

How to: Clerk in different types of school organisation

The school definitions, structures and funding

Types of state school

Below we describe the characteristics of the most common types of state school and explain governing board responsibilities specific to each type of school.

Schools maintained and funded by the local authority (LA):

Community schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LA is the direct employer of school staff• governing board has some employer responsibilities (such as appointing the headteacher)• land and buildings owned by the LA• LA is responsible for pupil admissions and appeals
Voluntary controlled schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• usually have a religious character• LA is the direct employer of school staff• governing board has some employer responsibilities (such as appointing the headteacher)• land and buildings usually owned by a trust (often a religious body) – the trust can appoint members of the governing board• LA is responsible for pupil admissions and appeals
Voluntary aided schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• usually have a religious character (established by religious organisation)• governing board is the direct employer of school staff• land and buildings (apart from playing fields) usually owned by a charitable foundation• governing board is responsible for pupil admissions and appeals
Foundation and trust schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• governing board is the direct employer of school staff• governing board is responsible for pupil admissions and appeals• land and buildings usually owned by the foundation or governing board

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Schools funded directly by the government:

Academies and free schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• run by not-for-profit academy trusts• independent from the LA• have greater freedoms to change how they are run (eg can follow a different curriculum) <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• converter academies• sponsor academies set up to replace underperforming schools• University technical colleges which cater for 14–19 year-old pupils and have university and employer sponsors
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Other types of school:

Special schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• can be any type of maintained or academy school• provide specialist education provision to pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) or statement of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
Grammar schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• run by the LA, a foundation body or an academy trust• select pupils based on academic ability and there is a test to get in
Pupil referral units (PRUs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• funded by the LA• cater for children who aren't able to attend a mainstream school or special school

State school structures and groups

Schools that operate as individual institutions are commonly referred to as standalone schools. They can be either LA maintained or an academy trust consisting of a single school (SAT). Some LA maintained schools choose to become academies. If a LA maintained school is judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted (see below) then it must become an academy.

Groups of schools

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The context for schools in England has undergone significant change in recent years. More schools have joined groups, either as a federation of LA schools or as part of a multi academy trust (MAT); the number of MATs continues to grow. Many other schools work together without formal arrangements, where staff and practitioners share good practice.

The benefits of schools being part of a group include economies of scale, shared facilities and resources. Forming or joining a group can be a way of helping another local school to improve, or of retaining the best staff by creating career progression opportunities across the organisation.

Federations

A federation is a formal structure between two or more maintained schools with one governing body that is accountable for a number of schools. Whilst the schools retain their own identity and admission arrangements, they may choose to have an overarching executive headteacher with oversight across all the schools in the federation as well as the headteachers in each school.

MATs

In MATs, the board of trustees is responsible for all of the academies within the group and technically undertake all governance functions for the academies within the trust. However, in practice, many governance functions are delegated, either to board committees, executive leaders, academy committees (often known as local governing bodies) or regional committees, and academy headteachers/principals.

How state schools are funded

There are two major types of school funding:

- **Revenue funding** pays for the day-to-day running costs of the school: staff salaries, stationery, heating and lighting bills.
- **Capital funding** is money provided for spending on school buildings and major items such as IT equipment. This funding may not be spent on the day-to-day running costs of the school or on routine maintenance.

The allocation of funding to schools

Maintained schools funding

Maintained schools currently receive their revenue funding from their LA through a central government grant known as the dedicated schools grant (DSG). The majority of the DSG is delegated directly to individual schools based on the number of pupils in schools and other factors such as pupils with a high level of special educational needs. LAs can retain a proportion of the DSG for centrally provided services such as school improvement.

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All maintained schools receive a small amount of capital funding through the devolved capital fund. This is calculated as a lump sum plus an amount per pupil.

Academy funding

Academies receive their revenue funding from the Department for Education (DfE). Funding for academies is known as the general annual grant (GAG) and is allocated on the same basis as maintained schools.

All academies receive devolved formula capital funding to address their own priorities for new buildings or major refurbishments. This is calculated as a lump sum plus an amount per pupil. For larger capital projects, SATS and MATs with fewer than five schools or 3,000 pupils are required to bid to the DfE.

Special school funding

All state-funded special schools are funded via a placeplus method. This provides base funding dependent on the number of agreed places in the school followed by additional (top-up) funding to meet the needs of individual pupils, where required. Maintained special schools receive their place funding via their LA and special school academies via the DfE. The top-up funding is provided by the LA where the pupil lives.

National Funding Formula for schools

The national funding formula (NFF) is a standardised formula to distribute funds directly from central government to every mainstream state-funded school in England. The NFF was announced in 2017 but has not yet been fully implemented and so in 2025/26, schools will continue to be funded according to the relevant local authority's (LA) formula.

Pupil premium and catch-up premium funding

Pupil premium aims to close the gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others. It is up to schools and academies to assess their pupils' needs and use the funding to improve attainment. Pupil premium funding is for:

- Pupils registered for free school meals (FSM) in the past six years
- Pupils currently or previously under the care of the LA
- Children whose parents have served in HM Forces at any time in the past six years, and children in receipt of a child pension from the Ministry of Defence (this is sometimes called the service premium).

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Governing boards have a role in determining how the pupil premium is spent and monitoring the impact of the expenditure.

Other funding streams available to schools

Other streams of funding that support schools to deliver education include:

- Universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) is flat rate funding available for all children in reception, year 1 and year 2. Schools with eligible pupils are required to offer each pupil a free school lunch every day.
- Primary school PE and sport premium funding which is based on the number of pupils in years 1 to 6. This funding is ringfenced and must be allocated to school sports provision, but it is up to schools to decide how it will be spent.