IN GOOD FAITH

The Report of the Executive’s Task Group on Faith Schools

www.teachers.org.uk
The Chair of the Task Group was Hazel Danson.

As reported in the previous Annual Report, the Union established a Task Group on Faith Schools in order to consider the complex issues surrounding faith schools and for the development of a Union position on such issues. The Department and Committee are very grateful to the Task Group for their hard work in advising the Executive on Faith Schools (see Appendix 4 for the membership of the Task Group).

Throughout 2007 the Working Group met on seven occasions during the months of February, March, June, July, September, October and November. During the meetings the Working Group received oral and written evidence from a variety of faith groups and other organisations. Topics discussed included: community cohesion; terminology around faith schools; faith schools and pupil attainment; comparative perspective on faith schools in Europe; Muslim schools in Britain; funding of faith schools; human and civil rights; faith schools and gender; schools admissions; DCSF’s position on faith schools: Faith in the System; Academies and faith schools; the role of SACREs; and the Commission on Integration and Community Cohesion’s report: Our Shared Future.

The Working Group on Faith Schools deliberated at length on many complex issues arising in response to oral and written evidence and other tabled items during the meetings. Some complex issues discussed by the Task Group included: faith schools within the state sector and private sector; state funding of faith schools; and admissions.

A highly successful consultative conference on faith schools was held in November (see Appendix 5).

In the December cycle, the Executive agreed the NUT Position Paper. The Paper is set out on the following pages.
PRINCIPLES WHICH INFORM THE POSITION PAPER

1. In its education statement ‘Bringing Down the Barriers’ (2005), the NUT argued persuasively for a comprehensive education based on the provision of a good local school for every child. Set out below are some of the statements from that document.

“If an education service is to meet the needs of all children and young people, it must be comprehensive in its approach. Primary and special education are as much examples of the success of a comprehensive approach as secondary education. There is nothing ‘standard’ about comprehensive education. There is nothing in comprehensive education which holds back high expectations of young people’s achievements. Comprehensive education can contribute as much to the talented and gifted child as to the child who is currently struggling to learn.

Comprehensive education is about tackling barriers to high quality education. No government committed to raising the living standards of its people and to playing a progressive role internationally can afford to have an education service which is shaped by barriers arising from, for example, the influence of social class and economic and health issues, race, gender, disability or sexuality. No civil society can permit itself to be anything other than vigilant in seeing that its leaders live up to their responsibilities.

The terms ‘comprehensive education’ and ‘equality of opportunity’ are synonymous. As the OECD’s Programme of International Student Assessment (2000) report demonstrates, the best education service is one where there is a single, non-diverse, system of well resourced provision within which the needs of all children and young people are targeted and met.”

2. The NUT argued further that:

‘The greatest potential for… joined up thinking lies in the widely welcomed ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda which recognises and sustains the idea that every school is at the centre of its community. It is an approach which is equally important for urban and rural communities.

If schools are essential to their communities, then all parents should be entitled to send their children to good local schools and live up to the responsibilities that go alongside such entitlements. All the evidence points to the fact that this is the wish of the vast majority of parents. Indeed, local schools are enhanced by their communities and communities are enhanced by their local schools.’

3. The comprehensive principle was founded on the idea of ‘equality of respect’ and ‘equal worth’. Regardless of a pupil's gender, socio-economic, disability, ethnic, religious and cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and academic ability, each should be treated with equal importance according to their specific needs.

4. Comprehensive education based on equality should enable the accommodation of beliefs within which faith groups and non-faith groups can attend happily.

5. Existing voluntary controlled schools are essentially community schools with foundations. It should therefore be possible to develop imaginative ways of recognising and meeting the needs of pupils with different faiths within community primary and secondary schools.

6. The debate on faith based schools needs to focus on ways to ensure that the religious and cultural differences of pupils are recognised and valued and their different cultural needs addressed at all schools.

7. All publically funded schools should be required, therefore, to meet specific requirements in relation to:

- admissions;
- curriculum including RE;
- governance;
- equality for all including in staff recruitment;
- human and civil rights; and
- duty to promote and foster social cohesion.
Every Child Matters

8. The ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda has the capacity to contribute not only to the concept of a good local school for every community but also to the regeneration of communities.

9. The five outcomes for children and young people are given legal force in the Children Act 2004, as the components of well-being and the purpose of co-operation between agencies. The Executive endorses the five outcomes as principles which inform its position on faith schools.

10. The five outcomes (with the 25 specific aims in the brackets below) are:

   • be healthy (defined further as: physically healthy, mentally and emotionally healthy, sexually healthy, healthy lifestyles, choose not to take illegal drugs);
   • stay safe (defined further as: safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation, safe from accidental injury or death, safe from bullying and discrimination, safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school, having security, stability and care);
   • enjoy and achieve (defined further as: ready for school, attend and enjoy school, achieving national educational standards at primary school, achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation, achieve national educational standards at secondary school);
   • make a positive contribution (defined further as: engage in decision-making and support the community and environment, engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school, develop positive relationships and choose not to bully and discriminate, develop self confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges, developing enterprising behaviour);
   • achieve economic well-being (defined further as: engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school, ready for employment, live in decent homes and sustainable communities, access to transport and material goods, live in households free from low income).

Human and Civil Rights

11. All schools should promote human and civil rights. These rights are enshrined in international human rights’ instruments. The Executive noted, in particular, the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Task Group noted in particular the following Articles of the Declaration in relation to the issue of faith schools:

   Article 18 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest this religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

   Article 26 Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

12. The Executive emphasised the need for the rights of parents not to be exercised to the detriment of others, for example, the rights of other parents and the views of other children. Recognition should be given to the rights of the child to be increasingly consulted about their future, in the context of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.

Equality Legislation

13. The importance of universal application of equality legislation in all schools, including in faith schools should be emphasised; in particular, the importance of the promotion of equality on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, race and gender identity. This principle must also inform staff recruitment and disability in schools.

14. Human equality in all its dimensions should be affirmed and celebrated. The importance of working for the elimination of any faith-based homophobia, transphobia and institutionalised prejudice towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people is vital.

15. Any calls by any religious leaders, seeking exemptions from equality legislation, and attempts to base this on the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, such a right being for all, not just for some should be rejected.

16. Full civil rights for LGBT staff and students are not only consistent with the right to religious freedom, but are rooted in the best and fundamental teachings of all major faiths; love, justice, compassion, and mercy, such values being shared by all who seek the common good.
17. In most cases the full civil rights of LGBT staff and pupils will not be inconsistent with the right to religious freedom. In cases where there is any conflict, however, the NUT unequivocally supports the right to race, gender and LGBT equality.

18. All schools should comply with the legal requirement to make educational provision free of sex discrimination.

19. Girls and boys should be entitled to educational provision which promotes equality of opportunity, challenges gender stereotyping and which does not prescribe narrow views about masculinity and femininity. All girls and boys should have an equal entitlement to play sport and enjoy physical exercise. All young people need to be empowered by teachers and careers advisors to make subject and career choices which are not influenced by stereotypes about what are “gender appropriate” choices or aspirations.

**Fair Admissions and Community Cohesion**

20. In order for there to be equality of access to education, there must be in place a fair and equitable pupil admissions process. Common admissions arrangements are the key to achieving this goal. The NUT has supported consistently the concept of local admissions forums. Initiatives such as the cross borough admissions forum in London are a step forward. Local admissions forums must have teeth. No admissions procedure should be in place which advantages one school at the expense of another, including faith schools.

21. Academy status has the capacity to undermine local communities of schools and the effectiveness of local authorities’ support. Sponsorship has the capacity also to undermine democratic accountability and curriculum entitlement. Indirectly, Academy status promotes the message that by virtue of status and additional capital investment, Academies are better than other schools, irrespective of the evidence.

22. The existence of independent fee-paying schools is detrimental to community cohesion.

23. If all schools were subject to a common admissions procedure there would be no contradiction between schools developing individually and clusters of schools working together. Securing inclusive and equitable school admissions arrangements is the key to bringing down the barriers between schools.

24. As the NUT argues in “A Good Local School For Every Child And For Every Community”, admissions of pupils to schools need a new coherence. All schools should be required to be involved in the local School Admissions Forums. Schools within School Admissions Forums would be required to seek agreement on admissions arrangements for their areas. Banding arrangements would need to apply to schools in communities, not to individual schools. The local authority would be required to act in accordance with the School Admissions Code of Practice.

25. Once each School’s Admissions Forum had done its best to reach agreement on admissions arrangements, it would report to the local authority. The local authority would be required to have regard to the report. The local authority would be required to decide on any appeals by individual schools in the context of the School Admissions Forum’s report. The local authority would then determine the admissions arrangements for each of the areas covered by the Schools Admissions Forums. Any separate schools’ admissions arrangements would be agreed with the local authority.

26. Local authorities would be required to co-ordinate with other local authorities where there are crossborder flows of pupils.

27. Recent research from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR): “School Admissions – Fair Choice for Parents and Pupils”, published June 1st of this year, shows that secondary schools which are their own admission authorities are far less representative of their local area.

28. The research also shows that where faith schools are their own admission authorities they are ten times more likely to be highly unrepresentative of their surrounding area. Non-religious schools which are their own admissions authorities are six times more likely to be highly unrepresentative of their surrounding area than community schools where the local authority is the admission authority.

29. The NUT has endorsed the recommendation of the IPPR research that no school should be its own admission authority. As the report states the most obvious organisation to perform this function would be the local authority which would set the over-subscription criteria for all maintained schools within its area.

30. Given that promoting community cohesion is a legal requirement on schools, local authorities should be required to consult on and establish a community cohesion plan for the Forums to which schools with their own admissions arrangements should be required to adopt.
31. The Executive noted that the Home Office defines a cohesive community as one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
- the diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.¹

32. The Executive agreed that the Home Office’s definition, whilst useful, did not view community cohesion in a holistic way. The Task Group therefore, recommended a broader definition of community cohesion which includes the widest interpretation of the word ‘community’ to include for example, LGBT communities.

33. “A Good Local School For Every Child And For Every Community” says that local authorities should also be required to establish Community Cohesion Forums at local level with clear links with the Admissions Forums. The remit of the Community Cohesion Forum could include:

- advice to local authorities on their community cohesion plans for school admissions and fair access;
- considering the implications of migratory and population flows; and
- advising the policy and community groups on responding to gangs based along ethnic lines.

34. Local Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education have a pivotal role to play in promoting community cohesion at local level and through the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.

35. It is vitally important to promote community cohesion in its widest sense in all schools and hence begin to tackle concerns regarding segregation along religious and ethnic lines. The promotion of community cohesion must include activities within the curriculum.

Diversity and Inclusion

36. Schools with a religious character often have a mix of other faiths and of no faith.

37. Schools which are inclusive of other religions are not necessarily inclusive in other aspects; e.g. admissions practices; the curriculum arrangements and other aspects of school life.

38. In order to foster community cohesion it is vital that schools with a religious character are inclusive of all faiths (and none).

39. In addition, faith schools must reflect the diverse nature of British society and their local community in relation to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability in terms of the school population and staffing. It is also vital that such schools promote diversity and equality in the day to day activities of the school.

40. Given that public money is used to fund schools with a religious character, the Executive believes that such schools must be open to the wider community in the interests of fostering social and community cohesion.

41. That does not mean to say that needs of communities with different faiths should not be provided for in within schools. In fact there is every argument for the curriculum and staffing to respond positively both to the diversity of faiths within schools and to the needs of those with no religious affiliation.

Equality of Treatment

42. Part 2 of the Equality Act 2000 came into effect on 6 April 2007 and makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief

- in the provision of goods, facilities and services
- in the disposal and management of premises
- in education
- in the exercise of public functions

43. The disproportionate provision of faith-based schools by Christian denominations is unjust and unsustainable.

44. While some faiths receive provision, any faith group which can demonstrate a reasonable need and demand for their own schools, has the right to equal treatment of provision. There is a case, therefore, for independent faith schools to be incorporated in the maintained sector.

¹Home Office Community Cohesion Unit: Building a Picture of Community Cohesion, 2003, the same definition was also used in National Guidance by the Local Government Association in 2002)
45. The Executive noted that recently a number of Academies with a faith designation had been established. These schools present a particular problem because they lie outside the maintained sector. Their staffing structures and decisions about any reserved posts will be through funding agreements and will be taken outside the local authority framework. They represent particular dangers for community cohesion and the pay and conditions of staff.

**Funding of Faith Schools**

46. There should be an equitable approach to funding across all schools – faith based and non faith based schools, according to identified additional educational needs. All schools must be accountable to the level of state funding received.

**Proposed Solutions**

47. In dealing with sensitive issues especially those involving faith and education, an approach that emphasises pragmatism and establishing common understanding is essential. The needs and wishes of faith communities should be considered, including the diverse views within the NUT membership.

48. The aim of achieving equity and community cohesion which takes into account the needs of religious groups and those of no religious affiliation should be based on a reciprocal approach where all schools whatever their existing status play their part in achieving those aims. A convergence of “reasonable accommodation”2 from both the faith school and non-faith school sectors is essential.

**Community Cohesion**

49. It is essential that the requirement to promote community cohesion is applied equally through:
   - the admissions process
   - school ethos
   - respecting cultural requirements
   - the curriculum
   - their staff recruitment policies

**The Admissions Process**

50. In determining the oversubscription criteria of admissions policies the entitlement of every child to a good local school must be paramount. The NUT is opposed to admissions policies which either privilege or discriminate against children on the basis of the beliefs, motivations or practices of their parents.

51. It is vital that all schools have admissions practices which are inclusive and which respect the diversity of the community they are situated in. See previous section on admissions (paragraphs 20-35).

**School Ethos**

52. The principle of collaboration between faith and non faith based schools in order to promote the common good, community dialogue, respect, mutual understanding and civic engagement is essential.

**Respecting Cultural Requirements**

53. Reasonable accommodations should be made to meet the religious needs of all pupils. For many years now many schools have attempted to be inclusive of faith communities. Examples of such ‘reasonable accommodations’ include;
   - provision of adequate private prayer space within schools;
   - recognising religious holidays which embrace all faiths;
   - flexible arrangements around school uniform to allow for religious and cultural differences; and
   - provision of suitable food in school canteens catering for all religious requirements.

54. All of the above actions can be seen as good practice and inclusive. The motivation behind schools making efforts to meet the religious and cultural wishes of parents and communities is often a desire to welcome diversity in the student/pupil population. Many schools wish to have an ethos that brings together children from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds whilst making accommodations to meet individual needs.

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2 The term “reasonable accommodation” has been adopted from the British Humanist Association’s document entitled A Better Way Forward – BHA policy on religion and schools 2006.
55. It is vital that ‘reasonable accommodations’ are made both by schools and faith communities within a spirit of reciprocity.

56. There are lessons here for policy makers. Perhaps if such accommodations were extended in breadth and depth, the call for the establishment of an increased number of faith schools, and with it the negative impact of educating children from different cultures and religions, could be avoided. Schools could develop this approach and consider the provision of space for religious instruction in addition to religious education for the children of parents who wish it.

**The Curriculum**

57. The Non-Statutory National Framework for RE and the requirements of local SACREs should apply equally to all schools and subject to the same inspection arrangements.

58. The issue of collective worship is in need of re-examining, particularly its requirement within the 1988 Education Reform Act to be ‘wholly or mainly of a Christian character’ in order to eliminate the need for withdrawal from school assemblies. Inclusive school assemblies must replace ‘collective worship’, with separate optional prayers and worship for those that require them.

59. In addition, schools must make provision for religious education to promote education about religion and learning from religion and to encourage respect and mutual understanding. Impartial, fair and balanced teaching about all major worldviews, including nonreligious ones, in RE, provide all children an understanding of the range of beliefs found in a multicultural society and the values shared by most religions and ethical worldviews.

60. No child should be exempt from receiving Sex and Relationships Education (SRE). This is an essential area of the curriculum. The teaching of Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) can occur within single-sex classes in order to allow teachers to cater for specific needs during SRE sessions. In addition SRE should be taught in a values framework.

**Staff Recruitment Policies**

61. Equal employment rights within schools are paramount to social cohesion. Schools must not discriminate against potential employees based on their religious or lack of religious affiliations, their sexual orientation, gender identity or their marital or civil partnership status. Schools should also take positive action to tackle any under representation of diverse groups.

62. The late amendment of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which allows schools to stipulate religious belief as a criterion for employment should be repealed. It is discriminatory to prefer candidates on the basis of their religious or lack of religious beliefs.

63. The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 provide a certain level of protection for people on the grounds of religion or belief. The Regulations ensure that direct and indirect discrimination; victimisation and harassment on the grounds of religion or belief are outlawed and applies to all aspects of employment.

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

64. Many people expressed concern about the Government’s initiatives to increase the number and range of faith schools. Concerns arose surrounding the potential divisiveness and discrimination in a proliferation of faith-based schools.

65. Our society is characterised by religious diversity, including a large minority of people with no religious beliefs or affiliations. In our plural society people of faith and none co-exist peacefully. The Executive acknowledges the efforts that many schools are making to work for social cohesion in their local communities.

66. Drawing on the evidence and research that the Task Group has considered, the Executive’s view is set out below.

i. All schools must make ‘reasonable accommodations’ to meet the religious needs of all pupils and respect the diversity of beliefs represented within its population.

ii. All schools (of a religious character or not) must actively promote and foster social cohesion. The education system must reflect the diverse nature of British society in relation to gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability.

iii. 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.
Based on the principles in ‘Bringing Down The Barriers’ there should be a move away from the current position in which 33 per cent of maintained schools have a religious character. There should be a system of comprehensive schools which is based on equality and reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of pupils of religious belief and those of none and with locally agreed admissions policies which neither privilege or discriminate against children on the basis of the beliefs or practices of their parents/carers.

67. The following recommendations are a summary of the proposals detailed in this position paper.
   - The universal application of equality legislation in all schools
   - The establishment of a fair and equitable pupil admissions process. A call for a common admissions procedure requiring schools to become involved in the local School Admissions Forums. No school should be its own admission authority.
   - At local authority level, the establishment of a local Community Cohesion forum with clear links to the Admission Forums.
   - All schools to adequately account for their level of state funding.
   - The promotion and fostering of community cohesion in all schools.

BACKGROUND

2006 Annual Conference Resolution

1. The 2006 Annual Conference carried the following resolution:
   “Conference believes that the Government’s policy of increasing numbers of faith schools could hinder integration and the creation of a fully comprehensive system and increase, rather than reduce barriers to achieving an inclusive society.

Conference instructs the Executive to establish a working party on faith schools with the remit of producing a report for it on the issue.

Conference instructs the Executive to seek amendments to the 2006 Education Bill which would:
   - ensure that there are no barriers, including barriers involving parental belief, to pupil admissions within faith schools;
   - ensure that local authorities have the responsibility for coordinating and setting the admissions arrangements for all government-funded schools following consultation with School Admissions Forums within the context of a statutory Admissions Code of Practice;
   - ensure that where schools offer religious instruction participation by pupils takes place with the agreement of their parents and that religious education in faith schools involves unbiased teaching about all faiths and beliefs including secular beliefs within the context of the locally agreed SACRE syllabus;
   - prevent voluntary controlled or voluntary aided schools being pressurised into becoming trusts;
   - strengthen the role of teacher, parent and governor organisations and trade unions on SACRES;
   - ensure that all pupils within faith schools are taught a broad and balanced curriculum and widen the role of the local SACRE in maintaining the application of the agreed syllabus in all government-funded schools;
   - consolidate the protection of LGBT staff in faith schools and the rights of all staff to freedom from harassment and discrimination on grounds of their actual or presumed sexual orientation, or on the grounds of religion or belief.

Conference instructs the Executive to convene a seminar on faith schools to consider:

2. the impact of admissions policies on the ethos and intake of faith schools in the context of the need for inclusive schools, admission policies and practice;
3. the distinction between religious instruction and religious education in faith schools;
4. the implications of further educational reforms for faith schools, particularly in the context of the White Paper ‘Higher Standards: Better Schools for All’;
5. the needs and desires of minority faiths and beliefs in the education system;
6. the needs of teachers and Union members in faith schools; and
the rights of all staff in faith schools, including the rights to union representation and negotiation. Conference instructs the Executive to include a wide range of invitees to the seminar including Union representatives on local SACREs. Conference instructs the Executive to consider the results of the seminar and working party report and draw on their findings for further policy on faith schools.

Background Statistics on Faith Schools in England and Wales

Of the 7.5 million young people attending maintained schools in England, 23 per cent (n=1,701,310) are educated in faith-based institutions. These institutions account for 33 per cent of maintained schools. The overwhelming majority of faith schools are Church of England and Roman Catholic, with a small number of Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Other Christian schools (see Table 1). But faith schools also exist in the independent sector: OFSTED’s Annual Report for 2004/5 states that there were 51 Jewish, 116 Christian and 100 Muslim schools in the independent sector. As of September 2006, of the 47 (46) Academies opened, four were former faith schools which turned into academies with 16 altogether having a faith designation.

(Census figures show that in 2001 there were 5,098,930 Christian children, 376,340 Muslim children, 62,237 Sikh children, 33,292 Jewish children and 82,952 Hindu children aged between four and 15 in England. The School Census from 2005 showed that there were 1,710,400 pupils in maintained Christian schools, 1,770 pupils in maintained Muslim schools, 14,670 pupils in maintained Jewish schools and 640 pupils in maintained Sikh schools in England, while the first maintained Hindu school is due to open in September 2008.

Table 1: Maintained schools: by religious character, January 2006 (England)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious character</th>
<th>Church of England</th>
<th>Roman Catholic</th>
<th>Methodist</th>
<th>Other Christian Faith</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Sikh</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total schools of religious character</th>
<th>Total schools of NO religious character</th>
<th>Total ALL schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6,276</td>
<td>11,228</td>
<td>17,504</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of schools</td>
<td>4,456</td>
<td>1,708</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of FTE pupils</td>
<td>772,030</td>
<td>405,240</td>
<td>4,480</td>
<td>9,560</td>
<td>8,760</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>1,201,151</td>
<td>2,947,440</td>
<td>4,148,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>588</td>
<td>2,779</td>
<td>3,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of schools</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of FTE pupils</td>
<td>172,590</td>
<td>318,880</td>
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<td>27,620</td>
<td>5,910</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>526,560</td>
<td>2,780,220</td>
<td>3,306,780</td>
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</table>


Table 2: Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals in maintained school by type of school, DfES figures for England, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious character</th>
<th>Maintained primary schools</th>
<th>Maintained secondary schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>11.3 (12.2 in 2001)</td>
<td>11.6 (11.8 in 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>15.6 (17.2 in 2001)</td>
<td>14.6 (16.5 in 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian Faith</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-religious schools</td>
<td>20.1 (20.2 in 2001)</td>
<td>15.4 (16.8 in 2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Taken from the report entitled: Faith in the System (2007) DCSF.
### Table 3: Percentage of children with special educational needs by type of school, DfES figures for England, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious character</th>
<th>Maintained primary schools</th>
<th>Maintained secondary schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious schools</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-religious schools</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
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</table>

### Table 4: Maintained schools: by religious character, January 2006 (Wales)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Church of England</th>
<th>Roman Catholic</th>
<th>Church in Wales</th>
<th>Total schools of religious character</th>
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<td><strong>Primary</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>248</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: WAG (2007) School and Teacher Statistics*

### The Government’s Drive to Increase Faith Schools, in particular through the Academies’ Programme, and its Implications for the 1944 Settlement

9. The 1944 Education Act achieved a settlement between Church and State over control of schools. In return for a degree of autonomy, Church authorities were required to contribute financially to their schools.

10. The 1944 settlement in relation to Church of England, Roman Catholic and non-conformist schools, was both pragmatic and fragile. There has been a continuing debate, at local level, about the relationship between denominational and maintained schools. While there have sometimes been specific and contentious local debates about admissions policies, local authorities and diocesan bodies have sought to resolve them.

11. The then Prime Minister's intervention at the time of the publication of the Green Paper in 2001, which implied that the ethos of faith schools gave them an intrinsic advantage over non-denominational schools, was unsupported by evidence. It was enormously damaging to existing relationships. It triggered a debate which undermined the 1944 Settlement. Prime Minister Blair’s claims contradicted all that is known about school improvement, including the importance of leadership, teaching and learning irrespective of school status. Success in all schools depends on the quality of teaching and the support that teachers receive. In addition, the socio-economic background of pupils is also a key factor.

### The NUT’s Task Group on Faith Schools

12. The 2006 Annual Conference resolution called on the Executive to “establish a working party on faith schools with the remit of producing a report for it on the issue”. Conference further instructed the Executive to convene a seminar on faith schools and to “consider the results of the seminar and working party report and draw on their findings for further policy on faith schools”.

13. During 2006, the NUT convened a high profile Task Group on Faith Schools comprising representatives from the Executive and lay members nominated by the Regional Offices/Wales Office.
14. The remit of the Task Group has been to advise the Executive on:
   - the organisation, including target audience (for example, Union representatives on SACREs), and content of a seminar on Faith Schools; and
   - further development of Union policy on faith schools which takes into account:
     - the impact of admissions policies on the ethos and intake of faith schools in the context of the need for inclusive schools, admission policies and practice;
     - the distinction between religious instruction and religious education in faith schools;
     - the implications of further educational reforms for faith schools, particularly in the context of the White Paper ‘Higher Standards: Better Schools for All’;
     - the needs and desires of minority faiths and beliefs in the education system;
     - the needs of teachers and Union members in faith schools; and
     - the rights of all staff in faith schools, including the rights to union representation and negotiation.

15. In addition the Working Group has considered:
   - Governance
   - Curriculum in faith schools
   - Differentiation between primary and secondary
   - Faith schools and community cohesion
   - Faith schools and pupil achievement
   - Impact of faith schools on children

Summary of Oral and Written Evidence considered by the Task Group

16. The Task Group considered oral evidence given by the following:
   - Simon Gouldon – United Synagogue Agency for Jewish Education
   - Keith Porteous Wood – National Secular Society, Executive Director
   - Dr. Bari – Muslim Council of Britain
   - Robert Leach – Lesbian and Gay, Christian Movement (LGCM)
   - Andrew Copson – British Humanist Association
   - Arzu Merali – Islamic Human Rights Commission

17. The Task Group also considered written evidence provided by the following:
   - Professor Gerald Grace - Academic
   - Mr A W Hewitt – NUT member
   - Roz Adie – Catholic Teacher
   - Oona Stannard – Catholic Education Service

See Appendix 3

A Summary of the Literature Search and Research Reports considered by the Task Group

18. The Task Group considered a literature search which consisted of:
   - The Impact of Faith Schools on Pupil Achievement (Appendix 1)
   - The Relationship Between Church And State In Other European Countries And The Provisions For Faith Schools In These Countries (Appendix 2)

19. The Task Group also considered the following research reports. A brief summary is provided for each report.

Nasar Meer, Muslim Schools in Britain: Challenging mobilisations or logical developments?

20. Muslim minorities currently feel subjected to unwarranted suspicion. More Muslim schools could contribute to the reconciliation of faith commitments and citizenship requirements within a public sphere that has historically included other religious minorities before it. Faith schools have historically been an effective way of integrating religious minorities throughout the development of the British education system.
21. A number of factors inform the broad interest in Muslim schools; educating the 'whole person', separate education for boys and girls, establishments that offer 'specialist training in the Islamic religious sciences', more Islamic culture embedded within the school ethos and curriculum, better exam results.

Pennell, West and Hine: ‘Religious Composition and Admission Processes of Faith Secondary Schools in London’

22. An analysis of the religious composition of schools with a religious character in London found that the student mix varied. Church of England schools were more religiously inclusive than Roman Catholic Schools. Schools that set aside a proportion of places for other faiths/no faith tended to be more inclusive of other faiths than those that did not adopt this practice.

23. Schools that were inclusive of other religions were not necessarily inclusive in other aspects; e.g. admissions practices in some schools resulted in social selection.

24. If community cohesion is to be fostered, schools with a religious character should be inclusive of all faiths (and none). At present this is not the case. Major tensions arise in balancing policies that aim to increase the number of faith schools and promote religious inclusion. These are not easily resolved in a pluralist society, but given that public money is used to fund schools with a religious character there is a strong case to be made for such schools to be open to the wider community in the interests of enhancing social cohesion.

Faith Primary Schools: Better Schools or Better Pupils: Stephen Gibbons and Olmo Silva

25. There is no unambiguous performance advantage of faith 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.

26. Pupils who attended faith schools at the primary phase, but not at the Secondary phase, do no better in primary schools than pupils who attended faith schools at the secondary phase but not at the primary phase. The faith schools gap in attainments at primary phase seems largely attributable to differences between those pupils who choose to attend a faith schools at any stage in their school careers, and those who choose never to do so or are excluded from doing so by school selection procedures.

27. There is clear positive selection of pupils into faith schools on the basis of observable characteristics that are favourable to education. Once we control for these types of selection, our lowest estimates suggest no difference between expected attainment in faith primary schools and expected attainment in any other school type; this is based on comparing pupils who swap in and out of faith schooling between the primary and secondary phases.

28. The results suggest that pupils in faith primary schools which have autonomous governance and admissions structures progress marginally faster. A child who starts in an autonomous faith school age 7 could expect to be one percentile higher in the distribution of pupil attainments by age 11 than a comparable pupil attending a standard secular school.

29. Pupils in faith schools that are under close local authority control do not progress any faster than similar pupils in comparable secular schools. Any performance impact from ‘Faith’ schools in England seems to be closely linked to autonomous governance and admissions arrangements, and not to religious character.
NUT TASK GROUP ON FAITH SCHOOLS

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS ON THE IMPACT OF FAITH SCHOOLS ON PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

Background Statistics
Of the 7.5 million young people attending maintained schools in England, 23 per cent (n=1,701,310) are educated in faith-based institutions. These institutions account for 33 per cent of maintained schools. The overwhelming majority of faith schools are Church of England and Roman Catholic, with a small number of Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Other Christians schools (see Table 1). But faith schools also exist in the independent sector: OFSTED’s Annual Report for 2004/5 states that there were 51 Jewish, 116 Christian and 100 Muslim schools in the independent sector.

Table 1: Maintained schools: by religious character, January 2004 (England)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious character</th>
<th>Church of England</th>
<th>Roman Catholic</th>
<th>Methodist</th>
<th>Other Christian Faith</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Sikh</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total schools of religious character</th>
<th>Total schools of NO religious character</th>
<th>Total ALL schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of schools</td>
<td>4,482</td>
<td>1,723</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6,313</td>
<td>11,449</td>
<td>17,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of FTE pupils</td>
<td>762,990</td>
<td>396,450</td>
<td>4,470</td>
<td>9,380</td>
<td>8,270</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1,182,380</td>
<td>2,930,250</td>
<td>4,112,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of FTE teachers</td>
<td>34,140</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td># 10</td>
<td>52,160</td>
<td>129,070</td>
<td>181,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of schools</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>2,819</td>
<td>3,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of FTE pupils</td>
<td>164,260</td>
<td>321,150</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27,090</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>518,930</td>
<td>2,805,780</td>
<td>3,324,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of FTE teachers</td>
<td>9,500</td>
<td>19,170</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,590</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30,640</td>
<td>164,610</td>
<td>195,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FTE = Full-time equivalent; # = less than 5

Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals in maintained school by type of school, DfES figures for England, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious character</th>
<th>Maintained primary schools</th>
<th>Maintained secondary schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>11.3 (12.2 in 2001)</td>
<td>11.6 (11.8 in 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>15.6 (17.2 in 2001)</td>
<td>14.6 (16.5 in 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian Faith</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-religious schools</td>
<td>20.1 (20.2 in 2001)</td>
<td>15.4 (16.8 in 2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of children with special educational needs by type of school, DfES figures for England, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious character</th>
<th>Maintained primary schools</th>
<th>Maintained secondary schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious schools</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-religious schools</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

1. In support of the work of the NUT Task Group on Faith Schools, research was carried out over the summer 2006 to determine the impact of faith schools on pupil achievement. A review of the literature on faith schools, however, reveals a predominant concern with aspects of social cohesion rather than pupil attainment.

2. The range of faith schools within the maintained sector now includes Muslim, Sikh and Jewish schools. The Government refers to ‘faith schools’ in order to embrace all faiths. As the schools from the latter faiths are both few in number and also relatively new to the state system, there is as yet little evidence of their effectiveness.

3. “Although it seems reasonable to talk about ‘church schools’ in general, the character of Roman Catholic and Church of England schools is very different. Roman Catholic schools cater largely for the Roman Catholic families; they may accept some non-Catholic pupils, but the majority will have links with the Catholic Church. Accordingly, their intake tends to represent a community which is widespread geographically, but is socially cohesive. By contrast, Church of England schools function much more as local community schools, with perhaps just a small number of places reserved for pupils from further a field who request a specifically Christian education. We should not therefore necessarily expect both kinds of Church school to have similar outcomes.”

4. Faith-based institutions claim that their spiritual focus helps to raise academic achievement. A shared set of values intrinsic to the faith, these institutions say, supports the development of strong working relationships between teachers and pupils.

5. Faith-based institutions claim that their paramount concern for the personal, social, spiritual and moral development of students increases a sense of self-worth among students, thus encouraging a positive response to subsequent academic demands. The principal of a Catholic sixth-form college in West London maintains, for example, that “If you can get your 16 to 19 year-olds to pray with you, it is a bit easier to get the essay in at the end of the week. You are appealing to other parts of them as people, not just their identity as students with learning goals”.

6. Faith-based schools and colleges also claim that their religious ethos and sense of purpose contributes to a vibrant team spirit and sense of collegiality among staff. Communities that can identify things that they have in common, faith-based institutions claim, are more likely to be successful than ones that are fractured.

7. The following evidence is cited in support of these arguments:
   - In 2004, 11 faith-based schools were judged ‘excellent’ by a Learning and Skills Council performance review. Of the 73 colleges in England judged excellent, 15 per cent were Roman Catholic. These colleges are non-selective and often draw their students from deprived innercity areas.
   - Research by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research found that pupils at faith-based primary schools are a year ahead of children at other schools. Using 2003 data on key stage 2 maths results, researchers found that children at the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham’s seven faith primaries scored 67.6 out of 100, compared with 53.9 at other schools. Based on these findings, faith school pupils appear to have a grasp of maths equivalent to a child aged 12.6 as opposed to 11.6 elsewhere. Furthermore, this gap was biggest among children in the bottom 10 per cent at both types of school. Even the worst performers at faith schools, the research report argues, had a “maths age” of 10.9, compared to 9.2 at other primaries.
   - In 2004, 51 per cent of Church of England pupils left school with five A*-C GCSEs compared to 42 per cent of children at non-denominational schools.
   - 2005 GCSE results showed that 46 of the 100 top-rated comprehensives were faith schools.

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5 TES, 21 January 2005.
6 TES, 21 January 2005.
8 TES, 24 September 2004.
9 TES, 23 September 2005.
• A study by the National Institute for Christian Education Research, a Church of England thinktank, shows that children improve faster in Anglican schools. The Institute’s study showed that pupils’ progress at 4,468 Anglican primary schools in Britain was more than double that achieved nationally, using the value-added measure. Pupils progressed three times as much at the 201 Anglican secondary schools than at other community schools.\textsuperscript{10}

• Figures produced by the DfE showed that 34 per cent of children at faith schools receiving free school meals – a key measure of deprivation – got five A*-C GCSEs in 2005, compared to 29 per cent elsewhere.\textsuperscript{11}

• A 2003 study by the Catholic Education Service found that Roman Catholic schools are much more successful than other maintained schools at creating an ethos where pupils learn effectively. Attendance records are better and pupils’ personal development is more effectively fostered, particularly at secondary level. From 5 to 16 years old, standards are higher than those of comparable pupils in maintained schools nationally and pupils make better progress.\textsuperscript{12}

• Public support for a faith-based education remains strong, according to an ORB pollster, even among non-believers. A survey of 1,000 adults conducted by ORB in March 2006 showed that 58 per cent of those who never go to church believe Anglican schools have a “positive role” to play, rising to 83 per cent among people who go to church once every three months.\textsuperscript{13}

• The argument that faith schools explicitly or implicitly select their pupils is dismissed by some as being based largely on anecdotal evidence and unfounded generalisation. It is asserted, for example, that the British Catholic community is predominantly Irish urban working class with origins in poor immigrant families. The claim, therefore, is that faith schools mitigate some of the effects of socio-economic segregation, especially for pupils from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds rather than reinforce them.\textsuperscript{14}

• A study of Catholic head teachers in England indicates that Catholic schools see their mission in terms of promoting faith, community and the social dimension. However, the same study also acknowledges that Catholic schools in England have given greater attention to academic performance in school prospectuses and that this development has been largely driven by government legislation. This emphasis on academic performance, it is argued, was viewed by head teachers in the sample as an education for service. Overall, however, academic success is not considered the primary aim of a Catholic school.\textsuperscript{15}

8. Critics of faith schools, including Richard Pring, doubt whether faith schools still practise the nurturing of a religious morality over academic attainment as argued in defence of the establishment of faith schools in the period before the 1944 Act.\textsuperscript{16}

9. The Office of the Schools Adjudicator was reported in 2004 as saying that the only reason Christian faith-based schools outperformed their secular neighbours was because of “their practice of selection from church-going families”.\textsuperscript{17} Indeed there is evidence that some parents undergo co-incidentally religious conversion when considering which schools to choose for their children.

10. A 2004 study by Paul Crollof Reading University concluded that children from church-going families often outperform those who never attend a religious place of worship. More generally, the study suggests that there was a direct link between a pupil’s academic success and a parent’s willingness to take part in events outside the home. Attendance at religious services was deemed to have a positive relationship with GCSE results. Young people with a parent who attends a religious service at least once a week were found to have the highest average GCSE scores, whilst the children of parents who are members of three or more organisations achieve nearly twice as many A*-C GCSE passes.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{10} National Institute for Christian Education Research, Statistical Survey of the Attainment and Achievement of Pupils in Church of England Schools, August 2005.

\textsuperscript{11} TES, 17 March 2006.


\textsuperscript{13} TES, 17 March 2006.


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p.152.


\textsuperscript{17} TES, 24 September 2004.

\textsuperscript{18} TES, 10 June 2005.
11. A study conducted by the London School of Economics in 2003 found that church and foundation schools were 25 times more likely to select pupils who will boost their league tables.\textsuperscript{19} “Selection, even on religious grounds, is likely to attract well-behaved children from stable backgrounds”, said a spokesperson for Ofsted in the TES on 16 February 2001.\textsuperscript{20}

12. Faith secondary schools take significantly fewer pupils with emotional, behavioural and physical difficulties than other state schools. The Department for Education and Skills 2005 statistics show 17.1 per cent of children at non-religious secondaries have special needs compared to 14.1 per cent at faith secondaries. They also show that 18.9 per cent of those at secular primaries have special needs compared to 16 per cent at faith-based primaries.\textsuperscript{21}

13. Apart from non-faith secondaries taking almost a fifth more children with special needs, which include autism, ADHD, emotional and physical disabilities, Anglican and Catholic schools have also been found to take fewer children from deprived backgrounds. DfES figures for England in 2005 have shown that in the average community primary school 20.1 per cent of children are eligible for free school meals. In the average Church of England primary it is only 11.3 per cent. Similarly, around 15.4 per cent of pupils in community secondaries are eligible for free school meals, whilst in faith-based secondaries this drops to an average of 11.6 per cent.\textsuperscript{22}

14. Research by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) concludes that church schools do very well because they control admissions and therefore attract ambitious parents. An analysis of 3,044 schools’ results found no evidence that faith schools add more value than other state schools. The top 10 positions in the 2005 Key Stage 3 value-added tables, for example, were dominated by grammar schools.\textsuperscript{23}

15. NFER found that faith schools outperform secular schools in two key areas: the number of GCSEs being taken by pupils and the total points score for the school. This means that, on average, each pupil at a faith school scores one more GCSE point than those at other comprehensives. However, the study argues that this may be due to Religious Education being compulsory in faith schools, often meaning an additional GCSE in examinations.\textsuperscript{24}

16. In the case of independent Muslim schools reaching high positions in the ‘value-added’ league tables in 2006, small class sizes also play a part in the achievement of pupils. The Muslim school that came highest in the table had only 6 pupils taking GCSEs.\textsuperscript{25}

17. Figures obtained by the TES earlier this year show that Ofsted inspectors believe that fewer faith schools are “highly effective” (OFSTED’s top mark) compared to those without a religious ethos. In the past academic year, only 1 per cent of faith secondary schools visited by inspectors was deemed to be “highly effective” compared to 3 per cent of non-denominational secondaries.\textsuperscript{26}

18. NFER came to the following conclusions about faith schools:

“The value-added analyses confirmed the findings of some earlier research by indicating that some ... faith schools perform above expectations on some outcomes. However, further research would be needed to identify the nature of the advantage and the reasons for it. The most noteworthy findings were that:

• Jewish schools performed exceptionally well on all but one of the outcomes
• Church schools performed consistently well in English.

It is important to note, however, that these positive associations are not necessarily causal. The analysis took into account prior attainment (the chief determinant of performance) and other important pupil-and school-level variables. However, there are relevant factors concerning intake (such as ethnicity, EAL, and parental support) which could not be included because data was not available.”\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{19} TES, 24 September 2004.
\textsuperscript{20} BHA Briefing 2006/4: Faith Schools Update.
\textsuperscript{21} TES, 11 November 2005.
\textsuperscript{22} TES, 23 September 2005 and BHA Briefing 2006/4: Faith Schools Update.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} The Guardian, 19 January 2006.
\textsuperscript{26} TES, 20 January 2006.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
INTRODUCTION

There are, roughly speaking, five major models which define the relationship between church and state in other European countries with implications for provisions for faith-based school in these countries.

Model 1: No legal separation between the Church and the State (examples: Greece, Luxembourg, Norway)

In countries with no legal separation between Church and State, there is usually one prevailing religion (Eastern Orthodox in Greece, Lutheran in Norway), or a limited set of religions which were predominant when the Constitution was established (Roman Catholic, Protestantism and Judaism in Luxembourg), that defines public life. Religious education plays a major part in the state education system, but there is no evidence that religious education exclusively focuses on the doctrine of the dominant religion. In Norway, children of parents who are not members of the State Church may be wholly or partially exempted from religious instruction. They are, as far as possible, offered other religious and moral education. There is no evidence in any of these countries of the establishment of specifically faith-based schools.

Model 2: The character of the State is non-denominational, but public authorities co-operate with a major religious institution, i.e. the Catholic Church (examples: Spain, Portugal and Italy)

In these countries, no denomination has an official status, but there is generally a Concordant between the State and the Catholic Church on the teaching of the Catholic faith in state schools. There is no specific provision for faith-based schools. In Spain, the State also has Cooperation Arrangements with Evangelical, Jewish and Muslim authorities in recognition of the individual’s fundamental right to a religious education. In Italy, relations between the State and other religions are based on agreements with the respective representatives.

Model 3: The character of the State is non-denominational, but public authorities used to co-operate with a major religious institution, i.e. the Lutheran Church (example: Sweden)

On 1st January 2000, the Swedish Church separated from the State and there is no longer a State Church in Sweden. As a consequence of immigration, the Roman Catholic Church, different orthodox churches as well as religions such as Islam and Buddhism have expanded. Jewish communities have existed in Sweden since the end of the 18th Century. An Act Prohibiting Discrimination and other Degrading Treatment of Children and School Students came into force on 1st April 2006. It regulates the right of children and pupils to equivalent treatment throughout the different levels within the education system. Head teachers need to ensure that there is an action plan for ensuring equal opportunities. There is no specific provision for faith-based schools.

Model 4: Church and State are separate, but there is provision for non-denominational and denominational schools (examples: Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland)

In Belgium, all students subject to compulsory schooling are entitled to moral religious education, the costs of which are borne by the State. The State guarantees parental free choice and administers neutral education, which implies respect for parents’ and students’ philosophical, ideological, or religious concepts. Schools run by public authorities offer the choice of instruction in a recognised religion or in non-denominational ethics. Education belongs to one of the following categories: denominational (predominantly Catholic), nondenominational (‘neutral’), and pluralist (this type does not actually exist). Denominational schools are either public, grant-aided schools organised by the provinces, municipalities or by any public law corporation, or private, grant-aided schools. Schools organised by the public authorities are non-denominational.

In Poland, the most important regulation is that the State guarantees introduction – according to parents’ and students’ will – of religious education (as an optional subject) into the curriculum of all state schools. The Catholic Church has a right to run education institutions according to canon law regulations and official principles scheduled in relevant Acts (i.e. School Education Act, etc.).
One of the key features of the Dutch education system is freedom of education, i.e. the freedom to found schools (freedom of establishment), to organise the teaching in schools and to determine the principles on which schools are based. People have the right to found schools and to provide teaching based on religious, ideological and educational beliefs. Publicly run schools are open to all children regardless of their religion or outlook, they are generally subject to public law, are governed by the municipal council or by a public legal entity and provide education on behalf of the State. Privately run schools are subject to private law and are state-funded, although not set up by the State, are governed by the board of the association or foundation that set them up, base their teaching on religious or ideological beliefs (i.e. Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu) and can refuse to admit pupils whose parents do not subscribe to the belief or ideology on which the school’s teaching is based.

Model 5: The State is non-denominational, but denominational bodies have played and continue to play an important role in the provision of education (example: Ireland, Northern Ireland)

The 1937 Constitution in Ireland, reflects Roman Catholic social thinking and teaching of the time but the State itself is non-denominational. Article 42 of the Constitution states that parents are the ‘primary and natural educators’ of their child/children and defines the role of the State in this regard as requiring that children receive, “a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual and social”. What exactly is meant by a certain minimum education has never been defined.

Religious bodies own and manage most schools at primary and secondary level. Approximately 94 per cent of primary schools are in Roman Catholic control, most others are controlled by the minority Protestant denominations (Church of Ireland, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches). There are a handful of schools operated by other religious groups, including the Irish Islamic and Jewish communities.

Since the 1970s, parents have become active in founding multi-denominational schools. There are now 35 such schools in operation throughout Ireland. In November 1999, the Department for Education and Science announced that it was increasing the capital grant aid to 95% of total costs and that it was putting a cap on the required level of the local contribution. Furthermore, the State would also purchase the site for a new school where it had already been given recognition and had demonstrated long-term viability.

Northern Ireland does not currently have a state established church. The Church of Ireland was disestablished in 1871. Although the Protestant population is the majority, the largest religious denomination is the Roman Catholic Church, followed by the Presbyterian Church, the Church of Ireland (Anglican) and the Methodist Church.

Northern Ireland’s education system has an extremely complex structure. There are 10 official bodies involved in the management and administration of the system, as well as a number of voluntary bodies that play a significant role. Secondary education is largely selective with pupils going to grammar schools or secondary schools according to academic ability. There is also a large voluntary school sector and a substantial number of Catholic maintained schools.

The Department of Education in Northern Ireland oversees the central administration of education in Northern Ireland. It is responsible for the strategic planning and management of education, curriculum content and delivery, allocating funds to the Education and Library Boards and covering capital costs for most schools. There are five Education and Library Boards, which are the local education authorities and library authorities for their areas. They ensure that there are enough schools of all types to meet the needs of their areas. They fund controlled schools and meet the running costs of maintained schools.

The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools promotes and co-ordinates Catholic education in Northern Ireland. It is responsible for the employment of teachers in Catholic maintained schools and for a number of other, mainly advisory, functions. It is funded by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland.

There has been significant growth in the development and provision of integrated education throughout Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education promotes integrated education and facilitates the establishment of integrated schools. These bring together in one school, children, parents, teachers and governors from Catholic, Protestant and other traditions. These schools are all-ability and follow the statutory curriculum. The Council negotiates with the Education Department to facilitate the creation of new schools and to assist existing schools that wish to transform to integrated status. It is funded by the Education Department and the Integrated Education Fund.
NUT TASK GROUP ON FAITH SCHOOLS

SUMMARY OF ORAL AND WRITTEN EVIDENCE CONSIDERED BY THE TASK GROUP

The views expressed in the evidence given do not necessarily reflect the views of the Task Group

Oral Evidence

Simon Gouldon: United Synagogue Agency for Jewish Education
1. All UK schools are faith schools; the Established Church is formally recognised in the Education Act 1944 and all subsequent legislation. A true Community school is more likely in a faith based environment, with more examples of ‘community in action’ than in many other State Schools. Every school segregates and selects, for example by location and culture.

2. If there really is problem with faith schools, it is not one of admissions policies, but rather a challenge of curriculum. A school's curriculum must compensate for any potential deficiencies a child might bring from home.

3. Students at faith schools achieve better exam results and Jewish schools engender in them a sense of pride in their faith as well as a respect for the cultures and views of others.

Keith Porteous Wood, National Secular Society Executive Director
4. The fewer religious schools there are, and the fewer privileges they have, the more socially just our education system will be, both for pupils and teachers.

5. Even more important are the adverse implications for cohesion of the Government's policies on faith schools. It is bad enough to have state-subsidised middle class white ghettos, which is what some church schools have become. But even worse is the implication for future community cohesion of the setting up of new minority faith schools which will be Government-introduced apartheid in education. Integration is already in reverse for some young Muslims: this misplaced policy could accelerate that trend.

Dr Bari, Muslim Council of Britain
6. Teaching about faith is an integral part of education and contributes to the holistic development of the child.

7. Faith Schools achieve better results in the physical, mental and social development of children. Academic achievement is also generally higher.

8. Faith Schools place a strong emphasis on the teaching of values such as respect and tolerance, which emanate from religious teachings.

9. Muslim faith schools do not object to accepting students of other religions and the curriculum is varied, including lessons about a variety of religions. However, students are able to gain more specific knowledge about the Muslim faith in supplementary schools.

Robert Leach, Lesbian, Gay, Christian Movement (LGCM)
10. Faith schools may discriminate in their appointment of teachers who live a lifestyle which is incompatible with the precepts of that particular religion. This may include discrimination of LGB teachers.

11. Faith schools must establish a principle of respect for the private lives of teachers and the Schools Standards and Framework Act should be amended accordingly.

12. All schools must pay special attention to preventing homophobic bullying, adopt a clear policy stating that homophobic bullying is unacceptable, and provide training for staff and relevant teaching materials.

13. Education differs from instruction and should offer students an understanding of what others believes or don’t believe and why. Respect for all people should underpin the PHSE curriculum.
Andrew Copson, British Humanist Association, “A Better Way Forward”

14. Inclusive community schools can provide an opportunity for people of all faiths, and none, to co-exist peacefully in an environment where beliefs are respected. ‘Reasonable accommodation’ should include: inclusive school assemblies, reformed religious education, more public holidays, more respect for and flexibility on other cultural and religious requirement, better diversity training for teachers, better complaints procedure, better sharing of good practice, the involvement of local people, reform of the law, phasing out of religious schools unless they can be persuaded to become inclusive and accommodation institutions.

Arzu Merali, Islamic Human Rights Commission, “British Muslims’ Expectations of The Government; Secular or Islamic? What Schools Do British Muslims Want For Their Children?”

15. 47.5% of Muslims prefer to send their children to a Muslim school rather than a state school. 40% responded that their religious values were the greatest anxiety for them as their children grow up. 38.5% of respondents would choose the best school (regardless of whether it is mainstream or Muslim) and only 8.5% chose the option of a mainstream school.

16. Muslim parents are concerned about the effects of an ideologically secular education for their children – this secularity being associated with mainstream education.

17. Whilst the preference for Muslim schools amongst those who identified themselves as highly practicing Muslims was borne out, there was no similar disinclinations towards Muslims schooling or inclination towards the ‘secular mainstream’ by those identifying themselves as secular or cultural.

18. This throws open the question of what a Muslim or faith school is perceived to be by Muslims themselves, and begs the question why those not practicing may see a role for Muslim schools in their life / the life of their children.

Written Evidence
Professor Gerald Grace, ‘Educational Studies and faith-based schooling’

19. The European Convention on Human Rights (2000) states that democracies should be characterised by a variety of educational provision. This may include faith schools.

20. The UK provides substantial state funding for faith-based schooling, with each faith community required to contribute some costs towards the school building. Society has never demonstrated significant opposition to state funding for faith schools and many are oversubscribed, showing parental demand. State financial support offers economic equity in access to these schools.

21. Faith schools which provide spiritual and moral education, positive community involvement and a counter-cultural environment to a market-dominated consumer culture have a strong claim to some state financial support.

22. The modern conception of a faith-based school has moved to a community model, providing for members of the faith and for others who wish to access its services. No empirical evidence exists to show that faith schools are socially divisive and the Church of England and Roman Catholic Church Schools have religiously, socially and economically diverse populations. Most faith schools are engaged in a process of education about faith, rather than indoctrination into faith.

NUT Member

23. In a democratic society education is the responsibility of parents and they have the right to choose a school whose aims and ethos come closest to their own beliefs.

24. Faith Schools offer children instruction in the standard curriculum as well as inculcation to the principles of the particular faith. The whole ethos of the schools reflects the beliefs and morals of the particular faith. They are not restricted to lessons in religious education.

25. Recruiting a teacher who openly follows a lifestyle that is in clear disagreement with that faith could undermine one of the very purposes for which the schools exists; moral education. The boundaries between freedom of religion and freedom from discrimination are yet to be decided.

26. It is impossible for parents, both with faith and without faith, not to influence their children's opinions and values.
Catholic Teacher

27. Both teachers and children who do not meet the requirements of faith schools may be discriminated against. Catholic schools, for example, admit practicing Catholics as their first criterion; this is not inclusive.

28. There is a distinction between what Catholics believe and an educational tolerance for what others believe. Catholic schools celebrate what is common and respect what is different between faiths.

29. Ten per cent of curriculum time is given to RE in my school and it is therefore difficult to provide the full coverage required by the very full expectations of the primary national strategy and national curriculum.

30. The care and ethos of faith schools together with the stronger home-school links and community feels often seems to encourage a sense of self discipline in many pupils and result in greater achievement.

Oona Standard, Catholic Education Service

31. It is counter-productive to the promotion of community cohesion to undermine the importance of faith in people’s lives. Faith informs how people wish to live their lives and therefore impacts on the education that they seek.

32. Faith is an equalities issue, being as much a part of someone’s identity as is their gender or race. To deny that and to try to relegate religion to being a private or even hidden activity would be completely unacceptable.

33. Faith schools contribute much to the education of disadvantaged minorities. Catholic schools are ethnically very diverse. They provide more value added for the most disadvantaged in their midst, and a successful education to all. There is much potential for community schools to acknowledge further the faith of their students and the importance of faith in the lives of individuals and society.
Appendix 4

MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP ON FAITH SCHOOLS

John Adams, Essex
Helen Andrews, Executive
Hilary Bills, Ex-President
Agnes Bishop, Essex
Margery Brown, Pembrokeshire
Kevin Courtney, Executive
Hazel Danson, Executive (Chair)
Angela Davies, Executive
Samidha Garg, Secretary to the Task Group
Baljeet Ghale, President
Bill Greenshields, Vice-President
Christine Hood, Executive
Max Hyde, Executive
John Illingworth, Nottingham

Satish Kapur, Leicester
Alex Kenny, Executive
Roger King, Executive
Tim Lucas, Executive
Judy Moorhouse, Ex President
Ian Murch, Treasurer
Patrick Murphy, Executive
John Pemberthy, Gloucestershire
Bernard Regan, Enfield
Hank Roberts, Executive
Mike Rought-Brooks, North Yorkshire
Nigel Utton, Portsmouth
Nick Wigmore, Lancashire
Robert Wilkinson, Executive
CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE ON FAITH SCHOOLS

(a) On 23 November the Union organised the above conference with the aim of consulting with members on its work in developing a policy statement on faith schools. The conference was attended by 80 members. The event was chaired by Hazel Danson, Chair of the Union’s Education and Equal Opportunities Committee and the Task Group on Faith Schools. The event was introduced by John Bangs, Assistant Secretary, Education and Equal Opportunities.

(b) Speakers at the first plenary session included Oona Stannard from the Catholic Education Service, Andrew Copson representing the British Humanist Association and Bill Moore, the Vice-Chair of the National Association of SACREs. The speakers spoke on their organisation's position on faith schools, covering a wide ranging philosophical positions and more specific educational implications of faith schools in society.

(c) Breakout sessions were held on five topics facilitated by members of the Task Group. They included the impact of admission policies on the ethos and intake of faith schools, the distinction between religious instruction and religious education and the needs and desires of minority faiths and beliefs in the education system. The topics also included the implications of the duty on schools to promote community cohesion and the needs and rights of staff in faith schools, including union membership and representation.

(d) Delegates commended the work of the Task Group on producing a well balanced position paper which had had to grapple with many complex and controversial debates. Report of the Executive 2008 127 Education & Equal Opportunities Committee

(e) Speakers at the second plenary session included Keith Porteous Wood, National Secular Society, Reverend Janina Ainsworth, the Church of England’s Chief Education Officer, Professor Anne West, London School of Economics and Pragna Patel and Julia Bard representing Women Against Fundamentalism. These speakers covered issues such as admissions, the inclusive nature of faith schooling, the effects of minority faith schooling on girls and the need for a secular based education system. The speakers were very well received among delegates who were challenged and stimulated by the content of the presentations.

(f) Four discussion groups were held which focussed on the Union’s Interim Position Paper on Faith Schools. This method of consultation proved popular and fruitful as delegates commented on the paper discussing issues of concern and making recommendations to the Task Group on Faith Schools. Comments collated from each discussion group were presented to the November meeting of the Task Group on Faith Schools which gave them careful consideration.
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