Secondary School Admissions in London

by Chris Taylor and Stephen Gorard

Cardiff University School of Social Sciences

February 2003

Institute for Public Policy Research
30-32 Southampton Street London WC2E 7RA
tel 0207 470 6100 fax 0207 470 6111
m.johnson@ippr.org www.ippr.org
Registered Charity 800065

Secondary School Admissions in London

by Chris Taylor and Stephen Gorard
Cardiff University School of Social Sciences

Contents

Introduction	2
The Secondary Education Quasi-Market in London	3
School Admissions in England and Wales	7
Evaluating Open Enrolment	11
Educational Attainment and School Choice	12
Pupil Mix and School Choice	14
Parental Satisfaction and School Choice	18
Efficiency and School Choice	19
School Choice and Admissions in London	20
Conclusion: A Way Forward For School Admissions in London	27
References	30
About the Authors	33
About the Project	33
About ippr	33

Introduction

The current system for secondary school admissions is said to be failing in London (Johnson 2002). This follows significant media attention on the fate of parents, their children and the schools throughout the process of pupils transferring between primary and secondary schools. However, this raises two important questions. The first is whether the current system for secondary school admissions can be deemed as 'failing'. The second asks if there is a problem with admissions to what extent is it a London phenomenon. This paper draws on more than eight years of research into secondary school admissions across England and Wales (Gorard *et al.* forthcoming). While focusing primarily upon secondary school admissions in London it relates these findings to those in other areas of England and Wales where applicable. The evidence presented in this paper clearly shows there are limitations for the current system of secondary school admissions and that some of these are exacerbated by the geography of school provision and complex admission arrangements in London. However the paper also notes the often unreported benefits of this system and the potential limitations of alternative admission procedures.

The dominant principle for admission into secondary schools is currently that of open enrolment and school choice. This allows parents to choose which school they would like their child to attend. Unfortunately this is not straightforward and does not operate homogeneously across schools or Local Education Authorities (LEAs). This system of school admissions is part of wider reforms to the organisation of schooling in England and Wales (Whitty et al. 1998). In particular it is closely related to the introduction of market principles in the provision of state maintained schooling. Schools are funded in relation to the number of pupils they admit. This gives rise to the potential for schools to compete against one another for pupils. Coupled with an increasing diversity of schools and Governmental insistence that each school develops their own distinct ethos secondary schools exist in a growing quasi-market (Le Grand and Bartlett 1993).

In order to understand and appreciate the impact of these reforms, including that of open enrolment and school choice, it is necessary to consider the local nature of the emergent quasi-market. The quasi-market in education is best characterised by a mosaic of local markets (Taylor 2002). London provides the largest and most complex quasi-market of schooling in England and Wales, with a significant number of interconnected and 'parallel' local markets (see Taylor 2001 for further discussion of these concepts).

The paper begins by introducing the London quasi-market for secondary schools. This provides an overview of secondary school education in London. This provides the context in which the new education market functions and has developed. It then goes on to outline changes in secondary school admissions in England and Wales. In doing so it introduces the key legislative reforms that have shaped the current system of open enrolment or 'parental choice'. This shows that recent changes to the admissions system have arisen from a number of perceived 'failings' of school choice. The paper develops these concerns by outlining four elements in which the current admissions policy can be judged. Each of these elements is then discussed in turn to determine the extent to which the current policy of open enrolment can be deemed as 'failing'. By contrasting the impacts in London with other areas of England and Wales the paper then begins to argue whether these 'failings' are typical to all areas or are unique to London. These arguments are then pursued in the final part of this paper by examining particular problems with the current policy for admissions in London. This discussion highlights a number of unique, yet inherent, characteristics of the education quasi-market in London that can cause or, more likely, exacerbate the main limitations of school choice policies. The paper concludes by outlining the likely outcomes and success of potential adjustments to secondary school admissions in London.

The Secondary Education Quasi-market in London

Although is has been argued that London provides the largest and most complex education quasi-market in England and Wales it would be misleading to perceive this as a single market place for school choice. Research has shown that for the vast majority of parents their arena for school choice is heavily constrained by proximity and accessibility (Taylor 2002). This means that for the day-school education market there is a limit to the number of schools each parent considers when choosing a school for their child. Consequently there is considerable value in examining the London quasi-market in smaller geographical units, and LEAs still provide a useful breakdown of the London quasi-market (Taylor et al. 2003). This presentation of the secondary education quasi-market in London considers the situation at both levels, London as a whole, so that comparisons can be made with the rest of England, and at the level of the LEAs, in order to consider variations in the quasi-market across London.

There are four features of the education quasi-market in London that perhaps makes it unique in England and Wales. First, London has the highest population and school density of any metropolitan area in the UK, and this extends over a large area affecting a large number of schools and families (Table 1). Second, for such an area there is comprehensive provision of public transport, including the London Underground. The third potentially unique characteristic of the London education quasi-market is the diversity of school provision across this area. The final feature is the geographic distribution of schools and children in relation to its administrative units, the LEAs. The combined effects of these produce very complex patterns of school competition, parental choice and pupil movement.

Table 1 Population and schools in England, 2001

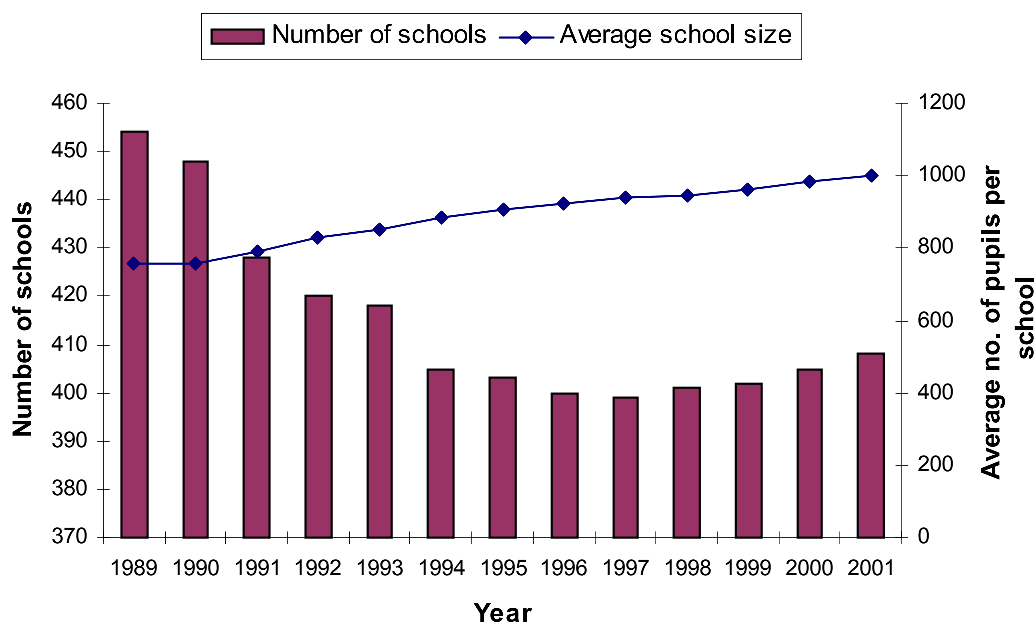
Region	Population density (persons per sq. km.)	No. of maintained secondary schools	No. of pupils in maintained secondary schools
England	378	3,481	3,231,827
North East	294	225	181,737
North West	477	484	462,044
Yorkshire and Humber	322	328	339,353
East Midlands	268	335	289,902
West Midlands	405	422	369,809
Eastern	282	430	372,800
South East	420	516	494,222
South West	207	333	314,652
London	4,572	408	407,308
(Inner London)	(8,680)	(134)	(127,231)
(Outer London)	(3,525)	(274)	(280,077)

The impact of the education market and school choice in London is presented later in this paper. This section presents an overview of three elements to school provision that help characterise the quasi-market in London. These are: the provision and diversity of secondary schooling; the key inputs or characteristics of the secondary school population; and school outcomes, in the form of examination attainment.

Figure 1 begins by presenting changes in the number of maintained secondary schools in London. As this illustrates the number has fallen since 1989 before beginning to rise again since 1997. The cause of this decline is discussed later in the paper but this provides a useful guide to the number of surplus places within the London quasi-market. Official statistics on the number of surplus places are problematic given that they are determined by the number of places

available, which as will be shown later, can be arbitrary. Instead Figure 1 presents the average school size as calculated by the total number of secondary school pupils divided by the total number of secondary schools for each year. This shows that irrespective of the recent increase in the number of secondary schools there has been a steady increase in the average school size. This could mean that there has been increasing pressure on every school place throughout the period. In other words changes to the secondary school population and school provision will have 'naturally' led to increased demand for every school in the London quasi-market.

Figure 1 Changes in the overall provision of school places in London, 1989 to 2001



Figures 2 to 5 (in the Appendix) illustrate the nature of school provision in London according to the four main types of secondary school available: community schools, voluntary-aided schools, voluntary-controlled schools and foundation schools. These Figures also show how the composition of London schools compares to the rest of the country. The most notable feature of the London quasi-market is the presence of voluntary-aided (VA) or faith-based schools, typically Roman Catholic and Church of England. Over a quarter of secondary schools in London are voluntary-aided compared to just over 15% across the whole of England. But as Figure 3 shows the distribution of such schools across London is uneven. For example there are a relatively high number of VA schools in Inner London boroughs, such as Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster. VA schools are also a significant feature of areas such as Hammersmith and Fulham, Camden, Hackney, Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, as well as in a two Outer London boroughs, Barnet and Croydon. It is also worth noting that there are many areas of London where there are no faith-based schools.

As a result of the high number of VA schools in London the proportion of Community schools, around half of all schools, is lower that in other areas of England (Figure 2). The other main feature of school provision in London is the relatively high presence of Foundation (or former Grant Maintained) schools in Outer London. In particular they constitute a high proportion of all secondary schools in Hillingdon, Bromley and Brent. In these three LEAs over half of the schools located there are Foundation schools. These became Foundation school status in 1998. Prior to that they were Grant Maintained (GM) schools, a legacy of a Conservative Government reforms in education that promoted the reduction of LEA powers in the running of schools. Indeed many of these GM schools are located in traditionally run Conservative LEAs. However,

a number of schools also became GM status through fear that their Local Authorities were going to close them (Fitz et al. 1993).

Although these are the main types of schools in London the diversity of school provision is further complicated or enhanced by their status. For example, some of these schools academically select all their intakes (grammar schools) (Figure 6 – Appendix), while others have Specialist schools status, that not only allows schools to select a proportion of their intake on the basis of aptitude in a particular subject but also get additional funding (Figure 7 – Appendix). Neither of these two elements to school provision in London are that significant in respect to the rest of England. However, their distribution within London is important to note. For example, there are only grammar schools in the outer parts of London, such as Sutton, Bexley and Kingston-upon-Thames. On the other hand specialist schools are found in almost every part of London, with the current exceptions of Hammersmith and Fulham, Lewisham, Merton and Enfield.

The importance of grammar schools in the education market can often be under-estimated. Simply examining the current provision does not reflect the importance of former grammar schools on the way parents choose schools. The development of comprehensive schooling did not necessarily remove the grammar ethos within schools not did it produce equivalent schools in the minds of parents. As Benn and Simon have argued, "in Coventry, as in London, new comprehensive schools grew up under an umbrella of selective grammar schools, which kept them firmly to their place as something less than genuinely common schools – and this remains the case." (1972:43). The historical nature of school choice may have some bearing upon patterns of school choice and their impacts today. As one London admissions officer indicated, many ex-grammar schools have always been popular and continue to be over-subscribed,

"I am not sure if there was any difference in the admittance to schools. I think the schools that are popular have always been popular and vice versa … When it changed [from selection] in 1976 … those schools remained over-subscribed because they were ex-grammar schools and that's continued." (London LEA Officer)

There were many new schools built in London throughout the comprehensive era, in fact 46% of comprehensive schools were purpose-built as opposed to 27% nationally (Benn and Simon 1970). But not only did they struggle against former grammar schools they were always going to attract less advantaged children because they were built alongside new residential development, and new public sector housing in particular. According to Benn and Chitty (1996) across England 62% of comprehensive schools drew children from council housing estates or areas with mixed housing with a substandard element, although by 1994 this had fallen back to 31%.

Another key feature of school provision in London is the relatively high proportion of 11 to 16 year olds who attend independent, or fee-paying, schools (Figure 8 – Appendix). As this shows a relatively high number of children attend independent schools in both Inner and Outer London LEAs such as Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond-upon-Thames, Harrow and Southwark. Although these LEAs may contain independent schools it is very unlikely that they only admit pupils from these LEAs. Therefore the impact of independent schools in attracting children out of the state maintained sector is unknown at a local level. Although Figure 8 indicates a east-west division in the presence of fee-paying schools in theory their impact could be felt in every LEA.

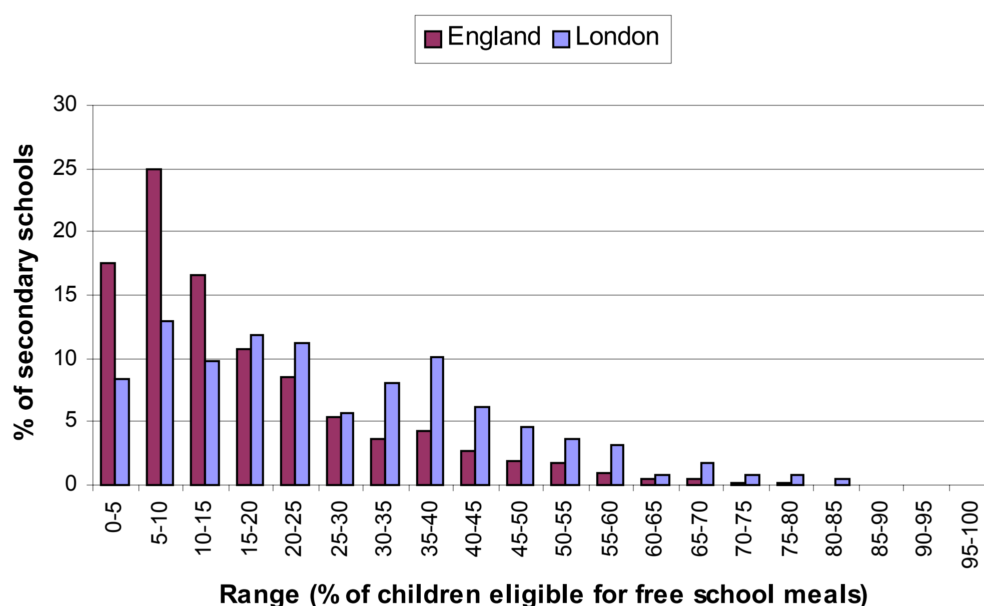
The importance of school diversity and the direct impact of Foundation, Voluntary-Aided, grammar, specialist, and independent schools is discussed later in this paper. However, the scale and breadth of school diversity in London does make this part of England perhaps unique. As

has been discussed elsewhere (Taylor 2001a) this has produced a very well developed market place in which school choice operates. This supply-side feature of the London quasi-market may be related to the impact of school admissions.

The quasi-market in London may also stand out from the rest of England because of the characteristics of the secondary school population it serves. For example, Figure 9 (Appendix) illustrates the distribution of children living in poverty, as determined by their eligibility for free school meals, across England and London. This shows that in London, and Inner London in particular, there are a relatively large proportion of children attending maintained secondary schools from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In Tower Hamlets, for example, over half of the pupils attending schools there are eligible for free school meals. Of course a high proportion of secondary school-aged pupils attending independent schools affects the relative levels of poverty amongst the rest of the secondary school population. Therefore the values presented in Figure 9 do not necessarily reflect the populations living in each London borough. However, these are the pupils that are entering the state maintained schools and have to be educated.

Figure 10 illustrates the distribution of children living in poverty in schools for the whole of England and for London. This shows that approximately a quarter of all secondary schools in England have between 5% and 10% of their intake eligible for free school meals. However, in London there is greater variation in the relative levels of children eligible for free school meals across schools. Indeed it is more likely that there will be schools where more than half of a school's intake are eligible for free school meals in London than in England as a whole. Of course this also means that schools are less likely to have very few children eligible for free school meals in London than elsewhere. But the extent to which these patterns and distributions are due to higher levels of poverty in London than elsewhere is less clear. The limited use of comparing school intakes against one another without accounting for the overall levels of poverty is why proportional measures of segregation are used (see later for a presentation of these).

Figure 10. Distribution of children eligible for free school meals across schools, 2001



Another key characteristic of the London secondary school population is its ethnic diversity. Figure 11 (Appendix) presents the proportion of secondary school pupils who are classed as white. This shows that London has the greatest relative number of pupils with other ethnic classifications. The collection and recording of ethnicity is highly problematic and a significant proportion of the secondary school population remain unclassified every year. However, two ethnic groups, black Caribbean and Bangladeshi, are considered later in this paper. It still remains that the white ethnic population is smaller in size than elsewhere in England. In particular, areas of Inner London have a greater proportion of children from other ethnic groups, along with Ealing and Brent from Outer London.

Figure 12 (Appendix) illustrates the relatively high number of pupils with special educational needs in London. As with levels of poverty and ethnicity, such pupils are more likely to attend secondary schools in Inner London. These three characteristics can place greater pressures on schooling in London, and Inner London in particular, than elsewhere in England. This situation is further compounded by two other characteristics that can help describe the school population: the number of permanent exclusions (Figure 13 – Appendix) and the level of unauthorised absence (Figure 14 – Appendix). Again, London is over-represented in these two areas, although the distribution of these within London does deviate from the high levels of poverty, ethnicity and special educational needs in Inner London.

Moving on to the third element of secondary schooling it is clear that these pressures do not necessarily prevent London from achieving similar levels of examination attainment to other areas of England (Figures 15 to 17 – Appendix). The average GCSE/GNVQ points score (Figure 15) and the proportion of 15 year olds obtaining 5 or more GCSEs with high grades (Figure 16) is only just below the England average. In fact for the proportion of children obtaining at least one GCSE (Figure 17) the average for London is well above the England average. However, on careful consideration of these figures it is also clear that there is considerable disparity in the educational attainments of children living in Inner and Outer London. It would seem that the levels of poverty, ethnicity and special educational needs illustrated above that differentiate Inner London areas with Outer London areas may have some bearing on this.

This section has provided a brief overview of secondary schooling in London. In particular it has begun to characterise the quasi-market for education in London. Most of the characteristics featured here suggest that schooling in London is unique when compared with other areas of England. However, it is important to note that variations within regions of England, such as levels of poverty and examination attainment, are generally greater than variations between regions. This means that there may be considerable overlaps across England in the nature and challenges of secondary schooling.

The relationship between a number of these features of the London quasi-market and the impact of school admissions will be discussed later. First though it is necessary to outline the development and arrangements for secondary school admissions in England and Wales.

School Admissions in England and Wales

The current system for secondary school admissions is the product of nearly a century of schooling – from the original conception of mass schooling to the comprehensive era and now to the current 'quasi-market' in education provision. Each phase of major reform to school provision and organisation in the UK has brought about associated changes in the dominant

form of school admissions. However, there has never been a single system of school admissions that has operated in every school, or even across an individual region or LEA. Instead the history of school admissions in England and Wales (and London) can be characterised as a complex mosaic of practice and local interpretation. For example, while the comprehensive era is associated with the use catchment areas in the allocation of pupils to schools according to Dore and Flowerdew (1978) 27% of LEAs during the 1970s operated a system of 'parental choice'. By the early 1990s, the era of supposed 'parental choice', approximately 58% of English LEAs surveyed still allocated school places by catchment area (Morris 1993). Furthermore, throughout both periods of reform many schools and LEAs operated a feeder school system whereby the allocation of places to secondary schools was determined by the primary school a child attended. Similarly a number of grammar schools have retained the ability to select their intake on academic aptitude since the origins of the tripartite education system.

Previous dominant systems of school admissions are not unproblematic. For example, catchment areas, the most used form of allocating places in comprehensive schools during the 1970s can lead to a reinforcement of residential segregation and differentiation. Otherwise known as 'selection by mortgage', the use of catchment areas in the allocation of school places into popular schools has led to inflated house prices since demand for housing in these areas increased. In a recent study in Coventry it was estimated that the 'premium' for house prices in the catchment areas of popular and high-performing schools ranged between 15% and 19% (Leech and Campos 2000). This is still relevant to the current admissions system since Coventry, for example, continues to use designated areas in the allocation of oversubscribed schools (see Taylor and Gorard 2001 for further discussion on this). For the housing market in London it can only be estimated that a similar effect would lead to similar, or higher, premium rates for property.

The most recent changes in the allocation of school places began under a Conservative government in 1980. Provision for parents to express a preference for their choice of school has existed since the 1944 Education Act. But it was the 1980 Education Act that paved the way for open enrolment to become the dominant system for school admissions. The 1980 Act also began to blur the boundary between the independent and the state-maintained schools' sectors, by providing state-funded school places in fee-paying schools via the Assisted Places Scheme. In doing so this Act marked the creation of a 'new' quasi-market in education (Taylor 2002). The 1980 Act also introduced the mechanisms by which parents could make a preference for the school of their choice instead of being allocated by the Local Authority. However, it was the 1988 Education Reform Act along with the rhetoric of 'parental choice' by governmental ministers that made this possible. The 1988 Reform Act also established an appeals process ensuring that Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools made every effort to meet parents' preferences. The main constraint imposed upon this policy of open enrolment was that parents' preferences could only be met if there were enough places in each school, defined by the Planned Admission Level (later known as the Standard Admission Number). If a situation arose where there were more preferences than places then LEAs determined which children would get places and which children would have to go elsewhere. There was no guidance in the 1988 Act, however, as to how LEAs should achieve this. This was further complicated by the fact that the 1988 Act allowed some schools to 'opt out' of local authority control and to become Grant Maintained status, further extending the supply-side of the new quasi-market in education. Although the main policy of open enrolment applied to these schools they had the power to change their Planned Admission Level and establish their own guidelines in the allocation of over-subscribed places. Similar autonomy was given to faith-based schools (Voluntary-Aided schools) in their arrangements for admissions and over-subscribed school places.

As highlighted earlier local authorities and schools did not interpret this shift in admissions policy in the same way. By law they had to meet the preferences of parents by offering places in schools where they were available. However, many LEAs and schools continued to allocate places by other forms. Many LEAs only responded to these reforms when an increasing number of parents themselves became aware of their rights, coinciding with the Parents' Charter. This often depended upon the social and cultural capital of parents, the history of school choice within an area, and the nature of competition between schools that emerged. 'While most LEAs persisted with catchment areas as a primary means of allocation, there were visible hot-spots, notably in Bexley, Bromley, Barnet and Hammersmith and Fulham (among others) where local children were not obtaining entry into local schools as places were now going to out-of-borough families.' (Fitz et al. 2002:129). Concerns began to grow that the policy of open enrolment was unfair and logistically difficult to manage. A number of high profile court cases (such as the 1989 Greenwich Judgement) only added to these concerns. The primary causes of many frustrations were the many different policies, arrangements and procedures for the administration of open enrolment between LEAs and schools.

Such concerns became so significant that the new Labour government in 1997 almost immediately set about addressing these problems. The 1998 School Standards and Framework (SSF) Act gave local education authorities renewed powers to administer and manage the open enrolment admissions system. To assist the re-empowerment of LEAs the Act abolished Grant Maintained (GM) schools, most of which returned to being Voluntary-Aided (VA) or became Foundation schools. Although this removed many of the privileges deferred to former GM schools it did not give the LEAs complete control on their admission arrangements. Similarly, the Act continued to allow some schools to academically select their intake and preserved the autonomy that most faith-based schools (VA) had enjoyed in their admission arrangements. Instead, the SSF Act required the Secretary of State to publish a Code of Practice on School Admissions. This Code contained measures and guidance designed to ease the admissions confusion. The main features of this Code were: the requirement for *all* admission authorities (including all Foundation and Voluntary-Aided schools) to publish annually their admission arrangements and criteria for the final allocation of school places; greater independence in the composition of, and guidance for, appeals panels; the introduction of admissions forums that formally required all relevant admission authorities (including autonomous schools and neighbouring LEAs) to meet and discuss, and resolve where necessary, their admission arrangements; and finally the introduction of admissions adjudicators, with their principle objective for determining any disputes between admission authorities (see Fitz et al. 2002 for further discussion). The Code also laid out guidelines and examples in the formulation of over-subscription criteria, used in the allocation of places where demand exceeds supply. While the combined effect of the SSF Act and the Code of Practice gave LEAs greater responsibility in admissions (including the affirmation for their total responsibility in ensuring all children within their authority had a school place) and increased the transparency of the admissions system for parents, many ambiguities remained (White et al. 2001). In particular, great disparity still existed between Community schools, which had to operate under the admission arrangements of their respective LEA, and schools who had autonomy in their admissions, including the new and fast growing Specialist schools.

Many of these earlier concerns that led to the introduction of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act and the Code of Practice for School Admissions were isolated to London, providing some evidence that the situation in London may have been unique. Indeed, many rural local authorities outside London believed that these legislative changes only applied to a number of London Boroughs,

"It does seem a lot of it is aimed at solving problems in London that don't exist in other parts of Britain" (Rural LEA Officer)

"Just because there is a problem with four London boroughs with different types of schools… why impose nationally a system to deal with that, and it has been a total and utter waste of money" (Rural LEA Officer)

However, reports of similar frustrations grew across many parts of England and Wales throughout the 1990s, particularly in urban areas. It is also worth noting that the introduction of these new measures coincided with the phasing in of new unitary (urban) authorities. Many such new local authorities took this opportunity to alter their admission arrangements from their County counterparts with great momentum (e.g. West Berkshire and City of Bristol LEAs). Even a number of long-established LEAs were quick to take the opportunity to address issues of inequality and injustice in admissions with the Admissions Adjudicator (e.g. Hertfordshire).

While the introduction of the 1998 Act and subsequent Code may have been an attempt to address the frustrations and organisational difficulties in London they have certainly been of some benefit in other areas of England and Wales. However, four years after the Government's attempt to intervene many fears and concerns still remain, particularly in London. Some Local authorities still have great difficulties in ensuring that they find a school place for their children,

"People who are living 0.6 or 0.7 [miles], above half way [of a mile], aren't getting in […] and consequently have to travel 2 or 3 miles across the Borough to another school." (Inner London LEA Admissions Officer)

"there are cases now you know where [school name] is full up in that year and we are phoning around other authorities and trying to get them in elsewhere." (Inner London Admissions Officer)

There is some indication that the interventions of the Labour Government have only added to the problems that local authorities have in the admissions process, even in London. For example, when discussing the introduction of admission forums, meant to alleviate tensions between the admission policies of local authorities and schools, a typical response was "oh that, the bureaucracy of it all" (Inner London LEA Admissions Officer). Many LEAs felt that they have always had good relationships with schools with autonomy in their admissions, and had regularly met informally with neighbouring LEAs. The new legislation simply increased the administrative workload of LEAs without easing any of the limitations and problems of the open enrolment admissions system.

Furthermore, these interventions have not prevented an increasing number of parents in England from appealing against their final allocation of school place: 46,103 appeals lodged in 1997/98 increasing to 60,454 appeals lodged in 1999/00 (an increase of 7.63% of total admissions in 1997/98 to 9.62% in 1999/00). This indicator of parental dissatisfaction is greatest in London, where over a quarter of all appeals in England are lodged.

Such frustrations and difficulties are not the only concerns with the current admissions system. While local governmental officers have struggled to cope with increasing parental preferences and face an increasing number of appeals, academics have also noted social divisions and inequalities in choosing schools. For example, Conway (1997) discussed the way in which the working-classes failed to engage with the market place due to class-related inequalities in power and knowledge. One of the earliest examples of research in London was that of a study by Ball et

al. (1995) (see also Gewirtz et al. 1995 by the same authors). Examining the process of school choice in three London boroughs they also identified social class divisions in how parents engaged with open enrolment and the new education market. This, they argued, had the potential for leading to a highly segregated secondary education system. What Ball and others have not acknowledged is how this situation may have varied in other areas of London and the UK, and, perhaps more importantly, how this situation may have deviated from what existed prior to the introduction of open enrolment. For example, the application of catchment areas, the dominant form of admissions system before 1988, only reinforced social class divisions that existed within the housing market.

Clearly the introduction of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act and, in particular, the guidance offered in the Code of Practice on School Admissions, formally acknowledged the 'failings' of open enrolment. There is also some indication that many of these 'failings' have not disappeared and, in some instances, may have been exacerbated and added to by the Act and Code. But is this situation unique to London? Before going on to answer this question a more transparent rationale and framework for determining the potential 'failings' of open enrolment is required.

Evaluating open enrolment

The previous discussion highlighted a number of apparent 'failings' of the policy of open enrolment in school admissions. These included the bureaucratic difficulties in administering a system of school admissions based upon parental preferences while ensuring school provision for all. These tensions are relayed throughout the entire system of open enrolment, to schools, to parents, and often to the children themselves. Furthermore there is a concern that the process of school choice is socially divisive, which has the potential for increasing social and economic segregation between schools.

Many of these shortcomings are due to one inherent limitation in the policy of open enrolment. This is the near finite number of school places available within the maintained and, to some extent, the private school sectors. There is little elasticity of supply in schooling, meaning that there are significant constraints, both financial and educational, in the ability of any school to expand the number of places it has available in any given year. Not only that but the legislation and admissions guidance supports and reinforces the notion of a finite number of places available in each school. Inevitably it will be difficult to meet parents' preferences unless there is equal demand across schools. However, research consistently shows that demand for schools is uneven, and is often hierarchical (Taylor 2001b). Of course uneven demand is not itself necessarily a 'failing' of open enrolment. In any quasi-market that encourages competition and choice uneven demand may indeed be desirable.

The added problem of a finite number of school places in the current system of open enrolment is that there will always be 'winners' and 'losers'. As outlined earlier when a school is oversubscribed some form of mechanism must be used to allocate school places amongst the parents who have applied. There are no criteria by definition that cannot privilege some parents over others in the final allocation of places. This means that there is always the possibility that open enrolment can be divisive between families, whether socially, economically, ethnically, etc.

This constraint upon open enrolment is so intrinsic that it can be easily argued that it poses a permanent obstacle to the process of school choice, irrespective of locale or time. It is possible that the extent to which it hinders open enrolment does vary across time and space because of

variations in the balance between the supply of, and demand for, school places. But to understand the severity of this key constraint it is necessary to consider other factors that should be considered when evaluating this system of admissions.

Bartlett and Le Grand (1993) identified five objectives for quasi-market provision of public services. These were their efficiency, their responsiveness, the choice the offered, their equity in provision and outcomes, and in the quality of provision. They noted that these same objectives should be used in their evaluation. As highlighted earlier the admissions policy of open enrolment is a key feature of the new education quasi-market. Therefore similar objectives or evaluative mechanisms can be considered here. Based upon this there would appear to be four main objectives of a policy of open enrolment in school admissions:

Educational attainment
Segregation/mix of pupils
Parental satisfaction
Efficiency

As for quasi-markets more generally these four objectives can also be used to evaluate the policy of school choice in England and Wales.

Educational attainment and school choice

UK school examination results have risen since the introduction of choice policies in 1988. The percentage obtaining five good GCSE passes increased from 22.6% in 1975 to 46.4% in 1998 (England and Wales), and the highest growth came from 1992/93 onwards (the last year in which the standard entry cohort for GCSE had been recruited prior to the ERA 1988). These improvements appear to be genuine (Schagen and Morrison 1998, QCA 2001). However, so many changes were taking place in education and assessment at this time that the increased growth in exam scores cannot be attributed to market forces without using a comparison group. Using the fee-paying sector as a comparison group it is clear that state-funded schools have been catching up at all levels (Gorard and Taylor 2002a, Howson 2000). Of course, it may be argued that the 'degrees of freedom' for independent schools are fewer since their results are already nearer the 100% limit, but this does not apply to low levels of attainment (such as percentage attaining at least on GCSE) where state schools have actually overtaken fee-paying schools since 1992/93

In the US, there is a correlation between the introduction of choice policies and improvements in reading and maths (Powers and Cookson 1999). Where choice has an impact on attainment, it appears to be positive (Jeynes 2000, see also Geller et al. 2001). Similar accounts have emerged in the UK (Levacic 2002, Bradley and Taylor 2002). Borland and Howsen (2000) cite a growing body of evidence that market competition leads to higher student achievement. If degree of competition is an input and test scores are an output in a production-function approach, then attendance policies, student/teacher ratios and levels of teacher education are relatively insignificant in terms of improvement (as well as being quite costly to ameliorate). Degree of competition is the most important manipulable variable that *could* lead to any improvement in test scores.

Claims about the differential effectiveness of school sectors are difficult to substantiate. Data analysed at the school and student level can give apparently conflicting results, but hierarchical models suggest that selective schools are more effective than non-selective schools with

equivalent students (Kreft 1993). Schagen et al. (2002) found some indications that specialist schools in the UK are superior to standard comprehensive schools in value-added terms, especially for high ability children. However, they also point out that the local competitors to specialist schools performed worse than expected so that there is no overall gain to the system. They also found evidence that religious-based schools, especially Jewish schools, do better than expected.

Other commentators believe that it is less clear whether there are genuine differences between school types (Cobb et al. 2000). It is difficult to disentangle the effects arising from new forms of school organisation and curriculum change from effects generated by the social composition of the school population, the mere perception of improvement in survey/interview work, a Hawthorne effect, and the lack of a suitably agreed control group. There is considerable dispute over whether specialist schools, for example, add value or not (Schagen and Goldstein 2002, Jesson 2002, Edwards and Tomlinson, 2002). Yang and Woodhouse (2000) found that once the prior attainment of students was accounted for at student and institution level, there was no difference between the effect of grammar and comprehensive sectors (as well as little stability of any school effect over time). Similarly, Yang and Woodhouse (2001) found no difference in performance between any school types.

Wilby (2001) claims that countries with genuinely mixed schools - such as Finland, Canada, and Korea - have a higher performance in literacy tests. In fact, the least privileged 25% by SES in these countries have higher reading scores than the average across 28 countries. If this is true, then the school-mix effect is crucial in understanding the potential impact of market forces in education.

Research suggests that if we control for student-level background characteristics in each school, then there is some evidence of a halo effect whereby students do better in schools with higher attainment (Schagen and Morrison 1998). But, if we control for school-level background variables, such as FSM, then students with higher prior attainment than their school average do better than would be predicted (like a big fish in a little pond). These differences are similar to the idea of the Types A and B school effects suggested by Willms (1992). Type A denotes how well we expect a student to do in a particular school compared to the average of all schools. This is like the big fish example, and of more interest to parents when choosing a new school. Type B concerns how well a school performs in relation to similar schools, and is of more interest to policy-makers and academics.

The question remains as to what extent the choice of school made by parents is going to influence the educational attainment of their children. The type of effects discussed above illustrate why it is difficult to make a direction relationship between a school's average levels of attainment and the attainment of an individual child. This problem is further compounded by the importance of a child's background characteristics (i.e. outside the school) in determining their levels of attainment. Yet raw-score performance tables are frequently used by parents when choosing a school, producing hierarchies of popularity based upon them (Taylor 2001b). According to the DfES (2001) parents in London are more likely to used examination performance league tables than any other groups of parents in England. This raises two important issues. The first questions the basis on which parents are choosing schools. Effective schools (however measured) may not necessarily be the most popular schools, therefore producing inefficiencies in the market situation. The second issue questions the actual need for school choice policies if little is known as to the actual value of alternative schools on an individual's education.

Pupil Mix and School Choice

Parents, as consumers, do not necessarily have equal access to the economic, social and cultural capital that aids and guides them in their choice of school. The most obvious example of this is that wealthy families have the ability to 'exit' the maintained school sector and pay for a private education for their child. It is important to note, however, that this is an option to such families irrespective of which admissions system is applied in the state maintained sector. There are still a number of privileges and constraints that can give parents unequal access to maintained schools under open enrolment.

As suggested earlier a number of studies have illustrated that this occurs, particularly in respect to the form, quantity and quality of information that parents utilise when choosing a secondary school and in the distance that some parents can consider sending their child every day. But as discussed earlier this does not mean that the composition of school intakes has changed. Indeed the research from which this paper has emerged has shown that socio-economic segregation between schools, as calculated by the proportion of children eligible for free school meals to move secondary school for there to be an equal distribution of such children across all schools, is lower than it was in 1989, the last year before open enrolment was fully implemented (Figure 18). (For more information about the measure of segregation used here see Gorard and Taylor 2002b). This shows that in England socio-economic segregation between secondary schools rose slightly in the first few years of a more dominant admissions system of open enrolment. But after 1990 this began to fall before reaching a plateau around 1997. Segregation has, though, begun to rise again in the last few years, although continues to remain lower that in did in 1989. Figure 18 also shows that segregation over time in London, and Inner and Outer London, has mirrored that of England as a whole – an initial rise followed by a significant decline before reaching a plateau and then rising again in the last four years.

Figure 18. Socio-economic segregation between secondary schools, 1989 to 2001

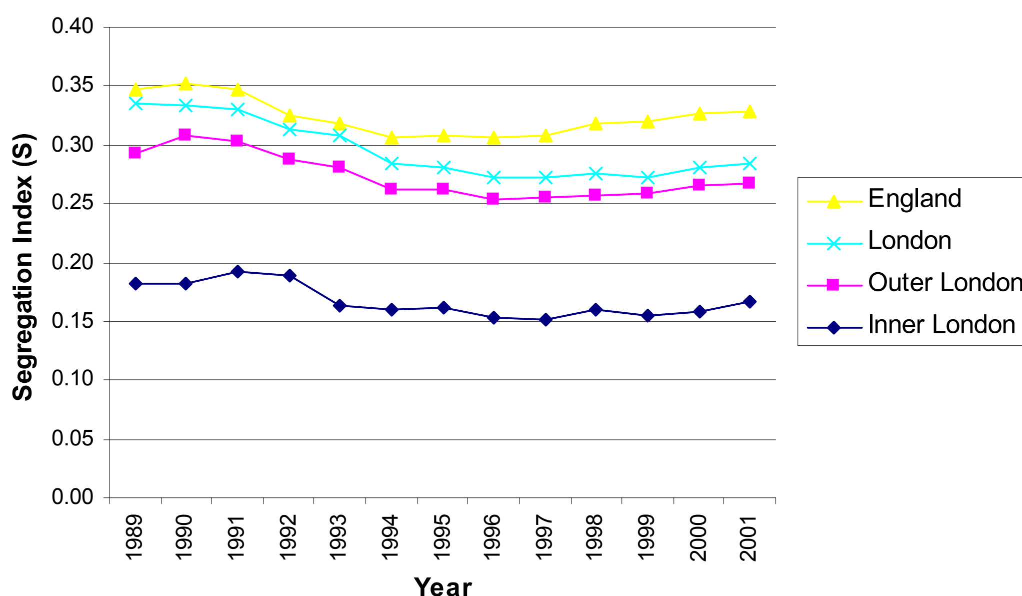


Figure 18 also shows that socio-economic segregation is lower between secondary schools in London than between all secondary schools in England. This is also illustrated in Figure 19 (Appendix), which shows the variation in segregation for 2001 across England and London. This shows that areas of Inner London actually have very low levels of socio-economic segregation

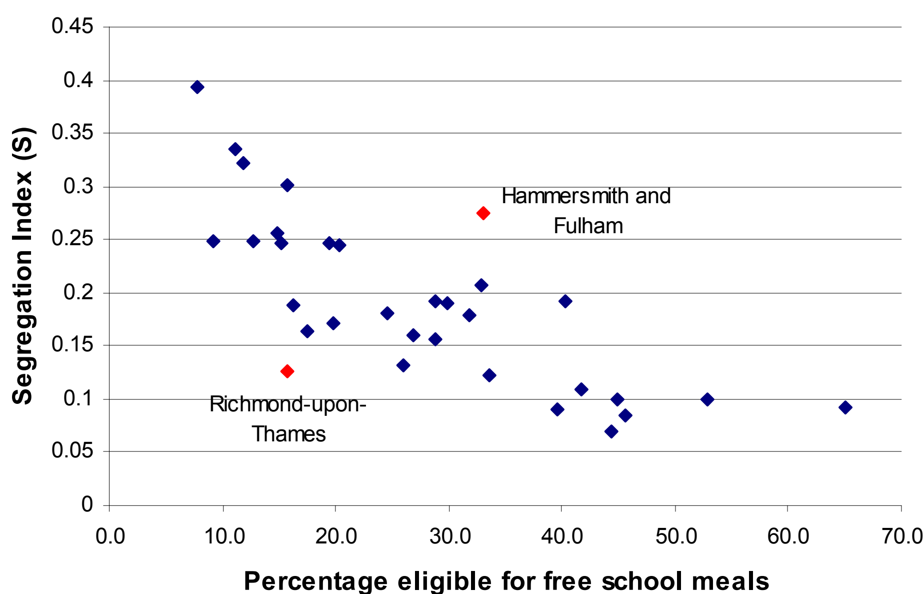
between schools in comparison with the rest of England and London. This means in these LEAs only a very small proportion of children eligible for free school meals would have to move school for there to be an equal distribution of such children in the schools. Figure 19 also illustrates where in London socio-economic segregation is relatively high. In Inner London, socio-economic segregation between maintained secondary schools in Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster is relatively high. A similar situation exists for Sutton and Havering in Outer London. In these LEAs over a quarter of children eligible for free school meals would have to move school for all schools to have their equal share. It is worth noting that there are a relatively high proportion of voluntary-aided schools in Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster. Sutton, it can be recalled, has a significant number of grammar schools. Havering is perhaps rather different to the others in that it does not have a remarkably wide diversity of schools. Instead Havering can be described as a high performing LEA with few of the 'pressures' in the school population listed earlier.

Furthermore, Figure 19 illustrates that socio-economic segregation across the whole of Inner and Outer London is still lower than it was in 1989. This does not mean, however, that segregation has fallen in all parts of London. Figure 20 (Appendix) illustrates the proportional change in socio-economic segregation between 1989 and 2001. This shows that such segregation between schools in London has fallen at a faster rate than any other region in England. This is reflected, to some extent in the variation in segregation between LEAs. The main exception in London over this period of time is in Hammersmith and Fulham where socio-economic segregation has risen considerably, even from an England perspective. Between-school segregation has also risen markedly in Havering, Barking and Dagenham, and Hounslow LEAs. More recently this socio-economic segregation has risen considerably in areas such as Hackney and Richmond-upon-Thames, while the overall pattern continues to be declining (Figure 21 – Appendix).

The general observation of low socio-economic segregation between schools in London applies for other forms of segregation, such as the distribution of pupils with statements of special educational needs (Figures 22 and 23 – Appendix) and for ethnic minority groups (Figures 24 to 25 – Appendix). The most important feature for the distribution of children from ethnic minority groups in London is the recent rise, albeit very small, in segregation between secondary schools in Inner London. In both instances a slightly greater proportion of Bangladeshi (Figure 26) and Black Caribbean pupils (Figure 26) would have to move school for there to be an equal distribution of pupils from ethnic minority groups in all schools in 2001 than in 1997. To what extent these levels of ethnic segregation pose a problem is unclear, particularly when one considers that segregation between schools of pupils with English as an additional language is also relatively low (Figure 28 – Appendix) and unchanged between 1997 and 2001 (Figure 29 – Appendix), although this masks the great variation in the fluency of English.

These patterns of ethnic segregation in London raise the question to what extent are variations in the distribution of particular ethnic groups are related to the size of such groups in each LEA. For example, ethnic segregation is greatest in Outer London boroughs where the proportion of such pupils is relatively low. The segregation index employed here has 'strong' compositional invariance, meaning it is unaffected by simple changes in the overall proportions of the minority group (Gorard and Taylor 2002b). However, it is easy to conceive that the smaller the size of any ethnic minority group, relative to the rest of the school population, the greater the chance that they will be distributed unevenly across schools. A similar situation can be seen in a comparison of socio-economic segregation with the relative levels of poverty for LEAs in London (Figure 30).

Figure 30. Relationship between segregation and overall levels of poverty



This shows an inverse relationship between segregation and levels of poverty. The greater the levels of poverty the lower the segregation between schools. Of course this is an important factor in explaining between school segregation, in this case socio-economic segregation. The effects of this are further enhanced when we consider the relatively high proportion of children attending independent schools in London. The absence of more privileged children in the maintained school sector would only act to decrease segregation between the maintained schools.

However, as Figure 30 tries to illustrate, there remain considerable variations in the levels of segregation even when the overall levels of poverty are accounted for. It shows that segregation between schools in Hammersmith and Fulham is higher than one would expect in an authority with similar levels of poverty. The inverse of this is found in Richmond-upon-Thames where one might expect segregation to be higher considering the relatively fewer number of children living in poverty in that borough. This relationship also does not necessarily help explain changes in patterns of socio-economic segregation over time.

Other factors that help explain levels and changes in segregation have been discussed elsewhere (Gorard et al. 2001, Gorard et al. 2002a and Gorard et al. forthcoming). These discussions have shown that there school choice alone cannot explain different levels and changes to between-school segregation. For example, another key explanation for the relatively low levels of socio-economic segregation in London is its relationship with residential differentiation (Taylor and Gorard 2001). London is often characterised by its extreme levels of poverty and wealth. Indeed this is often a pre-occupation of LEA admission officers and headteachers,

"Well, the key socio-economic issue for this Borough is that you have extreme levels of poverty and wealth. There is no normal ground" (Inner London LEA);

"You have got everything from one million pound houses to refugee accommodation in the hotels, to council property to charity property all within yards." (Headteacher of Inner London school);

"The general description is that we are a city of contrasts. There are very rich, there are very poor. There is nothing in between. You are either very very rich or very very poor." (Inner London LEA Officer – Westminster).

These vivid social contrasts seen by many are exacerbated by the high population density in London, which means that families with very different levels of wealth and poverty can be found living 'cheek-by-jowl'. A consequence of this is that schools can often find that in their local intake they will find both extremes. Unlike the previous explanation for segregation between schools the impact of the independent schools sector would reduce this effect.

The impact of the fee-paying sector is typical of the complex impact on maintained schools' intakes. On the one hand a large number of children attending an independent school can mean the school population who remain are more similar, thereby reducing segregation. However, the removal of a significant group of middle- to upper-income children reduces the school mix.

Another apparent contradiction in explaining school segregation can be found by returning to the impact of residential differentiation. It was noted above that residential differentiation is so extreme in some parts of London that school segregation can actually be lower as a consequence. But it is important to note that there are some areas of London where these contrasts are further apart. In fact there is a point at which the spatial variation in social geography is such that it can actually lead to greater socio-economic segregation. This is best illustrated by Figure 31 (Appendix). In this example the social geography varies over a larger area leading to an almost positive relationship between the levels of poverty in the schools and their respective locales.

The impact of residential differentiation on schools can be further enhanced when schools become oversubscribed. Nearly all maintained schools use some geographical tool to help allocate places where demand has exceeded supply. In particular, places will either be allocated first to those children living within a designated area or will be simply allocated according to the distance between their home and the school. According to a survey by Morris (1993) 17.6% of LEAs in London reported that they continued to use catchment arrangements as opposed to open preference arrangements. In all these cases residential segregation may be reinforced and could lead to inflation of house prices, further increasing residential differentiation with other areas (Taylor and Gorard 2001).

As with the overall levels of poverty, the added impact of residential differentiation still cannot explain all variations in between-school segregation. For example, Figure 32 (Appendix) shows very little relationship between the composition of schools and the social geography of their locales. It appears that local variations in the policy of open enrolment may have a significant role in determining the effects of school choice on school intakes. As discussed earlier many schools have the ability to alter their admissions arrangements, thereby altering the impacts of school choice. The most obvious example of this is for grammar schools that can academically select their intake. It is not surprising then that such schools will have fewer children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. It has already been suggested that the high level of socio-economic segregation between schools in Sutton LEA may be related to the presence of grammar schools. Similar situations may occur for LEAs with specialist schools, which could choose to academically select a proportion of their intake.

The next most obvious way in which local admission arrangements affect school intakes is in the application of particular over-subscription criteria, used to differentiate between children in the final allocation of school places. The most frequently used criteria is the order of preference the parents gave for a school. So, for any oversubscribed school the greatest priority is typically given

to those parents who made that school their first preference. The only opportunity for parents who made this school their second preference to get a place there is if the number of places available exceed the number of first preference applications. The next most frequently used criteria is proximity to the school. The effects of this on segregation have already been covered. Other criteria frequently employed are sibling and family links and, in the case of most voluntary-aided or faith-based schools, religious commitment. Each of these is meant to select different children in some way or another. Concerns exist where they tend to over- or under-represent different groups of children. It has also been shown that schools consciously use these criteria to manipulate the composition of their intakes. The impact of local admission arrangements in London will be discussed later since they also have some bearing upon the next evaluative component of school admissions, that of parental satisfaction.

Parental satisfaction and school choice

In a recent national survey among parents it was found that 85% were offered a place in their first preference of secondary school (DfES 2001). However, parents in London were the least likely to get their first preference (70%). This does not even take into account that parents' stated preferences are heavily constrained by the first preference rule outlined earlier. This occurs because parents are being increasingly informed that they are unlikely to get a place in a school unless they make it their first preference. As a result many parents have to make a strategic decision as to which school they should give as their first preference or to the order of their preferences. Consequently, it can be argued, there is a growing distinction between parents' 'ideal' choice of secondary school and the school they record as their first preference.

As highlighted earlier, changes in the ratio of secondary school-aged pupils to secondary schools means that the demand for any school will have increased over the last twelve years 'naturally'. It is not surprising, therefore, that the first preference rule is constraining school choice for many parents.

A possible consequence of these constraints on school choice is the rise in the number of appeals lodged by parents who have failed to get a place in the school of their choice, as highlighted earlier. The number of appeals is significant because it is very similar to the number of parents who do not get their first preference. Since parents who get their first preference are unlikely to appeal against the final decision it has been argued that nearly every parent who does not get their first preference must go on to appeal (Taylor et al. 2002).

It has already been suggested that London has relatively the highest number of appeals of any region in England and Figure 33 (Appendix) illustrates this. Furthermore the distribution of appeals across London is considerably marked. There would appear to be two particular 'hot-spots' for appeals and parental dissatisfaction: Enfield and Westminster. In the case of Enfield over half of all admissions end up in appeal. The most notable features of this authority are the presence of grammar and Foundation schools. Westminster, on the other hand, contains a large number of Voluntary-Aided schools. It has been shown elsewhere that the number of appeals is related to the combined effect of a large proportion of parents choosing an alternative to their nearest school and the number of schools that have autonomy in the organisation and design of their admission arrangements (Taylor et al. 2002).

Figure 34 (Appendix) shows changes in the number of appeals lodged between 1997/98 and 1999/00. Even though the number of appeals lodged have generally increased over this period several LEAs in London have actually seen a fall. In particular, the number of appeals lodged has

declined considerably in Newham and Islington. Inversely the number of appeals lodged has increased in Hillingdon, Kensington and Chelsea, Camden, Barking and Dagenham, and Redbridge.

It would also appear that parents in London are the least likely to get the decision overturned (Figure 35 – Appendix). In particular, parents in Inner London are very unlikely to be successful in their appeal. Whether this is a failing of the appeals process, a failure of the school admissions system or actually an indication that the original decision was the 'correct' one is unclear (see Taylor et al. 2002.). However, if the number of appeals upheld in the parents' favour is considered against the total number of admissions (Figure 36 – Appendix) then London would be similar to the rest of the country. This could suggest that there is a limit to the number of admission decisions that can be altered, irrespective of the number of parents who go on to appeal. It is also the case that there are no variations in the backgrounds of parents who go on to appeal (DfES 2001).

Whatever the explanations for the number of appeals lodged and upheld it is clear that there is enough evidence to indicate that there is greater parental dissatisfaction with the process of school choice in London than elsewhere in England. However, to assume that this means there is something wrong with the principle of school choice would be mistaken. Forrest (1996) showed that appeals were generally higher in LEAs that reported using a preference system for admissions than in LEAs that reported using catchment arrangements. Even if appeals are seen as an indicator of the failings of open enrolment, consideration must be given to the precise causes, such as the constraints on school choice due to other features of the education quasi-market. Given these concerns it should be noted that school choice research consistently reports that parents still want school choice. To close Pandora's Box now would be very difficult.

Efficiency and School Choice

This remains the most under-researched area of school choice, yet its importance may be growing. The introduction of market principles into public service provision was seen to provide the conditions for greater efficiency (Bartlett and Le Grand 1993). In education it is unclear if this has been the case. It is true that the number of secondary schools has fallen, while the average number of pupils per school has increased. This would suggest that there might have been efficiency gains over the last twelve years. Whether this is as a result of school choice or part of a continuing process of rationalisation in schooling is unclear (Audit Commission 1996). It is obvious that the impact of parental choice on school rolls has influenced decisions to close or merge schools in the last decade. A visible consequence of this has been the apparent absence of schools entering 'spirals of decline'. This is because local authorities have, by rationalising provision at an early enough stage, prevented the least popular schools from seeing their intakes dramatically fall in size or become increasingly polarised with children from particular backgrounds (Gorard et al. 2002b).

There is a paradox in these efficiency gains in that demand for school places is likely to have increased, which in turn can lead to greater segregation between schools and greater dissatisfaction amongst parents (see earlier discussions). In some respects these can be seen as the costs of this admissions system. Indeed the increase in appeals adds a direct cost to Local Authorities and schools, who have to pay for the administration of the appeals process and the secretariat for the appeals panels.

It may be the case that in London, with a high number of appeals, the cost of open enrolment is much greater than elsewhere. In reality, however, very little is known about the costs and savings of open enrolment. Without further research and comparison with the organisation of admissions prior to 1989 it will be difficult to make an evaluation of the efficiency of this admissions system. These early thoughts do suggest that there is an obvious contradiction for a policy of school choice that needs to be flexible enough to meet parental choice while directing the efficient use of resources.

School Choice and Admissions in London

It has been shown so far that the only discernable 'failings' of the current system for school admissions that can be considered unique to London are the low levels of parental satisfaction and reports of difficulties in the management and organisation of school admissions. There may also be a number of more isolated problems within London that are exacerbated by the nature of the London quasi-market. Whether these can be conceived as failings of the admissions process in London or problems that would always exist irrespective of what system of admissions is in place is unclear. Previous research has shown that consumer activity in London is considerable but not necessarily any greater than in other large metropolitan areas of England (Taylor 2001). Table 3 provides an estimate for the amount of 'active' choice in six local authorities from across England. However, the potential for school choice is considerably greater in London than elsewhere, given the higher population and school density and greater public transport provision. Ironically it is this greater opportunity for school choice that may actually be highlighting the limitations of open enrolment. In other words the finite number of school places has a greater bearing upon school admissions in London. If other areas of England had greater access to secondary schools then similar failings may appear elsewhere. Furthermore it is not clear if some concerns about open enrolment in London are simply due to more vocal criticisms of the system. As a number of LEA admissions officers report parents are increasingly talking to their local councillors who are then coming along to admissions officers to find out why their constituents are not getting a place in their choice of school. This political pressure not only raises the stakes in administering admissions but it also illustrates the lengths to which some parents may go when not given their choice of school. The problems might exist *in* London but to what extent are the really 'London problems'?

Table 3. 'Active' choice (from Taylor 2001)

LEA	Total intake 1995/96	Number of secondary schools	% Not 'local'†
London Borough	2,202	15	72.66
Large metropolitan borough (West Midlands)	11,612	61	68.28
Small metropolitan borough (West Midlands)	3,386	20	47.73
Metropolitan borough (Greater Manchester)	3,665	21	60.52
County (Eastern)	6,988	38	28.69
County (West Midlands)	4,458	29	41.68

† Calculated by taking the proportion of pupils in a school's intake that lived nearer to an alternative secondary school.

This is not to say that particular features of the London quasi-market do not exacerbate the general constraints of the admissions system operating across the whole of England and Wales. For example, it has already been shown that there is great diversity in secondary school provision in London. This is related to the presence of 'parallel' markets that create a very complex process of school choice, perhaps too complex to manage effectively.

This section explores in some detail the precise nature of school choice and admissions in London given the weaknesses of open enrolment generally. In particular four features of the quasi-market can be seen to lead directly to problems in London school admissions, particular when operating in combination. These four features are:

1. Problems due to casual admissions and pupil turnover;
2. Cross-LEA school choice;
3. The impact of school diversity and autonomy on admissions; and
4. Admission procedures and over-subscription criteria

The first key feature of school admissions in London is the high number of casual admissions, that is admissions that occur outside of the published timetable for school admissions. Casual admissions typically occur during the school year and can be due to residential mobility and children moving school. While residential mobility may be high in London the greatest cause of casual admissions is the frequent number of immigrants and refugees that arrive in an LEA during the school year. In one Inner London LEA it is estimated that approximately 10-11% of all admissions in secondary schools across the LEA are casual admissions. This is also seen as an underestimation since this is also a transient population who may have moved school and/or area before official data is collected. As the following LEA officer reports this may even be increasing,

"What we do have and we think that it is increasing is a much more transient population – we are affected by influx of refugees … We do have bed and breakfast hotels down in the south where, you know, a lot of current movement there and that kind of thing. So, for example, in schools on turnover, we have quite a high percentage of pupil turnover." (Inner London officer).

The problem with casual admissions is that they can go to schools that have the surplus places to admit them, typically the least popular schools in an area. Because of the nature of casual admissions they are more likely to pose an extra educational and resource burden upon the schools. For example, they are likely to have missed some schooling ands be behind the rest of their age cohort already in the school. If the casual admissions are refugees then they are more likely to have problems with their use of the English language. Not only then are they more likely to have additional educational needs they are also going to attend the least popular schools, which may already have significant educational pressures. Of course oversubscribed schools, by definition perceived to be the 'best' schools very rarely have to admit such children.

Given these problems for some schools a high number of casual admissions does have its advantages. Schools that would generally have a shortfall in the number of pupils they admit are now more likely to reach their optimum size. This not only makes the school appear more popular than it perhaps is, it also ensures that it receives maximum per capita funding. In the following example the increase in refugees over a sustained period of time has meant the LEA can build a new secondary school,

"We've had a large influx of refugees over the last five or more years from Somalia, Kosovo, Albania. And also way back this was a huge area for new Commonwealth settlements… We had a huge rising population in [name of LEA] and we are looking at having to build another school in the North." (LEA Officer – near to Heathrow Airport)

Where local authorities cannot provide the spaces in any of their schools the LEA has to try and find a school place in a neighbouring authority,

"We are getting problems now on casual admissions where people are ringing up and saying… there are cases now you know where [school name] is full up in that year and we are phoning around other authorities and trying to get them in elsewhere." (Inner London LEA Officer)

As a result a number of children, perhaps already feeling very vulnerable, then have to travel several miles across a new city every day to attend school. The situation in the LEA above is made worse by the fact that there are very few schools within the authority that are within the control of the LEA. The majority of secondary schools have autonomy in their admission arrangements and are either already oversubscribed or can argue that they do not have any surplus places in that particular year of entry.

This last example leads on to the second feature of the London quasi-market that can exacerbate problems with school admissions, that is the movement of pupils across LEAs. According to the DfES (2001) there are approximately 60,000 pupils crossing local authority boundaries every day to attend school. This movement is considerably higher than in other areas of England, including metropolitan areas (Taylor 2002).

In the example above the movement of pupils across LEA borders is forced, in that it is not a direct result of parental choice. Typically, however, this movement is due to the active choice of parents that often pre-dated the introduction of open enrolment in 1988,

"I think it has got to be that the grass is always greener somewhere else and you get well established flows." (Inner London LEA Officer);

"We were a planning area … combined with [name of adjacent LEA] then we got divided up once the, um, local councils took over. So that history of crossing borders particularly between [name of adjacent LEA] was already established and it's still out there with parents, you know, parents who have lived around here for years. They don't think oh, you know, that's across the border." (Inner London Officer).

It is not surprising that a large number of children continue to attend schools in other LEAs. This is because current admission arrangements mean that the first preference rule limits a parent's choice of school within their LEA. By making a preference for a school in another LEA, and most importantly on another application form, parents are in effect getting two first preferences. This increases their chance of getting into a school of their choice almost two-fold. Of course they can do the same with any number of LEAs, each time adding a school where they will be considered as having made a first preference. While choice may not exist within their home LEA parents can extend this by choosing schools further afield.

The geographical location of schools to LEA borders means that some schools are more likely to attract children from adjacent LEAs. A similar situation exists for schools next to key terminals in public transport networks,

"The geography of our schools are virtually around the perimeter… [School name] is right next to the tube station which runs from the south of the river [Thames] from there." (Inner London LEA Officer)

The movement of pupils across LEAs can be disruptive for the LEAs and the schools. For example, in one Inner London borough not only do a significant proportion of children living in the borough attend fee-paying schools but also a further 44% leave the borough to attend maintained schools in other LEAs. Many of these children leave the borough to attend faith-

based and foundation schools. As a result of this the LEA finds that their schools have a very high proportion of children eligible for free school meals. Socio-economic segregation is low but they have very little social mix and few academically able students in their schools.

A similar situation exists in the following LEA. In this case the pupils are leaving the borough to attend grammar schools, which means the resident LEA is losing its most academically-able students,

"I forgot to mention that there is still quite an outflow into the grammar schools [in adjacent LEA] which is really upsetting for [our] schools." (Inner London LEA Officer)

As these examples perhaps suggest parents are often choosing what they perceive to be a 'better' alternative to any school in their LEA. In some cases parents are choosing schools in adjacent LEAs because of low standards in their local schools,

"I know there's certain schools in [adjacent LEA]… they're labelled as 'failing' schools as it were – I mean we haven't got any 'failing' schools or schools with serious weaknesses and that immediately puts pressure on your schools. I mean parents, you know, why would you want to send your child to a school that's publicly acknowledged as 'failing'." (Inner London Officer)

In other cases parents are choosing an alternative because they believe schools in another LEA are just better because they generally have a better reputation,

"Some people apply to our least favourable schools because it is a [LEA name] school and because it is in [LEA name] they presume that it is a good one." (London LEA Officer – Camden)

This last example illustrates how complex it is to judge the impact of school choice since they are attracting children to schools that would otherwise be struggling with surplus places, and the associated knock-on effects of this.

Where the movement of pupils across LEAs has serious implications for secondary school provision is when schools within an authority are filling their places with children from other LEAs at the expense of local children. In one Inner London LEA there are two faith-based Voluntary-Aided schools with only 36% and 9% of their intakes, respectively, from the local LEA. As a result the LEA struggles to ensure its local children can obtain a place in a local authority school. The alternative is to send these children to schools in neighbouring LEAs, often in the least popular schools with the available places.

Such situations generally arise where the LEA has to deal with schools that have retained autonomy in their admission arrangements. This leads to the third feature of the London quasi-market that exacerbates the limitations of school choice. It has already been shown that London has the most developed education market with the greatest diversity of school provision. The problem with this is there that are many more schools that have retained their ability to control their admissions. This paper has highlighted throughout the possible links with this and parental dissatisfaction, school segregation and administrative difficulties. Neither does it appear that the recent Code of Practice on School Admissions has alleviated any of these problems.

Local authorities frequently state their frustration with this situation, particularly because they are responsible for ensuring that their children get a school place,

"The voluntary-aided handle their own admissions basically, um, but we do need to be aware of people that aren't getting into – I mean that's when it comes back to us normally, it's when we've got a child that's out of school and hasn't got a place." (Inner London Officer)

This problem is even more critical in authorities where the majority of schools are responsible for their own admissions procedures.

"All bar two of our secondary schools became grant-maintained … which meant that for admission purposes we had no control whatsoever and still don't." (Inner London LEA Officer)

This frustration increases when it is realised that many faith-based schools, in particular, are attracting children from very large areas (also see Taylor 2002),

"But we've got predominantly voluntary-aided schools so they take from the diocese rather than locally … across central London." (Inner London LEA Officer);

"50% of pupils who are educated in our authority go to independent schools, so they are not necessarily resident, so they come in still from North London. But we do have a large proportion of children in our own secondary schools who are also from outside the Borough, and it's because we've got predominantly voluntary-aided schools, so they take from diocese rather than local … it goes right across, Westminster and erm… maybe the south east – it's quite a big diocese over central London." (Inner London officer).

Not only does this make it difficult for local authorities to find places for their local children it can also mean that they have difficulty in filling places in Community schools under their control. In one Inner London LEA a school with autonomy for its admissions has increased the number of children it can admit every year for the last five years. In some cases, such as those where there are too few school places, this would be a useful decision but in this instance it means the local authority actually has to struggle to fill places in a nearby Community school. In the next example the LEA officer notes his concern that the authority are 'losing' so many children to other Catholic schools in other LEAs,

"We lose most to the Catholics [schools] – 90, 95% of our Catholics [children] go out-of-borough." (Inner London LEA Officer)

Another example of how some schools can gain in the market place is found in the next example. Here the school has attracted additional resources ensuring that it remains popular with parents. And the more the school becomes popular the more likely it has to select its intake in some form that will leave many parents dissatisfied,

"[Roman Catholic school] – they've just had a lot of new building work done over the last three or four years. The Diocese contributed… I'm not sure whether they've got any money from DfES, I can't remember exactly how but there was a lot of funding put into it… It was providing much better obviously resources and facilities, but that obviously impacts on the numbers itself because it just makes it a more popular school if parents think, you know, they've got very good resources." (Inner London Officer)

The lack of co-ordination in the admissions arrangements makes the process very difficult to administer. But this is not the only problem with diversity of schools and autonomy of admissions. Such schools can choose their own criteria for allocating school places. The most contentious is the ability of faith-based Voluntary-Aided schools to interview their applicants to

determine their religious commitment. However, many LEAs and schools believe that it is extremely hard not to select children, either consciously or subconsciously, on other social factors,

"I think it [growth of faith-based schools] will polarise more if we're not very careful … That was the issue with most of the other heads that the church schools were interviewing because they're looking at religious affiliation … but seem to be interviewing for other criteria as well." (Outer London Headteacher);

A. "The admission arrangements for the voluntary-aided schools are controversial in some cases, the two girls' schools are extremely oversubscribed so their admission arrangements lead to controversy among parents and so on, unfair and all of this. They all of course still interview to determine, Christian or whatever, religious commitments […] Certainly the two girls' schools do not have a balanced intake, they have a grammar school intake, effectively a grammar school."
"As we said they interview all applicants"
(Inner London LEA Officers, A and B)

In the last example the two Voluntary-Aided schools actually claim to use banding to ensure they get a comprehensive intake. However, the schools test individually and do not show the results to the LEAs. The local authority never understood why their intakes still appeared very differently to neighbouring Community schools until they realised that they only tested children after they had been interviewed for their religious commitment,

A. "They are taking from the bands of the ability profile that apply there. I have some personal difficulty with the way it works in terms of each parent has its individual chat with the headteacher and then fills in the form."

Not only could the school be attracting academically able students because it requires parents to show their commitment to the respective faiths it could also be using the interview to 'discourage' some parents from going any further with their application.

A similar lack of transparency could also exist in the appeals process. As one LEA officer argued, he found it difficult to believe why there were few appeals lodged against admission to some very popular Voluntary-Aided schools,

"Even though I am constantly reminding them and sending them forms, I am not sure how good the schools are at telling people."

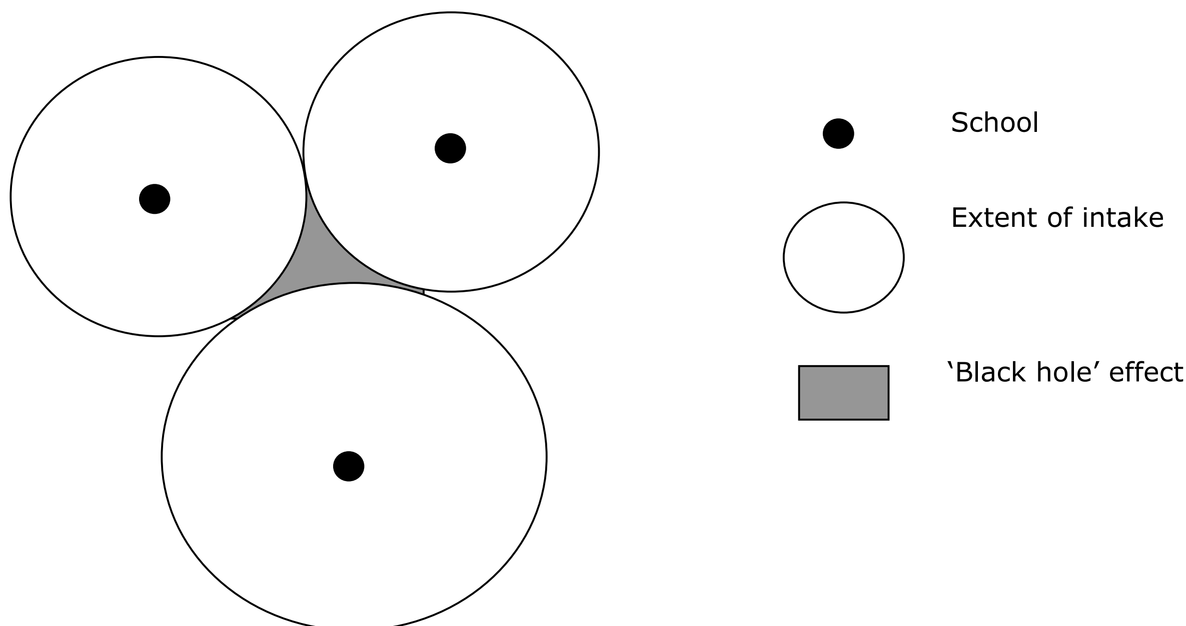
The final feature of the London quasi-market that can exacerbate problems with the current system of school admissions has been discussed throughout the paper. This relates to the criteria employed to allocate places when schools are oversubscribed. It has already been seen that schools with autonomy in their admissions can choose their own over-subscription criteria, and it has been shown how this can impact on school admissions. The final part of the discussion returns to the two most commonly used criteria in schools, irrespective of whether they are Foundation, Voluntary-Aided or Community schools. The first is the use of first preference as a criteria. As the following LEA officer points out parents can be heavily constrained by this and can often put themselves in a difficult situation if they are unaware of the real consequences of the order of their preferences,

"They are strategic with the first… and it has got to be a realistic choice. So if you are putting down a popular school as your second choice then effectively you are wasting your second choice." (Inner London LEA Officer)

The second relates to the use of proximity criteria. The use of designated or catchment areas have been discussed throughout the paper. The focus here is on the growing use of a distance measure that is deemed to be the most 'fair' and 'transparent' way of allocating school places. This often requires the distance to be measured from the home of all applicants to the school. Places are then allocated to those living nearest to the school. Depending upon the number and location of each year's applicants the maximum distance will vary. As a result variable concentric circles are drawn around each school.

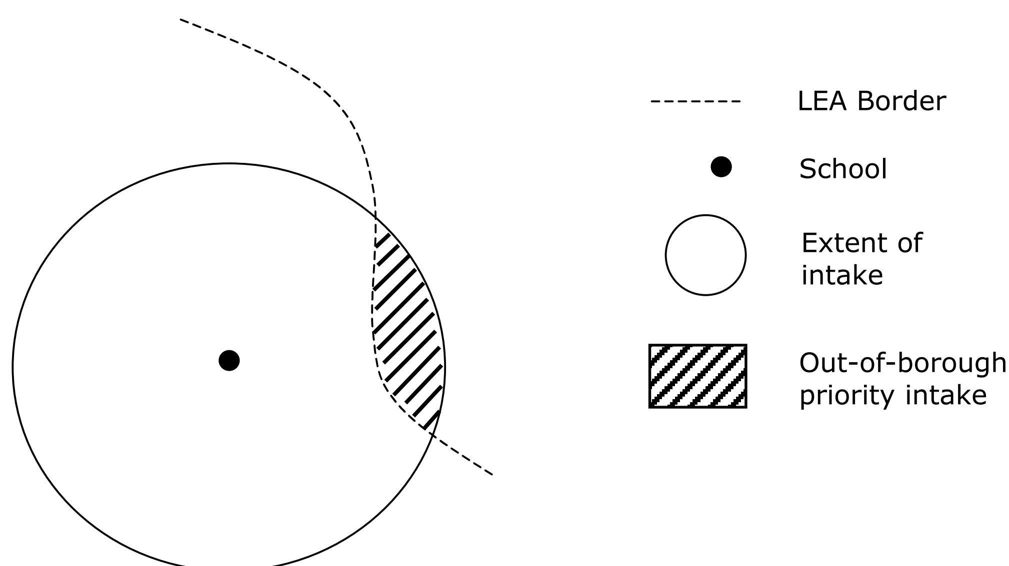
Because London has such a high population density the size of these concentric circles can often be very small with only several metres determining whether children get allocated a place or not. This can mean that some children who live just over half a mile away from a school will not get in and end up travelling two miles or more to the nearest school with available places. In some extreme cases children can be surrounded by schools yet not get a place in any of them. This is illustrated in Figure 37 which shows how the hypothetical location of three schools and the use of distance from school in allocating places can lead to a simple 'black-hole' effect. Any children living within the 'black-hole' will not get a place in any of the three schools.

Figure 37. The 'black-hole' effect



An alternative version of this 'black-hole' effect can be seen in Figure 38 where the use of distance from the school goes over the LEA boundary. In this example children living within the correct 'zone' are more likely to get a place in the school irrespective of whether they live in the local authority or not.

Figure 38. Out-of-borough priority intake



Both of these situations occur in London where the particular geography of schools and children combines to produce apparent injustices in the allocation of school places. These apparent injustices are made worse because of the high population density of London, meaning that the number of children each situation effects is considerable. They can also be made worse because of the different admissions arrangements and oversubscription criteria employed in nearby schools, making it extremely difficult to provide alternative school places for those children who live beyond the required zone. Furthermore, it is very difficult for LEAs and schools to prepare for such situations in coming years since the exact spatial extent of the priority 'zones' will vary according to changes in the size of each age cohort and according to changes in the number of preferences made for the schools.

Conclusion: a way forward for school admissions in London

This last section has outlined in some detail the particular problems for school admissions in London. It has been argued that although the cause of these may not be unique to London the nature of schooling and the unique characteristics of the London quasi-market exacerbate the limitations or 'failings' of open enrolment and school choice. In many instances it is the combined effect of a number of London characteristics that give rise to problems for schools admissions. The most obvious example of this is where the effects of geography are combined with the effects of diverse admission procedures and over-subscription criteria. This leads to great complexity and frustration for some LEAs, schools and parents, while giving other LEAs, schools and parents greater opportunities. It is the growing schism between these constraints and opportunities, caused by the same processes, that may be the most significant failing of school admissions in London. It is possible that this underlies recent increases in the socio-economic segregation between schools and the growing level of disquiet regarding the whole process.

To what extent any resolution of these problems should only apply to London is unclear, particularly since it has been argued that many of their causes are related to features found in any urban quasi-market. However, it is the case that the last national attempt to resolve problems and frustrations with school admissions, delivered in the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act,

was seen as only addressing a London problem. Irrespective of where changes to the admissions system should apply alternative approaches to school admissions may also be just as problematic if not worse.

Perhaps the most useful way forward for school admissions in London is to invest greater resources in educating the 'consumers'. For example, parents need to be carefully informed about the precarious relationship between educational attainment and school choice. Hierarchies of school choice closely associated to examination league table positions leads to overly justified demand for some school places (Taylor 2001b). This leads to a 'heated' education market that only exacerbates existing inequalities. Parents need to be made more aware of admissions arrangements and for all schools. This would greatly reduce the confusion and complexity caused by school diversity and admissions autonomy. Ironically there is greater awareness of admission procedures since the Code of Practice on School Admissions was implemented but this did not go far enough.

Another direction that would alleviate many of the pressures on school admissions would be to provide greater elasticity in the supply of places. Allowing popular schools to increase their intake would ensure that over-subscription criteria would have to be used less often, thereby giving more parents the opportunity to get a school of their choice. Of course there are significant educational problems associated with large schools, but in the education market place if such problems began to emerge then demand for popular schools would eventually fall. Allowing some schools to expand is seen as contentious since it has been shown this can make it difficult for other schools to fill their places. However, without a strategic approach to this particular approach could lead to ad hoc expansion and further frustrations,

"The members wanted to respond to this public feeling … and what they wanted for their children… and the expanded [school name] just like that – 25 extra places." (London LEA Officer);

"there is a pressure on us at secondary [level] at the moment for school places and we are looking at that … we have been in conversation a bit with [school name] about increasing their numbers and they are a bit reluctant to do so ... That's the other thing you see, I should be making provision - the kids are coming in from elsewhere – or should we just make sure we've got enough for ours?" (Inner London LEA Officer – K&C) [looking to change the admission criteria to help with the latter]

Another approach to addressing problems with school admissions is a return to the more frequent use of catchment or designated areas. In the following example from outside London this has alleviated a number of problems,

"But since they shifted some of the boundaries around… there were very few problems like that this year. The change to the catchment areas that affected this current year group has actually smoothed things over slightly." (Headteacher in new unitary authority, SE England)

However, in a similar area to the last example there is a fear that changes in the use or size of catchment areas can often be seen as a failing of the schools rather than a failure of the admissions process,

"We are often pushed to change the catchment area particularly by the school and we have found that can be very counter-productive because any changes … generate quite a high level of emotion, but what it usually ends up in is a lot of negative press for that school. So therefore you

start off with doing something to support the school … and you actually just drag it through the dirt.” (LEA Officer, SE England)

This paper has discussed other problems with the use of catchment areas, particularly their relationship with residential differentiation. It is also the case that some parents will always attempt to send their child to an alternative school, such as a faith-based Voluntary-Aided school or even to a fee-paying school. How the greater use of catchment areas would ease current problems with school admissions is very unclear.

The introduction of banding in school admissions is seen as a way of compensating for inequalities in the admission of particular children to schools. Some areas of London have had a long history of using banding in their admission arrangements. It has been shown that this can contribute in reducing the impact of residential differentiation on socio-economic segregation between schools (Gorard et al. 2002a). However, the ad hoc use of banding in some schools, particularly in faith-based schools, can lead to further problematic selection of children. In the following example the LEA admissions officer fears the further obstacles that parents will have to overcome in order to get a place in the school,

“We have got [school name] which has gone out on a limb of its own and decided to reintroduce banding, which is a great help he said sarcastically. Because with all this new legislation about admission forums and everybody trying to work together and they have run off and decided to do banding because they say they want a more comprehensive intake […] I mean we work well with them and they provide us with the information we want, but I don’t think it is helpful for parents trying to go through yet another set of hoops.” (London LEA Officer)

It has also been shown earlier in this paper that some schools can use the notion of banding after they have ‘pre-selected’ the applicants. Consequently, the process of banding does little to affirm a ‘privileged’ intake.

Ultimately, any approach to schools admissions could be problematic, producing ‘winners’ and ‘losers’,

“Whatever system we do there is going to be winners and losers and I have not got any lack of sympathy for losers because you have got an appeals hearing and you see people crying and sort of well up a bit yourself sometimes, but there will still be 60 appeals for [school name] because even if you change in to [local LEA] people, there will be [other LEA] people who didn’t go there and they will be coming to appeal… whatever you do, the school is over-subscribed and there are going to be people who are unhappy.” (London LEA Officer)

Any changes to the admissions process may only shift the failings of wider social and geographical inequalities to other LEAs, schools and parents.

References

Audit Commission (1996) *Trading Places: The supply and allocation of school places* (Audit Commission: London)

Ball, S., Bowe, R. and Gewirtz, S. (1995) Circuits of schooling: a sociological explanation of parental choice in social class contexts, *Sociological Review*, 43,1, 52-78

Bartlett W. and Le Grand J. (1993) The theory of quasi-markets, in Le Grand, J. and Bartlett, W. (Eds.) *Quasi-markets and Social Policy* (Macmillan: Hampshire) pp. 13-34

Benn, C. and Chitty, C. (1996) *Thirty Years On* (David Fulton: London)

Benn, C. and Simon, B. (1970) *Half Way There: Report on the British Comprehensive School Reform* (1st Edition) (McGraw-Hill: London)

Benn, C. and Simon, B. (1972) *Half Way There: Report on the British Comprehensive School Reform* (2nd Edition) (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth)

Conway, S. (1997) The reproduction of exclusion and disadvantage: Symbolic evidence and social class inequalities in 'parental choice' of secondary education, *Sociological Research Online*, 2, 4, <www.socresonline.ork.uk>

DfES (2001) *Parents' Experiences of the Process of Choosing a Secondary School* (Research Report No. 278) (The Department for Education and Skills: London)

Dore, C. and Flowerdew, R. (1978) Allocation procedures and the social composition of comprehensive schools, *Manchester Geographer*, 2, 1, 47-5

Fitz, J. Halpin, D. and Power, S. (1993) *Grant Maintained Schools: Education in the marketplace* (Kogan Page: London)

Fitz, J., Gorard, S. and Taylor, C. (2001) School admissions after the School Standards and Framework Act: bringing the LEAs back in? *Oxford Review of Education*, 28, 2-3, 373-393

Fitz, J., Taylor, C. and Gorard, S. (2002) Local education authorities and the regulation of educational markets: four case studies, *Research Papers in Education*, 17, 2, 125-46

Forrest, K. (1996) Catchment 22: New admission system for schools are not making parents happy, *Education*, 8th March, p. 8

Gewirtz, S., Ball, S. and Bowe, R. (1995) *Markets, Choice and Equity in Education* (Open University Press: Buckingham)

Goldhaber, D. and Eide, E. (2002) What do we know (and need to know) about the impact of school choice reforms on disadvantaged students?, *Harvard Educational Review*, 72, 2, 157-176

Gorard, S. and Taylor, C. (2002a) Market forces and standards in education: a preliminary consideration, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23, 1, 5-18

Gorard, S. and Taylor, C. (2002b) What is segregation? A comparison of measures in terms of 'strong' and 'weak' compositional invariance, *Sociology*, 36, 4, 875-895

Gorard, S., Fitz, J. and Taylor, C. (2001) School choice impacts: What do we know?, *Educational Researcher*, 30, 7, 18-23

Gorard, S., Taylor, C. and Fitz, J. (2002a) Markets in public policy: the case of the United Kingdom Education Reform Act 1988, *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 12, 1, 23-41

Gorard, S., Taylor, C. and Fitz, J. (2002b) Does school choice lead to 'spirals of decline'?, *Journal of Education Policy*, 17, 3, 367-384

Gorard, S., Taylor, C. and Fitz, J. (forthcoming) Markets, Schools and Stratification: The long-term impact of choice policies (RoutledgeFalmer: London)

Hirsch, D. (2002) Divide and you will divide again, *The Times Educational Supplement*, 13th December, p.19

Howson, J. (2000). Solid state, *Times Educational Supplement*, 14/7/00, p. 24.

Jesson, D. (2001) *Educational outcomes and value-added analysis of specialist schools for the year 2000*, (Technology Colleges Trust: London)

Johnson, M. (2002) 'Choice' has failed the poor, *Times Educational Supplement*, 22nd November, p. 23

Kreft, I. (1993) Using multi-level analysis to assess school effectiveness: a study of Dutch secondary schools, *Sociology of Education*, 66, 2, 104-129

Le Grand, J. and Bartlett, W. (1993) *Quasi-markets and Social Policy* (Macmillan: Hampshire)

Leech, D. and Campos, E. (2000) Is comprehensive education really free? A study of the effects of secondary school admissions policies on house prices, *RP581* (Department of Economics: Warwick University, Coventry)

Levacic, R. (2001) *An analysis of competition and its impact on secondary school examination performance in England, Occasional Paper 34*, (National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education: Teachers College Columbia)

Morris, R. (1993) *Choice of School: A survey 1992-93* (Association of metropolitan Authorities: London)

QCA (2001) *Five-year review of standards reports: summary*, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority: www.qca.uk

Schagen, I. and Morrison, J. (1998) *QUASE Quantitative analysis for self-evaluation: Overview report 1997: Analysis of GCSE cohorts 1994 to 1996*, (NFER: Slough)

Schagen, S., Davies, D., Rudd, P. and Schagen, I. (2002) *The impact of specialist and faith schools on performance*, (NFER: Slough)

Taylor, C. (2001a) The geography of choice and diversity in the 'new' secondary education market of England, *Area*, 33, 4, 368-381

Taylor, C. (2001b) Hierarchies and 'local' markets: the geography of the 'lived' market place in secondary education provision, *Journal of Education Policy*, 16, 3, 197-214

Taylor C. (2002) Geography of the 'New' Education Market: secondary school choice in England and Wales (Ashgate: Aldershot)

Taylor, C. and Gorard, S. (2001) The role of residence in school segregation: placing the impact of parental choice in perspective, *Environment and Planning A*, 33, 1829-1852

Taylor, C., Gorard, S. and Fitz, J. (2002) Market frustration? Admission appeals in the UK education market, *Educational Management and Administration*, 30, 3, 243-260

Taylor, C., Gorard, S. and Fitz, J. (2003) The modifiable areal unit problem: Segregation between schools and levels of analysis, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 16, 1

White, P., Gorard, S., Fitz, J. and Taylor, C. (2001) Regional and local differences in admission arrangements for schools, *Oxford Review of Education*, 27, 3, 317-337

Whitty, G., Power, S. and Halpin, D. (1998) *Devolution and Choice in Education* (Open University Press: Buckingham)

Yang, M. and Woodhouse, G. (2000) *Progress from GCSE to A and AS level: institutional and gender differences, and trends over time*, (presentation at BERA September 2000: Cardiff)

For Correspondence:

Dr. Chris Taylor
Cardiff University School of Social Sciences
Glamorgan Building
King Edward VII Avenue
Cardiff
CF10 3WT

Email: taylorcm@cardiff.ac.uk
Tel: 029 2087 6318
Fax: 029 2087 4175

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY
PRIFYSGOL CAERDYDD

About the Authors

Chris Taylor is a research associate at the Cardiff University School of Social Sciences. He was employed on an ESRC-funded research project to investigate the changing socio-economic composition of secondary school intakes in England and Wales since the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act. He is the author of 'Geography of the 'New' Education Market' (2002, Ashgate) and co-author of the forthcoming book 'Markets, Schools and Stratification' (2003, RoutledgeFalmer).

Stephen Gorard is a Professor at the Cardiff University School of Social Sciences, having previously been a secondary school teacher/manager and adult education lecturer. His current research interests include the impact of market forces on schools (www.cf.ac.uk/socsi/markets), underachievement, teacher supply and retention, widening adult participation in learning, the role of technology in lifelong learning, informal learning, the role of targets, and developing international indicators of inequality. His main task at present is to direct the Research Capacity-building support network for the ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme.

About the Project

Schooling in London was initiated in Spring 2002. Its proposals were announced at a conference on 5 February 2003. Joe Hallgarten and Jodie Reed worked with Martin Johnson on the project.

The following project papers are on the ippr website:
Schooling in London, An Overview by Martin Johnson
Not Choice But Champion by Martin Johnson
Secondary School Admissions in London by Chris Taylor and Stephen Gorard
School Budgets - Fair Enough? by Martin Johnson
Education Funding Formula: Increasing the AEN Unit Cost by Nicola Morton

Schooling in London is supported by the London Development Agency, PricewaterhouseCoopers in association with the London Partnership, the Random House Group Ltd. and Select Education, and in association with BBC London

About IPPR

The Institute for Public Policy Research is an independent charity whose purpose is to contribute to public understanding of social, economic and political questions through research, discussion and publication. It was established in 1988 by leading figures in the academic, business and trade-union communities to provide an alternative to the free market think tanks.

IPPR's research agenda reflects the challenges facing Britain and Europe. Current programmes cover the areas of economic and industrial policy, Europe, governmental reform, human rights, defence, social policy, the environment and media issues. IPPR has a strong track record of innovation in education and training policy. Recent publications include :

Johnson M and Hallgarten J (Eds) (2002) *From Victims of Change to Agents of Change : The Future of the Teaching Profession*
Piatt W and Robinson P (2001) *Opportunity for Whom ? Options for the funding and structure of FE and HE*
Hartley-Brewer E *Learning to Trust and Trusting to Learn : How schools can affect children's mental health*
Hallgarten J et al (eds) (2001) *ICTeachers*
Hallgarten J et al (eds) (2001) *A Digitally Driven Curriculum*
Hallgarten J (2000) *Parents Exist OK ! Issues and Visions for Parent-School Relationships*
Pearce N & Hallgarten J (eds) (2000)*Tomorrow's Citizens : Critical Debates in Citizenship and Education*
Millns T & Piatt W (eds) *Paying for Learning*
Mager C, Robinson P et al (2000,IPPR/FEDA) *The New Learning Market*

For information on IPPR's current education projects, visit our website at www.ippr.org