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## **The Educational Backgrounds of the Nation's Leading People**

**November 2012**

## Key Findings

### *School backgrounds*

- Ten leading independent schools accounted for **12%** of the leading people for which schools data was available. These are: Eton College; Winchester College; Charterhouse School; Rugby School; Westminster School; Marlborough College; Dulwich College; Harrow School; St Paul's Boys' School; Wellington College (see table 1 for top 100 schools).
- Eton College alone produced 330 top people - 4% of those with school information.
- The top comprehensive schools – with 6 each on the list – are Holland Park School and Haverstock School (where Ed and David Miliband both went to school). The top state grammar school (though it is now comprehensive) is Watford Grammar School with 17 former pupils.
- 44% of those listed went to independent school, 27% to grammar school, 8% to a former direct grant school and 21% to comprehensives and other state schools.
- The professions whose top people are most dominated by independent school alumni are 'public service' (which includes royalty, lord-lieutenants, and others in national, public, or local government organisations) 68%, followed by law at 63% and the armed services at 60%. The police are least dominated by independent schools with only 13% of leading police officers having an independent school background

### *University backgrounds*

- 31% of top people went to Oxbridge and a further 20% attended another leading research university in the Sutton Trust 30, but 22% did not go to university

- The profession whose top people are most dominated by Oxbridge graduates is the Diplomatic service at 62%, followed by the Law at 58%, the top civil service at 55%, education and literature at 48% and financial services or the City at 47%.
- The professions least dominated by Oxbridge graduates are pop music at 1%, sport at 8%, actors and actresses at 8%, the Police at 11% and the Armed Forces at 12%.

## Overview

This note presents the overall findings of an internal study by the Trust investigating the educational backgrounds of leading people in the UK. The study is based on 7637 people educated at secondary school in the UK, whose names appeared in the birthday lists of *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Independent* or *The Independent on Sunday* during 2011. These lists of names provided a snapshot of the country's leading people across a range of sectors. We are grateful to Dr John Jerrim at the Institute of Education, who produced these overall tables from the data gathered.

This analysis follows a series of reports the Sutton Trust has published on the school and university backgrounds of those in a number of leading professions and influential walks of life, including national news journalists, judges, and Members of Parliament. The surveys suggest that social mobility levels are low among the highest echelons of British society, who are not reflective of the wider society which the professions are intended to serve. Independent schools make up 7% of the school population, yet constitute over half of leading news journalists, medics, chief executives, and 70% of barristers and judges.

For this latest study, the school and university backgrounds of leading people were obtained by using a number of publicly available sources, such as *Who's Who*, official entries in websites, media profiles, and by contacting people directly. Schools were then categorised according to their status at the point at which the former pupil would have been expected to enter the school - sometimes different to the current status of schools. Schools were classified as: independent, former direct grant, state grammar, comprehensive, secondary modern, elementary (in a few cases) and 'other state school' where no precise school classification could be discovered or where it was found that the person had been state-educated. Universities meanwhile were classified into four groupings: Oxbridge; the Sutton Trust 30 leading research universities, other UK universities and foreign universities. There were also classifications for polytechnics and other further and higher education institutions.

The Sutton Trust 30 are 30 highly selective universities with less than 10 per

cent of places are attainable to pupils with 200 UCAS tariff points (equivalent to two D grades and a C grade at A-level) or less. They account for around one third of undergraduate places in the UK. They comprise the following universities: Bath; Birmingham; Bristol; Cambridge; Cardiff; Durham; Edinburgh; Exeter; Glasgow; Imperial College; King's College; Lancaster; Leeds; Leicester; Liverpool; LSE; Manchester; Newcastle; Nottingham; Oxford; Reading; Royal Holloway; Sheffield; Southampton; St Andrews; Strathclyde; Surrey; UCL; Warwick; York.

The analysis is based on the school and university backgrounds of people for whom sufficient data were available. School background information was collected for 7,637 of the 8,654 entries for whom details on schools could be found, while university information was collected for 8,112 of the 8,654 entries. The report only includes those who attended UK secondary schools, though some attended overseas universities.

People were grouped into a number of different sector groupings: Acting; Armed Services; the Arts; Broadcasting; Business; Charity; Civil Service; Classical Music; Diplomatic Services; Financial Services; Education; Journalism; Law; Literature; Medicine; Police; Politics; Popular Music; Public Service; Religion; Science; Sport; Theatre.

A profession, trade or other job title was taken from the description in the newspaper. Overall profession classifications largely followed the job descriptions.

Please note:

Actors: includes actors, actresses and comedians.

Armed Services includes all those with military titles regardless of subsequent jobs. The only exception to this is those who have become Lord -Lieutenants as these have been listed under Public Service.

The Arts: includes artists, fashion, dancers, choreographers and those who work in Museums and art galleries

Business – bankers and financiers, accountants have a separate classification (finance).

Education: includes Mathematicians. Vice-chancellors and academics have where possible been categorised by their study discipline.

Finance: includes City people, accountants, economists and statisticians.

Musicians have been divided between Classical Music (including opera singers) and Popular Music (which includes jazz and folk musicians).

Literature includes publishers and literary agents.

Public Services (includes royalty and those connected with royalty). It also includes lord-lieutenants and people who work in national and local organisations which are not charities e.g. Equal Opportunities Commission and Countryside Commission. Charities have a separate section.

Theatre (Directors, designers etc) in both Theatre and film

## Tables of main findings

**Table 1. The type of school top people attended**

	N	%
Independent	3,404	44
Grammar	2,032	27
Secondary Modern	111	1
Comprehensive	746	10
Other State School	743	10
Direct Grant (pre-1976)	601	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,637</b>	<b>100</b>

Notes:

1 7,637 of the 8,654 entries for whom details on schools could be found.

2 Figure refer to row percentages

**Table 2. The top 100 schools**

The following table lists the top 100 schools ranked by the numbers of leading people they produced.

Rank	School	Number of leading people
1	Eton College	330
2	Winchester College	92
3	Charterhouse School	74
4	Rugby School	71
5	Westminster School	69
6	Marlborough College	65
7	Dulwich College	58
8	Harrow School	57
8=	St Paul's Boys' School	57
10	Wellington College	56
11	Stowe School	51
12	Shrewsbury School	47
13	Highgate School	39
14	Ampleforth College	38
14=	Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School	38
16=	Bryanston School	37
16=	St Paul's Girls' School	37
18	Tonbridge School	36
19=	King's School, Canterbury	34
	Sherborne School	34
	Manchester Grammar School	34
22=	Radley College	32
	Haileybury School	32
	Uppingham School	32
	University College School	32
26	Clifton College	31
27=	King Edward's School, Birmingham	28

	Oundle School	28
29=	George Watson's College	26
	Latymer Upper School	26
	Whitgift School	26
32=	Christ's Hospital School, Horsham	25
	Bedford School	25
	Cheltenham College (Boys)	25
	Sedbergh School	25
36=	Latymer Upper School	24
	Cheltenham Ladies College	24
	Edinburgh Academy	24
	Brentwood School	24
	Millfield School	24
41=	Downside School	22
	Fettes College	22
	Lancing College	22
	Repton School	22
45=	Bedales School	21
	Merchant Taylors' School, Northwood	21
47=	Epsom College	20
	Glenalmond College	20
	Italia Conti Academy School	20
	Royal Ballet School	20
51	Leeds Grammar School	19
52	Bradfield College	18
53=	Bradford Grammar School	17
	Watford Grammar School	17
55=	King Edward VII School, Sheffield	16
	Magdalen College School, Oxford	16
	King's College School, Wimbledon	16
58=	Abingdon School	15
	Felsted School	15
	George Heriot's School	15
	Glasgow High School	15
	Nottingham Boys' High School	15
	Royal Grammar School, Guildford	15
	Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe	15
	Royal Naval College, Dartmouth	15
	St Dunstan's College, London	15
67=	Alley's School	14
	Berkhamsted School	14
	Blundell's School	14
	Bristol Grammar School	14
	Kingswood School, Bath	14
	Leys School	14
	Monkton Combe School	14
	North London Collegiate	14
	Wyggeston Grammar School	14
76=	Cranleigh School	13
	Glasgow Academy	13
	Gresham's School	13
	Hutcheson's Grammar School	13
	King's School, Worcester	13
	Maidstone Grammar School	13

	Pangbourne College	13
	Portsmouth Grammar School	13
	Reigate Grammar School	13
	St Albans School	13
	Stonyhurst College	13
	Sylvia Young Theatre School	13
	Taunton School	13
	William Hulme's Grammar School	13
90=	Aldenham School	12
	Bolton School (Boys)	12
	Camden School for Girls	12
	Christ's College, Finchley	12
	Dundee High School	12
	Hamilton Academy, Lanarkshire	12
	Harrow Grammar School	12
	Leighton Park School	12
	Solihull School	12
	William Ellis School, London	12
100=	Ardingly College	11
	Benenden School	11
	Brighton College	11
	Cardiff High School	11
	Francis Holland School	11
	John Lyon School	11
	Chigwell School	11
	Godolphin & Latymer School	11
	Gordonstoun School	11
	Liverpool College	11
	Loretto School	11
	Malvern College	11
	Mill Hill School	11
	Oxford High School	11
	St Marylebone Grammar School	11

**Table 3. Higher education institution attended by successful people**

	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Oxbridge</b>	<b>2,511</b>	<b>31</b>
No FE or HE	1,777	22
Top: 30 (excl Oxbridge)	1,629	20
Other fe or he	1,311	16
Other university	672	8
Polytechnic (pre- 1992)	118	1
Foreign university	94	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,112</b>	<b>100</b>

Notes:

1 8,112 of the 8,654 entries for whom details on higher or further education could be found.

**Table 4. University attended by different profession**

	Foreign	None	Other	Oxbridge	Polytechnic	Top	U	number of observations
Acting	1	35	43	8	1	7	5	<b>667</b>
Armed Services	0	28	44	12	0	12	3	<b>262</b>
The Arts	1	17	49	14	3	13	4	<b>354</b>
Broadcasting	1	28	9	27	2	21	12	<b>318</b>
Business	2	29	8	33	1	22	5	<b>497</b>
Charity	3	12	12	28	2	30	12	<b>129</b>
Civil Service	0	5	2	55	2	25	12	<b>189</b>
Classical Music	0	6	47	35	0	11	2	<b>236</b>
Diplomatic	0	10	2	62	0	19	7	<b>436</b>
Financial Services	1	19	2	47	2	25	5	<b>199</b>
Education	1	1	3	48	2	32	13	<b>330</b>
Journalism	2	22	7	41	3	18	6	<b>219</b>
Law	1	3	3	58	0	28	6	<b>436</b>
Literature	4	14	9	48	0	17	8	<b>427</b>
Medicine	1	2	10	28	1	38	20	<b>220</b>
Police	0	28	7	11	1	34	19	<b>74</b>
Politics	1	13	13	30	2	26	15	<b>1,004</b>
Pop Music	0	62	23	1	3	5	5	<b>405</b>
Public Service	2	22	16	30	2	22	7	<b>359</b>
Religion	1	1	15	41	1	33	8	<b>311</b>
Science	0	1	2	42	1	40	13	<b>225</b>
Sport	1	69	7	8	1	7	6	<b>599</b>
Theatre	3	18	23	34	1	17	5	<b>146</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8,042</b>

## Notes:

1 8,042 of the 8,654 entries for whom details on profession and higher or further education could be found.

2 Figures refer to row percentages

**Table 5. School attended by different profession**

	Comprehensive	Direct Grant	Grammar School	Independent	Secondary Modern	State	n
Acting	16	5	21	43	2	13	639
Armed Services	0	6	25	60	0	9	256
The Arts	7	7	22	48	3	14	311
Broadcasting	16	8	28	41	0	6	313
Business	1	7	27	59	1	6	454
Charity	9	10	24	51	1	5	113
Civil Service	5	9	33	49	0	4	159
Classical Music	6	12	23	53	0	5	220
Diplomatic	2	11	28	54	0	4	413
Financial services	2	10	24	57	0	6	185
Education	2	11	46	34	0	6	302
Journalism	6	8	25	52	1	8	213
Law	1	10	21	63	0	5	421
Literature	2	9	31	51	1	7	407
Medicine	1	11	36	43	0	9	198
Police	7	3	57	13	2	18	60
Politics	16	7	27	37	2	12	961
Pop Music	26	3	24	19	6	22	408
Public Service	1	6	18	68	1	6	323
Religion	0	15	35	37	2	11	265
Science	3	12	43	34	0	8	203
Sport	33	3	18	26	4	17	613
Theatre	7	9	27	50	0	7	135
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8,503</b>

Notes:

1 7,637 entries for whom details on profession and school could be found attended 8,503 schools (some attended more than one school)

2 Figures refer to row percentages

**Examples of state and independent educated people in acting, broadcasting, popular music, and sport.**

**ACTING  
STATE**

COMPREHENSIVE

Kenneth Branagh, Meadway Comprehensive School, Reading; RADA  
Keira Knightley, Teddington Comprehensive School, London, Waldegrave School for Girls, Twickenham, London, Esher V1th Form College  
Daniel Craig, Hilbre High School, Wirral, Calday Grange School, Kirby, Guildhall School of Music

DIRECT GRANT

Hugh Grant, Latymer Upper School, London; Oxford  
Keith Allen, Brentwood School

GRAMMAR

Ralph Fiennes, Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury; RADA  
Ray Winstone, Edmonton County School, London; Corona Stage Academy  
Emma Thompson, Camden School for Girls, London; Cambridge  
Sir Ian McKellen, Wigan Grammar School, Bolton School

SECONDARY MODERN

Colin Firth, Montgomery of Alamein School, Winchester; London Drama Centre

**INDEPENDENT**

Jeremy Irons, Sherborne School, Dorset; Bristol Old Vic Theatre School  
Dominic West, Eton College; Trinity College Dublin  
Benedict Cumberbatch, Harrow School; Manchester Uni  
Jude Law, Alleyn's School, London  
Daniel Day-Lewis, Bedales School, Petersfield; Bristol Old Vic Theatre School  
Hugh Laurie, Eton College; Cambridge  
Rowan Atkinson, St Bees School, Cumbria; Newcastle; Oxford  
Kate Winslet, Redroofs Theatre School, Maidenhead  
Julie Christie, Convent of Our Lady School, St Leonards-on-Sea, Wycombe Court High School, High Wycombe; Brighton College of Technology; Central School of Speech & Drama  
Helena Bonham Carter, South Hampstead High School, Westminster School

**BROADCASTING**

**STATE**

COMPREHENSIVE

Chris Evans, Padgate Community High School, Warrington  
Robert Peston, Highgate Wood School, London; Oxford  
Tess Daly, New Mills Secondary School, Derbyshire

Cat Deeley, Dartmough High School, Birmingham, Bishop Vesey's Grammar School, Sutton Coldfield

#### GRAMMAR

Michael Parkinson, Barnsley Grammar School

Sir David Frost, Gillingham Grammar School, Kent, Wellingborough Grammar school; Cambridge

John Humphrys, Cardiff High School, Wales

Sir David Attenborough, Wyggeston Grammar School, Leicester; Cambridge

#### INDEPENDENT

Stephanie Flanders, St Paul's School for Girls, London; Oxford

Davina McCall, Godolphin & Latymer School, London

Johnny Vaughan, Uppingham School, Leicestershire

Clare Balding, Downe House School, Berkshire; Cambridge

Jeremy Paxman, Malvern College; Cambridge

Tony Blackburn, Millfield School, Somerset; Bournemouth College

Rory Bremner, Wellington College, Berkshire; King's College London

Jon Snow, St Edward's School, Oxford; Liverpool Uni

Jeremy Clarkson, Repton School, Derbyshire

Jonathan Dimbleby, Charterhouse School, Surrey; University College London

David Dimbleby, Charterhouse School, Surrey; Oxford

#### POPULAR MUSIC

##### STATE

##### COMPREHENSIVE

Paul Weller, Sheerwater County Secondary School, Woking

Damon Albarn, Stanway School, Colchester, East 15 Drama School, London; Goldsmith's College, London.

Robbie Williams, St Margaret Ward School, Tunstall; Dance School

Gary Barlow, Frodsham High School, Cheshire

Susan Boyle, St Kentigern's Academy, West Lothian, Scotland

Tulisa Contostavos, Haverstock School, London

##### GRAMMAR

Brian May, Hampton Grammar School; Imperial College

Pete Townshend, Acton County Grammar School, London; Ealing Art College

Sir Paul McCartney, Liverpool Institute High School

Sir Mick Jagger, Dartford Grammar School; LSE

##### INDEPENDENT

Brian Eno, St Joseph's College, Ipswich; Ipswich Art School

Lily Allen, Millfield School, Somerset, Bedales School, Petersfield

Charlotte Church, Howell's School, Llandaff, Wales

Pixie Lott, Italia Conti Academy School, London

Leona Lewis, Sylvia Young Theatre School, London, Italia Conti Academy School, London  
Will Young, Wellington College, Berkshire D'Overbroeck's College Oxford, Exeter  
Florie Welch, Alleyn's School, London, Camberwell College of Art  
Jonny Greenwood, Abingdon School; Oxford Brookes Uni  
Justine Frischmann, St Paul's School for Girls, London; University College London

## **SPORT**

## **STATE**

### **COMPREHENSIVE**

Lewis Hamilton, John Henry Newman School, Stevenage, Cambridge Arts & Sciences Sixth Form College  
Ronnie O'Sullivan, Wanstead County High School, London  
Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson, St Cyres Comprehensive School, Penarth, Wales; Loughborough Uni  
Sir Stephen Redgrave, Great Marlow School, Bucks  
Victoria Pendleton, Fearnhill School, Letchworth; Northumbria Uni  
Jessica Ennis, King Ecbert School, Dore, Sheffield; Sheffield Uni  
David Beckham, Chingford Foundation School, Waltham Forest, London  
Sally Gunnell, West Hatch High School, Chigwell

### **GRAMMAR**

Martin O'Neill, St Malachy's College, Belfast.  
Rory McIlroy, Sullivan Upper School, Holywood  
Sir Bobby Charlton, Bedlington Grammar School, Northumberland

## **INDEPENDENT**

Sir Chris Hoy, George Watson's College, Edinburgh, Scotland; Edinburgh Uni  
Alastair Cook, Bedford School  
Frank Lampard, Brentwood School  
Sir Chris Bonington, University College School; RMA Sandhurst  
Jonny Wilkinson, Lord Wandsworth School, Hampshire  
Tim Henman, Reeds School, Cobham  
Sharron Davies, Kelly College, Tavistock  
Sir Matthew Pinsent, Eton College; Oxford  
Zara Phillips, Gordonstoun School, Moray, Scotland; Exeter Uni