4.10 Types of School: Academies, Free Schools and Private Education: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Use sociological terms where appropriate. Write full sentences for all questions worth 3 marks or more.

1 Identify and explain two ways independent schools may prepare pupils for elite occupations beyond formal qualifications, focusing on social and cultural mechanisms.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Discuss to what extent the diversity of school types in contemporary England increases or reduces educational inequality.

(Total for Question 2 is 8 marks)

3 Define what sociologists mean by an 'academy' in the context of current English school types and governance.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 Identify and explain two reasons why parents or community groups might set up a free school in an English local area today.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 State one practical difference between an academy and a local authority maintained comprehensive school in England today, focusing on governance or finance.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

6 Look at this short Item B about two invented local schools. Item B: "Stansby Academy is an academy run by a multi-academy trust and attracts many pupils from nearby middle class streets. Riverton Comprehensive is a maintained local authority school with higher proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals." Using Item B and your own knowledge, identify two reasons why these two schools might show a gap in average GCSE results.

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.10 Types of School: Academies, Free Schools and Private Education: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies one way, e.g. structured networking opportunities such as alumni events and internships organised through school contacts	**B1**
explains how this helps, e.g. these networks give pupils access to elite professions and information not available to others	**B1**
identifies a second way, e.g. teaching of cultural codes, interview techniques and interview practice tailored to professional recruitment	**B1**
explains how this helps, e.g. familiarity with professional norms and polished presentation increases success in selection for elite roles	**B1**

Answer: Independent schools provide networking via alumni events and organised internships that open doors to elite professions, and teach cultural codes and interview techniques that make pupils more successful in professional recruitment, both reinforcing elite reproduction beyond exam results.

Question 2

Level 1 Simple or partial statements about how school type diversity affects inequality with little or no sociological explanation or limited range of examples	**1-3**
Level 2 Clear explanations using sociological ideas and at least two school types, showing how diversity can both increase and reduce inequality, with some supporting examples	**4-6**
Level 3 Detailed, balanced discussion covering multiple school types and competing sociological perspectives, linking evidence about class advantage, cultural capital and selection to a justified conclusion	**7-8**

Indicative content:

- Arguments that diversity increases inequality: selection in grammar schools and some academies or free schools can socially select pupils, middle class families use choice and resources to access preferred schools, independent schools provide cultural capital and networks that reproduce advantage
- Arguments that diversity reduces inequality: some academies or free schools have improved standards in disadvantaged areas, faith schools can serve local communities, targeted trusts or sponsored academies may focus on raising attainment for disadvantaged pupils
- Use of sociological concepts: cultural capital (Bourdieu) explaining why middle class pupils benefit from certain school cultures, social capital and alumni networks in independent schools, material resource differences between schools
- Consideration of counterarguments: variation between individual academies or free schools means effects are not uniform, policies such as admissions rules or pupil premium aim to mitigate inequality, measuring impact requires careful evidence beyond headline attainment figures
- Conclusion should weigh the evidence and may argue that overall the current mix tends to increase segregation and reproduce class advantage, while acknowledging that individual examples exist where diversity has narrowed gaps

Question 3

identifies that an academy is state-funded but independent of local authority control (oe)	**B1**
development, e.g. it is run by an academy trust and has greater autonomy over curriculum and finances than a maintained school	**B1**

Answer: An academy is a state-funded school independent of local authority control, run by an academy trust and with greater autonomy over curriculum and finances than a maintained school.

Question 4

identifies one reason, e.g. to increase parental choice where local provision is seen as inadequate	**B1**
explains the reason, e.g. founders believe a new school can offer a different standard or approach and so expand options for families	**B1**
identifies a second reason, e.g. to provide a specialist curriculum or faith-based education not available locally	**B1**
explains the reason, e.g. groups may want schools emphasising particular teaching methods, languages or religious instruction to meet community demand	**B1**

Answer: Free schools are often set up to increase parental choice where existing provision is seen as inadequate, and to provide specialist or faith-based curricula and teaching methods not available locally, attracting families seeking that provision.

Question 5

identifies a correct difference, e.g. academies are funded directly by central government rather than through the local authority	**B1**
development, e.g. academies can set some aspects of their own pay or term dates within limits	**B1**
further development, e.g. maintained comprehensives follow local authority policies on admissions and staff pay more closely	**B1**

Answer: Academies are funded directly by central government rather than through the local authority and have more freedom over aspects such as staff pay or term dates, whereas maintained comprehensives are more subject to local authority policies on admissions and pay.

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Question 6

identifies one reason drawn from Item B, e.g. Stansby Academy draws more middle class pupils who bring cultural capital and home resources	**B1**
identifies a second reason drawn from Item B or knowledge, e.g. Riverton has more pupils eligible for free school meals, a proxy for disadvantage linked to lower average attainment	**B1**
explains how the first reason could affect results, e.g. middle class pupils may have more prior attainment, support and expectations that boost GCSE outcomes	**B1**
explains how the second reason could affect results, e.g. disadvantage can limit access to private tuition, quiet study space and enrichment activities, lowering average attainment	**B1**

Answer: Stansby Academy draws many middle class pupils who bring cultural capital, higher prior attainment and home support that boost GCSE results, while Riverton Comprehensive has more pupils eligible for free school meals, indicating disadvantage that limits access to tuition, resources and enrichment and lowers average attainment.

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