Engines of Privilege: Britain's private school problem

#LSEPrivilege

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Hosted by the International Inequalities Institute
Why worry about private schools?

• Only 1 in 16 pupils overall
• Yet:
  ➢ 1 in every 7 teachers is in the private sector; ~ £1 in every £6 of expenditure is in private schools;
  ➢ this means a private/state resource gap of about £3 to £1 for each pupil
  ➢ beacons of inequality
Typical private school
Typical state schools
What does the evidence say?

- Better educational outcomes at all stages of education
- Better access to universities
- Better chances of success in the labour market
Participation in private school is concentrated at the very top of the income distribution.
What’s the problem?

• Systemic inefficiency

• Democratic deficit

• Unfairness/ reproduction of privilege (low social mobility)
‘Private education is not fair. Those who provide it know it. Those who pay for it know it. Those who have to sacrifice in order to purchase it know it. And those who receive it know it, or should. And if their education ends without it dawning on them, then that education has been wasted.’

Alan Bennett’s sermon in Cambridge
Our Populus poll:

“It is unfair that some people with a lot of money get a better education and life chances for their children by paying for a private school”
Populus

- Agree: 63%
- Neutral: 19%
- Disagree: 18%
Abu cartoon, Guardian 1968
Options for reform

• Curtailing demand
  • contextual admissions
  • taxation

• Crossing the tracks/integrating supply
  • with *private* control over admissions
  • with *social* control over admissions
Curtailing demand:

- contextual admissions
- taxation
Crossing the tracks:

• Private control over admissions
  • Open Access Scheme
  • others

• Social control over admissions
  • Fair Access Scheme

• ‘Abolition’
What won’t work:

• removing charitable status

• the ‘politics of hypocrisy’

• small scale schemes
  • private philanthropy/bursaries
  • small scale schemes
Populus

18% Agree
19% Neutral
63% Disagree
Private school insiders’ views on unfairness

- Agree: 51%
- Neutral: 29%
- 20%
KING’S COLLEGE SCHOOL
WIMBLEDON

“A real golden ticket.”

GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE 2017

THE SUNDAY TIMES
LONDON INDEPENDENT SECONDARY SCHOOL OF THE YEAR

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