

# NSS research bank shows deep flaws in case for faith schools

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A substantial new analysis of academic research, published by the National Secular Society, has highlighted significant and myriad weaknesses in the arguments for state-funded faith schools.

[The Faith Schools Research Bank](#), which launched on Tuesday, brings together evidence from almost 200 sources on the impact of faith schools.

The bank has been compiled by University of Warwick academics Steven Kettell and Rebecca Vernon. It outlines evidence in five key areas: social cohesion; performance and selection; choice and admissions; values and morality; and opinion polls.

The NSS says the evidence "provides a compelling and comprehensive case against state-funded faith schools" when taken together.

It adds that it intends the bank to be a valuable resource for policymakers, politicians, academics and anyone else interested in the ongoing debate around faith schools in Britain.

## Comments

Co-author Steven Kettell, an associate professor in Warwick's Department of Politics and International Studies, said: "High quality research on the impact of faith schools is often inaccessible to the general public.

"We hope the Faith Schools Research Bank will be an invaluable and comprehensive resource which will change that.

"The evidence shows that faith schools advance the interests of religious institutions, rather than society as a whole. Faith schools foster social division, undermine equality and infringe on pupils' intellectual autonomy. And the arguments made in their favour don't stand up to scrutiny."

NSS head of education Alastair Lichten said the research in the bank presented "a compelling and comprehensive argument against faith schools".

"Supporters of faith schools commonly claim that they provide a social benefit, improved choice, and a superior moral foundation. These claims and more are ground down under the weight of evidence.

"This should act as a wake-up call to policy makers, who should support a secular and inclusive education system to improve social cohesion and enable children to develop their own religious beliefs."

## Notes

- The Faith Schools Research Bank is [available on the NSS website](#).

- The research bank mainly focuses on faith schools in England and Wales, although it also draws on evidence from Scotland and Northern Ireland where relevant. More than a third of state-funded schools in England are faith schools.
- The NSS will be holding an online launch event including Q&A with Steven Kettell on Thursday 8 April. [Click here to register.](#)

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[The #FaithSchoolsResearchBank makes a compelling and comprehensive case against faith schools. An essential resource for policymakers, politicians, academics and more.](#)  
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