**The educational system of Great Britain**

The educational system of Great Britain is a set of educational institutions of the constituent parts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and earlier the British Empire, which included the British Isles, as well as dominions and British colonies on different continents.

Education in the UK is compulsory for all citizens between the ages of 5 and 16.

There are two sectors of education: public (free education) and private (paid educational institutions, private schools). There are two educational systems in the UK that fit together easily: one in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the other in Scotland.

According to UNESCO and OECD in 2012, 3.5 million students studied in the country, of which 427 thousand were foreign citizens.

**The structure of the education system**

There is a huge variety of schools in the UK. Different reference books, the Internet, magazine and newspaper articles may use different criteria to classify schools. A common type of school in the UK is boarding schools, where students both study and live. The first boarding schools appeared in Britain in the early Middle Ages - mainly in monasteries. In the XII century, the Pope ordered all Benedictine monasteries to open charitable schools with them. Somewhat later, fees began to be charged for education in such schools. Although aristocratic families preferred home schooling to monastic schools, over time the belief spread that it was more beneficial for adolescents, regardless of social background, to study with their peers. This belief has become the foundation for the organization and development of privileged boarding schools (British English public schools), among which there are those that nurture, educate and shape the elite of modern British society for more than a thousand years. The list of the most expensive and prestigious schools in the world includes British boarding schools.

**Classification of schools by age of students**

Full-cycle schools - where children of all ages from 3 to 18 years old study.

Preschool institutions - they are also called nurseries and kindergartens, for children from 2 to 7 years old. Here they teach to read, write, count, develop through games. Typically, these schools are organized in conjunction with schools for younger students. - the age of students is from 2 years 9 months to 4 years.

Institutions for younger students

Primary school '- pupils age from 4 to 11 years. SATs examinations are conducted in 2 stages, in the second and sixth years of study. The results of the second exam are important for admission to the Secondary School.

High school - for children from 7 to 13 years old. Here, children undergo a special initial general training cycle in various subjects, which ends with the Common Entrance Examination exam. Successful passing of such an exam is a prerequisite for admission to high school.

Institutions for high school students

Senior Schools - for teenagers from 13 to 18 years old. Here, children first undergo a two-year training for passing the GCSE exams, followed by another two-year program: A-Level or International Baccalaureate.

Secondary school - education for children aged 11 and over.

Grammar school - education for children aged 11 and over according to an advanced program. In the same schools, you can get preparation for the university (Sixth Form).

University Preparation Schools (Sixth Form) - for older adolescents 16-18 years old.

**Classification of schools by gender**

Mixed schools - where both boys and girls study together. There are many supporters of collaborative learning who argue their position with the following statements:

Children from an early age learn to communicate and cooperate with members of the opposite sex.

Representatives of the opposite sex stimulate ambition and increase the motivation for self-development.

Girls' schools - where only girls study. The arguments for teaching girls separately are as follows:

Girls develop physically and emotionally a little faster than boys, and in them they do not have to adjust to the "lagging" classmates.

Girls tend to be more self-organized and better disciplined, and girls' teams are better organized and focused on learning.

"Amorous affairs" do not distract from study.

Girls grow up independent and do not expect that someone will do "non-female work" for them.

The competitive environment attracts little, and sometimes even oppresses girls, who value support and teamwork much more.

Boys' schools - where only boys study. There are also many arguments in favor of teaching boys separately:

Boys are naturally more mobile and active, and they need a lot of movement, sports and outdoor games for normal development.

Boys have slightly different criteria for success than girls (not obedience, but leadership, not "smoothing out sharp corners", but audacity, etc.).

Boys need a competitive environment for self-expression and active development.

From childhood, boys learn to easily cope with "non-male work" and become self-sufficient and independent.

**Preschool education**

Preschool education can be obtained in both public and private educational institutions. Often parents send their children to a nursery at the age of 3-4 years.

**Preparatory education**

In private schools, children from 5 years of age are admitted to preparatory (or primary) classes. Foreign students enter school at the age of 7, and at the age of 11-13 they are immediately transferred to the middle classes of the same private school.

**Primary school education**

Most British children enter public primary schools at age 5 and then transfer to secondary education at the same school or college at age 11. In elementary school, children learn English, mathematics, history, geography, music, industrial technology, and the arts. Parents choose subjects. In some boroughs and counties, eleven-year-olds can take an extended exam called the 11+ to expand their secondary school choices. This exam was previously used throughout England and Wales, but has been superseded by the standardized test.

**Secondary school education**

Secondary education in England for children under 16 is compulsory. All public and private schools teach children from 11 to 16 years old and prepare them for the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) - a general certificate of secondary education, or GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualification) - a national certificate of professional qualification. Most international students enter British secondary schools (most often private boarding schools) between the ages of 11-13. The formation of a creative, self-confident, independent person is one of the main tasks of the British school. Children undergo a special general training cycle in various subjects, which ends with the Common Entrance Examination exam. Successful passing of such an exam is a prerequisite for admission to high school. From 14 to 16 years of age, schoolchildren purposefully prepare for exams (usually in 7-9 subjects) for a certificate of secondary education - General Certificate of Secondary Education.

**Education from the age of 16**

At the age of 16, after completing the compulsory education cycle, students can either leave school and start working, or continue their education in order to enter the university. Those wishing to enter the university are offered a two-year A-levels course. After the first year of study, AS exams are taken, and after the second - A2-levels. The first year of study involves the compulsory study of 4-5 subjects, the second 3-4. There are no compulsory subjects required for delivery - the student selects all subjects individually from 15-20 offered by the school, thereby determining his specialization, which will be devoted to the next 3-5 years of study at the university. Most often, foreign students who come to study in the UK begin their education with A-levels.

**Education from the age of 18**

After completing a two-year A-levels course, students can pursue either vocational or higher education.

Further education (FE) includes vocational training courses and some courses for higher education (bachelor's degrees). The term vocational education is used to refer to courses for those who left school at the age of 16. There are over 600 public and private continuing education colleges in the UK. These institutions offer a variety of study programs including English language courses, General Certificate of Secondary Education preparation programs and A-levels, professional courses.

Higher education (HE) includes bachelor's degree programs, postgraduate programs (master's degree, doctoral degree) and MBA. The term "higher education" refers to study at universities, colleges and institutes that offer an academic or doctoral degree.

By type, universities are divided into the following:

University Colleges and Classical Universities. They pay great attention to research activities

Polytechnics and Colleges of Higher Education, which train graduates in applied specialties.

**Tuition fees**

Higher education is paid for both its citizens and foreigners. For the latter, it is more expensive. Students who are citizens of the country can study in debt, which they begin to repay only after receiving a diploma and finding a job with a minimum wage of 21 thousand pounds per year. If this does not happen, there is no need to repay the debt. Recently, more and more MPs in parliament are inclined to increase the cost of education. Such initiatives are unpopular among students.

**International assessment of the quality of education**

According to an international study of the quality of secondary education, the UK over the past 10 years (2000-2009) has shown negative dynamics in relation to the quality of training of graduates of its schools. So, for example, in 2000, according to the monitoring of the assessment of the quality of education in the school PISA (Program for International Student Assessment), conducted by the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), the United Kingdom ranked 7th out of 32 countries, being at a level significantly higher than the average OECD, and in 2009 the quality of education dropped to the OECD average, allowing the country to take only 24th place out of 65 possible.

With regard to higher education, the UK traditionally takes the 2nd or 3rd position in international rankings of universities.

**Sources**

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