

TATTLEER

Schools Guide 2024

The top prep and public schools in the UK

DULWICH COLLEGE ●**Dulwich Common, SE21 7LD***Website dulwich.org.uk***Head** Dr Joe Spence, since 2009; previously head of Oakham School**Pupils** 1,991. **Day:** 1,765 boys;91 girls; **boarding:** 135 boys**Ages** 11–18 **Term Fees** **Day:**£8,231; **boarding:** £17,182**Bursaries** 15% of pupils, up to100% **Alumni** Actor Chiwetel

Ejiofor, explorer Ernest Shackleton,

poet Michael Ondaatje

A swift 12-minute train ride from Victoria transports you to another world. Dulwich College feels like a countryside school, with its wide green spaces, iconic red-brick buildings, on-site reproduction of old-boy PG Wodehouse's study and beautiful Great Hall (whose ship-shaped ceiling has, over the years, made it the location for many films, ranging from *Tomb Raider* to *Legally Blonde*). But while it has its own lovely cocoon, the college makes the most of being in the city, too. Concerts are held at the Cadogan Hall; plays are produced in collaboration with the close-by girls' school JAGS; and the Dulwich copy of Shakespeare's First Folio (one of only 50 extant) will be loaned to the National Maritime Museum for its *The Tempest and the Thames* exhibition. The bursary provision is strong, supporting more than 210 pupils – meaning the student body is diverse – and inclusion and awareness are fostered by a Diversity and Inclusion forum made up of 100 pupils. Grades tend to be top-notch, space is made for intellectual exploration and 'free learning', and there's also a thoughtful approach to the arts. For example, a recent student exhibition not only showcased student work but provided them with experience of being curators and technicians, too. The dynamic intellectual and cultural life of Dulwich College is led by the master, Dr Spence, an impressive figure who has recently returned from an expedition to Antarctica, and – according to one student – possesses 'an underlying humour that is not to be underestimated'.



Dulwich College

EMANUEL SCHOOL ●●**Battersea Rise, SW11 1HS***Website emanuel.org.uk***Head** Robert Milne, since 2017;

previously deputy head of King's College School, Wimbledon

Pupils 1,090 **day:** 550 boys, 540 girls **Ages** 10–18 **Term Fees** £7,687**Bursaries** 25% of pupils, up to100% **Alumni** Chef Michel Roux Jr,

founder of the World Wide Web Sir

Tim Berners-Lee, co-creator of Peppa

Pig Mark Baker

Parents delight in how much their children enjoy the lessons here, crediting it with 'providing an academic environment that constantly stimulates curiosity'. And recent exam results speak for themselves: 90 per cent of GCSE grades were 9–7 and 94 per cent were A*–B at A-level – which puts Emanuel in the top 10 co-ed day schools in the country. University destinations are just as strong: three-quarters of last year's leavers headed off to Russell Group locations, with a third going on to read STEM subjects. But impressive statistics aren't everything, and the school prides itself on providing a 'happy environment' where the children can develop into 'altruistic, caring and outward-looking' young adults. 'They are genuinely encouraged as individuals to find their own thing,' an insider reveals – which is one reason the clubs are central. There are 60-plus activities every week on top of the 'outstanding' sport, music and drama offerings: from the Harry Potter club to the incredibly popular drone club.

FRANCIS HOLLAND, REGENT'S PARK ●**1 Ivor Place, NW1 6XR***Website fhs-nw1.org.uk***Head** Katharine Woodcock, since

2022; previously head of Sydenham

High School **Pupils** 554 **day girls****Ages** 11–18 **Term Fees** £8,200**Bursaries** 5% of pupils, up to100% **Alumni** Actresses Dame

Joan Collins and Emilia Fox,

TALA founder Grace Beverley

New head Katharine Woodcock has been a hit with parents. One describes her as 'a reflection of the school and its ethos – hardworking, kind, a visionary with a passion for education and internationalism, and for broadening the girls' horizons'. (For proof of the latter, look to the brand-new sixth-form centre, Linhope House: the product of a £5m investment.) And despite the central London location and an emphasis on independence, she fosters a strong sense of community. 'Ours is like no other, and almost feels a bit like a big family, smiling and waving across the corridors at one another,' says one student, describing inter-year mixing within the four houses and competitions involving spaghetti-and-marshmallow tower-making. Extracurriculars include the Women of Influence lecture series, which saw Rebel Wilson come to speak. The school has seen a recent flurry of sporting successes, among them three trophies in the Independent Schools Ski Championships. Meanwhile, a training programme for the pupils has launched with Chelsea FC.

FRANCIS HOLLAND, SLOANE SQUARE ●**39 Graham Terrace, SW1W 8JF***Website fhs-sw1.org.uk***Head** Alexandra Haydon, from

January 2024; previously deputy

head (academic) of Millfield

Pupils 585 **day girls** **Ages** 11–18**Term Fees** £8,350 **Bursaries**

5% of pupils, up to 100%

Alumni Screenwriter Jemima

Goldsmith, actresses Sienna Miller

and Emerald Fennell

Set in an imposing building just two minutes from Sloane Square, the stately institution has been given a contemporary injection with a brilliant new sixth-form centre, complete with its own gym, labs, study spaces and common room. There's a real emphasis here on instilling independence into students, and getting them prepped for the real world. The head of futures steers university applicants to destinations spanning Oxbridge, the US and everywhere in between, while an award-winning creative enterprise programme has turned many girls into entrepreneurs, from floristry to food. (Some of their businesses are now trading publicly.) There are societies aplenty, too: animal club stars giant African snails and a tortoise called Bobby; and the afternoon tea group – higher-brow than it sounds – is less about scones and more about discussing current affairs. Meanwhile, pastoral care is a real point of pride, and is underpinned by the dynamic life skills programme, not to mention a series of talks on parenting for adults. There are two tutors per tutor group, a unique arrangement, and pupils can drop into the well-being centre to talk to a counsellor during breaks and at lunchtime. Plans are underway to double the bursary provision, become carbon neutral by 2030 and launch some cutting-edge STEAM projects, including propelling a high altitude helium balloon into space. Life here is bustling, and overseen by interim head Rob Cawley, following the retirement of legendary head Lucy Elphinstone, who is described by one pupil as 'The. Best. Ever.'