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As far as education is concerned, I can only talk from my own experience in a Grammar/Comprehensive School.

I am Head Girl at Notre Dame Comprehensive School for Girls and also attended the Grammar school for a year before it turned comprehensive.

I have very good memories of school life at a High School. Being on an all girls site we had no pressure on us as far as boys were concerned. There was little bullying and I can remember a friendly atmosphere. The Grammar School system suited us fairly well because we were academic. The atmosphere changed, however, when the school turned comprehensive. From my experience, in a comprehensive school, it is very easy to see that the education system is only profitable for the minority who are academic. There is little enjoyment in school for those who are more practically-minded. They are forced to perform tasks that they simply cannot cope with and are labelled 'failures' when they are unable to succeed like the 'bright sparks'. It makes sense that after a while these pupils give up trying and start quoting the old cliché time and time again, "I hate school, it's boring." They rebel and make life difficult for everybody else. The idea of being taught at a desk in a classroom is a daunting thought and often seems pointless when there is so much to be learnt outside.

It seems to me that too much emphasis is put on examinations. Pupils who are not academically minded do not have much chance to prove their value although we all have talents! We study for two years to sit a ludicrously short examination which has bearing on our career and hence the rest of our lives. To cap it all, subjects studied at school are not worthwhile when faced with the problem of unemployment. Hopefully the new GCSE system will rectify these problems.

Some of the teachers, although very highly qualified, are just not suited to teaching and this is unfair on the pupils. They soon lose interest when a teacher uses highly complex words. Perhaps more time should be spent training the teachers. At the same time, there is a desperate shortage of money. I am studying English 'A' level and I have already been expected to buy some of the books I need for study.

Although Notre Dame is an all-girls' school, recently sixth form boys have been coming up to our site for lessons. The girls, although fairly old, act as if they have never seen boys before, running after them desperately down the corridor. It is a hilarious sight but pitiful at the same time. Something as natural as a boy-girl relationship is turned into a pathetic Mills and Boon Romance.

I personally have gained a fair amount from the present education system, because I have been able to cope with the demands made. However, I have come across many unhappy children in school. The lower school classes are large and little time is given to each individual. There are many improvements which need to be made.