

# **HMC SCHOOLS**

## **A Quantitative Analysis**

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Commissioned by  
**The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference**

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## **Executive Summary**

The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference has commissioned the Centre for Education and Employment Research at the University of Buckingham to undertake a quantitative review of the educational contribution of its schools. The focus is primarily on the 250 HMC schools, but some of the data are available only for the independent sector as a whole. Besides drawing on the literature, the review is based on four main lines of evidence:

- new databases, including a schools' dataset for the academic year 2006-07 compiled from information provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Independent Schools Council (ISC), and a teachers' dataset commissioned from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA);
- re-working of published statistics, including those from HESA's Performance Indicators in Higher Education and the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and re-analysing headteacher interviews;
- biographical searches of the school backgrounds of members of various occupations and endeavours;
- survey of the community involvement and partnerships of HMC schools.

### **Participation and Performance**

- Independent schools take 7% of school age pupils, but provide 21% of A-level entries.
- HMC schools are more likely than state schools, including grammars, to offer further maths, economics, classics and Spanish at A-level, and less likely to offer sociology, law, media studies, and psychology.
- Independent schools have above average A-level entries in further maths, physics, French, economics, and classics, and comprehensive schools in sports studies, media studies, law, psychology and sociology.
- In 2007 HMC schools achieved better A-level results in 24 out of 30 subjects than grammar schools, in 29 subjects than comprehensive schools and academies, and in all subjects compared with secondary moderns. The exception in the case of the comprehensives and academies is sociology; grammar schools were also ahead in ICT, media studies and sports studies, and on par in geography and business studies.
- In eight A-level subjects more than half the entries from HMC schools were awarded A grades in 2007: further maths (where it was over two-thirds), maths, German, Spanish, 'other science', art and design, chemistry, and critical thinking. In a further ten subjects it was above 40% against the average of 25.3%. The lowest proportions of A grades in HMC schools were in media studies, sports studies, ICT and sociology, but only in sociology was it below the national average.
- Data from Cambridge Assessment show that 31% of A-level candidates in independent schools obtained at least three A grades compared with 23% in grammars.
- About a sixth of comprehensive pupils are restricting their higher education choices by taking two or more LEP (less effective preparation) subjects.

- University admissions from independent schools are linked to the standing of the university, ranging from 45% of the Oxford and Cambridge intakes down to 4.5% at universities of below median ranking.

### **International Comparisons**

- UK independent schools achieved the highest score of all school groups in the 2000 PISA international comparisons of reading (614) and shared the top places with independent schools in Korea and New Zealand in the 2003 maths survey (589) and the 2006 science survey (597).
- The OECD average scores for maths in 2003 were 530 for independent schools, 526 for government-funded schools, and 494 for government-run schools; for science in 2006 the respective scores were 544, 515 and 496.
- In ten out of 11 countries independent schools performed better in the 2000 PISA reading tests than government-run schools, and they were ahead in six out of nine countries in maths in 2003, and eight out of ten countries in science in 2006.
- Autonomous government-funded schools also performed better than wholly government-run schools, but less well than fully independent schools.
- When the economic, social and cultural status of the intakes is taken into account, the differences between independent and government-run schools are reduced but remain, with the difference disappearing in only Sweden in maths in 2003, and the Slovak Republic in science in 2006.

### **Teachers and Headteachers**

- Newly qualified teachers recruited to independent schools are more likely to have received their training at Oxford, Cambridge and other leading universities, to have top degrees and to be in mainstream academic subjects.
- Three times as many teachers move from maintained schools to independent schools as in the reverse direction, attracted by among other things greater freedom to teach how and what they wanted.
- Headteachers of independent schools saw themselves as having the freedom to do what is right for the pupils rather than having to continually comply with externally imposed initiatives.
- There have been a number of impacts on the curriculum and qualifications, including the retention of the separate sciences pre-16, keeping physics, economics and classics alive at A-level, innovating in languages, and being open to qualifications such as the IGCSE, the IB and Cambridge Pre-U.

### **Life Chances**

- The school achievements of independent-school pupils carry forward into their future lives validating examination success.
- Pupils from independent schools progress to become members of the cabinet, senior civil servants, MPs, judges, barristers, solicitors, leading doctors, senior business executives, top journalists and prominent in the arts and creative media.

- Former independent-school pupils won 32.7% of Britain's medals in the 2004 Olympics and 37.3% in the 2008 Olympics; 71.4% of the independent-school golds were won by those who had been at HMC schools.
- There is a measurable earnings premium associated with being independent-school educated.

### **Working with Other Schools and the Wider Community**

- About a third of pupils in HMC schools are receiving help with their fees, and a quarter of independent-school pupils come from postcodes associated with average or below average income.
- Independent schools are working with other schools in this country through Independent State School Partnerships, other academic, sporting and arts support, and participation in the academies programme.
- Many HMC schools have extensive community service programmes, both in this country and abroad. Some schools devote one afternoon a week to helping others in the local community. There are also many examples of providing financial help and support of various kinds to communities overseas.
- Co-operation with schools overseas can take many forms including: projects and scholarships; specific help; and establishing overseas campuses.

### **Quality and Autonomy**

- The unifying themes of this report are quality and autonomy.
- Independent schools are popular with parents because of the perceived quality of education they offer, and this is borne out by the achievements of the pupils, both while at school and in later life.
- Both headteachers and teachers in independent schools enjoy more autonomy than do those in state schools.
- The key feature of autonomy is that it enables teaching and learning decisions to be taken close to the classroom.
- The government has recognised the importance of school autonomy in its academies programme, and headteachers of independent schools are being attracted to them; future evaluations will reveal whether the freedom they have goes far enough.
- Some schools are much more effective than others in educating ability, and it is important that universities and employers recruit on the basis of what people have become, not what they might have been.
- HMC schools are extremely effective schools, and offer pointers as to how the quality of education can be improved throughout the education system.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Centre for Education and Employment Research has been commissioned by the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference to undertake a quantitative review of the educational contribution of its schools. The study is intended to be wide ranging, not only looking at the educational achievements and life chances of those who attend HMC schools, but also the schools' support for the disadvantaged, influence on the educational system as a whole, and international links.
- 1.2 The focus is primarily on the 250 schools of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC). It is an Association which includes the schools which most people have in mind when they are thinking of independent schools, or as they used to be called, 'public schools'. When asked in the House of Commons, in 1942, to define a public school, R A Butler (famous for his 1944 Education Act) replied 'it was a school in membership of the Governing Bodies Association or the Headmasters' Conference'. Although the report is centred on HMC schools, some of the data are available only for the independent sector as a whole. In order to enable the reader to be able to locate HMC amongst other independent schools, we begin by sketching out its history and composition, before moving on to describe briefly the other main independent school associations.

### **Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC)**

- 1.3 The origins of HMC can be traced back to 1869, when the headmaster of Uppingham, Edward Thring, asked 37 of his fellow headmasters to convene to consider setting up a School Society and Annual Conference. Twelve of the heads contacted by Thring attended the first meeting (Morrish, 1970). His initiative followed hard on the heels of the Clarendon Commission of 1864, and the subsequent Public Schools Act of 1868. The Royal Commission investigated 'the revenues and management of certain schools and colleges' - in fact, the nine great boys' boarding schools, Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, St Paul's, Merchant Taylor's, Harrow, Rugby and Shrewsbury. The Act enshrined in law their independence. Following the use in the Act of the term 'public school' a number of other schools not covered by the Act adopted the soubriquet.
- 1.4 Thring's schools did not have the status of the nine Clarendon schools and they were prompted to band together partly because they felt vulnerable to government involvement. But they were immeasurably strengthened when the Clarendon nine joined them. The Headmasters' Conference gradually grew both in size and prestige, and between 1879 and 1899 its membership rose from 89 to 101. By 1906, HMC had in place a constitution and a structure of sub-committees, including one to liaise with other school associations. Baron (1955) in his paper on the origins and early history of HMC pointed out that during the formative years these committees tended to be dominated by the Clarendon schools. But a major expansion of the independent sector and a shift to day schools occurred following the Labour government's decision in 1976 to end the Direct Grant scheme which funded some of the leading state grammar schools. They were given the option of either becoming fully comprehensive or to go their own way, and 119 chose to become fully independent (West, 1993).
- 1.5 In 1996, the Headmasters' Conference became the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference to reflect that more of its schools were becoming co-educational, sometimes under female headteachers, and indeed there are now three girls' schools in

membership. Currently, there are 250 HMC schools (listed in Appendix A), 211 in England, 20 in Scotland, five in Wales, eight in Northern Ireland, three in Eire, two in the Channel Islands, and one in the Isle of Man.

- 1.6 Full membership of HMC is limited by constitution to the headteachers of independent schools. Eligibility for full membership is dependent on the degree of independence enjoyed by the head and his/her school, and academic standards, including participation and performance at A-level or its equivalent (Public Schools Guide, 2008). It also has as 'additional members' the heads of about 30 maintained secondary schools in England, and as 'international members' the heads of 66 prominent schools overseas, principally in the Commonwealth and Europe.

### **Independent Schools Council**

- 1.7 The overarching representative body for the independent sector is the Independent Schools Council (ISC) which was first established in 1974 as the Independent Schools Joint Council. It was reconstituted under its present name in 1998 and it currently counts among its members 1,280 of the approximately 2,500 independent schools in the UK. Judged in terms of pupil numbers its membership is proportionally higher with about four-fifths of those in the independent sector attending schools in membership of ISC associations (those outside tend to be mainly small, and include a number of faith and progressive schools). ISC speaks and acts on behalf of the schools in its member associations, co-ordinates the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), and produces an annual statistical review upon which we have drawn. The work of the ISI is monitored by Ofsted. There were proposals in the 2007 Education and Skills Bill to transfer the registration of independent schools from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to Ofsted, but following lobbying from the independent sector, these are not being carried forward (Mansell, 2008).
- 1.8 ISC comprises a number of associations of which joint membership is possible. As well as HMC itself, it includes four other headteacher associations - the Girls' Schools Association (GSA), the Society of Headmasters and Headmistresses of Independent Schools (SHMIS), the Independent Schools Association (ISA), and the Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS). In addition, it has as members the Association of Governing Bodies of Independent Schools (AGBIS), the Independent Schools' Bursars Association (ISBA), and the Council of British International Schools (COBIS), and two affiliated associations, the Boarding Schools Association (BSA) and the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS). There were in 2006-07 in membership of the ISC in the UK and Eire, 250 schools in HMC, 188 in GSA, 64 in SHMIS, 120 in ISA and 7 in IAPS UK and Eire schools with pupils of secondary age.

### **Other Associations**

- 1.9 The Girls' Schools Association was established in 1974 by the amalgamation of the Association of the Heads of Girls' Boarding Schools and the Association of Independent and Direct Grant Schools, two sub-groups of the Association of Headmistresses founded in 1874 to represent the heads of all girls' schools, including independent, direct grant and maintained. The GSA today represents about 200 day and boarding schools in England, Wales and Scotland, over two-thirds of which are senior schools. The Society of Heads of Independent Schools (SHMIS) was founded in 1961. It represents about 100 independent schools, some of which are also in membership of HMC. It includes among its members boarding, single-sex and co-educational, and special schools.

1.10 The Independent Schools Association (ISA) was founded in 1879 - not long after the HMC. It represents some 300 schools. There is wide variation in size and age range, including schools specialising in pre-prep, junior, or senior stages, or providing for the full range. The schools can be either single-sex or co-educational, and approximately 65 have boarders. It includes a small number of special schools or schools which specialise in dance and drama. The Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS) represents the headteachers of more than 500 girls', boys' and mixed prep schools usually for children aged from 7/8 to 11/13, though seven have senior students.

**Methods**

1.11 In addition to drawing on the research and other literature, our review is based mainly on four lines of evidence: that obtained from two new datasets; a re-working of published statistics and interviews; biographical searches; and a survey of HMC schools asking about community involvement and partnerships. These methods are described briefly here and fully in Appendix B.

**Datasets**

1.12 Two new datasets were compiled, one for schools and the other for teachers. The Schools Database was assembled from data of the ISC and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). We included only those schools in the senior (secondary) age range. A limitation is that DCSF data is for schools in England only. The final dataset consisted of 4,052 schools in England, 3,125 maintained schools and 867 independent schools. Of the independent schools, 298 were not in membership of ISC and the information is necessarily incomplete. In addition, there were 60 independent schools in the database from elsewhere in the United Kingdom and Eire. Chart 1.1 gives the breakdown of the schools by association for the independent sector and by school type for the maintained sector. These are the figures for England and differ from the numbers given in paragraph 1.8 which are for the UK and Eire.

**Chart 1.1: Secondary Schools in England, 2006-07**

<b>Independent</b>		<b>Maintained</b>	
<b>Association</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>School Type</b>	<b>N</b>
HMC	211	Grammar	164
GSA	177	Comprehensive	2,733
SHMIS	60	Secondary Modern	176
ISA	116	City Technology College	10
IAPS	5	Academy	42
Not ISC	298		
<b>Total</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,125</b>

Sources: DCSF and ISC.

1.13 The Teachers Database was obtained from HESA and provides the first employment destinations of UK graduates who successfully completed secondary teacher training courses in England. The data are for the years 2002/03 through to 2005/06 and comprise 79,072 cases (17,473 in 2002/03; 19,892 in 2002/04; 20,687 in 2004/05 and 21,020 in 2005/06).

**Re-Working of Published Material**

1.14 Data from two statistical sources and one set of interviews have been re-analysed. HESA publishes annually, on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for

England (HEFCE), a set of Performance Indicators for Higher Education Institutions. One of the performance indicators is the school background of students and we have re-worked the data to make independent-state school comparisons. A second source of published statistics is the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) triennial surveys of the reading, maths and science abilities of 15-year-olds undertaken as part of its Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA). It publishes compendious data from the surveys (eg OECD, 2001, 2004 and 2007), and there is also a PISA website. Data on independent schools have been extracted and compared with those for government-run schools. The meaning of autonomy for schools has been explored further by re-visiting the transcripts of interviews we conducted in 2006 (Smithers and Robinson, 2007) with the heads of twelve independent schools in England and Wales, seven day and five with some boarding.

### ***Biographical Searches***

- 1.15 We have traced the educational background of members of the cabinet and top civil servants using government and other websites. The main source for members of HM government was the No 10 website where brief individual biographies are given. This was supplemented by members' personal websites, and *Who's Who*. The Civil Service website gives brief biographical details of Permanent Secretaries. In some cases the information was not available so a wider internet search had to be made. In addition, we have drawn on analyses by the Sutton Trust of the school backgrounds of those in the legal profession, parliament (House of Commons and House of Lords), medicine, business and journalism (Sutton Trust 2005a,b, 2006 and 2008). As an indicator of sporting prowess, we have collated the school backgrounds of medal winners in the 2004 and 2008 Olympics.

### ***Survey of HMC Schools***

- 1.16 An email was sent by HMC to its members asking for examples of community involvement and partnerships. It was suggested that examples could be taken from their responses to the recent Charity Commission Consultation on Public Benefit (2008). In a time frame of only a fortnight, 39 schools replied, some forwarding the full document.

### **The Report**

- 1.17 Our quantitative review begins by focusing on the A-levels studied in different types of school, how well the pupils do in them, and the consequences for university admissions. GCSE comparisons were not possible because independent schools are increasingly turning to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), offered by both Cambridge International Education and Edexcel which, in spite of its high reputation, is not recognised by the DCSF, and consequently does not appear in its datasets. In Chapter 3, we quarry the OECD's PISA data to ask whether the academic achievements of independent schools are unique to Britain, or are a worldwide phenomenon.
- 1.18 In the next two chapters, we consider in detail two reasons that have been put forward to account for the academic success of independent schools. In Chapter 4, we look at where the teachers were trained, what degrees they have, and their views on teaching in independent schools. In Chapter 5, we try to get at the heart of the relationship between school autonomy and educational quality through interviews with the headteachers of independent schools.
- 1.19 Chapter 6 considers whether the academic achievements of independent-school pupils carry forward into future lives. If the good examination results were an end in

themselves, this would be some indication that the schools had become particularly adept at exam preparation, but if the results were matched by subsequent success this would be evidence of the general quality of the education provided. A range of occupations, endeavours and sporting achievements are considered.

- 1.20 Chapter 7 looks at the wider contribution of HMC schools, both in this country and abroad. In particular, opening up access through bursary schemes, and links with other schools through Independent State School Partnerships (ISSPs), other academic, sporting and arts support, and participating in the academies programme. We then turn to community service more generally, including support for communities both in this country and overseas. In the final section we focus on international collaboration.
- 1.21 We draw the threads together in Chapter 8 around the unifying themes of quality and autonomy. We explore the popularity of independent schools with parents and how this relates to the achievements of the pupils, both while at school and in later life. We consider whether the success of independent schools can be put down to intensive exam preparation and intake, and argue that the first does not stand up and there have to be factors beyond the ability and social background of the pupils. We suggest that this is the independence of the schools, which allows headteachers and teachers to make curriculum decisions in the best interests of the children. The government has recognised the importance of autonomy in its academies programme, but we question whether independence has gone far enough. We suggest that there are further lessons to be learned from the quality and effectiveness of independent schools.

## 2. Pupil Participation and Performance

2.1 We first attempt to quantify the subjects offered by HMC schools and how well the pupils do in them in comparison with the state sector (it is not our purpose to make comparisons between the independent-school associations). We concentrate on A-levels, because many HMC schools enter their pupils for the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) in some subjects at least. This is highly regarded, but it is not accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). In consequence, it does not appear in the National Pupil Database (NPD) from which we have developed our dataset (see Chapter 1 and Appendix B). The NPD does, however, provide very full information on A-level entries and performance.

### Participation

2.2 We have analysed participation in two ways. In Chart 2.1, we do so by school and, in Chart 2.2, by pupil entries. Chart 2.1 shows that all HMC schools except Sevenoaks, which offers only the International Baccalaureate<sup>1</sup>, teach A-levels, as do all the grammar schools. Not all comprehensives and secondary moderns have sixth forms. Comparing the school totals in Charts 1.1 and 2.1 we can see that nearly half - in the case of comprehensives 44.2 per cent and secondary moderns 43.8 per cent - take pupils only up to age 16. Currently about 30 per cent of the academies/city technology colleges lack sixth-forms, but many are new and are building towards having them. Of the schools with sixth-forms, 3.8 per cent of the comprehensives, 8.1 per cent of the secondary moderns, and 16.6 per cent of the academies offered no A-levels in 2006-07, presumably preferring vocational qualifications and other alternatives.

2.3 As well as overall participation, Chart 2.1 lists the percentages of schools entering pupils for 30 different subjects. These are the subject categories used by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) in its annual publication of results in August (omitting a few subjects with low entries). The subjects are listed in Chart 2.1 in order of the percentages of HMC schools offering them. A clear pattern emerges with all or nearly all HMC schools teaching the mainstream subjects through to only a handful offering A-level sociology, law, media/Film/TV. In contrast, these were prominent in the provision of comprehensives, secondary moderns and academies. On the other hand, the pattern in grammar schools was similar to that of HMC schools with some notable exceptions, HMC schools being much more likely to offer economics, classics and Spanish, and grammars, general studies, psychology, ICT, computing - and sociology. The subjects tended to fall into one of six groups:

- Taught by **all HMC and all or nearly all grammar schools**, but somewhat fewer comprehensives and secondary moderns: English, maths, physics, chemistry, biology, history and geography.
- Offered by similar proportions<sup>2</sup> of **HMC and grammar schools**, but fewer comprehensives, secondary moderns and academies: French, German, music, 'other science', design and technology and business studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Several schools, including King's College School, Wimbledon, and Bedford School in 2007 offered the International Baccalaureate in addition to A-levels. KCS, Wimbledon has now phased out A-levels.

<sup>2</sup> Less than five percentage points difference between HMC and grammar schools, but at least 10 percentage points above other state schools, except for 'other science' where entries are generally low.

**Chart 2.1: Per Cent of Schools with Entries in Subject at A-level in 2007**

Subject <sup>1</sup>	HMC <sup>2</sup> (N=210)	Gram (N=164)	Comp (N=1,526)	Second Modern (N=99)	Academy/ CTC (N=37)
English	100.0	100.0	94.5	85.9	75.7
Maths	100.0	100.0	91.5	60.6	73.0
Biology	100.0	100.0	90.7	57.6	67.6
History	100.0	100.0	89.7	65.7	59.5
Chemistry	100.0	99.4	87.0	37.4	67.6
Physics	100.0	100.0	83.3	33.3	59.5
Geography	100.0	99.4	82.6	61.6	48.6
French	98.6	97.6	66.1	26.3	40.5
Further Maths	95.2	88.4	42.1	12.1	48.1
Music	93.8	90.9	60.6	25.3	24.3
Design & Technology	88.6	93.3	76.5	51.5	48.6
German	86.2	90.2	45.1	11.1	21.6
Business Studies	85.7	86.0	64.5	30.3	40.5
Economics	83.8	69.5	33.2	4.0	18.9
Sport/PE	81.4	84.8	79.1	62.6	54.1
Classical Studies	80.0	45.1	7.9	3.0	0.0
Spanish	78.6	59.1	28.8	10.1	35.1
Religious Studies	76.2	82.9	57.2	30.3	32.4
Expressive Arts <sup>3</sup>	76.2	73.2	72.1	42.4	43.2
Art & Design	61.0	56.7	61.7	61.6	56.8
Political Studies	53.8	70.7	30.5	13.1	18.9
ICT	41.4	55.5	39.9	19.2	35.1
Psychology	40.5	79.3	85.6	63.6	62.2
General Studies	30.0	71.3	45.0	15.2	17.6
Computing	23.3	36.0	17.0	4.0	13.5
Other Science	19.0	20.1	11.7	4.0	5.4
Media/Film/TV	12.9	42.7	64.8	61.6	56.8
Law	4.8	18.9	33.1	30.3	32.4
Critical Thinking	4.3	17.1	6.7	1.0	8.1
Sociology	3.3	47.0	68.3	42.4	45.9
Offering Any A-level	100.0	100.0	96.2	91.9	83.4

1. Subject categories are those used by the JCQ in its annual publication of results in August, but communication studies, Irish, Welsh and 'other modern languages', home economics, and 'other subjects' omitted as having only a few entries.

2. HMC schools in England except Sevenoaks School which offers only the International Baccalaureate.

3. Includes drama.

**Source:** CEER Database compiled from DCSF National Pupil Database plus other sources.

- Available in more **HMC schools than grammars** which, in turn, are more likely to offer the subject than other state schools: further maths, economics, classics and Spanish.
- Offered by similar percentages<sup>3</sup> of **HMC, grammar and comprehensive schools**: sport/PE, expressive arts, art and design.
- Most likely to be offered by **grammar schools**: religious studies, political studies, ICT, computing, general studies and critical thinking.
- Most likely to be offered by **comprehensives**: psychology, media/film/TV, law and sociology.

2.4 The A-levels offered by the secondary moderns and academies tended to be a dilution of the comprehensive pattern, with art and design, psychology and media/Film/TV prominent. There was a similar concentration in the newer subjects in academies, but also a strong showing for maths and the sciences, reflecting the inclusion of the city technology colleges in this category. The overall picture which emerges is of the HMC and grammar schools remaining as the bastions of the subjects which have traditionally been regarded as the mainstays of the curriculum, while the rest of the state sector has ventured more frequently into newer fields. Not all of these are acceptable to the leading universities as entry qualifications. The University of Cambridge, for example, published in 2006 a list of A-level subjects considered to be ‘less effective preparation’ (LEPs), which includes film studies, media studies, dance and sports studies. These are among the faster growing A-levels in the state sector and will have a bearing on university admissions (Cambridge Assessment, 2007b).

2.5 Chart 2.2 reinforces the different patterns in A-level studies. Participation is presented as the proportions of Year 13 studying the subjects. On this basis English emerges as the backbone of A-level studies in all types of school, but while other subjects forming the core of the traditional curriculum such as maths, the sciences, history and geography are have a strong presence in HMC and grammar schools, this is less the case in other state schools. In contrast, 10 per cent or more of the A-level students in the comprehensives, secondary moderns and academies were taking psychology and media/film/TV. Patterns of subject take-up were similar in the HMC schools and grammars, but there were also differences. Unlike the grammars, HMC schools were more likely to have high take-up in economics, further maths and classics. The grammars, on the other hand, were more like other state schools in their entries in general studies, psychology and ICT. Proportionally more HMC pupils were taking French, Spanish and German than state-school pupils, with the grammars much closer than the other school types, and they were more likely to be venturing into languages such as Russian, Japanese and Mandarin.

2.6 Another way of portraying differences in A-level take up is adopted in Chart 2.3. This shows the percentage of the school entries (leaving aside those from further education and other centres) coming from the different types of school, based on Inter-Awarding Body Statistics. In these statistics HMC schools are not distinguished, so the category has to be independent schools.

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<sup>3</sup> Within five percentage points

**Chart 2.2: Per Cent A-level Entries in Subjects Per School**

Subject <sup>1</sup>	HMC <sup>2</sup>	Grammar	Comp	Second Modern	Academy/CTC
Maths	34.0	32.7	16.0	6.8	14.3
English	24.4	32.6	30.1	23.6	19.9
Biology	23.0	28.2	15.1	6.2	13.4
History	22.2	21.4	15.6	8.0	7.3
Chemistry	21.4	23.5	10.1	3.0	10.5
Physics	17.8	15.6	7.3	2.8	6.4
Geography	17.4	15.2	10.7	6.8	3.2
Economics	14.4	9.0	2.7	0.4	2.2
Business Studies	11.4	13.1	9.4	4.7	6.1
General Studies	10.9	46.2	17.6	4.5	4.9
Religious Studies	9.6	8.5	6.5	3.3	4.2
French	9.5	7.9	3.2	1.2	2.6
Sport/PE	9.1	7.5	8.0	6.6	5.7
Design & Technology	7.9	8.1	7.6	5.7	5.1
Classical Studies	7.9	3.3	0.6	0.2	0.0
Further Maths	7.6	4.9	1.5	0.3	1.4
Computing	0.9	2.2	0.9	0.4	0.9
Critical Thinking	0.2	2.0	0.4	0.0	0.6
Psychology	6.7	18.5	17.5	11.5	9.8
Expressive Arts <sup>3</sup>	6.7	5.3	7.9	5.6	4.7
Art & Design	6.7	4.1	7.3	10.6	7.3
Political Studies	6.6	7.2	2.4	0.9	1.5
Music	5.3	3.2	3.1	1.6	1.1
Spanish	5.0	2.7	1.1	0.4	1.5
German	4.3	4.0	1.6	0.7	0.6
ICT	2.9	4.2	4.3	2.5	5.0
Media/Film/TV	1.9	6.0	11.1	15.3	9.1
Other Science	1.1	1.0	0.6	0.5	0.3
Sociology	0.5	6.2	9.7	7.7	5.7
Law	0.2	1.5	3.2	3.5	4.2

1. Subject categories are those used by the Joint Council for Qualifications in its annual publication of results in August, but communication studies, Irish, Welsh and 'other modern languages', home economics, and 'other subjects' omitted as having only a few entries.

2. HMC schools in England.

3. Includes drama.

**Source:** CEER Database compiled from DCSF National Pupil Database plus other sources.

2.7 Overall about 60 per cent of A-level entries come from comprehensive schools (including academies), 21 per cent from independent schools, 18 per cent from grammar schools, and two per cent from secondary moderns. Although amounting to only just over a fifth of the school A-level entries, independent-school pupils comprise 61 per cent of the classics entries and 44 per cent of those in further maths. Independent schools are prominent too among economics, French and physics entries. Grammar schools are also represented above average in these subjects, but there are

many fewer entries from comprehensives and secondary moderns than might have been expected from their entries overall.

**Chart 2.3: Per Cent of A-level Entries By School Type, 2007**

Selected Subjects	Ind	Grammar	Comp	Second Modern	All Schools N <sup>1</sup>
Classical Studies	60.9	19.3	19.4	0.4	4,607
Further Maths	44.1	19.5	36.1	0.3	6,101
Economics	38.3	19.7	41.7	0.3	13,444
French	32.8	20.8	45.7	0.7	11,215
Physics	28.1	20.9	50.4	0.7	20,850
<b>All Subjects</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>59.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>547,779</b>
Sport/PE	15.2	12.6	69.8	2.4	16,658
Psychology	9.5	13.6	74.8	2.1	30,298
Media/Film/TV	5.0	9.3	80.6	5.2	14,989
Law	4.4	7.3	85.6	4.4	4,802
Sociology	3.3	11.4	82.2	3.1	15,082

1. Totals for all entries graded A-U from schools; does not include further education, sixth form colleges, higher education, other, private entries or unknown.

**Source:** Inter-Awarding Body Statistics, A-level Entries 2007, published 2008.

- 2.8 The obverse is found in such subjects as media/film/TV, law and sociology, where over 80 per cent of the entries came from comprehensives, and take-up in the secondary moderns was out of all proportion to their entries overall. In contrast, relatively few were from independent and grammar schools. Psychology and sports studies show a similar pattern. General studies is much more a subject of state than independent schools. Less than ten per cent of the entries came from the independent schools compared to the 64.8 per cent from comprehensives and 24.7 per cent from grammars.

### Performance

- 2.9 In Chart 2.4 we turn from participation to performance, drawing once more on the CEER Schools Database. The subjects are ranked in terms of the proportion of HMC entries awarded an A grade. This brings out the excellent performance of HMC schools, even relative to grammar schools, which obtained markedly better results than other types of state school. In eight subjects more than half the entries from HMC schools achieved an A grade: further maths (where it was over two-thirds), maths, German, Spanish, 'other science', art and design, chemistry and critical thinking. In another ten, over 40 per cent of the entries were awarded an A grade against an overall average of 25.3 per cent. The lowest percentages of A grades in HMC schools were in ICT, sociology, sports studies, media studies and business studies. But these proportions have to be seen against the background of the percentages of A-grades awarded in the different subjects nationally. These ranged from 56.8 per cent in further maths to just 9.5 per cent in ICT. Seen in this light it was only in sociology that the performance of HMC schools was below the national average.
- 2.10 HMC schools did better than grammars in 24 of the subjects, better than comprehensives and academies in 29 subjects, and better than secondary moderns in all subjects. The exception in the case of the comprehensives and academies was sociology which was offered in only three per cent of HMC schools. Grammars also obtained better results in sociology as well as in media/film/TV, sport/PE and ICT, and

similar results to HMC schools in geography and business studies. But HMC schools outperformed state schools, including the grammars, even in subjects with relatively few entries like critical thinking (where over half got A grades compared with a national average of just over 10 per cent), psychology, computing and general studies.

**Chart 2.4: Per Cent A Grades at A-Level, 2007**

Subject <sup>1</sup>	HMC <sup>2</sup>	Gram	Comp	Second Modern	Academy/CTC	Overall <sup>3</sup>
Further Maths	67.1	62.0	49.0	25.0	46.6	56.8
Maths	62.8	49.9	29.6	16.1	21.6	43.7
German	62.3	39.8	24.8	11.2	21.3	37.2
Spanish	55.5	36.4	28.7	24.8	26.3	38.0
Other Science	54.4	49.9	18.0	6.7	26.9	23.3
Art & Design	53.8	40.0	22.7	13.1	14.5	30.4
Chemistry	50.5	36.6	19.1	9.6	12.9	31.9
Critical Thinking	52.0	15.9	12.8	-	5.6	10.6
Physics	48.4	38.9	19.9	12.1	13.9	30.8
French	47.9	39.0	23.1	14.5	29.9	36.3
Political Studies	47.9	39.7	20.9	8.9	12.4	31.9
Economics	47.8	40.5	19.0	8.3	6.8	33.2
Classical Studies	47.5	41.2	22.8	-	-	36.5
English	47.2	39.6	15.7	4.9	14.3	23.2
Religious Studies	46.4	34.9	16.8	10.7	23.2	27.0
Biology	42.8	35.9	15.3	4.4	11.4	26.2
Geography	42.7	42.2	16.7	4.9	7.6	27.3
History	42.3	38.1	14.0	5.5	12.3	25.3
Music	39.2	25.9	9.4	5.7	9.8	17.6
General Studies	38.0	20.9	9.9	3.0	11.3	12.3
Expressive Arts <sup>4</sup>	36.6	29.5	12.6	12.6	6.6	14.8
Psychology	35.6	28.9	13.0	5.9	15.7	19.0
Law	35.3	30.0	14.4	7.5	10.1	20.7
Design & Technology	33.1	29.6	11.3	6.6	7.1	17.7
Computing	30.1	26.7	13.2	14.6	15.3	15.6
Business Studies	29.0	29.5	12.3	3.5	16.5	18.0
Media/Film/TV	24.2	30.7	11.6	5.1	11.7	14.1
Sport/PE	23.5	26.8	10.1	2.4	11.4	15.4
Sociology	15.3	35.9	18.8	8.8	16.9	23.0
ICT	12.9	18.3	5.5	2.8	5.5	9.5
Average	42.4	35.1	17.7	8.9	15.4	25.3

1. Subject categories are those used by the Joint Council for Qualifications in its annual publication of results in August, but communication studies, Irish, Welsh and 'other modern languages', home economics, and 'other subjects' omitted as having only a few entries.

2. HMC schools in England.

3. Overall UK figures published by JCQ, August 2007.

4. Includes drama.

**Source:** CEER Database compiled from DCSF National Pupil Database plus other sources.

2.11 These results are only for one year and it is possible that the gap between independent and state schools has been narrowing. Tony Blair, as Prime Minister, in a number of major speeches expressed his wish that state schools would come to rival independent schools in their ‘first rate teaching and facilities’, and Gordon Brown, as Chancellor, found the money to increase recurrent funding by 60 per cent and double the schools’ building budget over the lifetime of the Blair governments (Smithers, 2007). But rather than the difference in educational achievement narrowing, it seems to have been getting bigger. In publishing the 2008 A-level examinations results, the JCQ showed that, over the seven sets of results since the A-level examination was restructured in 2002, the percentages of A grades awarded to independent-school pupils had increased by 9.1 per cent compared with a rise of 8.3 per cent in grammar schools, 3.9 per cent in comprehensive schools, 4.6 per cent in the further education sector (including sixth form colleges) and 1.2 per cent in secondary moderns.

### **A-Level Combinations**

2.12 So far we have concentrated on individual A-level subjects since that is what the database has been set up to do. But we can broaden the inquiry to include A-levels in combination by drawing on analyses conducted by Cambridge Assessment (2007a, 2007b). As in the present study, the primary data are the national examinations data compiled by the DCSF - in Cambridge Assessment’s case the 2006 results. Three of the findings take our story further: the number of A-levels taken per candidate; the proportions achieving three A-grades; and the proportions of less favoured subjects included in the combination.

### ***Full Course***

2.13 In both independent and grammar schools most of the A-level candidates were taking what might be described as a full A-level course of three or more subjects (excluding general studies). In independent schools it was 90.3 per cent and in grammars 91.8 per cent, but this was true of only seven out of ten (71.2 per cent) in the sixth form colleges, and even fewer in comprehensive schools (65.6 per cent) and further education colleges (59.7 per cent).

### ***Three A Grades***

2.14 Although independent and grammar school pupils were just as likely to take at least three A-levels, independent-school pupils were much more likely to attain the coveted three A grades. In 2006, they outstripped their counterparts in the grammar schools by more than eight percentage points - 31.4 per cent against 23.1 per cent - in spite of the grammar schools selecting on ability while independent schools have more diverse intakes. In comprehensive schools and the colleges the proportions attaining three A grades were less half that in the grammar schools.

### ***Less Favoured A-levels***

2.15 Not all A-level subjects are equally acceptable to universities and employers. As we saw in paragraph 2.4, Cambridge University has issued a list of what have come to be known as the LEP (less effective preparation) subjects. The advice it gives is that applicants should offer at least two non-LEP subjects. Again focussing on those candidates taking three or more A-levels, those from independent schools are less likely to include any LEP subject in the combination. Approaching two-thirds (63.7 per cent) steer clear of these subjects altogether. The grammar schools compare favourably with 62.1 per cent. But in comprehensive schools and the colleges, a sixth and a fifth respectively, of those taking three A-levels may be restricting their choices

in higher education and employment by taking two or more LEP subjects. This is a key point to bear in mind in the widening participation agenda.

### University Admissions

- 2.16 The main purpose of A-levels is to facilitate university entry. As it has grown, the university system has become more differentiated and although all those obtaining two or more A-levels are more or less assured of a place somewhere, not all those places are equally desirable. Some are fiercely contested while others have to be heavily marketed. By and large, the more sought-after the course, the higher the entry requirements. Given the excellent grades obtained by many independent-school pupils in non-LEP subjects, including physics and further maths where supply is not sufficient to meet demand even in the leading universities, it could be expected that they would have their pick.
- 2.17 Data from HESA bears this out. Chart 2.5 shows a re-working of one of the 2006-07 higher education performance indicators. These were originally devised and published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in 1996-7, but since 2004 they have been published by HESA on its behalf. In Chart 2.5 the universities have been grouped and ranked according to their position in the Sunday Times (2007) league table. The 120 universities are ordered in deciles with Oxford and Cambridge split from the top decile.

**Chart 2.5: Per Cent Admissions by School Sector<sup>1</sup>**

University Rank <sup>1</sup>	Independent	State
Oxbridge (Ranks 1-2)	44.7	55.3
Rest of First Decile (Ranks 3-12)	31.8	68.2
Second Decile (Ranks 13-24)	20.4	79.6
Third Decile (Ranks 25-36)	16.2	83.8
Fourth Decile (Ranks 37-48)	8.8	91.2
Fifth to Tenth Deciles (Ranks 49-120)	4.5	95.5

1. Universities ranked according to position in the 2007 Sunday Times Good University Guide league table.

Source: [www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/content/view/1167/141/](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/content/view/1167/141/).

- 2.18 Chart 2.5 shows clearly that the proportion of entrants from independent schools is closely related to the standing of the university. The more competitive the entry, the more likely it is for independent-school pupils to gain places. The implication of the performance indicators is that this is a problem since alongside the actual admissions totals are benchmarks showing what the admissions should be, and the leading universities are under pressure to meet them. Since the bulk of the income of most universities comes from the government via the funding councils, they are having to comply with a monopoly customer.
- 2.19 But there is confusion in our view between what we have called ‘potential intelligence’ and ‘educated ability’. It may be that based on tests at an early age some young people are not progressing as they should. But intelligence is not fixed. There is no ‘true’ level of intelligence for which it will be possible to develop some thermometer. The examinations at age 18 are an opportunity for young people to show how their abilities have developed.

- 2.20 Some schools are more effective than others. It has been claimed that pupils from state schools do better once at university, and so the A-level results over-estimate the abilities of independent-school pupils (Naylor and Smith, 2002; McNabb *et al*, 2002; HEFCE, 2003). But HEFCE was careful to point out that, ‘schooling effects are both complex and small compared to the effects of individuals’ prior educational attainment’, and it urged that the results be treated with caution. This was borne out by Smithers (2004) who extensively examined the proposition. He found that degree classes vary with university and that in within-university comparisons (eg, Education and Employment Committee, 2001; Odell, 2003) students from independent schools, if anything, tended to get the better degrees. But because students from state schools tended to be admitted on lower A-level entry grades, relative to entry grades it could be claimed that these students had improved more. Smithers concluded that results in the A-level examination were the best available single indicator of success at university, and in offering places universities already attempted to make rounded assessments of individuals. Any rigid system which sought to adjust attainment by reference to the average performance of a school would be less fair.
- 2.21 The high academic performance of HMC schools is undoubted. But is this a uniquely British phenomenon? What about other countries which have such schools? Fortunately, we can address this crucial question through findings of the international comparisons organised by the OECD. These also gather data on the economic, social and cultural backgrounds of intakes, so we can also test out whether any independent-school effect is merely an intake effect.

### 3. The International Scene

- 3.1 Since 2000 the OECD, through its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), has been conducting, on a three-year cycle, surveys of the educational achievement of 15-year-olds in its member countries and others. The tests are in reading, maths and science with an emphasis on the ability to apply knowledge. In each round the testing concentrates on one of the subjects with the other two in supporting roles. In 2000 the focus was on reading, in 2003 on maths, and in 2006 on science. As well as the tests PISA also collects information on, among other things, the type of school attended and the economic, social and cultural background of pupils. The samples tested include pupils from both independent and maintained schools, but it is not possible to distinguish in the case of the United Kingdom, HMC schools from other independent schools.
- 3.2 One of the ways PISA characterises schools is in terms of whether they are directly controlled or managed by the government of the country, and if so whether or not they are dependent on it for more than 50 per cent of core funding. PISA organises these data into three categories, which we have labelled: independent (schools which receive less than 50 per cent of their core funding from government sources); government-funded (not managed by the government, but receiving more than 50 per cent of their core funding from it); and government-run (schools which are directly controlled or managed by government agencies or other education authorities either directly or through governing bodies which are either appointed or elected by public franchise).
- 3.3 In Charts 3.1 to 3.3 we present PISA's results for the main subject studied in each of the three cycles so far, with the countries ranked in order of the performance of independent schools. Not all the OECD countries are included in the comparisons because not all have either or both independent or government-funded independent schools or if they do the percentages of the samples tested were too low (below three per cent). Nevertheless, comparisons on reading are possible for 21 of the 30 OECD countries as shown in Chart 3.1.
- 3.4 What is striking is that in ten of the 11 countries with independent schools, the pupils in those schools performed appreciably better than those in the government run-schools. And where, as in Spain, Austria and Korea, there were government-funded independent schools as well, these occupied an intermediate position. The only exception was Japan and we will return to this later. Similarly, where a country had government-funded independent schools these also tended to do better than the government-run schools. In 11 out of the 13 with schools in this category, the government-funded independents were ahead, the only exceptions being Denmark and Luxembourg.
- 3.5 Of all these school groups in 21 countries, the independent schools in the UK achieved the highest average score, the only one to reach a level one standard deviation above the mean. In 2000 over nine per cent of the UK sample was drawn from independent schools and this will have contributed to the UK's good performance overall. The gap between independent and government-run schools, at almost one standard deviation, was also the highest among all 21 countries. And whereas the UK's independent schools were the highest scorers, its government-run schools were behind five others with large enough samples from fully independent or government funded independent schools to be included in this comparison.

**Chart 3.1: Reading Performance 15-Year-Olds, 2000 by School Type<sup>1</sup>**

Country <sup>2</sup>	Independent <sup>1</sup>		Govt Funded		Government Run	
	Score	% Students	Score	% Students	Score	% Students
United Kingdom	614	9.2	-	-	515	90.8
New Zealand	599	4.8	-	-	528	95.1
Greece	549	4.1	-	-	468	95.9
USA	545	4.3	-	-	502	94.6
Spain	543	9.2	503	28.9	478	62.0
Austria	532	5.0	531	6.2	504	88.8
Korea	532	33.6	522	15.7	519	50.7
Switzerland	523	4.7	-	-	492	94.1
Japan	518	29.6	-	-	524	69.6
Italy	513	5.1	-	-	486	94.1
Mexico	492	14.0	-	-	413	85.1
Canada	-	-	573	3.8	532	93.8
Germany	-	-	563	4.1	481	95.9
Ireland	-	-	541	57.7	501	39.5
Netherlands <sup>3</sup>	-	-	538	73.9	514	26.2
Sweden	-	-	520	3.4	516	96.6
Czech Republic	-	-	502	5.7	491	94.1
Denmark	-	-	496	24.5	497	75.5
Hungary	-	-	494	4.4	480	95.2
Portugal	-	-	482	5.9	469	92.6
Luxembourg	-	-	440	12.1	444	87.9

1. The OECD distinguishes three categories of schools on the basis of income and control. Independent schools are schools which receive less than 50 per cent of their core funding from government agencies; government-funded schools are not managed by the government but receive more than 50 per cent of their core funding from it; and government run are schools which are directly controlled or managed by government agencies, or other education authorities, either directly or through governing bodies which are either appointed or elected by public franchise.

2. Country only included if 3.0% or more of the pupils attending this type of school are included in the sample. OECD countries not included are Finland, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Turkey (where all or almost all of the schools are government run); Australia, Belgium, France (all of which asked for these data to be withheld); Slovak Republic (did not participate).

3. Results may be unreliable due to low response rate.

Source: Adapted from OECD (2001). *Knowledge and Skills for Life First Results from PISA 2000*. Paris: OECD, Table 7.13, page 307.

- 3.6 Chart 3.2 sets out in the same form the maths results from the 2003 round of testing. There are some differences in the countries included due to sampling, with Greece and Austria falling out of the list, because they no longer meet the minimum three per cent threshold for the independent-school sample. Austria satisfies the criterion for government-funded schools and it is joined there by the Slovak Republic, which did not take part in 2000, and Finland. Nevertheless, very much the same pattern obtains. In 2003, PISA additionally provided OECD average scores, and as Chart 3.2 shows, both fully independent schools and government-funded independent schools, with scores of 530 and 526 respectively, did appreciably better than the government-run schools.
- 3.7 Of the nine countries with large enough samples from independent schools, these schools were ahead in six. Japan's state schools again have the higher scores, but in Italy and Switzerland the differences found for reading in favour of independent schools were not repeated for maths. In terms of the best overall performance,

independent schools in the UK were just behind Korea, but above all other groups of schools. The difference from government-run schools was again greatest in the UK, but there were also huge gaps in the other five countries.

**Chart 3.2: Maths Performance 15-Year-Olds, 2003, by School Type<sup>1</sup>**

Country <sup>2</sup>	Independent		Govt Funded		Government Run	
	Score	% Students	Score	% Students	Score	% Students
Korea	593	21.7	532	36.0	527	42.3
United Kingdom <sup>3</sup>	589	5.3	-	-	503	93.8
New Zealand	579	4.6	-	-	522	95.4
Spain	520	7.7	505	28.1	472	64.2
Japan	513	26.4	-	-	544	73.0
USA	507	5.7	-	-	483	94.3
Switzerland	497	3.8	-	-	528	95.3
Italy	452	3.5	-	-	468	96.1
Mexico	430	13.2	-	-	375	86.7
Canada	-	-	573	3.8	529	94.2
Germany	-	-	566	7.5	497	92.2
Netherlands	-	-	541	76.7	516	23.3
Finland	-	-	539	6.7	545	93.3
Slovak Republic	-	-	523	12.6	495	87.4
Austria	-	-	518	6.7	504	92.0
Sweden	-	-	516	4.3	509	95.7
Ireland	-	-	516	57.6	486	41.6
Denmark	-	-	511	21.7	515	77.8
Czech Republic	-	-	505	5.8	517	93.3
Hungary	-	-	504	9.8	489	88.9
Luxembourg	-	-	463	14.1	498	85.9
Portugal	-	-	459	4.2	465	93.7
OECD Average	530	3.8	526	12.8	494	93.8

1. For definitions of independent, government-funded and government-run see Chart 3.1.

2. Country only included if 3.0% or more of the pupils attending this type of school are included in the sample. OECD countries not included are Iceland, Norway, Poland, Turkey (where all or almost all of the sample is in government run schools); Australia, Belgium, France (all of which asked for these data to be withheld).

3. Results may be unreliable due to low response rate.

Source: Adapted from OECD (2004). *Learning for Tomorrow's World*, First Results from PISA 2003. Paris: OECD, Table 5.19, page 436-37.

3.8 Government-funded independent schools similarly achieved the higher scores in the 2003. In Canada and Germany their scores were only just behind the top three countries for independent schools - Korea, the UK and New Zealand. Of the 15 countries with government-funded independent schools, these schools obtained better scores than the government run schools in 11. Consistent with the 2000 results for reading there was no difference in Denmark, but the slight apparent advantage to government-funded schools in the Czech Republic and Portugal in 2000 was reversed in 2003, and a gap in favour of state schools opened up in Luxembourg.

3.9 Chart 3.3 shows the science results from the 2006 testing. Again both the independent schools and government-funded independent schools came out ahead. The OECD

country average score for fully independent schools is 544 compared to the 515 for government-funded independent schools and 496 for government-run schools.

**Chart 3.3: Science Performance 15-Year-Olds, 2006, by School Type<sup>1</sup>**

Country <sup>2</sup>	Independent		Govt Funded		Government Run	
	Score	% Students	Score	% Students	Score	% Students
New Zealand	603	4.5	-	-	527	95.5
United Kingdom	597	6.0	-	-	510	93.8
Ireland	558	3.4	519	54.8	488	41.8
USA	554	6.6	-	-	485	92.6
Korea	552	14.8	505	31.5	524	53.7
Greece	545	5.1	-	-	469	94.9
Spain	537	10.1	503	24.6	475	65.3
Japan	526	28.9	-	-	537	70.1
Switzerland	513	3.6	-	-	511	95.5
Mexico	455	10.3	-	-	402	89.7
Canada	-	-	578	4.3	532	93.0
Germany	-	-	555	21.6	514	94.3
Hungary	-	-	533	13.1	500	84.2
Sweden	-	-	531	8.3	501	91.7
Netherlands	-	-	527	67.0	524	33.0
Denmark	-	-	507	22.8	492	76.1
Slovak Republic	-	-	506	7.2	487	92.3
Austria	-	-	503	8.4	511	90.7
Czech Republic	-	-	492	3.5	514	96.2
Portugal	-	-	484	6.9	471	91.1
Luxembourg	-	-	465	14.4	490	85.6
OECD Average	544	4.1	515	10.5	496	85.6

1. For definitions of independent, government-funded and government-run see Chart 3.1.

2. Country only included if 3.0% or more of the pupils attending this type of school are included in the sample. OECD countries not included are Greece, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Turkey (where all or almost all of the sample is in government run schools); Australia, Belgium, France (all of which asked for these data to be withheld).

Source: Adapted from OECD (2007). *PISA 2006 volume 2 Data*. Paris: OECD, Table 5.4., pages 166-67.

- 3.10 Of the ten countries with large enough samples from independent schools (compared with 2003, Ireland and Greece included, and Italy out), these schools were ahead in eight. Japan showed the familiar advantage to state schools and once more performance was similar the two school types in Switzerland. Independent schools in the UK again scored a standard deviation above the mean, coming this time just behind New Zealand. The third highest score was obtained by the government-funded independent schools in Canada. Overall, of the 14 countries with the government-funded independent schools, these schools were ahead in nine. Results were consistent with the 2003 maths results in seven countries (five with the advantage to government-funded and two with the advantage to the government-run), but in five the relative performance changed with the government-funded performing somewhat better in Denmark and Portugal, less well in Korea, and the previous difference disappearing in the Netherlands and Austria.

3.11 In Charts 3.1 to 3.3 the overall pattern of the better performance in independent schools holds, but there is variation both with respect to subject and year. But if we treat the results from the main and minor studies as equivalent we can trace the differences in the same subject from round to round. Chart 3.4 follows the reading scores of the 11 countries with large enough samples from independent schools to be included in the 2000 analysis through to 2003 and 2006.

**Chart 3.4: Trends in Reading Performance of 15-Year-Olds, 2000-06, by School Type<sup>1</sup>**

Country <sup>2</sup>	2000		2003		2006	
	Ind	Govt Run	Ind	Govt Run	Ind	Govt Run
United Kingdom	614	515	583	502	577	492
New Zealand	599	528	583	519	573	518
Ireland <sup>3</sup>	586	501	-	-	544	494
Greece <sup>3</sup>	549	468	-	-	543	455
USA <sup>4</sup>	545	502	531	495	-	-
Spain	543	478	515	466	505	446
Korea	532	519	573	520	591	554
Switzerland	523	492	487	499	500	499
Japan	518	524	478	508	498	501
Italy <sup>5</sup>	513	486	478	477	-	-
Mexico	492	413	454	388	455	402
OECD Average			520	489	532	488

1. For definitions of independent, and government-run see Chart 3.1.

2. Country only included if 3.0% or more of the pupils attending this type of school are included in the sample.

3. Data for 2003 not included because proportion of sample from independent schools below 3%.

4. Data for 2006 collected but removed for technical reasons.

5. Data for 2006 not included because proportion of sample from independent schools below 3%.

Sources: OECD (2001). *Knowledge and Skills for Life First Results from PISA 2000*. Paris: OECD, Table 7.13, page 307; OECD (2004). *Learning for Tomorrow's World, First Results from PISA 2003*. Paris: OECD, Table 5.19, page 436-37. OECD (2007). *PISA 2006 Volume 2 Data*. Paris: OECD, Tables 5.4, pages 166-67.

3.12 The results for nine of the countries are consistent across the successive sweeps, with independent schools ahead in eight and in the ninth, Japan, the government-run schools tending to do better. For two countries, Switzerland and Italy, it looks as if the apparent advantage to independent schools in 2000 could have been a blip because, consistent with the maths and science results, there was little difference between the independents and government-run in 2003 or 2006. As we have already seen, independent schools in the UK were pre-eminent in 2000 and their high standing was confirmed in 2003 and 2006, although in 2003 they were joined at the top by New Zealand and in 2006 overtaken by Korea, where both independent and government-run schools showed considerable improvement in reading scores over the six years.

3.13 Overall, as shown by the OECD country averages, in reading as in maths and science, the independent schools performed better than the government-run schools. A clear and striking result you would think, but PISA itself has been inclined to discount the results as merely reflecting the differing backgrounds of the intakes. It has devised an index of economic, social and cultural background (ESC) based on the highest occupational status of mother or father, the highest level of education of mother or father, and access to educational and cultural resources, such as the number of books in the home. We examine, in Chart 3.5, the effects of controlling for ESC on differences

between independent and government-run schools. ‘Independent’ here includes both the fully independent and the government-funded independents.

**Chart 3.5: Effects of Economic, Social and Cultural Status**

Country <sup>1</sup>	Maths Scores 2003		Science Scores 2006	
	Raw Diff Ind <sup>2</sup> -State	ESC <sup>3</sup> Adjusted	Raw Diff Ind <sup>2</sup> -State	ESC <sup>3</sup> Adjusted
United Kingdom <sup>4</sup>	87	50	86	51
Germany	66	30	40	20
New Zealand	57	25	77	39
Greece <sup>5</sup>	-	-	76	30
Mexico	55	26	53	17
Canada	41	26	44	26
Spain	36	19	38	16
Ireland	31	16	34	20
Korea	28	14	-4	-2
Slovak Republic	27	16	15	-2
Netherlands	25	10	3	4
USA	24	4	63	28
Portugal	19	11	24	16
Austria	18	5	-1	-8
Hungary	17	5	34	12
Sweden	8	-7	30	17
Czech Republic	-3	-14	-23	-30
Denmark	-4	-5	17	8
Finland <sup>6</sup>	-5	-13	-	-
Switzerland	-21	-39	-2	-26
Italy	-22	-32	-18	-24
Japan	-31	-40	-13	-26
Luxembourg	-35	-28	-25	-20
OECD Average	33	24	25	8

1. Country only included if 3.0% or more of the pupils attending this type of school are included in the sample. Those not included are Iceland, Norway, Poland, Turkey (where all or almost all of the sample is in government run schools); and Australia, Belgium, France (all of which asked for these data to be withheld).

2. Scores are independent schools minus state schools where independent includes government dependent and government independent private schools.

3. ESC is an index of economic, social and cultural status based on highest occupational status of mother or father, highest level of education of mother or father, and access to educational and cultural resources at home

4. Results for 2003 may be unreliable due to low response rate.

5. Not enough independent-school pupils in 2003 sample.

6. Not enough independent-school pupils in 2006 sample.

Sources: OECD (2004). *Learning for Tomorrow's World*, First Results from PISA 2003. Paris: OECD, Table 5.19, pages 437 and OECD (2007). *PISA 2006 Volume 2 Data*. Paris: OECD, Tables 5 .4., pages 167.

3.14 In both maths in 2003 and science in 2006 we find that the independent schools were ahead in 15 out of the 22 countries on raw scores, but although adjusting for ESC lowered the margin they were still ahead, in each case, in 14 countries. The exceptions were Sweden in 2003 where an eight-point advantage to independent schools became a

seven-point advantage to government-run schools, and the Slovak Republic in 2006 when an initial 15-point advantage disappeared. In both these countries these were government-funded rather than fully independent schools.

- 3.15 Thus while the backgrounds of the intakes do have an effect, there is still a difference in favour of independent schools. This poses the question: what else is it about independent schools that enables them to do so well? And there is the parallel question which is beyond the scope of this project: what is it that in some countries, notably Japan, which consistently puts the government-run schools ahead? The OECD has noted that in Japan the government has a policy of school autonomy and so, as we shall be exploring in Chapter 5, it could be that the generally better performance of independent schools owes something to independence itself. But, first, we consider the teachers since research shows that after pupil ability, teacher expertise is the most important factor in school attainment (Smithers and Robinson, 2005b).

## 4. Teachers

- 4.1 Pupil ability, socio-economic background, resources, teachers, autonomy, history and tradition: what is it that puts independent schools ahead not just in Britain but worldwide? In this chapter we focus on teachers. In 2002 we conducted a survey of the qualifications of teachers in independent and maintained schools (Smithers and Tracey, 2003). We found that teachers in independent schools were more likely to have a degree in the subject they were teaching and to hold a good degree from a leading university. Among maintained schools, the grammar schools stood out as being most like the independent schools.
- 4.2 Smithers and Tracey's (2003) data refer to the established staffs of the schools and in this chapter we re-visit teacher qualifications to look at who it is that independent schools are attracting among the newly qualified. We commissioned HESA to provide special analyses of UK graduates who had successfully completed their postgraduate year of teacher training at the secondary level and who on qualifying had obtained a post in a maintained or independent school. The data covered the years 2002/03 (when there was re-classification of subjects) through to 2005/06. In all, the dataset consisted of 30,901 graduates in the four years who had been tracked into teaching in the secondary age range in England - 1,793 in independent schools (5.8 per cent) and 29,108 in state schools. The percentage entering independent schools is lower than might have been expected. With a teacher: pupil ratio of almost double that in the state sector, Smithers and Tracey found that about 13 per cent of teachers are to be found in the independent sector for the seven per cent of pupils. But we have also found that independent schools like to recruit experienced staff with a good track record (Smithers and Robinson, 2003, 2004 and 2005a), so perhaps this proportion of direct entrants from teacher training is not so surprising.

**Chart 4.1: Newly Trained Teachers<sup>1</sup> by Sector and University**

University Rank <sup>2</sup>	Independent		State	
	N	% <sup>3</sup>	N	% <sup>3</sup>
Oxbridge (Ranks 1-2)	143	13.4	921	86.6
Rest of First Quintile (Ranks 3-14)	470	6.7	6,569	93.3
Second Quintile (Ranks 15-28)	397	6.2	5,964	93.8
Third Quintile (Ranks 29-42)	242	4.7	4,929	95.3
Fourth Quintile (Ranks 43-56)	298	4.9	5,834	95.1
Fifth Quintile (Ranks 57-70)	227	4.5	4,841	95.5
Total <sup>4</sup>	1,777	5.8	29,058	94.2

1. Secondary PGCE qualifiers in England known to have entered either the state or independent sectors in the years 2003-06.

2. University teacher training departments ranked according to position in *The Good Teacher Training Guide* league table (Smithers and Robinson, 2008c).

3. Row percentage.

4. Does not include 66 from universities not included in the league table.

- 4.3 The pattern described by Smithers and Tracey (2003) is largely replicated among the new recruits. Chart 4.1 shows the newly trained teachers by the university of teacher training (Smithers and Tracey analysed by university in which the degree was obtained; trainees may undertake their training in the same university, but they need not). The university teacher training departments have been ranked according to their Ofsted ratings, entry qualifications and employment records (Smithers and Robinson, 2008c).

The 70 providers have been split into quintiles, with Cambridge and Oxford which top this, as other league tables, separated out.

- 4.4 Chart 4.1 shows a clear relationship between recruitment of newly trained teachers to independent schools and a university's standing. The recruits were more than twice (2.3 times) as likely to come from Cambridge and Oxford, even though the trainees there are encouraged to enter the state sector (Smithers and Robinson, 2008a, Fenn, 2008). They were also more likely to come from the other universities in the first quintile and the second quintile. But the lower ranked universities yielded relatively few independent school recruits.
- 4.5 Chart 4.2 shows a similar analysis by the class of degree. Again the recruits to independent schools were more likely to have been awarded a first or upper second.

**Chart 4.2: Degree Classes of Newly Qualified Teachers<sup>1</sup>**

Degree Class	Independent		State		Total N
	N	% <sup>2</sup>	N	% <sup>2</sup>	
First Class Honours	196	7.9	2,283	92.1	2,479
Upper Second	903	6.0	14,087	94.0	14,990
Lower Second	484	4.9	9,388	95.1	9,872
Third	58	5.2	1,058	94.8	1,116
Pass	19	5.3	340	94.7	359
Unclassified	19	4.9	372	95.1	391
Total <sup>3</sup>	1,679	5.7	27,528	94.3	29,207

1. All secondary PGCE qualifiers in England known to have entered either the state or independent sectors in the years 2003-06.

2. Row percentage.

3. Does not include 1,694 of unknown degree classification.

Source: HESA

**Chart 4.3: Subjects of Secondary Newly Qualified Teachers<sup>1</sup>**

Subject	Independent		State	
	N	% <sup>2</sup>	N	% <sup>2</sup>
Classics	38	42.7	51	57.3
Architecture, Building and Planning	10	10.5	85	89.5
Physics	41	8.2	460	91.8
History	126	7.7	1,513	92.3
Chemistry	58	7.5	718	92.5
Geography	120	7.3	1,513	92.7
Philosophy	29	7.3	370	92.7
European Languages	147	7.2	1,883	92.8
Economics	21	6.9	285	93.1
All Other Subjects <sup>3</sup>	1,077	5.0	20,576	95.0

1. Secondary PGCE qualifiers in England known to have entered either the state or independent sectors in the years 2003-06.

2. Row percentage.

3. Does not include 1,780 whose subject was not recorded.

Source: HESA

- 4.6 The third cross-tabulation, Chart 4.3, shows the recruitment of newly trained secondary age range teachers to the independent and state sectors by degree subject. Of the small number with classics degrees, 42.7 per cent took posts in independent schools compared with the overall ratio of 1 in 20 joining this sector. Physics, chemistry, history, geography, language and economics teachers were also proportionally more likely to go to independent schools, reflecting the strong representation of these subjects in the sector revealed in Chapter 2. When we looked in detail at physics as a shortage subject (Smithers and Robinson, 2008a) we found that the physics teacher trainees were attracted to the independent sector because it afforded them the opportunity of specialising in their subject rather than having to teach biology as well. They also mentioned that they wanted to get on with teaching rather than being enmeshed in crowd control.
- 4.7 The new analysis bears out the findings of Smithers and Tracey (2003): the independent sector is able to attract well qualified newly trained teachers from the leading universities, with the difference from the state sector being most marked in the shortage subjects. Similar findings have been made by Green *et al* (2007b) using data from the ISC and two of the government's nationally representative micro-data surveys. But the differences among the newly trained are less than for the teaching complement as a whole. Elsewhere we have found that over three times as many teachers move from the state to the independent sector as go in the opposite direction (Smithers and Robinson, 2000).
- 4.8 Teachers move for a wide variety of extrinsic reasons such as the need to relocate, dissatisfaction with salary, coming to the end of a fixed term contract, promotion, personality clash, housing costs, long commute, or just wanting a change. But, overwhelmingly, the reasons given to us for moving to independent schools in interviews in three studies (Smithers and Robinson, 2001, 2003 and 2008a) were to do with the teaching itself - being treated as a professional, having more freedom to decide what to teach and how to teach, teaching children who want to learn, and having the time, facilities and back up to do so satisfyingly. Sometimes this was expressed in terms of the positive attractions of teaching in an independent school and, on other occasions, more as escaping from the prescriptions of state education. The following extracts illustrate the two poles.

It was an opportunity that just came up. A former colleague is ICT co-ordinator at the school I am moving to, we have always kept in touch. A post was available in the ICT curriculum area and she asked me if I would like to join. I looked around and got a really good feel for the school. I'll just be teaching IT, rather than D&T as well, as I currently do, so I will become better focussed. I am being offered a chance to further my teaching skills instead of having to work through yet another questionable government initiative. When I visited the school I asked some of the teachers why they liked it and they said they trust you, they treat you like a professional. (*Female, 40-44, D&T and some ICT, from an 11-18, girls' school to independent boys' school.*)

I have very mixed feelings about leaving. I am sad to be leaving friends, colleagues and students behind. But I am very pleased to be able to shake off the shackles of the national curriculum. My dissatisfaction is about what I have had to teach and the unbelievable record keeping that was required. It was taking up far too much of my time and mostly to little purpose. I began to resent what I was doing towards the end of my time in the school. I didn't like the prescriptiveness

of things. (*Male, 40-44, teaches English, from girls' grammar school to independent girls' school.*)

I will never go back to teach in a maintained school. The kids were awfully disrespectful, aggressive and absolutely not motivated as their parents did not seem to care either. Here the children want to learn, there is more money in the department and I can let my imagination go. (*Female, 25-29, teaches French, from coeducational comprehensive school to coeducational independent school.*)

I now enjoy a very pleasant working atmosphere, pupils who are keen to learn, a well-managed school. I am able to teach. I have been freed from endless after school meetings fruitlessly chasing after the latest and ill-thought out government initiatives. And I am paid more. (*Male, 55-59, physics, from coeducational comprehensive to boys' independent school.*)

- 4.9 Independent schools are thus able to attract well qualified experienced staff from their state counterparts. They also able to recruit directly from the graduate labour pool since their teachers do not have to have qualified teacher status. Not being bound by national pay scales gives them the freedom to do what is necessary to recruit teachers of the quality required from whatever sources are available. Bearing in mind the importance of teacher expertise to student outcomes, it is reasonable to infer that a key factor in the quality of education provided by independent schools is the teachers they are able to attract.

## 5. Headteachers

- 5.1 It is notable that the schools whose pupils obtain the best results at A-level are selective, so the ability of the pupils is an important factor. It is also true the pupils in independent schools tend to come from more prosperous socio-economic backgrounds. But ability and background are not enough to account for the success of independent schools. Grammar schools tend to be even more selective than independent schools. If parents have the choice of an excellent school free at the point of use and an excellent school for which they have to pay fees, most will tend towards the former. Grammar schools, therefore, tend to have first choice of the most able. Yet, as we saw in Chapter 2 (Chart 2.4, page 11), HMC schools did better than grammar schools at A-level in 24 of the 30 subjects considered.
- 5.2 Similarly, background differences alone do not account for independent schools tending to do better than government-run schools. The international comparisons of the PISA surveys show that even when the economic, social, and cultural background of the pupils is controlled statistically, independent schools still tend to come out on top. So although ability and social background play a part, there have to be factors beyond them. In Chapter 5 we showed that the teachers tend to be better qualified. But the PISA results discussed in Chapter 3 point to another factor, namely the importance of being independent. From country to country we saw independent schools tending to do better than government-funded schools which themselves tended to do better than government-run schools.
- 5.3 In this chapter we explore what it is about being independent that of itself has a bearing on the quality of education. We draw on interviews with the heads of twelve independent schools in England, eight in HMC and four in GSA schools, in England and Wales which were also analysed in Smithers and Robinson (2007). Of the schools, three were boys, four girls and five co-educational. Seven were day and five boarding and day. Our chief interest here is to explore what autonomy means in practice and how it can account for differences between independent and state schools. Two main themes emerged: (1) the benefits of being independent; and (2) the advantages of relative freedom from government interference.

### **Independence**

- 5.4 The independence of independent schools, freedom from reliance on government money, comes at a price – literally. They are businesses. It is not a matter of running up a deficit and having knuckles rapped by the government or local authority. If they do not turn a profit then that's it. Having to survive in the market place has a number of consequences. The nature of accountability is quite different from that in the state sector. Rather than having to comply with the requirements of the government as the monopoly customer, independent schools are answerable to parents for the quality of the education they are providing. Parents will be influenced by what they see and hear, and what their children tell them, but also by the reactions of universities and employers. What the schools offer is therefore under continual scrutiny by those most directly affected, and this will act to lever up standards. This emerges in the nature of their leadership, relationship with parents, and governance. But quality is not externally driven. Independence confers the freedom and flexibility for the schools to carry forward their visions of the intrinsic purposes of education.

### ***Role of Headteacher***

- 5.5 The heads suggested that they were much more concerned with admissions than their counterparts in the maintained sector.

The forces I need to respect most are the market forces, what the parents are saying about us at their dinner parties, not to put too fine a point on it, and the requirements of the universities. These are far more powerful than a government White Paper. (*coeducational day school*)

My main job is in profiling the school, seeing prospective pupils and keeping the current ones happy. If I can keep the school full then that's the job half done. (*boarding school*)

### ***Parent Power***

- 5.6 Genuine parent power leads to high expectations:

Parents put us under quite a lot of pressure; because they are paying for it their expectations are higher and they are more demanding. (*girls' day school*)

### ***Governors***

- 5.7 Ultimately the head's power depends on the governors who are more powerful in independent schools than state schools. Governors bring a lot to a school and are one of the ways in which it can maintain continuity and pre-eminence. Many governing bodies are stacked with successful former pupils:

The role of the governing body in a school like this is absolutely crucial with a representative spread of professional abilities. The output of the school is such that we have some pretty high-powered people who left the school 20-30 years ago and a healthy number are very happy to give their time and experience freely. (*boys' day and boarding*)

### ***Freedom from Direct Government Involvement***

- 5.8 The headteachers felt privileged in their freedom and flexibility to respond rapidly to an evolving world. The head of a co-educational day and boarding school put it this way:

Independent school heads feel they can fulfil a vision because they have the scope to make their decisions and not have the LEA breathing down their necks. I do not have to ask permission to introduce Mandarin or the Baccalaureate. I present it as a business case to my governors to see if we can afford it and a quick response from them means we can make decisions faster and be more effective as an institution.

- 5.9 He went on to contrast the independent and state sectors:

I suspect the differences are significant and probably growing. We are not subject to what appears to be the remorseless pressure of targets, Ofsted regimes, the bidding culture, and all the other government initiatives. There is the very serious pressure to recruit in my sector, the competitive pressure, which the maintained sector does not have in the same way. But we are independent in that we can choose how to spend our fee income. We are not tied in to all the legislative commitments. Our ability to recruit and retain good teachers because of our ethos alone gives you a much more stable school.

- 5.10 But above all the headteachers saw the contrast with their state counterparts most sharply in terms of their relative freedom from the constraints of central direction and accountability.

I sat down with a couple of local state heads to discuss co-operation over sixth form provision, for example, using specialised diplomas. They said it wouldn't work because 'whose results will they be?' They are totally driven by results and league tables. They are so, so answerable. I think it is more cold blooded. It ceases to be about people and starts being about statistics. It is not why people are in education I am sure. (*coeducational day and boarding*)

- 5.11 They were conscious that the central direction could lead to initiatives which, in their view, were more for show than intrinsically improving education. The head of an boys' school had heard from the heads of nearby state schools

that many of the directives and many of the inputs both locally and nationally are at a distance from what is required at the chalk face. These directives are often designed to be cosmetic and many of them for PR purposes to cover, for example, some young people not seeing any point whatsoever in being in school.

- 5.12 He went on to say:

You can bring in initiatives about inclusion, self-assessment, school dinners and so on, but until a government has a kernel of understanding of what schools are about, what they can do and what they cannot do, I don't think that initiatives of any sort are going to meet with wholehearted, transforming success, particularly at a time of teacher shortages. Until there is that honesty and an engagement with society about what schools should be and following that an embracement by society about what schools are designed for, then I don't think introducing this that and the other is going to achieve a great deal.

- 5.13 Two main themes emerged in the headteachers' comments: 'presence' and 'absence'. The 'presence' is the positive benefits of being able to develop the intrinsic purposes of education and different nature of accountability. The 'absence' is the relative freedom from government involvement. This is not a comment on the present government - although British governments since 1997 have more than their predecessors taken responsibility for running education - but on the principle of central direction. The headteachers we interviewed contrasted their freedom to take decisions close to the teaching and learning with the constraints on state schools which were continually having to comply with external directives emanating from offices far away, perhaps occupied by those with little or no classroom experience other than having been being pupils themselves.

- 5.14 Being able to take important decisions close to the classroom has manifested itself in a number of ways which have benefited the education system as a whole, including the curriculum and qualifications. Without the independent schools' freedom to choose, physics, chemistry and biology would have disappeared as individual subjects up to the age of 16. That was the intention of the national curriculum and GCSE science and it was only the resistance of the independent schools that persuaded the then government to retain the separate science GCSEs. Some state schools took advantage of this concession, but most switched, as they had to, to general science. This led to a disastrous fall in A-level physics entries and the closure of 17 university departments (Smithers and Robinson, 2006a). The development of chemistry was almost as seriously impaired. It is only now, twenty years on, that a government has woken up to the consequences and is encouraging state schools to revert to the individual sciences through such measures as an entitlement for all pupils who do well in science in the tests for 14-year-olds to take them. In similar vein, independent schools currently appear to be resisting the introduction of the Diploma as the qualification for 14-18

year-olds and the outcome is likely to be similarly beneficial to the education system as a whole (Smithers and Robinson, 2008b).

- 5.15 Independent schools have also been able to exercise their freedom over the curriculum and qualifications in other ways. Many are choosing to enter their pupils for the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) in one subject at least (Woolcock, 2008). The IGCSE, like the old O-level, is examined at the end rather than in a series of modules through course work. This frees up the schools from continually having to examine and allows a rigorous and integrated treatment of the subject, which the schools regard as a more suitable preparation for A-levels. But IGCSEs are not counted in league tables, so state schools are effectively tied to GCSEs - which have been put through numerous changes in the name of accessibility. Freedom to choose also means that subjects like further maths, economics and classics, as we saw in Chapter 2, continue to be strong in the independent sector. Without this involvement and example, these subjects could have collapsed at A-level with knock-on effects for universities. But independence has not just been about taking a cool look at the changes imposed on state schools. The flexibility conferred by autonomy has enabled independent schools to be in the vanguard of a number of important educational developments, for example, extending the range of modern languages to include Russian, Mandarin and Japanese amongst others, and taking up qualifications like the International Baccalaureate and the Cambridge Pre-U.
- 5.16 The numerous centrally-driven demands and directives imposed on state schools has made it increasingly difficult to recruit headteachers in the sector, so much so that the role itself has been called into question (Smithers and Robinson, 2007). There is a proposal on the table that executive heads without classroom or educational experience should be appointed for their managerial skills. But the heads of independent schools interviewed in this chapter were adamant that, given the centrality of learning and the expectations of parents, teaching experience was essential. They had found themselves in tough competition to be appointed and thought the independent sector was able to secure very good heads from within education. Moreover, they had not had difficulty in identifying potential future heads on their staffs and replacing them when they moved up. The talents of the headteachers of independent schools are much in demand and an interesting trend is emerging for them to be called upon to play a part in the academies programme - which is the present government's tentative step toward recognising the importance and benefits of school autonomy in the state sector - even to the point of becoming principals themselves.

## 6. Life Chances

- 6.1 The examination results of independent schools are there for all to see. In this chapter we explore through biographical material whether the pupils' school achievements carry forward into future lives. It would be a criticism of the examinations and the schools if the A-level grades obtained were just an end in themselves; if they were like a rocket which shot into the sky only to drop right back to earth. If this were the case it could be argued that the schools were merely offering a good training in examination techniques, and the underlying education which the examinations are intended to attest to was not taking place. If, on the other hand, success at school were to be followed by success in later life, then this could be evidence that the schools were developing enduring abilities. There are some who would attribute the success to home background and the social networks formed at school, and these may well play a part. However, if the learning itself were not vital, academic success would not be so very important to independent schools and they could be run much more cheaply as finishing schools fostering useful contacts. The question thus becomes: do independent-school pupils, in fact, enjoy above average success in their lives?
- 6.2 The Sutton Trust, particularly, has carried out analyses of the school backgrounds of the legal profession, members of parliament and top journalists. Chart 6.1 summarizes the findings. It emerges that, in each case, those educated at independent schools have a presence out of all proportion to the seven per cent attending these schools. There are also indications in the data that the more senior the position, the more likely the independent schools to show strongly. More office holders among MPs came from independent schools than did backbenchers. More barristers came from independent schools than did solicitors. It is the top journalists where over half are educated at independent schools.

**Chart 6.1: School Backgrounds of Lawyers, MPs and Journalists**

Occupation	N	Per Cent		
		Independent	Grammar	Other State
Barristers <sup>1</sup> (2004)	259	68	22	10
Solicitors <sup>1</sup> (2004)	298	55	34	11
MP Office Holders <sup>2</sup> (2005)	206	42	22	36
MP Backbenchers <sup>2</sup> (2005)	352	29	27	44
Top Journalists <sup>3</sup> (2006)	95	54	33	14

1. Adapted from Sutton Trust Briefing Note: *The Educational Backgrounds of the UK's Top Solicitors, Barristers and Judges*, June 2005.

2. *The Educational Backgrounds of Members of the House of Commons and House of Lords*, Sutton Trust, December 2005.

3. *The Educational Background of Leading Journalists*, Sutton Trust, June 2006; five of the top 100 educated abroad.

- 6.3 In further analyses, the Sutton Trust (2008) elicited the school backgrounds of 100 ministers and shadow ministers, 100 serving high court judges, 100 leading journalists in the print and broadcast media, 100 in the medical profession serving on councils of the royal medical colleges or other national representative bodies, and the chief executives of the FTSE 100 companies. It found that of this top 500 across the fields of law, politics, journalism, medicine and business who were educated in the UK more than half went to independent schools compared to just under one third (29 per cent) to grammar and 17 per cent to comprehensive schools. High Court judges were most likely to have been to independent schools (70 per cent), followed jointly by leading

journalists and business men (54 per cent), then the medics (51 per cent), and in fifth place, politicians (38 per cent).

- 6.4 We have carried out similar analyses to those of the Sutton Trust on the school backgrounds of cabinet ministers and senior civil servants. Chart 6.2 shows that these bear out the earlier studies. Tellingly, over a third of the Brown cabinet in August 2008 were from an independent school background. The senior civil service, we found, was second only to barristers in the percentage from independent schools.

**Chart 6.2: Schools of Members of Cabinet and Permanent Secretaries**

Office	N	Per Cent		
		Independent	Grammar	Other State
Cabinet <sup>1</sup> (2008)	23	35	22	44
Permanent Secretaries <sup>2</sup> (2008)	31	61		39

1. Cabinet as in August 2008 from [www.number-10.gov.uk/](http://www.number-10.gov.uk/).

2. [www.civilservice.gov.uk/](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/) 11 not available.

- 6.5 Although the occupations covered do range from the law to business, the analyses may give the impression that independent-school pupils head only towards a limited number of fields. But research of this kind requires a listing of a clearly defined membership which ideally contains information on school attended. The arts and media are less tidy in this respect. But ask any independent school headteacher and he or she can reel off famous former pupils. Old Tonbridgians, for example, include: Peter Fincham, ex Controller of the BBC One and now Director of ITV; Charlie Parsons, ex Planet 24 and currently involved in the Take That musical ‘Never Forget’ in the West End; the pop group Keane; the actor, Dan Stevens, who appeared in the BBC dramas ‘The Line of Beauty’ and ‘Sense and Sensibility’; Chris Hollins, BBC television sports presenter; and Anthony van Laast MBE (aka Anthony Hawkins) acclaimed performer with London Contemporary Dance Theatre and noted choreographer of many West End shows including ‘Mamma Mia’ and ‘Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat’. Manchester Grammar School can boast, among others, Nick Hytner, Director of the Royal National Theatre, Chris Addison, the comedy writer and actor, best known for ‘The Thick of It’, and Mike Atherton, the former England cricket captain.
- 6.6 One area outside the professions where there is a comprehensive listing is of Olympic medal winners. We have analysed the British the medal winners in Athens and Beijing. In 2004, Table 6.3 shows that 41.2 per cent of the gold medal winners had been to independent schools. As impressive as this is, it not as high as has recently been reported in the press where, for example, Syed (2008) claims the figure to be 58 per cent. He also reports that in the previous three Olympics it was 45 per cent. We do not know how he reached the Athens figure, but there is potential for confusion between events and winners since medals can be won jointly or a person may win more than one. In 2004, nine gold medals were won by 17 people, counting Kelly Holmes who won both the 800 and 1500 metres in athletics twice. Of these, seven had attended independent schools - one in cycling, the four rowers in the men’s coxless fours, and two in sailing.
- 6.7 The overall proportions of medals won by those who had attended independent schools were similar in 2004 and 2008, 33 per cent and 37 per cent respectively. Ten gold medals were won in 2008 out of the 30 whose school backgrounds we were able to trace. Of these, three were won in cycling by Chris Hoy, four in sailing and three in

rowing. HMC schools were strongly represented among the medal winners from independent schools. Nine of the ten golds were won by former HMC pupils. Of the 28 gold, silver and bronze medal winners from independent schools in 2008, 20 were from HMC schools. These included eight in rowing, four in cycling, three in sailing, two in equestrian and one each in swimming, canoeing and the modern pentathlon.

**Chart 6.3: Olympic Medal Winners**

Winners	N	Per Cent	
		Independent	State
<i>Athens Olympics</i>			
Gold Medals <sup>1</sup>	17	41.2	58.8
Other Medals <sup>2</sup>	36	28.1	71.9
All 2004	53	32.7	67.3
<i>Beijing Olympics</i>			
Gold Medals <sup>3</sup>	31	33.3	66.6
Other Medals <sup>4</sup>	46	40.0	60.0
All 2008	77	37.3	62.7

1. 17 winners of 9 events.

2. 36 winners of 21 events, 32 traced.

3. 31 winners of 19 events, 30 traced.

4. 46 winners of 28 events, 45 traced.

- 6.8 In 2004 silver and bronze medals were won by former independent-school pupils in equestrian (4), rowing (3), modern pentathlon and badminton, and, in 2008, in rowing (8), equestrian (5), swimming (2), modern pentathlon, cycling and canoeing. In contrast to the days of *Chariots of Fire* and post-war Olympics, none of the showcase athletics medals in either 2004 or 2008 was won by independent school alumni, but there again not many were won by Britain.
- 6.9 Many independent schools have excellent and wide-ranging sporting facilities and it may be that the association between attending one and Olympic success comes through the opportunity to participate in sports, notably rowing, which those going to state schools would not necessarily have available to them. Among other sports, former independent-school pupils tend to be strongly represented in the international rugby and hockey teams, but of England's top footballers only Lampard was educated at an independent school. UK independent schools used to provide many of the England cricket team, but more recently this has been masked by the increasing numbers born overseas.
- 6.10 The implication of the Sutton Trust reports is that the under-representation of those educated at state schools in top jobs is something of a problem. In commenting on the results for the legal profession it says: 'There may be significant scope to open up the profession to people from a wider range of educational backgrounds, so that the most able are given the opportunity to succeed'. In interpreting the findings on members of parliament, the Trust says: 'It is also the case that these findings are symptomatic of a wider issue - the educational apartheid which blights our system'. In commenting on the results for journalists it says: 'Not only does this say something about the state of our education system, but it also raises questions about the nature of the media's relationship with society: is it healthy that those who are most influential in determining

and interpreting the news agenda have educational backgrounds that are so different from the vast majority of the population?’

- 6.11 But there is another way of looking at these data. It could be that the senior positions have been obtained on merit as a result of the education received. There could be no stronger advocate of balancing up social groups than Gordon Brown and yet when he appointed his first cabinet - choosing the best people for the jobs and probably taking no account of school background - it contained over a third educated in independent schools. While there can be elements of who you know rather than what you can do in getting a top job, we should not ignore the fact that we do not inherit a fixed amount of brain power at birth but a potential that is continually developed through life.
- 6.12 The major environmental impacts are during the early years when there are strong influences of home background and school attended. In a further report from the Sutton Trust, Blanden and Machin (2007) draw on a longitudinal study of children born in the year 2000 (the Millennium Cohort) to test the effects of home background on demonstrated early ability. They find, as did Feinstein (2003) using data from a longitudinal study begun in 1970, that the ability/intelligence of low scoring children aged three from homes of high socio-economic status improves considerably by the age of five, while high scoring children in low socio-economic status homes lags behind. In Feinstein’s study the two groups had actually crossed over by the age of seven. This can be interpreted from the point of view of social inequality and social mobility, but it vividly illustrates that this differential development occurring during schooling. Those leaving school are what they have become, not what they might have been given their potential aged three, five, seven, or 11.
- 6.13 Recent economic analysis also points to the powerful influence of schooling. Research by Green *et al* (2007a), using national datasets, found that for people who had been at independent schools in the 1980s there was a premium of between 16 and 17 per cent on salary over their counterparts from the maintained sector. They attribute the premium in part to the academic qualifications achieved in independent schools. The researchers believe that the premium will, if anything, get larger because of the increased demand for highly educated people in the labour market. The researchers estimate the rate of return on the investment in fees to be about seven per cent, which is broadly equivalent to the returns on other capital. They conclude, ‘taken together, our findings are consistent with the idea that the private school sector has been successful in transforming its ability to generate the academic outputs that are most in demand in the modern economy’, which is all the more impressive since the authors betray an hostility to the independent sector.
- 6.14 The evidence of this report is that independent-school pupils do well academically at school and move on to the top universities and enjoy success in their later lives. This can be seen as ‘a social mobility issue’, but we would argue that it is more ‘a quality of education issue’. The temptation with social mobility interpretations is to think it is necessary to balance numbers up by family or school background, or where a person lives. This can mean that decisions are taken on the basis of peripheral social characteristics rather than developed abilities. Alison Richard, the Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University, has argued strongly against attempts to force elite universities to recruit more pupils from state schools and disadvantaged backgrounds. She has stressed that the role of Cambridge is ‘to educate and lead research, not to fix problems of social mobility’ (Frean, 2008a). The Secretary of State has denied that the

government has been trying to tamper with university admissions policies (Frean, 2008b), but the paraphernalia of OFFA (the Office of Fair Access to Higher Education) and the widening access benchmarks suggest otherwise. The attempts at social balancing appear even more ludicrous if applied to the converse. The logic of this reasoning would seem to demand that the under-representation of independent-school pupils in the ranks of highly paid footballers should be corrected by insisting that Manchester United and the other leading teams comply with benchmarks of some kind.

- 6.15 Recognising that the achievement of pupils in independent schools reflects the quality of education they have experienced has two important consequences. First, it focuses attention on the transformative effects of schooling. Education is a powerful process of change. It sets the direction of change, speeds up changes that would have occurred in life unaided, and brings about changes that otherwise would not have occurred (Musgrove, 1968). The molecular mechanisms underlying the enduring effects of ‘nurture’ are gradually being unravelled (Ridley, 2004). People do not have a fixed potential, but are continually being shaped by the interaction between genes and experiences, especially during their formative years. An important aspect of this development is the school attended, and some schools are much more effective than others.
- 6.16 Secondly, if children going to some schools do so much better than those attending others, treated as ‘a quality of education issue’, the question becomes not is this unfair, but what is it that the successful schools are doing right? And can what they are doing right be extended to other schools? The huge gap in the performance of independent and state schools in this country, but also elsewhere in the world, is a worrying fault line, but from the point of view of the quality of education the question becomes how can this be bridged? Does it require more autonomy and greater resources for state schools, as the Blair government seemed to think? Or is it more a matter of the independent sector reaching out and sharing its expertise and facilities? In the next chapter, we look at the ways in which the independent sector has been working with other schools and the wider community.

## 7. Working With Other Schools And The Wider Community

- 7.1 There are many arguments for having schools that are independent of the government. Not being centrally run they are free to experiment and to take a cool look at the numerous government initiatives that are imposed on state schools. They can be both a goad and an example. They are an important safety valve, and indeed it would be odd to try to inhibit parents who wanted to pay for their children's education in addition to their taxes. Their success led the Blair government to fund their state counterparts more generously than it probably otherwise would.
- 7.2 But HMC schools and the other independent associations in the UK also look outwards by offering educational opportunities, service to the community, working in partnership with state schools and forming links with schools abroad. These broad aims manifest themselves in practice by providing funding for bursaries, sponsorship of academies, and by working collaboratively with groups of maintained schools through the Independent State Schools Partnership (ISSP) grants scheme (more commonly known now as 'Building Bridges') and more generally. They are involved in community projects and their reach also extends internationally, including projects centred on students and teachers from the ex-communist bloc of countries in Europe and setting up or franchising schools abroad.
- 7.3 Public service has always been part of the ethos of HMC schools and the rounded education they seek to provide, but the Charity Commission's (2008) recent Consultation on Public Benefit has caused the schools to think about and set down more systematically than before the various contributions they are making. This chapter draws on examples provided by 39 HMC schools, a number of which allowed us to see their responses to the consultation.

### Bursaries

- 7.4 HMC schools, often in accordance with their founder's wishes, have traditionally provided places for poor local scholars and, more recently, offered bursaries to pupils from low-income families. Currently over 59,000 pupils, nearly one third (31.7 per cent) of all pupils in HMC schools, are receiving financial help with fees. The great majority (92 per cent) of these pupils are getting this help from the schools themselves, in the form of means-tested bursaries and scholarships (ISC, 2008). At one time much of the support was state sponsored. An Assisted Places Scheme (APS) was introduced by the Conservative government in 1980, 'designed to lift some 34,000 children from unpromising educational and social backgrounds and place them, at nil or reduced expense to parents, in some of the most prestigious schools in the country' (Walden, 1996.) It has been estimated (West, 1993) that, by 1992, 27,000 pupils were receiving assisted places at 295 schools in England and Wales. Each year about 5,000 pupils benefited mainly in senior schools. Recent research by Power *et al* (2006) has found that on comparing GCSE and A-level results AP holders did better than state-educated pupils of similar prior attainment and better than might have been predicted on the basis of background socio-economic and educational inheritance variables. But the Blair government began to phase out the APS from 1997 to fund a reduction in infant class sizes, and since then HMC and other independent schools have sought to fill the gap. Many are currently seeking to expand their bursary schemes further (Adonis, 2007).
- 7.5 The scale of the commitment can be quite staggering. At Eton in 2006/07 nearly one fifth of boys received fee reductions through scholarships and bursaries amounting to

£3.16 million, most of which was funded by the school, and the rest by external charities. The lion's share, £2.6 million, was devoted to widening access. Over 10 per cent (£1.6 million) of Tonbridge's annual budget supports fee reductions according to need. Bursaries are normally set at 10 per cent but full fee remission is possible. It is intended that at least 10 per cent of the pupils will have their fees fully remitted by 2026. At Nottingham High School over 10 per cent of pupils (87 boys last year) hold bursaries, including some fully funded.

- 7.6 The impact of bursaries and other forms of support shows through in the intake statistics. ISC (2006) found, based on responses from schools representing 75 per cent of pupils at ISC schools in the UK, that a quarter of pupils came from postcodes with average or below average income. Over a third (37.6 per cent) of ISC schools were found to have more than two per cent of their pupils from 'hard-pressed' areas, which the researchers claim is comparable to the free school meals (FSM) used as the indicator of poverty in studies of state schools. If the measures are comparable it seems that the social background of the intakes to independent schools is not so different from those of the leading comprehensive schools. The Sutton Trust (2006a) reported that, of the top 200 comprehensives in England, a quarter had fewer than two per cent of their pupils on FSMs, and two-thirds had fewer than five per cent.

### **Academies**

- 7.7 HMC schools are playing a major part in the drive to improve underperforming schools in the maintained sector through the academies programme. Since 2007, when the Secretary of State, Ed Balls, liberalised the sponsorship arrangements so that education institutions were exempted from the obligation to put in £2 million of direct funding, independent schools, especially those in HMC, have become increasingly attracted to the possibilities. By October 2007, just a few months after Ed Balls' announcement, 20 schools were sponsoring or in partnership with 47 academies (Adonis, 2007).
- 7.8 Some HMC schools have become lead sponsors taking responsibility for the development and management of a new academy. Wellington College is the lead sponsor of the Wellington Academy which has a £2 million endowment from a former pupil of the college. The academy, as a co-educational school of 1,150 students in East Wiltshire, replaces an existing school and is scheduled to open in 2009 transferring to new buildings in 2010. In keeping with its founder's aim 'to educate the sons of officers' in memory of the Duke of Wellington, one third of the students will come from local military families. In the words of the Master of Wellington College (2008) the academy 'will inherit the DNA of its Berkshire counterpart, with a house system, boarding and day places, a deep commitment to excellence, an emphasis on discipline, outdoor activities and service, and a combined cadet force (CCF)'.
- 7.9 Another HMC school becoming a lead sponsor is Dulwich College, together with Kent County Council and the Diocese of Canterbury. The academy on the Isle of Sheppey is due to open in existing buildings in a year's time and scheduled to move into new premises in 2011, replacing the existing middle and secondary schools on the island. When fully operational the academy will cater for 2,450 students. Its specialist focus will be business, enterprise and sports and its mission to challenge young people to achieve educationally and to contribute to the regeneration of the island. As a lead sponsor Dulwich College will be actively involved in the governance of the academy, and its staff will work with the staff of the school in sharing ideas and practice. In West Sussex, the Woodard group of independent schools, which includes Ardingly,

Hurstpierpoint and Lancing College, is sponsoring three academies in partnership with the county council, and Woodard's schools will be contributing their expertise. Lancing, for example, is to help to raise standards in the Boundstone Academy, especially in maths.

- 7.10 Other schools are providing support without becoming a lead sponsor. Marlborough College is helping to establish a sixth form and is forming partnerships in sports and arts with a new academy in Swindon. The City of London School is developing links with the City of London Academy in Southwark. Oundle is in partnership with the new academy in Peterborough, and Uppingham is considering with the sponsors (former pupils) of seven new academies how it might support them. Winchester, Harrow, Tonbridge, Manchester Grammar School, Dean Close, King's Canterbury and Wells Cathedral School are among other HMC schools sponsoring and supporting academies.
- 7.11 Some independent schools are themselves becoming academies. Belvedere School in Liverpool, having piloted the Sutton Trust's Open Access Scheme (Smithers and Robinson, 2006b), went even further in 2007 in transferring to the state sector as an academy, as did the William Hulme School in Manchester. Colston's Girls and Bristol Cathedral Choir schools have followed, both becoming specialist music academies. There is also an emerging trend for independent school heads to become the principals of academies.

#### **Independent State School Partnerships Grants Scheme**

- 7.12 Independent and state schools have long co-operated informally, but working together received considerable impetus from the Independent State School Partnerships (ISSP) grants scheme introduced in 1998. In the decade since, over 300 schemes have been supported (and many more schools) with some £10 million provided in grants from the Department for Education and Skills (now the DCSF). A further £4 million has been made available from spring 2008 through to 2011. The grants are intended to pump prime partnerships and schools have to demonstrate how they will sustain the partnership beyond the initial funding period. In addition to the government grant, participating schools are expected to put in resources of their own and seek funding elsewhere. A core requirement is that the partnership should 'add value to an existing activity, rather than being stand alone, and show how the benefits can be shared beyond the partnership schools' (DCSF 2008). Grants average £50,000 to £70,000 per year, covering principally staff costs, equipment, books and materials, and transport for staff and pupils. The DCSF is currently encouraging 'support for gifted and talented pupils, with activities centred on university applications, particularly from communities where aspirations are low and in increasing attainment and take-up of science, maths and modern foreign languages at GCSE, A level and university level' (DCSF, 2008). The Department is also 'interested in proposals which facilitate joint working through shared governance, for example two or more schools working together under a trust or federation'.
- 7.13 As an example of what this means in practice we can consider the Warwick ISSP that was set up on the initiative of Warwick School, an HMC member, in 2005. It involves three independent and eight state schools, four secondary and seven primary. The school takes the lead in an enrichment programme opening up its facilities to local state schools, both primary and secondary. In 2007-08, it held, for example, 'Come and Try it Days' which enabled over 500 primary school pupils in Years 4 to 6 to sample such activities as canoeing, ceramics, robotics and water polo. Warwick Castle provided the

setting for a 'History Day'. About 300 junior age pupils had the opportunity to visit all the attractions and take part in the activities, including those specifically put on for ISSP pupils. For secondary age pupils, the school in November 2007 hosted a 'Politics Conference', which was attended by some 300 sixth form and Year 11 students. Other provision for this age range included: a leadership conference and a leadership challenge day, and 'Thinking about Oxbridge' including visits to both Oxford and Cambridge. Other events included: performing arts master classes for gifted and talented pupils across the age range; dance and drama workshops; and series of sports development days made possible by using the school's pool and games pitches.

- 7.14 But this is just one among many. Over the last three years Blundell's School has been working with a local state secondary school and has put on a programme of master classes in PE, music and drama. The school is linking up with eight primary schools in a second ISSP initiative. An ISSP between Norwich school and a state secondary school in the city was awarded £225,00 to develop an enhancement programme in music, maths and physics. King's School, Worcester has formed a partnership with a local 11-16 comprehensive school. The schools will share sports facilities and coaching, and co-operate in the arts and music (including the comprehensive school's links with the Royal Academy of Music). Joint debating sessions, dance, community service and assemblies are also planned.
- 7.15 King's College School, Wimbledon, is participating in 'the London Challenge' and is working with local secondary schools in an ISSP which aims to raise standards through, for example, GCSE support, extension classes, and Easter revision. The school is also an active partner in a 'Leading Edge Partnership' with two local state secondary schools. Since 2002 the three schools have worked together on such things as in-house training for teaching and non-teaching staff, curriculum support at GCSE, the introduction of new curriculum subjects, such as Latin, extension classes, and interview preparation for Year 13. Wells Cathedral School, is another HMC school in a Leading Edge partnership, having joined Preston Manor (with whom they shared a television series) and two other Wembley schools.
- 7.16 The ISSP developed by Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Blackburn, and a local comprehensive aims at increasing the enjoyment of mathematics across the local borough, primarily through events for Years 9 to 11. In 2008-09 all eleven secondary schools in the borough will be involved in a range of experiences, including a series of video conferences linking them with others around the country, residential weekends mixing maths with outdoor pursuits, a maths team competition, talks by well known speakers, a puzzle day and a programme of revision sessions for GCSE pupils.
- 7.17 Evaluation of ISSPs by NFER (2003), Turner (2004) and Ofsted (2005) have reported favourably. Ofsted concluded the partnerships were 'very effective in realising their objectives'. These included experience of different learning styles; specific skills training; access to enhanced ICT; peer mentoring; extension classes; curriculum enrichment and wider opportunities in sport and the arts. The NFER reported that many of the schemes evaluated were funded by the schools themselves and that in cases where schools used each other's facilities, maintained schools more frequently accessed those of independent schools than vice versa.

### **Academic, Sporting and Arts Support**

- 7.18 HMC schools' links with the wider educational community are not confined to ISSPs. To offer just a few of the numerous possible examples. St Paul's in partnership with the local authority and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, is to put on master classes, initially for Year 9 pupils on the Gifted and Talented Programme in mathematics. The tuition is to be provided out of school time by St Paul's staff with the aim of enthusing, not cramming for exams. If successful, it will be extended to science and modern languages, and it could serve as a template for a national scheme. St Paul's already operates a Saturday Morning School whereby local primary school children are invited to classes in certain key subjects taught by St Paul's staff. No selection is involved; the aims again are to interest, excite and enthuse.
- 7.19 At Haileybury, a new project started in 2007, by the head of English, offers a programme of storytelling workshops to local prep and primary school pupils. The workshops have proved to be very successful with both staff and pupils, and have sparked new areas of work and projects related to the themes of the workshops. Although still in its infancy, the intention is to create a bigger programme that will be available to all primary schools in the local authority. Reading Blue Coat School is working with a nearby primary school to introduce philosophy into the curriculum. After a pilot year the school is now looking to extend the programme across all age groups. The head of philosophy and ethics has devised a broad curriculum for the primary school teacher to use backed up by observable lessons and other INSET. On a different scale, the Grammar School at Leeds has been working with a commercial company to develop a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) software application, widely used in industry, to use across the curriculum. Industry standard GIS are powerful teaching and learning tools that allow the presentation and analysis of spatial data in a whole range of subjects. The school has created a portfolio of teacher-led and pupil-centred activities and lessons for history, physics, religious studies, and at A-level for maths and business studies as well as geography. In collaboration with two other HMC schools, Leeds has provided training workshops and curriculum packages to maintained and independent schools across the country.
- 7.20 Some schools are involved in projects to promote sporting excellence. Ellesmere College has established a joint school/community elite swimming club in Shropshire, the Titans. It provides children aged eight and upwards with one-to-one coaching backed by underwater video analysis and specialist training equipment. They have the chance to compete in the Speedo North West League and enter open galas throughout the UK. Hymers College has entered partnerships with Hull Kingston Rovers Rugby League Club and Hull Zingari Cricket Club, and Hymers facilities are used by Hull KR for training their academy squads. A hundred youngsters regularly use the facilities, which the club has described as 'world class'. The benefits are reciprocal. The school has benefited from access to professional coaching and medical staff. Similarly, the school's facilities are being used to offer cricket to primary school children, for coaching days and festivals, as well as for England Cricket Board coaching courses.
- 7.21 In other schools the focus is the arts. Colfe's School in south London, for example, independently of mainstream urban regeneration projects, is giving financial support and staff time to a community art project in Peckham. Based in a local youth club, the project engages children from non-privileged background in various artistic activities. The project is run by the head of art at the school, who is released for a full day each week. Eight years ago, Portsmouth Grammar School in partnership with the city

council, business and community partners, created Portsmouth Festivities, a week long, summer arts festival designed to appeal across the community. One of its main aims is to broaden and enrich the experience of the young people of Portsmouth and to inspire them to develop their talents; for example, by providing opportunities for them to work alongside professional artists in a range of arts and educational events.

### **Community Service**

- 7.22 As well as the educationally-based support, many HMC schools have programmes of community service. This can take many forms such as helping others in the community, providing learning support, and raising money for charities. Tonbridge School is a good example of the breadth of involvement. It has appointed a Community Action Coordinator to manage, among other things, community service projects such as clearing churchyards, painting village halls, and gardening for the elderly. The school houses and defrays some of the costs of the charity, 'VSU (Voluntary Service Unit) Youth in Action'. Weekly chapel collections contribute to a number of local and national charities, and money is raised by the pupils for the local hospice. Academically, there is the sharing of facilities, expertise and teaching materials, outreach programmes, Oxbridge classes and university interview practice. The school's excellent sport facilities are shared with local schools, clubs and other groups. There is also flourishing arts programme involving the local community.
- 7.23 At the heart of the King's College School's programme is the afternoon per week when pupils in Year 10 and above can opt for community service. About a third (in 2007-08, 232 boys) do so. A fifth (20) of the staff are also involved. But the programme hinges on the pupils themselves driving the activities forward. In February 2008, a whole school day, 'Make a Difference Day', was given over to community service and fundraising. Regular activities include work with local residents and the elderly, offering IT support based in the school library, a friendship hour in the school dining room, a weekly evening food run for the homeless, and work in local charity shops. There is also learning support or sports supervision for mainstream classes or special educational needs centres in six local primary schools, a secondary school and a school for children with severe learning difficulties.
- 7.24 Brighton College also devotes one afternoon per week to community service in which many pupils pay visits to the elderly, volunteer in the local charity shop and assist the local sheltered housing charity. The college's sports facilities are used by the county council and town football club for junior team training. The general public has use of the swimming pool and sports hall. As with Tonbridge and King's, the school provides teaching and advice to help boost participation and performance in a range of subjects, including the Confucius Classroom initiative for pupils to study Mandarin. Each year the college runs the 'Raising Sights' conference for Year 11 pupils from state schools to encourage them to apply to Russell Group Universities.

### **Support for Communities Overseas**

- 7.25 The community service is not just local or confined to the UK. There are many examples of HMC schools providing financial help and support of various kinds to communities overseas. This usually combines fundraising at home with the hands-on efforts of pupils and staff. King Edward VI School in Southampton, for example, through its Romania project helps support an orphanage and placement centre in Oresti. Students from King Edward's regularly visit the orphanage. Chigwell School raised more than £100,000 to support an Ashram in Tamil Nadu, India. These funds have

been used for capital projects such as a home for the destitute elderly, an accommodation and teaching block at the school, and a children's home in a village affected by the Tsunami. Dean Close staff and pupils raise funds in support of, and go out to work annually, in Nyakaturu Memorial School in Uganda.

- 7.26 Trinity School, Croydon, supports a school in the Eastern Cape by raising funds to assist in the development of basic infrastructure such as a new classroom, the replacement of a latrine block with a fully plumbed system, and the provision of usable playing fields. Six teachers from the Trinity School went out to South Africa to help with teaching, training and the work generally. Morrison's Academy in Scotland has established links with a centre in southern Malawi. In 2007 the school raised £5,000 to build an outdoor centre, which also provides a teaching space and a respite for carers of AIDs orphans. Each year the school is committed to raising £1,200 to provide the salary of an extra primary school teacher so that the school of 900 pupils now has three teachers instead of two. Morrison's pupils also visit the centre to provide voluntary help.
- 7.27 King Edward's, Whitley, supports a school serving hill tribes in the poor northern area of Thailand and an orphanage in Malawi. The school raises £10,000 annually and biennial visits by pupils and staff help in equipping and decorating buildings and classrooms, and stocking the library. Wolverhampton Grammar School has linked up with a vocational college in Uganda. Gap year students spend six months working there and staff visits have helped with planning and implementation. Teams of pupils from Taunton School help out each summer with a holiday camp for Albanian orphans. Norwich School, through fundraising and group visits, is providing support for a primary school and health centre in Zambia, and is working with the British Council to establish a new school in India. Eton provides help with grants and in kind to schools in ten countries ranging from Kenya to Kosovo.
- 7.28 Students and staff from Sevenoaks school support projects in India and Eastern Europe. During the summer a group goes out to Mumbai to help with the Akanksha Street Children Project. Some help local children who live on the pavements and in the slum areas with their reading, maths and English. Others work in an orphanage, an AIDs home and a leprosy hospital. The school raises funds during the year to provide resources for an orphanage at Lasi in eastern Romania. The money raised goes towards teaching - art, craft, dance, English and sport. This is a long running project and each year about 20 lower sixth formers and staff spend part of the summer working in the orphanage. At the one of the children's hospitals in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova, during the week they are there, staff and some 15 lower sixth students organise a variety of activities, such as painting a mural to brighten up a ward for children recovering from eye operations. They also work in a home for mentally handicapped children in a nearby village.

### **International Collaboration**

- 7.29 HMC schools also work in collaboration with schools abroad. Since 1992 HMC Projects (established as a registered charity in 1998) has enabled students from the ex-communist block to spend a sixth form year in HMC boarding schools on much reduced means-tested fees (The Student Scholarship Scheme). In the fourteen years since the Projects started nearly one thousand 16 and 17 year-olds have benefited. The majority of participating schools offer one scholarship, but some offer two or more. The

scholarships are for one year only, but it is not uncommon for schools themselves to provide funding for a second year.

- 7.30 It is a condition of the scheme that the students should be more than usually proficient in English. It is remarkable how quickly and how well the students adapt to totally unfamiliar surroundings, curricula and teaching methods. Not every student achieves the ten Grade 'A's at A-level gained in 2006 by Jan Sramek, a student from a relatively backwoods part of the Czech Republic, but almost without exception those HMC scholars who continue in their schools for a second year leave with clusters of 'A' grades. Most will also have left their mark on the extra-curricular life of their schools. They will go on to play a leading role in their countries. Razvan Orasanu, who attended Epsom College as a HMC Projects scholar in the 1990s, has already achieved cabinet rank in Romania.
- 7.31 A parallel scheme for young teachers (The Teachers Experience Scheme) has provided funding for them to work for a year in a British independent school. The teachers are expected to combine teaching in their main subject with boarding house duties and help with extra-curricular activities. In return they receive a salary and accommodation from their schools. So far over 250 teachers have been supported.
- 7.32 Another collaborative venture is the Bulkeley-Evans HMC Scholarship Fund to enable former pupils to carry out projects in deprived communities during a gap year between school and university. About 30 grants are awarded annually, ranging from £300 to £500, with grants of up to £1,000 becoming possible. To receive an award students have to show how their proposed project will benefit the community. They also have to agree to write a report and to go back to their school to give a talk to the sixth form on their experiences. In 2006/07, 27 students were working in 18 different overseas countries on projects ranging from medical placements, village school teaching, sports coaching on youth programmes, and helping out in a drop-in centre for street kids.
- 7.33 A few HMC schools have set up schools abroad. Dulwich College, for example, has established three franchised schools in China and, in 2007, announced a further extension of its international school network with the addition of another three by 2013. The income contributes to the college's bursary fund and with the extended network the college hopes to have a 'sustainable income source enabling it to move even closer towards its aim of having sufficient funds for means-tested bursaries to be "needs blind" at the point of entry'. Other schools opening overseas campuses include Haileybury and Repton. In September, 2008, Haileybury-Almaty will be the first British independent school to open in Central Asia, in Kazakhstan. This will cater primarily for Kazakh children. In the Middle East, Repton School Dubai opened its doors to junior age pupils in 2007 followed by a senior school in 2008.

### **Comment**

- 7.34 The numerous examples provided in this chapter are only a small sample of what might have been discussed. It is clear the influence of HMC and other independent schools on education extends well beyond their walls. The government recognises that they are an important catalyst for improvement in the state sector. As Lord Adonis, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools and Learners at the DCSF, said at the 2007 HMC Annual Conference, 'it is your educational DNA we are seeking not your fee income or your existing charitable status'. In the same speech he emphasized that involvement

with the maintained schools is not 'a one way street' and that 'private schools - your teachers, pupils and governors - have a good deal to gain too from engagement with a wider community of schools and pupils'. This is a very important point. This chapter has described the many ways HMC schools are reaching out. But, as the headteachers told us in the interviews on which Chapter 5 is based, they greatly value what they and their schools are able to learn through their collaborations. It is in the interaction between the independent and state sectors, and the collaborations overseas, that the improvements are likely to come.

## 8. Quality and Autonomy

- 8.1 Independent schools are popular with parents. Ipsos MORI (2008) conducted an annual survey of their reasons from 1997 to 2004, and again in 2008. Over two thousand adults (2,063) were interviewed in their homes during February 2008. The distribution was then adjusted to the known profile of the British adult population. A steep rise was recorded in the proportion of parents who would choose to send their children to an independent school if they could afford to, up from 48 per cent in 2004 to 57 per cent in 2008. In the first survey, a decade ago, it was 51 per cent. When asked why they would choose an independent school the most frequently given response (66 per cent) was 'better standards'. This reason has always scored consistently higher than any other.
- 8.2 Ranked second and third respectively, were 'discipline' and 'smaller classes'. The proportion giving discipline as the reason rose to 30 per cent in 2008 from 14 per cent in 2004. Since the surveys began discipline had never previously been above 20 per cent. A quarter mentioned smaller classes. The proportion citing better teachers had increased substantially since 2004, up from eight per cent to 15 per cent. Better life chances and better facilities scored the same at 15 per cent. Other reasons included: 'better results' (13 per cent); 'best for child' (12 per cent); 'individual support' (11 per cent); and 'mix better with people' (9 per cent). The researchers concluded that 'better standards of education are still the key reason for choice' and that 'positive associations focus on the quality of education and prospects'. Among the key features identified were 'offer high academic quality', 'provide opportunities for pupils to fulfil potential', and 'provide good university and employment prospects'.
- 8.3 How is the quality perceived by the parents actually achieved? The parents themselves play an important role. They have positively chosen the schools. In the state sector, we know the schools sought out by parents, such as faith schools, tend to do better than the schools which children just end up in. In addition, in this report we have explored in particular, the importance of pupil ability, family background, the teachers and the headteachers. But there are other possible factors. Graddy and Stevens (2003) have pointed to the lower class sizes. They looked at the impact of school inputs on pupil performance in independent schools in the UK using school level data provided by the Independent Schools Council. They found a consistent relationship between lower pupil teacher ratios and examination results, in contrast to the state sector where research has not been able to demonstrate any such link. Neither should we discount history and tradition. James Sabben-Clare when Head Master of Winchester put it rather nicely when asked why his school did so well and he replied, 'It is a bit like the visitor to Cambridge who asked how they managed to get the lawn as nice as that. The answer was that you mow it and roll it - for about 600 years' (Smithers, 1995).
- 8.4 But rather than independent schools being recognised as extremely effective schools, whose success on the world stage should be a matter of national pride, their achievements are almost held against them. Attempts are made to explain away their excellent performance in terms of favourable intakes and intensive exam preparation. It has even been suggested that because independent-school pupils do so well, students from state schools should be admitted to the leading universities on lower entry grades (for example, Steve Smith, Vice-Chancellor of Exeter University and leader of the university strand of the National Council for Educational Excellence, in Waite and Grimston, 2008). The charge of intensive exam preparation won't stick, however, because as we saw in Chapter 6 the examination results are validated by the future life

achievements of the pupils. No prime minister could be more committed to balancing by background than Gordon Brown, but over a third of his cabinet, chosen we are sure entirely on merit, are from independent schools.

- 8.5 Neither can the high level of performance be just a matter of intake. Although the research is yet to be done, it is likely that HMC schools have more diverse intakes than grammar schools. Whereas independent-school pupils are admitted on a range of criteria, the grammars select purely on academic ability. In many areas grammar schools have the first pick of day pupils, and parents whose children win places at, say, Colchester Royal Grammar, Colyton Grammar, or the Tiffins, are overjoyed at not having to find an independent school. Nor can it be just social background. The Independent Schools Council (2006) has shown that over a third of the independent schools have more than two per cent of their pupils from low-income households, and this is not so different from the intakes of the leading comprehensive schools. The Sutton Trust (2006a), for example, has found that a quarter of the top 200 comprehensives in England have fewer than two per cent of pupils on free school meals. Yet, as we demonstrated in Chapter 2, the performance of HMC schools is better than grammars and appreciably better than comprehensives.
- 8.6 If it is not intensive exam preparation nor the background of the intake, then what is it? A prime candidate would seem to be the independence of the schools. This would explain why in the OECD's PISA studies independent schools tend to do better than government-run schools across a range of countries. But if it is independence *per se* why should this be linked to quality and effectiveness? Our research (Smithers and Robinson, 2003 and 2007) suggests that a key feature is that it enables learning and decisions to be taken close to the classroom. In interviews with headteachers and teachers, on which we have drawn in Chapters 4 and 5, what came through strongly was the freedom to do what is right for the pupils, to tailor the curriculum to all pupils. The headteacher we have quoted on page 27 put it this way: 'Independent school heads feel they can fulfil a vision because they have scope to make their decisions...a quick response from (my governors) means we can take decisions faster and be more effective as an institution.' A teacher, who had moved from the state to the independent sector, told us, 'I am treated as a professional and I am left to plan, teach and assess. I am enjoying my job so much that I don't bother counting any more the days and weeks to the next break.'
- 8.7 The government has recognised the importance of school autonomy in its academies programme. But there is a contradiction at the heart of government policies. The Blair government, continued by the Brown government, took upon itself responsibility for actually running the state sector of education with everyone from the Secretary of State downwards held directly responsible for the performance of schools (Smithers, 2007). In practice, this came to mean setting test and examination targets for all stages of education and to all levels of management, backed up numerous central initiatives. Regular stock-takes called ministers and officials to account for school performance and initiatives. While devised from the best of motives, this approach has led inevitably to teaching and learning decisions being taken remote from the classroom, perhaps by people with no experience of schools other than those they attended. The experience on the ground was starkly described to us by a modern languages teacher leaving a state school for the independent sector:

Everything now (in the state sector) is about targets and data analysis and evidence and benchmarking. My degree is in French not statistics! There are too many demands on us and not enough time to do the important stuff like preparation, marking and teaching. State education has become a factory farm. Every day it has been like going into some very big impersonal factory and it is like you are a cog in it.

- 8.8 Within this tight framework, the government driven forward by Lord Adonis, Under Secretary of State for Schools and Learners, has been rolling out a programme of publicly funded independent schools called academies. They are state funded, but are established as charitable bodies with sponsors and governors able to establish the ethos and set the strategic direction. The governors are responsible for the appointment of the principal, employing the staff, administering finances and controlling the land and other assets, including the premises. But like other state schools they are bound by the admissions code, the core curriculum, national pay scales, and are accountable through Ofsted and league tables. There is an emerging trend for the headteachers of HMC schools to become academy principals. The former head of Chetham's School of Music and the heads of St Dunstan's College, St Columba's College and Dean Close (Chairman of HMC in 2008-09) have all recently accepted appointments. This is testimony to the opportunities and greater freedom offered by academies.
- 8.9 But they still lack what may be the key freedom of fully independent schools, which is being able to anticipate and respond to parent and pupil needs through the market rather than having to take direction from central government. It will be a matter for future evaluation whether this semi-independence goes far enough. There are encouraging signs from the performance of government-funded independent schools in the OECD PISA studies. Nevertheless, they did less well than the fully independent schools.
- 8.10 The evidence of this report is that HMC schools are extremely effective. Their results, and the successes of their former pupils in all walks of life, indicate that they have found ways of developing abilities to the full. Through sharing expertise and facilities their influence on education is growing, both in this country and worldwide. But there is still more to be learned from them and, in turn, by them. Headteacher and teacher freedom seem intrinsic to their success. A major issue for the present and future governments will be to find an optimum national shape for education which fully harnesses the power and effectiveness of school autonomy.

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## Appendix A: HMC Schools

England	
Abingdon School	Cranleigh School
Ackworth School	Culford School
Aldenham School	Dame Allan's Schools
Alley's School	Dauntsey's School
Ampleforth College	Dean Close School
Ardingly College	Denstone College
Arnold School	Downside School
Ashville College	Dulwich College
Bablake School	Durham School
Bancroft School	Eastbourne College
Barnard Castle School	Ellesmere College
Batley Grammar School	Eltham College
Bedales School	Emanuel School
Bedford Modern School	Epsom College
Bedford School	Eton College
Berkhamsted Collegiate School	Exeter School
Birkdale School	Felsted School
Birkenhead School	Forest School
Bishop's Stortford College	Framlingham College
Bloxham School	Frensham Heights
Blundell's School	Giggleswick School
Bolton School	Gresham's School
Bootham School	Guildford High School
Bradfield College	Haileybury
Bradford Grammar School	Hampton School
Brentwood School	Harrow School
Brighton College	Headington School
Bristol Cathedral School*	Hereford Cathedral School
Bristol Grammar School	Highgate School
Bromsgrove School	Hurstpierpoint College
Bryanston School	Hymers College
Bury Grammar School	Ipswich School
Canford School	Kelly College
Caterham School	Kent College
Charterhouse	Kimbolton School
Cheadle Hulme School	King Edward VI School (Southampton)
Cheltenham College	King Edward VII and Queen Mary School
Chetham's School of Music	King Edward's School (Bath)
Chigwell School	King Edward's School (Birmingham)
Christ's Hospital	King Edward's School (Whitley)
Churcher's College	King Henry VIII School
City of London Freeman's School	King's College (Taunton)
City of London School	King's College School (Wimbledon)
Clayesmore School	King's School (Bruton)
Clifton College	King's School (Chester)
Colfe's School	King's School (Ely)
Colston's Collegiate School	King's School (Macclesfield)

King's School (Rochester)	Rugby School
King's School (Tynemouth)	Ryde School
Kingston Grammar School	Seaford College
Kingswood School	Sedbergh School
Kirkham Grammar School	Sevenoaks School
Lancing College	Sherborne School
Latymer Upper School	Shiplake College
The Grammar School at Leeds	Shrewsbury School
Leicester Grammar School	Silcoates School
Leighton Park School	Solihull School
Liverpool College	St Alban's School
Lord Wandsworth College	St Bede's College
Loughborough Grammar School	St Bees School
Magdalen College School	St Benedict's School
Malvern College	St Columba's College (St Albans)
Manchester Grammar School	St Dunstan's College
Marlborough College	St Edmund's College
Merchant Taylors' School	St Edmund's School
Merchant Taylors' School (Crosby)	St Edward's School
Mill Hill School	St George's College (Weybridge)
Millfield School	St John's School
Monkton Combe School	St Lawrence College
Mount St Mary's College	St Mary's College
Newcastle-under-Lyme School	St Paul's School
Norwich School	St Peter's School
Nottingham High School	Stockport Grammar School
Oakham School	Stonyhurst College
Oldham Hulme Grammar Schools	Stowe School
Oundle School	Surbiton High School
Pangbourne College	Sutton Valence School
Plymouth College	Taunton School
Pocklington School	Tettenhall College
Prior Park College	The Grange School
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School	The Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School
Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School	The John Lyon School
Queen Elizabeth's Hospital	The King's School (Gloucester)
Queen's College	The King's School (Worcester)
Radley College	The King's School (Canterbury)
Ratcliffe College	The Leys School
Reading Blue Coat School	The Oratory School
Reed's School	The Perse School
Reigate Grammar School	The Portsmouth Grammar School
Rendcomb College	The Royal Hospital School
Repton School	The Stamford Endowed Schools
Rossall School	Tonbridge School
Royal Grammar School (Guildford)	Trent College
Royal Grammar School (Newcastle)	Trinity School
Royal Grammar School and The Alice	Truro School
Otley School (Worcester)	University College School
Royal Russell School	Uppingham School

Warwick School Wellingborough School Wellington College Wellington School Wells Cathedral School West Buckland School Westminster School Whitgift School Winchester College	Wisbech Grammar School Wolverhampton Grammar School Woodbridge School Woodhouse Grove School Worksop College Worth School Wrekin College Wycliffe College Yarm School
<b>Wales</b>	
Christ College Llandovery College Monmouth School	Rougemont School Rydal Penrhos School
<b>Scotland</b>	
Dollar Academy Fettes College George Heriot's School George Watson's College Glenalmond College High School of Dundee Hutchesons' Grammar School Kelvinside Academy Lomond School Loretto School	Merchiston Castle School Morrison's Academy Robert Gordon's College St Aloysius' College St Columba's School Stewart's Melville College Strathallan School The Edinburgh Academy The Glasgow Academy The High School of Glasgow
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	
Bangor Grammar School Belfast Royal Academy Campbell College Coleraine Academical Institution	Foyle & Londonderry College Methodist College Portora Royal School Royal Belfast Academical Institution
<b>Channel Islands</b>	
Elizabeth College	Victoria College
<b>Isle of Man</b>	
King William's College	
<b>Eire</b>	
Clongowes Wood College King's Hospital	St Columba's College

1. This listing relates to the schools as they were at the time of the 2007 A-level examinations. As of September 2008 Bristol Cathedral School has become an academy in the maintained sector, and St Bede's School is a newly appointed member to HMC.

## **Appendix B: Methods**

### **Schools Database**

- B.1 The 2007 Schools Database was compiled by combining data from the Independent Schools Council and Department for Children, Schools and Families. It was put together in three stages, an independent schools dataset, a maintained schools dataset, with then the two combined and further information added. The ISC website identifies its member schools by name, address and association(s). Using the filters provided we were able to reduce the full listing to those schools with senior (secondary) age pupils. HMC schools were verified against the list on HMC's own website. Additional information from ISC on individual school characteristics, including gender, type (day/boarding), and upper pupil age were fed in.
- B.2 In parallel, a database of maintained secondary schools was compiled from 'Edubase', the DCSF's Register of Educational Establishments. It lists schools by name, location, and school characteristics. These include age range, gender, admissions policy, type, religious character, and for maintained schools specialist status and subject. Importantly, each school has a unique reference number (URN) which enables cross matching with other national databases. Edubase includes information on independent schools also.
- B.3 The independent and maintained schools databases were amalgamated and information was added from two more of the DCSF's national datasets: the Secondary School and College Achievement Attainment Tables (GCSE and Equivalent and Post-16) for 2007, published on the Department's website; and files released to us from the National Pupil Database (NPD) for the academic year 2006-07. The 2007 Attainment Tables yielded information on school characteristics, such as number of pupils on roll, aged 16-18, at the end of key stages 4 and 5, and performance at GCSE and A-level, but for schools in England only.
- B.4 The National Pupil Database, which was established by the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, is intended to provide a single longitudinal record for each pupil in education in England in both maintained and independent schools. In a sense it is the equivalent of radioactive labelling in the tracking that it enables. These data can be aggregated to schools since the record for each pupil includes the school identifier. The DCSF kindly provided us with two files, the key stage 4 (GCSE) and key stage 5 (formerly known as sixth form) data for 2006/07 as text files, plus other files listing the variables and giving the data definitions. The key stage 4 and 5 files contained 673,567 and 583,372 cases (anonymised) respectively. The dataset derived from the NPD was merged into our schools dataset. This consisted of 4,052 schools in England, comprising 3,125 maintained schools and 569 independent schools. In addition, there were 60 independent schools and 298 non-ISC schools in England. For these last two groups the data are incomplete.

### **Teachers Database**

- B.5 The Teachers Database is of UK graduates who had successfully completed their postgraduate year of secondary teacher training and had taken a post in a maintained or independent school on qualifying. Each year HESA collects data on students qualifying at first degree, other undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and their first employment destination after qualifying. These data are published annually as *Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions*. We commissioned HESA

to provide a special tabulation. Data were provided for each student (anonymised) on a case-by-case basis for the years 2002/03 through to 2005/06. Prior to 2002/03 the data are not strictly comparable because of changes in the classification of subjects. The variables in the dataset included, in addition to academic year, personal characteristics such as gender and age; subject and classification of first degree; the institution and country of PGCE; and entry to employment. Employment details included teaching and non-teaching occupations and if in teaching the phase and sector. In all, the teachers' dataset comprises 79,072 cases (17,473 in 2002/03; 19,892 in 2002/04; 20,687 in 2004/05 and 21,020 in 2005/06). The data are UK wide, but can be disaggregated by country.

### **Performance Indicators in Higher Education 2006/07**

- B.6 Since 2004 performance indicators for higher education institutions have been published by HESA on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) which published them previously (1996/07 to 2002/03). This is an annual publication based on data submitted to HESA by all publicly funded higher education institutions in the UK. The performance indicators (PIs) are in five areas: widening participation; student disability; non-continuation rates of institutions, research output and employment of graduates. An additional indicator, on module completion rates is published for Welsh institutions only. From the performance indicators accessed via the HESA website we were able to establish the proportions of students in each named institution who had been to an independent or a state school/college. The data provided are for young, full-time entrants to first degree programmes of study for new entrants living in the UK.

### **Programme for International Student Assessment**

- B.7 Since 2000 the Organisation for Economic Cooperation (OECD) has been conducting in its member countries and others, on a three-year cycle, tests 'to measure how well young adults, aged 15 and therefore approaching the end of compulsory schooling, are prepared to meet the challenges of today's knowledge societies' (OECD, 2001). It has operationalised the notion of using knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges as 'literacy'. This has been broadened from its usual meaning to embrace 'mathematical literacy' and 'scientific literacy' as well as the tautological 'reading literacy'. In each round of testing one of the literacies becomes the focus, reading in 2000, maths in 2003, and science in 2006, with supplementary testing in the other two fields. The OECD publishes compendious data on its surveys (eg OECD, 2001, 2004 and 2007), and there is also a PISA website. Pupils from independent schools were included in the samples, enabling comparisons to be made between independent and government-run schools across a range of countries.

### **Headteacher Interviews**

- B.8 In our study of headship (Smithers and Robinson, 2007) we conducted interviews in 2006 with the heads of twelve independent schools in England and Wales, eight in HMC schools and four in GSA. Of the schools, three were boys', four girls' and five co-educational. Seven were day and five boarding and day. The transcripts of the interviews have been used in this study to explore the meaning of autonomy for these schools.

### **Biographical Sources**

- B.9 The Sutton Trust has conducted a series of studies of the school backgrounds of the members of eminent professions and the leaders in various fields. So far the Trust has

reported on judges, barristers, solicitors, members of parliament, and leaders in medicine, business and journalism. We have replicated the work of the Trust in tracing the educational backgrounds of members of the Cabinet and top civil servants. We have obtained this information from government and other websites. The main source for members of HM government was the No10 website where brief individual biographies are given ([www.number-10.gov.uk](http://www.number-10.gov.uk)). This was supplemented by members' personal websites, and *Who's Who*. The Civil Service Website ([www.civilservice.gov.uk](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk)) gives brief biographical details of Permanent Secretaries across the Civil Service. In some cases the information was not available so a wider internet search was required.

- B.10 As an indicator of sporting achievement we have traced the school backgrounds of medal winners in the 2004 and 2008 Olympics. BBC Sport's website, is one of many which name the winners individually, the medal won and the respective sport. In all, in 2004, there were 53 winners, who between them landed 30 medals, nine gold, nine silver and 12 bronze. In 2008, there were 77 medal winners in 47 events, 19 gold, 13 silver and 15 bronze. Information on school background was not always easy to come by. Individual profiles on national websites, such as that of the British Olympic Association and sites dedicated to specific sports frequently omitted schooling, but the information in most cases could be elicited through personal websites, media sources, and PR and promotional companies.

#### **Survey of HMC Schools**

- B.11 An email was sent by HMC to its members August 2008 asking for examples of community involvement and partnerships. It was suggested that examples would have been included in the recent responses to the Charity Commission Consultation on Public Benefit (2008) and they could be extracted and forwarded. In spite of it being holiday time with only a fortnight allowed for returns, 39 schools replied. These were content analysed and used to illustrate the various categories determined for Chapter 7.

***(BACK COVER)***

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