

Table 6

**School structures, access, internal grouping and progression****Table 6.1 School structures**

This table indicates whether:

- there is a unitary system of schools catering for all students (comp)
- distinct school types for students of different educational aptitudes (select)
- or a mixed system offering both types of schools (mixed).

Even where the structure may be common for all, differentiated courses are usually offered, at least at upper secondary level to suit students' abilities and preferences.

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Lower secondary</b>	<b>Upper secondary</b>
<b>England</b>	comp	mixed	mixed
<b>Ireland</b>	comp	comp	comp
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	comp	select	mixed
<b>Scotland</b>	comp	comp	comp
<b>Wales</b>	comp	comp	comp
<b>France</b>	comp	comp	select
• <b>Germany</b>	comp	select	select
<b>Hungary</b>	comp	select	select
<b>Italy</b>	comp	comp	select
<b>Netherlands</b>	comp	mixed	mixed
<b>Spain</b>	comp	comp	mixed
<b>Sweden</b>	comp	comp	comp
• <b>Switzerland</b>	comp	mixed	select
• <b>Australia</b>	comp	comp	comp
• <b>Canada</b>	comp	comp	comp
<b>Japan</b>	comp	comp	select
<b>Korea</b>	comp	comp	select
<b>New Zealand</b>	comp	comp	comp
<b>Singapore</b>	comp	comp	select
• <b>South Africa</b>	comp	comp	comp
• <b>USA</b>	comp	comp	comp

## Notes

### **Northern Ireland**

There has, until recently, been a selective system of secondary education, with children taking tests in the final year of primary education to determine selection for the post-primary phase. The last transfer tests were taken in autumn 2008 for entry in September 2009. For 2010 entry, the Government has provided a menu of recommended criteria that schools can choose to use; and schools must have regard to these. Schools are recommended not to use academic criteria but are not precluded from doing so.

### **Wales**

The overwhelming majority of secondary schools in Wales are comprehensive schools. There are no grammar schools, that is schools which are wholly selective by academic ability or aptitude.

### **Canada**

At one time, secondary schools were primarily academic and prepared students for university. Vocational and technical schools were often separate institutions. Although some of these still exist, most secondary schools are now composite and offer both academic and vocational courses.

## Table 6.2 Access

This table indicates whether access to educational phases:

- is automatic (open)
- or subject to performance in school leaving certificates or other evidence of performance (cert).

In the case of higher education, this indicates whether holders of relevant upper secondary school certificates (e.g. Baccalauréat in France, Abitur in Germany, VWO in the Netherlands) have automatic right of access to higher education (open) or whether they have to meet additional selection criteria operated by higher education institutions (select).

	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Higher education
<b>England</b>	open	open	cert	select
<b>Ireland</b>	open	open	open	select
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	open	open/cert	cert	select
<b>Scotland</b>	open	open	cert	select
<b>Wales</b>	open	open	cert	select
<b>France</b>	open	open	open	open
• <b>Germany</b>	open	cert	cert	open
<b>Hungary</b>	cert	cert	cert	select
<b>Italy</b>	open	open	cert, age 14	open
<b>Netherlands</b>	open	cert	cert	open
<b>Spain</b>	open	open	cert, age 16	select
<b>Sweden</b>	open	n/a	cert, age 15/16	select
• <b>Switzerland</b>	open	cert	cert	open
• <b>Australia</b>	open	open	open	select
• <b>Canada</b>	open	open	cert	select
<b>Japan</b>	open	open	cert, age 15	select
<b>Korea</b>	open	open	cert, age 15	select
<b>New Zealand</b>	open	open	open	select
<b>Singapore</b>	open	cert	cert	select
• <b>South Africa</b>	open	open	cert, age 15	select
• <b>USA</b>	open	open	open	select

## Notes

- Ireland** Although admission to higher education is 'open' students need high scores in the Leaving Certificate examinations to access places on the most sought after programmes.
- Northern Ireland** There has, until recently, been a selective system of secondary education, with children taking tests in the final year of primary education to determine selection for the post-primary phase. However the last transfer tests were taken in autumn 2008 for entry in September 2009. For 2010 entry, the government has provided a menu of recommended criteria that schools can choose to use and schools must have regard to these. Schools are recommended not to use academic criteria but are not precluded from doing so.
- Italy** Until the 2004/05 academic year, students took the primary school leaving examination at age 11. This was required for entry to lower secondary education. The examination has been discontinued as primary and lower secondary now form 'sub-divisions' of the first cycle of education in Italy.
- **Germany** In cases where children, aged 6, are not thought ready to enter primary education, they may be obliged to spend some time in special preparatory classes.
  - **Hungary** A certificate confirming a child's attendance in kindergarten education is a pre-requisite for entry to compulsory education.
  - **Sweden** Primary and lower secondary compulsory phase education is provided in one 'all-through' school (grundskola).
  - **Switzerland** As in many countries, there are additional higher education entry requirements in certain subject areas, such as medical science, where there is a shortage of places for students.
  - **Japan** Students receive an elementary school leaving certificate, but progress automatically from their local elementary school to their local junior high school.
  - **South Africa** Access to post-compulsory education (age 15+) is dependent on successful completion of lower secondary education and achievement of the General Education Training (GET) certificate.

## Table 6.3 Internal grouping

This table indicates whether classes are generally defined by age or by ability in different subjects (set). In some cases, grouping by ability applies in some subjects only (age/set), or is introduced from a given class onwards (e.g. age/set Year [Yr] 4). In others, students are grouped both by age and the ability based pathway they have taken (age and set). Beyond the compulsory phase, there is considerable variation and students are most commonly grouped according to the courses they take.

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Lower secondary</b>
<b>England</b>	age/set	age/set
<b>Ireland</b>	age	age/set
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	age/set	age/set
<b>Scotland</b>	age	age/set
<b>Wales</b>	age/set	age/set
<b>France</b>	age	age
• <b>Germany</b>	age	age and set
<b>Hungary</b>	age/set	age/set
<b>Italy</b>	age	age
<b>Netherlands</b>	age	age and set
<b>Spain</b>	age	age
<b>Sweden</b>	age	age, set at 12+
• <b>Switzerland</b>	age	set
• <b>Australia</b>	age	age/set
• <b>Canada</b>	age	age/set
<b>Japan</b>	age	age
<b>Korea</b>	age/set	age/set
<b>New Zealand</b>	age	age/set
<b>Singapore</b>	age, set at age 10	age and set
• <b>South Africa</b>	age	age
• <b>USA</b>	age/set	age/set

## Notes

- Hungary** Classes are generally organised by age regardless of ability but, during lower secondary education, they may be organised by ability in different subjects. Decisions on class grouping are made by the school administration.
- Netherlands** Students in primary education may be grouped by ability in some schools; this procedure is quite rare, however, and students are usually grouped by age.
- **Australia** Teaching groups are generally organised by age. Setting may be practised in some subjects, such as mathematics, from year 7/8 (students age 12/13).
- Korea** Classes are generally organised by age regardless of ability but, since the introduction of the Seventh National Curriculum, some grouping by ability has been introduced.
- New Zealand** Classes are generally grouped by age, but variations do occur with setting by ability for some subjects, such as mathematics and English, or grouping by band.
- **South Africa** Primary level teaching groups are normally organised by age. However, multi-grade classes do exist in areas with low population densities, especially in rural areas. Similar arrangements are also made during secondary education.
- **USA** In elementary schools, children are generally grouped by age with some banding within a class for certain subjects. Grouping by ability may take place in some schools.

## Table 6.4 Progression within phases

This table indicates whether students automatically move to the next class (**open**) or whether this is subject to their achieving certain minimum standards (**perf**). In most countries where performance governs progression, the decision is made by all the teachers of the relevant class/year group and includes consultation with parents.

	Primary	Lower secondary
England	open	open
Ireland	open	open
Northern Ireland	open	open
Scotland	open	open
Wales	open	open
France	perf	perf
• Germany	perf 7+	perf
Hungary	perf	perf
Italy	open	perf
Netherlands	perf	perf
Spain	open/perf	open/perf
Sweden	open	perf
• Switzerland	perf	perf
• Australia	open	open
• Canada	open	open/perf
Japan	open	open
Korea	open	open
New Zealand	open	open
Singapore	open	perf
• South Africa	perf	perf
• USA	open/perf	open/perf