

THE TOP STATE AND INDEPEN

THE TOP 200 INDEPENDENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

RANKING BASED ON 2014 EXAMINATION RESULTS WITH A*-B GRADES AT A-LEVEL DOUBLE WEIGHTED

2014 RANK	2013 RANK	SCHOOL	A* (%)	A (%)	GCSE A* (%)	GCSE A (%)	2014 RANK	2013 RANK	SCHOOL	A* (%)	A (%)	GCSE A* (%)	GCSE A (%)
1	7*	Wycombe Abbey School, High Wycombe	99.3	98.7			101	72*	Canford School, Wimborne	83.0	74.3		
2	1	St Paul's Girls' School, London	98.9	99.3			102	112	St Mary's School, Cambridge	83.0	73.6		
3	2	North London Collegiate School, Edgware	97.7	99.0			103	186	Uppingham School	85.3	67.7		
4	12*	St Paul's School, London	97.7	97.6			104	141*	Forest School, London	82.3	73.2		
5	6	King's College School, Wimbledon	97.7	96.8			105	104	Sollihull School	82.6	72.3		
6	18	The Godolphin and Laymer School, Hammersmith	96.6	97.0			106	125	Queen's Gate School, London	83.2	70.7		
7	7*	Guldford High School	97.1	96.0			107	74	Tarnfield School, Guildford	80.8	75.3		
8	14	Eton College, Windsor	96.7	95.6			108	93	Warwick School	81.6	73.1		
9	5	Westminster School, London	95.5	97.9			109	148	Chigwell School	84.3	67.0		
10	3	City of London School for Girls	95.9	96.5			110	149	St James Senior Girls' School, West Kensington, London	85.7	64.1		
11	20	Sevenoaks School	96.9	94.2			111	132*	Bromsgrove School	85.5	64.3		
12	4	Magdalen College School, Oxford	97.4	93.0			112	168	Bradford Grammar School	82.7	69.3		
13	17	The Lady Eleanor Holles School, Hampton	96.1	94.9			113	134	Berkhamsted School	81.4	69.7		
14	15	The Royal Grammar School, Guildford	96.9	92.1			114	85	Stockport Grammar School	82.7	66.5		
15	16	The Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School, Elstree	95.1	94.4			115	101	Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol	80.0	71.7		
16	9	James Allen's Girls' School, London	93.2	98.1			116	67	King's High, Warwick	82.5	66.6		
17	10	Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls, Borehamwood	94.5	94.8			117	143	Bury Grammar School Girls	87.4	56.5		
18	19	Whitton Girls' School, Manchester	95.7	92.3			118	137	Shrewsbury School	83.1	65.0		
19	11	Stephen Perse Foundation, Cambridge	95.4	92.6			119	139	Rugby School	80.6	70.0		
20	79	Winchester College	94.7	92.3			120	126	Fettes College, Edinburgh	81.2	68.4		
21	31	Oxford High School GDST	95.3	90.7			121	94*	Wakefield Girls' High School	76.6	77.3		
22	22	Tonbridge School	93.3	94.6			122	133*	Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls, Monmouth	77.9	74.6		
23	24*	St Helen and St Katharine, Abingdon	93.5	93.6			123*	156*	Burgess Hill School for Girls	80.5	69.3		
24	12*	Brighton College	94.0	90.4			123*	167	Babbale School, Coventry	80.1	70.0		
25	36	The Abbey School, Reading	94.3	89.6			125	146*	St Leonards-Mayfield School, Mayfield	80.0	69.8		
26	32	Allyn's School, Dulwich	93.7	89.8			126	116	Dartmouth's School, Devon	76.3	76.7		
26*	42	Laymer Upper School, Hammersmith	93.6	89.6			127*	151*	Bishop's Startford College	82.7	64.0		
28	44	Concord College, Shrewsbury	94.9	86.7			127*	110*	Newcastle High School for Girls GDST	78.2	72.9		
29	43	Cheltenham Ladies' College	92.2	91.9			129	224	Coffe's School, Lee, London	86.5	56.2		
30	21	St Mary's School Ascot	94.6	86.1			130*	182	Shrewsbury High School GDST	82.9	63.1		
31	49*	University College School, Hampstead	93.1	88.8			130*	214	Christ's Hospital, Horsham	81.9	65.2		
32	45	Wellington College, Crowthorne	94.7	85.5			132	97	The Red Maids' School, Bristol	79.2	69.5		
33	24*	The Perse School, Cambridge	91.6	91.3			133	109	Bedford Modern School	80.3	67.2		
34	33	Hampton School	92.9	88.3			134		Ockbrook School, Derby	82.3	63.1		
35	35	Notting Hill and Ealing High School GDST, London	91.8	90.1			135	189	Queen Margaret's School, York	84.7	57.9		
36	38	Manchester High School for Girls	94.5	84.5			136	213	Kingwood School, Bath	80.3	66.6		
37	24*	St Albans High School for Girls	91.2	90.5			137	108	Sherborne Girls	81.9	63.2		
38	27	City of London School	92.4	87.7			138	102*	The Grammar School at Leeds	81.0	64.4		
39	28	The Manchester Grammar School	90.6	90.9			139	161	Immanuel College, Bushey	82.7	60.8		
40	55	Higgate School, London	93.1	85.8			140	172	Tudor Hall, Banbury	78.7	68.8		
41	39	St Swithun's School, Winchester	93.3	84.7			141	223	The King's School in Macclesfield	80.2	65.4		
42	46*	King Edward's School, Birmingham	89.9	91.4			142	217*	Northampton High School GDST	77.2	71.4		
43	29	Merchant Taylors' School, Northwood	90.1	90.6			143	91*	Birkenhead School, Wirral	80.3	65.0		
44	40	Channing School, London	91.9	86.5			144	127*	Rodean School, Brighton	75.1	75.3		
45	102	Reigate Grammar School	94.4	81.5			145	174	Sutton High School GDST, London	79.3	66.7		
46*	41	Benenden School, Danbrook	90.4	87.1			146	287	Ruthin School	90.0	44.1		
46*	53	St Catherine's School, Bramley, Guildford	91.1	85.6			147*	187	Cheadle Hulme School	78.3	67.0		
48	48	St Albans School	91.3	85.2			147*	131	St Peter's School, York	79.3	64.7		
49	37	South Hampstead High School GDST, London	89.2	89.1			149	115	The King's School, Worcester	78.0	67.1		
50*	57	Rodley College, Abingdon	89.7	87.5			150	289	Kent College, Pembury, Tunbridge Wells	85.0	53.0		
50*	70*	King Edward VI High School for Girls, Birmingham	90.0	86.9			151		Brampton College, Hendon, London	86.9	50.9		
52	54	Dulwich College, London	89.4	87.0			152	259	Newcastle-under-Lyme School	82.0	58.8		
53	63	Royal Grammar School, Newcastle upon Tyne	90.9	83.8			153	180	Cranleigh School	78.4	65.7		
54	59	The Grange School, Northwich	90.8	83.8			154	180	Bedford School	79.1	63.7		
55	52	Bancroft's School, Woodford Green, London	90.3	94.1			155*	250	Notre Dame School, Cobham	84.1	53.5		
56	84	Whitgift School, South Croydon	90.4	83.5			155*	99	Bramley High School GDST, London	76.8	68.1		
57	56	Trinity School, Croydon	92.0	78.1			157	177	Sheffield High School GDST	79.6	62.2		
58	68	Wimbledon High School GDST	86.8	88.4			158	194	Clifton College, Bristol	77.5	65.3		
58*	89	Queen Ethelburga's College, York	97.6	66.7			159	171	Loughborough Grammar School	79.8	60.5		
60	83	City of London Freemen's School, Ashstead	91.2	79.2			160*	183*	Queen's College, London	80.7	57.8		
61	23	Putney High School GDST, London	87.3	86.5			160*	195	Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh	80.7	57.7		
62	81	Exeter School	89.1	82.9			162	144	Holleybury, Hertford	79.0	60.9		
63	88	Isstock Place School, Roehampton, London	88.6	82.7			163	94*	Godolphin School, Salisbury	75.0	68.7		
64	64	Sir William Perkin's School, Chertsey	89.0	80.6			164	150	Repton School, Derby	77.5	63.5		
65	75	Kingston Grammar School, Kingston upon Thames	88.5	81.1			165	291	St Gerard's School, Bangor	72.5	73.3		
66	65	Walhamstead Hall, Sevenoaks	89.0	80.0			166*	188	Chetham's School of Music, Manchester	70.1	78.1		
67	66	Francis Holland School, Regent's Park, London	89.0	79.7			166*		The Royal Masonic School for Girls, Rickmansworth	80.6	57.1		
68	69	Caterham School	89.3	78.4			168	159	The John Lyon School, Harrow	78.1	62.0		
68	59	Dundee School, Peterborough	83.8	86.5			169	173	St John's School, Leatherhead	81.6	54.0		
70	82	Headington School, Oxford	85.1	83.7			170*	229	Clifton High School, Bristol	81.4	54.1		
71	91*	The Maynard School, Exeter	88.5	74.7			170*	189*	Eastbourne College	78.0	61.0		
72	51	Abingdon School	87.1	79.3			172	113*	Portsmouth High School GDST, Southsea	75.2	66.3		
73	77	King Edward's School, Bath	85.9	81.6			173	122*	Northwood College for Girls GDST	74.6	67.4		
74	62	Norwich School	88.9	75.2			174	156*	The Royal High School, Bath GDST	74.4	67.8		
75	46*	Badminton School, Bristol	85.3	82.3			175	196*	Churcher's College, Petersfield	75.6	64.6		
76	76	Nottingham High School	86.5	79.9			176	154	The Marist Senior School, Ascot	82.1	51.3		
77	80	St John's College, Cardiff	94.4	63.8			177	309	Gateways School, Leeds	83.1	49.2		
78	49*	St Helen's School, Northwood	85.0	81.6			178	178	Durham High School for Girls	74.2	67.0		
79	78	The King's School, Chester	87.1	76.9			179	203	RGS Worcester	77.6	59.7		
80	127*	The Queen's School, Chester	86.4	77.5			180	106	Bolton School Girls' Division	77.3	60.2		
81	140	Bristol Grammar School	86.8	76.5			181	226	Cheltenham College	75.1	64.5		
82	100	King Edward VI School, Southampton	87.7	74.1			182	201*	Brighton and Hove High School GDST, Brighton	78.2	57.8		
83	70*	Nottingham Girls' High School GDST	88.0	73.0			183		St Edward's School, Oxford	76.1	61.9		
84	118	St George's Weybridge, Aldlestone	85.1	76.9			184*		Monmouth School	73.5	66.8		
85	60	Loughborough High School	84.3	78.1			184*	185	Leicester High School for Girls	73.6	66.6		
86	121	Wellington School, Caterham	87.7	71.2			184*	191	Old Palace of John Whitgift School, Croydon	78.5	56.7		
87	119	Yarn School	84.6	77.0			187	170	Farnborough Hill, Farnborough	78.6	56.6		
88	72*	The King's School, Canterbury	84.6	76.1			188	182	Reed's School, Cobham	75.0	63.5		
89	102*	Marlborough College	83.4	77.8			189	196*	St Francis' College, Letchworth Garden City	73.8	65.5		
90	105	Leicester Grammar School, Great Glen	83.6	77.3			190	189	Ardingly College, Haywards Heath	74.0	65.0		
91	96	Downe House, Thatcham	84.6	75.2			191*	207	Reading Blue Coat School	69.5	73.6		
92	110*	Surbiton High School, Kingston upon Thames	85.9	71.7			191*	186	Merchant Taylors' Boys' School, Crosby, Liverpool	80.2	52.1		
93	155	Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Wakefield	84.9	73.5			193	67	Norwich High School for Girls GDST	76.3	58.6		
94	181	Hymes College, Hull	85.0	73.1			194*	183*	Wolverhampton Grammar School	73.5	64.7		
95	117	Queenswood, Hatfield	83.1	76.4			194*	200	Blackheath High School GDST, London	74.3	54.9		
96	175	d'Overbroeck's College, Oxford	82.1	58.0			196*	195	Hereford Cathedral School	75.7	60.1		
97	153	Epsom College	84.5	72.5			196*	146*	St Dunstan's College, Cardiff, London	78.3	54.9		
97*	90	Howell's School, Llandaff GDST, Cardiff	84.5	72.4			198	164	Sydenham High School GDST, London	74.2	62.9		
99	61	Etham College, London	87.0	67.3			199	326	Beales School, Petersfield	75.1	60.8		
100	107	The Portsmouth Grammar School	84.8	71.4			200	252	Bootham School, York	77.0	56.4		



Girls at Tonbridge Grammar School (TGS), our State Secondary of the Year, are encouraged to reach their full potential, see feature online

Go with the head

Bin the fancy brochures: set up your child for life by first visiting any likely schools to test the staff, the lessons and the ethos, says Chris Woodhead

Your local school is not bad, but neither is it very good. You have heard mutterings about unruly behaviour on the buses and this year's examination results show a decline. So you are starting to think about other possibilities. What are the questions you should be asking? Primary or secondary, state or independent: your starting point should be the same. The temptation in choosing a school for your son or daughter is to begin with the school rather than the child. Schools differ. Some pride themselves on their relaxed ethos. They may not have a uniform. They may think that it is always better if children discover things for themselves rather than be told anything by a teacher. They may believe that tests and examinations should be kept to a minimum. Others will have a more traditional approach to classroom teaching. Assessments will be more regular and expectations of progress more frequent. They may publish lists recording how well individual students have performed compared with their peers. There is no right and wrong here. You will have your own beliefs about what constitutes a good education and what is best for your child. Just make sure that before you are hypnotised by the glossy brochures you have thought hard about what your child needs. The best thing you can do with the brochure is, in fact, to bin it. What matters in a school is not, ultimately, the rows of computers or the acres of manicured playing fields. Approach the mission statements and the marketing jargon with a high degree of scepticism. It is a competitive market out there and, understandably enough, schools do their utmost to portray themselves in the best possible light. Instead, focus on the three things that do matter: ■ The experience children have in the classroom. Between the ages of 5-16 we spend 15,000 hours of our lives living behind a desk. That is an awful lot of hours to be bored; ■ The quality of the pastoral care provided; ■ The range of extracurricular activities on offer. ■ There is a fourth, too. The man or woman who leads the school is crucial to the above. You need to be very confident that you like and trust the head teacher. You cannot judge these things unless you visit a potential school. This may mean that you have to do a fair amount of preliminary research. In the past, I would have recommended that you started with an Ofsted report.

These days, I am not so sure. In recent years inspectors have spent precious little time in classrooms. They no longer assess individual teachers. They analyse data and check that the school has ticked the ever-lengthening list of boxes. I have always believed that the inspection process should concentrate on the strength of the leadership offered by the head teacher and the quality of the teaching. This is not what happens in 2014 and, while, therefore, the most recent report on the school you are considering is worth reading, it may not actually help you very much. The other source of information is the school's examination results and league table position. Many principals will say that parents should not pay too much attention to this data. They argue that what matters is the extent to which it develops well-rounded individuals. But any head who believes that parents are not interested in academic performance is living in a dream world. Of course results matter. They determine the university and the job. However,