

# Calls to boost integration after claims Muslim children can grow up without meeting non-Muslims

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The National Secular Society has accused the Government of dividing communities with the push to open new faith schools, ahead of a new report on religious and racial segregation in Birmingham.

The report from British Future will address "integration challenges" in the West Midlands and will seek to encourage "projects that bring together children and young people from different faiths and ethnic backgrounds".

It says that Muslims communities originating from South Asia had higher levels of segregation than other minority groups and presents the stark ethnic and religious differences between inner city and suburban areas of Birmingham.

The [Birmingham Post](#) said the upcoming report found that many Muslim children from these inner city areas were "likely to grow up without meeting or understanding people from different backgrounds."

Sunder Katwala, director of British Future, is one of the signatories to a joint letter which calls for the new Mayor of the West Midlands to appoint a deputy mayor for integration once they are elected on 4<sup>th</sup> May.

The letter to the *Birmingham Post* is also signed by Gisela Stuart MP and Andrew Mitchell MP. It says the new post is needed to "make integration work well" amid an "anxious and fragmented society".

British Future is calling for the proposed Deputy Mayor to lead an "Office for Citizenship and Integration to drive forward an integration agenda" across the West Midlands.

National Secular Society campaigns director Stephen Evans said: "Dividing our education system along religious grounds does nothing to help promote integration. The Government is worsening the problems we see in Birmingham and other cities by promoting such a divisive agenda.

"Further analysis of the interconnected problems around integration is welcome, and we look forward to seeing a copy of the full report."

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