

## FIVE REASONS FOR ENDING SELECTION AT ELEVEN

### 1. Labelling children as failures at eleven is wrong.

The majority of children who sit 11-plus examinations are rejected. This can have profound, long-term effects on their self-confidence and aspirations. Able and talented youngsters are given the message that they should lower their sights and expect less of themselves. For them, transfer to secondary school does not start with excitement and optimism but with demoralisation. *This should not happen in a society which values its children and wants all to achieve their best.*

### 2. Prejudging children's potential at eleven makes no sense.

Neither parents nor teachers nor tests can predict with certainty how a child will develop between eleven and sixteen, what they will enjoy learning or what they will excel at. Children differ in their abilities and achievements at eleven but do not divide neatly into two groups, the 'clever' and the 'not clever'. Some are good at one thing but not at another. Some develop later than average and others have yet to encounter the subject which will become their strength at secondary school. *Every child should have the chance to develop their potential to the full without prejudgement of what that might be.*

### 3. The existence of selective schools damages other schools.

Comprehensive schools which take in children of all abilities and admit significant numbers of pupils who learn easily are well-placed to encourage high standards and aspirations for all. Selective schools distort the intake of other schools and make their educational task much more difficult, particularly where children have lost confidence after failing the 11-plus. *Excellent all-ability schools with balanced intakes are the best way of ensuring that every child receives a first-rate education.*

### 4. Selection at eleven makes social mobility less likely.

Grammar schools are sometimes perceived as ladders of opportunity for poor children. In reality, grammar schools today admit few pupils from low-income families. Statistics show that their intake is skewed towards the better-off, some of whom receive expensive private coaching to help them pass the 11-plus. *Poor children are more likely to attend schools which are struggling with an unbalanced intake because of selection and with pupils who feel the system has rejected them.*

### 5. Selection divides children, parents and communities.

Primary schools tend to be at the heart of local communities. Children make friends from the local area, parents meet at the school gates and some may help to organise activities which support the school. Where children move on together to the same secondary school, this web of informal relationships remains intact even if parental involvement is less and the school benefits. *Selection disrupts relationships and makes it difficult, if not impossible, to develop a pattern of strong local schools.*