

U.K Education Acts since 1800

1833 The Factory Act

Intended to improve conditions for children working in factories and introduced a compulsory two hours schooling each day for children, although in reality there was often no easy access to education for these children. Some factory owners ran schools inside their own factories and there were also some church schools and dame schools (run by women who taught a little reading, writing and arithmetic).

1870 Education Act (The Forster Act)

The state did not take responsibility for education until this Act which attempted to provide elementary education for all children aged 5-13. It created the first local school boards which could compel attendance but in reality many boards did not use this power. These were the first local authority-run schools.

1876 Education Act (Sandon's)

Reinforced the principle that all children should receive elementary education by placing a duty on parents to ensure that their children attended school and created school attendance committees which could compel attendance.

1880 Education Act

School attendance for children aged between 5 and 10 was made compulsory and was also compulsory up to the age of 14 unless an exemption certificate was granted. Exemption could be obtained if the child had met a required number of attendances (250 attendances per year for 10 -12 year olds and 150 per year for those over 12) or if the child had obtained a 'labour certificate', proof that he/she had reached the educational standard required by local by-laws and/or had a paid job to go to.

1891

Elementary Education was made free

1902 Education Act (Balfour's)

School boards were abolished and in their place Local Educational Authorities (LEAs) were created to organise funding, employ teachers and allocate school places

1918 Education Act

The school-leaving age was raised to 14

1926 The Hadow Report

Between 1923 and 1933 six reports were produced by the Hadow Committee, of which the 1926 'Education of the Adolescent' was the most important. It called for secondary education for all, recommending that schooling should be split into two stages, primary and secondary with transfer at the age of 11. It also proposed separate schools for infants and juniors though this system was not formally established until the 1944 Education Act.

1944 Education Act

Primary education was re-organised into infants and juniors.

For Secondary education the tripartite system with three different types of school was introduced – grammar, secondary modern and technical.

The 11-plus examination was introduced.

Secondary education became free for all and the school-leaving age was raised to 15.

1951

The General Certificate of Education (GCE), at both O-level and A-level, was introduced.

1973 Education Act

Raising of the school leaving age (ROSLA) to 16

1988 Education Act

The National Curriculum was introduced which made all education the same for state-funded schools, ensuring that pupils had access to a basic level of education. Some subjects were made compulsory, including English, maths, science and some form of religious education. The GCSE was introduced to replace O-levels and the CSE (which had been introduced in 1965 for those 16 year olds who did not take O-levels and until that point had left school with no qualifications). The Act made no change to A-levels.

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