

Reading

- 1** Read the article about dress codes in UK schools. Is the answer to the question in the title *yes* or *no*, according to the headmaster?

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- 2** Read the article and look at the words in bold. What do they refer to, a or b?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 a the school | b its students |
| 2 a the dress code | b the exam results |
| 3 a at the school | b in the countryside |
| 4 a uniforms | b beliefs |
| 5 a from Europe | b from the UK government |
| 6 a schools | b uniforms |
| 7 a wearing appropriate clothes | b what students wear |
| 8 a the pupils' | b the school's |

- 3** Are the sentences true (T), false (F) or the article doesn't say (DS)?

- 1 ☒ **F** Anthony Gell school is known for doing exceptionally well academically.
- 2 ☐ Headteachers in the UK are not allowed to go against government policy on uniforms.
- 3 ☐ Pupils at schools with a uniform policy do not necessarily all achieve the minimum educational requirements.
- 4 ☐ David Baker abolished uniform at his school when he became headmaster.
- 5 ☐ Students at Anthony Gell sometimes choose to wear clothes which identify them with that school.
- 6 ☐ At Anthony Gell, richer children do not make fun of those with less expensive clothes.
- 7 ☐ David Baker rates clothing as less of a priority than helping pupils to learn.
- 8 ☐ There are no guidelines about what to wear at Anthony Gell.

Are uniforms the key to educational success?

THERE'S an unusual school hidden away in the English countryside. Anthony Gell is a small comprehensive, ¹**which** successfully supports its students and involves the local community. It also achieves good exam results, but ²**that's** not what makes it stand out. What makes it distinctive is that there is no dress code ³**there**.

In Europe, school uniforms are relatively rare. Yet the UK government has had a firm belief in the power of uniforms for years now, linking ⁴**them** to high standards and strict discipline and advocating zero-tolerance of untidy dress.

Headteachers have found it hard to resist ⁵**such** pressure. Over 90% of secondary schools are now thought to insist on uniforms and most of the ⁶**others** enforce a strict dress code. However, despite dressing students in blazers and ties, more than 40 schools still failed to reach the government's target for basic subjects, and an eight-year research project in the US recently concluded that uniforms do not make schools perform better.

When he became head of Anthony Gell, a non-uniform school, David Baker was aware of how this issue divided people – even the students themselves. But after doing an extensive survey, he decided not to change. "As long as students come in appropriate clothes, ⁷**this** isn't an issue. I believe in treating children as individuals, with rights and responsibilities."

Supporters of uniforms insist they improve behaviour and community spirit. Yet recent inspections of Anthony Gell commented on how responsible the pupils appeared and on their obvious pride in and loyalty towards the school.

Interestingly, proof of Anthony Gell's good relations with its pupils is revealed by ⁸**their** willingness to buy its optional branded clothing. Students are frequently seen wearing hoodies and sweatshirts adorned with the school logo around town at the weekend.

Another claim made for uniforms is that they paper over divides between rich and poor children, making bullying less likely. But Baker maintains that this is not a problem specific to schools and that wearing a uniform doesn't solve it. The dress code at his school is simple: "3Cs – clean, comfortable and covered up." And the absence of a school uniform liberates him from the obligation to enforce it, thus allowing more time to focus on the important business of teaching and learning.

