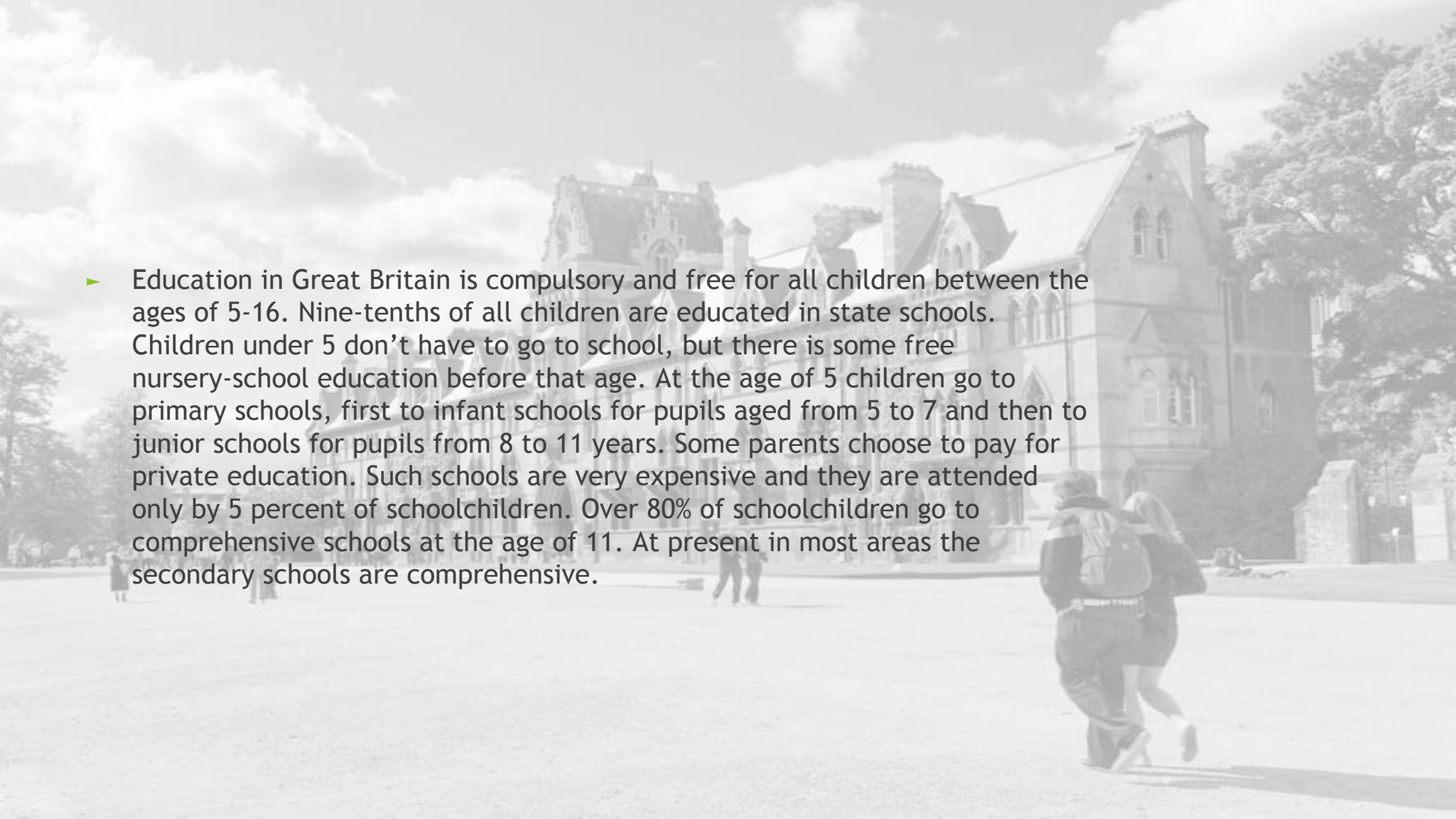


An aerial, grayscale photograph of a university campus. The central focus is a large, circular building with a prominent dome, likely a library or a central hall. The building features classical architectural elements like columns and arches. Surrounding it are various other university buildings, some with gabled roofs and others with more ornate facades. In the background, a church spire is visible against a cloudy sky. The overall scene depicts a historic and well-developed educational institution.

# **The system of education in Great Britain**

- 
- ▶ Education in Great Britain is compulsory and free for all children between the ages of 5-16. Nine-tenths of all children are educated in state schools. Children under 5 don't have to go to school, but there is some free nursery-school education before that age. At the age of 5 children go to primary schools, first to infant schools for pupils aged from 5 to 7 and then to junior schools for pupils from 8 to 11 years. Some parents choose to pay for private education. Such schools are very expensive and they are attended only by 5 percent of schoolchildren. Over 80% of schoolchildren go to comprehensive schools at the age of 11. At present in most areas the secondary schools are comprehensive.

- ▶ A comprehensive school offers 5-year courses to pupils of all levels of ability. Promotion to a higher class every year doesn't depend upon examination results - it is almost automatic. Pupils never repeat a year.
- ▶ The National Curriculum which was introduced in 1988 consists of 10 subjects which all the children must study at school. The subjects are English, Maths, Science, a modern foreign language (for 11-16 year-olds), Technology and Design, History, Geography, Music, Art, Physical Education. These subjects are called foundation subjects. Schools offer other subjects in addition to those in the National Curriculum. Pupils' progress in subjects in the National Curriculum is measured by written and practical tests.

- ▶ The most important examinations in British schools are GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and A-levels (Advanced Level). Pupils sit for the GCSE exams at the end of the 5-year course. Weak students may sit for 3 or 4 subjects. Better students will take 10 subjects. So pupils in Britain leave school at the age of 16 with examination certificates in the individual subjects they have passed. More ambitious pupils continue with very specialized studies in the sixth form. They remain at school for 2 more years and take their A-level exams. At the sixth-form stage studies are highly specialized in 3 or 4 main subjects which will prepare students either for entry to University or College for further education or for direct entry into employment in industry or commerce. A-levels are the main standard for entrance to University or other forms of professional training.



- ▶ Higher education in Britain is represented by Universities and colleges. All British universities are private institutions. Students have to pay fees and living costs, but every student may obtain a personal grant from local authorities. If the parents do not earn much money, their children will receive a full grant which will cover all the expenses.
- ▶ A university usually has both faculties and departments. The most common faculties are arts, law, medicine, science and theology. The departments include engineering, economics, commerce, agriculture, music, and technology. Each faculty is headed by one or more professors, who are helped by a staff of teachers called lecturers. Professors and lecturers spend some of their time giving lectures to large numbers of students or studying with much smaller groups and here the students have a chance to argue and discuss.

- ▶ After three or four years the students will take their finals. Those who pass examinations successfully are given the Bachelor's degree: Bachelor of Arts for History or Bachelor of Science. The first postgraduate degree is Master of Arts, Master of Science. Doctor of Philosophy is the highest degree. It is given for some original research work which is an important contribution to knowledge.
- ▶ There are Open Days which give a chance for applicants to see the university, meet students and ask questions. All this will help them to decide whether they have made the right choice. All universities admit men and women, but within some universities there are colleges especially for one sex. The proportion of men is rather more than 75 per cent. Most of the universities provide hostels for their students.



- ▶ The most famous universities in Britain are Oxford and Cambridge. They are the two oldest English universities and they both have a long and eventful history of their own. Cambridge University consists of a group of 32 independent colleges. The first students came to the city in 1209 and studied in the schools of the cathedral and monasteries.
- ▶ There are many types of colleges in England. There are colleges within universities. There are teachers' training colleges. There are also technical colleges of various types, colleges of arts and commerce. Colleges give a specialized training. At a university the curriculum is wider and the course of studies is longer. Technical colleges that give advanced courses in scientific and engineering subjects are called Colleges of Advanced Technology, and a student who gains the Diploma in Technology, for example, has something that is just as good as a university degree.