



Every day, around 8.4 million children attend one of over 24,000 schools across England. There has never been a greater diversity of school provision in England. Children attend schools maintained by a local authority, church schools, sixth form colleges, academies, free schools and independent schools. There are also pupil referral units, nurseries and grammar schools. Children are educated in many different contexts, from the age of 3 to 19.

In 2014, there were around 450,000 full-time teachers working in state-funded schools across England. Approximately 3 out of 4 of these teachers are female. There are around 240,000 teaching assistants. Together with the number of support staff, there are around 1.3 million people working in schools. This is across 17,000 primary and 8,000 secondary schools.

1.6 million free school meals are eaten every day by pupils at lunch. Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 now all receive a free school meal every day. According to a survey conducted by Kellogg's in 2014, 85% of schools now run a breakfast club and around a quarter of schools offer a completely free breakfast for children before school.

Since they were first established in 2000, over 4700 schools have opened or converted to be academies. An academy is an independent, state-funded school which receives its funding directly from central government, rather than through a local authority. The day-to-day running of the academy is with the headteacher but academies are often members of academy trusts or chains, which offer them advice and support.

The purpose of an education is to prepare children for adult life, to create a new generation of informed, responsible young people who have had a balanced education at school. Moreover, church schools in particular seek to provide children with a spiritual and personal experience of the Christian faith, and recognise the needs and talents of all in their community.

Around 30% of schools in England are church schools. These schools are predominantly supported or run by the Church of England and the Catholic Church, although there are over 70 Methodist schools and increasing number of free schools being opened with a Christian ethos. There is not only a need but also a demand for places in church schools in England, as parents recognise the value a Christian education offers their children. By offering a truly holistic education, church schools encourage children to think about their education not only in terms of their academic achievement, but also their own personal development as Christians in the community and the world.

School governors are volunteers who play a vital role in schools, although often behind the scenes. Their primary responsibilities are to hold the headteacher to account, to protect and promote the ethos of the school and to oversee the finances. School governors are often parents or people living in the local community, who give up their time to ensure the smooth running of the school. There are many opportunities to take up places on governing boards in schools, talk to your local school or register your interest here to find out more: <https://www.gov.uk/become-school-college-governor>

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