

Fact sheets on Britain

Education

All children in Britain between the ages of 5 and 15 must, by law, attend school or be otherwise educated in a way approved by the local education authority (in 1972-73 the statutory school-leaving age is to be raised to 16). A small proportion of children between 2 and 5 attend nursery classes. After the age of 15, increasing numbers of children are staying on voluntarily at school—some until 18 or 19, the age of entry into higher education in universities, colleges of education (for teacher training) or other colleges. For those who leave school earlier a wide range of further education is available.

All aspects of education in England and of universities and civil science throughout Great Britain are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Education and Science. The Secretary of State for Wales is responsible for primary and secondary education in Wales, but responsibility for other education in Wales rests with the Secretary of State for Education and Science. The Secretary of State for Scotland is consulted on matters concerned with Scottish universities and is responsible for all other forms of education in Scotland. The Minister of Education for Northern Ireland is responsible for education in Northern Ireland. The administration of publicly provided education in schools and colleges of further education is shared by the central government departments, local education authorities and various voluntary organisations. The universities are self-governing institutions, academically independent, although about 80 per cent of their income is drawn from public funds.

In 1969-70 the estimated total public expenditure on education in Britain amounted to nearly £2,366 million, some 12 per cent of all public expenditure.

The principal Acts governing education are the Education Act 1944 (for England and Wales), the Education (Scotland) Act 1962, and the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 1947.

Schools

There are over 38,000 schools in Britain. The majority of these, attended by nearly 95 per cent of the 9.5 million school-children, are supported from public funds, and the education provided is free.

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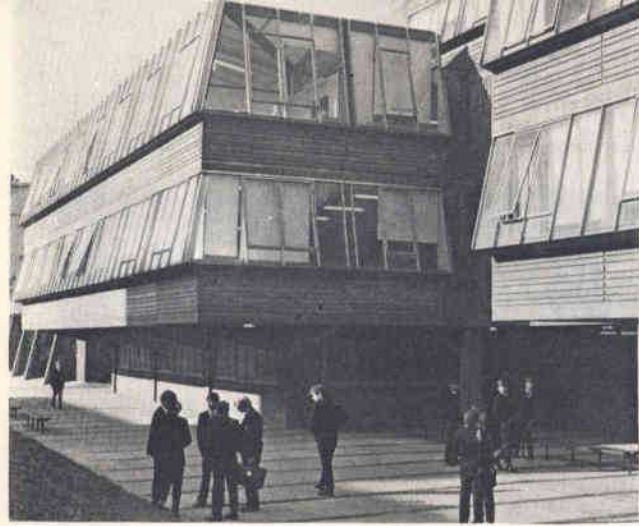
In England and Wales most of the publicly supported schools are county schools—the largest group, which are provided and maintained by local education authorities (their full cost falls on public funds) — or voluntary schools, provided by voluntary bodies, usually religious denominations, but assisted by the local education authorities. In addition, there are a few direct-grant schools (mostly grammar schools, see below) which are independent of local authorities but receive grants from the Department of Education and Science; they charge fees, but up to 50 per cent of their places must be provided free.

In Scotland, most of the schools supported from public funds are provided and maintained by education authorities and are known as public schools; they include denominational schools. There are also some direct-grant schools (known as grant-aided schools). In Northern Ireland, county schools, managed by local education authorities, and voluntary schools, under voluntary management, are both grant-aided by the Government.

Maintained and aided schools include primary schools, or departments, for children up to 11 (12 in Scotland), and secondary schools for older boys and girls. In Scotland, boys and girls are taught together in almost all schools; in England, Wales and Northern Ireland this is usual in the primary schools but boys and girls often attend separate secondary schools.

Most school-children in England and Wales receive their secondary education in schools to which they are allocated after selection procedures at the age of 11 (often referred to as the eleven-plus examination). About 1,025 grammar schools provide academic education while some 2,690 secondary modern schools give a general education with a practical bias. There are a few secondary technical schools offering a general education related to industry, commerce and agriculture. There are also some mutilateral or bilateral schools which provide any two or three of these types of education in separately organised streams.

Nearly a third of the maintained secondary school population, however, attend some 1,335 comprehensive schools which take pupils without reference to ability or aptitude and provide a wide range of secondary education for all or most of the children of a district. They may be organised in a number of ways including schools that take the full secondary school age-range from 11 to 18; middle schools whose pupils move on to senior comprehensive schools at 12 or 13 leaving at 16 to 18; and the comprehensive school with

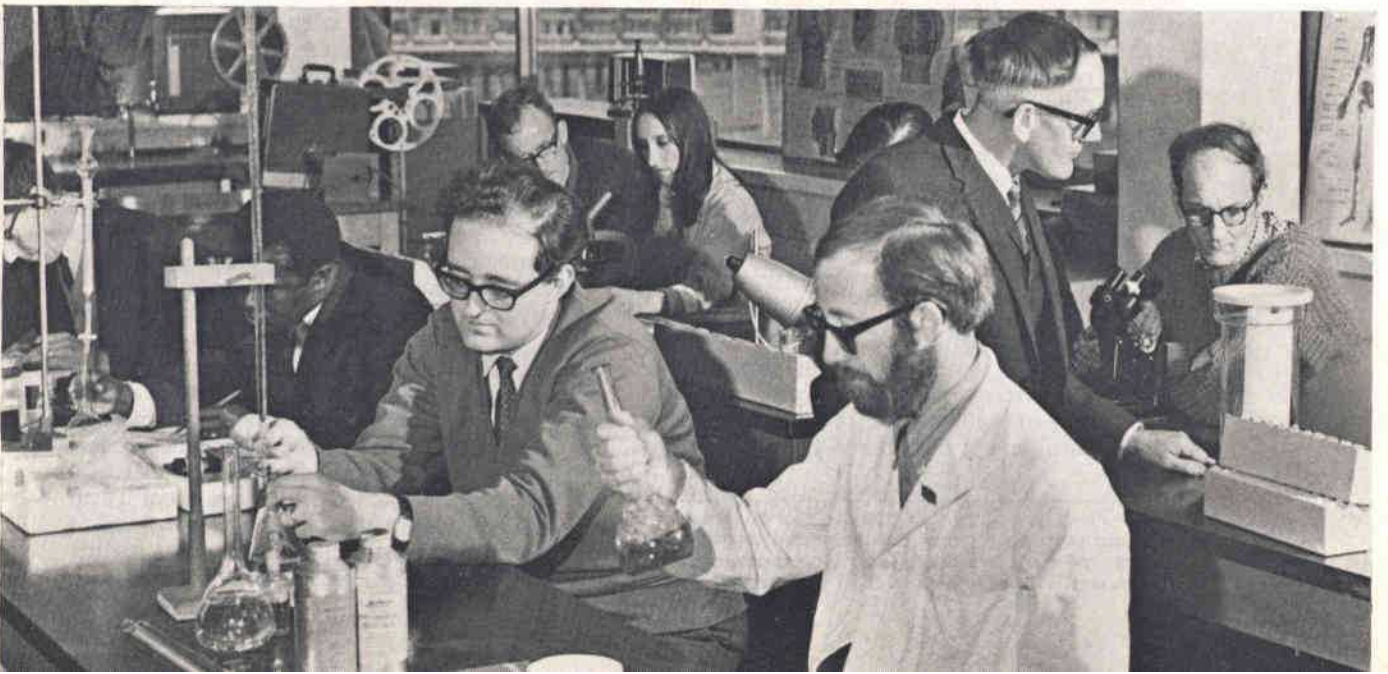


Fundação Cuidar o Futuro



Top: A new comprehensive school in London opened in 1970.
Above: A French lesson in a primary school.

Right: Secondary school children build their own computer.
Below: Physics project work in a technical college of education.



an age range of 11 or 12 to 16 combined with a sixth-form college for pupils over 16.

Secondary education in Scotland is largely organised on comprehensive lines and in 1969 about 60 per cent of all pupils in education authority secondary schools were in schools with a comprehensive intake. Where a selective system still exists Scottish secondary schools fall mainly into one of three categories or are a combination of all three: (1) junior secondary schools for pupils likely to leave school at the statutory leaving age (15, rising to 16 in 1972-73); (2) schools which, in addition to junior secondary courses, provide courses leading to the Ordinary grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education; and (3) senior secondary schools which provide certificate courses of four, five or six years.

In Northern Ireland there are grammar schools, secondary (intermediate) schools, which are the equivalent of the secondary modern schools in England and Wales, and technical (intermediate) schools, which offer the same facilities as secondary technical schools in England and Wales. Some comprehensive type schools do exist and arrangements for transfer between the other types of schools are flexible.

Independent schools, which are attended by about 6 per cent of school-children in England and Wales and a very few children in Scotland and Northern Ireland, must be registered and are subject to official inspection. Fees are charged but in many of the schools some scholarships and free places are available, financed either from endowments or by the local education authorities.

The largest and most important of the independent schools are known as 'public' schools in England and Wales. A public school is controlled by its own board of governors, and is often a boarding school. Independent preparatory schools, many of them boarding schools, take pupils aged from about 8 to 13, most of whom are intending to enter public schools. A number of other independent schools cover every age group, grade of education, and a wide variety of educational methods. Some of these schools are owned and managed by independent non-profit-making bodies; others are privately owned.

There is no national leaving examination in Britain but secondary school pupils in England and Wales may take the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) — which is controlled by teachers serving in the schools providing candidates—at the age of 15, or the General Certificate of Education (GCE), which can be taken at two levels: ordinary ('O'), at about 16, and advanced ('A'), at about 18 or 19, the level which qualifies for university entrance. There are separate examinations in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

School Teachers and Teacher Training

School teachers are employed by the local education authorities or the management of the school. In 1969 there were about 403,370 full-time teachers (or full-time equivalents) in publicly maintained primary and secondary schools in Britain. They are not, in general, bound by official instructions about syllabuses, textbooks or methods and there is considerable freedom for experiment in curricular reform, many of the experiments being

stimulated by the Schools Council for the Curriculum and Examinations, an advisory body representative of educational interests in England and Wales, and a similar body for Scotland.

Teachers in grant-aided schools generally need the qualifications approved by the education departments. The majority of teachers in England and Wales obtain this by a three-year course of study at colleges of education (formerly known as teacher-training colleges) and run by local education authorities. College students may obtain a degree — Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) — as well as a professional qualification by means of a four-year course. University graduates (at present) and certain specialist teachers are qualified to teach by their degree or specialist qualifications, but may take an additional one-year course at a university or a college of education. (This additional year's training is compulsory for students now graduating and intending to teach in primary schools and will be compulsory for those graduating after 1973 intending to teach in secondary schools). In Northern Ireland the system is similar except that courses for secondary school teachers last four years. In Scotland all men teachers and all women teachers in secondary schools have to be graduates and must do an additional one-year course of professional training at a college of education; courses for non-graduates are three years in length.

There are 159 colleges and 30 university departments of education in England and Wales; six colleges and two university departments in Northern Ireland; and, in Scotland, ten colleges, a teachers' training course at one university, and four other universities which offer B.Ed. courses jointly with colleges. The education departments, universities, local education authorities and other bodies provide a variety of short courses for practising teachers. A recent development is the refresher courses for married women returning to teaching after bringing up a family.

A number of teachers from British schools go to overseas countries each year under interchange schemes or schemes for temporary overseas posts.

Further Education

Further education (see Fact Sheet C/6) is organised very flexibly so that it is available to all above school-leaving age and can be provided at all levels, full- or part-time, vocational or non-vocational. Most of the institutions, including technical, commercial and art colleges, are run by local education authorities; between them these have nearly 280,000 full-time and sandwich course students and about 1½ million part-time students doing mainly vocational work, and well over a million students attending non-vocational evening classes.

Increasing numbers of young workers are released by their employers for one day a week, or in periods of several consecutive weeks, for classes of further education. The majority of 'day release' or 'block release' students, as they are known, take courses leading to qualifications as operatives, craftsmen and technicians.

Evening classes are organised by the universities, local education authorities and voluntary bodies, notably the Workers' Educational Association, and are aided by government grants. Almost

any subject can be studied in these classes: academic, cultural or practical, vocational or non-vocational. In Great Britain, seven grant-aided residential colleges provide one- or two-year courses for adult students, and there are about 30 residential colleges where adult students can take short courses lasting from a few days to a few weeks.

Higher Education

There are three branches of higher education in Britain: universities (see Fact Sheet C/5), colleges of education and advanced courses in technical colleges and other institutions of further education. Over 90 per cent of the 226,000 full-time university students and of those in other forms of full-time higher education in Britain receive assistance from public or private funds.

There are 44 universities in Britain. In the past few years several completely new universities such as those of Sussex, York, East Anglia, Warwick and the New University of Ulster at Coleraine have been established.

The Government has established an Open University (which came into operation in January 1971) to provide degree and other courses, using a combination of radio, television and correspondence courses together with a network of viewing and listening centres.

The courses in higher education outside the universities and colleges of education, provided by technical colleges and other institutions of further education, include a wide range of full-, part-time and sandwich courses mainly in science and technology, but also in the arts, social studies, business studies, law and other subjects. The university-level courses may qualify for approval by the Council for National Academic Awards, which awards degrees to successful students. The Government is concentrating this sector of higher education within 30 major national institutions called 'polytechnics' which are being formed from some 60 existing colleges.

The expansion of higher education in Great Britain was accelerated by the Government's acceptance of the target figures and other recommendations of the Committee on Higher Education under Lord Robbins. The report suggested that by 1973-74 there should be 390,000 places in higher education, of which 218,000 should be in universities and 122,000 in colleges of education. These figures for both universities and colleges of education have already been achieved, and the number of students continues to grow steadily. Higher education in Northern Ireland is also expanding, following the report of the committee under Sir John Lockwood.

Reading List

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Annual Reports	
Education and Science in 1969 (England and Wales). Department of Education and Science. HMSO, 1970	1.00
Education in Scotland 1969. Scottish Education Department. Cmd. 4312. HMSO, Edinburgh, 1970	.47½
Education in Northern Ireland 1969. Ministry of Education. Cmd. 542. HMSO, Belfast, 1970	.30
Statistics	
Education Statistics 1969. Department of Education and Science. Six volumes. HMSO, 1970-71	1.30 to 2.70
Scottish Educational Statistics 1969. Scottish Education Department. HMSO, Edinburgh, 1970	1.65
Other Government Publications	
Higher Education (Robbins Report). Cmd. 2154. HMSO 1963 (reprinted 1968)	1.20
Higher Education in Northern Ireland. Cmd. 475. HMSO, Belfast, 1965	1.00
COI Publications	
Education in Britain. Reference pamphlet (R 47, 1/66 (being revised)). COI	
Teacher Training in Britain. Reference paper R.5279 (being revised). COI	

Prepared by Reference Division,
Central Office of Information, London.