



Researching secondary school admission in Brighton and Hove

Carol Robinson and Keith Turvey
University of Brighton
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Aims of project

- Research formed part of a review of the secondary school admissions' procedure in Brighton and Hove.
- Aimed to develop an informed account of various stakeholders' experiences of Brighton and Hove's secondary school admissions' procedures.
- Research commissioned by Brighton and Hove City Council and conducted in 2015-16 academic year.



National context

- Admissions Code of Practice (DfES, 2007)
 - Random allocation introduced (lotteries) – Oversubscription criteria
 - Equal preference – there could be no consideration of preference rank
 - Parental ‘Choice’ an aspiration
 - Schools Adjudicator
 - Context – Local Authority main control of state school admissions (except faith schools and some sponsored academies)
- School Admissions Code (DfE, 2012)
 - With the proliferation of Free Schools and Academies, many more schools controlling their own admissions



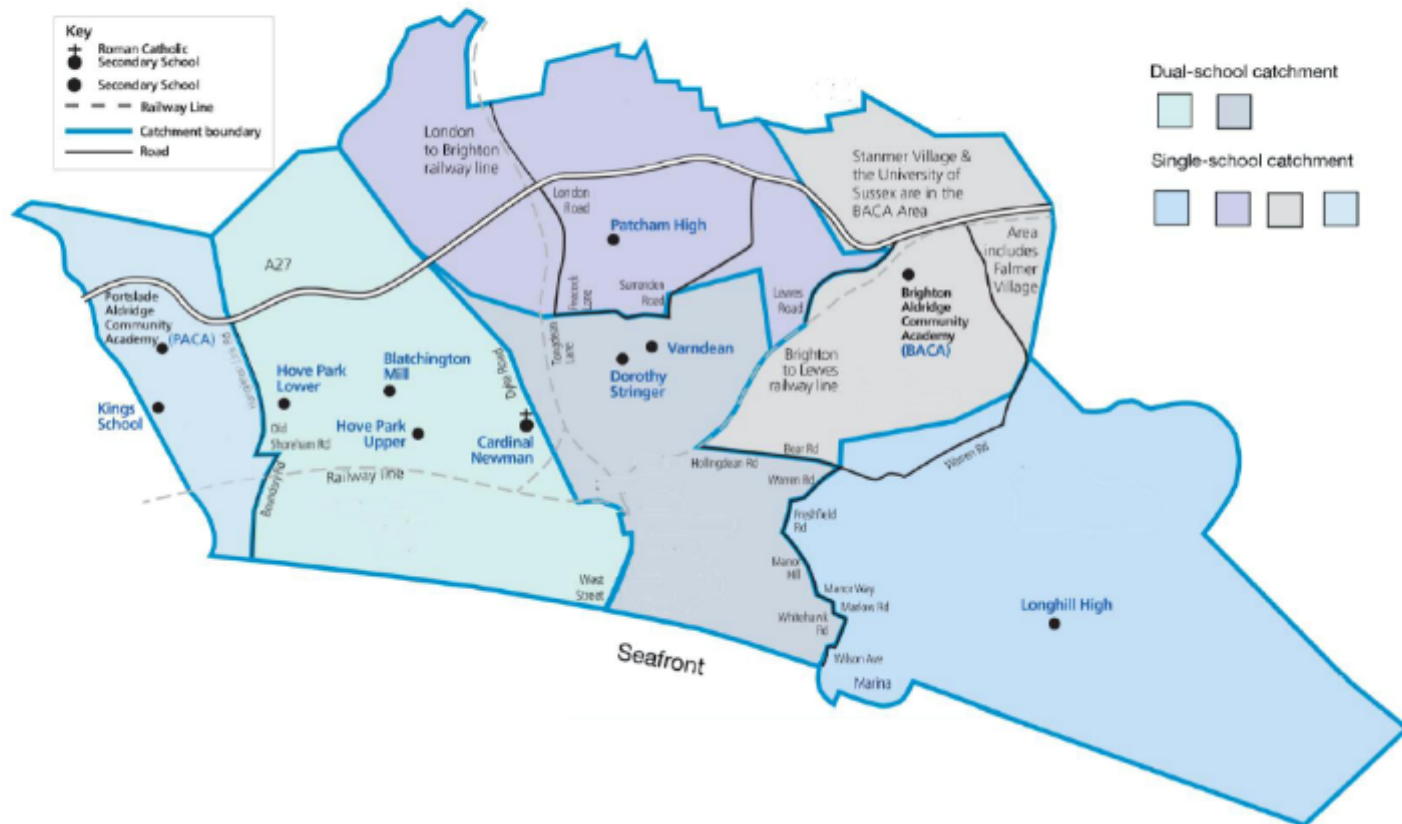
Local context

- Pre-2008 distance to school was the main oversubscription criteria
- 2008 Introduced a system of catchments and random allocation as main criteria
- 4 single-school catchments and 2 dual-school catchments
- LA conducted a city-wide consultation with various stakeholder groups established (governors, parents etc) – wide media coverage due to inclusion of ‘lottery’
- Some areas were poorly represented on stakeholder groups at the time



Appendix A: Map of catchment areas, illustrating secondary schools within each catchment

Secondary Schools and Catchments: Brighton and Hove





Research participants

Participants were from 8 secondary schools and 5 primary schools (including primary schools in single and dual school catchment areas)

The stakeholder group comprised:

- 54 students in year 7 and 8
- 19 parents/carers of students in year 7 and 8
- 15 staff (5 primary & 10 secondary) with responsibility for overseeing the transition of students from primary to secondary school.



Data collection methods

- Focus group discussions with students and parents
- Individual interviews with school staff
- The use of open questions e.g. 'Tell me about your experiences of applying for secondary school'
- Identification of common themes



Key findings (1)

Confusion and misconceptions about the school's allocation process
- It's really important you make a good impression when you visit the school so that they remember your name and they choose you.

Factors prioritised by students and parents when choosing secondary schools:

- The importance of peers
- High GCSE grades and positive Ofsted report
- The same school as siblings
- Proximity of school to home



Key findings (2)

- Measures taken by parents to try to secure preferred secondary schools
- The reality of available school choices

It's the people with the economic power who have a realistic choice. If you can afford to live in a certain area then your kids can get into the better performing schools... As always, it's unfair for people in deprived areas...the poor people come out worse...you won't get into one of the good schools you haven't really got a choice. (Parent)

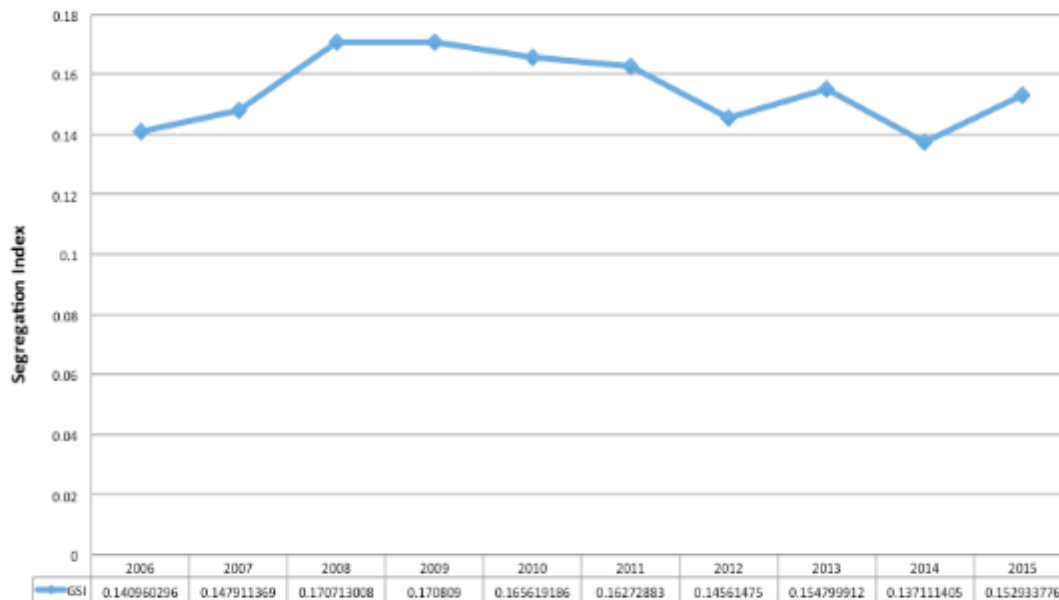


Speculating about random allocation

- Can we learn anything from the local use of random allocation over these years?
- If so, what and how?
 - Conceptions and definitions of fairness?
 - Potential to impact on social segregation?
 - Importance of LA-centred control of admissions?
 - Significance and impact of uncontrollable micro and macro variables



All Schools: Segregation Index 2006-2015 (FSM)



Annual School Census

$$GS = 0.5 * (\sum F_i / F - T_i / T)$$

Where:

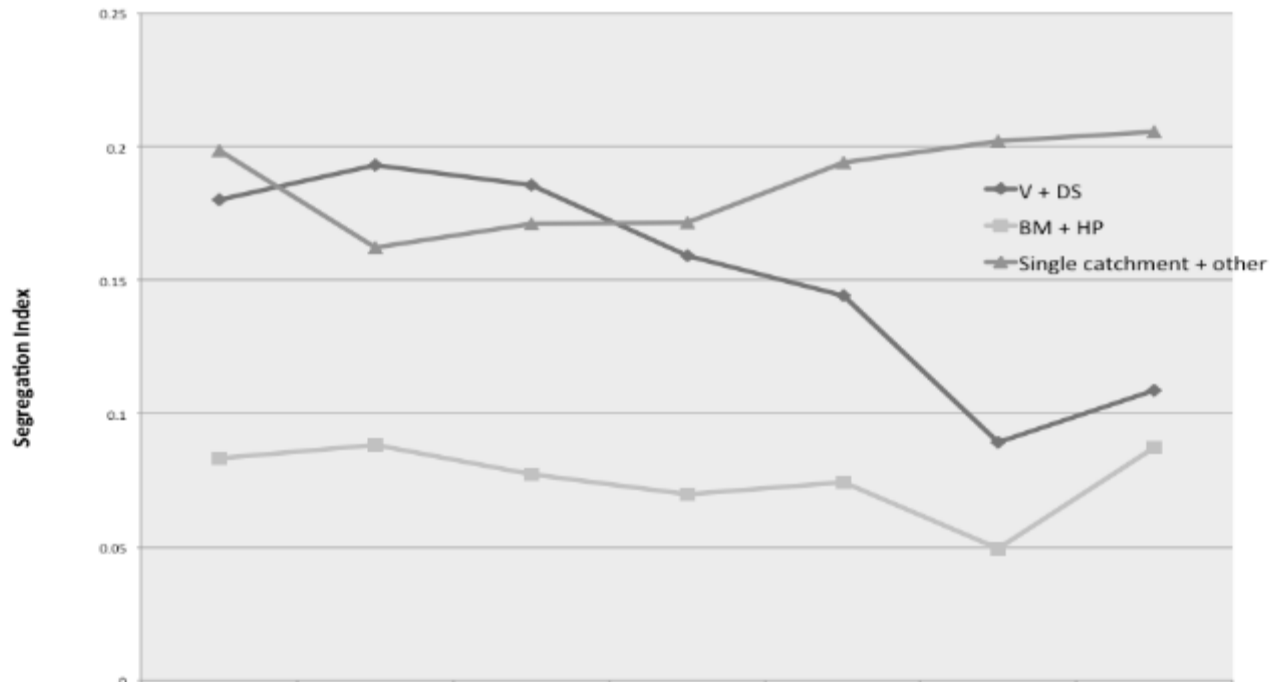
GS = Gorard's segregation
F_i = Number of pupils eligible for free school meals at School i.
F = Number of pupils eligible for free school meals in the region/geographical area as whole.

T_i = Total number of pupils at School i

T = Total number of pupils in the region/ geographical area as a whole.



Dual-School Catchments Vs Other: Segregation Index 2009 - 2015 (FSM)



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
V + DS	0.180142625	0.192824899	0.185703988	0.159036383	0.14413686	0.089216725	0.1088665
BM + HP	0.08349937	0.08819641	0.077366841	0.069959599	0.074108176	0.049450549	0.087119644
Single catchment + other	0.19878987	0.162212858	0.171337635	0.171589236	0.194102963	0.20227728	0.205437882

Annual School Census