

The English School system

After an optional education at *nursery school*, the compulsory education starts at an age of 5. It amounts to 11 years and lasts until the 16th year of one's life. The nursery school which is following the *primary school* amounts to 6 years resp. lasts until the 11th year of one's life. Afterwards, at *secondary school* students can choose between Comprehensive School and Grammar School. The education at secondary school amounts at least to 5 years.

The Comprehensive School offers an educational background for 11 to 16-year-old students which secludes with the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education). This is the first degree for the students. The Grammar School is intended to be a preparation for the attendance of university and offers an academically education for pupils at the age of 11 to 18 years. Furthermore the students have the chance to attend the Sixth Form College at Comprehensive Schools after they have passed GCSE. They seclude Comprehensive School with a GCE A-level like they would at Grammar School. These Colleges for further Education are educational institutions for 16 to 19-year-old pupils. However, there are not only academically but also non-academically (GSC A-level) as well as vocational training courses offered. These different branches of the school system are mainly public governed and financed. But there are also private financed schools in the primary and secondary branch. The public primary and secondary schools account for approximately 70% of all schools in England.

The following table gives a summary of the school types in England:

School type	Number	Percentage
Maintained Primary	16,971	70
Maintained Secondary (including schools with specialist status)	3,127	13
Special	1,054	4
Pupil Referral Units	443	2
Independent	2,375	10
City Technology Colleges	3	0
Academies	202	1
All schools total	24,175	100

Table 1: Type and number of schools, England (2010)

Source: Schools Census 2010

www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000925/SFR09-2010.pdf

(accessed 17 August 2010)

The listed school types were mainly categorized after their underlying logic of supervision because they partly differ in this dimension. In the public primary and secondary schools sector you can roughly distinguish between Community Schools, Foundation and trust schools and Voluntary-aided schools. Community schools are governed by a local school administration which hires teachers and provides the infrastructure of the school. The funding of Foundation and trust schools is financed by a private foundation. The school is governed in this case by a correspondent administrative body. Voluntary-aided schools are schools which are usually governed by denominations resp. the church. Furthermore there are schools with a so-called special status. These schools are run in cooperation with private companies resp. sectoral sponsors. They are specialized in a certain occupational field but still teach according to the demands of national curriculums. Every public secondary school can apply for the special status. Possible specializing fields are management, engineering, art, languages and sports.

Furthermore there are so-called Special schools. These schools offer education for children with special needs resp. disabled children.

The so-called Pupil Referral Units (PRU) are intended for adolescents who are out of the school system for example by exclusion or non-participation etc. The PRU concentrates on the special needs and handicaps of those adolescents and helps them with their problems. The primary objective of the PRUs is to reintegrate those adolescents into the regular school system.

The so-called independent schools are allowed to constitute their curriculum on their own. Due to the national curriculums they only have to meet with certain governmental minimum standards. Only half of these private schools have a foundation character. Mainly they are financed by the school fees paid by the parents.

A further school type is the so-called Academies which submitted a radical change in the year 2010. The Academies are intended for 14 to 19-year-old pupils. They are financed by the government and are known for a high degree of autonomy which is a result of the reduced

control of the school and made up of the own determination of performance-oriented salaries for teachers, the right to deviate from the national curriculum and the determination of lesson and school times. Due to the high degree of autonomy and the resulting flexibility an increase of the standards and in general an innovative school type is expected.

The quantitative dimension concerning the number of pupils of the mentioned school types in England are listed in the table below:

School type	Number	Percentage
Maintained Primary	4,093,800	52
Maintained Secondary	3,055,520	38
Special	90,770	1
Pupil Referral Units	12,800	0
Independent	576,810	7
City Technology Colleges	3,440	0
Academies	192,640	2
All students total	8,025,770	100

Table 2: Student headcount (5- 19*) by school type, England, 2010

* Please note that the Schools Census covers pupils who attend sixth forms if they form part of a State or Independent school. Typically, these students will be 16 years old when they join what is known as Year 12. They will begin Year 13 as 17- year- olds. There will be a small number of students who remain in school beyond 18 (approximately 3 per cent of students aged 16+).