Urban cultures are changing nationally and internationally. As they change so do the nature of social and educational inequalities; often they increase. Even a city like Oxford, with its ‘dreaming spires’ image, is polarized with considerable inequalities; these inequalities are reflected in the achievements of its maintained schools which overall are lower than expected. In recent years, a number of cities in the UK, e.g. London and Bristol, have adopted city-wide interventions both to raise achievement and to reduce inequalities; there have also been other experiments internationally with ‘area based’ policies. This series of seminars aims to identify the dynamics of 21st Century cities and the key elements of different city-wide educational interventions and relate these to the challenges facing educational decision-makers and practitioners in Oxford and beyond.

The seminars will take place in Seminar Room A, University of Oxford Department of Education, 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY (Limited parking is available behind 30 Norham Gardens).

4.30-5.00 Tea, 5.00-6.30 Seminar, 6.30-7.30 Drinks reception

Details of the seminars are set out below.

For further information contact Will Baker: will.baker@gtc.ox.ac.uk
CITIES - EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND EQUITY

Michaelmas Term 2010

Seminar 1 - 29th September 2010
Educational Disadvantage in the UK: Continuity and change in urban areas.
George and Teresa Smith, University of Oxford Department of Social Policy and Social Work; and
Tom Smith, Managing Director, OCSI Ltd

Seminar 2 - 13th October 2010
Improving Urban Education - some lessons from city-wide interventions
Geoff Whitty, Institute of Education, University of London; and
Tim Brighouse, previously Schools Commissioner for London

Seminar 3 - 3rd November 2010
The School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) in Wales:
Robust challenge and support for schools and local authorities
Chris Tweedale and colleagues, Welsh Assembly Government

Hilary Term 2011

Seminar 4 - 25th January 2011
Cities, Educational Improvement and Equity - What does the international evidence tell us?
Professor Ben Levin, University of Toronto and former Deputy Minister of Education for the Province of Ontario.

Seminar 5
Cities, Educational Improvement and Equity - Looking beyond the school system
(Date and speakers to be confirmed)

Seminar 6
Cities, Educational Improvement and Equity - Implications for Oxford City – Panel Discussion
(Date and speakers to be confirmed)
CITIES - EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND EQUITY

Seminar 1 - 29th September 2010


George and Teresa Smith, University of Oxford, Department of Social Policy and Social Work; and Tom Smith, Managing Director, OCSI Ltd

In a recent article (Forum: vol 49, 1&2) we traced the position of Britain’s first ‘Educational Priority Areas’ (small areas of concentrated educational disadvantage) over the 40 years since the national Plowden Report which had first proposed them. Continuity and change in their relative positions against each other and national standards suggested a number of significant trends. While they all remained disadvantaged overall, there were some very substantial changes. In this study we looked at only the four original small EPA areas in England. So how does this play elsewhere? In this presentation we will extend and update this analysis to cover a broader national picture of what has happened to such disadvantaged areas in recent years. This will include data on the Oxford area in recent years.

George Smith was until 2008 a University Reader in Social Policy and Research Fellow at Green College, Oxford. He co-directed the Social Disadvantage Research Centre with Professor Michael Noble. His fields of interest include urban disadvantage, social security, poverty/low income and education, and the measurement of deprivation at the local level. Teresa Smith was Head of the Department of Social Policy and Social Work for eight years, 1997-2005. Her main research interests are in the fields of community, disadvantage and the family, and the socio-spatial mapping of disadvantage and services for families and young children. Tom Smith is Managing Director of Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI), a company specialising in the analysis of social data for local authorities and central government.
CITIES - EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND EQUITY

Seminar 2 - 13th October 2010

Improving Urban Education – some lessons from city-wide interventions

Geoff Whitty, Institute of Education, University of London; and
Tim Brighouse, previously Schools Commissioner for London

Geoff Whitty and Tim Brighouse will draw on evidence from London and other cities including Hull and Bristol to consider if there are any essential ingredients that will ensure that more children enjoy more success in city schooling systems: they will reflect on the impact of various initiatives such as City Challenges in this country and comparable efforts internationally. They will conclude by drawing out some lessons for the future.

Geoff Whitty is Director of the Institute of Education and Professor of Education, University of London. His main areas of research and scholarship are the sociology of the school curriculum, education policy and teacher education. He has directed ESRC-funded research projects on the impact of education policies, such as the assisted places scheme, city technology colleges, Education Action Zones, and changes in initial teacher education. His most recent research includes a study of school councils for the Department for Children, Schools and Families and a series of projects on school-university links for the Sutton Trust.

Professor Sir Tim Brighouse has spent his entire career working in education. Most recently he has served as London Schools Commissioner, working to improve education in the capital. Before that his career started in the classroom and has taken in the role or Professor of Education at Keele University, as well as Chief Education Officer in both Oxfordshire and Birmingham Local Authorities.
CITIES - EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND EQUITY

Seminar 3 - 3rd November 2010

The School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) in Wales: Robust challenge and support for schools and local authorities

Chris Tweedale and colleagues, Welsh Assembly Government

The SEF is the Welsh Assembly Government’s over-arching policy for the transformation of the school system in Wales. Critical to system transformation is the challenge and support given to schools and local authorities on an area basis. Wales has 22 separate local authorities and 1800 schools. Consolidating the country’s education system through fewer priorities and by all levels working collaboratively is essential for improved outcomes for children and young people. Under the SEF, education professionals in each part of the system are expected to work together to develop better, more effective support and challenge mechanisms for schools and local authorities. The SEF also aims to harness the talents of education practitioners to provide opportunities for them to contribute to leadership, not only to their own schools but to the wider education system. The seminar will focus in particular on the experience of the SEF in cities in Wales.

Chris Tweedale is Director of the Children, Young People and Schools Effectiveness group within the Welsh Assembly Government. He took up his current post in January 2009. He became a Civil Servant two years earlier, working on the 14-19 reforms at DCSF in 2007. Before this, Chris taught in five secondary schools in England including eight years as a secondary Head. While still a headteacher he worked part time as an Adviser on School Effectiveness at DfES and the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit in the Cabinet Office.