

Time's Up for the Test

For most people in Britain the transition from primary to secondary school is a natural progression from their local primary to a comprehensive secondary. In cities there is more of a choice of secondary school, and sometimes popular schools are over-subscribed. In many small towns and rural areas, there is only one secondary school and everybody goes there.

Yet in 20% of England the process is quite different. At 11 children are divided into different types of school, theoretically on the basis of ability but in reality, for the vast majority, on the basis of social class. Between 15% and 25% go to grammar school and the rest go to secondary moderns which often pretend they are something else. High schools, non-selective schools, some even pretend that they are comprehensives, although if the grammar school down the road is creaming off say 20% of the brightest children that does not leave you with a genuinely comprehensive intake for the other schools in the area.

As Professor Andreas Schleicher, Director of the Education and Skills Directorate of the OECD, will tell a conference in London tomorrow, the evidence from the OECD's vast PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) research shows that the earlier the test for selection is taken, the less accurate it is. The vast majority of children in England take the 11+ when they are ten. At this age, the assessment test is determined overwhelmingly by social class, an outcome reinforced by the widespread use of private tutors my middle class parents who can afford it. The conference is at the NEU HQ in London.

Most secondary schools went comprehensive in the 1970s, when Margaret Thatcher was Education Secretary. It was Labour's Tony Blair who put a stop to further comprehensive reorganisations, introducing a system of ballots that were virtually impossible to get going (only one ever did, in Ripon) and were rigged against change. From 1997 the number of grammar schools has remained pretty constant, with neither the Conservatives or Labour keen to do anything to change the system to bring it into line with the rest of the country despite the vast amount of evidence that selection does not work and actually harms the education of most children.

A group of education organisations have now had enough of this and have got together to launch the Time's Up for the Test campaign. It will be launched tomorrow, at a meeting in the headquarters of the National Education Union. They have a wide range of speakers including Andreas Schleicher, Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham and former Conservative Education Society chairman and former Cambridgeshire head teacher Steve Mastin.

Andy Burnham will say: "Grammar schools are socially divisive without any compensatory gain." Steve Mastin, from the Conservative Education Association, will tell the audience that grammars are "unconservative". He is right. The selective education system was introduced by a Labour government after the Second World War. Professor Schleicher will address the conference by video as he is in Singapore tomorrow. The text of his video address is given below.

Selective education is not the way forward

By Professor Andreas Schleicher

Director of the Education and Skills Directorate of the OECD

We all know that students advance differently in their learning and that one size fits all school systems often don't do justice to many learners. A common answer to that has been to teach students in batches, to group by what we judge to be their academic potential. Academic selection is perhaps less common now than it used to be in the 1970s or 1980s, but it is still a very powerful force in education.

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But as intuitive as it looks to select students into more homogenous groups of learners, that approach is fraught with difficulties too, and interestingly you don't see much academic tracking and selection in many of the world's top performing education systems. And those countries actually have good reason for limiting stratification.

First, it's really difficult to sort students by their academic potential. Now in most cases we end up sorting them by their social background, which defeats the purpose of all of this. You can see in the PISA data that the earlier education systems divide up students the stronger the impact of social background on learning outcomes.

Second, teachers often just are not very good at judging the academic potential of students. In fact, the more selection mechanisms are based on the judgement of teachers, or parents, rather than objective metrics like assessment and tests, the more selection tends to get biased by social background. But even where you do use robust selection mechanisms, like tests, their prognostic validity is often really very limited particularly when you apply them to young age groups. We simply do not know what the future holds for learners, and we simply cannot judge true potential.

The most important aspect

But third, and perhaps that is the most important aspect here, selection mechanisms often set the wrong incentives. We see from PISA that less academically inclusive education systems tend to have a lower share of students with a gross high score. So, what does that mean? Well, you know, of all the judgements people make about themselves, the most influential one is how capable they think they are of completing a task successfully. Research shows the belief that we are responsible for the results of our behaviour influences motivation such as people are more likely to invest their effort if they believe its going to lead to the results that they are trying to achieve. So, if you get routed into a low performing track, or a low performing school, it often becomes a self-performing prophecy. Because then you get surrounded by other low performing students, and you do not any more see what excellence or high performance can really mean for you.



Professor Andreas Schleicher of the OECD

That also helps to explain why selection within schools, particularly when it is subject specific, seems to have far fewer negative consequences than selection into different schools or different school types. Perhaps selection sends the wrong incentive for teachers. It gives them sort of the illusion that they somehow do the right thing but they got the wrong students who belong to somewhere else. And you see that the likelihood that teachers send down students to lower performing tracks tends to be many times greater than the likelihood that they are promoting the best students to a more advanced track.

PISA also shows that in countries with a high degree of stratification students often tend to feel less well supported by their teachers. And as we all know, that perception that you have a teacher who knows who you are and who you want to become, and who accompanies you on that journey is such a powerful predictor for the academic and social development of students.

All that does not mean that you cannot get academic selection right, and there are actually education systems that are quite good at mitigating all the effects that I have just highlighted. But the future isn't that much with selection and grouping students, but with personalising education in ways that help every learner reach their full potential.

The development of selective and comprehensive education

By Demitri Coryton
Editor, *Education Journal*

With the Time's Out for the Test conference in London at the NEU offices in Hamilton House tomorrow and Christine Blower's Private Member's Bill in the Lords getting its Second Reading on Friday, the long dormant issue of selection into different types of school at age 10 has suddenly come back to life. In this policy analysis we look at the origins of comprehensive and selective education, the politics of secondary education and what the substantial amount of research on the subject tells us.

You can go back to the idea of the Common School in the Scotland of the 17th century for the origins of comprehensive education, but in its modern form it is an American idea. The whole of the United States was comprehensive by the 1920s, which gave the USA a great advantage in the expansion of higher education after the Second World War when the country had a pool of people educated up to 18 who could take up places in their greatly expanded higher education system.

It was a different situation in Britain. Before the 1944 Education Act the vast majority of children did not go to secondary school at all. They spent the whole of their education in elementary schools, as primary schools were then called. The Hadow Report of 1926, *The Education of the Adolescent*, one of three reports that Sir William Hadow produced as chairman of the Board of Education's Consultative Committee, concerned itself with what it called post-primary education. [1] This was not secondary education, which the committee was explicitly not tasked with looking at. His report recommended the creation of non-selective senior schools within the elementary school system, for children from 11 to 14 who did not go to secondary school. The debate over selection in the 1930s was over implementing the Hadow Report and whether non-selective senior elementary schools or selective central schools were the way forward. [2] The issue of secondary education was quite separate. It was available almost entirely to only middle class children whose parents could afford the fees that the pre-war grammar schools charged. There were a few scholarship places available free for the bright working class child, but the cost of actually going to a grammar school, rather than out to work, still deterred some who were qualified. Most grammar schools, like most independent schools, were not particularly selective as they provided the only education available for middle class children. If you could afford the fees, your child was in.

The Consultative Committee looked at secondary education in the Spens report of 1938. [3] This and the Norwood report of 1942 [4] developed the idea of the tripartite system. At about the age of ten children would take a test (the 11+, similar to the pre-war Scholarship) which would decide whether they went to a secondary grammar school for an academic education, a secondary technical school or a secondary modern school (which were usually anything but modern). There would be a re-assessment at the age of 13 to allow late developers to transfer to grammar schools and, in theory, those who had got into a grammar school but were not up to it to transfer the other way to secondary technical or modern schools. Transfers to grammar school at 13 hardly ever happened. Transfers the other way never did.

There was very little discussion of comprehensive secondary education prior to the 1944 Act. The Education Act 1944 was the work of the Conservative President of the Board of Education, R A Butler, known universally by his initials as RAB, and his Parliamentary Under Secretary, Labour's James Chuter Ede. Ede played a more significant role than his junior position might at first indicate. He had been a teacher in Epsom, Surrey, before going into politics. He became active in local government, becoming chairman of the

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Education Committee of the Surrey County Council, even though he was Labour and Surrey was one of the strongest Conservative counties in England. (It was also a county with a strong tradition of liberal education policies.) His deep knowledge of education and links with the teacher unions (he had been a member of the NUT) were invaluable to Butler and the two formed a strong war-time partnership. Yet there is not a single mention of selection, comprehensive education or multilateral schools in Ede's war-time diaries. [5]

The most contentious issue in the Education Act 1944 was the role of the churches in education. This was hugely controversial and took up an inordinate amount of time in the couple of years leading up to the Act becoming law. The wartime Coalition set out its plans in the Board of Education's White Paper, *Educational Reconstruction*. [6] It outlined the plans for what became the Education Act 1944 as being the provision of free secondary education for all, the integration of the voluntary (church) schools more fully into the national system and the streamlining of local administration with the abolition of the Part III authorities introduced by Arthur Balfour's Education Act of 1902.

It is often thought that it was the 1944 Act that introduced the tripartite selective system, but that is not so. The 1944 Act made secondary education for all possible. It left it up to each local education authority (LEA) to decide what system of secondary education would suit it best. In the period up to 1945 this was not a contentious issue. There is no mention of comprehensive education in the Conservative Party's education policy report of 1942, which was a fairly bland document. [7] Butler himself favoured some experimentation, supporting those local authorities that wished to introduce comprehensive schools, or multilateral schools as they were more usually then known as. [8] The Conservatives at this time did not take an ideological view of selection, and a number of Conservative LEAs made plans for comprehensive reorganisation in whole or in part, especially in rural areas. Conservative authorities that planned to introduce multilateral (i.e. comprehensive) schools in the late 1940s included Surrey, Westmorland and the West Riding of Yorkshire.

The issue was sharper and more divisive in the Labour Party. Many saw the new grammar schools as more egalitarian, although some on the left favoured the multilaterals. Their American origin made some in the Labour Party suspicious of them. Some also argued that multilaterals would be more expensive, at a time of great austerity, as they would require more new buildings while a selective system could more easily be fitted into the existing school building stock. Some also suggested that to get a decent sixth form at a time when very few progressed that far, multilaterals would have to be very large by British standards, as American high schools usually were. When London County Council announced its plans for multilaterals they included schools of between 1,250 and 2,000 pupils. The average for most authorities that went down this route was 500 to 600 pupils. [9]

In accordance with the 1944 Act, LEAs began filing their development plans with the new Ministry of Education. Joan Thompson of the Fabian Society kept tabs on them. By 1947 she had a sample of 53 LEAs and reported a considerable variety of plans. [10] As well as the three types of school outlined in the tripartite system, councils also went for combinations whether multilateral or bilateral. The bilateral schools had either grammar and technical streams, grammar and modern or technical and modern streams. Among these various alternatives 10% of schools were multilaterals accounting for 26.5% of pupils. Grammar schools accounted for 17% of schools and 12% of pupils. Secondary moderns were the largest category, with 50% of schools and 41% of pupils. [11]

LEAs reacted to the freedom given to them by the 1944 Act to submit plans with a wide range of school types reflecting local need. On the basis of Joan Thompson's survey of 53 LEAs, comprehensive/multilateral schools would have provided for over a quarter of pupils, which would have been a decent foundation for comprehensive education to have built on. But it was not to be. In 1945 the Labour Party won a landslide at the general election. Clement Attlee became Prime Minister and the Labour Cabinet plumped for selective education. Those LEAs, Conservative and Labour, that had planned comprehensive or multilateral schools, and that was a considerable number, were stopped dead in their tracks. Labour insisted that all LEAs adopt a selective system of secondary education, although in practice this tended to be grammar and modern schools rather than the full tripartite provision as secondary

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technical schools were few and far between. The government even wrote to all LEAs helpfully pointing out that the secondary moderns were meant for the working class.

The decision of Attlee's Labour government to insist on only a selective system for secondary schools has had a major and negative effect on both secondary and higher education, and remains a baleful influence on education in the 20% of England which retains selection to the present day. It condemned millions of children to be written off as failures at 10, with life changing consequences, and delayed the expansion of higher education as England in particular did not have the number of school students educated to 18 needed for the expansion of higher education. In 1945 only 2.5% of young people, almost entirely men, went into higher education. That was slightly fewer than before the English Civil War three hundred years earlier. [12] That number increased very slowly in the 1950s and 1960s, until the Robbins report of 1963 led to an expansion of universities, but they were not actually created until the 1970s. This also had a negative impact on Britain's economy. As former universities minister David Willetts has observed: "One reason Britain fell behind key competitors such as the US in the post-war period is that we had fewer highly educated workers than they did." [13]

Labour divided

Attlee's policy did not have universal support within the party. For example, in the 1948 party conference in Scarborough Mrs Edna Harrison of the Derbyshire North East District Labour Party moved a motion that "This conference affirms the principle of the common Secondary School for all, up to the age of 16". But she was followed by a composite motion moved by Mr T P Riley of Walsall which, in its many parts, did not mention selection or the common school at all. Mrs Harrison had her supporters, but we will never know how many they were as when it came to a vote the chairman suggested that the motions that had been proposed should be remitted to the National Executive for further consideration. And so they were, so there was no vote that might have embarrassed the party leadership. [14]

The post-war Labour government put its selective education stamp on education for the next 20 years. It was largely accepted by the Conservative Party, which in its 1950 *Campaign Guide* said that with comprehensive and multilateral schools, while "Conservatives are willing to see a few of these functioning, they consider that they should be in the nature of an experiment as they have not proved altogether satisfactory in other countries. To enable these schools to give adequate sixth form work they must be far too large." [15] Again, the low numbers staying in education until 18 were thought to mean very large comprehensive schools to give a good size sixth form, which for many regardless of party was a major argument against them.

The Conservatives were back in power the following year, but changes to secondary education came very slowly. The priority was building more schools for the post-war baby boom and recruiting enough new teachers to teach in them. Yet there was some movement. In 1954 the Ministry of Education published *Early Leaving. A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England)* [16] This was the Gurney-Dixon report. It noted that grammar schools were virtually the only way within the state system that pupils could progress to GCE A-levels, never mind universities. The secondary technical schools had very few pupils staying on until they were 18, and the secondary modern schools had none. The tiny number of comprehensive schools were too few to be statistically significant. The report looked at how those who had failed the 11+ but transferred to grammar school at 13 performed compared to those who started grammar school at 11. The report noted that: "There is just as high a proportion of good academic achievement among the transfers as in the whole intake into maintained grammar schools, even though when tested at the age of 11 they were presumably all regarded as below grammar school standard." [17] If it had been within the committee's terms of reference, which it was not, they would also have found that significant numbers of pupils at independent schools whose parents entered them for the 11+ as an insurance policy just in case in future they could not afford the fees at private schools, failed the 11+ but passed the easier Common Entrance at 13 and went on to get GCE O-levels, A-levels and go to university where they got a degree. It was the first evidence that selection tests at age 10 (the age at which the vast majority of children took the rather mis-named 11+) were not accurate predictors of later academic performance.

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It was also in the mid-1950s that the Conservative government abolished the legal limit on secondary modern schools providing O-level courses for their students. This restriction had been brought in by the post-war Labour government and prevented secondary modern students from studying beyond 15. O-levels were meant for 16-year-olds. The reversal of this policy meant that secondary moderns began to provide O-level courses for children who, in theory, should not have been able to do O-levels. It was another crack in the wall of the theory of the tripartite system.

Parental opinion was slowly beginning to change. Some LEAs who had been thwarted in their comprehensive reorganisation plans in the 1940s began to look again at ending selection. The first area to go comprehensive was the Isle of Man in 1938. It was not part of England and was completely independent in its internal affairs. The second place to go comprehensive in all its schools was the island of Anglesey in Wales, in 1953. It did not have any grammar schools, sending those who passed the 11+ to grammar schools in neighbouring authorities. Anglesey County Council just stopped sending children out of county and increased the size and scope of its existing schools.

The major breakthrough in comprehensive education came in 1957, when Conservative controlled Leicestershire County Council reorganised its grammar and secondary modern schools into a two-tier comprehensive system of upper and lower schools with a break at 14. This two-tier system has an echo in the present University Technology Colleges which also have an age range of 14 to 18. But as the UTCs have found out, there are also problems with this age range and the Leicestershire model was not widely followed. Leicestershire County Council at that time did not include the City of Leicester, which was Labour controlled and fiercely defended its grammar schools. The city only went comprehensive when it was merged with the county in the reorganisation that followed the Local Government Act 1972. The Tories controlled the enlarged county and against much protest from Labour in the city the Tories turned it comprehensive.

It was the failure of the secondary moderns that undermined the selective system. Middle class parents who could not afford private school fees were increasingly not prepared to see their children go to secondary moderns. The provision of grammar school places varied widely, within an LEA as well as between them, and this also undermined the selective system. In reality there was no percentage of the population that was of grammar school ability. The number of pupils who went to grammar school varied from 8% to 40%, and depended on the provision of school buildings in a given area rather than pupil ability.

A change of opinion in the 1960s

There was a sea change of opinion in the 1960s. In the early part of the decade the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) began publishing reports highlighting the failures of selective systems. These would become increasingly influential. The National Union of Teachers, most of whose members taught in primary schools where the union had a virtual monopoly, changed from being strongly pro-selection to supporting comprehensives. Within the Labour Party, the pro-comprehensive supporters had at last triumphed and Labour tapped into the growing demand for change with a strongly pro-comprehensive line. It helped Labour return to power in 1964 and win a bigger majority in 1966. The result was Circular 10/65 which required all LEAs to submit plans for comprehensive reorganisation.

This political movement was underpinned by the seminal Plowden report, *Children and Their Primary Schools*, published in 1967. [18] (In Wales there was a parallel report, *Primary Education in Wales*, the Gittens report. [19]) Plowden (and Gittens) came down unequivocally in favour of ending selection. This was not just because grammar schools were not the most effective way of educating children, but because of the harm done to the roughly 80% of children who failed their 11+ (or did not take it) and went to secondary moderns. As Plowden warned, "selection procedures may create the future they predict. The reputation, good or bad, which a pupil earns by his performance at 11 tends to influence what his teachers and parents expect of him in the future and what he feels he can do. Boys and girls tend to live up to, or down to, their reputations." [20]

Plans for reorganisation were nowhere near implemented when Labour lost the 1970 election. One of the first acts of the new Conservative government was to issue Circular 10/70, in June 1970. While this

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repealed the compulsion of Circular 10/65 and its follow-up Circular 10/66, the Tory government did not stop those LEAs that wanted to go comprehensive from doing so. The party's policy was a return to R A Butler's policy of leaving it up to the LEAs. A few Tory authorities took advantage of this change of policy and halted their plans. Those that did include a small number, like Kent, Buckinghamshire, Lincolnshire and the City of Plymouth, who were strongly opposed to going comprehensive. Yet most LEAs, including most Conservative ones, continued with their plans even though, in some Conservative areas, there was strong opposition from the right wing of the Tory party.

It is one of the great ironies of the move to comprehensive education that the Education Secretary who closed more grammar schools and approved the opening of more comprehensives than any other was Margaret Thatcher, Tory Education Secretary from 1970 to 1974. It was under Thatcher that England went from having a predominantly selective system of secondary education to a predominantly comprehensive one. As the Conservative *Campaign Guide 1974* proudly boasted, Margaret Thatcher had approved 91% of the comprehensive reorganisation proposals submitted to her. Out of about 3,600 reorganisation proposals put before her under Section 13 of the Education Act 1944 as amended, she turned down only 325. [21] The *Guide* could have added that these 325 were poor proposals that HMI recommended against.

The progress of the comprehensive reforms continued when Labour returned to power after the February 1974 election, under Wilson and later Jim Callaghan. Under the long years of the Conservative governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major, the number of comprehensive reorganisations declined to a trickle, but this was because by then the only selective areas left were where opposition to ending selection was very strong. To the despair of his Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, and her political advisor, Dr Elizabeth Cottrell, John Major at one time talked about bringing back "a grammar school in every town". As Shephard pointed out to him, this also meant a secondary modern in every ward. Nothing came of the proposal.

The election of New Labour and Tony Blair with a large majority in 1997 could have led to the completion of the comprehensive reform in England. (Scotland and Wales were completely comprehensive by the 1970s.) In the 13 years of Labour government not a single grammar school was reorganised. New Labour was strongly opposed to completing the comprehensive reorganisation, but on political rather than educational grounds. This was a choice. It did not have to be this way. In 1997 Labour controlled almost every LEA in the country, with only the shire Tory counties still Conservative. As the Socialist Education Association made clear to Blair at the time, a Labour government could have left it up to the LEAs. Buckinghamshire and Kent would still have held out for selection, but there would have been a further advance for comprehensives. Instead, Blair devised a system of parental ballots in selective areas that were deliberately almost impossible to secure. Only one ballot took place, in Ripon, where the grammar school and the secondary modern were opposite each other. Labour ensured that the system of ballots was rigged to never succeed. For example, the parents of children at the secondary modern did not get a vote, but parents at the grammar school did, as did parents at independent prep schools outside Ripon, most of whom would never use the state education system.

With the Tories back in power in 2010, with the Liberal Democrats in a coalition, the new Prime Minister, David Cameron, was pro comprehensive. However, many in his party were not. During his election campaign for Tory leader before the election he was up against David Davies. At a meeting of Conservative party members in Exeter, Cameron was asked about selection and gave an answer sympathetic to comprehensives. Out of an audience of several hundred, two people applauded.

Cameron won a majority in 2015, but the following year he lost the EU referendum and resigned. A lot of UKIP folk flooded into the Conservative Party while One Nation MPs were expelled. The Conservative Party moved to the right. Theresa May succeeded Cameron and announced plans for new grammar schools. Yet the negative reaction from within her own parliamentary party was so strong that the plans got nowhere. [22] Under the brief leadership of Liz Truss, May's idea was revived. Truss lasted 45 days. With the grown-ups back in charge of the party, that plan was dropped last week. In answer to a written question from Jonathan Gullis, who for a few days had been a minister at the DfE, the new Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, who personally supports grammar schools, replied: "The Department maintains a

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diversity of schools and wants grammar schools to continue to play an important role within the education system. The Department's priority is to concentrate on ensuring that as many children as possible, whatever their ability, have access to an outstanding education, rather than creating more grammar schools." [23]

So, we are back in the position we were in when New Labour came to power in 1997. Should Labour win the next election, its leaders have made it clear to pro-comprehensive campaigners within the party that Sir Keir Starmer is no more likely to end selection in England than Tony Blair was. Equally, the Conservatives have moved away from introducing new grammar schools, but won't do anything to get rid of existing ones. The stalemate looks set to continue.

The evidence

Policy in this areas is determined by politics, not facts or evidence. Labour does not want to risk upsetting its carefully crafted moderate image under Starmer. The Conservatives don't want to take on the right wing of the party in the remaining selective areas. But what is the evidence?

The OECD has been producing reports showing the benefits of comprehensive education since the early 1960s. From 1980 its research Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) has repeatedly shown both academic and social benefits from comprehensive systems. The 2012 PISA report stated: "Early student selection has a negative impact on students assigned to lower tracks and exacerbates inequities, without raising average performance." [24]

As Andreas Schleicher, Director of the OECD Education and Skills Directorate, said to *Education Journal* in September this year: "The evidence from PISA shows no positive correlation between early selection and better overall academic outcomes, but it does show a strong correlation between selection and the impact of social background on learning outcomes." [25]

Speaking at the launch of the OECD annual publication, *Education at a Glance*, in 2016, Andreas Schleicher said: "Schools are very, very good in selecting students by their social background but they're not very good in selecting students by their academic potential. And the earlier they select, the worse that relationship is. Academic selection ultimately becomes social selection." [26]

Within the UK, research over decades has consistently shown the advantages of comprehensive education. For example, in the mid 1970s Surrey County Council had a report from its Chief Inspector, Joan Dean, put before the Education Committee, which showed improvements at every level, from screening tests of five year olds to Oxbridge entrance, which followed the phases of primary and secondary reorganisations across the county. (Surrey had undertaken a Plowden reorganisation of primary schools and comprehensive reorganisation of secondary schools in phases across the county, starting in the west and ending up a few years later in the east of the county.)

In 2013 the journal the *Oxford Review of Education* published a paper on selection in Buckinghamshire. It found that any success that grammar school pupils had was at the expense of pupils not in grammar schools. It also found that: "The low prevalence of FSM (free school meals) eligible pupils in the grammar schools casts doubt on their ability to aid social mobility." [27]

Nationally, the Education Policy Institute has published a number of reports on selection. In 2016 it published *Grammar Schools and Social Mobility*, which found that it was more difficult for poor children to access grammar schools, even when prior attainment is taken into account. Pupils eligible for free school meals make up 6.9% of those with high prior attainment near selective schools, but only 2.4% actually attend selective schools. [28]

A POSTbrief note from the Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology, *Academic Evidence on Selective Secondary Education*, published in 2016, found that "available evidence from England and international comparisons using PISA data suggests that selective education systems widen educational inequality." [29] This is just a small selection of the available evidence.

Yet as we have noted, the decision on whether to end selection in England will be based on political considerations and not educational evidence. The level of selection has remained static for nearly 50 years. The new campaign to end selection, Time Out for the Test, will only succeed if it galvanises public opinion

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so that politicians in both main parties conclude that there are more votes to be lost by continuing with selection where it still exists than by abolishing it.

Foot notes

- [1] *The Education of the Adolescent*, report of the Board of Education Consultative Committee under the chairmanship of Sir William Hadow, published by His Majesty's Stationery Office in 1926.
- [2] See, for example, *Selective Central or Senior Schools*, in *The Year Book of Education 1933*, edited by Lord Eustace Percy MP, former President of the Board of Education, published by Evans Brothers, London, page 190.
- [3] *Report of the Board of Education Consultative Committee on Secondary Education with Special Reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools* under the chairmanship of Will Spens, (the Spens report) published by His Majesty's Stationery Office in 1938.
- [4] *Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools*. Report of the Committee of the Secondary Schools Examination Council under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril Norwood (the Norwood report), published by His Majesty's Stationery Office in 1942.
- [5] *Labour and the Wartime Coalition. From the Diary of James Chuter Ede, 1941 - 1945*, edited by Kevin Jefferys, published by The Historian's Press, 1987.
- [6] *Educational Reconstruction*, Board of Education White Paper, Cmd. 6458, July 1943.
- [7] *Looking Ahead. Educational Aims, Being the First Interim Report of the Conservative Sub-Committee on Education*, published by the Central Committee on Post-War Reconstruction set up by the Conservative and Unionist Party Organisation, September 1942.
- [8] Conversation between R A Butler and the author, then chairman of the Conservative National Advisory Committee on Education, 1980. There is also a news reel interview with Butler, probably from British Pathé, from the late 1940s saying the same thing. This was confirmed by a conversation with Butler's widow, Lady Molly Butler, then a vice president of the Conservative Education Association, with the author over tea at the Carlton Club a few years later.
- [9] *Secondary Education for All. An Analysis of Local Education Authorities' Development Plans*, Joan Thompson, the Fabian Society Research Series pamphlet No. 118, published by Fabian Publications Ltd with Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1947.
- [10] *Ibid.*, and a second report, *Secondary Education Survey. An Analysis of LEA Development Plans for Secondary Education*, Joan Thompson, the Fabian Society Research Series pamphlet No. 148, published by Fabian Publications Ltd with Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1952, analysed the plans of 111 councils.
- [11] See the table on page 8 of the Fabian Society's 1947 report.
- [12] *A University Education*, David Willetts, Oxford University Press, 2017, page 18. See foot note 16 which quotes Stone, *The Educational Revolution in England*, page 69.

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[13] Ibid., page 33.

[14] *Report of the 47th Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Scarborough, 1948*, the Labour Party, 1948. The report on the education debate starts on page 153.

[15] *General Election 1950. The Campaign Guide*, published by Conservative and Unionist Central Office, 1949, page 427.

[16] *Early Leaving. A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England)*, Ministry of Education, report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) under the chairmanship of Sir Samuel Gurney-Dixon, 1954.

[17] Ibid., page 13.

[18] *Children and Their Primary Schools, A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England)*, under the chairmanship of Lady Bridget Plowden, (the Plowden report), published in two volumes by the Department of Education and Science through Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1967.

[19] *Primary Education in Wales*, a report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (Wales) under the chairmanship of Professor Charles Gittens, (the Gittens report) published by the Department of Education and Science through Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1967.

[20] *The Plowden Report*, page 154.

[21] *The Campaign Guide 1974*, Conservative Central Office, 1974, page 315.

[22] 'Nicky Morgan hits out at Theresa May as PM faces first Commons revolt over grammar school plans Former Education Secretary becomes latest Tory politician to condemn Ms May's proposal', the *Independent*, 10 September 2016.

[23] Answer to written Parliamentary question, House of Commons Hansard, question 89066, from Jonathan Gullis MP, Wednesday 23 November 2022.

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