

Jargon Buster

Need some help understanding terms used in education and on the SPAAK website?

AD(H)D

Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder.

Advanced-level, A-level (A2)

A qualification awarded to students, usually in Year 13.

AS examination

AS examinations are taken by some sixth formers who want to study a broader range of subjects

Baccalaureate

The Baccalaureate (or "Bac") is a European examination system equivalent to A levels

Basic skills

The meaning of the term 'basic skills' depends on the context, but it often refers to literacy and numeracy.

Beacon School

A school officially recognised by the DfES as having key strengths which should be shared with neighbouring schools.

Behaviour Support Plan

A statement which sets out local arrangements for schools and other service providers for the education of children with behavioural difficulties.

BTEC National

Qualification equivalent to two A level courses.

Catchment Area

Some admission authorities give priority to children who live in an area around the school

Citizenship

A National Curriculum subject concerned with people's place in society and the rights and responsibility this confers. It is often taught as part of lessons in Personal, Social and Health Education.

City Academy

A flagship school set up in an inner city area to promote high educational standards.

CTC

City Technical College Independent all ability non-fee-paying schools for pupils aged 11-18. There are 14 CTCs and one CCTA - City College for the Technology of the Arts, in urban areas across England. CTCs teach the national curriculum to pre-16-year-olds with a focus on Science, Mathematics and Technology. They offer a wide range of vocational qualifications and part of their role is to innovate in the development, management and delivery of the curriculum.

Child Protection Register

The Child Protection Register is a record of children who are considered to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Such harm might be neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional abuse. For each child listed there should also be a child protection plan.

Child-centred

A child-centred approach to teaching and learning seeks to match teaching to individual pupils' needs, abilities and experiences.

Children Act

The Children Act covers the law on the care and upbringing of children and the social services provided for them. It deals with the principles which must guide courts when making decisions relating to children. The aim is that a child's welfare is paramount in deciding questions relating to their upbringing.

Childminders

Childminders look after children under five and school age children after hours and in the holidays. The local authority decides how many children a childminder can care for, and childminders are able to register as part of a network to provide early education.

CPVE

The Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) is a one-year course for young people aged sixteen and above with few examination passes. It is designed to prepare them for training in a particular area of work.

Community school

State schools in England and Wales which are wholly owned and maintained by the local education authority. The local education authority is the admissions authority - it has main responsibility for deciding arrangements for admitting pupils.

Comprehensive school

A school which does not select children for admission on grounds of ability.

Continuous assessment

Some courses are assessed by looking at selected pieces of work done during the course, rather than by a final examination. These courses are said to be continuously assessed.

Core Subject

One of the three main subjects (English, Maths and Science) in the national curriculum which are compulsory for all children of all ages.

County Schools

State schools in England and Wales which are wholly owned and maintained by local education authorities.

Curriculum

The curriculum is the sum of all the planned experiences to which a pupil is exposed at school, both inside and outside the classroom. A significant part of these experiences are determined by the Government through the national curriculum regulations. The curriculum in its broader sense might include such things as school plays, assemblies and lunchtime activities.

Day Nurseries

These take children under five for the whole working day. Children can attend on a part-time or full-time basis according to their parents' needs. They may be run by local authorities, voluntary organisations private companies, individuals or employers. There must be at least one adult for every eight children and at least half of the staff must have a qualification recognised by the local authority.

Detention

A punishment given to a child whereby they are kept under supervision after school, during the lunchtime or break. Schools must give parents / carers 24 hours notice of detentions which will take place after school.

DfES

Department for Education and Skills.

DLOs

Desirable Learning Outcomes 'Desirable Outcomes for children's learning before compulsory school age' apply to education provided in nursery and reception classes (that is until the term after a child's fifth birthday)

EAL

English as an Additional Language.

EBD

Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

Education Welfare Officers

(Otherwise known as Education Social Workers) Employed by local education authorities to monitor school attendance and help parents meet their responsibilities.

Educational Psychologist

Educational psychologists carry out psychological assessments on children. They also study and advise on the intellectual, emotional, social and physical development of children, and work with individual pupils to improve learning and behaviour.

Ethos

A school's ethos is its characteristic spirit. It might be expressed in such things as the school's approach to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, or the behaviour and attendance of the school's pupils.

Eleven Plus

An examination, taken in the last year of primary school, which determines whether a child can attend grammar school.

Examination Boards

GCSE and A level examinations are administered by regional examination boards. These are independent organisations which operate within central government guidelines.

Exclusion

The suspension or expulsion of a pupil from school for disciplinary reasons. Exclusions may be permanent or for a fixed term.

Extended school

A school that provides a range of services and activities often beyond the school day to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.

Fast Tracking

Any system which enables pupils to take qualifications earlier than other children in their year group.

Feeder Schools

A feeder school is one which generally transfers most of its pupils to one other. Some admission authorities give priority to children from certain primary schools.

Foundation Schools

Type of state school which is run by the local authority but which has more freedom than community schools to manage their school and decide on their own admissions.

GCE

General Certificate of Education.

GCSE

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is a single system of examinations for 16 year olds that replaced O levels and CSEs in 1988.

Gifted Child

Children with high achievement or potential for high achievement in mainstream academic subjects. Top 5-10 per cent in each school. Registered cohort should be at least 2/3.

GNVQ

General National Vocational Qualification. Vocational qualifications taken mainly by pupils age 16 and in full-time education.

Governing Body

The body with legal responsibility for the running of the school, comprising of a group of governors.

Governor

An unpaid individual who assists the headteacher in the running of the school as part of the governing body.

Grant Maintained Schools

State schools in England and Wales which are funded by central government through the Funding Agency for Schools.

Group Teaching

Group teaching involves breaking down a class into smaller groups of pupils, who can then proceed at different speeds or follow particular tasks.

HNC

Higher National Certificate.

HND

Higher National Diploma - a two-year course that equates to two years of a degree course. Offered in many subject areas, mostly with a practical application. HNDs may also have an industrial or commercial placement as part of the course.

Home-school Agreements

All state schools are required to have written home-school agreements, drawn up in consultation with parents. They are non-binding statements explaining the school's aims and values, the responsibilities of both school and parents, and what the school expects of its pupils. Parents will be invited to sign a parental declaration, indicating that they understand and accept the contents of the agreement.

Home Tuition

If children are unable to attend school, for example as a result of a long-term illness, they may be provided with home tuition by a specially trained teacher employed by the LEA.

Humanities

Humanities are subjects that deal with people and humankind as their central concern. Examples are geography, history, religious education and social studies.

ICT

Information and Communications Technology.

IEP

Individual Education Programme. Programmes which are drawn up by the class teacher and/or special needs coordinator within a school to provide individual support for children deemed to have needs over and above that of other children in the class. This could be either due to learning difficulties or because they are considered to be exceptionally bright or gifted children.

Independent Learning

Opportunities provided for children to work independently. This may take place within a variety of learning contexts and does not necessarily mean there is no guidance or structure at all.

Independent Schools

These are schools which are not funded by the state and obtain most of their finances from fees paid by parents and income from investments. Some of the larger independent schools are known as public schools, while most boarding schools are independent. Further information is available from the ISIS - Independent Schools Information Service

Infants

An infants school or an infants department in a primary school caters for pupils aged from four to seven years.

In loco parentis

While children are at school, teachers are regarded in law as being in the place of a parent (in loco parentis, to use the Latin phrase). This means that teachers must act towards children as a reasonable parent could be expected to act.

INSET

In-service education and training. All teachers have access to INSET in schools, helping them to refine their teaching and management skills.

Instructor

An instructor is someone who is not a qualified teacher, but is employed by a school to give tuition in a particular specialism, such as dance or keyboard skills.

IQ tests

Assessments which measure intelligence and which give a score against a national average.

IT

Information Technology means things to do with computers and other communications and control systems.

Juniors

A junior school or junior department of a primary school caters for pupils aged from seven to eleven years.

KS

Key Stage A child's progress through school is measured in Key Stages. Each Key Stage covers a number of school years. Starting at Key Stage 1 and finishing at Key Stage 4.

- Key Stage 1 Infant School (5-7 years)
- Key Stage 2 Junior School (7-11 years)
- Key Stage 3 Lower Secondary School (12-13 years)
- Key Stage 4 Upper Secondary School (14-16 years)

LEA

Local Education Authority The term 'local education authority' (or LEA) describes a type of council which has responsibility for providing education to pupils of school age in its area. Their overall education remit also includes early years, the youth service and adult education. An LEA is responsible for promoting high standards of education. It is responsible for contributing to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by ensuring that efficient primary and secondary education is provided and ensuring that there are enough primary and secondary places with adequate facilities to meet the needs of pupils living in the area.

Literacy Hour

An hour of learning to read and write in school, broken down into various activities.

Lower School

The first three year groups in a secondary school were once often called the lower school. Since the national curriculum, most people call this stage in a pupil's education Key Stage 3.

Mainstream Schools

Schools other than special schools are sometimes called mainstream schools.

Maintained schools

Schools whose running costs are met from public funds are called maintained schools. The term therefore includes LEA schools, church schools and grant maintained schools, but not independent, public or private schools.

Mind Maps

Drawings which show the links which can aid understanding and memory.

MLD

Mild Learning Difficulties.

Moderation

Because there are so many candidates, external examination papers are marked by a great number of people. It is important to ensure that standards are consistent, and grades are not affected by 'generous' or 'hard' markers. The process of getting all of the markers to mark at the same level is called moderation.

Modular Courses

Some courses may be broken down into a series of relatively self-contained segments called modules: say five modules, each lasting eight weeks. Pupils following modular courses are often tested at the end of the module, rather than just at the end of the year.

National Curriculum

Covers what pupils should be taught in state maintained schools. The national curriculum provides a balanced education for a child covering 11 subjects overall, and is divided into four Key Stages according to age.

National Curriculum Tests

The real name for SATs. All pupils undergo national tests and teacher assessments at ages 7, 11 and 14. The school will then send a report to parents telling them what National Curriculum Level their child has reached in both tests and assessments.

National Numeracy Strategy

A government initiative which aims to raise standards of numeracy for all children in infant, primary and junior schools. It tries to involve parents as much as possible.

NSPCC

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Nursery Class

These take children from the age of three or four and are open during school term time. They usually offer five half-day sessions a week. There must be one adult for every 13 children and staff are qualified teachers and assistants.

NUT

National Union of Teachers.

NVQ

National Vocational Qualification - a work-based qualification.

OFSTED

Office for Standards in Education An official body which regularly inspects all the schools in England which are mainly or wholly state-funded. OFSTED inspectors produce education reports which are meant to improve standards of achievement and quality of education, provide public reporting and informed independent advice.

Options

At the end of their third year in secondary school, pupils can choose which subject options to take for the next two years, and therefore at GCSE level.

Oversubscription Criteria

Often referred to as those rules applied by admission authorities when a school has more applications than places. They must by law be fair and objective and must be published annually in prospectuses and by local authorities in a prospectus explaining admissions at all schools in an area.

PANDA Performance and Assessment Reports

Produced by the Office For Standards in Education (OFSTED) and issued annually to schools. The contents of each PANDA report are confidential between OFSTED, the school, and the Local Education Authority, although schools are free to disseminate the information as they see fit.

Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

An informal group of parents / carers and teachers which support the school, for example organising fundraising events or helping out on open evenings.

PE

Physical Education.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

PEPs are schemes developed for young individuals in public care, designed to support their education.

Performance Tables

The Department for Education and Skills publishes comparative secondary and 16-18 performance tables each year. The tables report achievements in public examinations and vocational qualifications in secondary schools and Further Education sector colleges. Primary school performance tables are published by local education authorities and report the achievements of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2.

Pre-school Playgroups

These generally take children between the ages of three and five and most offer half-day sessions. Usually non-profit making and managed by volunteers and parents. There must be at least one adult for every eight children and at least half of the adults must be qualified leaders or assistants.

Primary School

A school providing education to children aged 5-11.

Private Nursery Schools

These take children between the ages of two and five and offer half or full-day sessions and some stay open in the school holidays. There must be at least one adult for every 13 children and at least half of the staff must be qualified teachers.

Prospectus

A school's prospectus is a brochure containing useful facts and figures, which the governing body must publish each year for parents and prospective parents. Ministers set minimum requirements for content, so that parents can easily make comparisons between different schools. Copies will be available at the school for reference or free of charge to parents on request.

PSE

Personal and Social Education. It is also what a school does generally to promote the personal and social development of pupils

PSHE

Personal, Social and Health Education.

Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

An educational establishment maintained by an LEA providing education to students who have been excluded from schools.

PTR

The pupil teacher ratio (PTR) is the number of pupils divided by the number of full time equivalent staff.

Reception Class

The youngest class in an infants or primary school (ignoring nursery classes) is called the reception class. Most of the pupils in the reception class will be four, becoming five in the course of the year. There must be at least one adult for every 13 children. Staff are qualified teachers and assistants.

Reading Age

When reading material is tested on large groups of pupils, the average reading ability of pupils of particular ages can be established. This provides something with which to compare an individual pupil's ability to read the same test material. Information about reading ages needs to be interpreted with caution.

Record of Achievement

A Record of Achievement is a document that summarises a pupil's attainments and achievements during their time at school. It includes information about the pupil's academic record, personal and social development and activities both in and out of school.

SATs =Statutory Assessment Tests**SEN**

Special Educational Needs. This denotes any child that has been identified as having some form of educational need either as a result of learning difficulty or if they are deemed as particularly bright or gifted. These children receive additional support either from within the school or outside agencies.

SENCO

Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

Setting

This is where pupils are streamed by ability but for each individual subject, so a pupil might be in different groups or sets for different subjects.

SLD

Severe Learning Difficulties.

SLDD

Students with Learning Difficulty and / or Disability.

SMT

Senior Management Team.

Special Schools

State schools in England and Wales which are provided by local education authorities for certain children with special educational needs.

Specialist Schools

This type of school includes technology, languages, sports and art colleges operating in England.

Specialist Schools Programme

Additional funding enables secondary schools to develop strengths in a particular subject area, supported by local industry and in partnership with local schools and the wider community to share resources and expertise, while still delivering a national curriculum-based education.

State Nursery Schools

These take children from the age of three or four and are open during school term time and normally offer five half-day sessions a week. There must be at least one adult for every 13 children. Staff are qualified teachers and assistants.

State Schools

Otherwise known as publicly funded schools and attended by over 90 per cent of pupils. Parents do not pay any fees. Scottish state schools are maintained and controlled by the local education authority.

Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

These statements describe any learning difficulties which pupils have, and specify the extra help or equipment they need. Around 3 per cent of school pupils nationally have statements. Some pupils with special educational needs are academically able.

Statutory Duty

If you have a statutory duty to do something, it means you are required to do it by law.

Statutory School Age

Children are required to go to school (or other full time education) from the term following their fifth birthday until the last Friday in June following their 16th Birthday.

Streaming

Where pupils are grouped according to ability, and they usually stay in the same groups for most or all of their work.

Study Support

Voluntary learning activity outside normal lessons which aims to improve children's motivation, build their self-esteem and help them to become more effective learners.

Summer Schools

Courses which take place during the summer holidays.

Sure Start

A new, innovative cross-departmental strategy to improve services for children under four and their families in disadvantaged areas. Over the next three years it will support the development of at least 250 local programmes across England. These programmes will involve parents and carers as much as possible.

Supply Teacher

A teacher employed to cover for staff absence, usually through a company providing this service such as a teacher supply agency.

SLD

Severe learning difficulties.

Supply Teacher

Teachers brought in on a daily basis to provide cover for absent teachers are called supply teachers.

Support staff

Staff in a school that support teachers, such as nursery nurses, teachers' aides and adult helpers.

Syllabus

A syllabus is a description of a course of study in a particular subject.

Teacher Assessment

A formal assessment made by a teacher when your child is aged 7, 11 and 14. Used alongside the national tests to judge a child's educational progress.

Talented Pupil

Children with high achievement, or potential for high achievement, in a sport or creative art. Top 5-10 per cent in each school.

Truancy

Truancy is the absence of pupils from school without authorisation.

Tutorial

A tutorial is a session where a teacher works with an individual pupil or a small group.

UCAS

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service - central agency for processing applications for undergraduate courses.

[UKNARIC](#) (United Kingdom National Recognition Information Centre)

is the official body entrusted by the UK Department For Education and Skills (DFES) with the provision of information and advice on the comparability of international qualifications with those in the UK.

Underachiever

A child who is not achieving his / her potential.

Verbal Reasoning Test

Verbal reasoning tests are designed to test pupils' ability to understand written and spoken language.

Vocational Courses

Vocational courses are designed to prepare students for a particular career, rather than giving them a general education with readily transferable skills and knowledge. See NVQs, HNCs and GNVQs.

Voluntary Aided School

Schools in England and Wales which are maintained by the Local Education Authority, with a foundation (generally religious) which appoints most of the governing body. The governing body is the admissions authority.

Withdrawal

Sometimes pupils are taken out of the classroom for short periods, either for special tuition or as part of a strategy to improve their behaviour. This practice is called withdrawal.

Work Experience

Many local firms and other employers give older secondary school pupils the opportunity to spend some time in a place of work. This work experience is a good preparation for leaving school and starting work.

Year Group

Refers to all the children in a specific chronological year at school, starting in year 1 (age 5-6) and ending when they leave school in year 11 (age 15-16) or year 13 (age 17-18). Year R refers to reception classes, in which children are placed before beginning year 1.