

Item A

In recent years, educational policy has helped to create an educational marketplace, whereby students and their parents are given more choice over the type of education that they would prefer. Furthermore, the government has provided a range of information to enable families to be able to select the type of school that best suits their own educational needs.

However, some sociologists would suggest that it is middle class families that benefit most from these changes and that working-class children are often left to attend school that do not adequately provide for their complex needs.

Applying material from Item A, analyse TWO ways in which marketisation policies have created greater inequalities between social classes (10)

One way in which marketisation policies have created greater inequalities between the social classes is through the process of selecting schools. Item A states that the 'government has provided a range of information', such as Ofsted reports and league tables which allow parents to make choices about their child's education. Whilst these sources are freely available on the internet, middle class parents are more likely to have the educational capital to be able to understand these documents and the cultural capital to be able to apply to the schools that perform the best. Gerwitz et al suggested that middle class parents tend to be skilled choosers of their children's education, whilst the working class are either semi-skilled choosers, who have the educational capital to understand the report, but lack the cultural capital for their children to be selected, or local-disconnected choosers, who due to a lack of economic capital may be reliant upon school in their local area to provide an education for their children. This creates greater inequalities as the top performing schools tend to be oversubscribed and are more likely to select middle class students to attend. These students earn more cultural and educational capital than their peers in lower performing schools and ultimately end up in higher paid professions, creating inequality. However, some sociologists would point to social mobility schemes in place at prestigious universities that look to tackle these issues for the most talented students.

A second way in which marketisation policies might create further inequality between the social classes is through funding. Item A states that working-class children are left to attend schools that do not attend to their 'complex needs'. As working-class students lack the cultural capital to get into high performing schools, they are often reliant upon their local schools for their education. If these are poor performing, they will have limited funds for additional resources for students or additional support for students with special educational needs. Consequently, students will struggle to catch up with their more affluent peers and be caught in a cycle of deprivation. However, recent attempts by the Coalition Government to address this issue have led to the introduction of the Pupil Premium, additional funding for schools if they have students from areas of economic deprivation. It can be argued however, that often these resources are not allocated to additional resources, but often make up budget shortfalls from cuts to educational funding made by the government.