



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity



The attainment of Muslim pupils in England and Scotland and parental aspirations

Muslim Pupils' Educational Experiences in England and Scotland: The project



- Literature and statistical review
- Family case studies: interviews with parents and child(ren) about educational experiences and outcomes, including negotiation of school choice
- Funding: Alwaleed Centre, University of Edinburgh – 3 years 2010-2012



Family case studies

Interviews with parents and children focusing on:

- **Background**
- **Factors shaping school choice**
- **The role of Islam in family life**
- Children and young people's views on school experience and on their social life
- **Educational attainment, outcomes and aspirations**

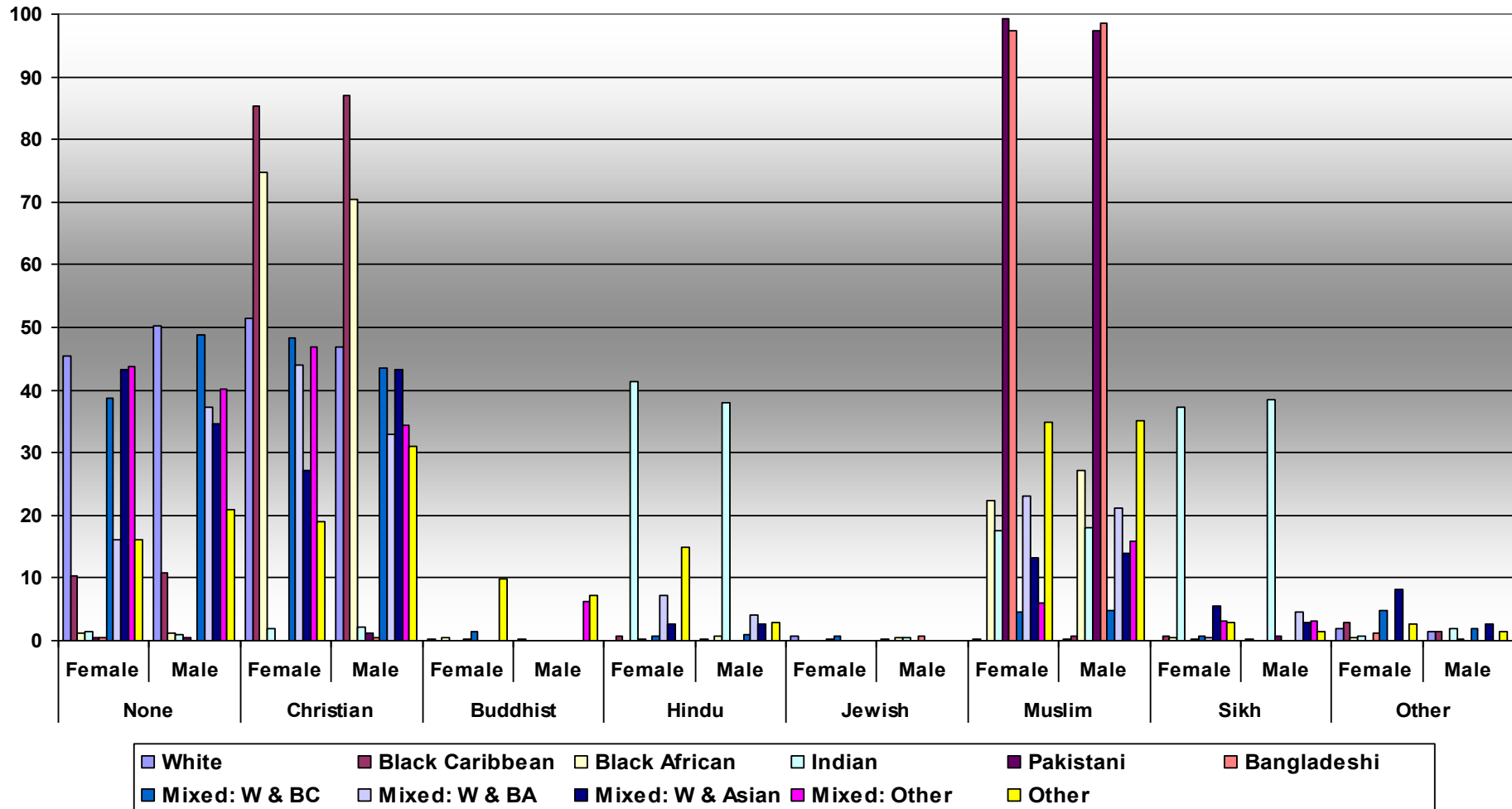
Key differences between Scottish and English education systems



- Far more institutional diversity in England than Scotland
- Smaller percentage of pupils attend fully LA controlled schools in England, especially at secondary level – recent expansion of academies and free schools
- Wider range of different types of faith schools in England than in Scotland

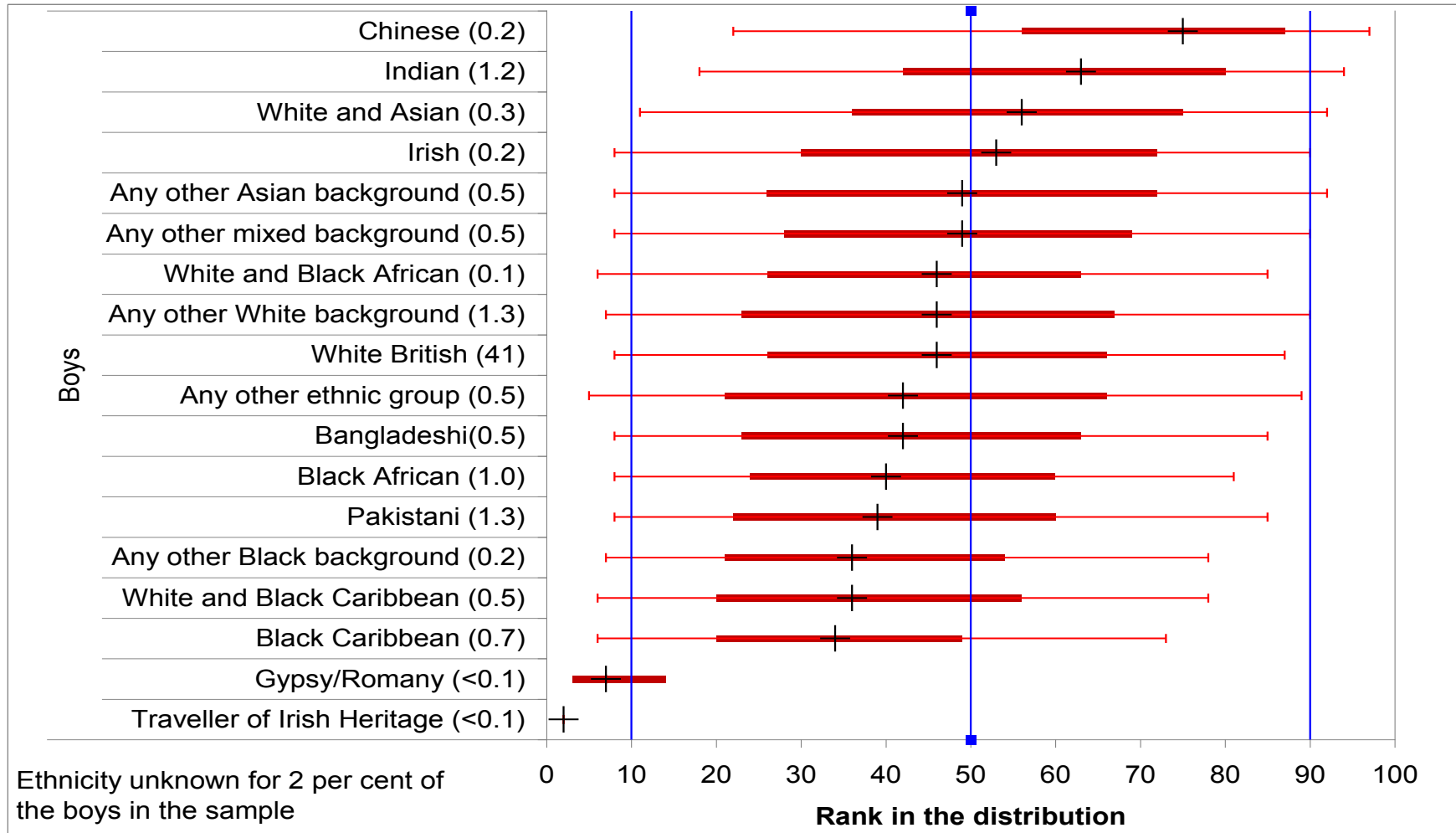
Problems in disentangling religion from ethnicity/nationality

(data drawn from LSYPE survey)



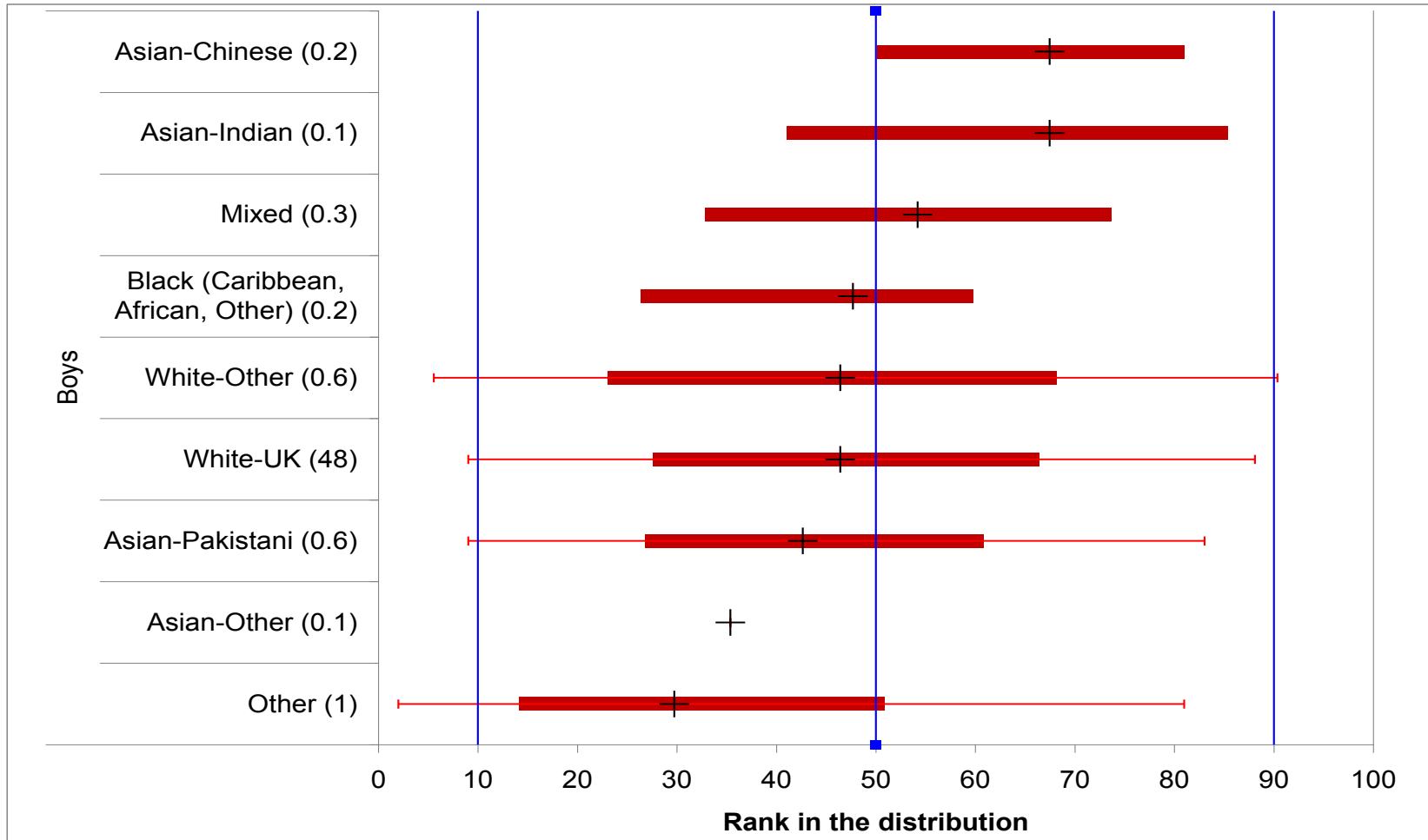
KS4/GCSE results, by ethnicity, England (boys)

National Equality Panel, 2010



Secondary 4 results, by ethnicity, Scotland, (boys)

National Equality Panel, 2010

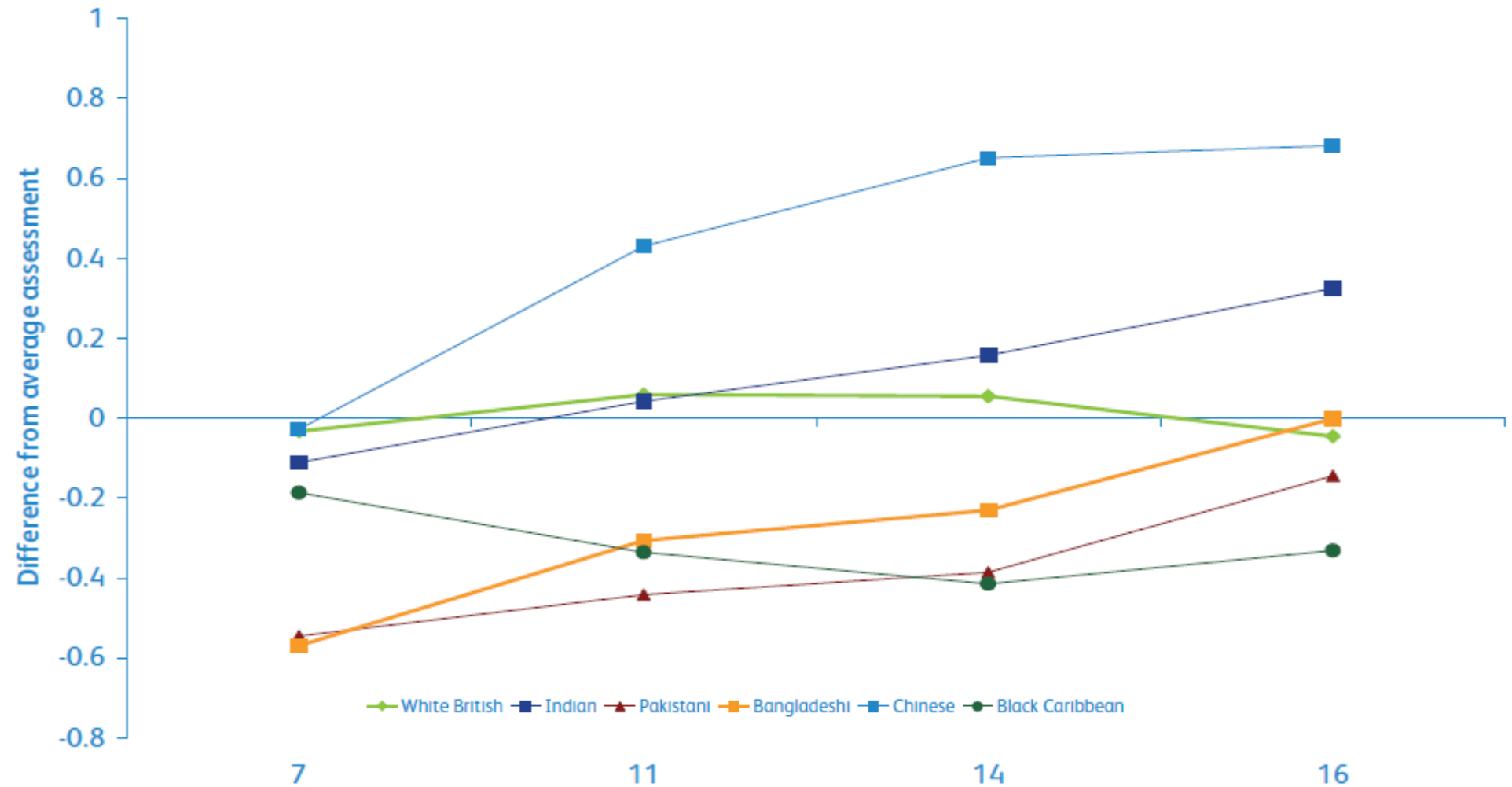


Attainment and progress – official statistics



- In both England and Scotland, Chinese and Indian pupils have highest attainment – Black African, Caribbean lowest attainment
- Progress - Muslim pupils start off well below national average – but catch up in England
- However, at the age of 16 **Pakistani (Muslim)** boys in England still score below national average – in Scotland the gap is generally smaller. (Caution – small numbers!)
- Girls outperform boys in all groups but pattern is similar

Differences from average assessments, boys aged 7-16, not entitled to FSM (LSYPE)





Key points

- Pakistani and Bangladeshi (majority Muslim) children start well behind some other groups – but make good progress through the education system over time
- Bangladeshi pupils overtake White pupils, whose relative performance declines over time
- Muslim pupils often from poorer backgrounds – but perform better than other groups from similar backgrounds
- Wide variation within ethnic groups
- Over time, variation WITHIN ethnic groups widens, while variation BETWEEN groups narrows
- SES stronger determinant of educational outcomes than ethnicity/religion

Key points from Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England



- Bangladeshi & Pakistani parents have high educational aspirations
- Education seen as means of achieving social mobility
- Pakistani/Bangladeshi pupils generally more positive about school than White pupils
- Strong support for education has been described as ethnic capital
- But some parents able to negotiate system more effectively than others – as illustrated by case studies



Family A – Pakistani origin

- Parents in professional occupations, own their own house; mother brought up in Pakistan, father in Scotland
- Three children; two eldest achieved high grades in upper secondary; eldest boy at prestigious university in another city; daughter applying to do medicine at prestigious university
- Choice of school influenced by friends, family and knowledge of local schools – secondary school not in own catchment area. High aspirations for children & strong social & cultural capital
- Islam featured strongly in family life and values passed on to children.
- Parents believed in participating fully in school life, whilst preserving Muslim values



Family B – Pakistani origin

- Parents in lower status occupations, in old social housing; mother brought up in Pakistan; father mainly in the UK
- Four children; one left school with few qualifications, currently working in factory; daughter at secondary school; two youngest in primary
- Choice of primary school influenced by friends but older children went to local, low achieving secondary school. High aspirations for children but lacked knowledge of education system
- Islam featured strongly in family life and mother would like children to attend Muslim faith school (state) to avoid after school study. Children took part in all school activities



Summary

Similarities between the families:

- Strong Muslim family cultures
- High educational aspirations

Differences between the families

- Socio-economic status
- Access to local knowledge about schools
- Variation in social and cultural capital



Thanks for listening!
If you are interested in further
information about the project you can
find it at:

[http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/education/research/
centres-groups/creid/projects/muslim-pupils-education](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/education/research/centres-groups/creid/projects/muslim-pupils-education)