

# Top Independent Schools

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Road to success: Magdalen College School in Oxford has taken first place in the independent school league table this year

## Ranking reflects unsettling times

The different qualifications on offer have added to the complexity of compiling the league tables, writes **Chris Cook**

**F**orget Buster Douglas beating Mike Tyson in 1990 or Wimbledon beating Liverpool to win the FA Cup in 1988. This year, the FT Top Independent Schools report contains a big upset: on our core measure, Westminster School is no longer first.

For the first time since the measure was introduced in 2006, the mixed

private school has not topped it. Does this mean Westminster has lost its killer instinct? Well, no. Its decline (to sixth place) coincides with its increased use of the "Pre-U" qualification.

Westminster is probably a victim of the increasing complexity of post-16 qualifications. The variety of qualifications sat at 16 and 18 years old makes comparing schools, even

just within England, an extremely difficult task.

What is the correct exchange rate to apply when comparing results attained in the International Baccalaureate, the A-level and the Pre-U – the subject-specific qualification introduced last year to supplement or replace A-levels?

The Financial Times uses official weightings produced by the govern-

ment to compare qualifications. But these are currently under review, and there is a suspicion that the Pre-U is under-weighted in this metric. We will wait for the steward's inquiry to conclude.

It may turn out that Westminster's position has dropped solely because it has increased its uptake of Pre-Us.

**Continued on Page 3**



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## Top Independent Schools

# Fees could rise as result of charity case

**Public benefit row**  
A landmark decision is due soon, says **Geraldine Hackett**

The dispute over whether and what benefits independent schools should provide for families that cannot afford their fees is expected to be resolved this month.

The upper tier of the Charity Tribunal, an independent review body, is to publish its judgment in its most important case for years.

Most traditional public schools have charitable status but those without endowments may have to introduce or increase fee surcharges to foot the bill for subsidised places or other measures that could be set out by the tribunal.

At the heart of the case, heard at the High Court in May, was the question of what kind of public benefit a charity must provide to demonstrate it is good for society.

In the 2006 Charities Act, the Labour government removed the presumption in law that the provision of education is a charitable purpose in itself but politicians left the job of setting out the rules on public benefit to the Charity Commission.

The case began as a judicial review of the Commission's guidance, brought by

the Independent Schools Council, which represents the 1,000 schools that are charities. This has been interpreted as requiring schools to provide a number of free or subsidised places in order to be registered charities.

The stakes have been raised by the attorney-general, Westminster-educated Dominic Grieve, who has taken the unprecedented step of intervening and has asked the tribunal to clarify the nature and extent of public benefit.

Mr Grieve's office has submitted several alternative packages that the tribunal might consider as ways of providing public benefit. These include co-sponsoring a state academy (with an endowment of £1m); 40 per cent free places; or providing three lessons a week in A-level science to a state school class.

In court, much was made of the claim that some schools charge fees that can only be paid by the rich and so those schools cannot fulfil the requirement in charity law to benefit "a sufficient section" of the public.

Helen Harvie, charities expert at Barlow Robbins, a law firm, believes there is a risk the tribunal could decide schools with high fees are fundamentally non-charitable. "That could be very serious for those schools. They might have to restructure the organisation, replace trustees or pay back tax reliefs," she says.

Average school fees have tripled in real terms over the past 20 years. Fees at

Westminster are £30,000 for boarders and £21,000 for day pupils. Critics of the sector argue that in London and the south-east, relatively affluent middle-class families have been priced out of private education.

The Charity Commission's case was that independent schools have to provide benefit to those who cannot pay.

Robert Pearce, the Commission's QC, said if a school is run solely "for the class of fee-paying children", it is not operating for the public benefit.

Independent schools will resent impositions such as set levels of subsidised

**'The direct grammar schools have always seen the importance of access'**

places, saying it could force them to raise fees that many parents already struggle to pay. Smaller schools fear they may have to close if forced to raise their fees. Schools that are unlikely to have problems include former direct grammars. They have a tradition of drawing in pupils from all backgrounds using endowment funds or money from appeals to alumni.

John Cloughton, chief master of King Edward's School, Birmingham, (annual fees £10,395), has built up funds that will allow him to provide free

places for a quarter of the pupils he takes in September.

"The direct grammar schools have always seen the importance of access and have gone out to recruit ordinary bright kids. We are not part of any financial elite," he says.

Some heads lay the blame for high fees on governments that have not taken up offers from independent schools to educate bright state schoolchildren.

Martin Stephen, who has just retired as high master of St Paul's School in west London (annual boarding fees £28,000; day £18,825), says: "We offered to open our schools and educate children at the cost being paid by the state. That was turned down. If independent education has become the preserve of a minority, it isn't the fault of schools."

On the final day of the week-long hearing, the presiding judge, Mr Justice Warren, said he had been given a difficult task.

The judgment is made more difficult because of the political controversy that surrounds independent schools and the privileges they confer on their pupils.



Prime Minister David Cameron, his deputy Nick Clegg and Chancellor George Osborne all went to expensive public schools.

It may be that compromise could lie in suggestions from Francesca Quint, barrister for the National Council for Voluntary

Organisations, that there could be less concentration on subsidised places and more emphasis on other ways of providing benefits for those who cannot afford the fees, such as secondments of independent school teachers to state schools or providing individual tuition to state school pupils.

## Top Independent Schools

# Ranking reflects unsettling times in education

Continued from Page 1

Last year, Stephen Spurr, Westminster's head, told the Financial Times: "Neither the pupils nor the staff think in terms of league table positions."

The school chooses qualifications, he said, "that are going to be the most stimulating to learn and to teach. In some cases that will be A-levels, in some cases Pre-Us. Our choice is based on the intrinsic educational worth of the curriculum."

Magdalen College School in Oxford has taken first place this year. South Hampstead High, North London Collegiate, Oxford High and Wycombe Abbey make up the rest of the top five – habitual high performers, all of them.

The increasing difficulty of comparing schools is part of the reason why, this year, the FT's league table of independent schools contains a new element: we have included a basket of new measures on university entrance.

This metric is not intended to suggest university is the only worthwhile route from school. However, broadly speaking, ex-pupils who have their pick of the country's elite universities have their pick of other routes too.

The university entry measure,

compiled by the producers of *The Good Schools Guide*, is not just for the latest year, but for several years. For a measure as volatile as entry to top universities, this multi-year metric is more powerful than taking a single year.

At the top of the tree on this measure, perhaps unsurprisingly, is Westminster School in London. Some 98 per cent of its students attended a top university, with about half going to the country's most elite institutions.

The table, however, continues

**League table redesign will also push more state schools to offer independent school-style curricula**

to suffer from the reluctance of some schools to participate in the exercise. Increasing numbers of schools are refusing to release their data to the Independent Schools Council, which collates the statistics we use.

No table, however, can tell you everything. As Biddy Passmore writes, there is a lot more to an education than qualifications and university entry. Even within the

narrow world of work, those are not the only things that employers value.

The difficulty in reading and compiling tables, however, is as nothing compared with the difficulty in seeing what is coming in schooling. Not since the late 1980s, when the National Curriculum was introduced, has so much been happening at once.

As Geraldine Hackett writes, the Charities Commission continues to hover over the private sector. Since 2006, providing an education has, on its own, not been considered enough of a public benefit to justify charitable status for a school.

Meanwhile, within the state sector, the school system is being torn apart and rebuilt. The lines between private and public are narrowing, as local authorities are withdrawn from their role as the arbiters of state schools.

At the same time, league table redesign will also push more state schools to offer independent school-style curricula. Modern languages, history and geography – always popular in the private sector – will grow in stature in the state sector.

At the same time, a smattering of fee-paying schools has been joining the state sector. These are not all high performing. Batley



**Stimulating learning: Stephen Spurr, head of Westminster School**

Grammar School, which re-opened as a state school this month, came in at 350th of 351 comparable independent schools in 2010, its last year as a private institution.

This is a difficult time to be a parent of a child heading to secondary school: in some areas, particularly in London, a rising population makes the task of finding the ideal place for your children, even in the private sector, especially daunting.

But, as the tables show, there are a lot of good schools out there.

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## Top Independent Schools

## Parents may be better off in chains

## Value for money

**Jill Parkin** looks at groups of schools that charge lower fees

Download some public school prospectuses and you could be forgiven for thinking you had visited a luxury liner website. There are theatres, videoconferencing facilities and state-of-the-art fitness suites.

But do spotty 13-year-old grunts or all-over-the-place seven-year-olds need designer surroundings or the latest laptops to help them achieve decent GCSEs?

If local state schools do not appeal, and the top league of private schools is unaffordable, then private chains might be the answer. In the past few years they have multiplied, offering a sort of John Lewis alternative to high-fee schools that turn out royals and Harry Potter actors.

"There has been a bit of a facilities arms race in the upper echelons of the independent sector and that's not what we're about," says Chris Woodhead, former chief inspector of schools and now chairman of Cognita, which has 50 lower-fee schools in the UK (see box, right).

"From the moment Cognita was set up, the crucial thing has been the excellence of teaching," says Sir Chris. The better a teacher teaches, the more a child will learn. I don't mean facilities are unimportant – we have invested a great deal [in them] – but excellent teaching is what matters and that's what parents want."

Proof of that would seem to be the New Model School Company



Chris Woodhead: 'Excellent teaching is what matters'

Charlie Bibby

(NMS), linked to Civitas, the social policy think-tank, which runs three non-selective primary schools charging about £5,300 a year. This not-for-profit chain is working in church halls or community centres for each school until it can afford permanent homes. Parents do not seem put off by the simple style.

NMS education is traditional and Christian in ethos. Phonics are used to teach reading and writing; the curriculum includes history and French. There are no entrance exams or SATs. NMS currently only operates in London, but the company hopes to be a model for schools elsewhere.

Independent schools are a diverse bunch. You can pay £8,000 a term for a day pupil at Marlborough College and £7,000 at Westminster School. If you live in a city, you can choose from ancient

former direct grant schools and not have formal entrance exams. "We don't waste money on facilities that don't advance the quality of teaching," says Sir Chris. "We invest in crucial facilities – a sports hall, for example. But we don't compete for the sake of it. Having so many schools gives us the purchasing power of a group."

Cognita, which came into being in 2004, took over existing

"We have a responsibility to ensure every penny parents give us is used to the benefit of their children"

schools, many of which are a long way from the well-heeled south-east. Its schools include Huddersfield Grammar School and Hydesville Tower School in Walsall and it charges average termly fees of £3,000 and does

**Interview** Chris Woodhead believes that passion distinguishes private teachers

As a former state school English teacher, chief inspector of schools and now a professor of education at the University of Buckingham and chairman of the Cognita budget school chain, Chris Woodhead is keen not to be seen as criticising state education as a whole, writes Jill Parkin.

"However, what distinguishes us from some [state schools] is the focus on teaching, Sir Chris says. "The first thing is passion. We have teachers who understand the subject that they are teaching and who are passionate about it. If you are not still reading poetry, novels and plays for delight, you shouldn't be teaching English."

"Second, we have the highest

possible expectations of our children, irrespective of their ability. We have teachers who communicate to every child the sense that they can do so much better."

"Third is the craft of the classroom, which has been infected in some state comprehensives by the idea that the curriculum should be personalised for every child."

"We don't believe in something called student voice, in inviting the student to comment on the teacher or to determine the method of teaching. This doesn't make the classroom old-fashioned or an over-anxious place but a place where learning goes on."

are on average 13.3 per cent less expensive than other independent day schools. We are able to achieve this because of the size of our network, which enables us to benefit from economies of scale."

Ms Fraser says GDST girls receive a well-rounded education without the long day of a boarding school. A typical week includes music, sport, drama, art and debating societies.

Ms Fraser says: "The majority of GDST sixth-formers go to their choice of university, with more than 60 per cent attending Russell Group universities."

"Many of our girls also defy gender stereotypes, with twice as many studying engineering or physical sciences as the national average for girls, and five times as many studying medicine. More than 40 per cent of our sixth-formers do a science or maths A-level."

The per capita ICT figure for Building Schools for the Future, the last Labour government's infrastructure programme, was £1,450. "Where we are now in the independent sector is that we really are harnessing some of the best bits of technology, particularly the apps revolution, for teaching and learning," he says.

Berkhamsted students have been using shared online documents to critique each other's writing. "What you end up with is an individual's work getting a lot of peer comment which they really do receive well," says Mr Steed. "It's fascinating. It's meant to be constructive; you don't slag people off. These are the rules [pupils] come up with – it's very exciting."

Schools set up the platform or forum for pupils to teach – and share with – each other. "Collectively, you get the wisdom of the class being shared. The teacher can track who is doing the work by who is adding the comments. The wisdom of the class is

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## Top Independent Schools

## Students learn to reap benefits of high-tech networking skills



Independents aim to harness the best bits of technology

## ICT

**Merlin John** looks at how the sector has embraced technology

Private schools did not benefit from the huge government investment in ICT in English state schools that took place following the first Blair government but it appears to have done them little harm.

Private schools have been less vulnerable to suppliers telling them what to buy and are more focused on getting the most appropriate technology to support learning and teaching, says Mark Steed, the principal of Berkhamsted School in Hertfordshire, and chairman of the ICT strategy group of the Independent Schools Council (ISC).

Nonetheless, Mr Steed says that ISC schools have made about £221m of ICT capital expenditure in the past four years, around £108 per independent pupil a year, against some £131 a head for state students.

"Most ICT issues are the same as every other issue every school in the country has had for the past 200 years"

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Schools set up the platform or forum for pupils to teach – and share with – each other. "Collectively, you get the wisdom of the class being shared. The teacher can track who is doing the work by who is adding the comments. The wisdom of the class is

definitely the way forward."

Ian Yorston, head of digital strategy at Radley College, Oxfordshire, says the most interesting comparison is not with the maintained sector but between day and boarding schools. The latter were among the first schools to come to terms with mobile phones and social networking.

A key factor in Radley's policies was a student who had cancer and was being treated in hospital. He kept friends up to date with his progress via Facebook, while they filed information for him to keep up with his studies. The page was managed by a teacher. The student is now studying engineering at Cambridge.

Berkhamsted and Radley understand that students will always be abreast of technology, so why try to lock down the school's technology so tightly when students can bypass it?

Mr Yorston says: "Appropriate-use policies are widely used, but differ from school to school. Ours, essentially, says that the rules for technology are the same as all other school rules. We take the view that most ICT issues aren't ICT issues at all. In other words, they tend to be issues of plagiarism, bullying, pornography and the like, which are the same as every other issue that every school in the country has had for the past 200 years."

Changing learning through ICT is at the heart of what Nick Dennis, history teacher and assistant head at Felsted School in Essex, promulgates. "We are keen to make sure that there is a pedagogical basis for this rather than say: 'Let's get some kit in,'" he explains.

His school's interest in mobile learning has led to a collaboration with Apple, the computer company, in running a regional training centre, part of a global network for sharing good classroom practice, and the only one with history as a focus.

One project by his pupils was the creation of a Wikipedia entry for curriculum work. Mr Dennis says: "What's more powerful than saying to a student: 'You are going to do something that has real-world value and is going to be seen by millions of people?'"

For GCSE work, pupils researched the life of a black German, Hans Masquoui, to develop a Wikipedia biography. Interest was initially stimulated by a powerful image of Mr Masquoui as a boy wearing a

swastika. The ISC ICT strategy group will soon share good practice via iTunesU, the education content site. "This will allow us to share, collaboratively, some of our best lessons, not only within the sector but with the maintained sector too," says Mr Steed.

"We aim to put up all the A-level chemistry practicals, so students can have them as vodcasts [video podcasts]. The advantage of iTunesU is that it comes down on to their phones, so they can review the chemistry practical they did that day."

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## Top Independent Schools

# 'Pick and mix' approach can pay dividends

## Switching sectors

Even rich parents may use the state education system at some point, says **Biddy Passmore**

The cost of private education, from nursery to university, averages a cool £150,000 these days, without boarding, so even the highest-paid parents are likely to think twice about paying all the way.

But if you plan to join the growing throng taking a "pick and mix" approach, switching between the state and private sectors, what do you do to get the best from both? Should you invest in the early years, shown by neuroscience to be crucial to a child's academic and social development? Or should you save up for the secondary stage, when teenage hormones are raging and many heads urge single-sex teaching and the benefits of the private sector's smaller classes?

The solution depends partly on your child's character and ability, and how much you can spend. But it also depends on the quality of the schools available where you live, unless you can afford £30,000 a year on boarding fees.

One thing is certain: you won't be alone in working out how best to play the system. "Weaving around is much more prevalent than it used to be," says Janette Wallis, a senior editor of *The Good Schools Guide*. "Parents

might start their child off in a private nursery, then switch to a state primary school at five, back into the private sector at 11 or 13 for GCSEs, and then to a state sixth form college for A-levels."

Another important factor is your child's sex. Underperforming sons tend to cause concern, unlike hard-working daughters. "In general, pay for boys before girls – they need all the help they can get," *The Good Schools Guide* advises.

Figures from the Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS) suggest parents are opting for boy-only prep schools. A poll of nearly 300 member schools last September found that nearly one in three of the boys' schools had seen a rise in numbers of more than 3 per cent over the previous year. This reverses a 15 to 20-year trend towards coeducation.

David Hanson, chief executive of IAPS, attributes this rise to a growing feeling among parents that young boys need a teaching environment that allows them to use more energy and liberates them to show their sensitive and artistic sides. Prep schools also have more male teachers than primary schools, attracted by the specialist subject teaching and sport on offer, he says.

For both boys and girls, he advises parents to invest early in their child's school career. "Even if you can only afford a few years – from three, five or seven – you will see dividends for ever," he says. "Your child will have become a life-long learner and will fly through any school, independent, grammar or comprehensive."



Wider choice: parents in Kent can send children to grammar schools, such as Maidstone

Alamy

Many parents, however, prefer to start their child's education at the local primary school, especially if they expect to pay at the secondary stage, and to top up with tutoring as the entrance exams approach.

"About 60 per cent of our main intake at 11 is from state primary schools," says David Levin, head of City of London, a boys' independent day school. "There are a lot of good primary schools in London, but there are perceived to be not many good state secondary schools."

Things are rather different in Buckinghamshire, where Mr Levin was previously head of the Royal Grammar School in High Wycombe, and in Kent, where state grammar schools continue to flourish. In these areas, a growing number of hard-pressed parents are switching their children

from primary to prep school a few years before the 11 plus, in the hope of getting a free secondary education beyond the norm.

"The number doing so is definitely on the rise," says John Coakley, principal of the Schools at Somerhill in Tonbridge, a collection of three schools that cover ages three to 13.

"We don't hothouse in any sense," he adds, "but we are a significant feeder to the grammar schools. And there's more and more competition to get in because the senior independent schools are so expensive."

Staff check pupils' performance each year, says Mr Coakley, so they can give parents a good steer if they are on track for a grammar school place. And if they are not they might try for a bursary at an independent school or go back into the state system and try for a

grammar school place a year or two later, he says.

No decision to switch school or sector is final. If your child wants a change, or the money runs out, there are plenty of options.

For those who have secured good GCSEs at a comprehensive, but now want more specialist A-level teaching in science or languages, places at grammar and independent schools are generally easier to come by at 16 than at 11.

While those who have been tucked up in a single-sex independent school, especially if they have been boarding, may hanker after the coeducational freedom of a state sixth form college.

Not only will they be saving parents the fees for the costliest stage of schooling, they will also be applying to university from the state sector, which should mean bonus points all around.

## Top Independent Schools

# Institutions turn to the professional persuaders

## Marketing

Gerald Haigh considers the importance of a school's image during recessionary times

Few independent schools are historically well endowed. For the rest, the basic business plan seems shaky, as it is all about making long-term investments in buildings, facilities and staff from an

income stream that is fragile and unpredictable.

As Erica Town, marketing director at St Peter's School in York, suggests, it can be a close-run thing, especially in a school much smaller than St Peter's which, with its prep and prep schools, has 1,000 day and boarding students, of both sexes, aged 3 to 18. "If numbers take a downturn just at the time a school has embarked on a large building project, it can find things becoming very tight," she says.

For all schools this means continuous marketing. The Association for Marketing

and Development in Independent Schools (Amdis) has 450 members, and offers an annual conference, training and the Amdis diploma in school marketing.

Tory Gillingham, its general secretary, says: "Most of the schools now will employ an experienced and qualified marketer." The aim of specialists such as Ms Town is to develop a marketing culture in the school, where everyone is effectively an ambassador.

That is why some independent schools, as do many state schools, let children show visitors round.

At Eversfield School, for example, a 300-pupil day preparatory school in Solihull, the children do the tour expertly and with great confidence.

"It's one of our best selling points," says Rob Yates, the head. "They'll say: 'I want my child to be like that.'"

Parents seem attracted by the breadth of the offering in such establishments, both in the curriculum and beyond, which is something that schools focus on.

Read this story in full online at [www.ft.com/independent-schools-2011](http://www.ft.com/independent-schools-2011)

## How the tables were compiled

The independent school performance tables on Pages 8-11 detail examination results for the majority of independent UK secondary schools, writes **Michael Jacobs**.

Based on 2011 results, the analysis covers performance in A-level, Pre-U, International Baccalaureate and Scottish Higher qualifications. They aim to help parents make informed decisions about schooling and can assist schools in benchmarking their performance.

The main classification shows the A-level results for independent schools, organised by geographical area. Using the UCAS points system, the average points achieved by candidates and the average points achieved "per entry" have been calculated for each school.

A-levels are awarded UCAS points using the following scale: A\*=140 points, A=120, B=100, C=80, D=60 and E=40 points. The points per candidate focus on the quantity of work done, while the points per entry measures the quality.

Combining a z-score for each of these measures, a formula that creates numbers reflecting the range of the points, an overall score for each school is calculated. This final number is used to rank the schools.

No position is shown for schools with fewer than 20 candidates, as scores can be volatile. In addition, the general study A-level has been excluded from the results (except for the majority of Scottish schools where we are unable to confirm this is the case).

Data for schools with fewer than three exam entrants are not given, to avoid disclosing information about individuals.

Three supplementary tables show some data on results relating to Advanced Highers for Scottish schools, International Baccalaureate examinations (IB) and the University of Cambridge A-level equivalent "Pre-U".

Because of the smaller numbers of students sitting these exams, no attempt has been made to rank related schools. Additional general information is presented in each table, including annual fees, total number of pupils and gender breakdown.

Alongside results data, an assessment of university placements for each school has been included. Using information on students entering British universities between 2005 and 2009, the numbers presented show the average number of entrants per year from each school.

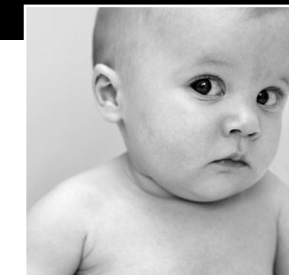
The percentage attending a UK university ranked among the world's best by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Academic Ranking of World Universities and the proportion entering Cambridge, Oxford or University College London over the five year period are also shown.

The underlying data on university placements were compiled by The Good Schools Guide, using freedom of information legislation to obtain the figures from British universities (for more details see [www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk](http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk)).

Most of the exam results data are supplied by the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and are supplemented by figures from the Scottish Council of Independent Schools and FT research. The fees information is obtained from the ISC census of January 2011. Due to a boycott of the ISC exam results survey, data for all schools offering A-levels are not available. For this reason, we also show the 2011 FT1000 rank, which applies to schools in England only (produced in March after the final exam results for all schools are published by the government).

Tables compiled by Judith Pizer of Jeff Head Associates. Additional research by Jiten Karia

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# Top Independent Schools

## Independent School A-level results 2011

Supplement Rank 2011	School name	Notes*	Town	FT1000 Rank 2011	Points/entry 2011	Points/candidate 2011	Candidates	Pupils 17+	% A/A grades	% A*/A* grades	Subjects/candidate	Total pupils	% girls	% boarders	Day fees 000's £pa	Board fees 000's £pa	Average un-entrants / annum (2005-09)	% World Ranked University	% Oxtbridge/OxL
<b>Bedfordshire</b>																			
91	Bedford High School Girls	IB	Bedford	286	110	390	67	103	54	86	3.5	458	100	17	11.0	20.9	9	80	15
133	Bedford Modern School		Bedford	316	110	328	142	146	52	83	3.0	1207	28	0	10.3	24.8	108	79	12
112	Bedford School	IB	Bedford	256	110	368	109	162	56	82	3.4	713	100	0	35	15.3	24.8	108	79
194	Dame Alice Harpur School		Bedford	339	106	319	79	79	50	74	3.0	841	0	0	10.4	14	73	8	
<b>Berkshire</b>																			
334	Beardown College		Wokingham	1585	90	258	26	31	20	56	2.9	491	30	15	16.4	28.1	24	39	1
156	Bradfield College		Reading	401	108	332	113	118	53	80	3.1	731	34	84	22.7	28.4	119	64	4
	Brigndie School Windsor		Windsor	95	276	11	19	38	62	2.9	252	96	0	0	13.1		8	36	2
344	Clares Court Schools		Maidenhead	1483	86	244	53	57	17	44	2.8	971	31	0	11.5		38	35	0
	Downe House	NR	Thatcham	123			71					561	100	95	20.9	28.9	69	90	15
	Eton College	NR	Windsor	13			273					1316	0	100	29.9	23	95	34	
97	Heathfield School		Ascot	551	133	338	29	32	60	80	3.0	190	100	100	29.0	25	74	7	
	Hurst Lodge School		Ascot				2	4		2.5	147	88	6	12.9	21.0	3	18	0	
293	Leighton Park School	IB	Reading	379	96	296	51	83	38	60	3.1	496	37	29	18.0	27.5	48	67	5
332	Licensed Victuallers'		Ascot	953	90	260	69	87	22	54	2.9	960	41	19	13.4	23.6	47	35	3
69	Luckley -Oakfield School		Wokingham	233	113	385	29	39	57	89	3.4	273	100	14	13.1	23.8	23	61	4
289	Padworth College		Reading	98	273	28	58	50	69	2.8	112	40	83	11.0	23.7	22	51	5	
	Pangbourne College	IB NR	Reading	1273			59			403	34	52	18.9	26.7	39	51	5		
260	Queen Anne's School		Reading	208	100	300	37	43	42	68	3.0	358	100	41	17.6	25.9	43	75	7
145	Reading Blue Coat School		Reading	233	109	336	81	85	56	80	3.1	665	7	0	12.4		96	68	6
240	St Gabriel's		Newbury	227	102	306	29	30	34	80	3.0	487	99	0	12.7		17	66	9
	St George's School	NR	Ascot	326			53					268	100	44	18.0	27.7	41	73	6
	St Joseph's Convent		Reading	109	355	15	26	51	86	3.3	321	87	0	10.8		14	51	0	
43	St Mary's School Ascot		Ascot	48	118	378	59	59	75	94	3.2	381	100	97	20.1	28.2	44	90	18
117	The Abbey School	IB	Reading	98	110	344	62	78	58	84	3.1	1067	100	0	12.1		75	83	6
267	The Marist Senior School		Ascot	395	99	303	20	32	31	75	3.0	338	100	0	10.2		19	63	4
57	Wellington College	IB	Crowthorne	220	116	370	158	223	65	90	3.2	997	35	79	24.4	28.8	150	76	9
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>																			
	Bury Lawn School	NR	Milton Keynes				2					193	34	0	10.0		11	48	2
	Pipers Corner School	NR	High Wycombe	575			9					495	100	6	12.8	21.0	27	46	3
341	St Mary's School		Gerrards Cross	87	256	20	21	29	49	30	304	100	0	12.4		13	50	5	
	Stowe School	NR	High Wycombe	529			174					704	34	84	20.4	28.1	122	57	5
4	Wycombe Abbey School		High Wycombe	2	125	439	87	87	88	99	3.5	568	100	94	21.9	29.2	77	98	37
<b>Cambridge and Peterborough</b>																			
	Cambridge Cent 6th f'm	NR	Cambridge	1129			165					207	47	60	27.4	33.8	63	55	12
322	CATS Cambridge		Cambridge	946	96	189	109	418	45	63	2.0	550	57	80	23.8	32.2	52	31	3
186	Kimbolton School		Huntingdon	296	106	330	88	94	47	78	3.1	943	48	4	11.5	19.4	71	62	6
	Perse School for Girls	IB NR	Cambridge	28			59					791	96	0	13.6		42	66	38
	Peterborough High Sch	NR	Peterborough	548			26					454	67	4	11.5	21.4	14	47	4
56	St Mary's School		Cambridge	87	114	400	61	74	60	84	3.5	671	100	13	12.5	26.9	31	41	8
262	The King's School Ely		Ely	538	99	311	72	92	38	66	3.1	449	40	32	16.4	23.7	43	60	6
163	The Leys School		Cambridge	298	107	348	97	103	50	80	3.3	554	40	49	19.1	25.4	80	70	9
21	The Perse School	PU	Cambridge	35	122	381	138	140	78	95	3.1	1257	24	0	13.3		103	89	24
205	Wisbech Grammar		Wisbech	334	105	328	65	66	49	74	3.1	651	47	0	10.3		49	53	7
<b>Channel Islands</b>																			
244	Elizabeth College		Guernsey	101	300	51	51	42	68	3.0	757	6	0	7.8		38	52	6	
109	Ladies' College	PU	Guernsey	110	363	50	49	56	87	3.3	571	100	0	18.9		35	69	8	
213	Victoria College		St Helier	104	328	96	99	45	72	3.2	730	0	0	4.2		62	64	6	
<b>Cheshire</b>																			
281	Abbey Gate College		Chester	552	97	302	36	40	30	62	3.1	491	44	0	9.8		18	43	1
272	Alderley Edge Girls	PU	Alderley Edge	407	99	288	41	42	32	68	2.9	566	100	0	9.0		29	63	7
	Hammond School		Chester	80	135	19	79	6	44	17	277	65	33	15.4	22.4	2	58	0	
52	King's School		Chester	173	116	380	99	99	67	87	3.1	994	32	0	10.2		86	80	13
86	The Grange School		Northwich	179	113	350	94	97	61	85	3.1	1179	47	0	9.1		83	81	6
200	The King's School		Macclesfield	244	106	320	121	128	47	74	3.0	1397	44	0	9.2		89	69	8
46	Queen's School		Chatteris	160	117	388	45	45	66	90	3.3	574	100	0	10.6		45	77	9
<b>Corwall</b>																			
138	Truro High School Girls		Truro	529	109	332	31	36	54	81	3.0	420	98	9	10.3	19.6	25	59	8
156	Truro School		Truro	282	108	330	115	124	55	81	3.0	854	37	6	11.1	20.6	104	71	7
<b>Cumbria</b>																			
243	Austin Friars St Monica's		Carlisle	451	101	304	43	83	46	69	3.0	464	48	0	11.0		28	49	4
151	Casterton School		Via Carnforth	462	106	383	29	39	57	73	3.6	305	92	50	14.7	24.6	29	78	3
	Cheywynde School		Barrow-in-F	227	100	398	11	13	36	70	4.0	297	50	0	8.1		20	53	3
	Lime House School		Carlisle	90	309	14	24	21	56	3.4	183	51	61	8.2	17.8	6	37	0	
278	Sedburgh School +		Sedburgh	594	98	300	85	109	34	63	3.1	533	29	85	19.4	26.3	69	61	8
302	St Bees School		St Bees	835	95	284	41	62	32	64	3.0	290	24	25	8.7	27.7	36	65	8
<b>Derbyshire</b>																			
	Abbotsholme School	NR	Uttewater	1346			45					320	37	41	18.1	26.6	21	41	2
240	Derby Grammar School		Derby	164	101	313	33	34	40	62	3.1	295	5	0	10.5		23	57	2
104	Derby High School		Derby	175	112	343	41	40	60	80	3.1	756	85	0	9.5		34	63	4
342	Mount St Mary's College		Sheffield	1007	86	266	37	104	26	58	3.1	417	40	17	10.8	21.6	27	43	1
173	Ockbrook School		Ockbrook	273	107	337	32	36	42	75	3.2	409	93	10	9.5	18.0	19	58	3
62	Repton School		Derby	330	114	380	129	143	65	84	3.3	653	41	71	20.1	27.2	105	73	10
265	Trent College		Nottingham	627	99	303	93	95	36	68	3.0	1071	41	11	14.0	23.7	84	51	3
<b>Devon</b>																			
	Blundell's School	NR	Triverton	489			92					573	41	64	16.8	26.1	70	59	7
94	Exeter School		Exeter	125	112	359	96	100	55	86	3.2	850	37	0	9.9		97	73	1
	Kelly College	NR	Tavistock	505			53					350	43	45	14.1	24.6	36	47	3
	Kingsley School		Bideford	552			41					387	41	18	11.3	21.6	14	37	1
277	Plymouth College	IB	Plymouth	1000	96	326													

# Top Independent Schools

Supplement Rank 2011	School name	Notes*	Town	FT1000 Rank 2011	Points/entry 2011	Points/candidate 2011	Candidates	Pupils 17+	% A*/A grades	% A*/B grades	Subjects/candidate	Total pupils	% girls	Day fees 000's £pa	Board fees 000's £pa	Average unentrants/annum (2005-09)	% World Ranked University	% Obridge/OJCL		
125	Prior Park College	NR	Bath	253	106	110	341	72	72	53	82	3.1	638	46	21	13.1	23.6	72	67	6
189	Queen Elizabeth's Hosp		Bristol	106	110	341	72	72	53	82	3.1	638	46	21	13.1	23.6	72	67	6	6
171	Red Maids' School	IB	Bristol	202	108	319	51	62	45	81	3.0	487	100	0	10.0	10.0	36	68	8	7
115	Redland High Girls		Bristol	208	111	332	54	59	61	80	3.0	354	100	0	9.6	9.6	48	71	7	7
180	Sidcot School	IB	Winscombe	300	106	340	57	101	48	73	3.2	508	44	32	13.4	26.4	37	60	8	8
270	Taunton School	IB	Taunton	743	98	312	96	132	38	66	3.2	258	43	45	15.0	24.5	73	68	7	7
151	The Park School	NR	Yeovil	23	108	339	59	96	49	82	3.1	749	99	13	9.6	19.0	62	69	9	9
237	Wellington School	IB	Wellington	290	101	329	75	85	43	71	3.3	896	45	14	11.3	21.9	83	62	9	9
232	Wells Cathedral Sch		Wells	207	103	311	93	111	47	72	3.0	966	49	39	14.2	23.8	66	61	11	11
<b>Staffordshire</b>																				
	Abbots Bromley Girls		Rugeley	395	107	351	14	21	54	76	3.3	247	98	37	13.9	22.9	18	55	2	2
	Chase Academy		Cannock	110	534	7	10	65	82	4.9	217	51	4	8.1	18.2	4	36	0	0	0
	Denstone College	NR	Lichfield	747							570	35	26	11.6	21.8	50	56	3	3	3
	Lichfield Cathedral School		Lichfield								425	39	4	12.5	18.0					
	232 Newcastle-under-Lyme		Newcastle	230	102	323	83	89	45	70	3.2	980	48	0	9.5	100	62	6	6	6
	St Dominic's Priory		Stone	105	355	13	13	52	77	3.4	192	93	0	9.6	13	38	0	0	0	0
	St Dominic's School		Brewold	102	322	12	19	39	71	3.2	277	99	0	11.3	2	44	0	0	0	0
	223 Stafford Grammar		Stafford	509	104	321	53	54	44	73	3.1	491	46	0	9.7	39	59	4	4	4
<b>Suffolk</b>																				
	184 Culford School		Bury St Ed	529	106	333	50	60	53	76	3.1	661	47	33	15.2	24.7	50	59	9	9
	Finborough School	NR	Stowmarket								270	51	26	10.2	20.3	3	6	0	0	0
	Framlingham College +		Framlingham	500	101						111	38	66	42	45	16.2	23.7	71	56	3
	91 Ipswich High School		Ipswich	126	112	355	36	39	55	90	3.2	578	100	0	9.6	36	79	8	8	8
	168 Ipswich School		Ipswich	190	107	335	116	146	49	80	3.1	811	36	5	11.2	20.3	85	77	12	12
	292 Royal Hospital School		Ipswich	523	97	285	103	112	32	62	2.9	692	42	69	12.9	21.8	77	49	3	3
	Saint Felix School	NR	Southwold	1180							430	50	18	12.9	22.8	11	52	7	7	
	St Joseph's College	NR	Ipswich	1393							606	31	19	11.6	23.1	34	44	2	2	
	Woodbridge School	NR	Woodbridge	283							640	45	6	13.0	23.0	73	63	8	8	
<b>Surry</b>																				
	19 Caterham School		Caterham	96	120	426	123	146	75	92	3.6	824	42	19	13.9	25.9	118	79	12	12
	Charterhouse	NR	Godalming	84							770	16	94	24.3	29.4	159	91	15	15	
	31 City of London Freeman's	PU	Ashted	106	119	393	101	121	74	90	3.3	854	48	6	14.4	22.9	86	80	9	9
	Claremont Fan Court Sch		Esher	626	111	333	12	18	47	94	3.0	682	40	0	13.1	6	17	42	1	1
	Cranleigh School	NR	Cranleigh	296							604	33	75	22.6	27.8	105	77	7	7	
	Dunrocton School		Reigate	525	93	268	15	17	21	58	2.9	327	100	0	12.1	24	68	2	2	
	Epsom College	NR	Epsom	200							725	37	47	22.9	27.4	144	81	7	7	
	319 Ewell Castle School		Epsom	1062	92	273	23	27	32	51	3.0	537	13	0	11.7	20	39	5	5	
	Freesham Heights	NR	Farnham	855							517	44	16	16.2	23.9	25	34	3	3	
	253 Greenacre School Girls		Banstead	100	305	24	26	32	73	3.0	371	100	0	12.1	21	36	2	2	2	
	7 Guildford High Girls		Guildford	16	126	405	83	84	87	96	3.2	984	100	0	13.0	80	95	22	22	
	324 Hallford School		Shepperton	796	89	292	29	36	23	56	3.3	416	3	0	11.0	21	52	7	7	
	85 Hartwood School		Dorking	393	113	349	149	188	60	85	3.1	325	63	94	21.4	36.9	97	64	7	7
	King Edward's Sch	IB NR	Godalming	681							368	41	68	17.3	24.4	39	60	7	7	
	219 Lingfield Notre Dame		Lingfield	313	104	313	46	47	43	75	3.0	830	50	0	9.6	39	51	5	5	
	More House School	NR	Fresham								389	0	26	15.9	24.7	2	0	0	0	
	274 Notre Dame Senior		Cobham	428	98	295	31	33	35	58	3.0	377	100	0	12.0	21	69	3	3	
	247 Priory's Field School		Godalming	366	100	318	35	44	42	65	3.2	402	100	26	14.2	23.0	21	57	3	3
	90 Reed's School		Cobham	379	113	355	101	107	60	85	3.1	588	10	16	18.7	24.7	63	53	3	3
	91 Reigate Grammar		Reigate	90	110	383	102	103	58	85	3.5	878	44	4	13.8	11	82	8	8	
	9 Royal Grammar School		Guildford	32	124	411	134	134	82	97	3.3	897	0	0	13.3	130	93	25	25	
	49 Sir William Perkins's		Chertsey	150	116	368	68	68	66	88	3.2	559	100	0	11.8	56	79	12	12	
	28 St Catherine's School		Guildford	50	119	412	72	74	70	92	3.5	630	100	25	14.3	23.3	60	94	18	18
	159 St George's College		Addlestone	330	108	334	110	112	49	81	3.1	885	36	0	10.6	82	69	9	9	
	186 St James Senior Boys'		Ashford	313	107	315	22	27	49	75	3.0	329	0	6	12.7	18.1	21	41	6	6
	219 St John's School		Leatherhead	316	104	321	122	124	41	73	3.1	552	20	19	18.5	25.4	92	71	1	1
	162 St Teresa's School		Dorking	566	105	375	30	34	54	75	3.6	328	100	21	13.4	23.2	29	63	4	4
	147 The Royal School		Haslemere	108	340	22	31	52	78	3.1	395	92	18	14.3	23.2	14	57	4	4	
	77 Tormead School		Guildford	65	114	358	48	47	64	88	3.1	741	100	0	11.9	51	90	10	10	
	109 Woodhatch School		Caterham	193	111	353	68	82	56	83	3.2	527	100	0	15.6	26.8	63	80	5	5
	Yehudi Menuhin School		Cobham	109	218						83	20	73	58	81	40.0	41.1	6	7	
<b>Sussex</b>																				
	284 Battle Abbey School	IB NR	Hayward H'th	533							384	39	30	19.5	26.0	63	59	6	6	
	138 Brighton and Hove High		Brighton	186	109	334	34	36	54	81	3.1	655	100	0	9.7	33	71	12	12	
	25 Brighton College		Brighton	46	120	407	183	192	77	95	3.4	910	40	25	18.0	31.0	139	76	11	11
	129 Burgess Hill Sch Girls		Burgess Hill	137	109	353	43	45	55	84	3.2	650	93	8	13.0	22.9	36	74	13	13
	135 Christ's Hospital	PU	Horsham	353	109	345	115	117	56	80	3.2	784	50	96	17.0	24.5	116	73	10	10
	285 Eastbourne College	NR	Eastbourne	252							630	42	48	13.7	26.1	112	65	7	7	
	285 Farlington School		Horsham		97	292	20	26	42	62	3.0	366	99	9	13.5	21.9	19	66	4	4
	Greenfields School	NR	Forest Row								101	35	18	10.7	18.9	1	83	17	17	
	Hurstpierpoint College	IB NR	Hassocks	330							630	42	53	18.5	27.8	61	61	6	6	
	89 Lancing College		Lancing	69	111	384	125	135	59	81	3.5	732	32	45	19.4	27.8	89	80	13	13
	Lavant House		Chichester		95	270	6	8	18	65	2.8	159	99	10	13.0	20.5	7	38	0	0
	Lewes Old Grammar		Lewes	300	97	298	18	21	20	71	3.1	501	39	0	11.3	15	49	3	3	
	171 Moira House Girls		Eastbourne	421	104	319	44	66	50	71	3.8	346	96	31	14.0					

## Top Independent Schools

# Life skills go beyond exam success

### Pupil development

Schools are right to promote character building, reports **Biddy Passmore**

**W**hen you send children to a private secondary school, what are you paying for? Excellent exam results, of course, and a place for them at a good university, please.

But parents would feel short-changed if schools did not go beyond that. Prospects gush about building rounded characters and developing the qualities and

interests needed to cope with setbacks and to lead a fulfilling life.

Some emphasise extra-curricular activities and opportunities for personal growth as much as the excellence of their teaching.

While there is little talk nowadays of developing "officer-like qualities", good private schools are certainly in the business of building character.

"It's the most important thing we do," says Helen Wright, head of St Mary's Calne, a girls' boarding school in Wiltshire, and president of the Girls' Schools Association. "Yes, we develop their minds and make sure they pass their exams. But they're not going to be happy, or successful, if they fail to develop as people.

"We train girls to become

authentically them, to discover who they are inside. This is all about relationships and having the right staff in the school to challenge and support them to go beyond what they thought they could do."

Ms Wright, whose doctoral thesis was on "moral leadership in schools", is hot on the subject of developing leadership among pupils. "It's not about how to lead others, it's about how you lead yourself," she says.

But St Mary's does provide plenty of opportunities to lead others and to work in teams. A "horizontal" boarding system – with a separate boarding house for each year group – allows girls to take on responsibility from their first year. There is also a huge amount of volunteering, with school and house charities often suggested by the girls. Music and sports are popular.

The central message, says Ms Wright, is: "Hard work is good, but when you fail despite having tried hard, you have to pick yourself up and start again."

Developing resourcefulness and resilience are also seen as crucial by David Levin, head of City of London, a boys' day school. Mr Levin, current chairman of HMC, the association of leading boys' and coeducational private schools, says "co-curricular activities" – sport, drama, music, volunteering – both strengthen boys' academic achievement and boost their ability to manage their time and to cope with setbacks.

But do universities care if an applicant has captained the cricket XI, passed grade 8 flute, chaired the debating society and spent two hours a week visiting a disabled old lady, as long as he or she has two As and a B?

The answer seems to vary from one university to the next. Top universities are mainly concerned with academic achievements and interest in the subject pupils have applied to study.

Counting achievement in areas such as sport is not relevant and could work against the state school applicants they are under pressure to recruit. But doing well in exams while taking part in other activities is still likely to work to an applicant's advantage as it is a good indication they will stay the course.

"The notion that we're looking for renaissance men and women is simply not correct," says Geoff Parkes, director of admissions for the University of Cambridge. "We're only really looking for things beyond the academic if it's relevant to what they want to do – grade 8 in an instrument if they want to study music, for instance.

"We are looking for motivation, commitment, drive and good time management," he adds. "That's where extra-curricular activities can be relevant. But being able to do well at A-levels while stacking shelves at the supermarket because your family's short of money is just as impressive as captaining the hockey team."

Carl Gilleard, chief executive of the Association of Graduate Recruiters, says employers are also looking for drive and resilience combined with a "can-do attitude", which is the most important quality of all.

"Graduates have to have confidence in their own ability," Mr Gilleard says. "Today, a degree is not enough; it's all about skills and personal qualities."

In words that will be music to the heads of independent schools, he laments the narrow focus on exams and says the first job of all schools is to go beyond the syllabus and prepare pupils for life.

There should be more focus on developing emotional intelligence and the transferable skills of team working and communication, he says.

Extra-curricular activities – music, sport, volunteering – are "absolutely essential", adds Mr Gilleard. "I'd say to any young person: join any societies going and take a position of responsibility. It'll look good on your CV, but will also help you develop as a person.

"You may have a first at Oxford, but if you haven't developed as a person you aren't going to get the job."



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