

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