4.8 The Comprehensive System and Its Aims: 10-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For questions worth 3 marks or more write full sentences. Use sociological terms where relevant.

1 Using an example, explain one way parental choice or middle-class strategies could continue to affect equality of opportunity after comprehensivisation.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Identify and explain two methodological difficulties when using exam pass rates to judge whether comprehensives improved equality of opportunity.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.8 The Comprehensive System and Its Aims: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies a parental or middle-class strategy, e.g. moving house to a desirable catchment area, or applying for entry to a particular comprehensive	**B1**
explains how this affects access, e.g. securing a place in a higher-performing comprehensive or a school with more top sets	**B1**
applies an example, e.g. a family buying a house near a well-regarded comprehensive to increase their child's chances	**B1**
development, e.g. this replicates class advantage by using economic resources to secure better school opportunities	**B1**

Answer: Middle-class parents can move house into a desirable catchment or use applications to get into a higher-performing comprehensive, for example buying a home near a school with strong exam results; this secures better school places and top-set access for their children, reproducing class advantage despite non-selection by exam.

Question 2

identifies a difficulty, e.g. changes in exam systems, grade inflation or rising national standards over time	**B1**
explains how this complicates comparisons, e.g. later increases in passes may reflect broader standards or more exams rather than local school effects	**B1**
identifies another aspect, e.g. differences in pupil intake or social composition over time	**B1**
explains how intake differences confound causal claims, e.g. a school showing rising passes may have a more middle-class intake rather than have become more meritocratic	**B1**

Answer: Methodological difficulties include changes in exam systems or standards and differences in pupil intake: grade rises over time may reflect national changes or inflation rather than local school effects, and higher passes can be due to a more middle-class intake rather than improved equality of opportunity.

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