

Excellent Education for Everyone is a group formed by residents of RBWM to promote positive discussion about ways to deliver a fair, inclusive education to all children within the borough. We don't believe that selection is the best way to achieve that aim.

Maidenhead is currently a non-selective borough, which borders directly onto Bucks. Each year a small number of state pupils in Maidenhead go to a grammar school across the border. Of the six secondary schools in RBWM that actually serve Maidenhead, most (4) are good or outstanding (one is a Free school that has not yet been inspected; one is requires improvement but a recent visit from Ofsted confirmed it was moving in the right direction.

The paper before you this evening makes much of the success of the secondary education sector in RBWM and so it should. We have invested in it and it is on an upward trajectory. We are in the top 10 of top performing state school areas. Why then are we planning to introduce selection into our secondary education sector in RBWM and risk this success?

It makes no sense for a number of reasons.

1: The government is currently consulting on selection in secondary education. At the moment we don't know if MPs will vote in favour or indeed the makeup and shape of the "new style "of grammar schools

2 We border Bucks where a minority of parents (in 2015/16 only 9%) send their children to grammar schools from RBWM. In a selective system usually 20-35% of children go to grammar schools. So trying to claim that a small number of children exiting our comprehensive education is proof that selection doesn't damage comprehensive education is misleading. Bucks does far worse with selection than RBWM do without.

Just a few statistics

- Bucks have one of the largest attainment gaps (the gap between the achievement of FSM and non-FSM children) of any local authority in the country, at 39%. The independent inquiry for Bucks County Council into this problem (by Professor Strand) showed that while the achievement gap closes during the primary phase in Bucks, it increases during the secondary phase.
- In 2014, across the entire county of Bucks, just 10 children in receipt of FSM passed the 11-plus. To be clear that is 10 children on free school meals out of the total number of 8431 children who sat the test.

It makes no difference that many Bucks grammar schools prioritise FSM children in their admissions policies - because these children don't pass the test in the first place.

I could go on and quote more statistics from Bucks that show that selection whilst benefiting a few leads to poorer outcomes for the majority of secondary pupils in Bucks but I'm limited with the time I have to address you this evening

2 The paper before you tonight champions choice as a key element for the introduction of selection secondary education. The number of residents that chose to send their children out of RBWM to attend grammar schools is small. Are we saying that because a small minority chose selection for their children, the vast majority who are content with the comprehensive system are to be disadvantaged by downgrading the comprehensive schools to secondary moderns? What about the choice for parents whose choice is to send their children to a comprehensive school? Maybe we should remind ourselves that children do not "choose" a grammar school, but the school chooses its pupils.

At present, parents can opt in to selective education via our neighbouring local authority. That extends "choice" for parents in Maidenhead. But take away our comprehensive schools and the choice is grammar or secondary modern. We don't think you have residents clamouring for that!?

Finally I would draw your attention to the considerable amount of data contained within this paper. It should come as no surprise to you that Ascot appears to have the lowest number of residents looking to send their children to a grammar school. Why would they when they have an outstanding comprehensive on their door step? The focus for RBWM should be on helping all our comprehensives reach outstanding - not on the introduction of selection.

At best RBWM should stop now and say no to selective education.

At worst you should send a clear message to cabinet that this paper should be withdrawn until such time as there is a change to the legislation. RBWM should not waste any resources on speculative matters. As it stands at the moment it's unlikely that any proposed legislation will get through parliament. Why waste resources and money on this until there's certainty?

We should be supporting our comprehensives

Thank you for listening to me