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Review calls for admissions reform

The current admissions policy for primary schools has the potential to discriminate in favour of wealthier families, a new report has warned.

Researchers from the Cambridge University-based Primary Review concluded that middle class families are able to use the catchment area system to their advantage.

Parents who are knowledgeable about Ofsted reports and league tables are able to use the information they contain to identify the best schools and then take advantage of their financial situation to buy a home in the catchment area, they explained.

"A fundamental reform of admissions policy - for example, prohibiting schools to discriminate on the basis of residence - would do much to level the playing field in terms of educational opportunities," the report suggested.

Such a change would help to improve social mobility, it added.

Schools minister Jim Knight yesterday announced details of a new Admissions Appeals Code, which he claims will help to make the process fairer and more independent.

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