



Learning in England ∞ Independent Schools

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An independent school is self-governing and not subject to the laws and regulations that govern maintained schools. There is a freedom to run the school. The Headteacher, in some schools called the Principal or Warden, has a great responsibility and duty, as guardian of the ethos, of sustaining the tradition and reputation of the school and its place in the wider community.

Parents or guardians must pay fees for their children's education. [Please see our information document which gives broad guidance on what fees are payable.]

Independent schools can join organisations which represent them to the wider world. The Boarding Schools Association, the Girls' Schools Association, the Headmasters' Conference Schools, the Independent Schools Council to name the most important. [Please see our information document on these organisations.] All independent schools will be inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate, which has a similar framework and approach to OFSTED.

“Membership of the HMC has criteria which guarantee quality, but we are all different shapes and sizes. Contrary to lazy media stereotypes, independent schools are not all cut from one kind of cloth. What does mark us out is that we are all genuinely independent, not funded by the State or local authority, directly accountable to parents, with whom as Heads we have a specific written contract. Our genuine independence allows us to be flexible, nimble and responsive to change, strong on the best of tradition yes, and also innovative, unafraid to do our own thing, focused on the child first, last and always.”¹

¹ Richard Harman former Chairman of the HMC



So, what makes an independent school distinctive?

First, they have **superb teaching** and **superb facilities**: labs for science and languages, music rooms, sports halls and grounds.

Secondly, they have long experience of **developing learning** in and beyond the classroom. Lessons in small groups of about 20 students or less mean everyone must join in.

Thirdly, Children can choose from an amazing range of activities what to do in their own time, outside lessons. This is an aspect of the school life called the extra-curricular or co-curricular programme. There will be impressive development of pupils and their personal skills in team sports, orchestras, bands and choirs, fine art and design, plays, expeditions and helping the elderly and children.

Finally, You will see on many of their websites a section relating to Alumni. Independent schools have strong networks with their past students, irrespective of the country they came from.

People who come to UK for an independent school education go back to their countries with skills and qualifications to bring significant change, as leaders in their societies.



How do I choose the best school for my child?



Since all independent schools are so different it is well worth doing thorough research to find out about each one. Paths to Learning can help with this.

We need to know your child well. Will he or she need particular challenge, or support academically, or in sport or the arts.

In the light of our Assessment we do our best to match your child to the best school to suit his or her attributes and aspirations.