FORUM
Volume 59, Number 3, 2017
www.wwwords.co.uk/FORUM
http://dx.doi.org/10.15730/forum.2017.59.3.445

Segregated Education and the *FORUM* Archive: six decades of writing against the grammar/secondary modern divide and in favour of comprehensive education

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ABSTRACT Scores of articles in *FORUM* have engaged for almost sixty years with a range of substantive issues relating to the grammar/secondary modern school divide, and to the movement for comprehensive reform. These articles constitute an invaluable resource for campaigners and historians. Highlighted and introduced here are half a dozen such articles drawn from a group of fifty listed elsewhere in this issue. All fifty are freely available in the online archive via the *FORUM* website (www.wwwords.co.uk/FORUM).

> Grammar and comprehensive schools cannot co-exist by definition. To suggest that they can is either the sheerest hypocrisy, or the exercise of the smoothest deceit. (Editorial, 1969)

In England's maintained education sector a belief that children come in kinds, some suited to what was termed an 'academic' education and many more unsuited, was institutionalised in the aftermath of World War II through the establishment of grammar and secondary modern schools. The movement for comprehensive education looked to overturn this institutional structure and replace it with one based on non-segregation. Time and again, in the almost sixty years of *FORUM*'s existence, contributors have returned to aspects of this struggle, laying bare how it is animated by contrasting conceptions of society and of the social role of the school, by opposed ideas about how people learn, and by seemingly irreconcilable educational principles.

A wealth of ideas, empirical evidence, lived experience and considered thinking about education, comprehensive and otherwise, from 3 to 19, is contained in the pages of the journal. All can be accessed via the online archive. In particular, articles have frequently appeared which argue in favour of comprehensive education, or trumpet its enduring success, or offer a critique of a segregated system of education, or draw attention to the educational damage the secondary modern/grammar school system inflicts. At a time when the Conservative Party has proposed intensifying segregation within England's state education system by expanding the number of grammar schools, and has sanctioned the expansion of existing grammar schools through the creation of so-called annexes, it may be worth drawing attention to *FORUM*'s reservoir of articles which particularly explore aspects of the grammar/secondary modern school divide or promote the vision of a comprehensive education system.

Fifty such articles are listed by title and author in the Appendix. The list can also be found on the *FORUM* blog. A sentence or two which characterises the content of each article has been included, along with the volume and issue in which the article appears, its year of publication, and the pages where it may be found.

From among the fifty, I have picked out for particular attention here half a dozen articles which engage with fundamental issues: the injustice of segregation at 11 and what it gives rise to; the persistence of the discourse of fixed innate 'ability'; and the conception of the link between school and local community, which is to say the issue of admissions and of parental choice in relation to the comprehensive school. Other equally fundamental issues explored among the fifty articles include those to do with the comprehensive school and its curriculum; the attainment of comprehensive school students; and the comprehensive school's role in the production, maintenance or disruption of the class structure.

Language works to shape consciousness, and so may achieve material force. Recognition of this underpins the drive to use more inclusive wording. But this drive is relatively recent. Many early articles in *FORUM* are cast in exclusive terms, notably in relation to gender. Many give proof of just how foundational the granite notion of fixed innate 'ability' was, and remains. Articles are content, for example, to employ 'he' as a generic, or to speak of 'backward' or 'below average' children. And so on. Articles in the *FORUM* archive appear as originally published; we ask readers to make due allowance for usage which would not be acceptable today.

The Bold and Imaginative Conception

On its appearance, *FORUM* styled itself a journal 'for the discussion of new trends in education'. It opened a space for consideration of the new in education – of what had recently made itself manifest in the field or was rising to consciousness – most compellingly, the movement for comprehensive reform.

The first article in the first number described the London School Plan, adopted in March 1947. Raymond King, the article's author, wrote:

> The most momentous educational feature of the plan was the bold and imaginative conception of reorganising secondary education in a system of comprehensive schools... The London comprehensive schools have had to make their way against much bitter opposition. It is only just beginning to be possible to see them, and their counterparts in the rest of the country, as the spearhead of a general trend towards a more comprehensive organisation of secondary education. (King, 1958, p. 6)

Several members of *FORUM*'s initial editorial board, including Edward Blishen, taught in secondary modern schools. Blishen, with others, wrote an editorial in 1962 which laid out the reasons why such schools, however well-intentioned, should have no future:

> Very simply, [their] existence rests on the assumption that at the age of eleven it is possible, or fruitful, or liberal, or even ordinarily humane, to divide children for educational purposes quite drastically, having no regard for differences in rate of growth or in background and history – no regard for the obvious educational principle that discouragement of children should be avoided like the plague at every point in their progress – and precious little regard, one would think, for that political outlook which we claim when we call ourselves a democracy. (Blishen, 1962, p. 43)

The hypocrisy involved in any so-called parity of esteem between the grammar schools and their counterparts is laid bare as the article continues. The system cannot but impose a sense of inferiority on secondary modern teachers, even as they cope with less advantageous funding and staffing ratios, and (in the article's words) attempt the 'removal [from their pupils] of under-privilege ... in all its senses: social, emotional, cultural' (p. 45). Lack of provision at the time for all secondary modern children to sit examinations raised the question of educational purpose in general. Parents of children at secondary moderns saw the configuration of the exam system as yet another way to exclude their children 'from the competitive arena of modern society' (p. 47).

Many of these children were labelled as 'backward' or 'lower-than-average': the article wonders what might be done for them. It stands, therefore, as a monument to the ubiquity of fixed-'ability' thinking about learners. To this day such thinking remains the basis for all arguments in favour of segregated education. The article can offer only palliatives, trapped as it is within the logic of the fixed-'ability' discourse, a legacy of IQism. Defenders of comprehensive schooling would continue to grapple with this intellectual framework. To justify the claim that comprehensives could cater for everyone, they would have recourse unreflectively to phrases such as 'the whole ability range', or 'pupils of

all abilities', and so find themselves endorsing a way of thinking about young people whose implications they were dedicated to opposing.

What Works

The fatalistic outlook of those who believe in fixed innate 'ability', or in an absolute determinism (however cloaked) of social and familial context, is at odds with one of comprehensive education's guiding principles – namely, that the limits of human educability are not decided in advance. The child is educable without limit. To begin from another position would seem false to the conception of the learner necessarily informing any educational institution which wishes to act ethically. To hold that 'ability' is fixed, and that human educability has predetermined limits, opens the door to injustice and sustains inequitable structures in schools and within the education system as a whole. Among other things, it implies that schools can't make a difference, and so sells the pass before battle is joined. The difference made will be to individual young people, and, as the editorial in *FORUM* 16(2) argues, perhaps also to society:

> The school system of any country reflects in some degree the class structure and relations of that society. To expect class relations to be overturned through purely educational measures is clearly ridiculous. This is not to deny that – given effective policies – important social changes can be brought about through education. (Editorial, 1974)

Nanette Whitbread's article in that issue notes that the discourse of fixed innate 'ability' was inflected in the 1970s with a discourse of social determinism. Scores on IQ tests, as well as standardised tests of reading or arithmetic, could be mapped onto a matrix of social factors, and these factors read as offering an explanation for the scores. So, perceived low 'intelligence' could be understood as an inevitable feature of social deprivation. This way of thinking about young people as learners was all the more pernicious in that it presented itself as progressive. For Whitbread, aware of the large-scale quantitative studies carried out at the time in Britain and the USA, 'What is cause for concern and demands explanation is that schools as a whole fail to compensate for initial disadvantage and may even increase it' (Whitbread, 1974, p. 40). Schools could make a difference. But the difference schools made could be malign.

Whitbread draws on contemporary studies to argue that the atmosphere, environment or ethos generated in a school, and in its classrooms, by the actions and decisions of staff (and, it must be added, of pupils and students) matters importantly to learning, as does the way teaching is engaged in, and the way young people are regarded. That regard is most powerfully made manifest through 'ability' labelling and the consequent decisions about how students are grouped. Streamed comprehensive schools are just as vulnerable to generating what Whitbread terms 'anti-school subcultures' (p. 41) as secondary moderns or grammar schools because of the ways they label, group and consequently treat their students. It is evident, argues Whitbread, that abolition of selection at 11,

and thereafter of grouping into streams based on 'ability', would have a beneficial effect. She notes the Swedish experience:

> Swedish studies proved that more secondary students aspired higher, as demonstrated by their choice of courses and their tendency to stay on, in comprehensive compared with bipartite schools, and that the contrast was most significant among those from working-class or rural homes. These studies led to the reform of the Swedish school system into the universal nine-year comprehensive. This had to be followed by extensive remodelling of curricula and teaching methods, involving much individualised learning, so that Sweden could effect her commitment to non-streaming too. (Whitbread, 1974, p. 43)

Whitbread concludes with a summary of characteristics which seem to attend those schools in which, to use the language of our own day, gaps are closed, and where a benign difference might be made. This, she writes, is what works:

> Many schools fail to mitigate initial disadvantages, especially in verbal skills, and some even increase early differences. But some schools show they can make a difference – these must be the models for the rest. Their characteristics include non-streaming, teachers who expect children to succeed, a humane school and classroom atmosphere and initiatives to involve parents. In such circumstances the self-fulfilling prophecy begins to be transformed. (Whitbread, 1974, p. 44)

Choice: the new selection

Six years later, at the outset of the Thatcherite tenure of power, Caroline Benn, in a long and detailed article (Benn, 1980, pp. 36-41), offers a critique of government education policy in relation to admissions, funding, curriculum and examination. The first two major education bills of the new regime reversed comprehensive reforms and, through the 'assisted places' scheme, attempted to use public money to subsidise private education. Benn spells out the failure of previous Labour administrations to ensure thoroughgoing comprehensivisation:

> The weak nature of the 1976 comprehensive Act was the last chapter in a history of failure to legislate effectively on comprehensive reform, beginning in 1965 with the crucial decision not to legislate at all. Although at that time government advisors and MPs urged legislation, the Labour government accepted DES advice to issue a circular instead. Circular 10/65, although strongly worded, carried no legal requirement. (Benn, 1980, p. 36)

The main thrust of Benn's article is to expose the logic of the assisted places scheme, and all similar schemes, and make plain how 'parental choice' in relation to secondary schooling reinstated selection:

> Ministers are at pains to draw distinctions between the old 11-plus selection of mass testing and the new 11-plus which is the opting out of comprehensive education of the selected. It is vital to understand this difference and to realise that the old 11-plus – overt, universal, imposed and scientifically based – has been giving way over many years to the new 11-plus – covert, restricted, optional and socially based. It means that the 11-plus is less and less controlled by those who are democratically elected (education committees or Parliament) but delegated instead more and more often to individual headteachers of grammar, aided and fee-paying schools... It is justified in terms of the 'choice' of the minority of parents who refer children and upon the 'needs' of their children alone, not upon the majority's needs or upon the desirability of universal choice... Choice is the new selection. (Benn, 1980, p. 37)

Benn goes on to point out the inevitable result of privileging parental choice in relation to admissions:

> [W]here systems are run with reference to parental preference alone, polarisation can develop rapidly... [R]eliance upon parental preference alone means that knowledgeable and discerning parents flock to one set of schools, while children of less knowledgeable and less demanding parents fill up the others. The more choice is emphasised, the less there is. Because a situation is created where more and more parents choose the same few schools, which build up, while others, in varying degrees and in increasing numbers, gradually spiral downwards. Thus every year in pure choice systems more and more parents are refused their preference, and more and more children end up in schools their parents do not favour. (Benn, 1980, p. 39)

Benn reiterates that there has never been a national comprehensive system. Her article closes with a call to rekindle the campaign for one.

Not a Social Experiment

After mounting in 1994 a sharp defence of the comprehensive principle against the objections of what he calls the Radical Right and the Postmodernist Left, and reminding readers that 'the drive to reorganise secondary schools along comprehensive lines was a grass-roots movement long before it became national policy' (Chitty, 1994, p. 89), Clyde Chitty returned to a central question of comprehensive education – namely, the nature of the school's intake, and hence of the school's relationship with its community or neighbourhood. He recalls the way, in the 1950s, defenders of the grammar school could, without blushing, attempt to present the drive for comprehensive education as a strategy to hone rather than blunt class division. In the words of Eric James:

> Nothing could accentuate class divisions more effectively than comprehensive schools drawing on limited localities, where the whole tone and prestige of the school is completely coloured by the social status of the particular neighbourhood, as American experience shows. (James, 1951, p. 45, cited in Chitty, 1997, p. 73)

Chitty suggests that it was the work of Fabians in the 1960s, and of Anthony Crosland in particular, which opened up in the Labour Party the idea that the comprehensive school, by ensuring a social mix of students, could be a powerful agent in bringing about peaceable social change. This idea was endorsed, he says, within Circular 10/65.

One consequence of accepting 'ability' as socially (rather than genetically) determined was that the comprehensive principle became identified with the requirement for such schools to have a broad social mix. To be 'truly' comprehensive, the thinking went, a school required a socially balanced intake. Chitty opposes this view. He quotes from Benn and Simon:

> A comprehensive school is not a social experiment; it is an education reform. In a society with class and race difference, a school that reflects all sections of a local community – and reflects them in proportions in which they are represented in the local community ... will often reflect these differences in the school... The comprehensive school does not offer pupils a chance to hide from society, but the opportunity to learn in the conditions of social reality that prevail in the wider community. (Benn & Simon, 1970, pp. 64-5, cited in Chitty 1997, p. 74)

Chitty is alert to the problems generated by what might be termed a monocultural catchment area, and especially to what he describes as the 'fiction' of parental choice of school, and yet:

> I would still endorse the 'neighbourhood' principle where comprehensive schools are concerned and in so doing reject the creation of an artificial 'social mix' when this involves 'bussing' pupils across cities and large conurbations. For one thing, I would wish to challenge the view that when neighbourhoods become dominated by a single class or racial group, the children who live there are incapable of 'performing well'. It may be that schools situated in 'deprived' areas require special help in the form of additional teachers and resources. But this approach has to be preferable to allowing 'unpopular' or 'failing' schools to wither away and die – a popular demand of the 'parental choice' lobby. The point is that every neighbourhood deserves its own educational centre and that removing a school from a 'poor' area is a special form of social discrimination. (Chitty, 1997, p. 75)

This 'neighbourhood school' principle cannot but remain contentious in our class-divided, multi-ethnic, multi-faith society. It is the nexus for sometimes-fraught debates about the extent to which maintained education is, or should be, implicated in equality and social justice under capitalism, and how such education can best serve the local community and the wider society.

Reminder and Resource

At the moment when comprehensive schooling was dismantled by New Labour, and when the nature of the mix, or the degree of diversity, within comprehensive schools was being reviewed as part of what these authors termed the 'crisis account' of British education, Smith and Gorrard offered an alternative view. They countered the then-current idea that the school system was intensely socially segregated, using their own research (based on PISA data) to show that 'schools in Britain (including in England) are at least as socially mixed and equitable as those in other European countries at present' (Smith & Gorrard, 2002, p. 121). The claim apparently held true despite the existence of an independent sector in the UK. The authors warned that the Labour government's policy of increasing the number of faith-based and specialist schools, and establishing Academies, may well increase inequality by further fragmenting the system.

And so to the day before yesterday. Melissa Benn anatomises Govian approaches to the structure of education under the coalition government (2010-15). Policies such as an intensified academisation programme and the lavish funding of free schools further laid waste to the local educational ecology. Where schools in an area had acknowledged their responsibility for educating all the children of that area, and had taken concrete steps to do so by, for example, talking together about particular difficulties, and taking steps to accommodate afresh the most challenging or disaffected students, the new orientation pitted school against school. If decisions made in one school adversely affected its neighbour, so be it. Academies and free schools are their own admissions authorities, and (like some local maintained schools) are not above leafleting postcodes to boost their numbers at the expense of other local schools. Benn notes: 'Social segregation always increases in areas where there are more schools which are their own admissions authorities' (Benn, 2010, p. 288). Presciently, she remarks on the likelihood that the Conservative element of the coalition will look for ways to enable grammar schools to expand.

To read in the *FORUM* archive is to be reminded that an education system is implicated so thoroughly in the formation of those who constitute society that it cannot but be, among other things, a site of political struggle and an index of the course of that struggle. *FORUM*'s archive constitutes a rich resource for all who, militant against continued segregation in education, would endorse the comprehensive school.

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APPENDIX.
The grammar/secondary modern divide: a list of articles from the *Forum* archive

1962

4(2), 43-49, Edward Blishen, The Future of the Secondary Modern School
5(1), 3-8, Robin Pedley, The Comprehensive School: England

The first two articles in this annotated list announce the contents of a whole issue of *FORUM*: the former about the secondary modern school at the start of the 1960s, and the latter about the incipient movement for comprehensive schooling. Both Pedley and Blishen speak of the anti-democratic nature of the divided system. Blishen highlights the injustice of selection at 11, and the inferior resourcing made available to secondary modern schools. Pedley reports on the progress made towards comprehensivisation in Anglesey, the Isle of Man, London, Coventry, Leicester and Croydon, as well as in Wales and Scotland. He is encouraged by the improvement in exam attainment which comprehensive schools enable, and regrets ministerial attempts to obstruct further reform.

1969

11(3), 75, Editorial, For Genuine Comprehensive Schools

Confronts the issue of bogus comprehensivisation, whereby covert methods of selection were retained in schools which are nominally comprehensive.

1970

12(2), 40-43, Caroline Benn, Bristol's Re-organisation: one stage down, one to go

Highlights the inequalities which stem from segregation. Compared with secondary moderns or 'comprehensives' locally, grammar schools are better staffed (that is, pupil/teacher ratios are more favourable; staff tend to have better qualifications) and better funded. The other local schools are undermined because of the imbalance to their intake caused by selection. Benn also notes the additional layer of complexity brought about by the presence of 'faith' schools.

1971

13(3), 72-75, Anonymous, Pitfalls of Parental Choice

Argues that 'a parent's right of choice needs to be seen in relation to the rights of the community in general', and that free exercise of such choice inevitably generates intensified social division in a locality.

1972

16(2), 40-44, Nanette Whitbread, How Schools Make a Difference

Argues against streaming and fixed-'ability' thinking, and in favour of using as a model those schools in which all succeed.

1974

16(3), 79-81, J.S. Dodge, From Grammar to Comprehensive Upper School

Offers a narrative of change which has been successful but not without mistakes. Touches on decisions to do with grouping, examinations, curriculum and pastoral concerns.

16(3), 82-84, Derek Roberts, Comprehensive from Scratch

Describes the educational and social benefits of moves to unstream, which resulted in increased attendance, exam attainment and staying-on rates.

1975

17(2), 56-58, Patrick Bailey, Going Comprehensive

Considers the way comprehensive reorganisation requires re-thinking teachers' roles, teaching methods and the curriculum.

1976

19(1), 2-7, Caroline Benn, The Comprehensive Reform: all over but the re-organising

Contains a clear statement of the problem of 'co-existence' between selective and non-selective schools (pp. 3-4). Such a situation does not give rise to a steady state but rather to one which works against non-selective schools, whose intakes become less comprehensive.

1978

20(2), 34-35, Brian Simon, Why Unstreaming?

In a special issue of the journal dedicated to the cause of unstreaming in primary school, it offers important arguments against fixed-'ability' thinking.

1979

22(1), 4-6, Raymond King, From Grammar to Comprehensive

Presents a personal view of educational changes from the 1920s to the 1960s by someone centrally involved in the movement for comprehensive reform.

1980

22(2), 36-41, Caroline Benn, A New 11+ for the Old Divided System

Looks at how selection returns in new guises – for example, via the assisted places scheme or as a consequence of the reversal of comprehensive reforms.

23(2), 52, Book Review

A review of Auriol Stevens' Clever Children in Comprehensive Schools. The text under review considers what happens to children who might have attended

grammar school but instead went to comprehensives. It accepts fixed-'ability' thinking but argues that these children were not put at an educational disadvantage.

1981

24(1), 4-6, Clyde Chitty, Why Comprehensives?

Re-states the case for comprehensive education in the context of the 1980s, considers comprehensive principles as rights, and offers a historical overview of the campaign for comprehensivisation. See also:

24(1), 7-9, Roger Seckington, The Comprehensive Movement

Mixes reflections on the experience of teaching in a grammar school and then in a new comprehensive with an account of the movement for comprehensive educational reform and its changing fortunes.

1982

24(2), 35-36, Michael Clarke, Comprehensive Education and Parental Choice

Reiterates the importance for the success of any comprehensive school of an ethos of cooperation and community as against one of individual personal advantage. A selective educational system precisely encourages such advantage. It is important to ask who gets the right to choose. The article argues for parental involvement in the local educational service, but against the privileging of parental choice of school.

24(2), 50-53, Caroline Benn, The Myth of Giftedness Part One

Recognises the way overt selection via 11+ has been widely supplanted by covert selection between and within schools through 'parental choice' and market mechanisms. Links this to the notion of 'giftedness', a term poorly defined by its advocates but handy for offering a new theoretical justification for selection.

24(3), 78-84, Caroline Benn, The Myth of Giftedness Part Two

Returns to the imprecision and confusion generated by attempts to define 'giftedness' and uncovers links to IQism, pro-selection rationales, biases of class, gender and 'race', and media manipulation of academic work for anti-comprehensive propaganda. Recognises that programmes to 'enrich' will work for all children. 'It is because we believe in human genius that we oppose all

attempts to regiment it, or to commandeer it for the purpose of preserving what is basically a school system designed for a social elite... Giftedness is what education itself helps to create and release...'

1988

30(2), 36-38, Nanette Whitbread, Comprehensive Counter-attack

Reviews the history of the 1944 Education Act and comprehensivisation as an expression of democratic aspirations or 'radical democratic intent' (p. 36), and claims that 'a comprehensive education is about offering quality to all so that each may achieve the highest standards possible and enjoy a rich educational experience' (p. 38).

30(2), 39-41, Andrew McPherson & J. Douglas Willms, Comprehensive Schools Are Better and Fairer

Looks at the Scottish experience of comprehensivisation, which it is argued has led to increased equality of opportunity and a rise in attainment for working-class students.

1994

36(3), 89-90, Clyde Chitty, Thirty Years On

Couples a retrospective view of the comprehensive movement to date with a combative political stance.

1995

37(1), 4-6, Tamsyn Immison, Comprehensive Success for the Twenty-first Century

Opposes the sense of failure, and the resulting wastage of talent, generated by the 11+ exam, and argues the importance of high expectations for all learners.

37(2), 35, Nanette Whitbread, Celebrating 10/65 Thirty Years On

Notes how the 11+ exam was hated, and how parents supported local authorities moving to comprehensivisation. Points out how teachers were inspired to keep looking to improve their work, and to serve their communities. Warns of the dangers of underfunding, and how illusory is the notion of educational 'choice' predicated on a market system.

37(3), 83-84, Tony Mooney, The Need for Comprehensive Schools

Arguments in favour of a comprehensive system follow a personal account of failing the 11+.

1996

38(1), 5-7, Brian Simon, The Return of Selection

Anticipates the return of selective education via a re-vamped IQ-ism.

38(2), 50-51, Jane Collins, Community Comprehensive

Offers a set of arguments for why such a school works, to do with aspiration, inclusivity, local relationships and accountability, trust in the school community and a humane ethos.

38(3), 68-71, Caroline Benn & Clyde Chitty, Alive and Well and Destined to Survive

Includes an analysis of the impact of the remaining grammar schools on the rest of the maintained system.

1997

39(3), 73-76, Clyde Chitty, Comprehensive Schooling and the 'Neighbourhood' Debate

Revisits notions of the 'social mix' and 'social cohesion' in relation to comprehensive ideals, and finds them wanting. Comprehensive education is not a social experiment but an educational reform. Opposes the idea of bussing students to a given school, or any other attempt to create an artificial mix of students. Considers the damage caused by parental choice.

1998

40(1), 26-28, Phillip Woods, Carl Bagley & Ron Glatter, Choosing Grammars?

An account of survey-based research into the impact made by a selective school on its locality.

1999

41(1), 28-30, John Dunford, The Comprehensive Success Story

Although it does not question a fixed-'ability' view of learners, this text offers a history of comprehensive successes against the odds.

41(3), 93-96, Vic Kelly, Comprehensive Threats
Notes important failures in the development of comprehensivisation: principally the lack of a comprehensive curriculum, and the failure to replace a legitimising educational discourse inimical to the comprehensive idea.

2001

43(1), 34-36, Stephen Gorard, In Defence of Local Comprehensive Schools: Part Two

Based on a large-scale research study, celebrates the achievements of local comprehensives, and points out the crucial role of the local educational authority in improving not only exam results but also equitable outcomes.

43(1), 37-42, Kristine Black-Hawkins, Selective Memories: re-living grammar school experiences in the comprehensive system

Gives a personal account, informed by social and political awareness, of the sense of not belonging which was generated by attending grammar school.

2002

44(3), 121-122, Emma Smith & Stephen Gorard, International Equity Indicators in Education: defending comprehensive schools: Part Three

At the moment when New Labour dismantles comprehensive provision, makes clear how such schools are as socially mixed and equitable as any comparable institutions in Europe.

2003

45(1), 3-11, Tim Brighouse, Comprehensive Schools Then, Now and in the Future: is it time to draw a line in the sand and create a new ideal? The Brian Simon Memorial Lecture

Outlines the original pro-comprehensive, anti-grammar school campaign, and identifies a hierarchy of types of school in urban areas brought about by parental choice. Notes the change in social conditions from the 1950s and '60s as compared with today. Advances the idea of a 'collegiate' school system. [There is a rejoinder to this by Clyde Chitty in 47(2/3) (2005), 207-211.]

45(1), 12-16, Clyde Chitty, The Right to a Comprehensive Education

Offers a view of the comprehensivisation campaign and a defence of comprehensive education's values in the present. Highlights problems with the original campaign, notably the notion of 'grammar schools for all' and the focus on using comprehensive schools for purposes of social engineering.

45(3), 102-108, David Howard, Justice, Inclusion and Comprehensive Values: three essays on comprehensive education

The first essay considers ideas of fairness and justice derived from Rawls, and employs these to argue that comprehensive education is part of a struggle for social justice. The second concerns issues of inclusion, and the nature and richness of a comprehensive curriculum. The third considers values important in the comprehensive campaign, and how these might continue to relate to a society in which there has been a perceived loss of social solidarity and a rise in individualism.

2004

46(2), 73-76, Natalie Heath, Comprehensive Schooling: in need of definition?

Scrutinises the ambiguity found to be present in any comprehensive principle, and considers ideas of inclusion and equality which are central to the comprehensive ideal but about whose meaning, it is argued, there is no agreement. [A rejoinder to this article appears in 46/3, p. 115, from Malcolm Horne of the Socialist Education Association.]

2006

48(1), 9-12, Melissa Benn, Diversity and Choice: the spin doctor's route to selection

Argues that, in the educational field, choice and diversity create a hierarchy of local schools. Re-states the case for a local school to reflect fully the area's social mix, and for education to be infused by a philosophy of public service.

2008

50(1), 49-59, Roger Titcombe, How Academies Threaten the Comprehensive Curriculum

Argues that a broad and balanced curriculum for all is being undermined by the policy of academisation. Notes how exam results in academies have been

boosted by the use of GNVQ courses rather than by GCSEs. Points out the way some academies have narrowed the curriculum – for example, in limiting provision for Modern Foreign Languages.

2010

52(3), 285-289, Melissa Benn, A Comprehensive Response to the Coalition: how should we approach current government policies on education?

Anatomises Govian policy, especially as regards academies and free schools. Notes the continuing danger of school privatisation, and of skewed admissions. 'Social segregation always increases in areas where there are more schools which are their own admissions authorities' (p. 288).

2011

53(1), 153-162, Richard Pring, Can Education Compensate for Society?

Offers an overview of the literature about whether or not comprehensive schools can improve education for all pupils. Can education compensate for poverty and social injustice? Critiques empiricist research approaches.

2012

54(1), 41-43, Bernard Barker, Comprehensive Schools and the Future

Notes that comprehensive reorganisation produced local diversity rather than a national system, and in some areas left intact the grammar/secondary modern divide. In a period of increasing economic inequality, selection by postcode took hold, alongside the principle of all children being of equal worth and the expectation that educational opportunities would be raised, especially for girls. Comprehensive schools stressed mutuality, cooperation and personal growth, while a discourse of competition, choice and 'skills' was advanced by politicians influenced by neoliberalism.

54(2), 313-318, Clyde Chitty, The Birth of New Labour and the Death of Comprehensive Education

Explores how New Labour ended any attempt to create a nationwide system of comprehensive schools. Policies led to increased fragmentation and division in the system as a whole. Those policies derived from a long-standing ambivalence within the labour movement towards secondary education.

54(3), 429-447, Bernard Barker, Grammar Schools: brief flowering of social mobility?

Presents a range of statistical, documentary and interview-based evidence about secondary education in the era of the generalised 11+, and exposes the falsity of claims that grammar schools enhanced social mobility.

2013

55(3), 407-414, David Kitchener, What Price Free Schools? The Continued Insidious Privatisation of United Kingdom State Education

Shows how free schools, a laissez-faire model of schooling working independently of local authorities, have increased segregation, have not led to an improvement in attainment, have strengthened stratification in the education system and have undermined cooperation between schools.

2014

56(3), 377-400, Stewart Ranson, Educating Democracy: conjunctures in the long revolution

Notes the demolition of the comprehensive tradition of valuing the capabilities of each and providing opportunities for all. In place of this tradition there has emerged a rationing of limited opportunities through tacit and explicit social selection. Asserts that the reform of education lies at the centre of the regulation of democracy, and, drawing on the work of Williams and Simon, explores the implications of different perceptions at state level of the purposes of education across extended historical periods. 'The period of social democratic comprehensive education (1955-76) stands out as the exception in the longue duree of class based caging of educational opportunity'. Concludes with a call to renew the struggle for an educated democracy.

2015

57(3), 333-335, Melissa Benn, Why Bringing Back Grammar Schools is Not Proving a Popular Idea: two successes for the comprehensive argument in recent student union debates

Offers a pointed résumé of arguments in favour of comprehensive schooling.

2016

58(2), 167-176, Daniel Murphy, Linda Croxford & Cathy Howieson, The Values of Scottish Comprehensive Schooling

Reviews fifty years of comprehensivisation in Scotland, where such a process was understood as an important part of the drive to eliminate wasted talent by increasing staying-on rates and exam attainment, and by improving the way school was perceived by young people. Notes the alignment between comprehensive education and democratic living, infused with the values of liberty, equality and solidarity.

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