

# Scottish govt commits to faith schools despite religious decline

Posted: Tue, 14th 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 100<sup>th</sup> 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 [\[CC BY 2.0\]](#)*

# No more faith schools

We need inclusive schools free from religious discrimination, privilege or control. Join our campaign.

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

Tags: [Faith schools](#)

## Related Campaigns

- 

### [No more faith schools](#)

We need inclusive schools free from religious discrimination, privilege or control.

[Read More](#)

## Related Articles

### [NI assembly votes in favour of inclusive, evidence-based RSE](#)

MLAs speak of "twisted" RSE teaching that thoughts of sex are "sinful" and same-sex relationships "laughed at". [Read More »](#)

### [Faith school takeover proceeds despite overwhelming opposition](#)

NSS: Governors 'concealing' strength of feeling against Church of England ethos. [Read More »](#)

## **NSS announces major conference on protecting liberal values**

Kenan Malik, Joan Smith and more speaking at NSS Secularism 2024 conference in London. [Read More »](#)

## **Allowing more religious selection in schools would be a big mistake**

Abandoning the 50% admission cap would exacerbate the discrimination, disadvantage and division inherent with faith schools, argues Stephen Evans. [Read More »](#)

## **NSS joins open letter against faith school discrimination**

Education experts, politicians, religious leaders and public figures unite to call on Education Secretary to keep the faith school admissions cap. [Read More »](#)