

**Secondary PGCE Economics and Business Education**

**School and College types in England and Wales, Summer 2023**

**Secondary Schools**

There are over 4000 Secondary schools in the UK of varying sizes and with a variety of intakes. The majority are either 11-16 or 11-18, though funding and competition with colleges has meant some small school sixth forms have been closing. 93% of pupils attend a state school and approximately 7% of pupils an Independent School (though this rises to 18% at 16-18). So, most pupils attend a comprehensive, whose governing boards determine their catchment area and the criteria on which pupils are admitted (often proximity to the school and whether pupils have siblings there).

Schools are free to set their own policies on behaviour and on marking, assessment and feedback. There can be big differences between institutions (something you will encounter on placement): in terms of culture, behaviour expectations, focus on exam results and extra-curricular options. More and more schools are introducing their own ‘isolation’ or ‘support’ facilities for pupils with challenging behaviour, who might be educated separately on site on either a temporary or permanent basis.

**Local Authority schools:** (e.g. Lancashire, Bury, Bolton or Trafford).The LA is responsible and accountable for the schools in their area. The number of schools within Local Authorities is shrinking as the Academies programme expands, bringing problems with funding and services in some areas. The LA provides the maximum number schools can recruit in Year 7 (this is partly a function of the square metreage of the school site).The number of pupils also determines the budget they receive: LA schools pay a fee (an agreed % of budget) for services such as payroll and HR. Each school has a Pupil Access Number (PAN) which can be reviewed. Most schools will recruit to the PAN, without the scramble and competition seen in the college sector. The LA provides school policies (e.g. Safeguarding and visits/trips) and a school advisor to support improvement.

All schools who attract fewer students than their PAN are open to receive those from others, e.g., pupils who are excluded or move to the area, known as ‘managed moves’.Schools often find challenges in supporting these pupils to adjust to a new school and curriculum and some unscrupulous Heads will try and ship out problem pupils.

**Academies:** some schools are single academies or part of a wider Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), funded directly from the Department for Education and not part of the Local Authority. They are of varying size (from 1 to 40+ schools, both Primary and Secondary), are free to set their own pay scales and need not follow the National Curriculum. Though the Academies programme originates from Tony Blair’s Labour government, they have been extended under recent Conservative education policy.

The comparative performance of academy schools is a discussion point. Whilst some MAT chains have helped turn round schools and push up outcomes (and Ofsted ratings), others have not and some MAT CEOs have been criticised for their six figures salaries with problem students who may under perform in exams disappearing from school.

**Further Reading:** [British Educational Research Association (BERA) blog: *What drives Academies to grow?*](https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/multi-academy-trusts-in-england-what-drives-them-to-grow) ; [Types of Academy Chain](https://www.carterandcoley.co.uk/services/specialist-sectors/academy-schools/different-types-academy-chains)

**Faith schools:** have a particular faith attached and admissions may be based on this. They have to follow the National Curriculum but can choose what they teach in religious education. Most are Church of England or Roman Catholic, though others Jewish, Sikh and Muslim. Some demand that parents are regular church attenders as part of the admissions process. Often senior staff will have to be of the particular faith group or at least agree to promote these values.

**Further Reading:** [TES piece on faith schools and inspection bias](https://www.tes.com/news/ofsted-chief-denies-pursuing-anti-faith-agenda); National Secular Society: [*No More Faith Schools*](https://www.secularism.org.uk/faith-schools/)

**Grammar schools:** the 164 [grammar schools](https://www.elevenplusexams.co.uk/schools/regions) in the UK cluster around particular Local Authority areas, including Trafford and Kent. Students sit an entrance exam at age 11 (Year 6) that often means they are prepped and may have private tutorial support to help them pass the tests and gain a place. Those students who do not pass end up at a Secondary Modern or a Comprehensive School. Theresa May’s government attempted to expand the grammar school system in the face of [research from the Sutton Trust that suggests pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are much less likely to attend](https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Gaps-in-Grammar_For-website.pdf).

**Independent schools:** these are fee paying schools outside of the state sector system and range from those charging a few thousand pounds per year to those charging tens of thousands. Independent schools tend to perform better (they receive 50% of the A grades at A level despite forming only around 12% of the entry). Critics argue they lead to the creation of elites and have a negative impact on remaining schools who may lose their most able pupils. The North West contains independent schools with a strong reputation, such as Manchester Grammar School and Manchester High School for Girls. Labour has proposed adding VAT to private school fees and removing their charitable status to fund better provision in the state sector.

**Further Reading:** [The Guardian (2019): *Britain’s Private School Problem*](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/jan/13/public-schools-david-kynaston-francis-green-engines-of-privilege)

[Comprehensive Future](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/comprehensive-future); [The Independent Schools Association](https://www.isaschools.org.uk/);

**Free Schools**: are funded direct by the government and work much like a ‘start up’ with parents and other stakeholders organising their opening. They are state sector institutions but cannot select students on ability. Their rationale is to provide more choice for parents, particularly where there are few ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ schools in an area. Some independent schools that faced financial difficulties after the 2008 global financial crisis have converted to free schools and are now part of the state sector.

**Alternative Provision (AP)**: this means students who were in mainstream school are now taught in an outside setting. Typically, these are those who have been temporarily excluded from school or for whom a few days (or longer) outside might help them settle and focus before returning to school. The school who excluded them pays the cost of the alternative provision. This might include Year 10 and 11 pupils studying an alternative curriculum for one or more days per week in a local college or a new setting for pupils who have illustrated poor behaviour. This sector has expanded hugely in recent years, in part because pupils in these settings did not contribute to school accountability measures. So called ‘off-rolling’- where pupils are removed from school due to their potential negative impact on behaviour and results- impacted [one in 10 Year 11 pupils in 2019](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/oct/11/one-in-10-pupils-removed-from-school-rolls-to-boost-gcse-results). This practice is now [investigated by Ofsted as part of an inspection.](https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2019/05/10/what-is-off-rolling-and-how-does-ofsted-look-at-it-on-inspection/)

**Pupil Referral Unit (PRU):** pupils may be sent here with behavioural or personal issues that mean they struggle to settle in the state sector. Over 16 000 UK students are currently educated in a PRU, with some then returning to mainstream school. Typically, class sizes will be small with more support for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties, typically available from social services and educational psychologists.

**Further Reading:** [*What is a PRU?;*](https://www.theschoolrun.com/what-is-a-pupil-referral-unit) [BBC News video: *Inside a PRU*](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/education-44973412)

**Special Schools:** these are set up exclusively for the education of young people with Special Educational Needs, mostly those with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that sets out the individual support pupils require. Often this type of provision covers a range of learning difficulties and disabilities and such schools may have less than 100 pupils.

**Further Reading:** [SEN pupils in England (2019)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814244/SEN_2019_Text.docx.pdf)

The PGCE **Alternative Placement** is an opportunity to spend two days in a PRU and/or Special School during placement 2 and/or placement 3.

**The DFE School Comparison Tool:** the link below illustrates the range of performance data collected about schools and colleges published by the DfE. This is very much part of a policy agenda that sees schools competing for pupils as part of a market, fuelled by parental choice, with results acting as a ‘signal’ of performance: <https://www.find-school-performance-data.service.gov.uk/>

**Data presented includes:**

\*GCSE pass rate and Progress 8 score, which is a measure of value added since Year 6 SATs

\*Proportion of boys/girls in the school and results by gender, SEN status, EAL and for disadvantaged pupils

\*School workforce data

\*Latest school Ofsted report (this must also be available on the school website)

\*Absence data

\*Spending per pupil, e.g. on teaching staff, supply teachers, energy and IT equipment

[**Ofsted**](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted) are the school and college inspectorate in England and generally drive practice within them, with a focus on outcomes for students. All state school institutions are rated by Ofsted on a 4-point scale and have to publish their report on the school/college website. Independent Schools are monitored by the [Independent Schools Inspectorate](https://www.isi.net/).

Ofsted also inspect early years and care settings, as well as Initial Teacher Education (ITE).

**Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:** these nations have a separate education system which is run from the devolved governments. The curriculum and assessment arrangements differ to those in England: Scotland has a completely different system of Highers, for example. Registration with the National education body is required for anyone seeking to work in one of these countries. Arrangements for the induction of new teachers post-PGCE also differ.

**Business Studies continues to be a popular subject in many secondary schools**. In just under half of providers, [*GCSE teaching begins in Year 9*](https://schoolsweek.co.uk/half-of-schools-start-gcses-in-year-9-nfer-survey-suggests/#:~:text=Around%20half%20of%20schools%20start,new%20survey%20of%20teachers%20suggests.), with a three-year curriculum. Ofsted, however, have already stated that they are no fans of such an approach and that this might negatively impact on the grade schools receive for ‘Quality of Education’ when inspected. A Year 9 curriculum may mean a greater demand for business teachers. Typically, there might be 3 Business/economics teachers in an 11-18 and one in an 11-16, though this depends on the size of the school and curriculum choices (e.g. whether they offer VCERT or BTEC as well as GCSE/A level) and the popularity of the subject.

**There is a very small entry at GCSE in Economics**. Numbers are very healthy at A level (the highest on record). Economics tends to recruit more boys than girls and has a higher proportion of the entry from selective and independent schools than does Business Studies.

At both GCSE and A level, Business Studies and Economics (especially) tend to have a higher proportion of male than female students. This has some implications for how we deliver.

**Sixth Form Colleges:**

There are 94 Sixth Form Colleges in the UK. They are incorporated institutions funded via the Education and Skills Funding Agency and range in size from 1000 to 3000+ students: their core business is generally teaching A levels. Most sixth form colleges also offer BTEC National Diplomas (including in Business) at Level 3 (A level equivalent) and sometimes at Level 2 (GCSE equivalent). There has been some criticism of Sixth Form Colleges as ‘exam factories’, with their strong focus on results. This is in part a product of a system where funding for SFCs is based upon student achievement and student retention (whether they complete the course and pass). At the end of the day, students want to achieve grades that allow them to progress to the university of their choice: good results are ‘hard currency’. Colleges offer a period at the start of year 12 where pupils can switch to a different A level or to a BTEC. SFCs are represented by the [Sixth Form Colleges Association](https://www.sixthformcolleges.org/379/our-members).

**Further Education Colleges:**

There are over 300 FE Colleges in the UK. They are different to sixth form colleges in that they also teach adults and typically have a more vocational focus, including BTEC, NVQs and technical qualifications in career pathways such as construction, engineering and health and social care. Many offer degree courses (at Foundation and above), in partnership with a university. Staff tend to be experts in these areas and most have worked in the sector before teaching. FE has suffered hugely from funding cuts over the last 10 years and many colleges have merged to form ‘super colleges’, sometimes after financial troubles. Pay and terms and conditions for teachers are generally worse than in schools and SFCs.

**The Teachers pay spine**

**Schools:** [**https://neu.org.uk/advice/your-rights-work/pay/pay-scales**](https://neu.org.uk/advice/your-rights-work/pay/pay-scales)

**Sixth form colleges:** <https://neu.org.uk/sixth-form-colleges>

The summer 2023 pay announcement confirmed a commitment to a 6.5% rise for teachers. Progression up the pay spine is determined by performance (typically exam results and wider contribution) and any decision is that of the Head/Principal. Sixth form colleges tend to pay close, but not up to, the pay rates of Secondary schools.

Where you start on the pay spine depends on your prior experience and how well you can sell this to the Head/Principal. In recent years, most trainees have begun at the bottom of the pay spine, though some have benefitted from being moved up multiple points after good performance.

**Note:** Further Education Colleges set their own pay scales (the typical FE lecturer earns around £10 000 per year less than their equivalent in schools).Independent Schools tend to follow the Teachers Pay Spine but might pay above this; Academy chains can set their own pay and conditions but also tend to follow the state sector.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

\*Why might a school convert to Academy status or join a Multi-Academy Trust?

\*How- if at all- might a pupil benefit from time in Alternative Provision or at a PRU?

\*Should independent school fees be subject to VAT?

\*Is selection at age 11 good for all pupils?

\*What is the difference between a Sixth Form College and a Further Education College?

\*How does your old school perform on the DfE school comparison tool?

\*How might a marketized education system where schools are judged on results impact on pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds? Why do Ofsted judge schools on the performance of these pupils?

\*Are faith schools a form of selection?

\*To what extent do schools select parents rather than pupils?