

News story: Back to school for thousands of pupils as new free schools open

Thousands of children will start the term in 52 new schools as the next wave of free schools open their doors for the new academic year.

Free schools are popular with parents, deliver choice, innovation and higher standards with 29% of those inspected rated outstanding by Ofsted.

The new schools open just a few weeks after several existing free schools across the country reported exceptional results in GCSE and A levels.

The 52 new openers take the total number of free schools opened since 2011 to over 500, meaning more than four in five of local authorities now have at least one free school in their area.

The newly-opened schools include primary, secondary and all-through schools, and sixth form colleges – with some tailored specifically to technical education, including new UTCs, and a number of schools for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System Lord Nash, said:

We need schools that offer every child the best possible education, and free schools have shown that they can provide that across the country. They were among the top-performing schools in recent GCSE and A level results and almost a third are rated outstanding by Ofsted – the most successful category of non-selective state schools.

These 52 new schools will provide much-needed places and encourage innovation, driving up standards and ensuring even more parents have the choice of a good school place for their child.

Mark Emmerson, Chief Executive of the City of London Academies Trust said:

Opening a brand new school is very exciting as it allows us to establish our ambition from day one. We aim to provide the very best educational experiences in the country ensuring a high expectation culture driven by a broad but rigorous curriculum, exceptional teaching and a nurturing environment.

Mark Wardle, principal of Callywith College said:

Callywith College has been built for North and East Cornwall and the reactions of students, their families and the local community have been overwhelmingly positive. Our open day in August was a massive success and we look forward to delivering outstanding teaching and learning for our students when they join us.

New Schools Network Director, Toby Young, said:

It was fantastic to see so many free schools doing well in this year's GCSE and A level results and I am confident that many of the new schools opening this year will also be among the country's top performers in due course.

Notable new schools include:

- The City of London Primary Academy, Islington, a 420-place – at capacity – primary school with an age range of 2-11 plus a 38-place nursery. The City of London Academies trust will run the school.
- The Bobby Moore Academy, an all-through school offering primary places in Newham and secondary places in Tower Hamlets – offering places in areas of basic need. The 4-19 school is on the site of the former Olympic Park – offering pupils access to facilities plus links to West Ham United Football Club. It will have 1,500 places at full capacity and is part of the David Ross Education Trust.
- XP East, an 11-19 secondary school and sixth form in Doncaster – the second school in the multi-academy trust following the success of XP School, which is also in Doncaster. XP East welcomes its first 50 pupils in September and will reach 450 pupils by 2023. The school will follow the national curriculum, but plans to adopt a project based curriculum based on those used in Expeditionary Learning and High Tech High schools in the U.S.
- Callywith College, a 16-19 mixed faith sixth-form college in Cornwall. It will open with 350 students and grow to its full capacity of 1,280 by 2021. The college offers an extensive curriculum with a wide choice of A levels; a range of level 2 and level 3 technical education courses; as well as GCSE maths and English for students who do not have a C grade.
- Scott Medical and Healthcare College, Plymouth, a 375-place studio school specialising in healthcare occupations – working with employers including Plymouth NHS Trust, Age Concern UK, Peninsula School of Medicine and Dentistry and Plymouth University.

Further Information

Of those inspected by Ofsted, 29 per cent of free schools are rated Outstanding.

124 out of 152 local authorities now have at least one open free school.

Regional breakdown of places created at schools opening:

- 9 schools in the East of England, creating 6,090 places
- 4 schools in the East Midlands, creating 1,554 places
- 5 schools in Yorkshire and the Humber, creating 3,530 places
- 5 schools in the North West, creating 3,280 places
- 9 schools in the South West, creating 3,865 places
- 2 schools in the West Midlands, creating 290 places
- 7 schools in the South East, creating 5,330 places
- 11 schools in London, creating over 9,400 places

[News story: Information for British nationals attending Oktoberfest in Brasov](#)

Travel insurance

Do make sure you are fully covered for unexpected losses or expenses. Do check the [travel advice for Romania](#) before you leave the UK.

You can get a free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before leaving the UK, which isn't a substitute for medical and travel insurance, but it entitles you to state provided medical treatment. If you don't have your EHIC with you or you've lost it, you can call the Department of Health Overseas Healthcare Team (+44 191 218 1999) to get a Provisional Replacement Certificate. If you need emergency medical assistance during your trip, dial 112.

Passports and valuables

Do keep a separate record of your passport details, preferably a photocopy of the details pages with next of kin contact details also. Do report a lost/stolen passport immediately to the local police. The British Embassy in Bucharest only issue Emergency Travel Documents.

Ron (Romanian Leu) is the normal currency for everyday transactions in Romania. You should only change money through official exchange offices or banks. Do declare all foreign currency above 10,000 Euros on entry into the

country. Do use international money transfer services in case of loss of funds.

Do leave passports/valuables in a safe place. Beware of bag and mobile phone snatchers especially on public transport, in restaurants, cafés and at the festival. Don't leave your passport/ valuables in your car if you are driving. Do ensure you know whom to contact to obtain emergency credit cards and replacement cheques if they are stolen. Do report the loss of valuables to the local police and do obtain a report.

You don't need a visa to enter Romania. British citizens who enter Romania have the right to stay for a period of 3 months from the date of entry.

For more information, check out the Oktoberfest flyer.

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[Statement to Parliament: Foreign Secretary Commons statement on North Korea](#)

Mr Speaker,

With your permission, I should like to make a statement about the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

At noon on Sunday, local time, North Korea tested the most powerful nuclear device ever detonated in the history of the regime's quest for an illegal arsenal.

The underground explosion in a testing site only 60 miles from the Chinese border triggered an earthquake measuring up to 6.3 on the Richter scale – ten times more powerful than the tremor created by the last detonation.

The regime claimed to have exploded a hydrogen bomb capable of being delivered on an intercontinental ballistic missile.

We should treat that claim with scepticism, but the House must be under no illusion that this latest test marks another perilous advance in North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

In a country blighted by decades of communist economic failure – where, in the 1990s, hundreds of thousands of people died of starvation or were reduced to eating grass and leaves to survive – the regime has squandered its resources on building an illegal armoury of nuclear bombs.

The House will wish to join me in condemning a nuclear test that poses a grave threat to the security of every country in East Asia and the wider world.

Earlier today, the North Korean ambassador was summoned to the Foreign Office to receive a formal protest. Honourable Members will recall the steady drumbeat of provocative and dangerous actions by Kim Jong-un's regime.

Last year North Korea tested two nuclear weapons and launched 24 missiles; so far this year, the regime has fired 18 missiles – including two of intercontinental range; indeed three tests have taken place since the House rose in July, and on Monday last week, a missile flew over Japan, causing sirens to sound on Hokkaido and forcing thousands of people to take cover.

The regime has threatened to launch more missiles towards the US Pacific territory of Guam, which is home to 180,000 people and two military bases.

I will commend the dignity and restraint shown by South Korea and Japan, the countries that find themselves in the firing line of Pyongyang's reckless ambitions.

North Korea's brazen defiance has brought universal condemnation.

When the UN Security Council met in emergency session yesterday, every member – including China and Russia – denounced the latest nuclear test.

Britain has been at the heart of mobilising world opinion with the aim of achieving a diplomatic solution.

Last week, I spoke to my Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, and the Japanese

foreign minister, Taro Kono.

A few hours after the nuclear test on Sunday, I spoke to the South Korean foreign minister, Kang Kyung-wha, and I have of course been in regular contact with Secretary Tillerson of the United States.

During her highly successful visit to Tokyo last week, my Right Honourable Friend the Prime Minister made clear our solidarity with Japan as it faces this grave threat.

Just as North Korea has pursued nuclear weapons with single-minded determination, so the international community must show the same resolve in our pursuit of a diplomatic solution.

And we should not be diverted by arguments that equate the illegal and aggressive actions of Pyongyang with the legitimate and defensive military exercises of South Korea and the United States.

North Korea has caused this crisis and the onus rests squarely on Kim Jong-un's regime to obey international law and meet their obligations to disarm.

All hopes for progress rest on international cooperation – and there are some encouraging signs.

On 5 August, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2371, including the toughest sanctions ever imposed on North Korea, banning exports of coal, seafood, iron ore and lead.

If fully enforced, these new measures will cost Pyongyang about \$1 billion – one third of the country's total export earnings – reducing the resources available for nuclear weapons.

We are now pressing the Security Council to pass a new Resolution as swiftly as possible, imposing further sanctions and showing the unity and determination of the international community.

China, which accounts for 90 per cent of North Korea's overseas trade, has a unique ability to influence the regime – and the House can take heart from the fact that Beijing voted in favour of the latest sanctions resolution and condemned Pyongyang's actions in the most unsparing terms.

North Korea's nuclear device was not only tested near China's border, it was also detonated on the day that President Xi Jinping opened a summit in Xiamen with the leaders of Russia, India, Brazil and South Africa.

I call on China to use all of its leverage to ensure a peaceful settlement of this grave crisis.

Kim Jong-un claims to want security and prosperity for North Korea's people.

The only way to achieve this goal would be for North Korea to obey the UN and halt its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, disarming in a complete and verifiable manner.

Britain stands alongside our allies in striving to achieve this goal.

I commend this statement to the House.

Press release: PM call with President Trump: 5 September 2017

Theresa May today spoke with President Trump to discuss North Korea's most recent missile tests, which have been conducted against all standards of international behaviour.

The Prime Minister stressed that the regime poses a threat not simply to its region but to global peace and security, and it was important for the international community to send out a clear message that such irresponsible and provocative actions must end.

Mrs May said Britain would work with the US and international partners to continue to exert economic pressure on North Korea through further measures including sanctions.

The Prime Minister noted the importance of the UN Security Council continuing to present a strong and unified international voice by reaching swift agreement on new measures.

The Prime Minister said she would also work with EU leaders on further measures the EU could take to pressure the North Korean regime.

The Prime Minister and the President agreed on the key role which China has to play, and that it was important they used all the leverage they had to ensure North Korea stopped conducting these illegal acts so that we could ensure the security and safety of nations in the region.

During the call, the Prime Minister also extended her condolences to the President and the US public for the loss of life and damage caused by Hurricane Harvey and expressed the UK's solidarity with the US people at this time.

Statement to Parliament: Statement on

Grenfell Tower: September 2017

With permission Mr Speaker I would like to make a statement on the latest progress following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower 12 weeks ago.

Over the summer the Prime Minister, the Housing Minister, the Minister for Policing and Fire and myself have been meeting with the people of north Kensington to make sure that their concerns are being listened to and, more importantly, acted upon.

As a result, the Grenfell Recovery Taskforce has been appointed and started work.

The process of removing control of properties from the tenant management organisation has begun.

The remit of the public inquiry has been set.

A temporary school has been built.

Work is underway on the scaffolding that will surround the tower.

And I would like to pay particular tribute to the incredible team recovering and identifying the remains of those who died.

They are doing an exceptionally difficult job in the most trying of circumstances.

So far they have identified 57 victims, hopefully bringing some measure of comfort to their loved ones.

Obviously we would all like to see this process completed as quickly as possible.

But I'm sure all Hon Members appreciate the need for both accuracy and dignity as well as speed.

My statement today is going to focus on two areas the House has previously shown particular interest in: the rehousing of residents, and our building safety programme.

However, I will be happy to answer questions on any area that Honourable Members wish to cover.

And my door is always open to anyone who wants to discuss the issues in greater detail.

First, rehousing.

151 homes were lost to the fire.

A number of households have said they would like to be re-housed separately,

leading to 196 households from Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk needing a new home.

Everyone who was ready to engage with the process was offered a temporary home within three weeks of the disaster.

61 households have accepted an offer and 29 have moved in.

153 households, including all but two of those who suffered a bereavement, have had face-to-face meetings with the team responsible for offering a choice of permanent homes.

164 households have used the online allocation system to look at what permanent accommodation is available.

127 have expressed an interest in one or more properties.

Viewings are continuing this week.

So far 10 households have accepted offers and two have moved in.

21 households that accepted offers on temporary accommodation with housing associations have asked for their tenancies to be made permanent.

This is entirely fair, and the council is working to make it happen.

The number of people who have moved into temporary or permanent homes continues to rise, but I know that the overall total is still low.

One reason for the low take up of temporary home offers is that some residents simply don't want to move twice and they have said it is their preference to stay where they are until a permanent home becomes available.

Meanwhile, residents who have accepted an offer of a permanent home have been given the opportunity to make choices about furniture and so on before they move in.

That obviously takes a little time too.

But we're talking here about peoples' homes and their lives.

What matters to us isn't ticking boxes but working at a pace that suits the needs and circumstances of individual residents.

We don't want to rush anyone.

That's why, at the request of residents, the council extended the "expressions of interest" period for permanent homes.

I don't want to see anyone living in emergency accommodation for any longer than necessary.

But nor do I want to see families forced to move or to make snap decisions simply so I have better numbers to report at the despatch box.

Turning now to testing and building safety.

Of course, the issues raised by Grenfell extend well beyond Kensington.

Across England there are 173 social housing buildings that are over 18 metres tall and clad with some form of aluminium composite material, or ACM.

In July, the Building Research Establishment began a series of large-scale fire safety tests on ACM cladding systems, comprising both the visible cladding and the internal insulation.

The aim was to establish whether each system, when properly fitted, complied with the relevant Building Regulations guidance, BR135.

Three of the seven cladding systems that were tested were found to meet the criteria set out in BR135.

The other four fell short of what was required.

The cladding systems that passed the test are in use on eight social housing towers.

Systems that failed are in use on 165.

The owners of affected buildings have been given detailed advice drawn up by our independent expert advisory panel.

This covers steps to ensure the safety of residents including, where necessary, removal of cladding.

We have also been holding weekly update calls with local authorities, housing associations and other building owner groups.

We have today published further advice that brings together all the results and the views of the expert panel on the implications for building owners.

We will shortly be meeting with local authorities and housing associations to discuss further steps.

This will include the process by which we will ensure that remedial work is carried out.

We have made the BRE tests available to all private residential building owners too.

While 89 private buildings in England have tested their cladding through those facilities, I continue to urge all private owners of similar blocks to submit samples for testing.

I have also asked housing authorities to ensure the same steps are taken for all private sector residential tower blocks in their areas and to collect the data so that we understand the scale of the issue and we can track the remedial action.

Inspections carried out since the fire have also highlighted other safety issues related to building design.

For example, structural engineers studying Southwark's Ledbury Estate said that strengthening work may be needed on blocks constructed using the concrete panel system that, in 1968, failed with devastating effect at Ronan Point.

They also raised concerns about cracks that appeared cosmetic but could compromise fire-safety compartmentation.

We have been in contact with Southwark Council and the engineers to discuss these issues, and have engaged the Standing Committee on Structural Safety to advise on their implications.

Meanwhile, all local authorities that own similar buildings have been advised to review their designs and to check whether any strengthening work was properly carried out.

Separately, the British Board of Agrément has told us that, based on their investigations following incidents in Glasgow, some cladding systems may be designed and installed in such a way that they could fail in strong winds.

We're not aware of any injuries caused by this kind of failure.

However, we are taking advice from the independent expert panel and have written to building control bodies to draw their attention to the issues that have been raised.

The wider issues of competence and certification will also feed into Dame Judith Hackitt's review of building safety, the terms of reference for which were announced last week.

Finally, I have also established an Industry Response Group, which will help the sectors required to improve building safety and to coordinate their efforts.

Mr Speaker, for all the work being done, nothing can match the strength and determination shown by people of north Kensington.

We saw it in their initial response.

We've seen it in the dignity and courage that has been shown by survivors.

We saw it in the deeply moving scenes at this year's Notting Hill Carnival.

For me, the biggest sign that the people of Kensington will not be beaten was the amazing results achieved by local children in their GCSEs and A-levels.

I'm thinking particularly of a remarkable young woman named Inês Alves.

Just 16 years old, her family lost their home in the fire but she still received a string of top grades.

That included an A in chemistry, despite Inês sitting the exam just hours after fleeing the burning tower.

Inês is due to start her A-levels this month.

I wish her all the very best.

Her achievements should be an inspiration to us all.

If a teenage schoolgirl who has suffered unimaginable trauma can do something so incredible, we in this House have no excuse for failing to do everything possible to support the victims of Grenfell and to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again.

I hope all Honourable Members will join me in doing just that.