

**Who should run state schools?
Ipsos MORI survey of the general public for NASUWT and Unison**

NASUWT and Unison commissioned Ipsos MORI to investigate who the public thinks should run state schools.

We asked the public to consider the idea that 'more schools in the future could be run directly by private companies, religious groups, charities or groups of parents rather than being run by the local council as they generally are now'. Around twice as many thought this was a bad idea as a good idea (44% considered it bad, 24% good). The majority support the status quo: 62% think that local authorities are best placed to run schools.

These views reflect a positive balance of opinion about state education: 54% think it is generally good compared with 19% who think it is poor (the remainder do not state an opinion). Views are even more positive among parents, where 79% rate their own children's schools as good.

Asked to consider a scenario where a school run by a local authority was failing to deliver good standards of education, the public most often cites the Government (37%) and the local authority (26%) as being responsible for addressing the failings. Even when schools are run by organisations other than the local council, the public is still more likely to hold the Government accountable than the organisation directly running the school (35% compared with 21%).

The public was also asked to consider the idea of 'individual parents being asked to pay additional fees for their own children's education to supplement the funding from taxes'. Nearly one in five (18%) support this idea but around three in five (64%) oppose it.

In total, a representative sample of 1,211 adults in England was interviewed face-to-face in their homes from 5-11 March.

Topline Results

- Results based on a sample of the general public, aged 15+, living in England
- Fieldwork carried out face-to-face 5-11 March 2010; in total 1,211 respondents were interviewed
- All fieldwork conducted using Ipsos MORI Omnibus Services.
- Where results do not sum to 100, this is due to computer rounding or multiple responses
- An asterisk (*) indicates a finding of less than 0.5%, but greater than zero
- Results are weighted by sex, social grade, work status, region, housing tenure and ethnicity
- Questions are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated

Q1. Overall, how good or poor do you think the standard of state-funded schools in England is?

	%
Very good	8
Fairly good	46
Neither good nor poor	21
Fairly poor	16
Very poor	3
Don't know	7

Q2.a Overall, how good or poor do you think the school/s your child/ren attend are?

Base: Parents of school aged children 5-16 only (230)

	%
Very good	40
Fairly good	39
Neither good nor poor	8
Fairly poor	6
Very poor	3
Don't know	-
Can't say – quality varies	4

Q2.b Overall, how good or poor do you think the schools attended by the children of your immediate friends and families are?

Base: All who do not have a child aged 5-16 (981)

	%
Very good	19
Fairly good	46
Neither good nor poor	13
Fairly poor	7
Very poor	2
Don't know	8
Can't say – quality varies	5

- Q3. Some people have suggested that more schools in future could be run directly by private companies, religious groups, charities or groups of parents rather than being run by the local council as they generally are now.

How far do you believe this is a good or bad idea, or do you have no view either way?

	%
Very good	5
Fairly good	19
Neither good nor poor	21
Fairly bad	20
Very bad	24
No view either way	8
Don't know	3

- Q4.a Overall, which, if any, of the following do you think is the most appropriate group to run state-funded schools?

	%
Local councils/ local authorities	62
Universities or colleges	14
Groups of parents	5
Non-religious charities	4
Religious organisations	4
Private companies	4
None of the above	2
Don't know	6

- Q4.b Overall, which, if any, of the following do you think should not run state-funded schools?

	%
Religious organisations	35
Private companies	34
Groups of parents	32
Non-religious charities	17
Universities or colleges	11
Local councils/ local authorities	5
All of the above should be allowed to run state-funded schools	6
None of these	4
Don't know	8

Q4.c **Are there any types of private company that you think should not be allowed to run state-funded schools** (unprompted)?

Base: Respondents who do not select private companies at Q4b (783)
%

General	
Airline companies	9
Alcohol companies	22
Drugs companies/ pharmaceutical companies	17
Energy suppliers/oil companies	8
Financial institutions/banks	10
Fast food companies	18
Marketing companies	9
Publishing groups	7
Tobacco companies	21
Weapons manufacturers/ suppliers	14
Entertainment	
Media groups	8
Football clubs	9
Pornography/adult entertainment companies	17
Political groups	
Extreme right wing/racist/fascist groups	13
Extreme left wing groups	11
Political lobby groups	11
Union busters/ organisations opposed to trade unions	9
Others	
Foreign-owned companies	1
Religious organisations	*
Supermarkets/retail	1
Other	2
No private companies	7
No-there should be no restrictions on who should be allowed to run schools	10
No answer	*
Don't know	40

Q5. **A. If a school run by a local council fails to deliver good standards of education, who do you think should ultimately be responsible for addressing the problem?**

B. If a school run by an organisation other than the local council fails to deliver good standards of education, who do you think should ultimately be responsible for addressing the problem?

C. Overall, who do you believe is best able to ensure that all schools deliver the best for every child in the country?

	A %	B %	C %
The local council/local authority	26	15	19
The Government	37	35	51
The organisation or group running the school	9	21	5
The school's staff	8	6	10
The school's governors	12	12	5
Parents	2	2	4
Independent body	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*
Don't know	5	7	7

Q6. **Which of the following do you think are most important to ensuring a good quality of education?**

	%
Quality of a school's teaching	70
Quality of a school's leadership	37
Number of pupils in each class	36
Access to books, IT equipment and other facilities	35
Standard of behaviour of a school's pupils	30
Number of teachers	29
Quality of a school's support staff	12
Quality of school buildings	9
Number of pupils attending the school	7
Provision of extra-curricular activities and after-school clubs	7
Access to school transport	2
Don't know	3

Q7. And how important, if at all, do you think the following things would be in ensuring a good quality of education in state-funded schools?

	Essential	Desirable but not needed	Not needed	Don't know
	%	%	%	%
Private sponsorship to pay for an individual school's facilities or equipment – for example, sports halls, minibuses or computer labs	23	58	13	5
Private management of the school where a private company is given full control of running the school	9	17	66	8
A good amount of voluntary support from parents or local residents	45	46	4	4
Parents or local residents are given full control of the school	8	23	64	6

Q8. How far do you support or oppose the idea of individual parents being asked to pay additional fees for their own children's education to supplement the funding from taxes?

	%
Strongly support	5
Tend to support	13
Neither support nor oppose	16
Tend to oppose	23
Strongly oppose	41
Don't know/not sure	3

Q9. How important, if at all, do you think it is that the way head teachers lead and manage schools is checked and regulated?

	%
Very important	69
Fairly important	24
Not that important	3
Not at all important	1
Don't know	3

Q10. Which, if any, of the following groups do you think should check and regulate the way head teachers lead and manage schools?

	%
Ofsted (school inspectors)	51
The school's governors	38
The local council/ local authority	33
The Government	29
Parents of pupils at the school	16
Other head teachers	10
The general public	3
None – head teachers should just be trusted to do the job	1
Don't know	3

Q11. Can I just check: do any of your children attend a private school?

Base: All parents (331)

	%
Yes	6
No	92
Prefer not to say	1
Don't know	1

NB – in total, 13 parents we interviewed had children who attended private schools.