007), Harris and Rose (2013) and Burgess et al (2014). These studies do not seem to have found that existing grammar schools contributed significantly to this wider political agenda, even where they identified some limited advantages for individual pupils. Research on the diversified school system by Machin and colleagues (Machin and Vernoit, 2011; Machin and Silva, 2013), particularly on the performance of New Labour’s academies compared with other schools, concluded that even where they performed better overall they did not necessarily succeed in closing the achievement gap.

⁶⁴ R. Coe, K. Jones, J. Searle, D. Kokptsaki, A. Kosnin, and P. Skinner, ‘Evidence on the Effects of Selective Education Systems’, *A Report for The Sutton Trust by CEM Centre*, University of Durham, 2008.

⁶⁵ D. Jesson, *The Creation, Development and Present State of Grammar Schools in England*, A report for the Sutton Trust by the Centre for Performance Evaluation and Resource Management, University of York, 2013.

⁶⁶ G. Whitty, ‘Developing Comprehensive Education in a New Climate’, in M. Benn and C. Chitty (eds), *A Tribute to Caroline Benn: Education and Democracy*, London, Continuum, 2004.

⁶⁷ J. Cribb, D. Jesson, L. Sibieta, A. Skipp, and A. Vignoles, *Poor Grammar: Entry into Grammar Schools for disadvantaged pupils in England*, London, Sutton Trust, 2013.

⁶⁸ D. Jesson, *The Creation, Development and Present State of Grammar Schools in England*, A report for The Sutton Trust by the Centre for Performance Evaluation and Resource Management, University of York, 2013; The Sutton Trust, *The Sutton Trust Mobility Manifesto*, London, The Sutton Trust, 2014.

⁶⁹ The Sutton Trust, *The Sutton Trust Mobility Manifesto*, London, The Sutton Trust, 2014.