

Being part of a state-funded sixth form is mostly focused on academic studies because it's a place where you can receive a high-quality education and prepare for further studies or careers. Good academic performance is important for future career opportunities and university/ apprenticeships admissions.

The total funding allocated to schools is £57.3 billion in 2023-24. This is given to provide state funded schools with teacher pay, support staff pay, energy bills, and teaching materials. Capital funding is a separate sort of money used to pay for new school buildings and improvements to the school premises. Therefore in return, students are expected to utilise these resources to achieve the best possible grades. This is because of marketization. Schools (particularly in the catchment area) are competing against each other to lure parents into making the decision of which sixth form is most suitable for their child. This is called parental choice and schools only way to appeal the best amongst other schools is to show off their student's grades. For example a parent is more likely to send their child to a school where majority of students get A's and A\*'s rather than C's and D's.

Especially given we aren't a grand private school, we have to prove we are capable of attaining the same results as them. Grading differences between private and state-funded sixth forms are said to have a direct association with poverty. I understand that if everyone got all A\*'s it would be hard for individuals to differentiate from one another, especially competing for universities. I also understand extracurricular activities is what sets people apart from each other. However it has been recognised that 70% of private school pupils were awarded the top grades of A and A\* for A-Levels in comparison to 39% for those at state- funded schools in recent years. This further alludes state schools need to focus mostly on academic studies whilst also promoting extracurricular activities, which I believe holds less significance. These grading variances is due to material deprivation which means the government sole aim in funded schools is to provide them with similar opportunities as independent schools (such as free school meals or bursary funds) so those whom are in a poorer circumstance can accomplish the best possible grades. Grades reflect social status.

Yes, extracurricular and work experiences are important. However high grades illustrate an individual can tackle daily tasks, time manage efficiently and have self-discipline, which they can use this work ethic for a company. For example, Heston Community School advertises our school academic studies through past students' pictures and their grades beside them hung across the walls ubiquitously. This is a constant reminder of how our school expresses the importance of academic studies to achieve desirable grades, which will help students be motivated and prosper in their exams. (We don't see what extracurricular activities they participated in...)

Certain universities have specific A level / b-tech grade requirements. This therefore proves no matter how many clubs an individual has attended, if you are not capable to achieve the grades to meet these certain requirements, this hinders your options for future degrees in an individuals desirable university.

In conclusion, I strongly agree being part of a state funded sixth form is mostly about how well you do in your academic studies as we are disadvantaged to afford prestigious tuitions or we lack high- quality resources to succeed the highest possible grades in contrast to independent schools. Therefore state- funded schools focus on how students can productively work with the limited resources they are given by the government to attest that students can academically prosper in A-levels or any other qualifications.