

The determinants and impact of clustering school intakes

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This project uses a variety of approaches to uncover why national school systems tend to cluster children in schools with other children having the same characteristics. Prior evidence, worldwide, shows that clustering children who face potential disadvantage tends to reduce the beneficial impacts of school. My recent work has uncovered evidence that there is more than one process of clustering going on in England (in addition to many factors influencing the clustering). So this new project is entirely original in looking at how each clustering process takes place (by poverty, ethnicity, first language, and learning difficulty), what the effect might be on individuals, how to reduce clustering where it is harmful, and what the lessons might be for other school systems.

The project takes advantage of the quality of data in the annual schools census, and the documents required by the unified admissions authority system - both particular to England. In addition, the project will gather the views of a representative sample of admissions officers, and synthesise the evidence from all.

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