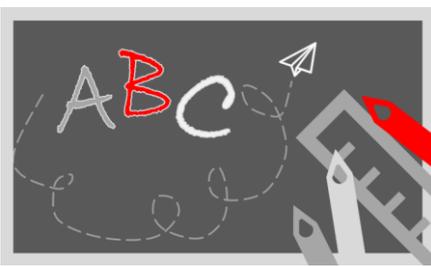


TROUBLE-FR³E SCHOOLING



The UK Education System

Finding the right school

Finding the right school and securing placements is a material challenge for assignees coming to the UK. Not only is the system complex, with a wide variety of choice for both State Schools and Independent schools; there is the added complication of limited availability of places, high demand for popular schools and the need to have a residential address before State Schools even consider your application.

De-bunking complexity

This newsletter provides high level guidance on the education system in the UK and highlights some of the challenges assignees are likely to encounter when relocating to this Country. It includes:

- **A high Level overview** of the Education System;

- **The difference** between State and Private Education;
- **Choosing a property** and some of the factors to consider when looking for the right school/area;
- **Costs** associated with Schooling in the UK, especially when looking at private, fee-paying schools.

Table 1 below provides a high-level overview of the UK Education system.

State Schools

Types of School

All children in England between the ages of 5 and 16 are entitled to a free place at a state school. The majority of these follow the national curriculum. State schools, in the main, fall into one of four categories:

- **community schools:** controlled by the local council;
- **foundation/voluntary schools:** similar to community schools but with more autonomy on how they are run;
- **academies:** run by a governing body, independent from the local council;
- **grammar schools:** these select pupils based on academic ability and there is normally an exam to get in.

There are several other State Schools such as Free Schools, Special Schools (for children with special educational needs) and Faith Schools (which have to follow the national curriculum but can choose what they teach in religious studies). The majority fall within one of the four main categories.

Stages

The state-funded education system is divided into stages based on age and ranging from Early Years, through to Key Stage 1 to 4. Post-16 education (ages 16 to 18) is informally referred as Key Stage 5.

At age 16 students typically take exams for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). While education is compulsory until 18, schooling is only compulsory to 16. Key Stage 5 education can take a number of forms, and may be academic or vocational. This can involve continued schooling, known as "sixth form" or "college", leading to A-level qualifications, or a number of alternative qualifications such as the IB (International Baccalaureate).

Independent Schools

Types of school

Independent schools are fee-paying private schools, governed by an elected board of governors and independent of many of the regulations and conditions that apply to state schools (e.g. following the national curriculum).

Many of the older, expensive and more exclusive schools catering for the 13–18 age-range are also known as public schools (this originates from the Public Schools Act 1868, when schools were open to pupils regardless of where they lived or their religion – hence "public").

Stages

Independent schools normally follow three key stages of entry.

- **Pre-prep (pre-preparatory):** these are fee-charging independent primary schools that cater primarily for children up to the age of 8.
- **Prep (preparatory):** these educate younger children up to the age of 13. They are called that way because they are meant to "prepare" children for the Common Entrance Examination to get them into a private independent secondary school, including prestigious English public schools.
- **Senior schools:** include both independent and public schools from the age of 13 onwards. The last two years are normally referred to as the sixth form (lower and upper sixth). These are effectively equivalent to

Table 1: An overview of the UK Education System

Key stage	Year (UK)	Grade (US)	Age	Exams	State Funded Schools	Fee paying Private Schools			
Early Years	Nursery	Nursery	3-4	None. Individual schools may set own examinations	Relevant in most of the UK PRIMARY Relevant in some smaller Primaries INFANT JUNIOR	Pre-prep			
	Reception	PreK/K1	4-5						
KS1	Year 1	K/K2	5-6						
	Year 2	1	6-7						
	Year 3	2	7-8						
	Year 4	3	8-9						
KS2	Year 5	4	9-10	11+, SATS	Comprehensive schools LOWER SCHOOL UPPER SCHOOL SIXTH FORM / COLLEGE Selective GRAMMAR SCHOOL	Prep			
	Year 6	5	10-11						
KS3	Year 7	6	11-12	Common Entrance normally at 13+ (Year 8)		SECONDARY SENIOR	Senior		
	Year 8	7	12-13						
	Year 9	8	13-14						
KS4	Year 10	9	14-15	GCSE					
	Year 11	10	15-16						
KS5	Year 12	11	16-17	AS or equiv.					
	Year 13	12	17-18						

Key Stage 5 State Education at the end of which students normally sit A-Levels or other alternative equivalent qualifications such as the IB (International Baccalaureate).

International Schools

London and outer London also benefit from a strong choice of international schools. Typically, these are schools that promotes international education, in an international environment, by adopting a curriculum such as that, in the main, of the International Baccalaureate.

Challenges linked to relocation

Prioritise Schools first

Generally, securing a place in the right school is one of the most challenging aspects of assignees relocating into London. When families move, school choice tends to be the main driver in selecting the most appropriate area to live. This is true for independent schools, and it is essential for State Schools.

Plan schooling in advance

Timing is also key, with the majority of places allocated for a September start date being decided on submission of an application much earlier in the year. There are always some late leavers closer to the end of the school year, enabling a limited window of opportunity for assignees to engage with schools before the summer term ends. But there are no guarantees.

State Schools – Catch 22

All children in England between the ages of 5 and 16 are entitled to a free place at a state school. There are some excellent options in the UK, in particular the more selective ones. With quality comes competition for entry.

Generally, all State Schools have admission criteria to decide which children get places – residency (see below) is a key one but there are others such as giving priority to siblings, to children from a particular religion (for faith schools), or those who do well in an entrance exam (for selective schools), or attended a particular primary school (a 'feeder school').

The main practical difficulty when relocating is that until a family has a residential address, a State School is

Table 2: Average school costs by year groups (in GBP per annum)

Key stage	Year (UK)	Grade (US)	Age	British Private Schools (Pre-prep/Prep/Senior)			International Private Schools		State Schools	
				Central London	Greater London	Outer London	Central London	Outer London		
Early Years	Nursery	Nursery	3-4	15,500	13,000	9,800	15,800	8,000	Free but expect to contribute towards additional trips, activities and school projects	
	Reception	PreK/K1	4-5	17,000		11,800	20,000	13,000		
KS1	Year 1	K/K2	5-6	17,500	13,500	12,500	21,500	20,500		
	Year 2	1	6-7							
KS2	Year 3	2	7-8	18,000	16,500	16,000	22,000	21,000		
	Year 4	3	8-9							
	Year 5	4	9-10							
	Year 6	5	10-11							
KS3	Year 7	6	11-12	19,500	18,500	18,500	24,500	24,000		Free but expect to contribute towards additional trips, activities and school projects
	Year 8	7	12-13							
	Year 9	8	13-14							
KS4	Year 10	9	14-15	19,500	18,500	18,500	24,500	24,000		
	Year 11	10	15-16							
KS5	Year 12	11	16-17	19,500	18,500	18,500	24,500	24,000		
	Year 13	12	17-18							

unable to offer a place. And an application cannot be considered until a family has a residential address. For rental purposes, the school will require evidence of a signed Tenancy Agreement. It's a risk, and one that assignees need to consider carefully when moving to the UK. Ways to mitigate the risk of not obtaining a place even after a property is secured are:

- Having a "stop-gap" private option to fall back on for one to three terms whilst waiting for a place to become available at your preferred choice;
- Being flexible to having a 1st, 2nd and 3rd State School option when applying;
- Anticipating the start date on your tenancy to allow more time to apply before arrival – although Local Councils require the children themselves to be resident when the application is considered. Something to bear in mind.

Private Schools

Oversubscribed

Many of the top private British and international schools are oversubscribed and assignees opting for a private option will need to pre-plan schooling strategy in advance of their move.

Mitigating risks

Just like State options, assignees should consider mitigating risks of not securing a place by registering with several schools in advance of their move. The cost of

registration normally ranges between £50-£250 depending on the year group.

Check admission process

Checking the admission process of individual schools is also important as many now undertake an entry assessment before extending offers to prospective parents and their children.

And finally... Costs

Costs need to be considered as many private schools in and around London (and some of the top ones outside of London) charge substantial school fees that must be factored into the cost of relocation. Table 2 summarises these in general terms for **day schools**. Clearly some variation is present within each category with some of the top schools charging more than the ongoing average calculated in the table. For **Boarding options** where available, an additional £12,000 to £15,000 a year is normally payable on top of the school fees listed. For many, school buses are available but at additional costs between £1,000 to £4,000 a year depending on school and usage. Expect to be asked to pay a **deposit** too on acceptance of a place – generally equivalent to a full term's and returned when your child leaves.

State School are generally free but Parents should expect to contribute towards additional trips, activities and school projects not included in the core curriculum.