RUNNYMEDE

Right to Divide?

Faith Schools and Community Cohesion

A Runnymede Report by
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with research by Savita Vij

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Foreword

England is a more diverse country in terms of ethnicity and faith than ever before. This is a welcome change. There are many benefits to be gained from diversity. However, that diversity needs to be balanced with equality and cohesion in order to create a successful multi-ethnic society.

We currently have an education system that includes faith-based schools. These schools go some way to reflect the diversity of religion and belief in England. This research project asked whether a school system with faith schools could also promote equality and cohesion.

The project involved a wide range of stakeholders (parents, teachers, education experts, religious leaders, local authority officials, and pupils) through a range of different means so that we could learn from their experiences about the benefits and challenges to cohesion that a school system with faith schools provides.

In order to present a full account of the context (social, educational, policy, political and historical) in which faith schools operate, the report includes a wide-ranging discussion of current debates, a discussion of contemporary education policy and community cohesion policy, a review of the literature, and some historical background on the involvement of faith organizations within the English educational system. This forms a backdrop to the analysis of the many discussions, interviews and other forms of data-gathering that made up the fieldwork for this project.

The resulting recommendations have far-reaching implications for our entire schooling system. In our collective attempts to create 'a society at ease with itself', significant change may sometimes be necessary. Too often the debate about faith schools in England has been based on empty rhetoric; in this report we have offered a more considered, independent, and evidence-based approach.

As the multicultural settlement that had been the pattern until 2001 is increasingly challenged, and schools are asked to respond more vigorously to persistent inequalities, play a larger role in their neighbourhoods and communities, and prepare young people to be effective citizens as well as effective participants in the labour market, the role of faith schools has come under greater scrutiny. The recommendations that result from this research project propose a way forward that seeks a sustainable balance between diversity, equality and cohesion – a solution that contributes to our common objective of nurturing a successful multi-ethnic society.

Michelynn Laflèche
Director
The Runnymede Trust

Executive summary

Discussions, dialogues and debates on the role of faith schools and their effect on community cohesion often create more heat than light. Runnymede first intervened in this area 27 years ago;[1] and the debate still rages on today.

For this report we have consulted with over a thousand people – parents, pupils, professionals and policymakers from a range of faith backgrounds as well as those who do not subscribe to any religion. We approached the issues open-mindedly; seeking only to discover what part faith schools play in preparing young people for life in a multi-ethnic, multi faith society. Our findings and recommendations set out a direction for policy and practice that offers an opportunity for faith schools to play their full role in building a successful multi-ethnic, multi-faith nation.

Government policies are committed to increasing choice and diversity in the education sector. The participation of faith schools and religious organizations in the state-maintained sector is significant in providing the choice factor. Government is also keen to strengthen the role that schools play in promoting social cohesion through increased contact between young people of different ethnic and faith backgrounds. At the same time, parts of the media and public opinion are calling for caution in expanding the role of faith in education given increasing concerns about segregation, reported 'parallel lives' between different ethnic and faith groups, violent terrorism carried out in the name of religion, and ongoing discussion about the proper relationship between religion and the state.

Faith schools are defined in this report as state-funded institutions that educate pupils within the context of a particular faith or denomination. There are nearly 6900 faith schools in the state-maintained sector making up 33% of all maintained schools; of which the Church of England has the largest representation with 4657, followed by 2053 Roman Catholic, 36 Jewish, 8 Muslim, 2 Sikh, 1 Hindu and around 82 other Christian schools. While debate about faith schools is often characterized by discussion of Muslim schools, they are few in number and consequently low in their impact on cohesion. While this research project includes Muslim schools, we have been looking at faith schools as a whole, not at individual faiths.

Although faith schools have a long history in the English education system, their involvement has been viewed as controversial; and the current government's tone on the issue has changed with successive government ministers. Since 2001, faith schools have been courted and faith organizations encouraged to become more involved in education in 'the maintained sector where there is local agreement'.[2] Independent faith schools have been encouraged to acquire voluntary-aided status.[3] Academies have been seen as another option for the encouragement of faith schooling, described as state-maintained independent schools aiming to make a difference 'in areas of disadvantage' through external business, charity and religious sponsors. Similar in concept are 'trust schools' (Education and Inspections Act 2006), which provide further opportunities for faith bodies to play a role in compulsory education. In 2008, however, perhaps in recognition of ongoing controversy over the involvement of faith schools in the English education system, or to mark a change in the tone of government policy, Ed Balls (in response to the interim report of this project)[4] made the first statement on faith schools from the Brown government. He distanced the government from encouraging growth in the number of faith schools, noting:

> In some local communities, there is support for faith schools, in some there are schools moving from the independent sector to the state. Other communities are clear that faith schools aren't the right schools for their communities. It is up to the local community to decide what it wants. We're not leading a drive for more faith schools.[5]

It would appear, then, that government policy is not completely settled in this area.

At the same time, following the disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2001, and reinforced as a consequence of the tragic London bombings in July 2005, the notion of community cohesion based upon 'shared values' has become a central policy initiative. Schools in particular are identified as being crucial to breaking down barriers between young people.

The concept of community cohesion has been highly influential in setting new research agendas analysing the impact of segregation. Sir Herman Ouseley[6] points to a 'virtual apartheid' between schools in his review of race relations in Bradford, arguing that it has led to polarization, failure to

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1   Dummett and McNeal (1981).

2   DfES (2001:45).
3   Voluntary Aided schools are partly funded by the local authority and the religious authority and governing bodies have control over admissions and teaching of Religious Education.
4   Osler (2007).
5   House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2008).
6   Ouseley (2001).

prepare students for life in a multi-ethnic society, and racial tensions within and beyond schools. The Cantle Team Review[7] highlights how distinct ethnic or religious communities can live within metres of each other without developing cultural or social bonds, and stresses that schools have a role to play in challenging such 'parallel lives'.

As our starting-point in this study, we take the guidance issued to schools on their statutory duty to promote community cohesion, introduced in 2007, and use the discussions we have conducted online and face-to-face with community groups, schoolteachers, pupils and policymakers to assess whether faith schools are well placed to deliver their obligations in this regard in the following areas:

- encouraging pupils to share a sense of belonging,
- helping pupils develop a positive appreciation of diversity,
- removing barriers to equality,
- and building strong partnerships between people from different backgrounds.

Key recommendations

Our consultations led us to identify six key recommendations, which will clarify the role of faith schools in our education system, and help them improve their capacity to fulfil the role of promoting cohesion between young people from different ethnic and/or faith backgrounds.

End selection on the basis of faith

Faith schools should be for the benefit of all in society rather than just the few. If faith schools are convinced of their relevance for society, then that should apply equally for all children. With state funding comes an obligation to be relevant and open to all citizens.

Faith schools can demonstrate a successful emphasis on the teaching of values, one which we recognize as a significant contribution to effective education for the 21st century. However, faith schools are much more effective at educating for a single vision than they are at opening dialogue about a shared vision. As currently constituted they may be having the effect of limiting young people's ability to engage in such discussions. This is a significant reason why we advocate that faith schools should accept a broader range of pupils, from a range of faith backgrounds or of no faith.

All parents should be given access to what faith schools claim is a distinctive ethos. Currently,

there remains some question as to the link between parental choice and faith. The educational success of many faith schools may mean that the faith of the school is not the overriding consideration in the choice the parents are making. Opening up faith schools to all young people would enable the schools to focus on identifying the distinctive nature of what they are offering in terms of their vision. At the moment, faith can be used by parents as a means of ensuring social exclusivity within a school. This works counter to the stated aims of government to create spaces where people from different backgrounds can work together for common aims.

There are few external structures for creating a shared vision between schools as they are currently constituted and given the direction of travel in government policy towards greater autonomy for schools; it is unlikely that this can improve in much more than a piecemeal, bolted-on manner. While efforts at twinning between schools are welcome, they are unlikely to lead to the kind of meaningful contact over a longer period that is required to break down barriers. Our earlier research has already highlighted how existing levels of ethnic segregation between schools will continue to be exacerbated by selection on the basis of faith.[8]

If faith were to be perceived as an educational specialism for a school, it would provide the infrastructure for them to cascade their expertise among other institutions, just as other schools do. Given the quasi-market that operates between schools, and the government's commitment to offering parents choice between schools, all schools need greater support in building partnerships with each other and with other organizations so that they can function together to improve education for all rather than merely for some.

Our research has found that commitment to the promotion of cohesion is not universal, and for many faith schools not a priority. Despite the existence of a statutory duty to promote community cohesion since 2007, and good race relations since 2002, many faith schools have done very little to engage with community cohesion initiatives. Given the challenges made by many in civic society, academia and parliament to the continued existence of faith schools on the basis that they are detrimental to cohesion, we found that, for many schools, cohesion was still not considered to be important. Too often, there remains a resistance to learning about other faiths when faith schools are seen as the spaces in which singular faith identities and traditions are trans-

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7   Cantle (2001).

8   Weekes-Bernard (2007).

mitted, rather than as spaces in which faith is 'lived'. By seeing faith schools as schools for all in the community, rather than as a means of ensuring exclusivity, the potential for learning about others' religions and faiths will be enhanced. This will in turn contribute to greater understanding of faith diversity in England.

Without faith-based admissions criteria, resistance to the contribution that faith organizations can make to the English education system could lessen. This would enable a real and effective partnership to be established between government and faith organizations in providing education for all citizens. Instead, controversy over the role of faith in education and resistance to engagement between faith schools and the remainder of the schooling system has the effect of limiting the legitimate role of faith organizations in schooling.

Children should have a greater say in how they are educated

Children's rights are as important as parents' rights. While the debate about faith schools is characterized by discussions of parental choice of education, little is heard about children's views. Faith schools in particular emphasize parental choice (even when those choices may be based on an incomplete understanding of our very complex education system, or a will to avoid interaction with young people from other backgrounds), but do not champion the rights of children.

Restoring some balance, through giving young people appropriate opportunities to influence the shape of their educational experience, is crucial. Teaching about democracy and citizenship within institutions that are autocratic only serves to demonstrate to young people the double standards operated by adults. If young people are to develop the ability for critical thinking and self-determination, in opposition to absolutist thought and closed approaches to difference, developing appropriate democratic dialogue within schools is necessary. Both faith schools and those without a religious character could do far more to enable young people's voice and participation, thereby demonstrating their commitment to democratic dialogue.

RE should be part of the core national curriculum

In schools without a religious character, provision for learning about religion is too often poor. In faith schools, provision for learning about religions beyond those of the sponsoring faith is also inadequate. Local structures for supporting religious education in schools are too often weak and ineffectual. All schools should therefore follow a common RE National Curriculum as a minimum guarantee of learning about the role of faith in society, critical thinking about religion, ethics, and the diversity of faith traditions.

Faith schools should also serve the most disadvantaged

Despite histories based on challenging poverty and inequality, and high-level pronouncements which infer a mission to serve the most disadvantaged in society, faith schools educate a disproportionately small number of young people at the lowest end of the socio-economic scale. Selection procedures, while based on faith, seem to favour the more privileged. In the case of many faith organizations, therefore, allowing faith to be a criterion for school selection would appear to contradict their mission to provide education for the most disadvantaged. When challenged on this data, faith school providers seem to be more keen in their public announcements to discuss statistical validity than engage with a mission to serve the most disadvantaged.

Faith schools must value all young people

Inequalities and failure to tackle religious discrimination in non-faith schooling is a significant driver for faith school attendance. Faith is an important marker of identity for many, and all schools need to be able to show that they respect this by challenging bullying on the basis of faith background, and improving the quality of teaching about religion and faith.

Important facets of people's identities operate beyond what they are able to express through their faith. These other aspects need to be developed within the process of learning in faith schools – and be well valued within them. It is not enough to privilege one marker of identity over all others, catering for young people only as members of particular faith communities without also understanding their gender, ethnicity, age, ability or sexual orientation. While this may prove to be controversial for many faith-based organizations, becoming schools for all will require the development of teaching practices and ideologies that value everyone equally.

Disappointingly, given their emphasis on values and moral education, faith schools have not developed a distinctive approach to learning about diversity. They appear to take approaches to race, gender and disability equality that are similar to those of non-faith schools, and are therefore no better placed to respond to the needs of young people. This is particularly of concern given the large numbers of minority ethnic pupils attending

faith schools (particularly in urban areas), and the ongoing controversies about gender and sexual orientation within many faith communities.

If these recommendations are acted upon, faith should continue to play an important role in our education system
While not diminishing the strength of the caveats and criticisms expressed above, faith schools remain a significant and important part of our education system. They expand the range of choice in schooling, and a means of improving standards, by offering choice to parents and developing effective responses to local, national and global challenges in education. Yet, all too often, faith schools struggle to engage with neighbouring schools and other social partners, thus limiting the impact that they can have. As currently constituted, they display an insular and too often absolutist approach to faith which excludes rather than includes. Young people deserve better from our school system as they grow to become adults in a multi-ethnic and multi faith society.

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Any reform which impacts on one-third of the schooling system is likely to be radical and difficult. However, the status quo is no longer an option. Currently, government policymakers appear to have reached an impasse; with faith organizations unwilling or unable to change the nature of their schools significantly, offering to do little more than tinker at the margins of their provision to address issues of national concern – namely community cohesion. Government on the other hand has expended much political capital in this area already, leading to the Janus-like situation of welcoming faith schools into the system, but only where there is agreement from the Schools' Adjudicator and other local partners, who have shown an antipathy to faith-based schooling as currently constituted. These recommendations offer a way of moving beyond this impasse and, while they will require a shift in the current understanding of faith-based schooling, offer a solution which can ensure the relevance of faith in schools for the 21st century.

Part 1. Faith Schools in Context

The education system in England is complex and diverse and the role of faith schools within it highly contested. In Part 1 of this report, we provide a background to the debate on faith schools by considering:
- the contemporary education policy context
- the history of faith organizations' involvement with education in England
- the size and distribution of faith schools in England
- the rationale and tools for government's community cohesion policy agenda
- and the key debates in recent years regarding the role of faith organizations and schooling

Chapter 1. Education Policy – Levers and Constraints

Within the English educational system, there are approximately 6900 maintained faith schools, making up one-third of all state-maintained schools in England. They operate within and are highly influential upon education policy in England. Education policy rarely moves inexorably in one direction. Of necessity it is a series of compromises, contradictions and conflations. Schools as institutions have to operate within a policy context of competing demands and policy agendas. Faith schools are no exception to these constraints.

In this report we highlight some of the tensions within the government's policy on education – tensions that impact in particular on faith schools and their role in promoting community cohesion. We consider how faith schools respond to competing pressures from parents, community organizations, neighbouring schools, and local and national government. We do this in order to make recommendations about how best a system in which faith schools play a part can prepare young people to operate successfully in a multi-ethnic, multi-faith society. In describing pressures within institutions, Woods et al. (1988: 187) note that:

> School managers were characteristically caught in a complex web of influences and were involved in balancing an array of cross-pressures. Thus, for example, not only do the academic and the social and pastoral need to be weighed against each other in so far as they compete for finite time and resources in the school, but their perceived relative importance also depends on the one hand on inclusive values and on the other on pressures of exclusivity.

Here we examine the shape these pressures take, and consider how the balance in policy and practice can be adjusted and strengthened so that faith schools will engage with an inclusive agenda that promotes community cohesion.

1.1 From welfare to self-help, equity to effectiveness

There has been a concerted shift in government education policy since the 1990s – presaged by the ground-breaking Education Reform Act (1988), but reinforced by consecutive Conservative and Labour governments. This shift has emphasized the role of education as crucial to the engagement of 'UK plc' in the 'knowledge driven economy' (DTI, 1998). As with all shifts in policy, this move has earlier form (as early as James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech in 1976); but the vigour with which New Labour's policy hyperactivity has been applied to education is unprecedented.

Government's renewed focus on a knowledge-driven economy has played out against a backdrop of the move from 'Old' to New Labour. Eighteen years of what came to be known as Thatcherism, and pressures of inter-national policy convergence, have coalesced to produce 'third way' approaches (Giddens, 1998). These are approaches that commentators such as Tomlinson (2001) have referred to as the shift from a welfarist to a 'post-welfarist' state; the rejection of Keynesian national welfare states in favour of the state as an enabler, regulator and mediator. A state defined in third-way terms is not necessarily the same as the neo-liberal small state, and can involve a great deal of state-led activity and intervention. Policy has been imple-mented through a range of policy tools which have characterized New Labour's approach to public-sector reform – market incentives, compe-tition and contestability, user choice and voice, and public servant capability (Ball, 2008).

However, there is a tension at the heart of the drive to focus the education system on the knowledge-driven economy, one which reflects some of the key tensions in the Labour party throughout the Blair government. If, as Tony Blair stated, 'education is our best economic policy' (Blair, 2005; cited in Ball, 2008), how does this relate to education for social justice and equity – or to quote Blair in another speech, education's 'unique ability to correct the inequal-ities of class or background'? (Blair, 2006 – cited in Ball, 2008: 153). As Ball notes:

> While a commitment to *forms of equity* is part of New Labour's agenda for education, equity is rarely presented as a primary goal of policy in itself and is tied to the achievement of other ends and purposes, usually economic.

Given a concentration on effectiveness in preparing young people for a knowledge-driven economy, greater diversity of outcome and method of delivery becomes a secondary problem; indeed it is sometimes championed as a key plank of reform. Through creating different forms of school governance, and communities of schools

with a shared focus (e.g. academies, specialist schools) the government hopes to increase the speed of educational innovation (possibly with eventual benefits for all pupils), enlarge user choice and involvement, and 'disarticulate' monolithic forms of education delivery. In this light, faith schools can be seen as a core part of a disarticulated system – offering a route to effectiveness in a knowledge driven economy, with less emphasis placed on equity. This approach is encapsulated in the New Labour slogans 'what works' and 'standards, not structures'.

1.2 Policy conflict, policy resistance

Faith schools take on a particular role in this diversity of schools. They are valued by government primarily in terms of effectiveness for their pupils, their particular ethos, and their ability to encourage and harness parental involvement. While meeting many of the education reform goals laid out for a knowledge-driven economy, however, those of equity and social justice remain secondary goals in policy terms and often in practice for faith schools. Paterson (2003) highlights three competing drivers of New Labour's education policy, noting that:

> Just because Labour media managers want to present a coherent image of politicians who are thoroughly in control of what they are doing and thinking is no reason for the rest of us to concur.

She argues that the three strands of Labour's ideology of education can be defined as:

1. New Labourism: a 'reinterpretation' of New Right and 19th-century liberalism;
2. Developmentalism: promotion of the competitiveness of the nation in a global economy;
3. New Social Democracy: an 'insistence on the inadequacies of unregulated capitalism, on the role of the public sector and on the importance of redistributing power, wealth and opportunity'.

This analysis is significant for our understanding of the competing pressures that shape the context in which faith schools operate and that influence their understanding of their role in promoting community cohesion. Paterson goes on to explain how the 'standards, not structures' approach to educational reform (*New Labourism*) is in tension with the focus on education as the means of 'building social capital through creating a sense of civic duty' (*Developmentalism*), and

with an additional emphasis on reducing child poverty, challenging racism, encouraging redistribution and strengthening equality of opportunity (*New Social Democracy*). Typified respectively by policy on City Academies, Citizenship studies, and the Sure Start initiatives, all three strands are active in government policy, and as policy is increasingly made not just through legislation but as a series of policy 'moves' expressed and promoted via editorial columns, speeches, reports, guidance and interviews, it is not surprising that different strands of policy impact differentially on different institutions and actors. Ball (2008: 7) notes:

> Policies are contested, interpreted and enacted in a variety of arenas of practice and the rhetorics, texts and meanings of policy makers do not always translate directly and obviously into institutional practices. They are inflected, mediated, resisted and misunderstood, or in some cases simply prove unworkable.

It is likely that some institutions are more able than others to 'resist' policies and interpret them in ways that are unexpected. Furthermore, the likelihood is that where the policy tools in operation are those of markets, competition and user choice, those who can live up to the headline performance measurements (SAT and GCSE scores) are more likely to be able to resist policy regarding 'softer' equity measures, such as inclusion, pupil voice and community cohesion (Berkeley, 2002).[9] While faith schools enjoy success (as narrowly measured by examination results) and are popular with parents, government levers for influence are weaker.

The ability to construct a coherent balance between these competing strands of policy is a complex challenge for faith schools as they need to respond to other policy drivers as well. Faith schools face an alternative set of policy pressures from their sponsoring faith bodies. These bodies take widely varying approaches, but they all work to define a vision of education that is similar to but not totally aligned with government visions. For many, their focus is to engage in religious instruction and create a space in which young people can be educated in the religious tradition of their parents/carers. These obligations and differences in mission act as a prism through which school policy and practice are viewed – which thereby creates a further set of tensions for these institutions in formulating their responses to government policy.

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9   See policy on 'light touch' inspections (Ofsted and DfES, 2004).

Table 1. Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools

(1a): Schools by Status and Religious Character (January 2007, England)[1]

	Primary Schools					Secondary Schools				
	Community	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Foundation	Total	Community	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Foundation	Total
Total	**10,726**	**3,731**	**2,542**	**362**	**17,361**	**2,112**	**554**	**113**	**564**	**3,343**
No Religious Character	10,726	15	43	322	11,106	2,112	40	53	551	2,756
Church of England	0	1,956	2,446	39	4,441	0	137	53	11	201
Roman Catholic	0	1,696	0	0	1,696	0	341	0	1	342
Methodist	0	2	24	0	26	0	0	0	0	0
Other Christian Faith[2]	0	28	29	1	58	0	22	7	1	30
Jewish	0	28	0	0	28	0	9	0	0	9
Muslim	0	4	0	0	4	0	3	0	0	3
Sikh	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
Other	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1

Source: School Census and Edubase
[1] Includes middle schools as deemed; [2] includes schools of mixed denomination or other Christian beliefs.

(1b): Number (headcount) of Pupils by Status and Religious Character of the School[1,2] (January 2007, England)

	Primary Schools					Secondary Schools				
	Community	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Foundation	Total	Community	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Foundation	Total
Total	**2,799,440**	**785,840**	**414,130**	**108,270**	**4,107,680**	**2,023,450**	**504,450**	**112,740**	**627,850**	**3,268,490**
No Religious Character	2,799,440	2,470	8,400	99,210	2,909,510	2,023,450	39,960	64,610	614,590	2,742,600
Church of England	0	361,960	396,520	8,840	767,320	0	120,100	40,830	11,190	172,110
Roman Catholic	0	404,350	0	0	404,350	0	316,600	0	1,290	317,890
Methodist	0	420	4,070	0	4,490	0	0	0	0	0
Other Christian Faith[3]	0	6,180	5,130	230	11,540	0	19,720	7,300	780	27,810
Jewish	0	8,690	0	0	8,690	0	6,080	0	0	6,080
Muslim	0	1,150	0	0	1,150	0	1,200	0	0	1,200
Sikh	0	1300	0	0	300	0	500	0	0	500
Other	0	330	0	0	330	0	290	0	0	290

Source: School Census and Edubase
[1] Includes middle schools as deemed; [2] excludes dually registered pupils; [3] includes schools of mixed denomination or other Christian beliefs. Pupil numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. There may be discrepancies between the sum of constituent items and totals as shown.

1.3 Faith schools in England

Faith schooling is part of a long tradition of religious involvement in the English educational system. With approximately 6900 maintained faith schools in the system, as noted earlier, they constitute one-third of all state-maintained schools in England.

Status. The majority of faith schools (91%) are in the primary sector and have voluntary-aided status (VA).[10] The Church of England has the largest representation of maintained faith schools with 4642 schools, followed by Roman Catholic (2038), Christian other (88), Jewish (37), Methodist (26), Muslim (8), Sikh (2) and the first state-funded Hindu school, which opened in September 2008 (see Table 1). There is also one Seventh Day Adventist secondary school and one Greek Orthodox primary school.

Denomination. The number of maintained faith schools does not reflect a proportionate relationship with religious populations by denomi-nation. According to the 2001 Census, Christianity is the main religion in Great Britain, at almost three-quarters of the population (72%).[11] People with no religion formed the second largest group (15%). Around 5% claimed a non-Christian religious denomination with Muslims as the largest religious group after Christians, followed by Hindus, Sikhs, Jews and Buddhists respectively.

The pattern of faith involvement in Academies[12] and the Independent sector varies. All of the faith-sponsored Academies are Christian in denomi-nation. Of the 47 Academies open in April 2008, 16 have a faith designation: Church of England (3), Roman Catholic (1), CE/RC (1), and non-denomi-national Christian (11).[13] Out of an estimated 900 independent faith schools[14] (representing 2 out of every 5 independent schools in England approxi-mately), over 700 represent various Christian denominations; the next largest groups are the 115 independent Muslim schools and 38 independent Jewish schools.[15]

The choice of school status – voluntary controlled (VC), voluntary aided (VA), independent faith schools and faith-sponsored academies – relates to the different ways in which they are

funded, and governed. Among the state-maintained faith schools, approximately 59% of primary faith schools are VA and 40% are VC. In the secondary sector, 88% are VA and 10% VC. A full 100% of RC primaries and non-Christian schools are VA, giving them greater control over governance, school admissions and the teaching of RE.

1.4 The history of faith schooling in England

To understand the particular make-up of faith schooling, it is useful to look at the history of faith schools within different religious denominations. The following factors appear to have played an important role in the demand for and provision of faith schooling across different faith-based commu-nities:

- poverty, educational inequalities and the desire to use education as a route for socio-economic mobility;
- successive waves of immigration and efforts to promote integration;
- demand for faith-based education by faith, educational and community organizations;
- changing religious needs.

What follows is a brief description of how and when the major denominations began to interact with the state education system.

Faith Denominations and the State System
Church of England schools[16]

The National Society (formed 1811) aimed to promote the 'education of the poor in the principles of the established church' in the absence of a state-education system, later introduced in 1870. The Education Acts of 1902 and 1944, whilst expanding state supported education, initiated a 'dual system' of schools and consolidated the position of voluntary Christian schools with increased financial support. Today, the Church of England provides some 25% of primary and 6% of all maintained secondary schools in England. Many of these Church of England schools were estab-lished to serve the local population irrespective of religious affiliation. They are supported by the National Society, which encourages education in accordance with the principles of the Church of England. The Archbishops' Council 2001 Report has recommended the establishment of additional Anglican schools, particularly VA schools. CE schools can be found across England; however, a disproportionately high number of CE faith schools (roughly 40%) are in rural areas.

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10 Voluntary Aided schools are partly funded by the local authority and the religious authority and governing bodies have control over admissions and teaching of Religious Education.
11 This group included the Church of England, Church of Scotland, Church in Wales, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations.
12 Academies are defined as state-maintained independent schools aiming to make a difference in areas of disadvantage through public–private partnerships.
13 DCSF (2007b: 6).
14 Independent Schools Counci.
15 DCSF (2007b: 6).

16 Godfrey and Arthur (2005).

Roman Catholic schools[17]

Between 1847 and 1906, the number of Catholic schools in England grew markedly; primarily in urban areas. This growth responded largely to the influx of working-class Irish immigrants, communities who were at the heart of state-funded Catholic schools by the Catholic Poor School Committee, now known as the Catholic Education Service (CES). Catholic independent and Catholic grammar schools were established in the 19th and early 20th centuries to provide education for the children of the small Catholic upper and middle classes. Today Catholic schools make up around 10% of primary and 10% of all maintained secondary schools in England aiming to preserve the Catholic religious culture. The CES supports these schools on behalf of the Bishops' Conference and in partnership with 22 diocesan education services. Almost a third of RC schools are in the North West, in some areas making up more than a third of the schools in an authority.

Methodist schools

State-funded Wesleyan schools (historically affiliated with John Wesley's efforts to establish Methodist day schools) arose from concern about domination of public elementary education by the Church of England and a growth of Roman Catholicism in the 19th century. These schools therefore have their foundations in a revival of Methodism in England. Although around 900 Methodist public elementary schools already existed by 1870, internal disputes over the role of the church in providing state-education led to a decrease in their number. Today there are more than 60 Methodist Primary Schools, 26 of them state-maintained. Largely in the North West of England, they reflect a historical predominance of Methodism among the working-class populations of the old mill towns.

Jewish schools[18]

The Manchester Jewish School opened in 1853 after a demand for equality of provision alongside Church schools. Waves of Jewish immigration since the 19th century have encouraged further take-up of state-support. Although the Jewish population swelled between 1880 and the 1940s with an influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe, the numbers attending Jewish day schools began to fall, reflecting an impetus towards integrating and assimilating into wider society. Post World War II, a changing attitude towards education saw the setting up of educational organizations[19] and community leaders,[20] raising the profile of Jewish schooling. The number of pupils enrolled in Jewish day schools more than doubled (from 12,800 to around 26,500) between 1975 and 2005/6. There is now an ongoing presence of Jewish schools in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and North East/North West London. However, the type of schools and maintained funding differs between mainstream and strictly orthodox schools.[21] Although demand for strictly orthodox schools is growing, in the maintained sector (which makes up only 28% of Jewish schools), 70% of the schools can be described as mainstream and 30% as strictly orthodox.

Muslim schools[22]

The first two Muslim schools, the Islamia Primary School in Brent, North London and the Al Furqan Primary School in Sparkhill, Birmingham, became state-maintained in 1998. The emergence of Muslim faith schools is linked to the migration of South Asian Muslims to England in the 1950s and 1960s. Since then, independent faith schools linked to mosques and charities have grown, supported by funding from community members. This support was prompted by key concerns, e.g. to provide a 'safe' environment for post-pubescent girls, a faith-based education, training for future religious leaders, and the opportunity to increase achievement among pupils from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds in particular. Muslim independent schools have proliferated and now number around 115, a six-fold increase since 1990, providing education for an estimated 1% of Muslim children. Since 2001, Muslim schools have been actively welcomed into the maintained sector, with the government giving the Association of Muslim Schools (AMS)[23] financial support to facilitate their integration into the sector.

Greek Orthodox schools

St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary School in Croydon, South London is the only maintained school from this religious tradition in the UK. Pupils from nursery to Year 6 have daily Greek lessons. The first Greek Orthodox community

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17 Grace (2002).
18 Miller (2001).

19 The Joint Council for Jewish Religious Education (JEC) founded a nation-wide network of supplementary education and the Jewish Educational Trust set up in 1971 to raise the profile of day schools.
20 Jonathan Sacks, The Chief Rabbi of the United Synagogue, was instrumental in calling for settled Jewish immigrants to renew their commitment to Jewish education to secure the future of the faith in1994.
21 See the Jewish Leadership Council's (2007) Consultation Document, The Future of Jewish Schools.
22 Flint (2007); Hewer (2001).
23 The AMS was established in 1993 as a network for the growing number of Muslim schools in the UK.

was established in London in the 1670s, with the arrival of a small group of refugees. Since then many wider communities have developed, particularly with the arrival of new migrants after the Second World War.

Sikh schools

The first state funded Sikh school in England opened in 1999 after a two-year campaign for the Guru Nanak Sikh College in the London Borough of Hillingdon to become a state-maintained primary/secondary school. It opened in 1993 as an independent school following concerns from Sikh parents about drugs, indiscipline and declining moral standards in other schools. This school has received considerable media recognition for its external examination achievements since 1999. The second Sikh school to open was in Slough, Berkshire in 2006. Slough has some 10,000 Sikhs, according to the 2001 Census, which makes it the highest concentration in the country to date.

Seventh-day Adventist schools

The government currently provides funding for one Seventh-day Adventist school, the John Loughborough secondary school in Tottenham, London. This voluntary-aided school has been funded since 1998, although the Seventh-day Adventist Church has had a presence in Britain since the mid-19th century. However, the school has been criticized for teaching Creationism and has recently received a 'Notice to Improve' from the school inspectors.[24] In the United Kingdom and Ireland the Adventist Church operates 2 secondary schools and 9 primary schools. Negotiations are currently underway to acquire state funding for 8 Adventist primary schools and another Adventist secondary school.[25]

Hindu schools

The first state-maintained Hindu school opened in September 2008 in Harrow, West London. It is a voluntary-aided primary school run by the I-Foundation organization, a charity linked to ISCKON (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness) promoting Vedic culture and philosophy. I-Foundation claims that the demand for the school is from Hindu parents who are becoming increasingly concerned that their children may be losing touch with their culture and religion. They are now looking to develop further schools in Barnet and Leicester, locations with large Hindu communities. In these areas and others with sizeable Hindu populations a number of independent and supplementary schools are run by different Hindu sampradayas,[26] including the Swaminarayan School in Wembley and Sai schools in Harrow and Leicester; teaching language and religious classes in addition to secular subjects. Given the diversity of Hindu traditions, some concern has been expressed about representing them all in a single school.

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24 Branigan (2002b).
25 Lechleitner (2007).

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26 These are different organizations within Hinduism representing various theologies passed on by oral training and initiation.

Chapter 2. Faith Schools and Government Policy

2.1 Government, faith and community cohesion

The current relationship between faith schooling and government policy is closely shaped by the government's decision to work positively with faith-based communities. This has evolved through the following three policy concerns:

- Faith, identity and equality
- Faith communities as sources of social capital and service deliverers
- Inter-faith social action, integration and preventing extremism

Faith continues to be important in the lives of many British citizens. Government, in recognition and response, has set up a number of links with religious organizations and networks, and policy legislation has focused on equality for religious beliefs. These new relationships have been established beyond educational provision, as the Minister for Welfare Reform noted in 2007:[27]

> I believe that there is not an entirely secular solution to achieve social cohesion in our communities. It cannot be done without the partnership of all faith-based groups. A partnership based on mutual respect, tolerance and understanding; that draws on the values that unite us all – of whatever creed, colour or race; that looks for the positive influence of faith-based groups as forces for good within the community – helping people to overcome barriers to work and to make their contribution to the wider social good.

It has been argued that for some communities faith has come to the fore as a key identifier and motivator of community affiliation and action. The latest British Social Attitudes Survey (2007)[28] highlights that there has been a major decline over time in religious identity, defined as belonging to a religion or attending religious services; yet it remains closely related to individual's views on relevant social issues and topics today. Discrimination on religious grounds has also been

high on the government agenda. The features of Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism configured in Runnymede reports of the 1990s[29] have taken on new and complex forms in the light of tragic experiences of terrorism both overseas and at home. New legislation and machinery have been created to understand and respond to religious discrimination. For example, the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 outlaws offences that involve stirring up hatred against persons on racial or religious grounds.

In forming these links and pursuing new legislation, it is important to highlight that different faith communities are starting from different positions in relating to the state. For some there are long-established relationships based on historical precedence including ex-officio representation in the legislature; for others there is a long tradition of motivation around political reform. Also, different faith-based communities are organized in a multitude of ways and, as government engages with faith community bodies, these differences become more important. Debate is far from settled and tensions remain over the role of religion, but it is clear, nevertheless, that in modern British society faith plays a role in political dynamics and is seen as a key area for action on equality and participation.

Faith-based communities have also been recognized as offering effective routes for engagement with people, as a source of motivation for people to work together for the greater social good, and as a tool to build both bridging and bonding social capital. This in turn is seen to contribute to the regeneration of neighbourhoods and communities. However, simultaneously, there have been ongoing tensions. For example, religious sites and beliefs can be major sources of conflict in communities, and there are concerns around the subordination of women, young people, disabled and LGBT people.[30]

Since 2001, the relationship between faith and state has been influenced by the community cohesion agenda. This is a re-interpretation of multiculturalism, in 'which the emphasis on separateness and differences is counterbalanced by the creation of interaction and commonalities'.[31] The concept was developed in 2001, following the disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham, amid fears of communities leading parallel lives and segregating along ethnic and faith lines. Since then, it has been embedded in a signifi-

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27 Jim Murphy MP, Minister for Employment and Welfare Reform, 'What role for faith groups in today's welfare state?', a speech at a seminar in partnership with Employment Focus at City of Manchester Stadium, 19 February 2007.
28 See Heath et al. (2007).

29 *Islamophobia – A Challenge for Us All* (1997); *A Very Light Sleeper* (1995); both published by the Runnymede Trust.
30 Blakey, Pearce and Chesters (2006).
31 The Institute for Community Cohesion (ICoCo); http://www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/icoco

cantly wider policy agenda – shaped by responses to violent extremism post 9/11 and the terror attacks on London in July 2005 – with a view to strengthening a sense of national belonging and integration through shared values. Together with the CRE and the Home Office, the Local Government Association (LGA) provided guidelines (2002) to understanding the concept as one in which:

- a common vision and a sense of belonging exists for all communities;
- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities;
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

In 2007, the report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion extended this definition to include a focus on rights and responsibilities, and an expectation that institutions would treat people fairly.

Faith has been seen as central to developing cohesion, with explicit attention given to integrating and quelling violent extremism within Muslim communities in Britain. A Muslim 'task force' was set up by Government soon after the July 2005 attacks in London with the remit to tackle the perceived radicalization of young people. Wider faith communities have been encouraged to engage with women, young people and hard-to-reach groups. Where the previous government supported the establishment of the Inner Cities Religious Council, the current government has extended the involvement of faith-based communities in policy-making. It has supported a range of organizations in initiatives to engage more effectively with faith-based groups.[32] This includes the work carried out by the Cohesion and Faiths Unit of the newly formed Department of Communities and Local Government, and the grants, totalling more than £4.3 million, offered to faith organizations in March 2007 by Communities Minister Phil Woolas to promote a common sense of citizenship.

A number of criticisms levied at the narrow focus of the community cohesion and faith communities engagement agenda fall into the following areas of concern:

- the practical problems associated with attempting to formulate a public policy of community cohesion on the assumption that common principles and shared values can be founded in multi-ethnic, multi-faith and multi-cultural societies;
- the relative de-emphasis of material deprivation and socio-economic marginalization in community cohesion facilitation programmes in favour of concentrating on inter-faith relationships;[33] and
- the conflation of extremism with one faith, Islam, and how this impacts upon religious prejudices and Islamophobia.

2.2 Young people, schools and community cohesion

All state-funded schools are now required to promote community cohesion. Further to the responsbilities set out in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote good relations, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a duty on schools 'to promote community cohesion.'[34] This reflects wider requirements for schools and youth services to prepare young people to be 'active citizens' and to challenge segregation along class and ethnic lines.

Observations from the Cantle, Clarke, Ritchie, Ouseley and Denham (Home Office) Reports[35] present young people as facing inter-generational tensions, and having an increasingly territorial mentality in asserting different racial, cultural and religious identities. Schools can reinforce these divisions. Burgess and Wilson, and Debbie Weekes-Bernard[36] have found that levels of ethnic segregation are high in England's secondary schools and higher for pupils of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin than for pupils with Black Caribbean or Black African heritage. Schools and youth services have been identified as 'central to breaking down barriers between young people and helping to create cohesive communities'.[37] Policies have been developed to support institutions in delivering change, in particular Education for Citizenship, Every Child Matters and the duty to promote community cohesion noted above.

An initial review of citizenship education in England was undertaken by Sir Bernard Crick,[38] leading to the statutory introduction of three

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32   The Cohesion and Faith Unit has established a Faith Communities Consultative Council as a successor to the Inner Cities Religious Council.

33   McGhee (2003).
34   Education and Inspections Act 2006, Chapter 3, Part 38.
35   All published in 2001.
36   Burgess and Wilson (2005); Weekes-Bernard (2007).
37   Cantle (2001).
38   QCA (1998).

strands – 'social and moral responsibility', 'community involvement' and 'political literacy' – into secondary schools in 2002. The DfES Diversity and Citizenship Report (2007)[39] more recently proposed that this should also include 'Identity and Diversity: Living Together in the UK', exploring both historical and contemporary issues around national identity formation and Britishness. This relates to the recommendations of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) to emphasize a new model of rights and responsibilities:

> that makes clear both a sense of citizenship at national and local level, and the obligations that go along with membership of a community, both for individuals or groups.[40]

The 'Every Child Matters' agenda,[41] underpinned by the Children's Act 2004, focuses on social justice issues for young people. It puts forward a national strategy to ensure that local services are built around young people, identifying risk and opportunities as early as possible. Changes have included the establishment of a Children's Commissioner for England, the Children's Fund for responding to disadvantage, as well as creating local authority children's services to lead on cross-community and cross-sectoral partnerships. The aim is to improve well-being in childhood and later life – being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and overall to narrow the gap between those who do well and those who do not.[42]

Guidance for schools to promote cohesion[43] was published in 2007 to provide a non-statutory framework within which local authorities and schools can understand their new duty to promote community cohesion. It highlights how all schools have a duty to promote community cohesion regardless of school intake and location, recognizing that young people live and work in a country that is diverse in terms of cultures, religion or beliefs, ethnicities and social backgrounds. Schools are required to promote cohesion by:

- encouraging pupils to have a shared sense of belonging,
- helping pupils develop a positive appreciation of diversity,
- removing barriers to equality,
- and building strong partnerships between people from different backgrounds.

2.3 Faith schools and government policy

Collaborating with the providers of faith schools, in 2007 the government published 'Faith in the System',[44] to set out 'our shared understanding of the contribution these schools (popularly known as faith schools) make to school-based education and to the wider school system and society in England'. It was the first joint statement of its type and aimed to respond to worries over the impact of faith schools on community cohesion. The paper reasserts the legitimacy of faith schools while at the same time encouraging faith schools to engage more widely with each other and with schools that do not have a religious character. The backdrop for the publication was an intimation that the government might accept a proposed amendment to the Education and Inspections Bill in the House of Lords in October 2006 that would require faith schools to take 25% of their pupils from outside of the sponsoring faith community:

> [T]he Government welcomes the contribution that schools with a religious character make to the school system – both as a result of their historical role and now as key players in contributing to the more diverse school system with greater opportunities for parental choice that we seek. The Government remains committed to supporting the establishment of new schools by a range of providers – including faith organisations – where local consultation has shown that this is what parents and the community want, and where this greater diversity will help to raise standards.

This government endorsement was balanced by a reaffirmation of faith schools' commitment to contributing to the entire education system and to the promotion of equality and community cohesion:

> The providers of faith schools, like the providers of all schools, are committed to ensuring that their schools:
> - promote community cohesion. In this context, the providers of faith schools and their faith communities welcome the duty imposed on the governing bodies of all maintained schools in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion and for Ofsted to report on community cohesion in its inspection reports of maintained schools and Academies;
> - work in a spirit of partnership with the local authority and the Learning and Skills Council

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39   Ajegbo, Kiwan and Sharma (2007).
40   Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007: 7).
41   DfES (2004).
42   http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/aims/
43   DCSF (2007a).

44   DCSF (2007b).

(LSC) as commissioners of education. In this context, the providers of maintained faith schools and Academies welcome the involvement of local authority governors as members of their governing bodies;

- endeavour to meet the needs of all their pupils whether they are of the faith or not;
- offer high standards of education;
- work in partnership with other schools and organizations from the voluntary and statutory sectors and play a full role in the local Admissions Forum and Schools Forum;
- safeguard and promote the welfare of all their pupils and, like all schools, link with the Local Safeguarding Children Board;
- respect the dignity of the human person within each individual – including pupils and staff – of all faiths and none; and
- (in the case of faith schools) nurture young people in the faith of their family.

Though a long way from the initial proposals to require faith schools to take a quarter of their pupils from religion/belief backgrounds different from that of the sponsoring body, the document also noted a new agreement with Catholic and Church of England schools:

> The Government has reached historic agreements with the Church of England and the Catholic Church on arrangements for new Church of England and Catholic schools.
> **The Church of England** has determined that all new Church of England schools will give priority to 25 percent of their places with no requirement that the children be from practising Anglican families.
> **The Catholic Church** has said that it will first and foremost continue to plan new Catholic schools in order to meet the needs and demands of Catholic parents. In addition and subject to local discussion, it will consider the scope for new Catholic schools to offer additional places to other families who would like a Catholic education for their children as it typically does at present when restructuring its existing educational provision in response to changing demography.

How historic these agreements are is debatable. 'Faith in the System' marked an important point in putting the relationship between faith schools and government policy on a clearer footing, but at the same time highlighted the tensions between these alternative sources of power within the English education system; setting out the key concerns and battlegrounds. The paper highlights religious education, admissions, employment practice,

gender equality issues, interfaith relations, uniform, and citizenship education as areas of contention.

'Faith in the System' did not put an end to controversy over the role of faith schools. In 2008, perhaps in recognition of controversy over the involvement of faith schools in the English education system or to mark a change in the tone of government policy, the newly appointed Secretary of State, Ed Balls (in response to the interim report of this project)[45] made the first statement on faith schools from the Brown government. He distanced the government from encouraging growth in the number of faith schools, noting:

> In some local communities, there is support for faith schools, in some there are schools moving from the independent sector to the state. Other communities are clear that faith schools aren't the right schools for their communities. It is up to the local community to decide what it wants. We're not leading a drive for more faith schools.[46]

It would appear, then, that government policy is not completely settled in terms of faith schools. Interestingly, and perhaps counter-intuitively to many of the critics of faith schools, 'Faith in the System' is clear in its assertion of the important role that faith schools play in meeting the needs of people who may be otherwise hard to reach ('in particular those who have difficulty in achieving their potential in education'), 'fostering understanding, cohesion and integration', and respecting the dignity of all faiths.[47]

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45 Osler (2007).
46 Minutes of the House of Commons Children School and Families Select Committee (2008).
47 DCSF (2007b: 1).

Chapter 3.
Faith Schools –
the Debate So Far

3.1 Critics

A fierce public debate has been developing around the existence and expansion of faith schools in a modern, progressively secular and diverse society – in particular post-2001, when faith became seen by many as a greater cause for division in society. The concerns raised include:

- heightening segregation between young people along class, faith and ethnic lines;
- unfair admissions protocols that favour the most socio-economically privileged families;
- ignoring the rights of children through indulging parental choice;
- religious indoctrination.

A poll of nearly 6000 people, published in *The Observer* in 2001 shortly after the disturbances in the northern mill towns and the terrorist attacks on New York, found that only 11% of respondents were in favour of more faith schools. By 2005, this view had hardened. An ICM poll revealed that following the 2005 London terror attacks, 64% of respondents agreed that 'the government should not be funding faith schools of any kind'.[48]

Some of the opposition to faith schooling has been on the grounds that faith schools in the state sector have an anomalous role in an increasingly diverse and increasingly secular society.[49] The British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society have developed a sustained and vociferous critique based on their work on education policy and faith schools.[50] They argue that taking into consideration wider humanist principles and concerns for equality and social cohesion, faith schools are not the way forward. They suggest that more can be done within community schools to accommodate the diversity of religious beliefs to be found in a pluralist society.

Furthermore, there is a significant body of criticism on how the perceived success of faith schools is undermined by charges of selective school admissions policies, 'cherry picking' their pupils, impacting upon class and ethnic segre-

gation. In her research on faith schools admissions policies, Anne West finds evidence of selective admissions criteria and practices, e.g. use of interview and pre-admission meetings. The research claims that some Catholic and Church of England schools are 'socially selective "elite"' secondary schools which 'appear to select out'[51] low-income religious families, thereby displacing them to religious schools of a less affluent composition.[52] West's findings are supported by the DCSF's own interim research into the effectiveness of the School Admissions Code.[53] Faith schools were found to be most likely not to comply with the code; engaging in practices that were exclusive and favourable to those with greater social capital and higher socio-economic status.

Educational policies encouraging parental choice are seen as problematic where they privilege parental choice over children's rights and contribute to segregation. Irene Bruegel's research found that parental prejudices allied with their school choice reduced the chances of children from different backgrounds being in the same secondary school class. This was especially true of the Catholic schools in her sample.[54] While Professor Diane Reay found that 'white flight' into selective faith schools allows middle-class parents to prevent their children sharing multi-ethnic classrooms.[55] The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) and Comprehensive Future[56] support this argument and assert the importance of schools in creating opportunities for children to learn with other children from different backgrounds, faiths and abilities as the strongest moral and intellectual basis for adult citizenship.

Children's rights are also cited in the context of indoctrination. Fears were sparked by some faith schools teaching creationism in existing schools, e.g. the Seventh-day Adventist school in Tottenham, North London, and by the prospect of future schools/academies being run by evangelical faith organizations.[57] Melissa Benn and Fiona Millar highlighted in their 2006 book how the right of children to be educated in an environment free of religious doctrine is challenged by faith schools and their missions. Lynne Davies goes further in 2008, arguing that religious doctrine taught in a non-critical manner can lead to absolutist views of the world and of self. She argues that this is more likely to be the case in faith schools where young people interact only

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48   See ICM/Guardian Poll http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/
     Politics/documents/2005/08/23/Guardian-aug05.pdf
49   ATL (2007).
50   British Humanist Association (2002; revised January 2006).

51   http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/pressAndInformationOffice/
     newsAndEvents/archives/2007/ReligiousSchoolsLondon.htm
52   Allen and West (2007).
53   www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode (accessed 23/04/08).
54   Bruegel (2006).
55   Reay (2008).
56   Benn and Millar (2006: 8).
57   Branigan (2002a).

with people from a similar religious background. She identifies absolutism as a key factor in the radicalization of young people.[58]

In September 2008 a coalition of organisations was formed to campaign 'for inclusive schools and an end to special arrangements for state funded religious schools'.[59] The coalition is chaired by Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain and members include Ekklesia, a Christian think-tank as well as the British Humanist Association, Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers.

3.2 Supporters

Many faith school providers highlight the contributions they make to community cohesion, educational standards and demand for further expansion in the maintained school sector by citing the following:

- the common good
- religious identities and diversity
- moral values and discipline
- achievement
- parental demand

Providers of faith schools highlight their importance for their institutions. In the Archbishops' Council 2001 Report, church schools are identified as of crucial importance to 'the whole mission of the Church to children and young people, and indeed to the long-term well being of the Church of England'.[60] This faith ethos, however, is seen as pivotal to an education that builds communities. A statement issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales emphasizes the mission of Catholic schools as 'the ongoing development of the entire potential of every person ... to promote the well-being and freedom of every person, made in the image and likeness of God and finding fulfilment in God alone' (5 May 2000).

Professor John Sullivan notes in 2001 that these institutional aims have wider benefits for society. He argues that schools that are true to a religious mission play a positive community-building role and have 'a concern for the common good as a high priority in their aims'.[61] Similarly, research into the UK's Islamic schools in 2005 presents the views of Muslim educators who see themselves as re-evaluating the purpose of education for the community, to affirm them and make them active citizens.[62]

A number of contributors to 'Faith Schools: Consensus or Conflict' (2005)[63] argue that the most important criteria for any school regardless of faith is that schools prepare young people for a world of cultural and religious plurality. Although there appears to be a recognized lack of empirical research in or with faith schools, Mark Halstead and Terence McLaughlin (2005) assert that faith schools can give children a sense of their own identity and help them become respectful of the beliefs and values of others.

Many faith-school providers claim that they are able to educate pupils to have respect for people from different backgrounds because of the emphasis they place on moral values and discipline. Churches provide guidance to schools on moral development in terms of the Christian understanding of creation and humankind.[64] The Muslim Educational Trust also highlights the specific dimension of Muslim schools as fostering strong moral values and a sense of responsibility for the family unit as underpinned by the teachings of Islam.[65]

As well as a religious ethos in schools, high educational standards are presented as a means of justifying faith involvement in schools. Analysis by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) in 2002 showed that pupils in Jewish schools exceeded the national average scores in key stages 1 to 3 by more than 10 percentage points.[66] The National Society[67] also claims that during Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 (in 2004) the value-added scores of pupils in Anglican schools were on average higher than those of pupils in non-faith schools. This is despite making allowances for individual pupil, local authority and school characteristics. While there may be a correlation between religious ethos and achievement, there is no clear evidence to suggest causation.

It is unclear what influence academic results wield in encouraging parental demand for faith schools in relation to other factors. However, providers claim that demand for school places strengthens the argument for state funding. The Church of England Board of Education refers to surveys reporting 160 applications for every 100 places[68] in their schools to demonstrate continued parental demand and the need for an extra 100 Church secondary schools. Church of England

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58   Davies (2008: 20).
59   www.accordcoalition.org.uk
60   Archbishops' Council (2001: xi).
61   Sullivan (2001).
62   Lawson (2005).
63   Gardner et al. (2005).
64   See http://www.natsoc.org.uk/schools/curriculum/ethos/e2.html
65   The Muslim Educational Trust was set up in 1966 to develop Islamic education in the UK; see http://www.metrust.demon.co.uk/issues1211/issues91-94.pdf
66   Jewish Leadership Council (2007).
67   The National Society set up in 1811 established a national system of CE education, supplemented by the State from 1870 onwards. They continue to provide support for around 5000 CE and other church schools in England and Wales.
68   The Archbishops' Council (2001: xi).

and Catholic schools are also perceived as over-subscribed, with parents from non-religious or different religious backgrounds willing to engage in religious practice or even change their faith to gain admission to some of these schools.[69] The Jewish Leadership Council (2007) highlights growing demand for school places and plans for additional schools and colleges, doubling the number of places in mainstream secondary Jewish education in London by around 50%, as evidence of demand. Similarly, the Association of Muslim Social Scientists et al. (2004) claim that there is a growing call by Muslim parents for more Muslim schools in the maintained sector.[70] These claims of increasing demand are counterbalanced by evidence that demand for faith schools is not uniformly experienced across geographical areas or within religious populations. There are examples of faith schools becoming multi-faith in admissions because of lack of demand.[71]

In response to the launch of the Accord Coalition, arguing for an end to 'special arrangements for state funded religious schools' in September 2008 the 'Faith Schools Providers Group' responded to the criticism by making the following assertions:[72]

- Faith schools are open to applications from students of other faiths and none. . . the admissions policy . . .is conducted in a transparent, open and accountable way.
- Faith schools consistently deliver excellent academic results, within a caring atmosphere that nurtures the whole student as an individual. . .
- They nurture an understanding and appreciation of other cultures, promote good citizenship and give young people the chance to practice this in varied ways through the curriculum. . .
- Faith schools develop best practice that supports community cohesion . . .
- Faith communities will go out of their way to support those suffering from hardship and assist those who request financial help. . .
- The staff teams of faith schools are diverse, with members drawn from all faiths and backgrounds. . .

- In September 2007, all the main faith school providers in England signed up to a shared vision for promoting community cohesion through schools with a religious character.

3.3 Faith and state

Understanding the contemporary policy context, the long history of involvement of faith organizations in English education, the different levels and styles of engagement in the education system and the controversies and disputes over their role is crucial in assessing the contribution faith schools make to community cohesion. It is also important to understand the principles and drivers for the community cohesion agenda. From the analysis above, it is clear that faith has become a more significant marker of identity in recent years. This has elicited a great deal of reflection about the relationship between faith and the state. Schools are arguably the most widespread institutions in which faith and state interact and are therefore key signifiers of the relationship. As such they have drawn upon themselves an unprecedented level of scrutiny and attention from a wide range of sources.

In this report, we focus on the policy aspects of community cohesion to find out how the policy is interpreted in faith schools in different parts of England, and how it impacts on their practices. The official guidance to schools on their duty to promote community cohesion identifies four areas of work in which schools should engage:

- encouraging pupils to have a shared sense of belonging,
- helping pupils develop a positive appreciation of diversity,
- removing barriers to equality,
- and building strong partnerships between people from different backgrounds.

Here, we use these tasks as the prism through which to understand how a system that contains faith schools within it prepares young people for life in a multi-ethnic, multi-faith, diverse society.

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69 Webster and Elliot (2008); Sims (2007).
70 The document is published by the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, the education and development campaign FED 2000, the Muslim College UK and the Forum against Islamophobia and Racism.
71 'The Jewish School where half the pupils are Muslim', The Independent, 1 February 2007.
72 Catholic Communications Network (2008) 'Faith school leaders unite to rebut criticism' 29/08/08; press release issued on behalf of the Faith Schools' Providers Group http://www.catholic-ew. org.uk/ccb/catholic_church/media_centre2/press_releases/press_ releases_2008/faith_school_leaders_unite_to_rebut_criticism2 [accessed 21 October 2008].

Methodology

- How can a school system that contains faith schools successfully prepare young people for living in a multi-cultural society?
- How do faith schools contribute to community cohesion?

Our approach to these questions was largely qualitative. We selected methods most appropriate to go beyond a formal consultation process in order to allow participants to respond honestly to the sensitive issues around faith schooling and community cohesion. From the workshops to the survey questionnaire, opportunities were created for reflection, opinion forming, the giving and receiving of evidence, and evaluation.

Expert Consultations

A consultation paper was drafted and circulated to a range of national experts in the fields of education policy, race equality policy, academic research around education/faith, teaching unions and youth/community networks (see Appendix to this report). 55 institutions/individuals were asked to draw upon their experience and professional backgrounds to identify in detail how different areas of school life (notably that of faith schools), e.g. admissions, curriculum, ethos, interaction and relationships, and school organization, could impact upon community cohesion and ethnic segregation. Of the 27 responses received, 11 were written papers and 16 were one-to-one interviews.

Local Workshops

We held community consultation workshops in six locations across England. Two were in London: Newham and Hackney (inner London), and Brent and Harrow (outer London); the other four locations were Blackburn, Liverpool, Leicester and Southampton. The sites were selected to reflect a range of lived experiences of ethnic and religious diversity (see Osler, 2007) and schooling. An average of 25–30 participants attended each workshop.

School Consultations

Consultations with schools involved in-depth discussions with headteachers (7), focus groups with parents (2) and young people (5). Focus groups with young people engaged 88 pupils, of whom 52 were from Year 10 (secondary schools) and 36 from Year 6/7 (primary schools), and they came from 7 participating schools and 1 youth SACRE. The focus groups for young people were split into three principal themes – Me and My School, My Friends, Me and My Future.

Parent/Teacher Surveys

An online survey consultation with open responses from parents and teachers generated anecdotal evidence from 220 respondents. Surveys sent to teaching, governor and parent organizations were passed on to the full range of their members. Despite this, an unexpectedly high response was received from RC schools.

Limitations of Methods

Biases include resource differentials between religious, equality and community organizations. For example, many of the non-Christian organizations had no equivalent to a local diocese, and were run by a very small number of representatives. In addition, among the different denominations and faith perspectives within religious communities, encompassing reform, gender and youth networks, we engaged diverse voices wherever possible, especially in the local workshops. However, there is always a concern that the most vocal will make themselves heard above the others. Although we approached schools from different denominations in all our areas, our selection was limited to those that agreed to attend workshops or give us access for consultations. Our surveys are even less reflective of the minority faith provision of faith schools. In many ways, the most important contributions to the project reflect the concerns of those with the largest representation of faith schools, i.e. CE and RC providers.

Part 2. Analysis

Our research process engaged over 1000 people from a wide range of backgrounds, faiths and areas across England to consider what role faith schools play in promoting community cohesion. In this Analysis section we use the four tasks set out by the government for schools as our chapter framework for reporting on the views expressed to us. They also provide the basis for the recommendations that we make in Part 3 of the report.

1.   Encouraging pupils to have a shared sense of belonging
1.1 A common vision?
1.2 From faith visions to a shared vision
1.3 Challenges to the creation of a common sense of belonging
1.4 Conclusion

2.   Helping pupils develop a positive appreciation of diversity
2.1 Teaching faith, teaching faith diversity
2.2 Protecting faith identities
2.3 All about faith? Valuing broader diversity
2.4 Conclusion

3.   Removing barriers to equality
3.1 Faith schools challenging inequality
3.2 Faith schools and race equality
3.3 Faith schools and gender equality
3.4 Faith schools and class inequality
3.5 Faith schools: open for all?
3.6 Faith vs achievement as a criterion for choice
3.7 Challenges resulting from exclusivity
3.8 Conclusion

4.   Building strong partnerships between people from different backgrounds
4.1 Choosing partners
4.2 Barriers to interaction
4.3 Faith schools promoting interaction and partnership
4.4 Creating spaces for dialogue
4.5 Institutional innovation for interaction
4.6 Conclusion

Material quoted from the contributions made by participants in our research panels and interviews is given in italics throughout this report.

Chapter 1. Encouraging pupils towards a shared sense of belonging

The idea that a common vision and sense of belonging for all can create cohesiveness has been developed in policy terms in the aftermath of the 2001 disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. The Cantle Report (2001) into possible explanations for the disturbances suggested they were caused by 'the failure to communicate and agree a set of clear values that can govern behaviour'[73] which led to community breakdown in some parts of the country.

As a result, developing shared values and a civic identity formed a key strand of guidance issued to local authorities on mainstreaming and promoting community cohesion. The Local Government Association (LGA) together with the CRE and Home Office provided further definitive guidelines[74] to understand the concept as working towards a society where a common vision and a sense of belonging exists for all communities. To achieve this, the government's policy as outlined in *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* (2005) stipulates that this is not a choice but a responsibility, and that all citizens should have compatible expectations of and opportunities to contribute to their society.

More explicitly, in *Our Shared Future* (2007) the Commission for Integration and Cohesion describes a common vision as 'a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country'. According to their report, a sense of belonging comes from everyone being aware of their rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place, coupled with trust in institutions.

In this chapter we look at how our different respondents understood and acted upon their duty to encourage pupils to have a shared sense of belonging and suggest some ways in which the dilemmas involved in the promotion of a common vision for single-faith schools might be addressed.

1.1 A common vision?

Faith schools and their representative bodies were keen to express their expertise in and focus on values education. Their frameworks for values education are based on particular religious teachings which often overlap with universal human rights principles, though there are also significant divergences. The visions of society that faith schools promote are diverse. Many of the respondents highlighted the role that faith schools play in providing education in the values of particular faith groups:

> Our aim is to cater for parental demand [from those] who want to educate their children in an Islamic environment; the school is not just for results. We consider that if we want to safeguard Islamic backgrounds and our religious duty to transmit this, Islamic education is one of the key institutions. (Association of Muslim Schools)

> Our schools should be at the centre of church mission. This goes back to Archbishop Ramsey who said Church of England schools 'are there to nourish those of the faith, to encourage those of other faiths, and to challenge those of no faith'. (The National Society)

> Most Jewish schools were set up in order to cater for the needs of the minority faith community, so the older ones were actually set up to act as houses of integration in the 19th century. Now the Jewish communities fear is that we want to have Jewish schools because we are worried because we used to be the top ethnic minority group but now we are the fourth, behind Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, now we are the fourth ethnic minority group, so we are way behind, we are only very little, we are 0.1% of the UK population. (Board of Deputies of British Jews)

Proselytizing faith schools

The role of faith schools in the missions of various faiths was a clear motivation for the national bodies. The preservation of faith identity, traditions and values across generations was perceived to be an important reason for the engagement of faith communities in the education system. Indeed, the government also recognized that faith schools supported parents' rights to ensure that their children are educated in accordance with their religious convictions:

> The Government recognizes that faith schools ... make a valuable contribution to the way in which this country discharges its duty under Article 2 of Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) to respect the right of parents to ensure education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions. (Faith in the System, p. 3)

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73   Cantle (2001: 19).
74   LGA (2002).

This motivation was translated into practice in a variety of ways by the schools:

> *Prayers include a midday Salaah before lunch where they sit together in worship and have a talk. Here we also go beyond the values of tolerance to include compassion . . . This is all part of the school's ethos which is based upon the Qu'ran and accorded as a fundamental tenet of Islam.* (Muslim school)

> *We learn about a different Christian virtue every week, like love, peace, friendliness or responsibility. We hear a story from the bible in assembly with examples of each virtue and we do some work on it in RE. Then we have to become the virtue, like if it's being friendly, we show visitors around the school. In English we write poems about it and in art we'll make posters that we can hang on the walls.* (Young people, RC School)

> *Central to this school are values such as ahimsa which form part of the mission statement. We should be much more interested in developing values of conduct consistent with philosophical traditions of Hinduism rather than an allegiance to particular sampradayas of Hinduism or Isckon. Our value will be embodied by pupils and staff here. For example, there will be strict policies around vegetarianism, bullying, the way we nurture the environment.* (Hindu School)

> *The school embodies Christian values. These values come across in the way that the staff teach and interact with the children and underpin the whole ethos. At the heart of the Christian message is love for God and love of neighbour. Children learn that their neighbour could be anyone. They are taught to treat people as they would like to be treated. They are encouraged to fundraise for people in need and pray for people. If children come from this sort of background they are very likely to be good citizens.* (Parent/Teacher survey)

Respondents were less confident in articulating how the promotion of a particular faith related to building a common vision across communities, but were able to suggest a relationship between the values promoted in faith schools to benefits for the wider community of citizens who had a sense of their moral obligation to society.

> *I think the Christian ethos promoted by the Methodist schools for example would be something many people could identify with because it is about valuing human beings as individuals recognising that there is a higher power and it's not just about human impulses. Our overriding aim is to partic-ipate in education and have an influence there because we believe the churches have something to contribute in terms of putting a humanity back into the system and development of the whole child in particular the spiritual development which can often be overlooked.* (Free Church)

> *We have a bit of a problem in part of our school constituency who think that Christian values are the same as caring and sharing and some rather fuzzy-woolly comfort-zone things. In fact we think there's much more edge to them and that young people need to be brought up to put others before themselves and to make sacrifices and also to have an education that prepares them for all the challenges of life; not just employment, achievement and attainment.* (The National Society)

> *Although faith schools may draw pupils from a very wide area, they will be given strong support from the local faith community. Faith groups can contribute towards embedding in every locality those values that are essential for cohesive communities but which can hardly be brought about by government even though public policies may depend on them: a sense of neighbourliness, concern for a place, civility, common courtesy.* (Dr Alan Billings)

Social, cultural and religious capital

Like Billings, researchers who have studied Catholic education also stress the potential that religion and spirituality have for guiding young people to put their talents at the service of the 'common good'.[75] This relationship between spirituality and religion can be understood using Baker and Skinner's (2006) definition of 'religious capital'. They suggest that religious capital is the practical contribution to national and local life made by faith groups. Spiritual capital reinforces this contribution by providing a theological identity, worshipping tradition, value system, moral vision and a basis of faith.[76] They argue that spirituality can thereby provide a framework of values for religious and social action that can benefit wider communities.

This sense of 'religious capital', or the development of the moral and spiritual character of pupils for the benefit of society, was highlighted as a reason for parental choice of a faith school and also seen as a challenge to a perceived over-emphasis on academic achievement. It was argued that parents appreciated the moral

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75   Grace (2002); Sullivan (2001).
76   Baker and Skinner (2006).

authority which faith schools embodied and which they believed prepared young people more effectively for participation in society:

> *The disappearance of spirituality in education has a lot to do with the priority of what you can measure, outputs and targets. Where are the aspects of being human that you can't measure?* (Leicester consultation)

> *The primary aim of schools is not just to raise standards but also to recognise their role in the community.* (Liverpool consultation)

> *Africans and Muslims here prefer faith schools because of their strict moral codes.* (Liverpool consultation)

> *Quite a few Muslim parents would prefer to send their child to St Wilfred's as there is a religious ethos. They want schools to focus on morality and this is what faith schools provide, whether they are Christian or Muslim.* (Blackburn consultation)

> *Spiritual development is important for young people. They cannot develop views and opinions without acknowledging the moral and spiritual background in which they are being brought up.* (Parent/teacher survey)

> *Faith is central to formation of a truly human person. In an economy driven culture it is necessary to have individuals and communities who strive to protect the human rights of every person and who are constantly aware of human values when making decisions that affect others.* (Parent/teacher survey)

It becomes clear that, for many, the contribution of faith schools is to preserve particular religious identities and visions, create citizens with an understanding of their moral obligations to society, and reassert the importance of the moral and spiritual in education. Faiths have a vision of society that they assert through the kinds of moral education in which they engage. These various visions are shared within the schools and with their respective faith communities. But how do these values relate to the obligation to promote a common vision across faith communities (and with those of no religion) and dialogue to promote a shared vision? There is a step between the promotion of a particular set of

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Faith schools demonstrate a successful emphasis on values education which we recognize as a significant contribution to effective education for the 21st century.

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values based on religious teaching, effective moral and spiritual education, and the development of a shared vision across communities, which it is more challenging for faith schools to address.

1.2 From faith visions to a shared vision

For some respondents, secular spaces were best suited for development of a shared or common vision; leaving faith schools to focus on their strengths in moral and spiritual education and preservation of religious traditions. The development of a shared vision was seen as dependent on having shared experiences and spaces to experience being citizens. A respondent from Brent drew attention to educational and leisure spaces: 'secularised spaces where our multi-faceted personalities can play out, e.g. our primary schools, playgrounds and parks, theatres'. However, in Blackburn religious spaces were being used to enable interaction. The Canon of the Anglican cathedral described the need for cohesion to focus on spaces that engage young people:

> *Young people who aren't even from our faith come in and just sit around talking. When I asked why, they said they couldn't find anywhere outside of school to talk. This is what you need to do something about if you want cohesion.* (Blackburn consultation)

But as one respondent was keen to assert, faith schools have a duty to promote cohesion, both legally and morally:

> *Even though parents may choose to send their children to a particular school the responsibility to promote cohesion should not be a choice. For example our school feels that we have a real responsibility to be in dialogue with the communities outside of our school gate.* (Hackney/Newham consultation)

Citizenship and faith

The Inter-Faith Network suggested that young people should be given the skills 'to become active, confident and respectful citizens within a diverse society'. And the Citizenship Foundation also privileged the role of young people; arguing that schools should be asking them '"what kind of society do you want?" And "what can you do to work towards that?"' As an example the Citizenship Foundation points to an exchange programme in which they have been involved that links young people from a Muslim school and a

Roman Catholic girls' school in South London. The programme engages them in debates about the Millennium development goal to achieve gender parity[77] by exploring common aims:

> *We brought them together for workshops to look at girls' education in developing countries and got them down to a Labour Conference to question ministers. It worked really well, because it was an issue they all felt strongly about and focusing on this was extremely productive. Lots of pupils at the Catholic school had roots in Uganda, and then the Muslim pupils mainly from Pakistani origin thought their faith wasn't always pro-education so there was an interesting exchange of ideas.* (Citizenship Foundation)

From this example it becomes clear that it is not only secular spaces in which interaction between people of different religions or of no faith is possible. This is also an example of a focus on a culture of human rights that Osler (Osler and Vincent, 2002) recommends developing when thinking about education policy for what she terms 'cosmopolitan citizenship'. The purpose of this should be to acknowledge 'our global inter-connectedness' which equips young people to 'contribute to and engage constructively with difference at local, national and international levels, while at the same time acknowledging our shared humanity and human rights' (Osler 2007b: 15).

Diverse intakes and shared visions
Exchanges such as these are not widespread. Through the research process we managed to unearth examples of good practice occurring in faith schools which showed a capacity to focus on the task of building shared values across faith (including non-religious belief) boundaries. However, these projects and initiatives were exceptions rather than the rule.

Others pointed to the opportunities that were afforded for engaging in building a shared vision by having an intake from a diverse range of faiths in some faith schools. A representative from the

> **Faith schools are much more effective at educating for a single vision than they are at opening dialogue about a shared vision. Where they do have some success it is often due to the opportunities afforded for young people of different backgrounds to mix – these spaces can be faith-based or secular. Faith schools should aim for a broader intake of pupils in order to enable interfaith and intercultural dialogue.**

National Society gave examples of multi-faith CE schools creating spaces for pupils of different religious and non-religious belief to build a common sense of belonging:

> *I was in a school in Cardiff where they have a large Somali immigrant population who were mainly Muslim, and they had a mixed Welsh Christian population and an element which was quite secular within that particular church affiliation. Every child in the school understood Christianity and the Muslim tradition as well. There were sensitivities around certain activities and different religious needs were catered for but they all had the freedom to engage with each other.* (The National Society)

And a spokesperson for the Board of Deputies of British Jews highlighted the success of multi-faith Jewish schools:

> *There's King David in Liverpool which is 25% Jewish in its pupils and has a large amount of Hindu pupils, King David in Birmingham is now 70% Muslim. When I went to the school it was great because I was sitting eating the Kosher food with the non-Jewish children who attend the school and they said they didn't mind eating it, and they really knew so much about Judaism, and I felt that for them they would never have any anti-Semitism because they had such an understanding of the way the faith worked.* (The Board of Deputies of British Jews)

In both examples, the school's religious ethos creates environments that encourage positive inter-faith relations. They also highlight the ways in which a particular religious character does not have to be exclusive to one faith community and can have positive impacts on community relations.

1.3 Challenges to the creation of a common sense of belonging

Above, we have noted a central tension in the mission of faith schools to preserve and promote particular religious identities and visions, and government's desire for all schools to contribute to building shared visions across faith boundaries. There are, however, further challenges that militate against schools being able to deliver on

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77 In 2000 all 191 member countries of the United Nations – including Australia – committed to eight targets to halve poverty by 2015. This includes eliminating gender disparity at all levels of education and empowering women.

an aspiration to promote a common sense of belonging, challenges that take on a particular shape for schools with a religious character.

Children's voices, human rights

The first such difficulty was identified by some respondents as the difficulty in negotiating a shared sense of cohesion between those committed to faith-based visions and those to children's rights. This for some secularists, humanists, teaching unions, education philosophers and other critics of faith schools presents one of the biggest challenges for the promotion of a common vision. They argue that schools with a religious character can be incompatible with a 'child centred approach' to education. This restricts young people's autonomy and choice over their own vision of how to live.

The British Humanist Association, which has campaigned on this basis for the diversity of religious belief to be accommodated in community schools, but for schools with a religious character to be removed from the state system, makes this point forcefully:

In the Archbishops' Council Report 'The Way Ahead', a clear commitment is made to strengthen the Anglican Christian character of its schools. We think that children should not be the experiment with this and that they should have autonomy over choosing their religious beliefs and values. (British Humanist Association)

The Hindu Council, which had until recently not been a keen supporter of faith-based schooling, provide an interesting perspective, recognizing that while faith schools have the right to teach young people about religion as a way of life, in preparing young people to live in multi-faith societies, spirituality should not be presented as exclusive to religion.

The world now is composed of multi-faith societies, moreover, sometimes we must accept that spiritual progress can be made in a non religious mode. What we are suggesting here is to really promote inclusion, so that even people not belonging to any faith feel included. In very ancient times Hinduism affirmed that spirituality underpins not only religions but also other fields of human endeavour, like music, art,

science and so on, therefore also non religious human activities. This idea is called 'religious pluralism' and is in strong contrast with what some faith schools preach, that is a strongly exclusivist approach. (Hindu Council)

The tension between the rights of parents to teach young people in conformity with their religious/philosophical convictions and children's rights to have autonomy over their religious beliefs remains. Faith schools clearly emphasize parents' rights and respond to their aspirations for their children, but it is relevant to ask in the context of developing shared values about the autonomy of young people and their ability to influence the shape of those values. In our consultations some participants were keen to emphasize the importance of empowering children and encouraging their participation in decision-making;

Children have individual human rights [as defined by the UNCRC] which should not be trumped by 'community rights'. Even non-maintained faith schools need to be stronger on children's values, e.g. their rights. (Brent/Harrow consultation)

Young people are used tokenistically and undermined. Issues they raise are brushed aside. You need to relate to children as empowered. (Liverpool consultation)

One step in the right direction would be for the effective development of more democratic strutures in schools,[78] providing young people with improved opportunities for decision-making and engagement in the process of deliberation about decisions affecting the school community. Schools with a religious character could benefit from a particular focus on school democracy in order to counterbalance the emphasis on parents' rights in choice of school. A Jewish faith school highlighted its work in this regard:

> **Children's rights are as important as parents' rights. While the debate about faith schools is characterized by discussions of parental choice of education, there is little discussion about children's voice. Faith schools, in particular, emphasize parental choice but do not champion the rights of children. Faith schools and other schools could do far more towards enabling young people's voice and participation, thereby demonstrating their commitment to democratic dialogue.**

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78   See Osler (2000). The Democracy in Schools Standard is an example of an accredited award that schools can achieve to highlight their commitment to democratic practice; www.democracyinschoolsstandard.com

Young people and teachers have been involved in creating a charter that we can have as part of our ethos. They have done this via school councils in which they've discussed what changes they would like to see in the school. They will get to see how their contributions are turned into a reality. (Jewish School)

Addressing power

A focus on participation, voice and empowerment in schools might address another challenge in the building of a common sense of belonging, namely that of power differentials. Participants raised their concerns about the community cohesion agenda being synonymous with assimilation and integration into a narrowly defined 'Britishness' – one that is defined around the values of a majority faith or ethnicity rather than one developed through widespread dialogue. The prevalence of issues of security and preventing extremism, were seen as singling out Muslim communities for special focus, rather than the agenda being about how all can contribute to the development of a common sense of belonging. Common values were perceived by some as a tool for policing rather than valuing diversity.

Cohesion as an agenda comes across as very integrationist, that some of us need to integrate into so-called British values. (Hackney/Newham consultation)

There are undertones of racism around faith schools and community cohesion, all-white faith schools aren't causing alarm, it's just visible Asian ones. (Brent/Harrow consultation)

These comments and concerns raised elsewhere[79] highlight the challenge of constructing a dialogue where not all parties consider themselves to have equal status and where the onus is put upon the minoritized participant to justify their position. This suggests that schools

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[79]   Khan and Berkeley (2007).

with a religious character may have to build trust and reciprocity between faiths before a meaningful dialogue can be achieved. Some respondents felt too that the importance of cohesion was not appreciated in all parts of the country, allowing schools to demote it within their individual agendas:

The onus on cohesion is on all schools. Understand that it is an important responsibility as the push for it hasn't just come from media paranoia but [in response] to actual events that took place. But this doesn't mean that a response shouldn't come from the white majority communities. (Hackney/Newham consultation)

There's thinking in the city that we are doing well at multiculturalism because we haven't had a riot. Cohesion is not a political priority in Leicester – the examples of best practice in Bradford [are used] because there is a political push for it there. (Leicester consultation)

Differential levels of infrastructural support for schools in their efforts to promote interfaith dialogue and different patterns of ethnic and faith diversity can prove to be a barrier to the effective development of a common sense of belonging. Faith schools *could* be effective sites for the development and sustainability of this infrastructure, yet report that they are often dependent on external structures to provide support for their efforts in this arena.

1.4 Conclusion

In working towards a common vision and sense of belonging for all there is a key tension for faith schools. Faith schools have a mission and obligation to promote a single vision, one that is shared with their sponsoring community. A requirement to develop a shared vision with those of other faiths and those of non-religious belief is therefore an additional and perhaps conflicting agenda. Some argue that simply by creating effective citizens with a strong sense of moral purpose they make a significant contribution to the development of a common vision

> There are few external structures for creating a shared vision between schools as they are currently constituted and, given the direction of travel in government policy towards greater autonomy for schools, it is unlikely that this can improve in much more than a piecemeal, bolt-on manner. If faith schools are to be effective sites for inter-faith dialogue then they need to find ways of engaging with other schools more effectively. If faith were to be perceived as a specialism for a school, it would provide a route for them to cascade their expertise among other institutions, as other specialist schools do.

for society. If so, the step towards a shared vision is left for other institutions and actors in civic society to make, and it is not clear which are better placed to undertake this task.

Many faith schools have made some attempt to square this circle through promoting citizenship and exchanges, though these are not yet universal activities. Those faith schools that admit pupils from a range of faith and non-faith backgrounds have greater opportunity to engage in interfaith dialogue from a position of equal status, yet without undermining their initial faith mission. This appears to be the most effective way of enabling faith schools to meet their obligation to promote cohesion.

Further particular challenges exist for faith schools in promoting a common sense of belonging. First, there is a need to redress the imbalance in children's participation in decision-making about their educational careers, empowering them as putative citizens by valuing their autonomy. Second, the quest for common values does not occur in a vacuum, but in a society riven with inequalities; addressing the power differentials that place the Christian faith schools in a position of greater power in any school-level interfaith dialogue is essential for building effective links. Finally, the key cohesion issues are very often locally defined. Some faith schools have engaged wholeheartedly in the efforts to build local interfaith infrastructures, but for many this has not been made possible, let alone a priority.

Those existing structures that are designed to enable schools to share their expertise and increase the choice available to parents and pupils could be usefully adopted by and adapted for faith schools. Treating faith as a specialism would require faith schools to be clear about the educational impact of their mission, and encourage them to ensure that they engage with other schools in sharing their vision with others. This is more likely to lead to an informed debate about a common vision and sense of belonging.

As noted above, this analysis gives rise to a number of recommendations for policy and practice. Given the fundamental tension between the promotion of a single vision and the development of a shared vision in which faith schools are asked to engage, there are a number of steps faith schools could take collectively and individually to meet both aims. Faith schools could and should:

- broaden their intake to include pupils from different faiths or non-religious belief;

- be at the vanguard of democracy in schools, privileging children's voices in balance with parental choice;
- commit to acting as local hubs for interfaith dialogue between schools by adopting faith expertise as an educational specialism.

Chapter 2.
Helping pupils develop a positive appreciation of diversity

Schools play a central role in supporting young people to appreciate and value the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances. The values underpinning the National Curriculum make this clear:

> Education should reflect the enduring values that contribute to personal development and equality of opportunity for all, a healthy and just democracy, a productive economy and sustainable development. These include values related to ... our society where truth, freedom, justice, human rights, the rule of law and collective effort are valued for the common good ... we also value the contributions made to our society by a diverse range of people, cultures and heritages. (The National Curriculum 2007, DCSF/QCA)

The aims of the curriculum include enabling all young people to become responsible citizens who 'understand their own and others' cultures and traditions, within the context of British heritage, and have a strong sense of their place in the world'. While the introduction to the National Curriculum sets outs some rather high-minded and aspirational ideals for its purpose, it is clear that its framers have understood the importance of valuing diversity. State-maintained faith schools are required to follow this curriculum. In this chapter we look at the ways in which faith schools have interpreted this duty and put it into action. We look initially at faith diversity and the teaching of religious education. We then go on to consider how faith schools address diversity in some other important markers of identity.

The central tension addressed above (Chapter 1 in Part 2) returns as faith schools attempt to balance a focus on supporting pupils to develop their identities as religious, with a demand for learning about a diverse range of identifications. In this chapter we consider how faith schools engage in teaching about religion, faith and belief, and how they put into action their teaching about other markers of identity.

2.1 Teaching faith, teaching faith diversity

Research investigating children's understanding of religious concepts has highlighted the difficulties

of using religious education, as currently conceptualized, for building interfaith understanding in religious schools. Olivera Petrovich, referring to her most recent research with 400 children aged 5, 6 and 7 years, all attending different faith schools in England, and their RE teachers,[80] has found that:

> [B]ecause faith schools are seen as providing teaching about traditions and beliefs of particular religious cultures, they are apt to be seen as promoting mainly diversity rather than cohesion. [The] goal of cohesion requires that far more emphasis should be placed on underlying (i.e. conceptual) similarities among pupils from different faith and ethnic backgrounds.

She goes on to recommend that because of the 'substantially greater proportion of time set for RE, it is an opportunity for faith schools to meet pupils' conceptual needs associated with religion more successfully than non-faith schools'. Given this opportunity, the potential for faith schools to be leading on issues of interfaith understanding is great.

RE as a tool for cohesion?
Religious Education (RE) is mentioned in the guidance to schools to promote community cohesion[81] as an opportunity to use the curriculum to value differences and challenge prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping. Currently, all maintained schools have to teach RE and in all maintained schools, other than voluntary aided schools with a religious character, it is taught according to a locally agreed syllabus. To raise standards of teaching and learning in RE the Government published a non-statutory National Framework for Religious Education (2004), which encourages the teaching of the tenets of Christianity and the five major religions represented in the UK.[82] While many faith schools do teach some aspects of other faiths there is no legal requirement for them to do so.[83] Though how far this opportunity has been taken up is in reality difficult to discern and, given the special status of religious education, very difficult to monitor. In our view, faith schools should be required to teach a curriculum that is based on a national framework.

A recent Ofsted report on the teaching of RE (2007) found that there is insufficient consistency in the quality of RE teaching and learning across the country and that RE as it is currently taught cannot respond effectively to the drive to promote

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80   Olivera Petrovich, 24 July 2008.
81   DCSF (2007a).
82   To act as a guideline for Education Authorities and other syllabus providers. It encourages the teaching of the tenets of Christianity and the five major religions represented in the UK – Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism – and sets out guidelines and national standards for RE at every key stage level.
83   DfES; http://findoutmore.dfes.gov.uk/2006/02/religious_educa.html

community cohesion without reform. The responsibility for RE curricula rests with the local Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACRE), though, again, faith schools do not have any obligation to follow the locally agreed syllabus they provide. Ofsted (2004b) were damning in their criticism of the way SACREs undertake their task, despite the commendable efforts of many on a voluntary basis:

> All agreed syllabuses seen meet statutory requirements, but their quality varied considerably. Very few syllabuses seen were of high enough quality throughout to make a consistently sound basis for good planning, teaching, learning and assessment.

SACREs were mentioned in all of the areas we visited during the research as key players in supporting young people to learn about faith and in providing a space for schools to work collaboratively across faith boundaries on various areas of the RE curriculum:

> The SACRE is becoming more effective, especially the Youth SACRE. (Liverpool)

> The local SACRE was formed because of a recognition that a large number of young people don't see faith as an important part of their identity. (Leicester)

The SACRE in Newham was described as particularly active, representing 12 out of 15 secondary schools. One of their projects included creating a DVD. Aimed at young people, it encourages them to think about their religious beliefs, and issues around sex education in order to improve the teaching of sex and relationship education (SRE) in relation to faith. Where effective, SACREs can therefore play an important part in building relations and sharing learning resources between different faith schools and schools without a religious character as well as contributing to the RE curriculum (Ofsted, 2007).

In one of the workshops, respondents made suggestions to improve the quality of the local SACRE's work.

> Participant 1: You have the SACRE and other systems in place – but no inspections of them – so they have no authority to enforce things. If they were used by Ofsted then they could be more effective.

> Participant 2: SACRE needs better leadership in order to get engaged.

> Participant 3: When [new coordinator] took over the SACRE she 'sacked' all the representatives because they were all Christian. She then came to the inter-faith council and said I want one representative from each faith to come.

> Participant 4: But it's difficult to get representatives from all faiths because the SACRE meets in the afternoon. It is incredibly boring and is not rooted in the community; there is a perception that apart from the Christian faith all other faiths work in the way the clergy do. As in that there are all full time representatives of their faith who are paid to do things like this.

A number of issues were raised about the authority of the SACRE to influence change, in particular when the faith schools in the area did not have to adopt the locally agreed syllabus.

Although there may be a potential for a role for local SACRE, the criticisms of them appear to come from all angles. They are often unrepresentative, often lack authority, are under-supported by the local authority, they can lack the capacity to deliver the syllabus effectively, and are unreflective of best practice in teaching and learning. Given the importance of the task that is given to them, there is a strong case for radical reform, coupled with encouraging greater compliance from all schools.

The Ofsted report highlights four key changes RE will have to make to respond more effectively to the promotion of cohesion. These are worth quoting at length:

- RE cannot ignore diversity within each religion, teaching about a religion as though it were a monolithic set of beliefs and practices. Each religious tradition encompasses variety, and individuals and groups within it will interpret their faith in very different ways.
- RE cannot ignore controversy. We should dispense with the notion that we should encourage pupils to think uncritically of religion as a 'good thing'. Religion is complex and its impact is ambiguous. Pupils are aware of this ambiguity and must be given the opportunity to explore the issues openly.
- RE cannot ignore the social reality of religion. Most of the issues in the RE curriculum for

> **Radical reform of locally agreed syllabuses should include the adoption of a statutory framework for RE, putting it on a similar footing to other National Curriculum subjects and subjecting it to similar levels of evaluation and monitoring. If RE is to carry the burden of promoting interfaith diversity, it will need to change.**

secondary pupils have been about ethical or philosophical matters, such as arguments about the existence of God, or debates, from a religious perspective, about medical ethics or the environment. It has been unusual to find questions about religion's role in society, changing patterns of religion in the local community, or the rise and decline of religious practice. It now needs to embrace the study of religion and society.

- RE cannot ignore its role in fostering community cohesion and in educating for diversity. This goal has never been far from good RE teaching but the current changes in society give this renewed urgency. Pupils have opinions, attitudes, feelings, prejudices and stereotypes. Developing respect for the commitments of others while retaining the right to question, criticize and evaluate different viewpoints is not just an academic exercise: it involves creating opportunities for children and young people to meet those with different viewpoints. They need to grasp how powerful religion is in people's lives. RE should engage pupils' feelings and emotions, as well as their intellect. (Ofsted, 2007: 40–1)

Given both the sometimes poor performance of SACREs and the worries expressed about the quality of religious education in schools, the ability to appreciate and value the diversity of faith backgrounds through the RE curriculum is highly questionable. Participants in the local workshops noted the perception that faith schools in particular struggled to teach about faith diversity

The problem here is the lack of understanding of faith in non-faith schools and misunderstandings of other faiths in faith schools. In the faith school I went to they were literate about their own faith but didn't impart the same knowledge about other beliefs which is what you have to live with. (Blackburn)

I sent my children to a community school as I wanted them to be around children of other faiths as that's the community they have to live in – and in Catholic schools the children don't learn about other faiths to the same extent. (Brent/Harrow)

The Diversity and Citizenship Review in 2007 found that in order to build community cohesion, schools need to 'anchor their education for diversity within their local context' or 'risk tokenism' (Ajegbo et al., 2007: 56). One of the key ways in which they can do this, argues the report, is for the Non-Statutory National Framework for Religious Education to be

more widely adopted. We would go further and argue that rather than continuing with a non-statutory framework, RE should be brought into the National Curriculum fully so that there can be a clearer focus on improving the standards of teaching and learning and so that all young people receive their entitlement to learn about not only their own faith tradition but those of others in their society.

Can faith schools teach about religious diversity?

Faith organizations recognized the challenges schools face when teaching about faith diversity. The National Society identified one of their major challenges as working with CE schools in 'rural communities' that lack the 'language or the means to engage' with diverse faiths. In the following example they claim that one of the schools they visited refused, with no explanation, to teach about Islam. This refusal denies the opportunity to understand and appreciate faith diversity to young people who may not encounter faiths different from their own on a day-to-day basis.

We had a school the other day that was refusing to teach Islam and we asked why – because you're teaching the Judaic tradition which is a descendant part, so what's the problem? And so we challenge that where we find it. (The National Society)

Other problems were identified in teaching about faith in faith schools that were not restricted to the challenge of teaching about the diversity of faiths in England. Concerns were raised about the style and content of religious education and its relevance to young people in England. Dr Alan Billings referred to particular challenges for Muslim religious education, and the potential that faith schools provide for addressing them:

There is an urgent need for the Muslim community to produce fresh theological expressions of how one can be both British and Muslim that is at least as comprehensive and coherent as the ideology of the Islamic extremists ... Theology is not something that governments can do and there is a strong argument for these theological resources being developed in the safe environment of the faith school. (Dr Alan Billings)

The Board of Deputies of British Jews referred specifically to orthodox Jewish schools and the practice of drawing teachers from their particular communities, which can provide a limited pool of expertise. In order to meet the needs for a relevant religious education they have begun an accredited training programme for teachers from these commu-

nities as well as other faith backgrounds:

> Some of our schools tend to have teachers from their own community, because they want their students to be taught subjects very much rooted in their own identity. But because they are from their own community they don't tend to wish to go out into the outside world and go to university. So within the very orthodox centres of the Jewish community we have set up centres where we are training in-house. We are taking teachers who are well versed in Jewish studies but bringing secular education to them and giving them accreditation through a London University. And I've introduced it to the Hindu community, and now they are working to produce their own trained teachers. (Board of Deputies of British Jews)

As well as the adoption of a national curriculum for religious education, it is evident that there needs to be greater emphasis on building the capacity of RE teachers in faith schools both to understand faith diversity, and to develop relevant curricula and resources for teaching about their own faiths.

2.2. Protecting faith identities

This gap in the capacity of the education system to provide religious education which values diversity may not be a problem for many of the parents who responded to our survey. For them the very reason that they had opted for a school with a religious character was not to learn about other faiths but to bolster their own faith identities. They interpreted the development of a particular faith identity as in itself constitutive of valuing diversity.

> If we are living in a multi-faith society that encourages minorities to have all manner of projects and infrastructure based on their ethnicity and/or faith, then it is only right and proper that the same groups are encouraged to have schools in which children can develop a strong sense of identity and self-esteem. (Parent/teacher survey)

The suggestion is that young people ought to concentrate on learning about their own faith tradition before learning about those of others. As one of the respondents notes, in a multi-faith society, there should be spaces which enable faith communities to share and develop their identities.

> **Provision for learning about religion is poor in non-faith schools. Provision for learning about religions beyond those of the sponsoring faith in faith schools is also inadequate. The local structures for supporting religious education in schools are too often weak and ineffectual. All schools should therefore follow a common RE National Curriculum as a minimum guarantee of learning about the role of faith in society, critical thinking about religion, ethics, and the diversity of faith traditions.**

The step from this to state-funded faith schools is not, however, as straightforward as they suggest and comes from a particular, and we believe erroneous, interpretation of multiculturalism.[84]

Faith schools: a refuge from religious discrimination

Many respondents reflected the view that faith schools provided a safe space in which to develop a faith identity, which was seen as particularly important given what they interpreted as prejudice against religion. They noted negative perceptions towards faith in the public and education sector. Faith schools were perceived as having an important role in challenging these views.

> There is a genuine confusion in this town about faith in education. One local councillor used the local press to 'criticise' the church for hypocrisy in the matter of segregation in education ... The head teacher of a local authority primary school criticised faith communities for bringing segregation into education. Earlier this year the chair of children's services in a discriminatory way was attempting to end Borough support for transport costs to church schools. And was it a joke when a senior education officer in this Borough told me that they could learn all they wanted to about Christianity by watching East Enders? This debate is not just about faith schools, it is about the role of faith in the public sector. (Blackburn)

> My reason for coming here [inter-faith council] is to raise the profile of faith – so that faith is considered more in this city and that we recognise the potential this has. The inter-faith council find a lot of prejudice against faith from within the secular community. For example our engagement with public bodies is largely with those who see faith as peripheral and weird. (Southampton)

These attitudes of ridicule and also indifference towards faith by policymakers were echoed in other workshops by contributors from a range of religious backgrounds and organizations. In this scenario, faith schools are seen as institutions with a 'pro-faith' approach, whereas other schools are seen as being at best indifferent towards faith identities.

Headteachers of Muslim and Jewish schools

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84   CFMEB (2000).

mention how their schools offer a safe place for pupils to express their religious identities:

> When I asked another girl what the difference was between the state school she used to go to and the faith school she is at now, she said that kids used to wipe their hands on her hijab after they'd been to the toilet. And when she told the teachers they said and did nothing. Nothing like that would happen where she is now. (Muslim school)

> We have high security here because we have to deal with incidents of anti-Semitism. (Jewish school)

A visit to a Jewish school in London revealed a high level of security with locked gates, security guards and rigorous checks on visitors' identity. The headteacher explained that racism towards their students, although less frequent now, necessitated such precautions. Marie Jenkins's research into Muslim and Jewish educational experiences in schooling (Jenkins, 2008) shows how the safeguarding of religious dress against verbal and physical abuse is a significant factor in rationalizing separate faith-based education. Some faith schools are seen to not only ensure physical safety, but also accommodate dress, diet and religion, and other areas of everyday life.

Consultation participants highlighted the reluctance of teachers to teach about faith and parents choosing to withdraw pupils from world faith classes and school visits to places of worship:

> Because of a fear of faith, teachers are more reluctant to teach about it … Visits to places of worship should be supported by the local authority – schools should opt in, despite resistance from some parents. (Hackney/Newham)

> The problem of Islamophobia is turning into a problem of 'faith phobia', so many teachers shy away from the subject. (Liverpool)

> Parents are choosing to withdraw their children from world faith classes, I found out at a recent inspectors' and advisers' conference. They were reporting that there's been an increase. (Leicester)

The perception of the respondents is that because the quality of RE teaching is weak and faith identities are not highly valued in schools without a religious character, faith schools offer an effective response. It is clear that it is not only faith schools that have to develop improved teaching about faiths, their role in society and issues of faith identity and diversity. If they were able to achieve this, parents might feel more comfortable with their children attending non-faith-based schools. This view echoes in part the recommendations made by the National Union of Teachers (2008):

> Based on the principle of equity, all schools must make 'reasonable accommodations' to meet the religious needs of all pupils and respect the diversity of beliefs represented within its population such that all faith groups and those with none can attend happily.

Improving the quality of teaching about faith could respond to the worries of parents about their faith identities not being valued and schools' failure to teach effectively about religion.

2.3 All about faith? Valuing broader diversity

Schools were identified as having a clear responsibility to act to value diversity across all 'diversity strands'. School's Out, who campaign on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) issues as they affect education and those in education, drew attention to six strands of equalities:

> There needs to be an embedded awareness of the provision of all the strands of diversity: race, gender, religion and belief, sexual orientation, disability, and age. (School's Out)

> **Inequalities and failure to tackle religious discrimination in non-faith schooling is a significant driver for faith school attendance. Faith is an important marker of identity for many, and all schools need to be able to show that they respect this through refusing to tolerate bullying on the basis of faith background, and improving the quality of teaching about religion and faith.**

There is now a significant amount of legislation relating to equality, ranging from the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, to the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, and the Equality Act 2006, with which schools have to comply. The Equality Act 2006 shows the changing policy emphasis of legislation for diversity and equality in bringing together strands, e.g. race, gender, disability, age, sexuality and religion.[85] However, there is a broad exemption in the

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85   The 2006 Equality Act makes provision for the establishment of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights; dissolving the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission. This makes provision about discrimination on grounds of religion or belief; to enable provision to be made about discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation; imposes duties relating to sex discrimination on persons performing public functions and amends the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Act for faith schools especially regarding the content of the curriculum, which could be a possible source of tension with all schools promoting cohesion.[86]

Consultation participants highlighted that while the community cohesion agenda for schools was seen as focused on ethnicity, religion and belief, it should also include other markers of identity. There was a concern that faith schools do not put enough emphasis on LGBT issues:

> *Cohesion is much more than religion and belief, but also what schools do about ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and class.* (Hackney/Newham consultation)

> *Brent is working on LGBT issues in schools, developing early interventions. This is a problem for all schools but it may not be a priority in faith schools.* (Brent/Harrow consultation)

This is particularly worrying in light of research which highlights that homophobia is more likely to be experienced by young people attending faith schools.[87]

Workshop participants pointed to the wide range of issues that schools should address in valuing the diversity of society by highlighting potential sources of conflict:

> *The areas of community/school life that present the biggest challenges include generational divisions and gang warfare.* (Hackney/Newham consultation)

> *Participant 1: What about working in areas with known conflict for example at the shopping centre you have the rival youth gangs between Tamil and Hindu youth.*
> *Participant 2: You also have to respond to heightened tensions around terrorism and dealing with young Muslims being drawn to violence and extremism.*
> *Participant 3: Diversity doesn't mean equality within [groups], for example there is prejudice and exclusive attitudes of British born Jews towards Israeli ones. We need to challenge the development of having an exclusive identity – that's an important part of being well-rounded.* (Brent/Harrow consultation)

In all the areas, sources of potential conflict were seen as broad ranging:

> *There are complete no go areas for black people here – especially north of Liverpool. Black people could live there all their lives but still feel uncomfortable.* (Liverpool)

> *When the government is talking about extremism they only ever mention Muslims, nothing about Combat 18, BNP or other extremism which we face is ever dealt with.* (Blackburn)

> *People hold us up as a melting pot of cultures, but really we're just lucky that we haven't had a riot here. There are all kinds of tensions simmering underneath because of the conflict between different cultures and on top we're being sold as a model of multiculturalism.* (Leicester)

There was a strong perception that to look at diversity and community cohesion, greater attention needs to be paid to the reality of multi-faceted identities, e.g. LGBT, gender, class, conflicts between young people from different ethnic and faith backgrounds and racisms that affect all communities. How do faith schools show that they value diversity on this broader basis?

Diversity in practice

Respondents provided numerous examples of work that could be undertaken by all schools to promote a broader understanding and appreciation of diversity. The DCSF pointed to the spaces currently provided by the curriculum. Schools Out pointed to the framework of equality impact assessments. Participants in local workshops suggested resources currently used by Local Authorities and community organizations with schools, notably to respond to inequalities and make provisions for conflict resolution training.

The schools consulted reported on their efforts in this area where visitors were brought into the school for young people to learn about African drumming, Asian dancing and ethnic food. This was usually part of Multicultural and/or International weeks, Black History months and special religious occasions. Activities dotted throughout the school year were held up as examples of promoting cultural, ethnic and faith diversity across faith denominations and local areas:

> *When we have international week, the teachers choose a country that these children are from. It gives those children their self-esteem and they are proud of their culture. Through the Music for Life workshops, we've had African drumming and the teacher did drumming and talked about culture, country and racism. That sort of thing we'd never be able to afford to do and it was exceptional.* (RC school)

> *We focused on Asia and had an India week. An Indian teacher came in and presented about Diwali. We had caterers cook on the premises, and it was so successful that we've introduced curry on the school menu. We've also looked at the Chinese and Afro-Caribbean*

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86   http://www.governornet.co.uk/linkAttachments/Equality%20 Act%20Part%202%20Guidance%20for%20Schools.doc
87   Stonewall (2008).

diasporas … Those cultures that have made the most significant contribution to the UK are chosen and usually the embassies from these countries work with us. Currently we've been focusing on learning about diversity in the school but are evaluating this and taking young people into the local areas is something we want to incorporate. (Jewish school)

> **Effective teaching about diversity remains a challenge for many schools regardless of their faith status. However, there did not seem to be a more advanced approach from the faith schools. They faced challenges similar to those of all the other schools, and were adopting similarly lacklustre responses.**

The headteachers of the RC and Jewish schools explained that their multicultural/international weeks were new initiatives which the schools were piloting. For the former, activities like the ones described above were made possible only by recent funding; prior to the funding, learning about diversity had not been such a formal process.

In many ways this resembles what Mullard (1982) describes as the 1970s 'saris, samosas and steel-bands' version of multiculturalism. This approach has been heavily criticized for its failure to engage with the politics of multiculturalism and disproportionately focusing on cultural diversity rather than race equality. Bhattacharyya (1999) reflects upon how this narrative has continued to be used in educational policymaking with its assumption that this entertaining spectacle is sufficient to allow people to lose their fear of one another and to rub along together. A similar critique extends to some of the concerns around the citizenship curriculum and community cohesion approaches to diversity. Osler captures this in her response to the curriculum and diversity review (Ajegbo et al., 2007), which she claims looks back to a somewhat 'romantic form of multiculturalism prevalent during the 1970s and 1980s which overlooked structural inequality and instead emphasized a study of the other and "celebration" of different identities' (Osler, 2007: 6). McGhee (2003) also highlights the relative de-emphasis of material deprivation and socio-economic marginalization in community cohesion facilitation programmes.

Failing to develop sufficient breadth or depth of knowledge about multicultural diversity in relation to real life was described by the DCSF as one of the barriers to promoting community cohesion. In their consultation response they detailed this as:

> [A] superficial introduction to the more exotic elements of cultural appearance did little to promote real understanding of those whose ethnicity, culture or faith were different from the young people studying them … failure to relate the content and nature of the study of ethnicity, culture and faith to real life.

One of the faith school pupils interviewed also noted that the inclusion of diversity in the curriculum was often superficial:

> *This month is black history month and we haven't learnt anything – the teacher thinks that because some children are doing a black history dance, like that's enough. Another teacher, his father was from Jamaica and he taught us properly, it's important if a teacher is from that background.* (Young person, school consultation)

A survey respondent raised concerns about whether such approaches enabled real learning:

> *It is more important that young people are taught critical reasoning skills and are allowed to apply these to their own and other belief systems. Bland multi-cultural sharing without comparative analysis and critique only serves to create intellectual and social dissonance.*

Faith and diversity – a distinctive approach?
Our earlier research has highlighted the need for further focus in schools in valuing diversity and effectively incorporating it into the curriculum and ethos of all schools.[88] Our findings here suggest that faith schools have further barriers to engaging with the diversity of society. In our consultation survey when we asked parents and teachers to evaluate how well their schools encourage young people to explore different aspects of their identities, 54% of respondents said very well for religious beliefs, but only 20% said the same for sexuality. In responses to consultations, others noted that seeing some issues as too controversial to discuss in schools could lead to conflict going unresolved and prejudices being maintained:

> *The [pupils] didn't have a good source of information about issues that cause conflicts and didn't have an opportunity to talk about it in school. That allowed those tensions to fester because they couldn't discuss controversial issues.*

> *[Cohesion can be undermined] where a school makes it clear by silence and inaction that some sorts of prejudice are ok. When the use of discriminatory language – like the derogatory use of the word 'gay' or 'Jew' or 'terrorist' – is allowed*

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88   *Improving Practice* (Runnymede, 1998); *Complementing Teachers* (Runnymede, 2003), *The Parekh Report* (CFMEB, 2000).

to go unchallenged. When a school sees its responsibility as being to create 'one size fits all' citizens who are normalized into the majority.

Faith traditions often reflect and sustain gender inequalities in society that remain a source of contention within many religious communities. Schools have to find a means of promoting gender equality as understood from a religious perspective but which are relevant to living in a modern society. Some of the prayers and texts used in Jewish orthodox schools were, for example, raised as problematic for learning about gender equality in a way that befits a multicultural curriculum (see Cohen, 2005). Organizations like the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance[89] emphasize that new resources need to be found so that the school curriculum can become more gender sensitive. Faith schools, like all schools, are tasked with developing more effective approaches to understanding and valuing multiple identities. Faith schools, as distinct from schools without a religious character, experience particular challenges in responding to religious teachings and traditions which adopt a markedly different approach to the more contemporary secular, human rights-based approaches.

2.4 Conclusion

Faith schools, like all schools, have a significant role to play in supporting young people in learning about and valuing diversity – diversity of faith but also along other markers of identity. Given their emphasis on faith and teaching about religion, they are well placed to be leaders in creating interfaith understanding and dialogue. Unfortunately, they have not delivered in this area so far. By not engaging with locally agreed syllabuses or agreeing to teach from a non-statutory framework, faith schools have missed an opportunity to share their expertise more widely, and to capitalize on their capacity to support learning about faith, faith diversity and the role of faith in society. Further, faith schools *could* be a source of innovation and partnership in learning about faith which could impact on the whole of the education system. Both faith schools and other

> **People have multiple identities beyond their faith. These need to be the focus of learning in faith schools, and these identities need to be valued within them. It is not enough to privilege one marker of identity over all others, catering for young people only as members of particular faith communities, without also understanding their gender, ethnicity, age, ability or sexual orientation. While this may prove controversial for many faith-based organizations, moves in the direction of ecoming schools for all will require the development of teaching practices that value everyone equally.**

schools are failing to deliver effective RE education which has the knock-on effect of encouraging parents who have a faith to consider faith schools as the only space in which their beliefs can be respected. This can create a defensive approach to faith and belief rather than an open, inquiring one that would encourage greater sharing and appreciation of diversity.[90] Faith schools should make a real commitment to the development of religious education across the education system in the UK by agreeing to engage with an RE National Curriculum – to include the understanding of a diversity of faiths, critical engagement with faith and its role in society, and partnership between people from different faith traditions and those without religious belief.

At the same time, faith schools should, like all schools, redouble their efforts towards valuing and appreciating diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability, age and sexual orientation. While this will include addressing a range of difficult issues, it is imperative that young people should be prepared well for entering adulthood in a diverse society. Through encouraging debate about diversity within religions and engaging with controversial issues, faith schools can enable young people to engage critically with contemporary debates grounded in a faith perspective.

Faith schools can best respond to the tension between the need for effective religious instruction, and the need to learn about and value the diversity of faiths in society not by looking inwards, but by engaging with others to improve understanding of their own faith as well as those of others.

If faith schools are to successfully value and appreciate the diversity of people's backgrounds, they should:

- Follow a newly established National Curriculum in RE;
- Confront and combat, as should all schools, discrimination on the basis of religion or belief;
- Recognize, value and respect difference – challenging discrimination on all legally defined equalities strands including those of gender and sexual orientation.

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89   They advocate meaningful participation and equality for women in family life, synagogues, houses of learning and Jewish communal organizations to the full extent possible within *halakha* (Jewish religious law).

90   For further discussion of open and closed approaches to diversity see Runnymede's (1997) Islamophobia report.

Chapter 3. Removing barriers to equality

Schools aim to create opportunities for young people to achieve their full potential by 'striving to remove barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and working to eliminate variations in outcomes for different groups' (DCSF, 2007a: 7). Religious organizations have often entered the education system in order to respond to inequalities in society. Inequalities in our education system persist with differential outcomes linked to ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability and gender.

In this chapter we consider how faith schools contribute to delivering similar life-chances for all pupils. We do this by looking at both the responses that faith schools have developed in addressing differential educational performance for the students that attend faith schools, and also on the impact that they have on educational achievement across the education system through their policies on admissions.

3.1 Faith schools challenging inequality

One of the key arguments made in favour of faith schools is that they possess a distinct ethos from non-faith schools. This ethos is deemed to be attractive to parents but remains a slippery concept in policy terms.[91] In investigating faith schools we were keen to discover whether issues of equality were part of the schools' ethos and discern whether they were distinct approaches to equality which could be said to stem from such an ethos.

The Catholic Church notes that inequality can be destructive of attempts to promote a cohesive society, and identify particular groups who are marginalized and 'in danger of being seriously alienated'. They also note that Catholic schools have a role to play in addressing this alienation:

> Social and community cohesion are threatened by various forms of inequality, separation and alienation. Underlying other divisions in our society is the fundamental gap between the rich and the poor. Among the groups that are in danger of being seriously alienated in our society are the following:

- second-generation black British of African / Caribbean origin
- second-generation British Muslims
- asylum-seekers and undocumented migrants
- Gypsy and Traveller communities
- young unskilled homeless and/or unemployed
- poor white working people
- old and new migrant communities (e.g. Irish, Polish, etc.)

> For most of these groups, Catholic schools, parishes and organizations provide a meeting-place and an important support in becoming fully integrated into society.
> (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales, and Department for Christian Responsibility)

Parents who responded to our survey noted that they felt that faith schools were committed to the achievement of all pupils in the schools, in particular through an emphasis on personal development, often through extra-curricular activity. Such activities would not be particular to faith schools, however an emphasis upon personal development to create inclusion may be a shared focus for schools with a religious character. It is an area of the curriculum that QCA identify as supporting young people in their *'spiritual, moral, physical, emotional, cultural and intellectual development ... It promotes their wellbeing and enables them to develop their potential as healthy, enterprising and responsible citizens in our society.'*[92] As noted above, parents perceived spiritual and moral education to be a key strength of faith schools. This in turn is seen as demonstrating a contribution to the 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) agenda to 'be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing'. Survey respondents also noted how faith schools nurtured pupils to be the best that they can be with high levels of confidence and self-esteem:

> *The fact that we have an emphasis on our faith, not just on school as a place of academic learning, is important as it helps them to be well-balanced individuals. Pupils who are intelligent know that this is not the only thing that matters, and pupils who are not high achievers understand they have just as important a role to play within the community and are highly valued.*

In our school consultations, there were a number of responses highlighting how faith schools specifically contributed to cohesion and equality for all by challenging underachievement. However, it

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91   See Lauder at al. (1988) for further discussion of school ethos.

92   See http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/personaldevelopment/

remains difficult to ascertain what role faith ethos plays in this, or whether faith schools have an approach to equality which is distinct from schools without a religious character. Below, we focus on race equality, gender equality and faith schools' response to socio-economic inequalities in order to understand better what approaches faith schools take to these issues.

3.2 Faith schools and race equality

The intake of faith schools is ethnically diverse – perhaps more so than the common perception of faith schools would suggest. Statistics from faith school providers show that Anglican schools as a whole recruit less than a proportionate number from minority groups except in KS3 and except for Black Caribbean and Black African pupils in KS4.[93] Similarly, RC schools have more Black pupils and fewer Asian pupils, relatively than other schools nationally.[94] These figures mask geographical patterns since people from minority ethnic communities are clustered in the major conurbations. A survey by the Catholic Education Service – *Ethnicity, Identity and Achievement in Catholic Education* (2003) – found that 'minority ethnic pupils tend to be clustered in Catholic schools which are located in poorer areas'.[95] Representatives from both the Catholic Education Service and the Church of England highlighted the ethnic diversity of their school population:

> *Certainly in the secondary sector we are predominantly an urban or city school community and in there is a much more complex mix. CE schools have a much higher population on average of black Caribbean and black African young people than any other group of schools, we have a lower population of a variety of Asian backgrounds, but in certain places, we also have a number of schools that are over 60% or in some cases 90% Muslim, so the Church of England does cater for the faith communities that are there.* (The National Society)

Catholic schools are diverse communities, ethnically, socially and typically, in many other ways. In 2005, as Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Philips said that 'when we look at the ethnic mix of schools, Catholic schools tend to be far more mixed than local authority schools'. Independent Ofsted data supports this, showing that the proportion of ethnic minority pupils in Catholic schools is slightly above the national average: 20% compared to 15.6% at secondary level and 18.2% compared to 16.7% in primary

schools. (Catholic Education Service)

Whole-child approaches and ethnic diversity

Many of the church schools gave examples of initiatives that they would undertake in common with all schools. In these responses there was also a particular emphasis on personal development, combined with pupil performance monitoring. A CE school gave an example of the following successful strategy:

> *We've been successfully running a Black Children's Achievement Project (BCAP) [96] to increase attainment. A lot of this is self-confidence building and setting tasks that they can achieve in. Now the ones who achieve the least are white boys. So we have focus groups and extra work on this. We're changing our curriculum to have a more creative curriculum, so more aesthetics-based learning so that the boys who have learning difficulties can take part … With Black History month we are questioning why is it just black children? Why aren't we valuing everyone's achievement? Instead of just black children's achievement project, we're changing it to achievement across the board and making it more inclusive.* (CE school)

Personal development is tailored to different groups of pupils identified as experiencing learning difficulties. This school had decided to broaden the original remit of the project to include others identified as underachieving 'across the board'.

A Catholic school in London reported that they gave less attention to the performance of particular minority ethnic groups and more to providing support services for all pupils through "pupil tracking" and schemes like 'circle of friends':

> *We ensure academic success even though we don't monitor progress of BME groups but have 'pupil tracking' noting academic and social progress from pre-school nursery for all our pupils. We share how well they are doing with teachers and challenge parents to support them to do better. If children are difficult socially than we have a 'circle of friends' where pupils support each other and a learning mentor who is a non-teaching member of staff, and a counsellor who comes in to see the children once a week who is not linked to the church.* (RC school)

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93 Godfrey and Arthur (2005).
94 CES (2005).
95 CES (2003: 47).

96 Piloted in 30 schools from November 2003, this was the first major DfES project to look specifically at the achievement of African Caribbean pupils. The project encouraged schools to develop "whole-school" solutions to support African Caribbean pupils. The key principles of the strategy included strong leadership, effective teaching and learning, backed up by the use of accurate monitoring data, active engagement with parents and the wider community, and intolerance of racism, poor behaviour and bullying.

'Circle of friends' is a good example of an anti-bullying strategy and additional emotional support. These are usually implemented through PSHE curriculum time or work allocated to inclusion officers. There is a concern that the school had chosen to not specifically monitor the progress of BME groups (in direct contravention of the school's duties under the Race Relations Amendment Act). It is therefore difficult for them to evaluate how these strategies benefit pupils from different backgrounds. This is an important area for schools to develop, especially in schools like the one above with a high Black Caribbean school population. The Catholic Education Service report noted above recommends that 'schools can support pupils of all backgrounds and abilities through careful and sustained monitoring of individual progress' (2003: 47). As in many schools, there appears to be a reluctance to acknowledge the possibility of ethnically based inequalities in the school, in favour of using the data they collect to respond to individualized underachievement.

In the Brent/Harrow and Liverpool consultations, Christian and specifically Catholic schools were perceived by participants to provide better schools for African-Caribbean families, especially in terms of "achievement" and "behaviour" in comparison to schools without a religious character. The areas mentioned reflected these national trends in terms of achievement. Brent has a significant black population – nearly twice the average for London. A key strand of their race equality targets for 2007/10 is improving outcomes for children and young people of Black African and Black Caribbean heritage by reducing the gap.[97] In Liverpool's Young People's Plan (2008/9), black children are identified as some of the most vulnerable young people in Liverpool.[98] Workshop participants had the impression that faith schools might be better than schools without a religious character for black children; currently, however, there is no empirical research to support their perception.

Universal faiths and English language
Another area of practice that schools were keen to address was that of English as an Additional Language (EAL). Survey respondents noted that faith schools (in particular Catholic schools) were responding to the needs of new migrants who shared their faith:

Our town has been a focal point for European/ other immigrants over recent years and this

school has done its utmost for these children from different cultures.

The school has a very high ethnic mix which is changing over time, i.e. currently more Poles in the early years than previously.

Large proportions of Portuguese, Goan, Black-African, Polish and other Eastern Europeans come here.

A group of parents and the EAL coordinator of classes in a Catholic primary school discussed the benefits that came from the approach that their school had adopted:

Parent 1: My English is very poor, the teaching is very good, it helps with my children so my communication is better when reading to them.
Parent 2: I chose this school because my children come here and it is Catholic. We don't know if we'll be here for a long time so when they go back again at least there won't be that much difference in the education.
Co-ordinator: We offer these classes through Sure Start and we have parents from different religions use them to make friends and get involved in their children's education. Apart from shopping and household things, a lot of them don't get out … It's probably one of the only times they get to talk to a native speaker. Unfortunately the government has started to make people pay, before it used to be free so now we've had to turn lots of parents away. (Catholic school)

The classes were described by parents as essential to their participation in their children's education as well as wider community life. The lessons were an opportunity for parents to raise issues regarding their children's learning and provided a regular space for socializing. The faith school setting provided a link for these families from Kerala, South India where their children also attended Catholic schools. As the Co-ordinator highlights, even though these lessons have made a significant difference to integration in education and wider community life, they have become less well attended because of cuts to funding.

In this example, links to a faith tradition were identified as important in supporting integration into wider society, especially for new migrants. Survey respondents noted:

Welcome is written in different languages, we've produced a flyer in Polish. Now we're working with the local authority to produce a welcome pack for ethnic minorities coming into the area.

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97   http://www.brent.gov.uk/www.nsf/0/cafacaf10ddbd8a1802572e b0043b31d/$FILE/SingEqualityFULL.pdf
98   http://www.liverpool.gov.uk/Images/tcm21-119266.pdf

Policymakers have acknowledged the role that faith schools can have in welcoming new migrants (DCSF, 2007).[99] Faith communities also see this as one of the ways that religion can play an important social capital role in bridging new communities with established ones.[100]

While both the Catholic Education Service[101] and the Church of England can point to examples of good practice in their schools, our findings suggest that the experience of effective intervention to promote race equality is as mixed as it is within the broader education system.

3.3 Faith schools and gender equality

Similarly there was little evidence collected which pointed to faith schools offering a distinctive challenge to patterns of gender inequality. The headteacher of a Muslim school reported that the school's practice impacts upon gender equality through raising the aspiration and attainment of young Muslim girls, notably those from 'orthodox and traditional communities':

> What we are creating are confident British Muslims who are not having identity crises. Faith schools actually serve orthodox and traditional communities. It provides opportunities for young people from these backgrounds. For example we address the fear of girls being corrupted who may lose their Islamic values to Western culture and create a partnership of trust with the parents. This allows us to create pathways particularly for women into higher education. Eight years ago when I took over the school, only two-thirds of girls went on to further education because of the cultural fear. By understanding that and putting in place structures of trust with a strong Islamic ethos, around 95% of girls in the school now go on into further education. (Muslim school)

He argues that by building partnerships of trust with parents and addressing their fears the school

had dramatically increased the number of girls going on to further and higher education. Some state-funded and independent Muslim girls' schools have been highlighted in league tables for high achievement rates.[102]

As noted above, there are some particular challenges that exist for faith schools in confronting gender inequalities that exist within faith traditions. There is remarkably little evidence or research on the ways in which faith schools understand and respond to issues of gender inequality. The new statutory duty to promote gender equality should provide the tools to support more effective analysis and action to respond to gender inequalities in schools. However, the response of schools to their duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, which came into force in 2002, has been less than satisfying.[103] Lack of leadership is identified as a key barrier in the DCSF-published *Diversity and Citizenship: Curriculum Review*::

> As a baseline requirement, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires schools to have a 'race' equality policy. Yet according to the Commission for Racial Equality, only 65% of schools have fulfilled this statutory duty. This raises questions not only about the checks and balances at school and local authority level, but also about the commitment of some headteachers and governors to even the basics of education for diversity. This situation must be rectified. (Ajegbo et al., 2007: 34)

3.4 Faith schools and class inequality
A legacy of work with the poor

Representatives of the Church of England noted the roots of church schools in providing education for the poor and noted the need to redefine what this meant for modern times – particularly with a legacy of schools in areas that

> Disappointingly, given their emphasis on 'whole-child approaches', and values and moral education, faith schools have not developed a distinctive approach to learning about diversity. They appear to have similar approaches on race, gender and disability equality to those of non-faith schools, and are therefore no better placed to respond to the needs of young people. This is of particular concern given the ethnic make-up of faith schools (particularly in urban areas), and the ongoing controversies about gender and sexual orientation within many faith communities.

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99   DCSF (2007b).
100 See response by Faiths Forum for London to a draft refugee integration strategy http://www.londoncivicforum.org.uk/attachments/378_200711295345_Response_to_refugee_integration_strategy.pdf
101 CES (2008).

102 In 2005, Feversham College, an 11–18 girls' school in Bradford, was deemed to have boosted students' performance more than any other secondary school in the country. In 2007 in the primary sector, the Jame'ah Girls Academy, a Leicester primary school, attained an impressive 97% pass rate, a remarkable 23% higher than Leicester city average. Islamia Primary School in Brent has for the fifth year running outperformed its local education authority.
103 BTEG (2007).

are relatively advantaged:

In 1811 the national society set up 17,000 schools the purpose of those was to provide education for the poor. We would say that in terms of community cohesion as it was then that was the first major step, you'd redefine that now as economically disadvantaged and a variety of other things ... nearly 40% of all children in Church of England schools are in rural schools, and most of those would tend to be white monocultural kind of communities and relatively advantaged. And those schools by and large served the immediate communities that live there, so they are community schools in the real sense of the word. (National Society)

In *The Way Ahead* the National Society proposed a renewal of the Church of England's mission in working with the most disadvantaged in society:

It should be an especial care of the Church today to renew that commitment to those who have least in life; to the children who are most likely to lose out in the life ahead of them. We live in a society where the gap between the affluent and the poor causes much concern, and where there is a very real risk that the children of the poor are destined to remain poor, unless their talents can be nourished and their aspirations raised through an education that is excellent and that gives real hope. (Archbishops' Council, 2001: 5.20: 39)

Similarly, the Catholic vision of education focuses on service to the poor:

In its ecclesial dimension another characteristic of the Catholic school has its root: it is a school for all, with special attention to those who are weakest. In the past, the establishment of the majority of Catholic educational institutions has responded to the needs of the socially and economically disadvantaged.[104]

One teacher at a Sikh faith school gave examples of how as a faith 'comprehensive' school they have raised the achievement of young people with lower socio-economic status (referred to here as 'secure or below') and are sharing these successes with other schools:

We really should be a comprehensive school rather than a faith school. In the whole essence of what a comprehensive school stands for that is what this school is. Sometimes people think faith schools draw in all the cream. This school is well below

average on wealthy achievers and those at the top end, and the school has half the average for [this area] let alone the national average. But where we have double the average is with secure families or below. And these kids are outperforming the kids who are from wealthy families. And that's the way it should be. Now we are working with X College for example, which is a low-performing school and we helped them get their 5 GCSEs and our teachers are teaching their kids Punjabi so they can do this. We've been working with X School in joint maths lessons, bringing the kids here and there, and what's the benefit of this? Higher grades, so that everyone can work together to achieve the best grades. (Sikh school)

Here the teacher gives an example of how and why his school shares learning resources. He argues, in line with the recommendations of the National College for School Leadership, that network based learning which involves collaboration within school networks and between networks and a range of other public service, voluntary and community providers, plays an important part in supporting the achievement of all pupils.[105]

Faith schools gave many examples of how they can impact on underachievement for young people of lower socio-economic status through implementing national strategies that target particular groups, personal development through the PSHE curriculum and having school specialisms, e.g. the environment. Minority faith schools also claim to impact on the confidence of pupils from disadvantaged or hard-to-reach backgrounds.

Impoverished independence vs state control

The poverty of some minority faith communities and poor resources available to independent faith schools was identified by some respondents as a way in which state funding for faith schools could respond to poverty. The Board of Deputies of British Jews and The Movement for Reform Judaism gave examples of some strictly orthodox Jewish schools:

One of our main concerns is one we share with government and the public, is the increasing levels of poverty within the Jewish community ... mainly within the strictly orthodox community. The schools they are being sent to are normally private schools. Most are Ofsted registered but they are not as well regulated as the state schools. These schools in Hackney, particularly these very Orthodox ones, are very run down and in dilapidated buildings. (Board of Deputies, British Jews)

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104 Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1998).

105 Jackson and Hannon (2005).

They may be making an effort to gain state status for their schools only because there is a lot of poverty within X community. In terms of fees I think they might have been talking to the state sector about going voluntary-aided and state maintained. (The Movement for Reform Judaism)

Moving to state funding would improve the level of resources available for the teaching and learning of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in these communities. This step also includes a number of challenges to the existing structures and practices within these schools which would open them up to greater public scrutiny. In particular for adherents of 'strictly orthodox' faith communities that are sending their children to independent, poorly resourced faith schools, state funding may provide a means of improving the life-chances of young people in those communities.

Still educating the poor?

Statistics highlight that primary-level faith schools appear to have greater success in SAT results for

> **Despite histories based on challenging poverty and inequality, and high-level policy which suggests a mission to serve the most disadvantaged in society, faith schools educate a disproportionately small number of young people at the lowest end of the socio-economic scale. Selection procedures, while based on faith, seem to favour the more privileged. For many faith organizations it would appear to be in contradiction of their mission to provide education for the most disadvantaged that faith should be a criterion for school selection.**

young people from lower socio-economic status. In 2005, faith schools outperformed non-faith schools in every subject for 11-year-olds in receipt of free school meals (see Table 2).[106]

From the data in Table 2 it would appear that primary-level faith schools on average are responding more effectively to the needs of pupils of lower socio-economic status than other schools, though some have argued that this is a function of selection among families with lower household income.[107] However, data collected on the number of young people eligible for free school meals (Table 3) show that there is a persistent gap between the proportion of young people from households with lower income attending faith schools and those attending other schools.[108]

Despite the aspirations of the Church of England to respond to the needs of the most economically disadvantaged and some examples of faith schools over-serving young people of lower socio-economic status (especially among the minority faith schools), the data highlight that, in London at least, this aspiration is not being met successfully. Allen and West (2007) argue that secondary-level faith schools in London admit a cohort of pupils with higher socio-economic status and higher ability than other schools.

While these figures have been contested by some commentators, further analysis of national patterns of recruitment to faith schools needs to be undertaken. It is clear that there is a gap between an aspiration expressed by faith schools to serve young people from disadvantaged communities and the reality of practice. We discuss admissions to faith schools below.

Faith schools (in particular those from a Christian tradition) emphasize their focus on development of the 'whole child'. Comments noted above from parents and teachers show an understanding of how this is manifested in terms of personal development approaches:

Table 2. Pupils in receipt of free school meals (FSM) achieving levels 4 or 5

	Pupils achieving level 4 or above (%)	
	Faith schools	Other maintained schools
English	67	59
Maths	62	55
Science	77	71
Reading	75	67
Writing	50	43
Reading and writing	48	41
Reading, writing and maths	41	34

	Pupils achieving level 5 (%)	
	Faith schools	Other maintained schools
English	14	10
Maths	16	13
Science	29	25
Reading	26	20
Writing	8	6
Reading and writing	6	5
Reading, writing and maths	4	3

106 Hansard, 6 march 2006, Column 1232W.
107 Gibbons and Silva (2006) note: 'One thing that seems clear is that there is no unambiguous performance advantage of Faith or autonomous schools that cannot be attributed purely to pupil-side selection into these schools, or to school-side selection of pupils likely to show the fastest progress'.
108 Hansard, 3 Dec 2007, Column 938W.

Table 3. Maintained primary and secondary schools:[1] school meal arrangements by denomination of school position in January each year: 1997, 2002 and 2007 (England)

Maintained primary schools

	Faith schools			Other schools			Total		
	Number of pupils	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Number of pupils	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Number of pupils	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
1997[2]	1,235,350	205,660	16.6	3,193,260	732,860	23.0	4,428,620	938,540	21.2
2002[2]	1,223,840	154,100	12.6	3,139,430	596,500	19.0	4,363,260	750,590	17.2
2007[3]	1,198,860	139,100	11.6	2,911,890	516,400	17.7	4,110,750	655,510	15.9

Maintained secondary schools

	Faith schools			Other schools			Total		
	Number of pupils	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Number of pupils	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Number of pupils	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
1997[2]	604,780	91,460	15.1	2,432,210	461,440	19.0	3,036,990	552,900	18.2
2002[2]	500,930	65,090	13.0	2,760,000	421,270	15.3	3,260,930	486,350	14.9
2007[3]	526,580	59,830	11.4	2,745,880	369,870	13.5	3,272,460	429,700	13.1

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Number of pupils includes those with sole and dual registration; excludes boarders.
[3] Includes pupils with sole and dual main registration. Includes boarders.
Note: Pupil numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. There may be discrepancies between the sum of constituent items and totals as shown.
Source: School Census.

[T]he centrality of the human person in the educational project of the Catholic school strengthens its educational endeavour and renders it fit to form strong personalities.[109]

[Teachers] have an opportunity to demonstrate that educational 'effectiveness' is concerned with the development of the whole person as a child of God.[110]

It would be useful, however, to come to a better understanding of what the relationship is between whole-child approaches and the promotion of equality between groups of pupils. It is clear that there is a task to be undertaken in articulating what is distinctive about faith schools in terms of the delivery of equality, and how this can be demonstrated and shared in their practice.

3.5 Faith schools: open for all?

The focus on admissions in English educational debates derives from the perceived impact of school choice on educational outcomes and life-chances. We would concur with an initial proposition that improvement is required in the educational outcomes of all schools so that parents are empowered to make choices between good schools rather than between schools where there is a substantial difference in levels of achievement. It is also true, however, that education has an exchange value,[111] which means that there will always be controversy in a system in which there are differential levels of educational success that are dependent (or at least reliant) on the school attended.

A discussion on admissions and faith schools revolves around a central issue – namely whether faith schools see themselves as having a role in contributing to the education of all children in a community or only those who share a particular faith affiliation. This crucial distinction shapes the debate and also the ability of faith schools to contribute to community cohesion or to offer the opportunity of similar life chances to all children.

Admissions code / admissions practice

The DCSF response to our consultation highlights that, for schools to promote community cohesion, they should aim to be community-based schools; taking into account their school population by looking at ethnic, faith or socio-economic groups and the circumstances of the area in which the schools are located. Emphasizing the recently adopted School Admissions Code,[112] they note that schools (including faith schools) should consider how 'particular admission arrangements impact on the communities within which they are physically based and those faith communities which they serve':

> Provisions in the Education and Inspections Act and the new School Admissions Code will further ensure that local authorities and schools ensure fair access for all children and promote community cohesion. Admission authorities for faith schools must comply with the School Admissions Code in the same way as those for all other maintained schools and academies. The Code advises that 'admission authorities for faith schools should consider how their particular admission arrangements impact on the communities within which they are physically based and those faith communities which they serve' and that 'all admission authorities must act upon any information that suggests that the school's or admission authority's policies or practices appear to be unfairly disadvantaging one group of children compared to another' (DCSF 2008).

This strengthening of the School Admissions Code is expected to support pupils from all backgrounds to choose schools rather than schools choosing children. In a publication accompanying the Code[113] the DfES stresses that it underpins the government's aim to create a schools 'system where all parents feel they have the same opportunities to apply for the schools they want for their child'.

This sits rather uneasily with the ability of faith schools to apply oversubscription criteria that include a faith affiliation. Where demand for places is high, this means that the schools' intake will be entirely from the sponsoring faith. While the Church of England and Free Church schools are willing to ensure that their schools do not exclude all children who do not share the faith of the sponsoring organization, the other denominational schools are not yet prepared to make that undertaking. In 'Faith in the System',[114] the Church of England was able to announce a commitment to opening up faith schools to wider communities. The agreement only applies to new schools, however, so is likely to have little impact on the

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109 Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1998).
110 Archbishops' Council (2001).
111 As Jonathan (1990) notes: 'education has exchange value as well as intrinsic value, and since its value-in-exchange, like that of any other currency, depends not on the amount that an individual holds in absolute terms, but rather on the amount that she holds relative to others, then a more favourable experience – in exchange value terms – secured for one child, entails a less favourable experience for some other child or children'.
112 The School Admissions Code came into force on 28 February 2007 and applies to all maintained schools and Academies when setting their admission arrangements for September 2008 and subsequent years (DCSF, 2008).
113 http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sacode/docs/ SchoolAdmissionsCodeWordVersion.doc
114 DCSF (2007b).

make-up of the faith schools population in the near future. The response from the Catholic Church was even less forthcoming, stating only that it would 'consider the scope' for new Catholic schools to admit others to what it termed additional places.

No similar agreement was reached with Jewish, Sikh, Greek Orthodox or Muslim schools. Not only is this at odds with the government's expressed policy intention that all parents should be able to 'apply for the schools that they want', but it seems to be at odds with the aspirations of the sponsoring organizations;

> The school cannot be considered separately from other educational institutions and administered as an entity apart, but must be related to the world of politics, economy, culture and society as a whole ... It has not come into being as a private initiative, but as an expression of the reality of the Church, having by its very nature a public character. It fulfils a service of public usefulness and, although clearly and decidedly configured in the perspective of the Catholic faith, is not reserved to Catholics only, but is open to all those who appreciate and share its qualified educational project ... Catholic schools, moreover, like state schools, fulfill a public role, for their presence guarantees cultural and educational pluralism and, above all, the freedom and right of families to see that their children receive the sort of education they wish for them.[115]

> [A] policy of total commitment to Christian families in the secondary school's wide catchment area may lead to some misgivings on the grounds that the school is not associating with its local community, and not giving an opportunity for non-Christians to experience what it is to learn in a Christian environment. These misgivings are the greater if the local children who do not get in are from disadvantaged sectors of the community whereas the pupils admitted from further away are from the better off districts. The misgivings can be especially strong if there is a racial dimension to this split. There is, therefore, both a community and an ethical reason, linked to the Church's position on poverty and inclusion as set out in paragraph 5.20, for offering a proportion of places for local children. . . In addition it may

further be argued that the life of the school would be enriched by the admission of some children from other faiths. **We would therefore suggest that some places should be reserved for children of other faiths and of no faith.** This could be achieved either through catchment or quota as appropriate to local circumstances.[116]

Community schools: Exclusive schools

Two of the schools consulted noted that they were supporting some diversity in terms of faith – the difference in approach between Catholic and Church of England (voluntary controlled) schools is evident:

> *CE schools are unique in that schools like this were set up to meet the needs of all the children within the parish. We were set up as community schools, and we've got Hindu, mainly Christian, Jehovah's Witness and Muslims.* (CE School)

> *It's Catholicism that brings them here. They say they want a Catholic education. Our No 1 criterion is that you have to be baptised Catholic in the area. The children are all largely Catholic but we have 3 Muslim children in the school.* (RC school)

Other respondents to our consultations also noted that, for maintained schools to contribute to community cohesion and equality for all, they need to be accessible to all in the areas in which they are located. One of the common concerns expressed by experts was the conflict between diversity of provision and equality within schools, with parental choice policies reducing the options for the most vulnerable families. A respondent from the Family and Parenting Institute made the following observation:

> *Government intervention that is focused on parental choice will do little to improve opportunities for the most disadvantaged children. Choice and diversity of provision do not guarantee equality. The emphasis upon choice within finite provision will inevitably result in only limited options being available for those who are last to choose.* (Family and Parenting Institute)

> We would strongly support efforts for faith schools to engage with all in their communities and not be exclusive to those of a particular faith and agree that there would be benefits for teaching and learning in the schools themselves, for equality in society, and for community cohesion.

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115 Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1998).

116 Archbishops' Council (2001).

The School Admissions Code responds to this understanding of school choice. It is an attempt to encourage collaboration between schools in delivering education for all children in a community and to alleviate some of the perceived disadvantages for marginalized groups in the admissions process. The DCSF outlined the responsibilities that schools have as well as independent admissions forums:

> *In addition to being required to annually consult local authorities, their Admissions Forum and other schools in the area over proposed admission arrangements, admission authorities for faith schools must now consult their religious authority (e.g. Diocesan Board) and they or any of the other statutory consultees may object to the Schools Adjudicator if they consider the school's admission arrangements to be unfair. The Admissions Forum is charged with considering the overall effect of admission arrangements in its area on cohesion. Admission Forums now have the power to commission and produce reports on how fairly admissions are working in their area and this must include information on the ethnic and social mix of pupils attending schools in their area and the factors that affect this. Forums have a responsibility to object to the Schools Adjudicator about any arrangements which they consider to restrict fair access.* (DCSF)

Faith schools are now required to show that they are inclusive schools. So that faith schools do not present themselves in a way that may deter parents from particular communities and ensure that no level of ability is substantially under- or overrepresented (as set out in Section 101 of the 1998 Act), they are required under the code to consult with their local authorities, religious authorities and other schools over proposed policies. The role of an admissions forum and school's adjudicator is seen as key in promoting cohesion and equality by overseeing compliance with the code in a given area and objecting to any arrangements seen to 'restrict

> **If faith schools perceive their role as being that of exclusive institutions for people of a particular faith rather than as adding diversity to an education system which is for all in a community, then their commitment to state education can rightly be questioned. If faith is an important factor in defining a school's vision and the place of that vision in society, then those schools have much to gain from being open to people of all faiths and none, rather than being closed and exclusive. Faith schools, like all schools, must engage with the whole community and be open to working with all in order to play their part in pursuing community cohesion and similar life-chances for all.**

fair access'. Specified religious authorities[117] and admissions forums have been given a significant role to be decision-makers and it is important to consider some of the tensions around this. The function of the admissions forum is to be an independent voice which may conflict with the subjective authority and position of religious bodies. This conflict will be more likely if faith schools do not consider accepting a proportion of their pupils from outside of their particular faith tradition.

Structures to facilitate equal access for families from different backgrounds to a school system that includes faith schools have been put in place (admissions forums, ethnic monitoring, etc.). However, to make these more effective, the authority of schools' adjudicators and comparative analysis of data between schools with and without a religious character is paramount. Initial signs of faith schools' understanding and implementation of the code are not entirely positive. Early research on the implementation of the Schools Admissions Code[118] found that faith schools were disproportionately likely to have used practices deemed unfair, practices that include asking about parents' ability to contribute funds, interviewing parents, and keeping places unfilled rather than give them to a pupil from a different faith. This creates the perception that faith schools are exclusive rather than inclusive institutions with little interest in being schools of and for their local community.

3.6 Faith vs achievement as a criterion for choice

Reflections on the provision of different types of faith schools in local areas indicated how they are most commonly identified by community stakeholders as being high-achieving schools. In Blackburn, Liverpool and Leicester they

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117 See point 3 of the 'Amendment of the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999'; http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20073009_en_1
118 DCSF (2008).

are perceived to have above-average results compared with local non-faith schools. In Leicester this was seen as significant given that collectively its primary schools are third from bottom in the national league tables. Consequently, in local school systems achievement appears to be given a higher value for school choice, and faith schools are seen as high achieving. At the same time, the Islamic, Jewish, CE and Catholic schools are not necessarily accessible to all or representative of the wider areas in which they are located because perceptions of educational success have translated into oversubscription and subsequent exclusivity:

Faith schools are in the top bracket of achievement here ... The Islamia school for girls and Tauheedal schools are extremely popular with Muslim parents. (Blackburn consultation)

JFS is not ethnically diverse but a Jewish, high-achieving school. (Brent/Harrow consultation)

The primaries here are also third from bottom of the national league tables. Mainstream schools do provide religious education and instruction but not social mobility. Faith schools are perceived as high-achieving and are oversubscribed here. (Leicester consultation)

Many of the faith schools are oversubscribed. Faith schools here, CE and Catholic school here have better than average results than non-faith schools. (Liverpool consultation)

St Anne's is a popular choice here because it has outstanding achievement and has a good work ethic. (Southampton consultation)

Some workshop participants questioned whether faith affiliation would trump other factors if faith schools in the area were not perceived as high-performing:

Choices for Jewish families are less to do with faith than quality of education. They are seen to provide good education. (Newham/Hackney consultation)

> **For many of the workshop participants, the faith status of the school was seen as a proxy for potential achievement levels rather than as an expression of their desire for a faith based education. Recognition of this source for demand for places in faith schools might be seen as an encouragement for faith schools to reconsider what is perceived as distinctive about their mission – whether it is faith or academic achievement. The link between parental choice and faith is unclear. The educational success of many faith schools may mean that the faith of the school is not the overriding consideration in the choice that parents are making.**

African Caribbeans would be more likely to travel and send their child to a high-achieving Catholic school. It is not faith but achievement and behaviour that they look at. (Brent/Harrow consultation)

Muslim children in CE schools are not attending by choice but because it's the nearest good local school. (Blackburn consultation)

The choice of Jewish day schools in areas like Hackney may express a desire for a religious ethos as well as high academic standards, but it is the latter that may be a priority for many parents. Valins (2003) in his research on faith-based schooling and the Jewish community found that from most of the parents and education providers interviewed, secular academic standards were key to choosing their child's school, giving young people the best opportunities to be socio-economically mobile. Significantly, 'Analysis of OFSTED inspection reports and examination league tables shows how pupils in Jewish day schools are achieving academic results that are far higher than the national average'.[119]

In Blackburn, the choice of CE schools is not expressed in the context of underachievement, but having proximity and access to a 'good' local school. Currently, in the maintained sector, there are around 39 Church schools which make up around 48% of all maintained schools. With a significantly large South Asian Pakistani-Muslim population this is reflected in eight of the CE schools having a significant majority (greater than 75%) of pupils from Muslim backgrounds and demand expressed by parents for maintained Muslim schools.[120]

3.7 Challenges resulting from exclusivity

Faith schools that remain focused on the admission of children of only one faith face a number of challenges which could be more effectively responded to if they were open to a broader faith diversity. These challenges include rigorous authentication of religious affiliation, overcoming

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119 Valins (2003: 243).
120 http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/agenda/executive_board_
    documents/011204/word/faith_schools_consult.doc

resistance from neighbouring schools to their expansion, and developing partnerships with neighbouring institutions.

Proof of commitment required

Parents are required to prove their and their children's commitment to a particular faith in order to gain entry to a faith school. This can lead to a high level of administration, including registers of attendance being taken in parish churches, references being sought, and some very fine judgements being taken regarding the level of commitment from parents.[121] The Leader of the Opposition has also recognized the phenomenon of parents' actions to prove that they are of a particular faith.[122] A researcher from the Movement for Reform Judaism criticized the admissions policies of Jewish schools:

> The problem with school admissions in the Jewish community largely has to do with the definition of who is a Jew and who has the right to define who is a Jew. It's less to do with practice and more to do with legal status within the Jewish community. There have been a number of problems in recent years where mothers are Jewish converts, and where that conversion for whatever reason has not been accepted at the Chief Rabbi's office and by the Jewish courts, then the child is officially not considered Jewish and so will not be given a place. (Movement for Reform Judaism)

Broadly speaking, the ethos of Jewish schools, especially in London, can be categorized as strictly orthodox or mainstream/progressive; however, there are substantial differences within these.[123] The majority of schools are controlled by Orthodox religious authorities and exercise Halachic law (Jewish Law) in their admissions (Valins, 2003). This means that in central orthodox schools, the Office of the Chief Rabbi can show preference for ethnically Jewish families over practising Jews that may have converted. Complaints were recently

made by parents about the admissions practices at the Jewish Free School in North London on the grounds that this practice contravenes race relations legislation.[124]

Similar issues apply to the newly established Hindu faith school. In a critique of the school's admissions policies, the Hindu Council UK expressed reservations about the authority of the I-Foundation in setting the admissions criteria for a Hindu school.[125] They claimed that its decision to give priority to applications from families that are vegetarian and do not drink alcohol, is based on ISKCON's interpretation of Hinduism, which excludes many other Hindu communities. In a press response to the publication of admission policies, they said: 'The Krishna Avanti school was offered state-funding and is being allowed to open as a "Hindu" rather than an "ISKCON" school: *that is what it should be, a truly Hindu school that serves and reflects the wider Harrow Hindu community with its kaleidoscopic Hindu diversity*'.[126]

By taking an exclusivist approach, these schools are forced into making judgements not just about the declared faith affiliation of the parents but also interpretations of the depth of commitment to a particular faith. They are required to 'make windows into men's souls'.

Challenges to expansion

School reorganization is never easy and there is often local resistance to any change. In many cases this resistance is attached to the development of new or the expansion of existing faith schools; resistance that can cause resentment. As one survey respondent noted:

> The local authority appear to be targeting faith-based schools for closure as it seems more convenient for them to have non-denominational schools to make managing their budget easy for them. If they fund one faith school they have to be logically prepared to fund others and where would they find the bottle to draw the line?

Consultation participants questioned the processes for consulting on school reorganization. Negotiating future secondary schools appeared to highlight local tensions in the Hackney/Newham workshop with the campaigns

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121 India Knight (27/02/08) 'Faith schools' sin of admission', The Sunday Times; Alice Miles (23/5/2007) 'Sneaky, unfair, divisive; welcome to church schools', The Times.

122 'Parents who pretend that they have Christian beliefs in order to win places in church schools are doing the best for their children, David Cameron believes', Phillip Webster and Frances Elliot (23/01/08), The Times.

123 A further breakdown would need to be made between strictly and central orthodox. The strictly orthodox community can be defined as one which expects all its children to attend Jewish schools, and in particular schools which reflects its stringent approach to Jewish practice, learning and lifestyle. Central orthodox schools are those that accept the religious authority of either the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations, or his counterpart in the Sephardi Community. Then there are 'mainstream' schools that are progressive/pluralist and others that accept the authority of other orthodox religious authorities (Jewish Leadership Council, 2007).

124 Millar (2007).

125 The School is working in affiliation with ISKCON (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness) as the official faith advisor and I-Foundation, a charity that aims to establish sustainable projects that promote and advance Vedic culture and philosophy in the modern world.

126 Royston (2007).

for state-funded Muslim schools and parental demand for non-denominational schools:

> There is a need for state-funded single-sex Muslim schools by the communities here. (Hackney/Newham consultation)

> We have responded to parental demand for more non-denominational secondary schools and consider that an imbalance of provision of faith and non-faith schools can undermine cohesion. Admission arrangements in faith schools which are too prescriptive can lead to such imbalances, which is why we work with our Admission Forum to address this. (Hackney/Newham consultation)

Here we see disagreement between a local Muslim organization and the local authority. The Muslim organization claims that Muslim parents need funded single-sex faith schools for girls but are being denied because of links made between Islamic schools and fundamentalism.[127] Whereas the local authority on the other hand has stressed that it is prioritizing non-denominational schools as a response to parental demand for high-quality, mixed, non-denominational schools. The local authority suggests an imbalance in choice resulting from local faith schools' 'prescriptive admissions policies' and a large number of pupils needing to access secondary provision outside the borough. These will be tough decisions for local authorities to make if future funding for faith schools is to be granted according to local agreement. To ensure that misunderstandings do not foster a lack of trust in these processes, local authorities must show how they consult with minority faith, inter-faith, as well as wider communities, and that decision-making processes are transparent and accessible. Faith schools will also have to demonstrate how they can be inclusive.

We also found considerable controversy in Southampton over an evangelical Christian organization winning the bid for taking over local schools:

> The OASIS trust – a strong evangelical organisation won the bid - now they [Oasis] want to involve the council of faiths. There are divisions within faith communities over what is wanted from faith schools. There is no real talking about this. A non-denomination school would be preferable when planning future schools here. (Southampton consultation)

The two new academies that are to open in Southampton (September 2008) have been subject to criticism for sponsorship being given to Oasis Community Learning, with its roots based in The Oasis Trust, a Christian charity. Community stakeholders in Southampton mentioned the links between The Oasis Trust and evangelical Christianity and the impact that the Trust's Christian ethos could have upon pupils' education. There are similar apprehensions about other Christian evangelical academies.[128] There was a sense in Southampton that there was an exceptionally strong inter-faith network working with institutions of higher education in the city that had been marginalized in the process of bidding for new schools. It is important to further explore the basis for awarding faith-based sponsorship if this does not have the support of local faith communities. In the Brent/Harrow workshop, we found representatives of local communities who were concerned about the opening of the first Hindu school:

> A copycat effect of faith schools generates a feeling of 'why can't I have a faith school?' and without being consulted new schools are set up. (Brent/Harrow consultation)

> Some Hindus have campaigned for the first Hindu school because they feel marginalized and there is a fear of losing their cultural identity. This is a concern to lots of Hindus here because we feel that communities will start to become polarized within themselves. I, like many other Hindus here, don't want to send my children to a Hindu school. The push for this Hindu school hasn't really come from the Hindu communities but ISCKON; I don't think that outside of families associated with this, there will be a take-up. I think this will cause problems because more widely it will be presented as a 'Hindu school'. (Brent/Harrow consultation)

Even though the rationale for the first Hindu school was on the basis of the borough having the largest Hindu population for any local authority in the country (with 20% of residents describing themselves as Hindu) and a long-established history of faith schooling,[129] local communities in Harrow felt they hadn't been adequately consulted or engaged in the consultation process.[130]

Since the onus of future faith schooling lies with local demand, it is essential for local authorities to consult widely with stakeholders, including within

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127 See North London Muslim Community Centre's (2002) Research Report: Muslims in Hackney: An assessment of needs and services. http://www.nlmcc.org.uk/Muslim_in_Hackney_-_An_Assessment_of_Needs_and_Services_-_Aug_02.pdf

128 Paton (2006).
129 Harrow already has 10 voluntary-aided faith schools, eight of which are primary schools. There are eight Roman Catholic schools, one Church of England school and a Jewish school.
130 With proposed funding from the Targeted Capital Fund in 2005, Harrow Council received two applications from the Sai school of Harrow and the I-foundation, and on the grounds that the latter had been running a private school in Hertfordshire for the last 20 years, the bid was accepted.

faith communities and for this process to be public. It is also important that faith schools develop a compelling rationale for their existence and the benefits that they can provide for the education of all young people in an area. Under the Education Act 2002, where a new secondary school is required, all proposals (from a community or faith group, an LA or another public, private or voluntary body) will be judged on the basis of their educational merits, value for money and the outcome of consultation.[131] With new legal duties to promote community cohesion and race equality in place, it remains to be seen how decisive a factor this will be in decision-making.

3.8 Conclusion

Faith schools have an important role to play in England's education system, should they decide to become a full part of the system rather than persist as a system apart. Religious organizations have often entered the education system to respond to the inequalities that operate in society, to engage people with their visions of the world, and to influence the values that emerging citizens possess. Faith schools offer the opportunity of a distinctive voice within the education system – in particular in their emphasis on whole-child approaches to education, and specialization in spiritual and moral education. There are numerous examples of where they have developed exemplary practice. However, this distinctive voice is remarkably quiet on issues concerning equality. An emergent vision of equality is evident, but needs to be more effectively articulated so that faith schools become more effective champions of social equality.

Currently the intake of faith schools is wealthier and higher achieving on entry to secondary school than average. This would suggest that the role of faith schools in challenging inequality is becoming obscured by other concerns. If faith schools become a means of preserving privilege rather than challenging injustice, then this undermines their espoused vision of 'lived faith'.

Here, we have argued strongly for faith schools to become schools open for all in their communities.

> **Without faith-based admissions criteria, there would likely be less resistance to the contribution that faith organizations can make to the English education system. This would enable a real and effective partnership to be established between government and faith organizations in providing education for all citizens. Instead, controversy over the role of faith in education and resistance to engagement between faith schools and the remainder of the schooling system has the effect of limiting the legitimate role of faith organizations in schools.**

This could be through setting quotas, ballot selection or emphasizing catchment areas over faith affiliation. This is not an attempt to undermine the role of faith in schooling but rather to support faith schools in delivering on their mission. The benefits of such an approach would be an ability to engage with communities as champions of the disadvantaged, to work more effectively in partnership with other institutions, and to contribute further to the school system as relevant partners for all in an area.

Faith schools will remain controversial and their intentions misunderstood until they can demonstrate their relevance for all and their lived faith in challenging inequality rather than supporting the inequitable status quo. In order to achieve this, faith schools should:

- articulate what their faith-based approach means for learning about diversity and equality and put it into practice;
- re-evaluate their missions in order to return to initial aspirations to be institutions working to support the most disadvantaged in society;
- understand parents' motivations for application to faith schools more realistically and ensure that they can articulate what they offer beyond examination success; and
- no longer select on the basis of faith.

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131 Education Act 2002, Sections 70, 71 and 73.

Chapter 4. Building strong partnerships between people from different backgrounds

Schools, particularly those 'where the population is less diverse or predominantly of one socio-economic, ethnic, religious or non-religious background'[132] are required to show how they 'provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds'.[133] A definition of interaction in the 2007 guidance to schools for promoting community cohesion refers to the following understanding, as provided by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion:

> Meaningful contact between people from different groups has been shown to break down stereotypes and prejudice. Contact is meaningful when: conversations go beyond surface friendliness; in which people exchange personal information or talk about each other's differences and identities; people share a common goal or share an interest; and they are sustained long-term (so one-off or chance meetings are unlikely to make much difference).[134]

Therefore interaction is placed in the context of contributing to good race relations in breaking down stereotypes and prejudices. In many ways this relates to the hypothesis explored in 'contact theory', whereby changes in ethnic relations occur following intergroup contact.[135]

In this chapter we consider how faith schools approach their duty to enable interaction between people of different backgrounds and the challenges and opportunities they face in building partnerships with other organizations.

4.1 Choosing partners

For many of the faith school-based respondents, the key partners that they identified were parents and others within their own faith community. The ability to build effective partnerships beyond these networks was less well developed. There are a number of promising initiatives that aim to enable interaction across fault lines of faith, ethnicity and

social background; however, their implementation is patchy and their reach limited.

Faith schools identified their ability to create effective links with parents and others of a similar faith background within their neighbourhood as a key strength. Kinship-like ties were seen at the heart of strong partnerships in schools. This included multilingual schools with rapidly changing pupil populations or those serving generations of the same families that both prided themselves in creating a sense of family. The metaphor of kinship was used to describe school communities of pupils, parents and staff where individual differences were welcomed, but there was an awareness of being part of a family where faith was important. As a group of parents noted:

> Parent 1: It's a very family orientated school, it's like a home and there's a real sense of belonging. I've started doing cooking and mother–toddler classes and it's not just about staff involvement, we have ex-pupils that come back regularly. My son comes to our sporting nights with his friends, he was here over 15 years ago and now he's 25!
> Parent 2: I am part of a massive church community; always seeing people in church and when we worship the pastor tells us we're like a family.
> Parent 3: If you speak to any of our staff here, they'll tell you that it's like a family.
> (RC school)

In the Hackney/Newham consultation, examples were given by the Association of Muslim Governors (AMG) of how they use places of worship to engage with Muslim parents. One of the activities that they undertake locally is announcing parents' evenings at the local mosques in East London, which they claim has dramatically increased attendance. Building on these links they have set up the first online forum to facilitate dialogue between governors, and run seminars to encourage a greater number of Muslim parents to become school governors. Links with places of worship were seen as a way to increase the role that parents play in schools and to increase the engagement of pupils.

Research by Demie and McLean has found that building links with parents in places of worship can indirectly impact on educational attainment. In their research on good practice that increases the achievement of African heritage pupils they highlight that schools with a religious character are 'demonstrable in the engagement of black African pupils and their parents in co-constructing an achievement culture in all schools'.[136] In one

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132 DCSF (2007a: 6).
133 Ibid, p. 7.
134 Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007).
135 Amir (1969).

136 Demie and McLean (2007).

particular school that they identified, many black African families went to church a number of times a week, which allowed staff to build more personal relationships with them.

These examples show that through improved engagement with parents, schools have begun to create partnerships which make a difference to the young people's learning. Faith school providers highlighted strong partnerships between schools, parents and wider communities and advocated using these networks to contribute to community service. The Catholic Education Service describes their schools' key partnerships as 'home, school and parish'. The Board of Deputies of British Jews further highlights extended community ties between Jewish schools, synagogues and a range of supplementary schools and activities with older people. A representative from the Free Church also emphasizes how churches provide community service by participating in school activities, from 'going in to hear children read or running extra curricular activities'.

Most faith schools I have worked in … working with parents is key to engaging the wider community. Faith schools providing things such as community service projects are key, as are adult education programmes, even open evenings – giving parents a real sense of what we're doing. (John Sullivan)

Catholic schools bring to community cohesion the benefits of being part of a larger extended community. It is well known that Catholic schools thrive on being part of the triumvirate of home, school, parish. The school reaches out through this triangle to many others and also benefits from their support. Ofsted figures show that on a measure of schools scoring good or better for 'links with parents', Catholic schools do better (80% good or better compared to 66% in other schools) and parents make a greater contribution to their children's learning (72% good or better and 30% excellent or very good compared to 55% and 18% for other schools). (Catholic Education Service)[137]

When we are doing our inspections we always write about things like community cohesion, we do not call it that but we look at links with other partners within the community. Within our schools within our synagogues, within all our local centres, we have an enormous range of supplementary schools of varied activities of learning, be it scouts or cubs, or things for old people, we are absolutely fulfilling that. I believe integration is generational. (Board of Deputies of British Jews)

Lots of churches are involved in their local schools in ways that people may not see as entirely obvious, they see it as a service to the community just to go in and hear children read or the running of extra-curricular activities. So a lot of it won't be overtly Christian, it's about service and reaching out to the people in your community. (Free Church)

Although government guidance highlights strong partnerships between schools and communities, educational and inter-faith organizations have interpreted this as bringing together people from different backgrounds, while faith-school providers have identified it as extended community ties and community service, predominantly inter-generational rather than cross-cultural. These links are not unimportant and may be crucial in understanding the effectiveness of faith schools. It is significant, however, that many respondents recognized that while these partnerships are valuable they do not necessarily lead to opportunities for young people to interact across ethnic, faith or social class boundaries.

The foundation of strong partnerships as articulated by faith school providers appears to be around parents, schools and places of worship which are seen to have the benefits of serving wider communities. Therefore one of the key contributions that faith schools consider themselves making is inter-generational links between young people, parents and elders in communities. One of the key ways in which religion can shape social capital, as highlighted by Harris (2003), is the 'unique feature to nurture and sustain reciprocity among actors', in other words building relationships of trust.[138] These networks may then be used for civic activism. The 2005 Citizenship survey found that 52% of people who actively practised a religion participated in civic activism and civic consultation compared to 45% of people who did not.[139] However, these networks may not necessarily include people from different ethnic, faith and social backgrounds.

4.2 Barriers to interaction

Faith schools need to reassess their approach to cohesion. Without neglecting important intergener-

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137 CES (2005) *Quality and Performance.*

138 Harris (2003).
139 DCLG (2005).

ational links that have already been established, the more challenging work of building links between young people from different backgrounds ought to be given greater priority. Respondents reflected on what barriers existed to greater interaction between pupils of different backgrounds. As noted above, many barriers related to an understanding of the purpose of faith schools.

Parents don't want to mix

Where the purpose was defined as solely (or overwhelmingly) concerned with the transfer of religious traditions:

> *Parents, governors or faith communities possibly see bringing young people of different backgrounds together as low priority or even undesirable.* (Inter Faith network)

By becoming schools for all in the community, the demand for better interfaith and inter-ethnic understanding will be increased. The importance of maintaining faith boundaries was mentioned quite explicitly by the Board of Deputies of British Jews as a reason for parents to choose Jewish schools, and for faith communities to become involved in education.

> *We want them to know and understand about other faiths but also within the orthodox community we want them to marry within their faith. And we feel there is a danger that if you were growing up with young people from different backgrounds … yes we want them to be friendly but not friendly leading to marriage. And I'm being honest to say that.* (Board of Deputies of British Jews)

Valins (2003) makes a similar point about the role of community leadership. He describes them as 'gatekeepers to a system that seeks to produce and defend identities' through Jewish education. In other words the purpose of some faith schools is to socialize pupils into developing a particular identity, and one of the methods of achieving this is through meeting only students from a similar faith background.

Parents were identified as a barrier to increased interaction in many of the local area workshops. Young people's perspectives of living in multicultural Britain were seen to be largely shaped by parents.

> *We need to include more anecdotal evidence of how cohesion is understood, especially by parents … Children are very much influenced by the adult responses at home, that's why you need something that bridges the home-school gap.* (Southampton consultation)

Respondents were concerned that parental fear of difference was leading to resistance to schools encouragement of greater levels of interaction. Young people were seen as more open and adept at understanding their identities and their relations with others than their parents' generation:

> *Young people are mixing with others and are still preserving their own identities. Parents are the issue not kids. The real problem is what the adults think is going on. Children go home to parents who have got divided loyalties.* (Blackburn consultation)

A representative of a Muslim school claimed that his pupils very rarely interacted with non-Muslim ones. He reflected that parents wanted to protect learners from influences judged to be un-Islamic, including elements of the curriculum. This was to the extent that the parents who sent their children (both boys and girls) to his school would not consider allowing them (girls in particular) to continue into further or higher education. In the course of discussions that took place in our workshop, the school representative acknowledged that these young people might be missing out on opportunities and may not contribute significantly to community cohesion. He recognized that:

> *We need to do more brainstorming about how our children can meet more children of 'other' backgrounds. We are guilty of not being very cohesive in the community.* (Muslim school)

Faith schools' effective links with parents were seen both as a benefit and a constraint. Ineffective links created greater pressure for faith-based schools, especially when particular groups of parents felt unable to engage with the school system:

> *Parents play a large role in preparing young people for living in multi-cultural communities. Schools could do much more to work with them through evening classes etc. In our area state maintained schools are not doing enough to reach out to BME parents. Especially as there are language difficulties among Pakistani and Bangladeshi parents compared to Indian or Chinese ones.* (Hackney/Newham consultation)

Young people do want to mix

The young people who took part in our research were very keen to learn about other faiths, ethnicities and cultures. When we explored with them the kind of activities they would like to see,

we can see that they would like to have events held more often and, interestingly, cover topics less to do with difference and more with commonalities, such as food and shared social action. This suggests that although heritage, culture and identity may be the focus of workshops and celebrations of diversity, they can be combined with shared popular activities like food and a focus on social community issues.

Again, this highlights the gap between parental views and those of young people. Jenkins acknowledges that even if faith schools have developed good inter-faith structures at an institutional level, this may not be filtering down to a pupil-level. This raises questions for her about the issue of children's rights over parents'.

I feel strongly about the issue of children's rights versus parents' and whether we are asking enough of faith schools on behalf of children around meaningful engagement. There are already good inter-faith support structures in place for faith schools, however this needs to be brought down to a pupil level. (Marie Parker-Jenkins)

Where people live matters

Ethnic clustering in terms of housing was also seen as a significant barrier to promoting further interaction. Patterns of settlement impacted on the intakes of schools which meant that interaction within a neighbourhood was often not enough to introduce ethnic and faith diversity through interaction to pupils.[140]

Participant 1: In Leicester one of the main issues of segregation is physical space …
Participant 2: We're doing work on inner-cities and faith relations but what about the suburbs? Schools on the west-side are mono-cultural white; the other side is Asian …
Participant 3: Many young people from the wider catchment areas have no experience of BME people. (Leicester consultation)

The ethnic enclaves that people live in lead to greater ethnic segregation … Liverpool is traditionally a place with pockets of communities. There has been a ghettoisation here but things are changing. (Liverpool consultation)

There is white and Asian flight to suburbs like Balderstone, etc., but it's not to faith but grammar schools. They are moving from the centre [of town] to the margins. (Blackburn consultation)

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140 See Weekes-Bernard (2007) on 'School Choice and Ethnic Segregation'.

The main differences here in our neighbourhoods are not to do with faith but class … There is white flight as people who do well want to move out and be in neighbourhoods with people who share their professional backgrounds. They tend to move out … to the suburbs. (Hackney/Newham consultation)

As well as physical segregation along complex lines of class, ethnicity and faith, participants from different areas also emphasize the lack of structures to hold debates like the ones that we had organized

There's no inter-communication or structures that allow this kind of debate in the city and schools. There isn't really any joined-up thinking or networking. (Leicester consultation)

Cohesion: beyond black and white

Participants noted complexity among the settlement patterns of people from different ethnic groups. It was argued that it is not enough to look at ethnic diversity in a binary manner; white and non-white, but also to consider relations between specific minority ethnic groups. Schools located in rich multicultural areas like inner and outer London found that since their schools attracted people from particular ethnic backgrounds, with similar faith affiliations, this often meant that other minorities in the area became invisible neighbours. The headteacher of the RC school noted:

We are a Catholic school in the midst of a Muslim, Sikh and Hindu environment … children can be racist towards Asian students. We need to take every opportunity to mix with other schools. Most of the students in my school are African-Caribbean which means that these pupils don't have the experience of mixing with local Asian students. It ends up reinforcing stereotypes about each other. (RC school)

There was strong evidence of poor links between young South Asian heritage students and pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds in places like Newham and Leicester which had large South Asian populations and a visible presence in the borough/city. To build cohesion it is essential that local authorities and schools work together to address the specific dynamics of relations within their area.

Who is my neighbour?

A further barrier that both faith schools and schools without a religious character may face is the relationship between schools and community

organizations. A headteacher of a CE school discussed how schools were 'cocooned' and had neglected links with non-faith organizations. They saw this as one of the biggest challenges they now faced given the new responsibility to demonstrate a contribution to cohesion. In this particular example the challenge for the school has been to identify local community hubs and then to set up links for sections of the community to use extended services, e.g. to develop their ICT skills and ensure that children's 'home backgrounds are represented':

I always have trouble with the local community because we have lots of links with the local church as our children go round quite a lot but the local community is one of the challenges – it's about time and who do we meet? There's a row of shops here but there's no community centre, even with the other schools, there's no reason to get together. I find it difficult to think about what this community is that we're meant to get into … My challenge would be to involve the local community in the school, both so that children's home backgrounds are represented, which is coming up in the extended schools programme and what we could do here, so we are a hub for people who have no ICT skills, for parents who want help. (CE School)

The importance of building these links is to ensure that schools do not become secluded. An area that could benefit from greater attention is the existence of structures for networking in particular between schools with a religious character and non-religious community organizations. As Osler points out in her interim report on the community consultation workshops (2007); 'inter-faith dialogue that is not extended to those individuals outside the faith tradition will be of limited value in realising community cohesion'. There is a coordinating role for local authorities to ensure all schools (and in this context, faith schools) have access to databases, resources and partnerships with community and voluntary organizations, e.g. through local strategic partnerships.

Supplementary schools as partners

One area where partnership seems mutually beneficial is with supplementary education.[141] In Blackburn, supplementary Muslim schools (often but not exclusively madrassahs) were seen to offer poor schooling, impacted on

141 Supplementary Schools aim to enhance/advance the educational opportunities of young people from their community through the provision of out of school hours educational initiatives.

young people's mainstream education, given the amount of time spent in them, and could be a contributory factor in perceptions of Muslim self-segregation. However, parents and pupils value their learning in these schools, in particular language learning:

There is poor supplementary schooling at the mosque; the child suffers because of the amount of time spent here. If Arabic were to become part of the National Curriculum then it would take pressure off madrassahs and supplementary schools. We have Spanish, Italian, why not Arabic? We have to cater for local communities. There is a concern that [Muslims] want their heritage to be recognized or taught. Muslims in the community haven't been very vocal in voicing these truths and have instead withdrawn into their own communities, expecting their madrassahs to pick this up and this may sometimes be seen as not integrating. (Blackburn consultation)

In all of the other areas, the role of supplementary schools was felt to be undervalued despite the opportunities that they could offer established and new minority communities for integration. In Liverpool, supplementary schools are described as 'experienced' in working with particular BME communities, and in Southampton they are seen to better 'integrate' new Somali refugees/migrants in the area:

Liverpool has a lot of supplementary schools … community cohesion initiatives need to come from community schools rather than just schools … We have Chinese Saturday classes, Polish schools, madrassahs and Yemeni and Somalian groups, etc. They have experience dealing with these communities. (Liverpool consultation)

There is quite a big Somali community who have recently arrived and now attend a school run by the mosque. This helps them to integrate better. (Southampton consultation)

Throughout 2008 the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education has had regional advisers collecting good practice from supplementary schools around the country. Locally, education services should collect and provide information about the provision of supplementary education in the area that all schools can build links with. Improving these partnerships may lead to better outcomes in terms of equality and diversity as well as community cohesion.

4.3 Faith schools promoting interaction and partnership

Despite these barriers, some faith schools engage in a wide range of activities to promote interaction between pupils of different backgrounds:

Many faith schools are actively working with other schools and the wider community to bring together people from different backgrounds, for example through partnership arrangements with other schools and the provision of extended services. (DCSF)

Encourage young people to play a part, outside school, in community activities involving young people of a range of backgrounds. (Inter-Faith Network)

These suggestions echo the guidance issued to schools to promote community cohesion. The further development of extended schools is seen as key to delivery of the Every Child Matters agenda, whereby schools are expected to provide access to a 'core offer' of integrated services, which includes childcare and parenting support, extra-curricular sport/music clubs and adult and family learning facilities outside of school hours.

> Despite challenges including the wariness of parents, geographical separation, the complexity of local patterns of diversity, and poor communication links between schools and voluntary and community sector organizations, some faith schools have shown that it is possible to innovate and achieve some success in building partnerships for interaction between groups.

Twinning programmes are expected to create opportunities for schools to learn from each other and serve wider communities. They were suggested by the Cantle Review Team (2001: 30), and aim to influence the views of young people from different cultures about each other, though care has to be taken to ensure that twinning programmes go beyond the exoticization of other pupils and are actually based on meaningful contact.[142]

Links between schools, links outside of school

Consultation participants suggested a range of things that schools could do in partnership with others. All of the suggestions emphasized that whether links are to business or public-sector organizations, the aim has to be to create effective, lasting relationships between schools across religious and non-religious organizations that allow knowledge about creativity, equality, enterprise, etc., to be shared.

The types of school partnerships suggested were area-wide with the use of school councils and contact/teaching links between schools with and without a religious character (including community and supplementary schools). School links with the community were those that involved parents in something that is 'lasting and tangible'. In relation to links with community groups, youth, public sector and community networks were mentioned that were 'involving', 'energizing', 'working to the same aims' and 'across all equality streams'. International partnerships were mentioned that were in operation across regions and specifically with organizations engaged in work in developing countries. Organizations that prioritize race equality and global perspectives were also seen as potentially significant partners. More general responses about the type of partnerships related to young people having opportunities to meet in neutral spaces, allowing individuals to engage in 'open dialogue' and enabling pupils, teachers, local authorities and faith communities to 'pool ideas, funds, etc.'

In other accounts, having 'secular' and public spaces which promote 'shared experiences' and allow young people to mix and talk were seen as essential.

Anything that promotes shared experiences is the best – there must be secularized spaces where our multifaceted personalities can play out, e.g. our primary schools, playgrounds and parks, theatres, and where we experience being citizens. (Brent/ Harrow consultation)

There is a need to get young people to mix outside of schools. (Hackney/ Newham consultation)

Young people who aren't even from our faith come in and just sit around talking, when I asked why, they said they couldn't find anywhere outside of school to talk. This is why you need to do something about if you want cohesion. (Blackburn consultation)

Respondents highlight that young people are central to attempts to promote greater interaction between people from different ethnic and faith groups and that greater attention needs to be paid not only to creating spaces for contact but specifically the type of contact that allows different aspects of identities to be explored between pupils.

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142 See Donnelly and Hughes (2006).

4.4 Creating spaces for dialogue

The Inter-faith Network and academic researcher Marie Parker-Jenkins both mention projects that increase dialogue, both 'virtual' and 'face-to-face'. A project run by Dash Arts[143] is given as an example of good practice by the Inter-Faith Network and research looking at how online discussion forums can support cooperation and collaboration between young people from different backgrounds is cited by Parker-Jenkins (2008). Other popular collaborations for young people, as mentioned by Professor Richard Pring, are through sports activities where the focus is on 'working together or in competition without necessarily realising that they are crossing any faith boundary'.

Sport England have set up a Strategic Alliance Team to work with government on how sport can unite communities – especially in deprived areas. Examples include the setting up of 'world united' football teams in regions like Leicestershire. Teams are made up of local players, with heritages that include Eastern Europe, South Asia, Iraq, Kosovo, Somalia, Syria and the UK. It is envisaged that teams like this will '*promote cohesion and fair play, fight racism and prejudice, celebrate cultural diversity and differences, but also have fun playing football matches locally, regionally and nationally*'.[144] They argue that sports activities can be a way of increasing teamwork skills, celebrating and bridging ethnic and social differences.

Blackburn Cathedral began hosting lunchtime 'dialogue sessions', drawing in young people from faith schools and schools without a religious character, as well as events like film screenings for cross-sections of the communities:

> There are regular events in the Cathedral for individuals from faith and non-faith backgrounds to talk about sensitive issues together. We hold lunchtime dialogue sessions and recently held a screening of this controversial Panorama film, 'White Fright', which looked at issues of segregation here without engaging with the communities.[145] (Blackburn consultation)

A large turnout for this screening became part of a continuous series of exchanges and dialogues between different communities in Blackburn, creating new partnerships. This highlights how community spaces for dialogue and conversation

around issues perceived to be controversial can contribute to cohesion. It provides a means of engagement, in contrast to media representations. It also shows that these spaces do not necessarily have to be secular.

Faith schools can also play a role in sharing local and global approaches to diversity. A Sikh school in London adopted an orphanage in Sri Lanka following the Tsunami. At the same time, the school emphasized how it brought 10,000 local people together through a festival.

> We adopted an orphanage outside the capital in Sri Lanka after the Tsunami. And those kids had nothing left and the staff raised £600 a month and sent that off ... It's not a faith school it's a community school and we are at the heart of the community here. We held a mela last year and 10,000 people turned up. (Sikh school)

Some, though not all, schools could give examples of where they had hosted a variety of extra-curricular and linking activities that were seen as successful in expanding the knowledge that young people have of development issues in a local or international context. Running events such as community cultural festivals allowed schools to see themselves as community focused rather than simply faith schools.

4.5 Institutional innovation for interaction

A number of other experts working with young people and faith-based organizations highlight institutional changes as a means of creating spaces for interaction and partnership. The Family and Parenting Institute refer to the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda in creating schools as 'as local hubs for education, family services, childcare and activities for older children'.

Children's centres

Both the Catholic Education Service and Board of Deputies for British Jews highlighted the opportunities provided by the setting up of children's centres. Both saw this as a chance for schools to create stronger partnerships between people from different backgrounds. The latter stressed the difference that this will make in sharing important information about contraception, medical advice, etc., between orthodox Jewish and non-Jewish communities in Hackney.

> The school next to this square in Hackney is building a children's centre. There's going to be medical advice, contraception advice, there's going to be a clinic, and that's being provided through

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143 www.dash-arts.org.uk

144 http://www.sportengland.org/text/eastmidlands_index/ eastmidlands_news_media/iyr_east_midlands-globalallstars.htm

145 In May 2007, the documentary *White Fright* was screened on BBC1's Panorama programme, claiming that there is evidence of increased segregation between Blackburn's Muslim Asian and White communities.

the Learning Trust in Hackney. Also in Hackney there is a non-Jewish school, and I introduced a very orthodox head teacher [of a Jewish school] to the head teacher of the non-Jewish school who already had a children's centre, and the two are now working together. This is an example of using the experience of the non-Jewish community to help the Jewish community. (The Board of Deputies of British Jews)

By opening up children's centres,[146] offering services for the local rather than only the faith community, schools can take a positive approach to engaging different communities in local areas. The Every Child Matters agenda, the Ten Year Childcare Strategy in 2004 and, most recently, the Childcare Act 2006 have cemented the need for, and the importance of, affordable, accessible and high-quality childcare in every community. The Centres are to be developed in areas where families are experiencing poverty and therefore may offer another way for schools' partnerships to impact upon service provision for the most disadvantaged families and young people.

Multi-faith schools

Other institutional developments that faith-based organizations may see as contributing to community cohesion are multi-faith schools. The DCSF maintain that there are currently 54 maintained schools with more than one religious character (the majority collaborations between Christian denominations). The Hindu Council has declared its intentions to have future Hindu–Christian faith schools to show how Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic faiths can work together, 'sharing the same school ethos and yet representing their own religion without compromise':

It is also possible for a maintained school with a religious character to have more than one religious denomination and there are currently 54

> **These institutional innovations may not go far enough, however. In this report we have advocated a more radical approach than multi-faith schools and clusters – instead arguing that faith schools need to become community schools provided by faith organizations for society. In our view, the importance of preparing young people for life in a multi-ethnic and multi-faith society requires a more fundamental shift in approach than this. It is heartening however, to see a willingness from many faith schools to consider changing their structures significantly in order to engage more fully with the neighbourhoods and communities of which they are part.**

maintained schools with more than one religious character. (DFES)

Our response – as well as my personal response – is first of all let's talk about two-faiths schools so automatically the idea of a polarized point of view is going to be challenged. We imagine two faiths working together in the same school – and I am discussing this idea of Hindu–Christian faith schools … So this is something we are exploring, because if you have a school with two Abrahamic faiths again there is a problem of polarization. Instead, if you mix up Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic faiths in the same school this would be a wonderful starting point … This would give an excellent opportunity of showing that schools can work across religious boundaries and that two faiths can work together, sharing the same school ethos and yet representing their own religion without compromise. (Hindu Council)

Consultations revealed that multi-faith schools, formally and informally were considered as a positive way to draw upon shared faith ethos and serve multi-faith communities. Further demand and supply of multi-faith schools, in particular academies, may be a way to fostering better multi-ethnic and multi-faith relations.[147]

School clusters and federations

Setting up more formal partnerships with other faith and non-faith schools as 'cluster groups' was seen as an opportunity by a headteacher of a Jewish school in London, in order to work with the local SACRE and schools without a religious character. Together, the Jewish schools in the area were taking turns to provide other schools with resources to learn about Jewish festivals.

We are part of formal clusters under the United Jewish Synagogue with a number of other Jewish schools. Non-denominational schools are part of the SACRE and so we're responsible for these schools learning about Jewish festivals. (Jewish school)

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146 In 2004, Prime Minister Tony Blair described Children's Centres as the new frontier for the welfare state and the education system. Currently, it is estimated that there are around 2500 Children's Centres in the 30% most disadvantaged electoral wards in the UK

147 In 2007, Sir Cyril Taylor, chairman of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, announced the government's plans to back multi-faith academies to combat extremism and segregation across England

4.6 Conclusion

The ability and willingness of faith schools to create strong and positive partnerships with others reflects a developing theme throughout this report. The will to work in partnership is dependent on the vision of the role in society that the schools consider themselves to have; as a service for a particular faith community or a service provided by a faith community to society. When asked about partnerships many within faith schools referred to partnership with their co-religionists – either parents of pupils at the school or those who attend local mosques, synagogues, temples or churches. For many the links with those outside of these groups were much weaker, and in some cases not seen as a priority.

No one would deny that successful relationships with parents/carers are critical in school effectiveness, but parents can also provide a challenge in that their own prejudices and fears can be a limitation on what schools are prepared to deliver and to prioritize. For many parents who have chosen faith schools, interfaith and cross-cultural activities are not seen as important or necessarily desirable. Young people, on the other hand, identified such activities as significant to them. This highlights the challenge of striking the right balance between valuing children's voice and parental rights to define the style and content of their children's education.

Ethnic clustering and geographical patterns of settlement influence the resources available to schools in pursuing activities that bring people of different backgrounds together. Nonetheless, some schools, in very different areas in terms of ethnic make-up, had been able to advance a range of actions, while some in very multi-ethnic areas admitted that they still had much to do to understand and respond to the dynamics of the ethnic diversity in their areas. Actions undertaken in partnership, such as school-twinning and sports, were far from universal and some faith schools had not yet been engaged in activity of this type, despite having intakes that were uniform in terms of faith.

For many faith schools, the development of partnerships with non-faith-based community organizations was perceived as very difficult. They had little knowledge about where to begin and few sources of support in developing partnerships – either with supplementary schools or other organizations that could support their efforts to fulfil their community cohesion (and race equality) duty. Some had begun to use the opportunities provided by educational innovations such as specialist schools, the academies programme, children's centres and extended schools, to begin to build new partnerships. The choice of partners remained crucial, however, as even those who had taken the option of developing multi-faith schools were often linking between similar faiths (e.g. RC and CE schools), an approach which would fail to change the existing dynamics of ethnic diversity.

There remains a range of limits to faith schools' ability and willingness to engage in positive partnerships as schools wholly engaged with the rest of the education system and other social partners. In order to respond to these difficulties, faith schools should:

- Prioritize bringing people together from different backgrounds rather than merely within a particular faith-based community.
- Challenge the wariness of parents in engaging with young people from a range of faith, ethnic and class backgrounds by emphasizing their obligations to all in society rather than solely to co-religionists.
- Use the opportunities provided by educational reform to build partnerships through, e.g., children's centres, extended schools, school federations and academies, and ultimately through becoming community schools with a faith specialism.

Part 3. Conclusions

These six key recommendations could clarify the role of faith schools in our education system.

1. End selection on the basis of faith

2. Children ought to have a greater say in how they are educated

3. RE should be part of the core national curriculum

4. Faith schools should also serve the most disadvantaged

5. Faith schools must value all young people

6. Faith should continue to play an important role in our education system, provided points 1–5 are taken into account

What the Research Tells Us – and More

Faith schools in England pose a series of dilemmas for policymakers and all of those concerned about building a successful multi-ethnic society. Recent approaches to educational policy development in England have promoted diversity of provision in order to achieve improved academic standards. Faith schools and their sponsoring organizations have been seen as key partners in developing such diversity and improving standards. Schools do more than produce examination results, however. The Children's Plan (2008) defines the government's vision for the '21st Century School':

> It provides an excellent education and by personalising learning does not compromise in its mission to see each child achieve all of which he or she is capable. But it also actively contributes to all aspects of a child's life – health and wellbeing, safety, and developing the wider experiences and skills that characterise a good childhood and set a young person up for success as an adult.

Educational standards are therefore not enough. Schools are seen as locales for development of the wider skills that prepare young people for adulthood. The ability to operate effectively in a multi-ethnic, multi-faith society is recognized as a key factor in this preparation. Faith schools, as currently constituted, experience a series of barriers to preparing young people for life in a multi-ethnic society. Their presence in the educational system also impacts on practice in schools without a religious character, making it more challenging for them to deliver an effective education that values religious and ethnic diversity.

Paterson (2003) has pointed to a wider trend in New Labour policymaking that attempts to balance the seemingly conflicting aims of the 'promotion of competitiveness' and 'insistence on the inadequacies of unregulated capitalism'. Policy on faith schools seems trapped within this dilemma. Faith schools are welcomed into the English education system because they are popular with parents in large part due to perceived academic success. They are at the same time criticized by many political commentators for being socially divisive.

Our research project has attempted to shed some light on this dilemma and propose some possible ways to move on. When, over 25 years ago, Runnymede considered the relationship between 'Church Schools' (RC and CE schools) and ethnic diversity, we posed a key question, to which we return today:

> Should church schools ... alter their character, and become a service provided *by*, rather than *for*, the church, admitting children of any religion or none? (Dummett and McNeal, 1981: 22)

The extent of our research project, which has engaged over 1000 people in debate about faith schools and community cohesion, has prepared us to provide an answer relevant to England in 2008.

Twenty-five years ago the faith organizations involved in administering schools were much less diverse, and faith was less significant as a marker of social division. Justifiable concerns regarding the importance of social cohesion, our greater recognition of human rights as the irreducible core of our common values and shared identity, threats to democratic practice from violent extremists, and our increased need to capitalize on the benefits of diversity in a globalized economy, all speak of how vital it is that we come to a new understanding of the ways in which we collectively use government funding to prepare young people to operate successfully in modern society. The model of 'separate but equal' schooling is no longer satisfactory, nor does it meet the needs of contemporary England.

Through opening up a broad-ranging discussion with a wide range of stakeholders in this project, we have been able to examine how faith schools can address their role within our shared endeavours to create a society at ease with itself. *There are positive and negative aspects to the somewhat specialized environment in which faith schools operate, and by appraising these we can arrive at a series of recommendations that would improve their 'shared endeavours' capacity.*

For example, on the positive side:

- Faith schools demonstrate a successful emphasis on values education, which we recognize as a significant contribution to effective education for the 21st century.
- Although faith schools are much more effective at educating for a single vision than at opening dialogue about a shared vision, where they do have some success is through the opportunities they provide for young people of different backgrounds to mix, in spaces that can be faith-based or secular. *Recommendation*: Faith schools should aim for a broader intake of pupils in order to enable interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

- Faith schools in particular emphasize and cater well for parental choice. They do not, however, champion the rights of children. But children's rights matter, and while the debate about faith schools is characterized by discussions of parental choice of education, discussion about children's opinions, needs and wishes need to be brought to the fore. *Recommendation:* Faith schools and other schools could do far more to bring out young people's voice and participation, and demonstrate their commitment to democratic dialogue by so doing.

- Faith is an important marker of identity for many. Inequalities and the failure to tackle religious discrimination in non-faith schooling are significant drivers for faith school attendance. *Recommendation:* all schools need to be able to show that they respect this through taking a stand against bullying based on faith background, and improving the quality of teaching about religion and faith.

- Faith schools are strong on ties with the community. Government guidance highlights strong partnerships between schools and communities, and educational and inter-faith organizations have interpreted this as bringing together people from different backgrounds, while faith-school providers have identified it as extended community ties and community service, predominantly inter-generational rather than cross-cultural. These links are not unimportant and may be crucial to an understanding of the effectiveness of faith schools. It is significant, however, that many respondents to our questionnaire recognized that although these partnerships are valuable they do not necessarily lead to opportunities for interaction among young people across ethnic, faith or social-class boundaries.

- Some faith schools have shown that it is possible to innovate and achieve a certain amount of success in building partnerships for interaction between groups. This has been achieved despite challenges that include the wariness of parents, geographical separation, the complexity of local patterns of diversity, and poor communication links between schools and voluntary and community sector organizations.

Criticisms of faith schools and their role in current society include the following:

- While provision for learning about religion is poor in non-faith schools, provision for learning about religions beyond those of the sponsoring faith is also inadequate in faith schools. The local structures for supporting religious education in schools are too often weak and ineffectual. *Recommendation:* All schools should therefore follow a common RE National Curriculum as a minimum guarantee of learning about the role of faith in society, critical thinking about religion, ethics and the diversity of faith traditions.

- Effective teaching about diversity remains a challenge for many schools, regardless of their faith status. However, faith schools did *not* seem to be exhibiting a more distinctive approach. Facing similar challenges to all schools, they were adopting similarly lacklustre responses.

- Disappointingly, too, given their emphasis on 'whole-child approaches', values and moral education, their teaching of race, gender and disability equality is similar to that offered by non-faith schools, and they are therefore no better placed to respond to the needs of young people. This is of particular concern given the ethnic make-up of faith schools (particularly in urban areas) and the ongoing controversies about gender and sexual orientation within many faith communities.

- Despite histories based on challenging poverty and inequality, and high-level policy which suggests a mission to serve the most disadvantaged in society, faith schools educate a disproportionately small number of young people at the lowest end of the socio-economic scale. Selection procedures, while based on faith, seem to favour the more privileged. For many faith organizations it would appear to be in contradiction of their mission to provide education for the most disadvantaged that faith should be a criterion for school selection.

- If faith schools perceive their role as providing exclusive institutions for people of a particular faith rather than as adding diversity to an education system which is for everyone in a community, then their commitment to state education can rightly be questioned.

- For many of our workshop participants, the faith status of the school was seen as a proxy for potential achievement levels rather than as an expression of desire for a faith-based education. Recognition of this as a source of demand for places in faith schools might be seen as an encouragement for faith schools to reconsider what is perceived as distinctive about their mission – faith or academic achievement. The link between parental choice and faith is unclear. The educational success of many faith schools

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may mean that the faith of the school is not the overriding consideration in the choice parents are making.

The research analysis suggests changes are needed in education policy:

- There are few external structures for creating a shared vision between schools as they are currently constituted. Given the direction of travel in government policy towards greater autonomy for schools; it is unlikely that this can improve in much more than a piecemeal, bolt-on manner. If faith schools are to be effective sites for inter-faith dialogue then they need to find ways of engaging with other schools more positively. If faith were perceived as a specialism for a school, it would provide a route for them to cascade their expertise among other institutions, as other specialist schools do.
- Radical reform of locally agreed syllabuses should include the adoption of a statutory framework for RE. This would put it on a similar footing to other National Curriculum subjects, and open it up to similar levels of evaluation and monitoring. If RE is to carry the burden of promoting interfaith diversity, it will need to change.
- People express identities beyond that of their faith, and these too need to be the focus of learning in faith schools and valued within that context. It is not enough to privilege one marker of identity over all others, catering for young people only as members of particular faith communities without also understanding their gender, ethnicity, age, ability or sexual orientation. While this may prove to be controversial for many faith-based organizations, becoming schools for all will require the development of teaching practices which value everyone equally.
- We would strongly support efforts for faith schools to engage with all in their communities and not be exclusive to those of a particular faith and agree that there would be benefits for teaching and learning in the schools themselves, for equality in society, and for community cohesion.
- If faith is an important factor in defining a school's vision and the place of that vision in society, then those schools have much to gain from being open to people of all faiths and none, rather than being closed and exclusive. Faith schools, like all schools, must engage with the whole community and be open to working with all in order to play their part in pursuing community cohesion and similar life-chances for all.
- Without faith-based admissions criteria, there might be less resistance to the contribution that faith organizations could make to the English education system. This would enable a real and effective partnership to be established between government and faith organizations in providing education for all citizens. Instead, controversy over the role of faith in education and resistance to engagement between faith schools and the remainder of the schooling system has the effect of limiting the legitimate role of faith organizations in schools.
- Small-scale institutional innovations may not go far enough. In this report we have advocated a more radical approach than multi-faith schools and clusters – instead arguing that faith schools need to become community schools provided by faith organizations for society. In our view, the importance of preparing young people for life in a multi-ethnic and multi-faith society requires a more fundamental shift in approach. It is heartening, however, to see a willingness from many faith schools to consider changing their structures significantly in order to engage more fully with the neighbourhoods and communities of which they are a part.

Any reform which impacts on a third of the schooling system is likely to be radical and difficult. However, the status quo is no longer an option. Currently government policymakers appear to have reached an impasse; with faith organizations unwilling or unable to substantially change the nature of their schools, offering only to tinker at the margins of their provision to address issues of national concern – namely community cohesion. Government on the other hand has expended much political capital in this area already, leading to the Janus-like position of welcoming faith schools into the system, but only where there is agreement from the Schools' Adjudicator and other local partners, who have shown an antipathy to faith-based schooling as currently constituted.

As a result of our consultations, and as summarized in the preceding text, we have identified six key recommendations to clarify the role of faith schools in our education system, and lead to their being better able to fulfil their role of promoting cohesion between young people from different ethnic and/or faith backgrounds.

1. End selection on the basis of faith
Faith schools should be for the benefit of all in society rather than just some. If faith schools are convinced of their relevance for society, then that should apply equally for all children. With state funding comes an obligation to be relevant and open to all citizens.

2. Children should have a greater say in how they are educated
Children's rights are as important as parents' rights. While the debate about faith schools is characterized by discussions of parental choice of education, there is little discussion about children's voice.

3. RE should be part of the core national curriculum
Provision for learning about religion is too often poor in schools without a religious character. Provision for learning about religions beyond that of the sponsoring faith in faith schools is also inadequate.

4. Faith schools should also serve the most disadvantaged
Despite histories based on challenging poverty and inequality, and high-level pronouncements that suggest a mission to serve the most disadvantaged in society, faith schools educate a disproportionately small number of young people at the lowest end of the socio-economic scale.

5. Faith schools must value all young people
People cherish facets of their identities beyond their faith, and these also need to be the focus of learning in faith schools – and valued within them. Similarly, religious identities should be more highly valued within schools that don't have a religious character.

6. If these recommendations are acted upon, faith should continue to play an important role in our education system
Faith schools should remain a significant and important part of our education system, offering diversity in the schooling system as a means of improving standards, offering choice to parents and developing effective responses to local, national and global challenges in education.

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Through this research project we have been able to develop our understanding of how faith schooling is perceived, practised and understood at a range of levels; from central government, to faith hierarchies, voluntary-sector organizations, parents and young people. By looking beyond the rhetoric, we have been able to pilot a way through to a set of proposals that value what is important about faith identities and faith organizations' engagement with public services, would strike a more sustainable balance between community cohesion, equality and diversity.

Twenty-seven years after we first asked the question 'Should church schools ... alter their character, and become a service provided *by*, rather than *for*, the church, admitting children of any religion or none?', we can emphatically answer 'yes'.

Appendices

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2. Consultation participants

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Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
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Free Church Education Committee
Guru Nanak School
Hindu Council UK
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The Learning Trust (Hackney)
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Selected Runnymede Publications

Re(thinking) 'Gangs'
Runnymede Perspectives by Claire Alexander (2008)

A Tale of Two Englands:
'Race' and Violent Crime in the Press
Runnymede Perspectives by Kjartan Páll Sveinsson (2008)

Empowering Individuals and Creating Community:
Thai Perspectives on Life in Britain
A Runnymede Community Study by Jessica Mai Sims (2008)

Living Transnationally – Romanian Migrants in London
A Runnymede Community Study by Andreea R. Torre (2008)

Faith Schools and Community Cohesion -
Observations on Community Consultations
A Runnymede Interim Report by Audrey Osler (2007)

Failure by Any Other Name? - Educational Policy and the
Continuing Struggle for Black Academic Success
Runnymede Perspectives by Nicola Rollock (2007)

Creating Connections - Regeneration and Consultation on a
Multi-Ethnic Council Estate
A Runnymede Community Study by Kjartan Páll Sveinsson (2007)

The State of the Nation - Respect as a Justification for Policy
A Runnymede Thematic Review by Omar Khan (2007)

School Choice and Ethnic Segregation – Educational
Decision-making among Black and Minority Ethnic Parents
A Runnymede Report by Debbie Weekes-Bernard (2007)

Not Enough Understanding? -
Student Experiences of Diversity in UK Universities
A Runnymede Community Study by Jessica Sims (2007)

Bienvenue? - Narratives of Francophone Cameroonians
A Runnymede Community Study by Kjartan Páll Sveinsson (2007)

Distant Neighbours - Understanding How the French
Deal with Ethnic and Religious Diversity
Runnymede Perspectives by Christophe Bertossi (2007)

Bolivians in London -
Challenges and Achievements of a London Community
A Runnymede Community Study by Kjartan Páll Sveinsson (2007)

The Vietnamese Community in Great Britain
- Thirty Years On
A Runnymede Community Study by Jessica Sims (2007)

Equal Respect - ASBOs and Race Equality
A Runnymede Report by Sarah Isal (2006)

Why Preferential Polices Can Be Fair -
Achieving Equality for Members of Disadvantaged Groups
Runnymede Perspectives by Omar Khan (2006)

What's New about New Immigrants
in Twenty-First Century Britain?
Rob Berkeley, Omar Khan and Mohan Ambikaipaker
(2006, Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

Preventing Racist Violence: Work with Actual and Potential
Perpetrators - Learning from Practice to Policy Change
A Runnymede Report by Sarah Isal (2005)

The Space Between: From Rhetoric to Reality
on Race Equality in the Workplace
A Runnymede Trust Report by Sandra Sanglin-Grant (April 2005)

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Preventing Racist Violence: Interim Findings
Sarah Isal (Working Paper June 2004)

Realising the Vision: Progress and Further Challenges
The Report of the CFMEB (2000) revisited in 2004
Runnymede Trust Briefing Paper (April 2004)

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Perspectives on Inspection and Regulation
Rob Berkeley (ed.) (2003)

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Understanding The Issues, Delivering Solutions
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Dr Debbie Weekes and Dr Cecile Wright
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A Very Light Sleeper:
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About Runnymede

The Runnymede Trust is an independent policy research organization focusing on equality and justice through the promotion of a successful multi-ethnic society. Founded as a Charitable Educational Trust, Runnymede has a long track record in policy research, working in close collaboration with eminent thinkers and policymakers in the public, private and voluntary sectors. We believe that the way ahead lies in building effective partnerships, and we are continually developing these with the voluntary sector, the government, local authorities and companies in the UK and Europe. We stimulate debate and suggest forward-looking strategies in areas of public policy such as education, the criminal justice system, employment and citizenship.

Since 1968, the date of Runnymede's foundation, we have worked to establish and maintain a positive image of what it means to live affirmatively within a society that is both multi-ethnic and culturally diverse. Runnymede continues to speak with a thoughtful and independent public voice on these issues today.

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