

I went to secondary school and left at 15. I had no real aspirations, I thought I was thick. I wanted to work in an office, but I was dyslexic. They said I was thick, but I'm not thick.
(Barbara)

I went to comprehensive school, I was one of the first. We did O-Levels or CSEs. Boys and girls both did domestic science and metal work. Career advice was given – I wanted to be a nurse or teacher. I did Language and Arts, began Latin, to go to Oxbridge. I went to Sixth Form, but some parents complained about their kids staying on. I don't know why (Karen)

I went to secondary modern. Did the basics - English, History, Geography, Domestic Science, sewing, cooking, PE – big on sport. Girls were there for the service industry, factories. We weren't given any aspirations. I said I wanted to be a hairdresser, and they said I needed nice nails. When I was little, I used to stand on an oil-cloth and dance - I said I'd be a tap-dancer and make you rich (Pam)

I went to secondary school and left at 15. I wanted to be a model or a singer, but I was told "dream on". I thought, I'll show you (Marilyn)

Went to secondary school, which I wanted, as all my friends were going. I left at 15. (Marian)

I went to technical school and did domestic science, ironing, cooking, baking, sewing. We made pinafores and nighties. I was borderline for grammar school. All the career advice was secretarial stuff, it was really preparing you for marriage and children. I went to an all-girl school, so there was no opportunity for girls to compare with boys. My dad was against education for girls. I had no career ambitions when I was little, but I loved music. I left school with no qualifications, but I returned and did my 'O' Levels in Sociology and Psychology, then I trained as a medical secretary, but never used it. I did A-Levels, then a degree at aged 30, then post-grad in social work. (Sally)

I went to St Woolos Girls. The aim was to pass the school certificate – English, languages, Math, Science. The headmistress pushed for university. My parents – no, not university, it never really came up. My ambition was to work in the post office – they always looked busy!

In the last term at school, we had to go for one month to learn to cook, polish cutlery, etc. (Shirley)

I was nervous about sitting the 11+. I think it's a good system. In junior school, we did English and Math in morning, in the afternoon a little history, sewing, no art, no science. In high school, there was no Physics for the girls. English, Math, History, Geography, French, Latin, Biology, Chemistry, PE, cooking, needlework. I left at 18, went to college. (Val)

I went to grammar school. It was all gender-orientated, jobs like teacher, secretary. There was no access to Physics or Chemistry, but in sixth form there was an option for Zoology. I did Biology, French, Math, English, History, Geography, Scriptures. I wanted to be an air hostess and travel. But I recognised my limitations. Dad wouldn't let me stay in sixth form, I had to get a job locally. I went to secretarial school after grammar school. (Jane)

I was disappointed that I failed the 11+. I went to secondary school but left at 15. I just wanted to work and earn money. (Elaine)

I went to secondary school, but I was a "slow learner" and left at 15. There were no aspirations for girls then; my youngest sister just got married, even though she was clever. There was no thought to a career, just marriage and kids. (Babs)

I failed the 11+, and I'm still angry – it was tipped in favour of boys. I went to secondary modern. You were labelled a failure. We did girl subjects, like cookery, needlework. Career advice was to "go in a factory". My ambition was to be a district nurse, have a bike and a pretty hat. (Elaine B)

I went to comprehensive school, and did English, Languages, Latin, Math, the three Sciences. I was in top band. Did cookery, not wood-work. The career advice was to be a nurse or a teacher. My ambition was to be a missionary, because in Sunday School, there were visiting missionaries. But I went into banking. I was more practical than academic. (Mel)

I was on the cusp – first year to go into comprehensive. I passed 11+, I remember wearing brown gym slips and having wooden desks. Did the first year in grammar school, broke my arm, lost 12 weeks,

then had to go to the new comprehensive. Hated it. I was good at learning, and the opportunities were not there. Same grammar school staff, but they no idea how to look after so many. It was the social aspect they were not capable of dealing with. I left at 15, it was too unruly... I remember in n junior school, the boys had the school pitch for 5 days at lunchtimes, girls had to go on the grass. I started a girls' strike, "We want the field". I got the cane, but we had the pitch 2 days a week. I didn't think 2 days a week was just. That inequality stands today – 2/5 is not equal. (Pippa)