

Educational Disadvantage, Social Mobility and Religious Identity

David Lundie & Mi Young Ahn
 Education Studies, Liverpool Hope University
 Lundied@hope.ac.uk ahnm@hope.ac.uk



Aims

- To determine the economic and academic benefit of secondary qualifications (GCSE and A-Level) in RE and the extent to which these benefits are understood by disadvantaged and minority students and their parents.
- To analyse the perceptions of the academic, economic, spiritual, moral, social and cultural benefits of RE among parents in disadvantaged and minority communities, and to identify potential barriers to perceiving benefits.
- To identify any potential relationship between the authentic portrayal of religions by minority students, the perceived social aims of RE by disadvantaged groups, and access to RE as an examination subject.

Methods

Mixed methods research

Secondary data analysis

Compiling 6 data sets of all England secondary schools data (published by National Statistics)

Religious Studies, Subject Choice and Aspiration Survey for Pupils & Parents

Developing & conducting the survey research for Yr 8 & 9 pupils and parents at secondary schools in Merseyside

Findings 1

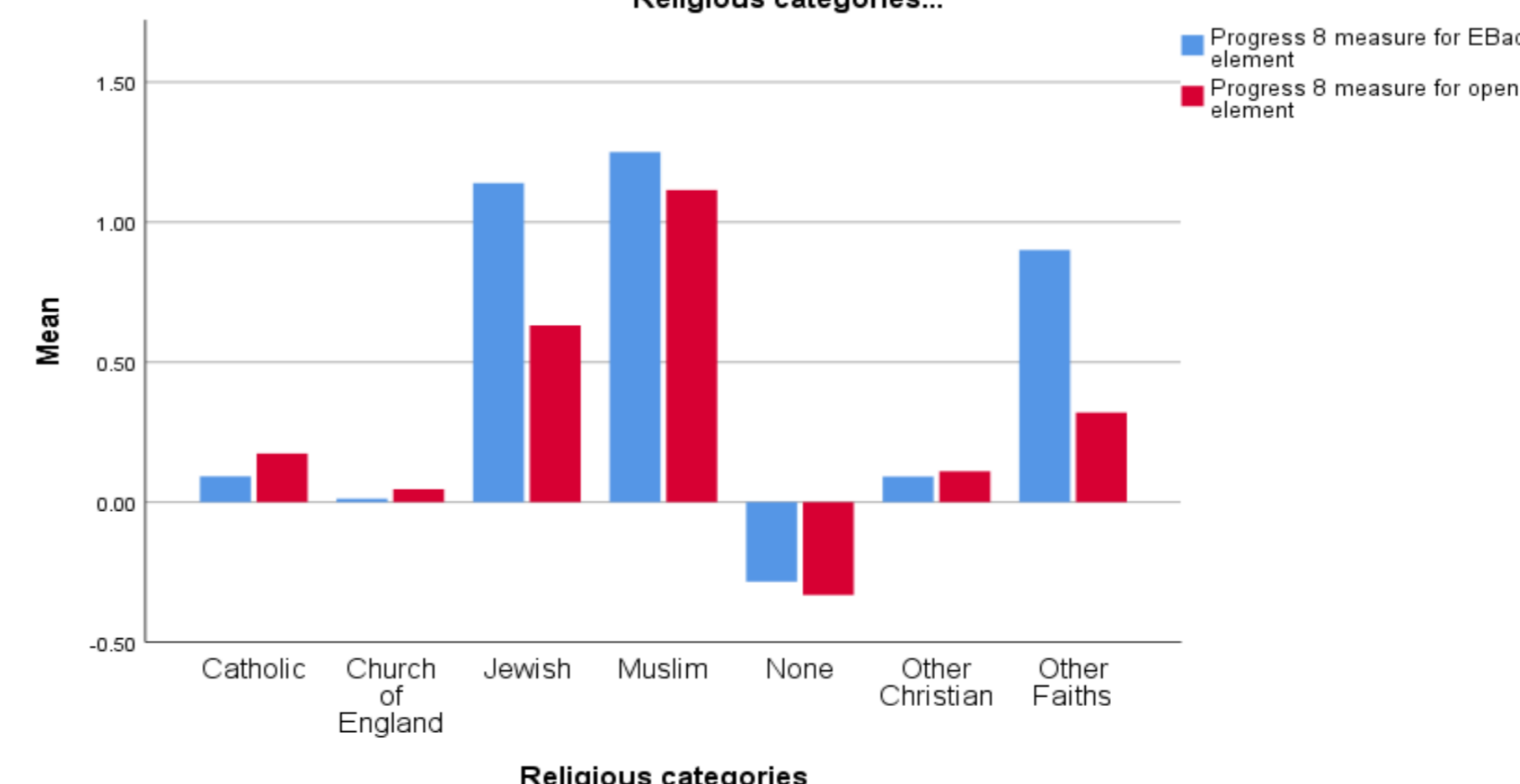
The secondary data analysis of the **all England secondary schools data** reveals:

- The total number of schools which participated in GCSE RS in 2018 decreased substantially; from **3,257** schools in 2017 to **2,824** schools in 2018.
- Schools participated in GCSE RS in 2018 tend to show statistically significant differences in:
 - Socio-economic indicator: Eligibility for free school meals
 - School performance: Ofsted effectiveness
 - Academic achievement: Attainment 8 & Progress 8
- The gaps between schools that participated in GCSE RS and those which did not, has narrowed from 2017. The 701 schools which decided to drop GCSE RS in 2018 tend to have higher percentages of disadvantaged pupils and lower levels of academic achievements, in comparison with those which participated in 2018.

		FSM	FSM KS4	Ofsted	Average Attainment 8	Progress 8 EBacc	Progress 8 open
GCSE RS participated 2018	Valid	2347	2791	2213	2811	2346	2346
	Missing	477	33	611	13	478	478
	Mean	11.069	.267401	1.99	46.297	.0187	.0213
	SD	9.8915	.1571393	.776	11.5191	.55547	.53673
Not participated	Valid	1580	2528	1494	1669	1332	1332
	Missing	1024	76	1110	935	1272	1272
	Mean	17.404	.418487	2.00	29.196	-.6413	-.7378
	SD	17.9942	.2257000	.796	20.2296	.94095	1.08075

- There are statistically significant differences of socio-economic status & academic achievement between schools with different religious characters.

Simple Bar Mean of Progress 8 measure for EBacc element, Mean of Progress 8 measure for open element by Religious categories...



Findings 2

Religious Studies, Subject Choice and Aspiration Survey for Pupils & Parents

- Participant recruitment
 - Schools with twice the national average of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (28%) and above
- The pilot study suggests:
 - In general, pupils' perception of religious education is positive, although they do not consider themselves and their friends religious.
 - Pupils are less keen to take A Level RS.
 - No pupils attend any out-of-RE classes religious activities; and RE class is the only time to discuss religion to some pupils
 - Parents seem to regard religion more importantly than their child.

Practitioner Action Research

A community of practice comprising primary teachers in disadvantaged schools and organisations that work with primary schools have begun a series of meetings to develop resources to support primary teaching.

An initial needs analysis suggests that teachers' lack of subject knowledge, concerns about parental withdrawal, and lack of knowledge of available local support are all challenges which need to be addressed for effective RE in the primary school.