



Learning in England ∞ State-funded Schools

4 > How can we help you find a place for your child at a state-funded school?

A state-funded school must comply with the law on Admissions and teaching the National Curriculum. The Local Education Authority maintains the state-funded schools and supports the head teacher in the management of the school. Historically, there was a division between Grammar Schools and Secondary Modern Schools. Children were selected to go to Grammar Schools. Where you went to school was determined by the results of the 11+/11plus test which was done at the end of the pupils' last year in Primary education. In the 1960s most Grammar Schools and Secondary Modern Schools were converted into Comprehensive Schools. In the 1990s new schools could be Academies. Later Free Schools could be established, for example, by parents. More recently existing schools or groups of schools could become Academies and shared their management in Academy Trusts.

Most schools were funded by the state, but some also received monies from the Church, or charities, or were sponsored by businesses and universities.

There are 163 Grammar Schools altogether, in England: in Greater London, Kent, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. There are also a Grammar Schools in Birmingham, Gloucester, Poole and Chelmsford.

There are several different types of maintained school:

- > Community Schools run by the Local Education Authority
- > Foundation or Trust Schools run by the Governors of a foundation, trust or charity
- > Voluntary Aided schools are run by a Religious Organisation and contribute some funding to the running of the schools
- > Voluntary Controlled schools are run by the Local Education Authority but a Religious Organisation provides one quarter of the Governors.

Of course, the schools may vary in emphases in the curriculum, the academic achievement of their pupils or facilities, for example, in supporting children with Special Needs.



“Children in state schools were used to independent learning, and group work and did not expect teachers to lecture them on exam technique.”¹

This is where we can help. We know information that may not be found from the school’s website. Here are some examples:

- a school has a particularly good reputation in a subject which is of interest to your child; or
- there are particularly good facilities for Science, Technology, Sport or Arts; or
- there is a lift or other special facility to support those with physical needs; or
- there is an excellent Learning Support Department; or
- there is support in learning English, for children who have a different mother tongue.

In order to get into a maintained school you must apply online. You must be living in the catchment area of the school.

We would recommend that the search for the best school for your child begins, **before** you find somewhere to live. Some Local Education Authorities say it is not essential to live in the catchment area of the school, but you will have to get your child to the school yourself, or use public transport.

The Local Education Authority website gives tight deadlines for applications. If your job starts in the middle of the academic year, then your child can still be allocated a place in a maintained school. We can support your online application and with the various other services shown on our website.

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My child is very bright. How can I be sure he will be stretched?

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Many state schools have a reputation for drawing out the best in their students. Some schools find that children do very well in mixed ability groups and others do better where they are in ability streams. Many schools have programmes to stretch and challenge children, or subject clubs run by older pupils.

We assess your child and suggest a match with the state school that is likely to work best for him or her. There is no guarantee of getting into that school, though the chances are increased if you live in the catchment area.

The support of parents in ensuring homework is done independently and as well as possible is also important, along with encouragement in being self-disciplined and being involved in extra-curricular activities.

Contact us at Paths to Learning by emailing felicitygunn@hotmail.com

¹ Orla Douglas trained with Teach First. She writes under a pseudonym. The guardian 5.12.12
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