

Response ID [REDACTED]

Submitted to **Schools that Work for Everyone**

Submitted on [REDACTED]

Introduction

1 Welcome – would you like to provide your email address?

Email::

[REDACTED]@christianconcern.com

2 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please select which type of organisation you represent.

Please select::

Faith group

If you selected 'other', please specify::

Please provide the name of your organisation::

Christian Concern

3 If you are responding as an individual, please select your interest in the schools system.

Please select:

If you have selected 'other', please specify::

4 What local authority area are you based in?

Please select:

Families who are just about managing

5 How can we better understand the impact of policy on a wider cohort of pupils whose life chances are profoundly affected by school but who may not qualify or apply for free school meals?

Please see families who are just about managing section of the consultation document:

6 How can we identify them?

Please see families who are just about managing section in the consultation document:

Independent Schools

7 What contribution could the biggest and most successful independent schools make to the state school system?

Please see Independent Schools section of the consultation document:

8 Are there other ways in which independent schools can support more good school places and help children of all backgrounds to succeed?

Yes (please provide further comments below)

Please see Independent Schools section of the consultation document:

Respecting the autonomy of independent schools must be the starting point. This allows independent schools to provide the bespoke service they do, giving a greater diversity of choice in the system and so more options for parents choosing to educate their children at school.

This question and much of the consultation document seems to assume that all independent schools have lots of pupils and lots of money. The reality, as noted in the consultation document, is that many independent schools are very small and charge small fees. This must be taken into account when developing policy.

9 Are these the right expectations to apply to all independent schools to ensure they do more to improve state education locally?

No (please provide further comments below)

Please see Independent Schools section of the consultation document:

The principle of 'each according to its ability' must be applied. The consultation document notes that almost 50% of independent schools have fewer than 150 pupils. Many of these schools are very ethnically diverse and pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Yet when giving examples of 'partnership arrangements' between independent and state schools every example of an independent school given is a large, wealthy and prestigious institution.

Clearly a small independent Christian school with 5 or 10 pupils from poor backgrounds will not be expected to have the same impact on the local state system as Eton College, but the lack of examples given in the consultation document make the situation for these smaller schools unclear. A significant number of independent schools simply do not have the capacity to help improve the local state system.

The role of an independent school is primarily to provide an educational service to its community, not to improve state schools in the local area. We are concerned that small independent schools may struggle to keep up with these expectations and that the quality of the children's education may suffer as a result. These proposals overlook the thousands of children from 'ordinary families' who attend independent schools.

10 What threshold should we apply to capture those independent schools who have the capacity to sponsor or set up a new school or offer funded places, and to exempt those that do not?

Please see Independent Schools section of the consultation document:

We think that an evaluation of resources, facilities and minimal fee income would be a good place to start. For example, start with schools that have more than 1000 pupils or are charging more than £5,000 per term for fees. Some independent schools have low fees because parents cannot afford bigger fees.

11 Is setting benchmarks the right way to implement these requirements?

Not Answered

Please see Independent Schools section of the consultation document:

12 Should we consider legislation to allow the Charity Commission to revise its guidance, and to remove the benefits associated with charitable status from those independent schools which do not comply?

No (please provide further comments below)

Please see Independent Schools section of the consultation document:

Providing education for the community should warrant charitable status. Independent schools already do this through the excellent educational service they often provide, as noted in the consultation document.

We are again concerned about the impact this policy would have on small independent schools. Parents in 'ordinary families' pay for their children's education through taxes and then pay again for independent schooling. This is their freedom as parents to educate their child and in doing so they act sincerely in the best interests of the child. Removing charitable status from schools which are unable to keep up with new benchmarks will have a devastating effect on these families as they are required to pay more money for the education of their child.

13 Are any other changes necessary to secure the Government's objectives?

Not Answered

Please see Independent Schools section of the consultation:

Universities

14 How can the academic expertise of universities be brought to bear on our schools system, to improve school-level attainment and in doing so widen access?

Please see Universities section of the consultation document:

15 Are there other ways in which universities could be asked to contribute to raising school-level attainment?

Not Answered

Please see Universities section of consultation document:

16 Is the DfA guidance the most effective way of delivering these new requirements?

Not Answered

Please see Universities section of the consultation document:

17 What is the best way to ensure that all universities sponsor schools as a condition of higher fees?

Please see Universities section of the consultation document:

18 Should we encourage universities to take specific factors into account when deciding how and where to support school attainment?

Not Answered

Please see Universities section of the consultation document:

Selective Schools

19 How should we best support existing grammars to expand?

Please see Selective Schools section in the consultation document:

20 What can we do to support the creation of either wholly or partially new selective schools?

Please see Selective Schools section of the consultation document:

21 How can we support existing non-selective schools to become selective?

Please see Selective Schools section of the consultation document:

22 Are these the right conditions to ensure that selective schools improve the quality of non-selective places?

Not Answered

Please see Selective Schools section of the consultation document:

23 Are there other conditions that we should consider as requirements for new or expanding selective schools, and existing non-selective schools becoming selective?

Not Answered

Please see Selective Schools section in the consultation document:

24 What is the right proportion of children from lower income households for new selective schools to admit?

Please see Selective Schools section of the consultation document:

25 Are these sanctions the right ones to apply to schools that fail to meet the requirements?

Not Answered

Please see Selective Schools section of the consultation document:

26 If not, what other sanctions might be effective in ensuring selective schools contribute to the number of good non-selective places locally?

Please see Selective Schools section of the consultation document:

27 How can we best ensure that new and expanding selective schools and existing non-selective schools becoming selective are located in the areas that need good school places the most?

Please see Selective Schools section of the consultation document:

28 How can we best ensure that the benefits of existing selective schools are brought to bear on local non-selective schools?

Please see Selective Schools section of the consultation document:

29 Are there other things we should ask of existing selective schools to ensure they support non-selective education in their areas?

Not Answered

Please see Selective Schools section of the consultation document:

30 Should the conditions we intend to apply to new or expanding selective schools also apply to existing selective schools?

Not Answered

Please see Selective Schools section of the consultation document:

Faith Schools

31 Are these the right alternative requirements to replace the 50% rule?

No (please provide further comments below)

Please see Faith Schools section of the consultation document:

The Government recognises that around a third of all maintained schools in England are faith schools, and that in general these schools outperform non-faith

schools, particularly among poorer pupils. Removing the 50% cap gives greater autonomy to these faith schools and serves as a reward for the good work they have done.

It is surprising then that the Government would seek to restrict this autonomy by imposing new requirements on the schools, particularly requirements that seem to undermine the faith basis on which these schools operate. We would argue that the Christian ethos on which Catholic and Church of England schools are built is what makes them so effective. The better performance of poor pupils at Christian schools is a testament to their inclusiveness and ability to promote community cohesion and social mobility.

Suggesting that faith schools set up mixed-faith multi-academy trusts and establish 'twinning arrangements' with other-faith schools and non-faith schools is a form of syncretism which lumps all faith schools together and undermines the very reason that Christian schools are so effective.

It is naïve to think that Catholic, Church of England, Islamic and Jewish schools will happily partner together in multi-academy trusts and maintain their distinctiveness. It will only lead to the dilution of the strong Christian basis for some of the best state schools in the country.

We suggest giving high performing faith schools more autonomy so that the faith-basis on which they are built may flourish and in this way many children will benefit.

32 How else might we ensure that faith schools espouse and deliver a diverse, multi-faith offer to parents within a faith school environment?

Please see Faith Schools section of the consultation document:

Catholic and Church of England schools need to be given more autonomy so that the Christian values of strong moral teaching, inclusion and community may thrive. The Government has noted that its strongest schools, particularly for poorer pupils, are Christian schools. This is not an accident.

The reason these schools are so effective is the Christian gospel and its implications for education, when it speaks of the 'renewing of minds'. Squashing this message by trying to put all 'faith schools' in one bucket is unwise and will only reduce the quality of education in Britain.

33 Are there other ways in which we can effectively monitor faith schools for integration and hold them to account for performance?

Yes (please provide further comments below)

Please see Faith Schools section of the consultation document:

Teaching Christianity in schools should be prioritised. All schools should teach the basics of Christian doctrine and stories about Jesus. This will help pupils to understand and appreciate the freedoms, heritage and values they have inherited by living in Britain.

No school should be allowed to have girls wearing face veils as this hinders integration. Some ethnic diversity among pupils should be ensured and measuring ethnic diversity with respect to the surrounding area could be a good way of working out which schools are promoting community cohesion.

Values taught in schools should be Christian and include explanations of Christian festivals like Christmas and Easter which have messages of good news for everyone.

34 Are there other sanctions we could apply to faith schools that do not meet this requirement?

Yes (please provide further comments below)

Please see Faith Schools section of the consultation document:

Schools that hinder integration should be closed down.