

Tekst 7

No boys in school means girls behaving badly

Received wisdom says girls do better in single-sex schools, but they miss out in other ways, says **Victoria Hislop**

1 **G**IRLS keep coming top of the examination league tables³⁾ and the ones who do particularly well seem to be those who are separated from boys. Surely then, any parents in their right mind will rush their daughter to the nearest girls' school, determined to keep her away from all those "underachieving" boys.

2 But should such a decision be based on league tables? If, like me, you went to a girls' school, you may have reservations about whether your A-level grades compensated for some of the less definable life skills you failed to learn. The world is a co-ed place (even if there is still an imbalance of men in top positions in industry, politics, academia and anywhere else you care to name) and I'm not sure if the central half-decade of my education helped prepare me for it.

3 And I am not alone. In a recent study by Liverpool University's Department of Education among students who had been to single-sex schools, 38 per cent said they would not send their own children to one.

4 My own grammar school was a seething mass of 800 pubescent females, with 100 or so staff – all women, but for three men, who were the objects of dozens of teenage crushes. In between bouts of concentrated work, we wasted our energies smearing the results of cookery lessons on to door handles, sneaking out to smoke or ganging up against whoever had the worst acne that week.

5 I am convinced that most of our bad behaviour happened only because there were no boys about the place. If there had been, our "showing off" might not always have needed its victims. Perhaps we would have been more wary of appearing childish or cruel.

6 Professor John Gray of Cambridge University's faculty of education, who has reviewed all the research on the pros and cons of single-sex education, says: "The apparent edge girls' schools give pupils seems to stem from

their initially superior performance when they entered these schools." He goes on to say that parents can be pretty confident that they will not be harming their daughters' academic progress by sending them to mixed schools. So, if better academic performance isn't part of the single-sex package, what is?

7 As part of its response to the growing gap between girls' and boys' results, the Department for Skills and Education set up a website on gender and achievement. It notes: "Boys are more prominent physically and verbally during classroom interaction." Strip away the jargon and this means they are better at making themselves heard, more disruptive and pushier. It's this aspect of male behaviour that girls can avoid by going to an all-girls' school.

8 If, then, in mixed schools, boys are distracting girls from their studies (even if that doesn't necessarily affect results), are there any advantages for girls in being with boys? Angela Daly, the headmistress of Cranbrook, a mixed school in Kent, is extremely positive about the benefits for girls of having boys around. "Girls tend to be a bit more thoughtful about their responses, but are very good at listening to boys, picking out wisdom." She also believes that girls are less distracted by sex than they are in a single-sex school.

9 The whole issue is like a multiple-choice paper, but one where there's more than one right answer – and it's especially difficult given that many education experts are keen to point out that there's no conclusive proof of girls being academically better off if they're separated. Professor Alan Smithers of Liverpool University says: "If parents' preference is for a co-educational school, providing it is a good school, then they should not worry."

The Daily Telegraph

noot 3

examination league tables: jaarlijkse tabellen met de examenresultaten van Engelse middelbare scholen

■ Tekst 7 No boys in school means girls behaving badly

- 1p **32** ■ What does Victoria Hislop suggest in paragraph 1?
- A Exam results hardly seem to influence people's choice of schools.
 - B Girls seem to be more ambitious than boys where education is concerned.
 - C Girls' schools seem to give their pupils higher marks than they actually deserve.
 - D Single-sex education seems to be better for girls than mixed education.
- "I'm not sure if the central half-decade of my education helped prepare me for it"
(regels 16-17)
- 1p **33** □ Leg uit wat Victoria Hislop bedoelt met "it" in deze zin.
- 1p **34** ■ What is the function of paragraph 3?
- A To round off the answer to the question posed in paragraph 2.
 - B To support the feeling expressed in paragraph 2.
 - C To tone down the point made in paragraph 2.
- 1p **35** ■ What does Professor Gray (line 38) conclude with regard to mixed schools versus girls' schools?
- A On average, girls get lower marks at mixed schools than at girls' schools.
 - B On the whole, girls do better at mixed schools than at girls' schools.
 - C The parents are usually more concerned about the type of school than the girls.
 - D The type of school appears to make little difference to girls' overall school results.
- 1p **36** □ Welk voordeel van meisjesscholen komt in alinea 7 aan de orde?
- 2p **37** □ Welke twee voordelen hebben gemengde scholen voor meisjes volgens alinea 8?
- 1p **38** ■ "No boys in school means girls behaving badly" (titel)
Hoe verhoudt deze titel zich tot de inhoud van het artikel?
De titel
- A bevat een veelgehoord vooroordeel over het thema van het artikel.
 - B relateert de ernst van het onderwerp van het artikel.
 - C vat de hoofdgedachte van het artikel samen.
 - D verwijst naar een argument in de discussie waar het artikel over gaat.