



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2016-0204 , 4 November 2016

# The role of grammar and faith schools

Robert Long  
Alex Adcock

## Summary

On Tuesday 8 November MPs will debate a motion on the role of grammar and faith schools. This debate was scheduled by the Backbench Business Committee following a representation from Lisa Nandy.

This debate will be opened by Lisa Nandy, Neil Carmichael and Caroline Lucas.

### Motion to be debated:

"That this House notes recent proposals by the Government to expand the role of grammar and faith schools; and calls on the Government to conduct a full assessment of the evidence relating to the effect of grammar schools and faith schools on children's learning."

[Watch the debate live on Parliament TV](#)

## Contents

<b>1. Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
Proposals to lift ban on new grammar schools	2
Faith school admissions	3
<b>2. Grammar schools</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Press coverage	5
2.2 Parliamentary coverage	9
<b>3. Faith</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 Press coverage	20
3.2 Parliamentary coverage	21
<b>4. Further reading</b>	<b>26</b>

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

# 1. Summary

## Proposals to lift ban on new grammar schools

On 9 September 2016 the Prime Minister confirmed that the Government intended to lift the long-standing ban on the [creation of entirely new grammar schools in England](#), and to “give the green light” to the expansion of existing grammar schools.<sup>1</sup>

The Government would consult on proposals:

- Requiring new or expanding grammars to take a proportion of pupils from lower income households, so that selective education is not reserved for those with the means to move into a catchment area or pay for tuition to pass the test; or
- Requiring them to establish a new, high quality, non-selective free school. Requiring them to set up or sponsor a primary feeder school in an area with a high density of lower income households; or
- Requiring them to sponsor a currently underperforming non-selective academy.<sup>2</sup>

The Government also proposed that existing non-selective schools should be allowed to become selective “in some circumstances”.<sup>3</sup>

In explaining the rationale for the proposals, the Government stressed the need to move toward a more meritocratic system:

We are going to build a country that works for everyone, not just the privileged few. A fundamental part of that is having schools that give every child the best start in life, regardless of their background.

For too long we have tolerated a system that contains an arbitrary rule preventing selective schools from being established - sacrificing children’s potential because of dogma and ideology. The truth is that we already have selection in our school system – and its selection by house price, selection by wealth. That is simply unfair.<sup>4</sup>

The press notice also set out other proposals to encourage higher education providers to sponsor under-performing local schools or set up new free schools.

## Green Paper

The consultation on grammar school expansion and other issues, [Schools that work for everyone](#), was subsequently published on 12 September 2016. The consultation will remain open until 12 December 2016.

---

<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister’s Office/ DfE press release, [PM to set out plans for schools that work for everyone](#), 9 September 2016.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

The Green Paper also stated that the Government would encourage multi-academy trusts to select within their trust:

We will make clear that multi-academy trusts and/or other good or outstanding academies can already establish a single centre in which to educate their "most able" pupils. This centre could be 'virtual' or have a physical location.<sup>5</sup>

### Further information

- The Library briefing [Grammar Schools in England](#), SN 07070, provides more information on the relevant law and history of grammar schools, and the debate on their potential expansion.

### Faith school admissions

Where oversubscribed, schools in England designated with a religious character ('faith' schools) are allowed to use faith-based oversubscription criteria to give higher priority to children of the faith than children of other faiths or of no faith.

Where there are fewer applicants than places (i.e., a school is undersubscribed) all applicants must be given a place without reference to faith; schools cannot refuse a place solely on the basis that a child is not of the relevant (or any) faith.

New academies<sup>6</sup> or free schools with a religious character are currently required to admit, as a minimum, 50% of their pupils without reference to faith where the school is oversubscribed.<sup>7</sup>

### Green paper

The Government consultation [Schools that work for everyone](#) proposes removing the 50% cap, and allowing new faith schools to select the whole of their intake on the basis of faith, where oversubscribed. The consultation proposes to make the change conditional on new measures to promote inclusivity, specifically that schools:

- Prove that there is demand for school places from parents of other faiths
- Establish twinning arrangements with other schools not of their faith
- Consider setting up mixed-faith multi-academy trusts, including becoming a sponsor for underperforming non-faith schools
- Consider placing an independent member or director who is of a different faith or no faith at all on the governing body of new faith free schools<sup>8</sup>

Under the proposals, schools that did not meet these requirements would lose the right to admit on the basis of faith and become a non-faith school.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Department for Education, [Schools that work for everyone](#), p27

<sup>6</sup> I.e. not converters from the maintained or independent sectors, or sponsored academies with a predecessor maintained school.

<sup>7</sup> DfE, [School Admissions Code](#), Dec 2014, paragraphs 1.36 to 1.38 and in particular see footnote 30.

<sup>8</sup> Department for Education, [Schools that work for everyone](#), p32-33

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p34

**Further information**

- More information on faith schools in England can be found in the Library briefing [Faith Schools: FAQs](#), SN 06972.
- The Library briefing [School admissions in England: State-funded mainstream schools](#), SN 07147, provides wider information on admissions rules.

## 2. Grammar schools

### 2.1 Press coverage

**Telegraph, 3 November 2016**

[Do universities favour grammar or state school pupils?](#)

**Guardian, 2 November 2016**

[Ofsted head praises England's schools for immigrant integration](#)

Sir Michael Wilshaw says achievement of schools in helping new arrivals into British society goes largely unnoticed

[...]

But critics of England's schools were wrong to conclude that new grammar schools were the answer. "I think this would be a monumental mistake," he said.

Wilshaw argued that "grammars are back in vogue now partly because we have failed to sufficiently reform comprehensives", and partly because of the damaging effects of "anti-academic ideology associated with the early comprehensives".

**Guardian, 1 November 2016**

[Another education U-turn? This is dangerous driving from Theresa May](#)

The government's irresponsible approach to education policy is leaving a trail of chaos – and schools will have to sort it out.

**Telegraph, 29 October 2016**

[Parents travel three times as far to drop off their children at grammar schools](#)

**Times Educational Supplement (TES), 28 October 2016**

[Selection by any other name is still not that sweet](#)

**Times Educational Supplement (TES), 28 October 2016**

[Greening backs UTCs as non-grammar alternative](#)

**Times Educational Supplement (TES), 28 October 2016**

[Grammar plan is about 'more choice for parents'](#)

**Guardian, 26 October 2016**

[Out of the classroom: the ex-teachers meeting the need for tutors](#)

Around a quarter of UK pupils have had private tuition and the prospect of new grammar schools is set to pique further interest

**Guardian, 25 October 2016**

[Grammar schools cannot help 90% of children](#)

Guardian, 19 October 2016

[May defends grammars and plans for universities' role in state schools](#)

Independent, 16 October 2016

[Theresa May told to stop 'obsessing' over 'socially divisive' grammar schools](#)

Telegraph, 14 October 2016

[Grammar pupils progressing faster than their peers in non-selective schools, data shows](#)

Guardian, 11 October 2016

[Grammar schools are unfair. Principled parents must refuse to encourage them](#)

Guardian, 11 October 2016

[Jeremy Corbyn wants to abolish nuclear weapons – but not the 11-plus](#)

Independent, 4 October 2016

[Theresa May: Grammar schools do not leave poor children behind – it makes them do better](#)

Guardian, 3 October 2016

[Nicky Morgan: grammar schools plan could undermine progress](#)

Guardian, 1 October 2016

[Grammar schools cast pupils as successes or failures, says Burnham](#)

Independent, 30 September 2016

[Grammar schools could be reintroduced through the back door, campaigners warn](#)

Multi-academy trusts will be able to move their brightest pupils to 'centres of excellence'

Times Educational Supplement (TES), 30 September 2016

[Grammars mean 'selection at 4'](#)

Guardian, 24 September 2016

[May's schools plan would cost council taxpayers 'significantly', says LGA](#)

Guardian, 22 September 2016

[My school's broad social mix benefited all pupils. I'm glad it wasn't a grammar](#)

Independent, 22 September 2016

[Theresa May's grammar schools plan based on 'no evidence', warns biggest study of existing schools](#)

Exclusive: Former schools minister David Laws says the Prime Minister needs to go 'back to the drawing board' with proposals

**Guardian, 20 September 2016**

[No grammar schools, lots of play: the secrets of Europe's top education system](#)

In Finland children don't start school until they are seven, but what happens before that is even more important

**Guardian, 20 September 2016**

[Allow failing schools, not grammars, first choice of the brightest pupils](#)

**Times Educational Supplement (TES), 16 September 2016**

[Dear Ms May, how can you talk about social justice?](#)

**Guardian, 16 September 2016**

[Grammar schools might be a leg up for working-class children](#)

**Telegraph, 16 September 2016**

[Schools looks to become first grammar](#)

**Telegraph, 16 September 2016**

[George Osborne criticises Theresa May's grammar schools focus in intervention that suggests leadership hopes remain](#)

**Financial Times, 15 September**

[UK grammar school plan criticised by OECD education chief](#)

Academic selection 'ultimately becomes social selection', says expert at group of developed nations

The OECD's top education expert has suggested that the UK government is "dramatically over-playing" the capacity for grammar schools to drive up academic standards and improve social mobility.

**Financial Times, 15 September**

[Academies wary of grammar schools revival](#)

Trust chiefs pour cold water on May's proposals to bring back selection

The heads of some of England's leading academy chains have expressed deep reservations about Theresa May's plans to create a new wave of selective grammar schools.

The majority of chief executives at multi-academy trusts, some of whom control dozens of schools, say they are highly unlikely to introduce selection. Of the six trusts contacted by the Financial Times only one said it would consider selection for some students.

**Independent, 14 September 2016**

[Theresa May says the only reason she's Prime Minister is because she went to grammar school](#)

**Independent, 13 September 2016**

[Most teachers against new wave of grammar schools, survey suggests](#)

Financial Times, 12 September

[Tory MPs criticise May's grammar school plans](#)

Guardian, 12 September 2016

['Tutor-proof' 11-plus professor admits grammar school test doesn't work](#)

Independent, 12 September 2016

[Grammar school plans are not 'going back to the Fifties', says Home Secretary](#)

Guardian, 10 September 2016

[Grammar schools 'will cut private-school dominance of professions'](#)

Independent, 10 September 2016

[Former Education Secretary: Theresa May's school plans are 'weird'](#)

Telegraph, 10 September 2016

[Two cheers for Theresa May putting grammar schools back on the agenda - the real work starts now](#)

Financial Times, 9 September

[The great grammar school row and the curse of 'bring backery'](#)

Financial Times, 9 September

[A first glimpse of Theresa May's meritocratic vision](#)

Guardian, 9 September 2016

[Theresa May's grammar school nostalgia is heartfelt - but wrong](#)

Guardian, 9 September 2016

[Disadvantaged children under-represented in grammar schools](#)

Guardian, 9 September 2016

[Grammar schools are not just socially divisive – they're deeply ineffective](#)

Guardian, 9 September 2016

[Who will open new grammar schools and will they boost social mobility?](#)

Telegraph, 9 September 2016

[Jeremy Corbyn's grammar schools crusade sets himself against Labour's working-class voters](#)

Telegraph, 9 September 2016

[Excellent grammars should be open to all](#)



## 2.2 Parliamentary coverage

### Urgent question

#### [New Grammar Schools](#)

Urgent question on the Government's plans to lift the statutory ban on opening new grammar schools

08 Sep 2016 | Urgent questions | 614 cc467-484

#### [Angela Rayner \(Ashton-under-Lyne\) \(Lab\)](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education to make a statement on the Government's plans to lift the statutory ban on opening new grammar schools in England.

#### [The Secretary of State for Education \(Justine Greening\)](#)

As the Prime Minister has said, this Government are committed to building a country that works for everyone, not just the privileged few. We believe that every person should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, no matter what their background or where they are from.

Education is at the heart of this ambition. We inherited a system from the Labour Government, however, where far too many children left school without the qualifications or the skills they needed to be successful in life. Our far-reaching reforms over the last six years have changed this, strengthening school leadership, improving standards of behaviour in our classrooms, ensuring children are taught to read more effectively and improving maths teaching in primary schools. As a result there are now 1.4 million more pupils in schools rated as good or outstanding than in 2010.

This means more young people are being given the opportunity to access better teaching and to maximise their potential. This is what we want for all children, and we are continuing our reforms so that every child can have the best possible start in life. It is why we are doubling free childcare to 30 hours for working parents of three and four-year-olds. As I said in July, on the issue of academic selection I am open-minded because we cannot rule anything out that could help us grow opportunity for all and give more people the chance to do well in life.

The landscape for schools has changed hugely in the last 10, 20, 30 years. We now have a whole variety of educational offers available. There will be no return to the simplistic binary choice of the past, where schools separate children into winners and losers, successes or failures. This Government want to focus on the future, to build on our success since 2010 and to create a truly 21st-century school system. However, we want a system that can cater for the talent and the abilities of every single child. To achieve that, we need a truly diverse range of schools and specialisms. We need more good schools in more areas of the country responding to the needs of every child, regardless of their background. We are looking at a range of options, and I expect any new proposals to focus on what we can do to help everyone to go as far as their individual talents and capacity for hard work can take them. Education policy to that end will be set in due course.

[Angela Rayner](#)

Wow! Despite that waffle, the cat is finally out of the bag. The Government have revealed their plans for new grammar schools in England, but not in this House—we did not even hear the word “grammar” just then. Instead, they did it through leaks to the press and at a private meeting of Conservative Members. So much for the one nation Government we were promised. Will the Secretary of State promise today that future such announcements will be made here so that we can give this policy the scrutiny it so badly needs?

Perhaps the Secretary of State can tell us the evidence base for this policy today. Has she read the Institute for Fiscal Studies report “Entry into Grammar Schools in England”? If so, perhaps she remembers the conclusion:

“amongst high achievers, those who are eligible for” free school meals “or who live in poorer neighbourhoods are significantly less likely to go to a grammar school.”

The OECD and the Sutton Trust, and even the Government’s own social mobility tsar and their chief inspector of schools, have all cited the evidence against this policy. In Kent, where we have grammar schools, the attainment gap is far wider than it is elsewhere. So can the Secretary of State tell the House what evidence she has to support her belief that grammar schools will help disadvantaged children and close the attainment gap?

At a time when our schools are facing a crisis in teacher recruitment and retention, with thousands taught in super-size classes and schools facing real-term cuts to their budget for the first time in nearly two decades, pushing ahead with grammar schools shows a dangerous misunderstanding of the real issues facing our schools. What will the Secretary of State be doing to address the real problems facing our schools today?

The Prime Minister has said this policy is justified because we already have social selection. Quite how making things worse by bringing back grammar schools as a solution remains a mystery. Perhaps the Secretary of State can tell us why she is not ensuring that all children get a decent education?

This policy will not help social mobility but will entrench inequality and disadvantage. It will be the lucky few who can afford the tuition who will get ahead and the disadvantaged who will be left behind—a policy for the few at the expense of the many. I was told that the Tories know the cost of everything and the value of nothing. I do not even think they know that anymore.

Finally, the Prime Minister promised to lead a one nation Government. She said that her policy would be led by the evidence, and she claimed that she would govern for the disadvantaged, not the privileged few, yet this policy fails on every single count. It may be a new Prime Minister, but it is the same old nasty Tories.

### Justine Greening

The first thing I would say to the hon. Lady is that we have not yet actually made any policy announcements; they will be made in due course. She has given a commentary on what I guess she presumes the policy announcement will be. I would encourage her to wait. Broadly, we are interested in increasing diversity and meeting parents' desire for choice in having a school near to them that matches the needs of their child. We also want to see capacity built into the system, in two ways. We want more good schools near to children where they need them. There are too many parts of our country where, in spite of all the reforms we have made and the improvements in attainment that we have seen, there are still children who cannot get good enough access to a good school. We also want to build capacity by having some of our best schools work with other schools in the system to help collectively to raise attainment and standards as a whole. We want to see all parts of our education system, not just the school system but universities as well, playing a stronger, better role.

The hon. Lady asked about evidence. She quoted a report by the IFS that does mention free school meals. However, I must say that I do not understand her argument. She seems to be criticising the status quo while resolutely defending keeping it in place. It was really interesting listening to her, because, in many respects, the words echoed the voices that I heard in my childhood—people having a dogmatic debate about the education system while I studied in my local comprehensive entirely untouched by that ideological debate. What we want to do, and what we think this Parliament and the country should do, is to be prepared to look at the practical ways that we can improve attainment for our children, and to leave no stone unturned to do that.

Complaining about one aspect of our school system and then saying that we should not even have a debate about that element is, frankly, an untenable argument. It is, in essence, politics and dogma coming before pupils and opportunity. It is about Labour Members prioritising, as we can see today, an ideological debate, while Government Members want a debate about the practical steps we can take to tackle generational failure and schools that still are not delivering for children who live near to them. It would be wrong to discount how we can improve prospects for those children, especially the most disadvantaged, purely because of political dogma. If Labour Members are not willing to ask themselves these difficult questions, how can they possibly come up with any of the solutions?

We do believe that selection can play a role, and we think there is evidence to show that it does for many children in grammar schools—but anyhow, we need to leave no stone unturned. We will set out our policies for consultation in due course, and I am sure that hon. Members will want to debate them thoroughly after that.

[...]

## Debates

### [Grammar Schools](#)

Lords motion to take note of the Government's proposals for the extension of grammar schools and selection in education. Agreed to on question.

13 Oct 2016 | Debates | House of Lords | 774 cc2011-2049

### [Grammar School Funding](#)

13 Jan 2015 | Adjournment debates | 590 cc191-214WH

## PQs

### [Grammar Schools](#)

**Asked by:** Phillips, Jess

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what evidence her Department holds on the merits of grammar schools for social mobility.

**Answering member:** Nick Gibb

Grammar schools' stretching education levels the playing field between disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers. For example, one study [1] found that in areas where at least 10 per cent of places are selective, pupils eligible for free school meals in grammar schools gain around 7 to 8 GCSE grades more than they would have achieved if they had not gone to a selective school. Across all pupils in grammar schools the average gain was 3.5 grades. Furthermore, disadvantaged pupils who attended grammar schools are more than three times as likely to go to Russell Group universities after finishing sixth form than those who attend comprehensive schools [2].

It is important to remember, however, the evidence we have is based on the existing selective school system, not the model we are proposing for the future system. We recognise that selective schools currently admit too few disadvantaged pupils and we want to look at how we can improve this. We are consulting on options for a new schools system, which will also make sure selective schools support non-selective education in their area to further support increased social mobility.

[1] Atkinson, Gregg and McConnell (2004) The results of 11 Plus selection: an investigation into equity and efficiency of outcomes for pupils in selective LEAs, by Bristol University.

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/destinations-of-ks4-and-ks5-pupils-2015-provisional>

02 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 50029

[Grammar Schools: Disadvantaged](#)

**Asked by:** Powell, Lucy

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children in receipt of free school meals (a) sat and (b) passed the 11-plus exam in each fully and partially-selective local education authority area in the most recent year for which data is available.

**Answering member:** Nick Gibb

The Department for Education does not collect data on whether those pupils sitting the entrance exam for a selective school are eligible for free school meals; neither are local authorities required to provide this information to the Department.

02 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 49288

[Schools: Standards](#)

**Asked by:** Timms, Stephen

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what comparative assessment she has made of the pre-16 and post-16 attainment of pupils attending (a) high performing non-selective and (b) grammar schools; and if she will make a statement.

**Answering member:** Nick Gibb

The Department produces data on the performance of both pre-16 and post-16 schools by their admissions arrangements at year 7. Pre-16 performance information is published in the "GCSE and equivalent results: 2015 to 2016 (provisional)" [1], statistical first release (SFR). Post-16 performance information is published in the "A level and other 16 to 18 results: 2015 to 2016 (provisional)" [2] SFR.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-results-2015-to-2016-provisional> (Table 6b)

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/a-level-and-other-level-3-results-2015-to-2016-provisional> (Table 1b)

02 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 49286

[Comprehensive Schools](#)

**Asked by:** Tomlinson, Justin

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the efficacy of grammar stream programmes in comprehensive schools.

**Answering member:** Nick Gibb

The Government is committed to enabling all children to fulfil their potential by delivering a school system that works for everyone.

The Department has not commissioned any recent research to look at the specific benefits or effects of streaming by ability in comprehensive schools. However, we do know that the vast majority of schools choose to stream by ability over the core subjects.

There are indications that this approach benefits higher-ability pupils. For example, the Educational Endowment Foundation (EEF) evidence review[1] found that on average studies showed that higher attaining pupils make one to two additional months' progress when set or streamed compared to when taught in mixed ability groups. The EEF found that high attaining pupils benefit from different kinds of grouping, including pull-out classes, accelerated classes and moving up a year.

[1] <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/setting-or-streaming/>

02 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 48945

### [Grammar Schools](#)

**Asked by:** Cunningham, Mr Jim

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what advice her Department has received from experts on the reintroduction of grammar schools in the last 12 months; and if she will make a statement.

**Answering member:** Nick Gibb

The Department has reviewed a wide range of external research and evidence on the impact of academic selection, including research on the impact of selection on the educational attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

The evidence shows that grammar schools provide a good education for those who attend them. Grammar school pupils outperform those of similar ability in comprehensive schools and they also make more progress than other pupils with similar primary school results. Nearly 78 per cent of high ability pupils achieve the English Baccalaureate at grammar school, compared to just over 52 per cent at comprehensive schools, and the attainment gap for disadvantaged students in grammar schools is practically eliminated

This evidence is based on the existing system of grammar schools. We are proposing significant changes to the requirements placed on selective schools to ensure that they raise standards for all pupils as part of a diverse schools system.

Our proposals will help deliver a school system that works for all children and offers parents genuine choice by increasing the number of good and outstanding school places.

02 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 47688

### [Free School Meals and Special Educational Needs](#)

**Asked by:** Benn, Hilary

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupils attending state-funded (a) grammar schools and (b) schools that are not grammar schools (i) are eligible for free schools meals and (ii) have special educational needs.

**Answering member:** Nick Gibb

The Government does not collect data on pupils who have social educational needs.

The number and proportion of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals are set out below.

	<b>Eligible for and claiming FSM</b>
<b>State-funded grammars</b>	2.5% (4,237 of 166,517 pupils)
<b>Non-selective state-funded secondary schools</b>	13.8% (416,279 of 3,026,901 pupils)

Source: January 2016 school census return. The data includes all pupils on roll, including those over 16.

The consultation document **Schools that work for Everyone** proposes that we should seek to identify and support those families which are 'just managing'; those on modest incomes who might not be in receipt of benefits but nevertheless are just about managing. The document also proposes that we should place conditions on new selective schools so that they attract more pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, and that they should work with non-selective schools to raise standards for all pupils.

02 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 45940

[Grammar Schools: Admissions](#)

**Asked by:** Smith, Royston | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many grammar schools have sought to end selective admissions under sections 104 to 109 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

**Answering member:** Nick Gibb

The Department does not routinely collect data on significant changes to schools but we are not aware of any grammar schools that have sought to remove selection under the provisions mentioned.

02 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 49518

[Grammar Schools: Admissions](#)

**Asked by:** Nandy, Lisa

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of grammar school entrants were previously educated in fee-paying preparatory schools in (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15 and (c) 2015-16.

**Answering member:** Nick Gibb

The data requested is not collected by the Department or local authorities.

The School Admissions Code<sup>[1]</sup> sets out that admission authorities must not “take into account any previous schools attended, unless it is a named feeder school” (para 1.9b) or “name fee-paying independent schools as feeder schools” (para 1.9l).

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>

24 Oct 2016 | Written questions | 45673

### [Engagements](#)

**Asked by:** Lucy Powell (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op)

Just one in every 1,000 pupils is a child on free school meals in a grammar school. Does the Prime Minister agree that that tiny number is a flimsy evidence base on which to create a new national schools policy? Would it not be better for her to look at the real evidence base and at how to reduce inequality in education?

**Answered by:** The Prime Minister

I want to see every child getting the education that is right for them. I want every child to be able to get on as far as their talents and hard work will take them. That is why we need to increase the number of good schools in this country. If we look at the gap in attainment in grammar schools between those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who are not, we see that it is virtually zero—that is the not the same in other schools. I just say to the hon. Lady that it is wrong that we have a system in this country where a law prevents the opening or expansion of good schools. That is what we are going to get rid of.

19 Oct 2016 | Prime Minister's questions | 615 c806

### [Topical Questions](#)

**Asked by:** Stephen Twigg (Liverpool, West Derby) (Lab/Co-op)

The Secretary of State has spoken about social mobility. Where is the evidence, from this country or other parts of the world, that bringing back selection at 11 will increase social mobility? I think the evidence shows the opposite. May I urge her once again to think again about this plan to extend grammar schools and instead work together to raise standards for all children in all our schools?

**Answered by:** Justine Greening

Of course, the two objectives are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, our school reforms will continue, and they have already seen the best part of 1.5 million children now in good or outstanding schools who were not in 2010. We see attainment driven through grammar schools in places such as Northern Ireland. It

is just wrong simply to set on one side schools that are closing the attainment gap for children on free school meals and not look at how we can make that option available to more parents and more children.

10 Oct 2016 | 615 c20



[Grammar Schools: Free School Meals](#)

**Asked by:** Nandy, Lisa

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of grammar school entrants were eligible for free school meals in (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15 and (c) 2015-16.

**Answering member:** Nick Gibb

The number and proportion of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals in selective state-funded secondary schools in England in each of these years is listed in the table below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>	<b>Number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals</b>	<b>Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals</b>
2013-14 (data as at January 2014)	162,629	4,204	2.6%
2014-15 (data as at January 2015)	164,149	4,163	2.5%
2015-16 (data as at January 2016)	166,517	4,237	2.5%

Source: School Census

Includes sole and dual main registered pupils

21 Sep 2016 | Written questions | 45674

[Grammar Schools](#)**Lord Scriven**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what evidence they have that grammar schools improve the educational attainment of areas where they are established.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education (Lord Nash) (Con)**

My Lords, exam data show that grammar schools achieve good results for pupils attending them. As set out in our consultation document, *Schools that Work for Everyone*, some studies suggest that there may be an association with poorer educational consequences for pupils not attending selective schools in areas where selection is allowed. In contrast, research from the Sutton Trust found no adverse effects of existing grammar schools on GCSE results for pupils in other schools.

**Lord Scriven (LD)**

I thank the Minister for that very well-crafted Answer. The vast majority of studies, apart from three, show that there is no overall attainment and actually all that happens is a distributive effect, where those who go to grammar schools improve and those who do not—the majority—have slightly worse educational attainment. Given that three or four times more people who sit the 11-plus fail it than succeed at it, that grammar schools tend to attract the highest-graded teachers and that this distributive effect takes place, what evidence is there that the consultation paper ideas that the Government have put forward will deal with these systematic failures that fail so many young people in the grammar school system based on selective education?

**Lord Nash**

The existing evidence is based on the system as it currently works, which is old technology and has undoubtedly resulted in binary choices in cases. We want to develop some new technology that embraces the selective system to result in a benefit to the whole education system.

**Lord Framlingham (Con)**

My Lords, does the Minister agree with me that there is a grave danger of this House being as out of step with the country on grammar schools as it was on Brexit? The majority of people in the country understand the huge value of grammar schools—

- Noble Lords

No!

**Lord Framlingham**

Noble Lords are making my point. The majority of people in the country are happy to see grammar schools reintroduced.

**Lord Nash**

We want to widen the choice for parents and there may well be areas where they would like to see more grammar schools.

**Baroness Whitaker**

My apologies for inadvertently attempting to pre-empt the noble Lord's interesting and relevant question, but can the Minister tell us in what way a system set up to reject a majority of children will serve the interest of a modern labour market and the needs and potential of individual students?

**Lord Nash**

Again, the noble Baroness is referring to an old system, where indeed parents and pupils may have had a binary choice between a highly performing grammar school and a very poor secondary modern. Now they may have a choice between a highly performing grammar school and a highly performing academy, which may well suit that pupil better. We believe that if we have a system where all selective schools, including existing selective schools, are required to engage in a wider

system of support, we may well be able in certain circumstances to develop technology which works for the benefit of all pupils.

[...]

**Lord Addington (LD)**

My Lords, will the Minister bear in mind that the 11-plus was based on what is now regarded as faked information about 11 being the correct age at which to assess? It is regarded as particularly unfortunate for most boys. If we are going down the selection route, could we not follow the example of public schools in pushing the age back by a couple of years?

**Lord Nash**

As I said, we are working to develop systems which are much fairer and less easy to prepare for, and we believe that under the new system pupils may well be able to move streams or even schools at a later age. I entirely agree that the common entrance exam is a first-class exam taken at 13.

15 Sep 2016 | Oral questions | 774 c1571-3

## 3. Faith

### 3.1 Press coverage

TES, 28 October 2016

[Exclusive: Catholic education chief says total religious segregation in schools is 'dreadful'](#)

The man responsible for opening new Catholic schools says students of different faiths can share same values

TES, 12th October 2016

['Relaxing faith schools admissions rules risks the divisive ghettoisation of education'](#)

In an increasingly divided nation, the last thing we should be doing is exacerbating that by dividing our children, says a former schools minister

TES, 18 September 2016

[How on earth can a 100 per cent faith school hope to encompass pupils from a variety of backgrounds?](#)

The faith school proposal in the Green Paper will only succeed in making schools work for fewer children than they do now

Tablet, 15 September 2016

[Church welcomes abolition of cap on faith school admissions,](#)

Schools Week, 16 September 2016

[Faith schools welcome 100% faith-based admissions,](#)

Telegraph, 9 September 2016

[Religious selection in school admissions is utterly deleterious for integration](#)

National Secular Society, 13 September 2016

[Government launches consultation on abolishing faith school admissions cap](#)

TES, 12 September 2016

[Green paper: new faith schools must prove demand from parents of other religions](#)

BBC News, 9 September 2016

[Theresa May to relax faith schools admissions rules](#)

## 3.2 Parliamentary coverage

### PQs

#### [Faith Schools: Admissions](#)

**Asked by:** Zeichner, Danie

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to paragraph 10 of her Department's consultation, Schools that work for everyone, whether the suggestion that the 50 per cent cap on faith-based schools admissions does not achieve inclusivity defines inclusivity by (a) income background and (b) ethnic background.

**Answering member:** Caroline Dinenge

The Department's decision to remove the 50% cap on faith admissions and replace it with a series of safeguards to ensure new faith free schools are inclusive is based on a broad range of evidence on the impact of the cap. This includes the data set out in the consultation document. In developing these safeguards we will also consider evidence produced via the consultation.

02 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 50098

#### [School Choice](#)

**Asked by:** Dowd, Peter

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make it the Government's policy to ensure that schools are open to pupils from a range of different religious and non-religious backgrounds.

**Answering member:** Caroline Dinenge

We want all parents to have a real choice about which school their children attend irrespective of their background. It is also important that all schools: promote inclusivity; enhance understanding of other faiths and those with no faith; promote community cohesion; and prepare children and young people for life in modern Britain. Regardless of whether or not they have a religious character, schools should enable pupils of all faith and of no-faith to play a full part in the life of the school.

We are currently consulting on proposals to enable more high quality providers of schools, including faith schools, to establish new schools which, alongside our investment in the free schools programme, will improve choice for all.

The consultation document is available at:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone>

01 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 48556

[Faith Schools: Standards](#)

**Asked by:** Godsiff, Mr Roger

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the effect of the selection processes used by faith schools on academic attainment in those schools.

**Answering member:** Caroline Dinenge

Faith schools are amongst some of the highest performing in this country and are more likely to be rated good or outstanding by Ofsted as compared to non-faith schools. The department does not routinely collect information about individual schools' admission arrangements. Schools designated with a religious character can choose to give priority to children on the basis of their faith, where the school is oversubscribed. It is though for the admission authority of the school to decide whether or not to prioritise some or all of their places on the basis of faith within their oversubscription criteria.

On 9th September the Prime Minister announced that we will remove the 50 per cent cap on new faith free schools and consult on a new set of much more effective requirements to ensure that new faith free schools are properly inclusive. The consultation document, 'Schools that work for everyone', is available at:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone>

01 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 47704

[Free Schools: Admissions](#)

**Asked by:** Godsiff, Mr Roger

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the effect of removing the 50 per cent cap on religious selection in free schools on religious tolerance and integration.

**Answering member:** Caroline Dinenge

All schools must promote religious tolerance and integration whatever their character and ethos. The Department is currently consulting on proposals to replace the 50% cap on faith admissions in faith free schools with new measures to better promote inclusivity and community cohesion. The proposed measures, alongside existing requirements to promote fundamental British values, will apply to all new faith free schools with 100% faith admissions and help ensure that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. The consultation document is available at: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone>

01 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 47363

[Schools: Admissions](#)

**Asked by:** Godsiff, Mr Roger

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make it her policy to allow Parliament to vote on (a) whether to remove the current 50 per

cent cap on religious selection in free schools and (b) other changes to the schools admissions code.

**Answering member:** Caroline Dinenge

The Department is currently consulting on proposals to remove the 50% cap on faith admissions in new faith free schools. The outcome of the consultation and government response will be presented to Parliament. The consultation document, 'Schools that work for everyone', is available at: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone>

Any changes to the Schools Admissions Code are subject to Parliamentary scrutiny.

01 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 47256

[Faith Schools: Admissions](#)

**Asked by:** Godsiff, Mr Roger

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of changes to the cap on religious selection on the opening of new Catholic state schools.

**Answering member:** Caroline Dinenge

Some faith groups, including the Catholic Church, have felt unable to open new schools through the free schools route because they believe it contravenes religious rules. This has meant, for example, that in areas where there has been significant growth in the Catholic population, the Catholic Church has not set up sufficient school places to meet demand.

We want more high quality providers to be able to set up new schools and we are consulting on how best to do that. The consultation document, 'Schools that work for everyone' is available at: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone>

01 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 47232

[Free Schools: Admissions](#)

**Asked by:** Godsiff, Mr Roger

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the effect of removing the 50 per cent cap on religious selection in free schools on the ability of parents to get their children into a local school.

**Answering member:** Caroline Dinenge

We want a diverse range of schools to give parents greater choice and drive up standards. The proposals set out in our consultation, 'Schools that Work for Everyone', aim to increase local capacity by enabling a wider group of providers to establish new schools. The proposal to remove the 50 per cent cap on religious selection in new free schools has, for some faith groups, been a barrier to setting up new schools. The removal of the cap and the establishment of new faith schools will

add to the overall stock of places and should increase choice for parents.

01 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 47231

[Faith Schools: Admissions](#)

**Asked by:** Dowd, Peter

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of allowing schools to admit children from one religion on integration and social cohesion.

**Answering member:** Caroline Dinenge

All schools must promote integration and social cohesion whatever their character and ethos. The Department is currently consulting on proposals to remove the 50% cap on faith admissions in new faith free schools. We have proposed additional measures to promote inclusivity and community cohesion, alongside existing requirements to promote fundamental British values, which will apply to all new faith free schools. These are aimed at ensuring all pupils can play an active role in our society and are prepared for life in modern Britain. The consultation document is available at: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone>

01 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 47142

[Faith Schools: Disadvantaged](#)

**Asked by:** Dakin, Nic

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information her Department holds on the relative proportion of children from poorer backgrounds who attend religiously selective schools.

**Answering member:** Caroline Dinenge

Underlying data for 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' provides information for each school, including religious denomination (where applicable), alongside the number and percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2016>

01 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 46994

[Church Schools](#)

**Asked by:** Chi Onwurah (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab)

Whether the Church of England has assessed the potential effect of changes to the cap on faith-based admissions on church schools.

**Answered by:** The Second Church Estates Commissioner (Dame Caroline Spelman)

The Church has 4,700 primary and secondary schools that seek to provide excellent education to 1 million pupils each year. These are not faith schools for the faithful but Church schools for the whole community, and the Church does not propose to change that. The 50%



cap applies only to new free schools that are oversubscribed. The majority of our new free schools, like many of our existing schools, do not have any faith-based oversubscription criteria.

13 Oct 2016 | Oral questions - Lead | 906557 | 615 c442

## 4. Further reading

Department for Education

[\*\*Schools that work for everyone\*\*](#)

Government consultation, September 2016

### **Library papers**

[Grammar Schools in England](#), SN 07070

[Grammar School Statistics](#), SN01398

[Faith Schools: FAQs](#), SN 06972.

[School admissions in England: State-funded mainstream schools](#),  
SN 07147

### About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publically available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email [papers@parliament.uk](mailto:papers@parliament.uk). Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email [hcinfo@parliament.uk](mailto:hcinfo@parliament.uk).

### Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).