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Edited by Gregory K. Ingram and Daphne A. Kenyon



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11

Admissions to Academy Schools in England: School Composition and House Prices

Stephen Machin and Anne West

The way in which pupils are admitted or assigned to schools determines the distribution of pupils among schools in a given area. This is important, as evidence from a range of different countries suggests that inequalities among pupils from different social groups are accentuated by between-school tracking (Pfeffer 2008; Van de Werfhorst and Mijs 2010). England has a predominantly comprehensive (all-ability) system, with little explicit tracking into academic and nonacademic schools. However, there is a degree of school selectivity, resulting in what might be called implicit tracking (Nikolai and West 2013). Moreover, changes to education policy have resulted in the creation of new school types with admissions criteria and policies that, in some cases, differ significantly from those found in other publicly funded schools. There has, as a result, been considerable policy interest and academic debate about these schools, their composition, and educational outcomes.

At the same time, there has been interest in the association between house prices and schools, with research indicating that school quality, defined in terms of a school's academic performance, is associated with higher house prices. This chapter brings together these two key issues: secondary school admissions in England and property prices. The first part of the chapter provides a historical, institutional, and policy context; the second addresses admissions to secondary schools; the third reviews previous research; and the fourth provides an analysis of academy conversions as they relate to pupil intake and house prices. The final section presents the conclusions.

Historical, Institutional, and Policy Context ---

HISTORICAL CONTEXT, 1944–1979

Secondary school admissions in England can only be understood with reference to institutional and policy context over time. Following the Education Act of 1944, a national system of compulsory primary and secondary education was established in England for pupils between the ages of 5 and 15 (in 1972 this was raised to 16) replacing the former elementary schools, which did not charge fees, for pupils between the ages of 5 and 14 years of age. Schools were provided by local education authorities (broadly equivalent to school districts) or voluntary bodies, normally the churches.¹ Admissions to local education authority schools were determined by the local authority, while admissions to most voluntary schools (voluntary-aided) were made by the school's governing body (for the small number of voluntary-controlled schools, admissions were the responsibility of the local education authority). The legislation also allowed for an academically selective system of secondary education: grammar schools for the most academically able, technical schools for those with technical aptitude, and secondary modern schools for the remainder. Admission to grammar schools was based in the main on the results of the "eleven plus," a test of ability taken in the final year of primary school, generally at the age of 11. However, concerns were raised about the so-called tripartite system, as the main beneficiaries of grammar schools were children from middle-class backgrounds (Floud 1956). Thus, in October 1965, following the 1964 general election, the Labour government asked local education authorities to submit plans for the introduction of comprehensive secondary education. Although this request was withdrawn following the election of a Conservative government in 1970 (Simon 1991), local authorities continued to submit proposals for comprehensive reorganization to the central government. By the beginning of the 1980s, comprehensive schooling was almost universal (Gordon, Aldrich, and Dean 1991), although some local authorities retained grammar schools.²

INTRODUCTION OF A QUASI-MARKET, 1979–PRESENT

Major changes to school-based education policy took place under successive Conservative governments (1979–1997). The Education Act of 1980 gave an increased emphasis to parental choice of schools, and following the Education Reform Act of 1988 further legislative changes resulted in school funding being determined predominantly on the basis of pupil numbers (in essence a quasi-voucher system) and each school being required to admit pupils up to its physical

1. In England, unlike the United States, there is no church-state divide in education, with the majority of religious schools being publicly funded.

2. There are currently 164 grammar schools in England, making up 5 percent of secondary schools.

capacity. School budgets were delegated by local education authorities, with governing bodies deciding how the budgets should be spent and appointing school staff. National test results and public examination results at different stages of primary and secondary education were also published in the media via government-produced performance and league tables (equivalent to U.S. "school report cards"). A quasimarket was thus created (Le Grand and Bartlett 1993), with schools being incentivized to increase the number of pupils admitted and maximize their league table positions.

A new type of school was also introduced: the city technology college (CTC). CTCs differed from other government-funded, or "maintained," schools in that they were not funded by local authorities or under their jurisdiction; rather, they were funded by the central government via legally binding contracts and owned by private (nonpublic) bodies, with sponsors providing a proportion of the capital costs.³

Under the Education Reform Act, a maintained school could also opt out of local authority control and become "grant-maintained," gaining control over admissions from the local authority and becoming the employer of staff. In so doing, the school joined other schools that had long had this responsibility, in the main voluntary-aided schools. Grant-maintained schools were funded by the central government, but unlike CTCs they had to follow the national curriculum. Although they employed their own staff, unlike CTCs they were bound by national schoolteachers' pay and conditions regulations. Although more autonomous than other maintained schools, grant-maintained schools were nevertheless required to adhere to education law, unlike CTCs, which were bound by contract law.⁴

Commentators expressed concerns about secondary school admissions following the introduction of these reforms. These concerns related to the admissions process (Audit Commission 1996), the use of interviews, overt selection on the basis of ability or aptitude, social or covert selection, and complex application procedures (Gewirtz, Ball, and Bowe 1995; West, Pennell, and Noden 1998).⁵ Following the election of the Labour government in 1997, the School Standards and Framework Act (SSFA) was passed in 1998. Grant-maintained schools retained their comparative autonomy as, in the main, foundation schools, but they

3. Unlike other schools, they also had a particular focus on science and technology education. Only 15 CTCs were established.

4. Kenneth Baker, secretary of state for education in 1988, considered CTCs to be "prototypes," laying the groundwork for grant-maintained schools, which he regarded as in many respects "the direct descendants" of CTCs (Baker 1993, 181).

5. There were also concerns prior to the Education Reform Act. A report commissioned by the former Inner London Education Authority (ILEA 1985) pointed out that some voluntary-aided secondary schools (responsible for their own admissions) were using interviews to obtain a disproportionate number of higher-ability pupils.

were no longer funded by the central government; instead, they received their budgets via the local authorities and were subject to local authority control (in effect, supervision).

In 2000, academies were introduced, with the first schools opening in the 2002–2003 school year.⁶ Academies bear similarities to CTCs in terms of their organizational form (West and Bailey 2013).⁷ However, the overall policy goal was to replace poorly performing schools and improve pupil performance. Initially known as city academies, they were outside local authority control and sponsored by businesses, individuals, churches, or voluntary bodies, which initially made a contribution, intended to be around 20 percent of the capital costs (DfEE 2000). Academies were set up by the sponsoring bodies, which established private companies with charitable status (not-for-profit) and entered into funding agreements with the secretary of state for education and employment. Referred to as sponsored academies, they offered a “broad and balanced” curriculum and specialized in at least one area of the curriculum (e.g., science and technology, languages, the arts, or sports). The aim was for academies to be all-ability schools, although they were permitted to select up to 10 percent of their pupils on the basis of aptitude in the academy’s specialist area. Admissions policies were agreed on with the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). Revenue costs were met by the government and set at a level comparable to those of other schools in the local authority, with additional funding provided to cover services for which the academy would be responsible (West and Bailey 2013).

The Education Act of 2002 allowed for academies outside urban areas, for all-age academies, and for an emphasis on any subject area. Following the 2005 general election, a goal of having at least 200 academies open by 2010, “or in the pipeline in areas of traditionally low standards,” was set (DfEE 2005, 29).

By 2010, there were 203 sponsored academies up and running in England (West and Bailey 2013). Following the 2010 general election, the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition passed the Academies Act allowing schools to convert to academy status under certain conditions; these are referred to as converter academies. Sponsored academies are still being established to replace, in the main, schools deemed to be providing poor-quality education (West and Bailey 2013). In January 2013, 12 percent of secondary schools were sponsored academies: 401 out of 3,281 state-funded secondary schools in England (DfE 2013b, tables 2a and 2b).⁸

6. Academies share some similarities with U.S. charter schools, which are independently run but publicly funded schools that are not subject to the same regulatory framework as other public schools (Zimmer et al. 2009).

7. For details of the ownership of schools of different types, see appendix A.

8. When sponsored academies are established, the head teacher and staff may or may not continue in their posts, though this is currently an under-researched aspect of the academies program.

SUMMARY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TYPES

There are currently seven different school types that make up the English secondary education system: fee-charging independent schools; and non-fee-charging academy schools, city technology colleges (CTCs), voluntary-aided schools, foundation schools, voluntary-controlled schools, and community schools. Each school type is characterized by a unique set of features regarding school autonomy. This is shown in table 11.1, which is arranged by the amount of autonomy the school's governing or management body has to make education decisions, ranging from fee-charging registered independent schools with the most autonomy to community schools with the least.

The changing pattern through time is described in table 11.2, which shows the number of state-maintained English secondary schools in operation at the

Table 11.1
Characteristics of Autonomy in English Secondary Schools

	Non-LA Admissions Authority	Maintained by Non-LA Body	Not Obligated to Follow National Curriculum	Fee-Charging
Registered independent school ^a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Academy ^b	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
City technology college ^c	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Voluntary-aided school ^d	Yes	No	No	No
Foundation school ^e	Yes	No	No	No
Voluntary-controlled school ^f	No	No	No	No
Community school ^g	No	No	No	No

^aRegistered independent schools are independent of the local authority (LA) and are fee-charging.

^bPrior to 2010–2011, academy schools were all-ability independent specialist schools that did not charge fees and were not maintained by the LA; they were established by sponsors from business, faith, higher education, or voluntary groups, working in partnership with the central government. The sponsors and the Department for Education (DfE) provided the capital costs. Running costs were met by the DfE in accordance with the number of pupils, at a level similar to that provided by LAs for maintained schools serving similar catchment areas.

^cCity technology colleges (CTCs) are all-ability independent schools that do not charge fees and are not maintained by the LA. Their curriculum has a particular focus on science and technology education (West and Bailey 2013). They were established by sponsors from business, faith, or voluntary groups (they are no longer being established; most have now become academies). Sponsors and the DfE provided the capital costs. Running costs are met by the DfE in accordance with the number of pupils, at a level similar to that provided by LAs for maintained schools serving similar catchment areas.

^dVoluntary-aided schools are maintained by the LA. The founding body (generally religious) appoints most of the governing body. The governing body is responsible for admissions and employing school staff. The land at voluntary-aided schools is usually owned by trustees, although the LA often owns any playing fields (DfE 2012c).

^eFoundation (formerly grant-maintained) schools are maintained by the LA. The governing body is responsible for admissions and employing school staff. Either the foundation or the governing body owns the school's land and buildings (DfE 2012c).

^fVoluntary-controlled schools are maintained by the LA. These are mostly religious schools in which the LA continues to be the admissions authority. The land at voluntary-controlled schools is usually owned by trustees, although the LA often owns any playing fields (DfE 2012c).

^gCommunity schools are maintained by the LA, which is responsible for admissions and employing school staff. The LA also owns the school's land and buildings.

Table 11.2
Secondary Schools in England, 2001–2002 and 2008–2009

	2001–2002, number (%)	2008–2009, number (%)
Academy	0 (0.0)	133 (4.0)
City technology college	14 (0.4)	3 (0.1)
Voluntary-aided school	555 (16.0)	537 (16.0)
Foundation school	609 (17.5)	560 (16.7)
Voluntary-controlled school	116 (3.3)	111 (3.3)
Community school	2,177 (62.7)	2,017 (59.9)
Total	3,471	3,361

Note: Data include middle schools, but not special schools.

Source: Machin and Veroit (2011).

start and end of the eight-year period beginning in the 2001–2002 school year. The table shows that by the 2008–2009 school year, there were 133 academies. These were introduced gradually, with the first three opening in 2002–2003, then speeded up beginning in 2006–2007: 2003–2004, 9; 2004–2005, 5; 2005–2006, 10; 2006–2007, 19; 2007–2008, 37; 2008–2009, 30. The table shows reductions in the other secondary school types as the share of academies rose to 4 percent of the secondary sector by 2008–2009. As noted earlier, the number of academies operating under the Labour regime rose further to 203 by the time the government changed in May 2010.

Admissions to Schools

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The 1998 SSFA established a new legal framework for admissions. Two key mechanisms were introduced, the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (the responsibilities of schools adjudicators include ruling on objections to schools' or local authorities' admissions arrangements) (West and Ingram 2001) and the School Admissions Code. In the first code (DfEE 1999), it was noted that admissions authorities had "a fairly wide discretion to determine their own oversubscription criteria provided these criteria [were] objective, fair, compatible with admissions and equal opportunities legislation" (para. 5.2). The general guidance was broadly similar in the second code. Criteria were not to be unlawful; the admissions authority had to consider the factors it believed to be the most important to ensure that children received an "efficient and suitable education" and had to have had "regard to the guidance" in the code (DfEE 2003, para. A.51). Admissions authorities had a duty to consider the code's provisions, but having done

so, they were able to set criteria that did not comply with the code provided they had good reasons for their actions and what they chose to do did not contravene the code's general principles or the law.

Significant regulatory changes followed the 2006 Education and Inspections Act. This prohibited interviews “where the interview is to be taken into account . . . in determining whether the applicant is to be admitted to the school” (pt. 3, sec. 44). The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations, introduced in 2006, required an admissions authority to give “first priority in its oversubscription criteria to all relevant looked after children” (sec. 3), a particularly disadvantaged group.⁹ The code was also strengthened from one in which admissions authorities should “have regard to” to one in which they must “act in accordance”; thus, in the third School Admissions Code (DfEE 2007), certain provisions were “mandatory” or “prohibited.”

The 2008 Education and Skills Act further strengthened the statutory admissions framework. A revised (fourth) code was published in 2009 (DCSF 2009), noting that the application and allocation process was to be made easier, with, beginning in 2010, parents needing only to apply to the local authority in which they lived and national closing dates for applications being specified. In 2010, the code was amended slightly and reissued (DCSF 2010). A new code introduced in 2012 (DfE 2012a) was broadly similar to the 2010 code.

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

In terms of the process of secondary school admissions, parents/carers must be allowed to express a minimum of three “choices” (or, more accurately, “preferences”) of publicly funded secondary schools for their child (generally at the age of 11 years, when children move from primary to secondary school) (DCSF 2010; DfE 2012a). They are required to complete a “common application form,” which is provided by and returned to their local authority. Schools outside the local authority can be named: that is, parents/carers can apply for a place for their child at any publicly funded school in any area. In some cases, schools are permitted to seek additional information about prospective pupils by asking parents/carers to complete supplementary information forms.

If there are fewer applicants than places available at a particular school, all those expressing a preference must be offered a place for their child (except in the case of grammar schools); if there are more applicants than places available, the school's published oversubscription criteria are used to determine which children are offered a place.¹⁰ As stated in the School Admissions Code (DfE 2012a): “If a

9. Children who are “looked after” or “in care” are those in “out-of-home care” (e.g., family foster care, kinship care, residential or group care) in the United States.

10. As these explicit criteria show, the admissions system in most English schools is rather different from that in some U.S. settings (see, e.g., Abdulkadiroğlu et al. 2005; Abdulkadiroğlu, Pathak, and Roth 2009; Pathak and Sonmez 2013).

school is undersubscribed, any parent that applies must be offered a place. When oversubscribed, a school's admission authority must rank applications in order against its published oversubscription criteria and send that list back to the local authority. . . . All preferences are collated and parents then receive an offer from the local authority at the highest preference school at which a place is available" (para. 15, secs. d and e).

Schools with responsibility for admissions have more scope to decide on their admissions criteria than other schools whose admissions policies are set by the local authority. Such schools are in a position, if they so wish, to seek to "select in" or "select out" certain types of pupils via their oversubscription criteria.

It is important to note that local authorities provide support for pupil travel costs in certain, legally defined circumstances. This legislation applies to all state-funded schools, including academies. Thus, children between the ages of 5 and 16 qualify for free school transport if they go to their nearest suitable school and live at least two miles from the school if they are under age 8, or three miles from the school if they are between ages 8 and 16. If there is no safe walking route, they must be given free transport, however far from the school they live (DfE 2013a).¹¹ In parts of the country (e.g., London), there is provision for free travel on public transport (Transport for London 2013).

Previous Research

A number of research studies have examined secondary school admissions policies in England. West and Hind (2003) provided, for the first time, data relating to admissions criteria and practices used by virtually all publicly funded secondary schools in England in 2001. They found that a significant minority of secondary schools, in the main those responsible for their own admissions (voluntary-aided and foundation schools), used a variety of criteria that appeared to be designed to "select in" certain groups of pupils: these criteria included giving priority to children of employees or those with a family connection to the school; selecting a proportion of children on the basis of aptitude/ability in a subject area; and interviewing prospective pupils and their parents (West, Hind, and Pennell 2004).

Subsequent research by Coldron and colleagues (2008) relating to admissions in 2006 found that some schools responsible for admissions, in particular voluntary-aided schools, were less compliant with the provisions of the School

11. For families on certain state benefits, there is more generous provision of transport. Children ages 11 to 16 are entitled to free transport if the school is 2 to 6 miles away, as long as there are not three or more suitable schools nearer to home. They are also entitled to free transport to a school 2 to 15 miles away if the school is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion/belief. Children with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities are entitled to free transport however far they live from the school if they have a statement of SEN that says the local council will pay transport costs or if they are not able to walk because of their SEN, a disability, or a mobility problem (DfE 2013a).

Admissions Code and were more likely to use covert selection than were community schools. They also found that there had been an increase since 2001 in the proportion of schools selecting 10 percent of their pupils on the basis of aptitude, with voluntary-aided and foundation schools being more likely to select in this way than community or voluntary-controlled schools (where admissions are the responsibility of the local authority).

A further large-scale research study focusing on secondary school admissions in 2008 was carried out following the Education and Inspections Act and the introduction of regulations requiring top priority to be given to looked after children (i.e., in local authority care). West, Barham, and Hind (2009, 2011) found that compared with 2001, virtually all schools gave priority—and in the main top priority—to children in care. More schools made reference in their admissions criteria to children with statements of special educational needs (a higher proportion were academies or community or voluntary-controlled schools as opposed to voluntary-aided or foundation schools). Very few schools used interviews, which were prohibited by the Education and Inspections Act. Fewer schools employed criteria that could be used for social or covert selection (e.g., prioritizing children of former pupils or staff). However, more schools selected pupils overtly on the basis of aptitude or ability in a subject area. The highest proportion of schools that selected in this way (allowed by legislation and guidance) were academies and foundation schools. Table 11.3 gives the percentages of all secondary schools in England using different admissions criteria and practices. Given our particular interest in academies, the percentages of academies using the various criteria and practices also are included in the table. It is important to stress that the criteria and practices are used only if a school is oversubscribed.¹²

SCHOOL COMPOSITION

Research evidence has clearly demonstrated that some types of schools have more advantaged intakes than others, although this is likely to be a result of parents' choices and different admissions criteria. Thus, voluntary-aided schools on average have more advantaged intakes than community schools in the vicinity (Allen and West 2009, 2011; see also West, Ingram, and Hind 2006). There has been particular interest in academies, which were originally designed to replace failing schools. The composition of academies has changed over time, with a year-on-year decrease in the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (an indicator of poverty). Between 2003 and 2008, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals decreased from 45.3 percent to 29 percent (Knight 2008; see also Curtis et al. 2008).

12. Children with statements of special educational needs (SEN) are outside the normal admissions process, and prioritizing children with such statements is not an oversubscription criterion.

Table 11.3
Admissions Criteria and Practices in Publicly Funded (Non-Grammar) Secondary Schools in England, 2008 (%)

	England (N = 2,970)	Academies and City Technology Colleges (N = 94)
Children in care	99	98
Pupils with a sibling on roll	97	85
Distance between pupil's home and school	93	87
Pupils with medical or social needs	59	57
Pupils living in specified catchment area	61	46
Pupils with statements of special educational needs naming the school	53	67
Pupils attending feeder primary schools	38	14
Pupils or parents meeting religious criteria	17	12
Compassionate or exceptional factors	10	7
Random allocation (area/tie break)	6	15
Proportion of pupils selected on the basis of ability or aptitude in subject area(s)	5	15
Parents support school ethos	4	0
No alternative school or difficult journey	4	2
Pupil banding used ^a	3	33
Pupils with special educational needs without statement	2	1
Proportion of pupils selected on the basis of ability	1	0
Interviews with parents	<1	1
Interviews with pupils	<1	0

^aBanding is a way of seeking a mixed-ability intake. It involves pupils being placed in groups on the basis of a test and individual schools, or schools in an area, taking a proportion of pupils from each group (West 2005).
 Note: This table does not provide an exhaustive listing of admissions criteria or practices used.
 Source: West, Barham, and Hind (2009).

This reduction in the proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds “may suggest that middle class parents are returning to Academies having not considered their predecessor schools as a viable option. Whilst this suggests that there is now greater choice and diversity for these families, there is also a danger that their greater ability to manoeuvre within the market may disadvantage more socially deprived pupils” (PriceWaterhouseCoopers 2008, 62). It can be argued, however, that those disadvantaged children who do attend academies with more advantaged intakes will benefit from more balanced school intakes as a result of school composition/peer effects.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND HOUSE PRICES

A significant body of research has explored the association between school performance and house prices, with the reviews by Black and Machin (2010) and Machin (2011) summarizing work that suggests an estimated 3–4 percent house price premium for a one-standard-deviation increase in school average test scores. More recently, Gibbons, Machin, and Silva (2013) explored house prices and value-added test scores at the primary school stage. Here the quasi-market is less well developed, and academic selection is not permitted. Their research demonstrates that house prices respond equally to both the expected academic gains and the initial characteristics of pupils. Importantly, the association between the school value added and house prices appears to be causal, although it should be noted that value added is also associated with school composition and hence pupil characteristics.

Consequences of Academy Conversions —————

This section explores two questions regarding academy conversions: (1) whether conversion to an academy affects pupil intake; and (2) whether there is any impact on house values near newly converted academies as parents potentially view the academies in an improved light relative to other options, so that demand for school places increases and pushes up local house prices.

EMPIRICAL APPROACH TO STUDYING ACADEMY CONVERSIONS

The empirical approach used for this study recognizes that the sponsored academies introduced under the Labour program were typically disadvantaged schools that were converted from badly performing predecessor schools to academies (Adonis 2012). Either simply studying what happened before and after conversion among academies alone or undertaking a before-and-after comparison with all other schools would be misleading. Thus, this study looked at what happened to pupil intake and house prices in areas near academies that converted in the sample period of school years (2001–2002 to 2008–2009). To do so, we defined a comparison group as “future” academies that converted after the last year of the sample period studied (2009–2010 and 2010–2011).

This comparison group turned out to be a good one (as shown in detail in Machin and Veroit 2011) in that the academies that converted in the sample period were very similar in terms of preconversion characteristics and intake trends to the schools that converted later.¹³ Thus, any biases that could emerge for a less-well-balanced control group should not arise in this analysis.

13. Machin and Veroit (2011) present balancing tests showing that the academies and “future” academies had very similar (statistically indistinguishable) characteristics. Their table showing this is reproduced in appendix C (see table A11.2). That table also makes it clear that schools that convert to academies are very different from most other secondary schools, with

Table 11.4 presents in detail which types of schools converted to academy status. The upper panel of the table shows all schools that acquired academy status, while the lower panel shows conversions for the sample of schools on which full data were available pre- and post-academy conversion. The main difference is the small number of new academies (12), for which there was no predecessor school, and 5 conversions from independent schools for which no predecessor school data were available.¹⁴

Table 11.4 shows that the vast majority of academy schools were actually academy conversions from predecessor schools. The table also shows that at least one school from every secondary school type converted to an academy. However, the majority of academy conversions occurred in community schools. There was also a marked increase in the number of foundation schools that converted to academies as the program matured. Finally, in the period studied, there are seven cohorts of converting academies with data on 97 schools, and there are two cohorts of schools that had signed up to become academies but that converted after the analysis period ended (i.e., what we refer to as the “future” academies).

PUPIL INTAKE

In England, over the time period studied, compulsory schooling was organized into four key stages that took place over 11 years of primary and secondary school.¹⁵ Key stage 1 ran for the first two years of primary school (for pupils ages 5–7), and key stage 2 continued over the next four years. In most local authorities (the exception being the minority that had middle schools), pupils made the transition from primary to secondary school at the end of year 6 (at age 11). They then studied in key stage 3 for the first three years of secondary school and key stage 4 for the final two years (ages 14 to 16). At the end of each key stage, children took national tests.

The pupil intake quality for secondary schools was measured using the average standardized key stage 2 total points score of the schools’ year 7 pupils (i.e., the end-of-primary-school test scores the pupils obtained before enrolling in secondary school). The average standardized key stage 2 total points score¹⁶

significantly worse performance and more disadvantaged pupils in their pre-academy state. Machin and Vernoit also present results showing preconversion trends in pupil intake to be similar in academies and “future” academies.

14. One further issue is that in cases where a number of schools combined to form one academy, we created one hypothetical pre-academy school. This resulted in hypothetical characteristics that were a weighted average (based on the schools’ student populations at the time of the merger) of the characteristics of the merged schools.

15. Beginning in 2013, the age of leaving compulsory education/training was raised from 16 to 17, so there are now 12 years of compulsory schooling. In 2015, the age will be raised to 18.

16. This was calculated by totaling for each pupil the overall percentage score in English, math, and science. This was then averaged to the level of the year 7 school.

Table 11.4
The Nature of Academy Conversions, 2001–2002 to 2008–2009

		A. All Schools						
		Pre-Academy School Type						
	All	New	Independent	City Technology College	Voluntary-Aided	Foundation	Voluntary-Controlled	Community
All academies	244	12	5	12	18	34	2	161
All academies, 2001–2002 to 2008–2009	133	12	5	12	10	15	1	78
Future academies, after 2008–2009	111	0	0	0	8	19	1	83
		B. All Schools with Full Data (Pre- and Post-Academy Conversion)						
		Pre-Academy School Type						
	All	New	Independent	City Technology College	Voluntary-Aided	Foundation	Voluntary-Controlled	Community
All academies	195	0	0	12	16	30	1	136
Became academies 2001–2002 to 2008–2009	97	0	0	12	10	13	1	61
Future academies, after 2008–2009	98	0	0	0	6	17	0	75

Source: Machin and Vennart (2011).

(with a population mean of zero and a standard deviation of one) of the pupils who enrolled in year 7 of the academy school (the first year of secondary school) also was measured.

Table 11.5 shows how the question of whether an academy school conversion had an impact on the pupil intake of academies vis-à-vis “future” academies over the 2001–2002 to 2008–2009 period was investigated. This table includes the results of three different specifications to report estimates of the impact of academy status on pupil intake. We began with the raw differences-in-differences estimate in column (1), and then added the time-varying controls in column (2). Column (3) contains estimates of heterogeneous effects for different cohorts of academies, determined by placing the first five academy cohorts from the treatment group into an “early” group and the remaining two academy cohorts into a “late” group.

The estimated coefficients in the table show that there was a significant increase in the key stage 2 test scores for the year 7 pupils who enrolled in an academy. This suggests that on average schools that convert to academies experience a sharp and significant increase in the “quality” of their pupil intake at year 7. Column (1) shows the key stage 2 total points score of the year 7 pupils enrolled

Table 11.5
Academy Schools and Pupil Intake, 2001–2002 to 2008–2009

	Key Stage 2 Test Scores ^a		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Academy conversion	0.162 (0.060)	0.127 (0.057)	
Academy conversion, early ^b			0.226 (0.088)
Academy conversion, late ^c			0.025 (0.065)
School fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control variables	No	Yes	Yes
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.871	0.875	0.877
Sample size	1,560	1,560	1,560
Number of schools	195	195	195

^aDependent Variable: Standardized Key Stage 2 Test Score. Standard errors (clustered at the school level) reported in parentheses.

^bEarly = cohorts 1–5.

^cLate = cohorts 6 and 7.

Note: Control variables are proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, proportion of pupils taking free school meals, proportion of pupils who are white ethnic, ratio of total pupils to qualified teachers, proportion of pupils with special educational needs with a statement, and proportion of pupils with special educational needs without a statement.

in an academy to be 0.16 standard deviation higher following the academy conversion. The intake quality was on average significantly higher by 0.13 standard deviation when the controls in column (2) were added. The estimates in column (3) show that the quality of intake measured by primary school test scores seems to have increased by more in the earlier academy conversions, as the “early” group of academies (cohorts 1–5, in school years 2002–2003 to 2006–2007) saw an increase in the key stage 2 performance of their year 7 intake by a statistically significant 0.23 standard deviation, as compared to a statistically insignificant increase of only 0.03 in the “late” group (academy cohorts 6 and 7, in school years 2007–2008 and 2008–2009).

These results suggest that on average schools seem to be attracting and admitting higher-ability pupils once they convert to academy status.¹⁷ Given that pupils had five years of secondary school education in the sample period studied, most of the academies studied would not have had the new post-academy conversion pupils taking the age 16 key stage 4 exams. Therefore, we do not look at this as an outcome in the school-level analysis reported here.

One interpretation of the results in table 11.5 is that higher-ability pupils may be moving away from other schools to academies. Table 11.6 looks at the impact on key stage 2 in neighboring schools (those within three miles) before and after academy openings.

Table 11.6 shows that academies seem to be upping the quality of their intake by enrolling pupils from nearby schools. The table shows significantly lower average key stage 2 exam scores among pupils in secondary schools located within three miles of academy conversions compared with the difference-in-difference estimates reported.

HOUSE PRICES

The previous subsection shows an improvement in the quality of pupil intake following academy conversions. This is probably not that surprising, given the way that many individuals view academy conversion as a school improvement program. We also attempted to ascertain whether parents may have increased their demand for academy schools by looking at house prices in areas close to academies.

We obtained the population of all house price transactions from the U.K. Land Registry for the year 2000 on and looked at what happened to house prices in postcodes within one mile of academies (before and after conversion) and “future” academies (before conversion). The results are shown in table 11.7. The estimates (with standard errors clustered at the area/school level) reveal a

17. Wilson (2011) reports evidence on changing pupil mix using a different metric, showing that academies enrolled approximately 12.5 percent fewer pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Thus, academies also became more socially mixed (see also Machin and Silva 2013).

Table 11.6
Pupil Intake in Neighboring Schools, 2001–2002 to 2008–2009

	Key Stage 2 Test Scores ^a		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Academy conversion	-0.037 (0.016)	-0.038 (0.015)	
Academy conversion, early ^b			-0.033 (0.019)
Academy conversion, late ^c			-0.050 (0.024)
School fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control variables	No	Yes	Yes
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.936	0.937	0.937
Sample size	7,937	7,937	7,937

^aDependent Variable: Standardized Key Stage 2 Test Score. Standard errors (clustered at the school level) reported in parentheses.

^bEarly = cohorts 1–5.

^cLate = cohorts 6 and 7.

Notes: Sample is all schools within three miles of an academy before and after academy conversion. Control variables are proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, proportion of pupils taking free school meals, proportion of pupils who are white ethnic, ratio of total pupils to qualified teachers, proportion of pupils with special educational needs with a statement, and proportion of pupils with special educational needs without a statement.

positive impact on the order of around 7 percent higher house prices in areas with an academy conversion. As with the pupil intake results, the distinction between early and late cohorts is evident, with a significant (and larger positive) effect observed only for the early group.¹⁸

Conclusions

This chapter describes secondary school admissions in England, placing a particular focus on academy schools. It highlights the ways in which admissions procedures are different in academies and presents some evidence that the introduction of academies to the English secondary school sector has affected the composition of enrollment and parents' demand for schools.

18. Thus, effects on pupil intake and house values do seem to be a function of time in operation as an academy. This is probably an intuitive finding in that things take a while to change (especially in the housing market). A time lag for beneficial effects to appear has also been found in the United States in work on charter schools, where benefits have been found in schools that have been running for some time as compared to new openings (Hoxby 2004; Zimmer et al. 2009).

Table 11.7
Academy Schools and House Prices, 2001–2002 to 2008–2009

	Log(House Price) ^a		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Academy conversion	0.069 (0.021)	0.068 (0.020)	
Academy conversion, early ^b			0.073 (0.028)
Academy conversion, late ^c			0.017 (0.020)
Area fixed effects ^d	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control variables	No	Yes	Yes
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.626	0.726	0.758
Sample size	854,945	251,199	251,199
Number of postcodes	86,135	32,679	32,679
Number of areas	195	195	195

^aDependent Variable: Log(House Price). Standard errors (clustered at the area/school level) reported in parentheses.

^bEarly = cohorts 1–5.

^cLate = cohorts 6 and 7.

^dArea is defined as all postcodes within one mile of an academy (before and after conversion) or a “future” academy (before conversion).

Notes: Sample includes all house purchase transactions (detached, semidetached, and terraced houses, as well as flats) in these postcodes. Control variables are whether a new build house; whether a freehold (relative to a leasehold); whether a detached, semidetached, or terrace house (relative to a flat); and a differential trend for postcodes in London (in all three specifications).

The English academies program is proving to be an interesting exercise in education policy that is changing school types and organizational structures. Because of this and other recent policy developments, it seems important to place this chapter in the appropriate context in the policy discussion around academy schools. We studied the sponsored academies set up under the Labour government’s program beginning in 2000. From 2001–2002 to 2008–2009, the school years studied, 133 academies were set up, and by May 2010, when a new coalition government was voted in, 203 were up and running.

Since the 2010 general election, the academies program has been massively expanded and taken on a new direction, with the number of conversions skyrocketing. The new “converter academies” are not only in the secondary sector but also in the primary sector, and even reaching outside the state sector to some independent formerly fee-charging schools. Moreover, the new coalition academies need not have a sponsor when they are converted. By January 2013, there

were 1,638 secondary academies in England, of which 401 were sponsored academies and 1,187 were converter academies¹⁹ (DfE 2013b, tables 2a and 2b).

Unlike the sponsored academies analyzed in this chapter, the new converter academies are not characterized by poor performance and disadvantage prior to conversion.²⁰ Once they have been in existence long enough to study, it will be an important research challenge to analyze the admissions and enrollment behavior of these new academies.

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19. The remaining 50 were other types of academies set up under the 2010 Academies Act, including secondary free schools, university technical colleges, and studio schools (DfE 2013c).

20. Note that sponsored academies are still being established as well (West and Bailey 2013).

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APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OWNERSHIP

Before the Education Reform Act of 1988, most schools were owned and funded by the local authority (table A11.1). Some schools, in the main church schools (notably voluntary-aided schools), were owned by charitable foundations (private, not-for-profit bodies). Following the Education Reform Act, schools could opt out of local authority control and become grant-maintained; these schools were also owned by charitable foundations. In addition, city technology colleges (CTCs) were introduced; though owned by charitable foundations, they had a contract with the government.

With the passing of the Schools Standards and Framework Act in 1998, grant-maintained schools generally became foundation schools. Though still owned by charitable foundations, they were funded by the local authority, not the central government, thus becoming more like voluntary-aided schools. Sponsored academies were also introduced by the Labour government. Following the 2010 Academies Act, passed by the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition, schools could apply to convert to academy status.²¹ Academies, like CTCs, are owned by charitable foundations, contracted by the government to provide education, and funded via a funding agreement with the secretary of state with responsibility for education.

Table A11.1
Schematic Outline of the Ownership and Funding of the Main Types of Publicly Funded Schools in England

	Owned by Local Authority	Owned by Charitable Foundation (Private, Not-for-Profit)
Funded predominantly by local authority	Community schools	Voluntary-aided and voluntary-controlled schools; foundation schools
Funded predominantly by central government		Grant-maintained schools
Funded predominantly by central government via legal contract (funding agreement)		City technology colleges; academies

Note: The land at community schools is owned by the local authority; the land at foundation schools is owned by the governing body or trustees; the land at voluntary-aided schools is usually owned by trustees, although the local authority often owns any playing fields (DFE 2012c).

Source: West and Bailey (2013).

21. The land and buildings would be leased or transferred from the current owners (e.g., the local authority or diocese) (DFE 2012b).

APPENDIX B: SOME EXAMPLES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Community School —————

There is no guarantee of a place at the school. In the event of oversubscription, places will be allocated using the following criteria in the order given:

1. Children looked after.
2. Children with a sibling attending the school.
3. Remaining applications.

In the event of oversubscription within any of the above criteria, priority will be determined by straight-line distance from home to school, those living closest being given the highest priority. Exceptional medical circumstances (supported by medical evidence) may override the above.

Community School and Academy in One Local Authority —————

Should there be more applications than places available, the following criteria will be used to allocate the places.

In accordance with the Education Act of 1996, children with a statement of special educational needs are required to be admitted to the school named in the statement. Thereafter, the following priorities will apply:

1. Pupils who are “looked after” by a local authority where the person with parental responsibility completes the application form.
2. Pupils living in the catchment area of the school/academy.
3. On medical grounds supported by a medical certificate.
4. Brothers and sisters of pupils attending the school/academy when the pupil starts at the school/academy. . . .
5. On the shortest distance, measured in a straight line, between the main entrance of the school/academy site and the pupil’s home address (mid-point, front of house), with those living closer to the school/academy being accorded higher priority.

The admissions criteria will be applied separately and sequentially until places are filled. Priority is not given within each criterion to children who meet other criteria. If the Council is unable to agree on a place for all children meeting a specific criterion, the distance criterion (number 5 above) will be used as a tiebreaker.

This appendix is based on West, Barham, and Hind (2009).

Voluntary-Aided School

Pupils will be admitted without reference to ability or aptitude. The number of intended admissions for the academic year commencing September 2008 will be 180.

Where applications for admission exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied (in the order set out below) to decide which children to admit:

1. a. Children who are in receipt of a statement of special educational needs (in accordance with the 1996 Education Act) as being in need of an educational placement at the school.
- b. Children who are in public care (“looked after” children).
2. Anglicans.
 - a. The practicing Anglican children of practicing Anglican families.
 - b. Practicing Anglican children.
 - c. Children of practicing Anglican families.
3. Other Christian denominations.
 - a. In recognition of the wider Christian commitment of the school, parents/carers who attend worship at a Christian* church.
 - b. The same order of preference as to religious commitment, residence, and relationship will apply as for Anglican parents/carers.
4. Other applicants.
 - a. Children who attend a Church of England (voluntary-aided) primary school and whose parents wish them to continue to be educated within a formal Christian ethos. Such applications to be accompanied by a written statement from either the visiting clergy at the school or the head teacher of the primary school.
 - b. Children whose parents have a religious commitment (other than those specified above). Such applications should be accompanied by a written statement from a religious leader.
 - c. Any other children. These should be accompanied by a supporting letter from the parents.

Notes:

Where applications for admission exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied, in the order set out below, to decide which children to admit:

1. How regularly and frequently the child attends worship at a Christian* church.
2. How regularly and frequently at least one parent attends worship at a Christian* church.

*Please note that the governors have defined “Christian church” as being any church in membership of, or sharing the statement of belief of, “Churches Together in England.”

3. The number of years the child's attendance at church has been sustained.
4. The number of years the parents' attendance at church has been sustained.
5. Whether brothers or sisters currently attend this school.
6. Whether the child attends a Church of England (voluntary-aided) primary school.
7. Whether the child is a practicing member of another faith community.

An authorized church official must provide information, usually the parish priest/minister.

Points are awarded according to each criterion, and when the total has been calculated for each child, the governors will allocate places to those children reaching the appropriate qualifying "score." This is the point at which 180 pupils can be admitted. This "score" varies from year to year as it is dependent upon the number of applications received and the nature of the church affiliation of that year's parents/carers, so it cannot be determined before all applications have been processed.

Should a situation occur where either

1. offering places to all of a group of parents/carers on a particular point score takes us over our admission number, or
2. all remaining candidates have zero points and the intake is not yet full,

then governors reserve the right to offer the final places to those children living nearest to [the school] as measured by the straight-line method from the pupil's registered address to the school.

Foundation School _____

Oversubscription: If the number of preferences received is more than the number of places available, places will be allocated in the following order:

1. Looked after children.
2. Where a child has a sibling attending [the school] at the time of application and who will still be on roll at the point of entry (natural brother/sister, stepbrother/sister, fostered or adopted child), in each case where this child also lives in the same household.
3. Those living nearest to [the school], measured by safest-distance walking route, will take priority.

Academy A _____

Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the published admissions number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below:

1. Children who are “looked after” under provision of the Children Act 1989.
2. Siblings in the academy at the time of admission (siblings would include half, step-, adoptive, and foster siblings provided they also live at the same address as the applicant).
3. Students in the defined catchment area: in the case of oversubscription, geography will be used as the tiebreaker. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the child’s home to the entrance of the principal’s office, with those living closest being given priority.

The admission of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is dealt with by a separate procedure. Pupils for whom a statement of special educational needs has been made in which [named academy] is named will be admitted.

Academy B

When the academy is oversubscribed, priority for admissions will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in priority order:

1. Students with statements of special educational needs where the academy has consented to be named in the statement.
2. Students in public care (looked after children).
3. Ten percent of students will be admitted on the basis of aptitude in sports, using a specified assessment process.
4. Pupils for whom it is essential to be admitted to the academy because of special circumstances to do with significant medical or social needs evidenced by written medical advice.
5. Students who, on the date of admission, will have a sibling (i.e., a natural brother or sister, or half brother or sister, or a legally adopted brother or sister or half brother or sister, who will be living with them at the same address at the date of their entry to the academy) on the roll of [named academy].
6. Of the remaining places:
 - a. 50 percent will be offered to students living within three miles and south of [named river], on the basis of proximity (i.e., students who live the nearest radial distance to the academy on the close of the admission application date). The radial distance is measured as a direct line from the academy’s main building entrance on [named road]. Home to academy distance will be measured as the direct-line distance between the applicant’s home and the academy’s main building entrance on [named road].
 - b. The remaining 50 percent will be offered to applicants living within three miles and south of [named river], on the basis of an independently operated random allocation.

APPENDIX C

Table A11.2 presents the current study's balancing tests of preconversion characteristics of academies and "future" academies (those that became academies after the sample period ended).

Table A11.2
Pre-Academy Conversion School Characteristics and Balancing Tests

	Proportion Eligible for Free School Meals	Proportion Taking Up Free School Meals	Proportion White	Proportion Getting Five or More A*-C GCSEs
City technology college	0.080	0.076	0.970	0.919
Voluntary-aided school	0.126	0.098	0.807	0.637
Foundation school	0.097	0.074	0.856	0.618
Voluntary-controlled school	0.081	0.058	0.904	0.636
Community school	0.160	0.117	0.860	0.499
All academies	0.267	0.196	0.837	0.302
Became academies 2001–2002 to 2008–2009	0.272	0.203	0.796	0.320
"Future" academies, converted after 2008–2009	0.264	0.190	0.865	0.289
Treatment-control gap (standard error)	0.008 (0.020)	0.013 (0.016)	-0.069 (0.025)	0.031 (0.022)

Source: Machin and Vernoit (2011).

Key Stage 2 Points Score	Full-Time- Equivalent Pupils	Full-Time- Equivalent Qualified Teachers	Proportion Special Educational Needs with Statement	Proportion Special Educational Needs Without Statement	Sample Size
73.781	1204.071	81.643	0.005	0.055	2
66.142	956.586	53.663	0.018	0.128	455
65.787	1124.553	61.254	0.019	0.137	429
66.622	1146.019	61.008	0.023	0.124	72
61.401	1038.966	58.688	0.025	0.171	1574
56.107	954.527	55.404	0.029	0.243	195
56.715	921.167	53.495	0.030	0.235	97
55.693	977.250	56.704	0.028	0.248	98
1.022 (0.771)	-56.083 (46.091)	-3.209 (2.721)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.013 (0.015)	