

Scottish govt commits to faith schools despite religious decline

Posted: Tue, 14 Aug 2018

Scotland's education minister has told the National Secular Society his government has "no plans" to roll back religious schools – as a poll shows Scotland becoming increasingly irreligious.

John Swinney, who is also the deputy first minister, told the NSS that the government had no plans to stop supporting denominational schooling, or to restrict such schools' ability to discriminate in terms of religion when appointing staff.

His letter comes as a poll [found](#) that almost 60% of Scots were non-religious, including almost 70% of 18-24 year olds.

The poll, by Survation on behalf of the Humanist Society Scotland, found that 37% of Scots call themselves Christians, of whom more than half (58%) say they belong to the Church of Scotland.

The poll found that 53% of Scots say they never pray and 60% only ever attend church for weddings, funerals and other special occasions. A majority (51%) do not believe in an afterlife.

Sixty-eight per cent did not believe in hell. A similar proportion said they did not believe in divine miracles, while 60% said they did not believe in angels and 65% did not believe in evil spirits.

The north-east of Scotland contained the most non-religious people (66%). In Glasgow the figure was 55%.

Alastair Lichten, the NSS's education and schools officer, said the Scottish government was "out of touch with the wishes of most Scots" and "pouring fuel on the fire of sectarianism just as a chance to tackle it is emerging".

"Inclusive, non-discriminatory, non-denominational education is our best chance to bring people of all faiths and none together. As religious belief in Scotland diversifies and diminishes, our future doesn't need to be a divided one."

In recent months the Scottish government has repeatedly committed itself to Catholic schools, in the 100th year since legislation brought Catholic schools into Scotland's state education system.

In June Nicola Sturgeon, the first minister, [described](#) her government as "an unequivocal supporter of Catholic schools". In the same speech she announced a 450% increase in funding for a Catholic teacher training programme.

In May Swinney [gave](#) an "absolute assurance" of the Scottish government's "commitment to maintain the Catholic education tradition".

But earlier this month Mhairi Black, an MP with the Scottish National Party (which governs in Scotland), [said](#) there should be "a debate" on the future of Catholic schools.

Image: John Swinney MSP, © Ninian Reid, via Flickr [\[CC BY 2.0\]](#)

Join our national campaign against faith schools

We campaign for an inclusive and secular education system free from any form of religious privilege, partisanship, proselytization or discrimination. Please consider a donation, from as little as £1 a month, to help support our work in this area.

P.S. make sure to check out the related campaigns below.

- [Find out more](#)
- [Donate](#)

- [Share on What's App](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [Education](#), [Faith Schools](#), [Scotland](#), [Statistics](#), [Religion & Belief](#)

Related Campaigns

- [**Education and Schools**](#)

Join our campaign for an inclusive and secular education system.

[Read More](#)

- [**Faith schools**](#)

We want an inclusive education system, free from religious discrimination or proselytization.

[Read More](#)

- [**Remove Religious Reps**](#)

Scottish law requires education committees to include three religious appointees.

[Read More](#)