



# INSTITUTIONALISED SEPARATION

*The Impact of Selective Schools*

DISCUSSION PAPER

*In a Class of Their Own*



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This discussion paper looks at inequity within selective schools and their impact on other schools. It presents evidence of dramatic, and deepening, educational inequality.

Selective schools are envisaged as a means for the public education system to cater to high achieving students from all walks of life, regardless of family background. However, *My School* and other data now reveals that selective schools are all but inaccessible to most students. For example, in NSW:

1. Selective schools are among the most socio-educationally advantaged schools within their local areas, with only a few exceptions. Fully selective NSW high schools comprise six of the ten most socio-educationally advantaged secondary schools in the state. The rest are all high-fee private schools.
2. An average of 73 per cent of selective school students came from the highest quarter of socio-educational advantage in 2016. Only 2 per cent of students in fully selective schools came from the lowest quarter.
3. Selective schools also appear to create a “brain drain” from non-selective public schools, depriving them of their most capable, highest-achieving students. Selective schools comprise 11% of government schools, yet enrol almost half of the high achievers.

The data suggests the dynamics of our school system — instead of promoting inclusion and equity — are increasingly putting socio-educationally advantaged students in a ‘class of their own’. These trends should concern policymakers, parents and students, and should inform the NSW review of the selective school enrolment processes.

The evidence presented in this paper requires us to reconsider the role of selectivity in our schools. Concentrating achievement and advantage in selective schools has come at a cost for students and schools left behind, and might not be best for students in selective schools either. The time has come to rethink and potentially scale back the segregation of high advantaged, high achieving students. A diverse mix of students in schools strengthens our entire education system. Such diversity is one of the biggest gifts schooling can offer our children and our society.

Unless the dynamics presented in this paper are recognised and addressed we won’t improve equity for all. The benefits of improved equity are substantial and widespread. But the chances of achieving much-needed improvement in student achievement is diminished when we aggregate the most disadvantaged students — whatever their background — in schools which are already struggling.

This discussion paper uses data from the *My School* website, including the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA). Rather than focusing on policy implications, it aims to diagnose a problem and prompt debate. While most of the analysis refers to NSW— which hosts 47 of Australia’s 55 selective schools — similar issues are emerging in other states.

This paper is part of the *In a Class of Their Own* series on disadvantage in Australia’s schools being released by the Centre for Policy Development (CPD). The series explores different facets of Australia’s contemporary school system and how it segregates and divides students, families and communities. The first paper in this series, *A Creeping Indigenous Separation*, focussed on disadvantage related to Indigenous students. *In a Class of Their Own* builds on CPD’s reports on the funding and composition of Australia’s schools. *Uneven Playing Field* (2016) and *Losing the Game* (2017) revealed a growing divide between advantaged and disadvantaged students, and richer and poorer schools. Our analysis suggested a less equal and more fragmented Australian schooling system.

# INTRODUCTION

*'End the selective school obsession'*  
*'Rich kids rule at selective schooling'*  
*'Open up selective schools for more inclusive education'*  
*'Selective schools do more harm than good: expert'*

These are some of the 2018 headlines we have seen in the mainstream Australian media on selective schools. Created to provide a stimulating educational environment for high-achieving gifted students, selective schools are facing an unprecedented challenge from critics who argue that they have become excessively elitist and competitive. This paper shows that students attending selective schools now come from elite social backgrounds, and that their concentration in selective schools has a detrimental impact on non-selective schools, and the education system as a whole.

Entry into a selective school is very difficult, with fewer than 30 per cent of applicants achieving a high enough score in the selective schools' test to secure a place at one of NSW's 47 (fully and partially) selective schools (Smith 2017). Among the state's highest scoring selective schools (as measured by HSC results), entry is much more competitive. As this paper suggests, selective schools have become dominated by highly socio-educationally advantaged students, often from families who have spent substantial resources on private tutoring to prepare their children for the admissions test.

Just how elitist are NSW selective schools? This paper analyses data from the *My School* website to show that selective schools are indeed among the most socio-educationally advantaged in NSW. Of the ten most socio-educationally advantaged secondary schools in NSW, six are selective schools. And in virtually every case, selective schools are the most advantaged school in their local area, even when compared with high-fee private schools. Selective schools are public schools that have become virtually inaccessible for all but the most advantaged students.

These trends raise broader questions about the value of segregating high-achieving students from others. What is the impact of this institutionalised separation on nearby schools, and on the comprehensive public education system overall? Unsurprisingly, selective schools routinely top HSC league tables. In 2017, eight of the top ten ATAR-scoring schools in the HSC were selective schools. Using data on HSC 'distinguished achievers' from the NSW Education Standards Authority (previously NSW Board of Studies), this paper shows that NSW's 47 selective schools account for almost half of all government school HSC distinguished achievers in the state.

Given that students' performance has been shown to reflect not only their own level of social advantage, but also the advantage levels of their peers within the school community (NSW DEC 2011), greater inequality between schools contributes to the growing polarisation of student outcomes, in this case, between selective and non-selective schools. We examine these trends below and in more detail in the next paper in this series.

Additionally, this paper tracks the 'brain drain' from comprehensive public schools that occurs when selective schools are established. It looks at four partially selective schools that opened in south-west Sydney in 2010, showing that while these schools increased their share of local high achievers, nearby comprehensive (and some Catholic) schools lost some of their high-achieving students. Many also experienced consistent declines in overall enrolment.

While this paper includes a brief discussion of policy implications, this is not its main purpose. Rather, it diagnoses a problem and presents new evidence of dramatic educational inequality. At a time of widespread concern about inequality, segregation and access to quality education, selective schools embody the fastest growing sites of privilege that we have seen in our education system in recent years. It's time to re-think the role of selectivity in our schools.



# WHAT ARE SELECTIVE SCHOOLS?

While many schools are popular enough to be able to select some of their students, and avoid others, the selective schools referred to in this paper are those established by the NSW government to cater for high-achieving gifted students. These are students who 'may otherwise be without sufficient classmates at their own academic and social level' (DoE 2018). The NSW Department of Education explains that:

'Selective schools help gifted and talented students to learn by grouping them with other gifted and talented students, teaching them in specialised ways and providing educational materials at the appropriate level. Selective high schools are unzoned so parents can apply regardless of where they live' (DoE 2018).



NSW has 47 selective schools, more than any other state. By comparison, Victoria has four, Queensland three, and Western Australia one. As a result, most of the analysis in this paper refers to NSW schools. However, similar issues are emerging in other states, as some of the data below shows. In NSW, there are 22 fully selective and 25 partially selective high schools. In fully selective schools, all classes are selective, while in partially selective schools, only English, Maths and Sciences classes are selective. Other classes are mixed, with selective students combining with local comprehensive students.

Admission into a NSW selective school is based on an applicant's results in the Selective High Schools' Placement Test. The test comprises four parts: reading, mathematics, general ability and writing. Applicants' primary school assessment scores in English and mathematics are also taken into account.

At the primary level, opportunity classes for gifted and talented Year 5 and 6 students are offered at 76 primary schools across NSW (DoE 2018). Admission is determined via the centralised Opportunity Class Placement Test. Students in opportunity classes are given academically challenging work, and these classes are often seen as 'de facto prep classes' for selective high schools (Vinson et al 2002, p. 29).

# HISTORY OF SELECTIVE SCHOOLS IN NSW

While some selective schools trace their origins to the nineteenth century, the number of selective schools in NSW grew rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s, as successive state governments began championing 'school choice'. Around the same time, the number of primary schools with opportunity classes grew dramatically, though opportunity classes date back to 1932 (Vinson et al 2002, p. 9). More recently, partially selective schools have grown in number since the early 2000s, with more than ten schools becoming partially selective since 2010.

Expanding the selective system is one part of a market-based approach to the provision of education, which has also seen:

- partial zoning of schools, enabling parents to apply for admission to a non-local public school
- increasing competition between schools, both public and private
- more outcomes measurement and standardised testing, for example, via NAPLAN
- increasing specialisation, for example, the expansion of the number of creative and performing arts, technology, and sports high schools, among other specialisations

In each case, the stated goal has been to provide greater diversity and increase choice for families. Enhancing opportunities for gifted and talented students is also an attempt to stem the exodus of middle-class families from public to private schools (see Campbell et al 2009 & Windle 2015 for more detail). Advocates of school choice argue that it enhances school quality and reduces inequalities by enabling families to avoid poorly performing schools, compelling these schools to lift their game. Today 96 per cent of students in Australia attend a school that is in competition with others in the same neighbourhood (Windle 2015, p. 15).

## THE ISSUES

Defenders of selective schools point to the benefits to individuals in terms of academic development and excellence, achieved in an environment of 'like minds'. As the Parents & Citizens association of one selective school stated (cited in Vinson et al 2002, p. 16):

Many students report that upon coming to the school, they feel less socially isolated than in a comprehensive setting. Instead of adopting strategies which hide their abilities (isolating themselves, deliberately under-performing), they no longer feel embarrassed by shining.

This is a common refrain among selective school students and graduates themselves, as recent media debates have demonstrated (e.g. Stewart 2017; Zhai 2018; Leung 2018).

Critics challenge the 'like minds' argument, pointing out that gifted students are present in every school, and can be given opportunities to learn together and stimulate one another. Creative timetabling and use of online technology can also enable students with particular talents or interests to collaborate across different schools. For example, Aurora College is a virtual selective school that enables students in regional and rural areas in NSW to study some subjects online, while still enrolled in their local public school (Aurora College 2018). Critics of selective schools, therefore, dispute the assumption that being with 'like minds' necessitates segregated schooling. As the Vinson report into NSW public education asked: 'Is it really the case that academically talented students cannot and should not mix with others ever?' (Vinson et al 2002, p. 17).



Others have argued that segregating talented students can damage their academic confidence, as they are no longer the ‘big fish in the little pond’, but instead surrounded by equally or more talented students (Marsh & Hau 2003; Susskind 2017). In recent media debates, selective school students and graduates have spoken out about the mental health challenges that can come with being in an extremely competitive, high-achieving schooling environment (e.g. Lee 2018; Anonymous 2018). Vinson et al (2002, p. 24) called for NSW selective schools to make greater attempts to select students who are more likely to thrive in a competitive environment, for example, via interview, as is the practice in other states.

Recent debates have focused on the skewed demographic profile of selective schools. As mentioned above, selective schools are under increasing scrutiny for enrolling highly advantaged students (Ho 2017; Heath 2017). The NSW Government has expressed concerns about the vast amount that parents are spending on private tutoring to prepare their children for the selective test, and has announced an ‘overhaul’ of the test, to open up opportunities for students who have not been tutored (Singhal 2017). Evidence suggests that household expenditure on private tutoring is significantly higher in NSW than it is in Victoria, partly attributable to the larger number of selective schools in NSW (Watson 2009). The NSW Government has also flagged the possibility of changing admissions policies in order to allow local students to attend selective schools, to make them ‘more inclusive’ (Singhal 2018).

Critics of selective schools argue that they cause a ‘brain drain’ from comprehensive public schools, depleting these schools of high-achieving students and their families. In the words of one Sydney teachers’ association (cited in Vinson et al 2002, p. 21):

‘The recent growth of selective schools in New South Wales is weakening the traditional local high school by sapping it of its impetus and lifeblood, its achievers and role models.’



The result can be a ‘predatory hierarchy’ (Windle 2015, p. 116) where selective and high-demand schools are free to choose their students, in the process depriving surrounding schools of their strongest students. As the next sections show, the concentration of talent and social advantage within selective schools has a detrimental impact on non-selective schools. The latter are denied the benefits of having high achievers and more socially advantaged students, both of which have been associated with superior academic outcomes.

## THE EVIDENCE

Data from *My School* confirms that selective schools are extremely socio-educationally advantaged. Fully selective high schools feature prominently among the most advantaged schools in NSW. Data from NSW Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) show that the establishment of selective schools and other schools which have enrolment discriminators (such as fees) creates a ‘brain drain’ from surrounding comprehensive public schools. The following sections provide an overview of this data, and explain the social implications.

### *Selective schools: sites of privilege*

Although selective schools are public high schools, the competition to secure a place in these high-scoring schools has led to a concentration of highly advantaged students among their cohorts. Among the ten most socio-educationally advantaged secondary schools in NSW, six are selective (marked with\*). Table 1 shows the 20 most advantaged schools and their ICSEA values.

#### Box 1: What is ICSEA?

The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is a score calculated for every school in Australia and reported on the *My School* website. ICSEA comprises factors shown to have an impact on student outcomes, such as parental education levels, parental occupation, school geographic location, and proportion of Indigenous students. ICSEA is set at an average of 1000 across Australia. The higher the ICSEA, the higher the level of educational advantage of students attending the school (ACARA 2016).

Media reporting sometimes uses the ICSEA incorrectly as a measure of socio-economic status, it does not include any direct indicators of parental income or wealth. This is why this paper refers to ‘socio-educational advantage’ when discussing ICSEA values.

**Table 1: 20 highest SEA secondary schools, NSW**

SCHOOL	ICSEA 2016
Sydney Grammar School	1302
*Northern Beaches Secondary College Manly Campus	1247
*James Ruse Agricultural High School	1240
St Aloysius' College	1234
Abbotsleigh	1222
SCEGGS Darlinghurst	1221

*Hornsby Girls High School	1215
*North Sydney Boys High School	1210
*North Sydney Girls High School	1205
*Merewether High School	1200
*Normanhurst Boys High School	1200
*Conservatorium High School	1200
Roseville College	1194
SCEGGS Redlands	1194
*Sydney Girls High School	1193
*Smiths Hill High School	1193
Ravenswood School for Girls	1193
*Baulkham Hills High School	1192
MLC School	1192
Barker College	1189

Source: My School 2016

Across NSW, selective schools (with only a few exceptions) are now the most socio-educationally advantaged schools within their local areas. In 2016, the average ICSEA value for fully selective high schools in NSW was 1187, well above the national mean of around 1000. A similar pattern is evident in Victoria, with an average ICSEA of 1138 across Melbourne's four selective high schools in 2016. In Western Australia's only selective school, Perth Modern School had an ICSEA of 1250 in 2016. Data is not available for Queensland's three selective schools.

As Table 2 shows, in wealthy areas, selective schools such as North Sydney Girls and Boys High Schools had ICSEA values (1205 and 1210 respectively) that even surpassed the already above average ICSEA values of schools in the local area (1178 for the North Sydney-Mosman area). Students in the selective schools were more socio-educationally advantaged even than those attending high-fee private schools.

In lower-income areas, selective schools had ICSEA values that far exceeded local averages. For example, Penrith High School's ICSEA of 1163 far surpassed the average of 1020 for the Penrith statistical local area. Even more striking was Merewether High School's ICSEA value of 1200, far in excess of the average of 1052 for the Newcastle local area.

**Table 2: ICSEA values of selective schools and their local areas**

School	School ICSE	Local area <sup>1</sup>	Local area average school ICSEA
Baulkham Hills High School	1192	Baulkham Hills	1107
Hurlstone Agricultural High School	1118	Campbelltown	975

<sup>1</sup> The ABS Statistical Area Level 3 was used as the local area for this analysis.

James Ruse Agricultural High School	1240	Carlingford	1087
Caringbah High School	1175	Cronulla - Miranda - Caringbah	1059
Gosford High School	1159	Gosford	1037
Hornsby Girls High School	1215	Hornsby	1145
Normanhurst Boys High School	1200	Hornsby	1145
St George Girls High School	1143	Kogarah - Rockdale	1022
Sydney Technical High School	1130	Kogarah - Rockdale	1022
Fort Street High School	1183	Marrickville - Sydenham - Petersham	1075
Merewether High School	1200	Newcastle	1052
North Sydney Boys High School	1210	North Sydney - Mosman	1178
North Sydney Girls High School	1205	North Sydney - Mosman	1178
Girraween High School	1180	Parramatta	1065
Penrith High School	1163	Penrith	1020
Conservatorium High School	1200	Sydney Inner City	1123
Sydney Girls High School	1193	Sydney Inner City	1123
Sydney Boys High School	1186	Sydney Inner City	1123
Northern Beaches Secondary College Main Campus	1247	Warringah	1124
Smiths Hill High School	1193	Wollongong	1054

Source: compiled from My School 2016

The *My School* website reports the distribution of students across the four quarters of socio-educational advantage (SEA). Within NSW selective schools, an average of 73 per cent of students came from the highest SEA quarter in 2016, rising to 89 per cent at NSW's highest-scoring school, James Ruse Agricultural High School. In contrast, only 2 per cent of selective school students came from the lowest SEA quarter. In Victoria, an average of 60% of selective school students came from the top SEA quarter in 2016, while at Perth Modern, the figure was 87%. This means that the vast majority of selective school students come from the most socio-educationally advantaged backgrounds, and there are virtually no students from disadvantaged backgrounds found in our selective schools.

In some areas, a generally sustained high level of advantage within selective schools can be contrasted with low and often declining levels of advantage in surrounding schools. Dramatic differences between schools within the same local area create inequalities and hierarchies that undermine schools' capacity to equalise opportunities for all students.

Are there any disadvantaged students within selective schools? On average only 2 per cent of students in (fully) selective schools came from the lowest SEA quarter (Q1) in 2016. At James Ruse and the Conservatorium High School, there were no students at all from the lowest SEA quarter. Even selective schools located in relatively low-income areas

had virtually no students from the lowest SEA quarter. For example, only 2 per cent of students at Penrith High and Smiths Hill High (Wollongong) came from the lowest SEA quarter in 2016.

In effect, the mechanism of selection favours those who are well-placed to gain entry to the schools rather than reaching all high-achieving gifted students who might otherwise be eligible – a problem not unique to New South Wales (Hu and Harris, 2018). Disadvantaged students are all but shut out of these schools.

The concentration of advantaged students within selective schools is particularly pronounced when in many cases, they are surrounded by comprehensive public schools with large proportions of students from the lowest SEA quarter. For example, while James Ruse had no Q1 students at all in 2016, at nearby Cumberland High School 24 per cent of students were from the lowest SEA quarter. While Penrith High had only 2 per cent of Q1 students, Q1 students comprised the majority of enrolments at nearby schools such as Kingswood High (53%), Cranebrook High (57%) and Cambridge Park High (65%). Similar patterns are evident elsewhere in western and southern Sydney.

Existing research (e.g. Hamnett et al 2007; Palardy 2013) shows that students' performance is affected not only by their own socio-economic status (SES) but also the SES of other students within their school, the so-called 'school composition effect'.

As the NSW Department of Education notes:

'The performance of students with low SES scores will, on average, be lower if they also attend a school with a large number of other low SES students. Conversely, the performance of students with high SES scores will, on average, be higher if they attend a school with a large number of other high SES students' (NSW DEC 2011, pp. 13-14).



As such, the concentration of social advantage within selective schools has an impact on the whole education system. Irrespective of ability or talent, the high levels of advantage of selective school students boost the performance of all selective school cohorts. In a more balanced public education system, the benefits of having socially advantaged students would be distributed across a much larger range of schools. A subsequent paper in this series will analyse this issue in more depth.



## *'Brain drain' from comprehensive public schools*

In addition to losing some of the most socially advantaged students, comprehensive schools also lose some of their highest-achieving students to selective schools. Fears that selective schools cause a 'brain drain' from comprehensive public schools are well founded. This section draws on data from the NSW Government on Higher School Certificate (HSC) 'distinguished achievers'. Each year BOSTES (now NESA) publishes lists of students who achieved a result in the highest band possible for one or more courses in the HSC. Looking at government schools, almost half (45 per cent) of all distinguished achievers in 2016-17 came from fully or partially selective schools. This is remarkable given that selective schools comprise only 11 per cent of all government secondary schools in NSW.

It is also possible to consider the impact of selective schools on nearby schools, looking at the number of HSC distinguished achievers before and after selective schools were established. Fully selective schools attract students from all over Sydney, with some travelling 100 kilometres or more to get to school (Smith & Gladstone 2018). This makes it difficult to discern any 'local' effects of a selective school on nearby schools. In effect, fully selective schools are not 'local' schools. However, local effects are discernible in some areas where partially selective schools have been established. In 2010, four partially selective schools were established in south-west Sydney, namely: Elizabeth Macarthur High School (Camden region), Bonnyrigg High and Prairiewood High Schools (Fairfield region) and Moorebank High School (Liverpool region). It is our assumption that most of the selected students would come from south-western Sydney.<sup>2</sup>

What impact did the establishment of these partially selective schools have on nearby schools? We compared the number, in each school, of those students included in the NSW list of HSC 'distinguished achievers' in 2005-06 (prior to the schools becoming partially selective) and in 2016-17. For the purposes of accurate comparisons between schools and over time, these numbers are expressed as each school's share of the total number of distinguished achievers within the local region. As Table 3 shows, each school was compared with all other secondary schools within the local region. In the Camden region, this meant that six schools were compared, while 15 schools were compared in Fairfield, and 11 in Liverpool.

Not surprisingly, the percentage of Distinguished Achievers (DAs) rose between 2005 and 2017 for all the partially selective schools. In some cases, this was a dramatic increase. For example, in 2005-06, only 2 per cent of distinguished achievers in the Fairfield region came from Bonnyrigg High School; by 2016-17, this had risen to 10 per cent. Meanwhile, Moorebank High School's share of local distinguished achievers increased from 13 per cent in 2005-06 to 28 per cent in 2016-17.

Non-selective schools in these regions generally did not share this increase, with many instead seeing a decline in their proportion of distinguished achievers. For some non-selective schools their share of distinguished achievers fell by half in this 12-year period.

The newly-established selective schools also experienced dramatic enrolment growth in the five years to 2016. On average across Australia school enrolments are declining in lower SEA schools and increasing in higher SEA schools. As Table 3 shows, enrolment in three of the four partially selective schools substantially rose between 2011 and 2016. Meanwhile, enrolment in two-thirds of the other government schools fell.

Shifts in enrolment distribution were particularly pronounced in the Camden area. While Elizabeth Macarthur High School grew by 153 students in the five years to 2016, all other local schools declined in enrolments, on average by 58 students.

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<sup>2</sup> ABS Statistical Area level 3 categories were used to compare schools within a local region.

Table 3: Changes in enrolment and share of distinguished achievers (DAs) in the local area, 2005-06 & 2016 - 17

	Enrolment change 2011-2016	2005-06 DAs %	2016-17 DAs %
<b>Camden region</b>			
Elizabeth Macarthur High School	153	9%	20%
Non-selective schools (average)	-58	30%	16%
<b>Fairfield region</b>			
Bonnyrigg High School	473	2%	10%
Prairiewood High School	224	5%	9%
Non-selective schools (average)	-5	7%	6%
<b>Liverpool region</b>			
Moorebank High School	19	13%	28%
Non-selective schools (average)	33	10%	8%

Source: My School and NSW Educational Standards Authority (formerly BOSTES)

We acknowledge other impacts on the schools, including newly established schools beyond each local area. Some schools have apparently been less affected by the partially selective schools. This may be attributed to factors such as location and access, school quality initiatives and school leadership. Over the years many schools, concerned at the establishment of selective schools, have established high-profile gifted and talented programs. Some of the less-affected schools may also benefit from factors, such as the cultural origins of the student population. Others may have a reputation that has equipped the school to cope.

However, it seems clear that the establishment of partially selective schools has had a negative impact on nearby government schools. The latter have lost enrolments, usually lost their share of the more advantaged students and, in a majority of cases, their previous share of higher achieving students.

## CONCLUSION

Selective schools in NSW are among the most socio-educationally advantaged in the state. Although they are public schools, designed to cater for high-achieving gifted students, regardless of family background, they have now become all but inaccessible to the majority of students. Selective school students typically come from the highest quarter of socio-educational advantage in NSW, with virtually none from disadvantaged backgrounds. Selective schools also create a 'brain drain' from comprehensive public schools, depriving them of their most capable and committed students, which can lead to falling overall enrolment numbers.

While selective schools are facing unprecedented scrutiny, the NSW government has been adding more selective streams to public schools in recent years. This paper has shown that even partially selective schools have detrimental effects on comprehensive public schools, and exacerbate existing inequalities in our education system. In the light of the NSW government's current review of its gifted education policy, the evidence presented in this paper questions the merit of continuing with the model of selective education that NSW has developed. Under the existing model, gifted students from disadvantaged backgrounds have virtually no chance of securing a place in a fully selective school. An equitable gifted education policy must focus on supporting comprehensive public schools to provide the opportunities that high achieving students need.

It is time to rethink and potentially scale back the segregation of high achieving, highly advantaged students. We need an education system where parents of gifted children can send them to their local comprehensive public school, confident that their interests and needs will be catered for, together with the interests and needs of all students, regardless of ability. In turn, a diverse mix of students in our comprehensive public schools strengthens these schools. Not only do they retain their high-achieving students, and families committed to quality education, but they are better able to give all students the invaluable education that comes from learning side by side with peers from all backgrounds and of all ability levels. Gaining an understanding and appreciation of this kind of diversity is one of the biggest gifts that schooling can offer our society.



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