



HIGHGATE SCHOOL

THE GODOLPHIN & LATYMER SCHOOL ●

Iffley Road, W6 0PG
Website godolphinandlatymer.com
Head Dr Frances Ramsey, DPhil, since 2017; previously principal of Queen's College
Pupils 800 day girls
Ages 11–18 **Term Fees** £6,978
Oxbridge 15% **Registration** by November of year before entry; £125 fee
Admission School's own exam and interviews
Alumnae Baroness Susan Greenfield, Julia King, Sophie Ellis-Bextor

Godolphin girls admitted to us that 'they are always being told they are amazing' – well, that's because they are. Dolphins are adventurous, fun, do well because they love it and, unlike some top academic hothouses, 'we don't take ourselves too seriously.' How refreshing to hear from a top London day school. Godolphin remains committed to interviewing all applicants – no small task when numbers have soared to over 850 (for 115 places). 'We are highly selective,' they tell us, rather unsurprisingly. IB average was up to 41 last year, A-levels down a smidgen at 88 per cent A*–B, but not for long given they trumpet 'our best-ever results' for GCSEs at 97 per cent A*–A. Head Dr Frances Ramsey told us that 'at Godolphin we foster high performance in a wide range of areas (academic, sporting, creative), but this is done in a warm, supportive and inclusive atmosphere, which bolsters the girls' confidence.' The girls we spoke to agree. Sport is very much a feature: the sports hall has netball courts, a climbing wall

and a trampoline, and there's an Astro on site too. They are regional finalists at netball and hockey, and their rowers are regularly invited to GB trials. There are too many other fabulous opportunities on offer to list here... A top-flight, nurturing school, where every girl will find her niche.

HAMPTON SCHOOL ●

Hanworth Road, TW12 3HD
Website hamptonschool.org.uk
Head Kevin Knibbs, MA, since 2013; previously Deputy Head
Pupils 1,270 day boys **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 11–18 **Term Fees** £6,685 **Oxbridge** 10%
Registration By autumn of year before entry; £125 fee
Admission School's own exams, interviews and previous school's report
Alumni cricketer Toby Roland-Jones, Olympic medallists Greg & Jonny Searle
PREP Head Tim Smith **Pupils** 230 day: 227 boys, 3 girls
Ages 3–11 **Term Fees** £4,645

Hampton's (justified) reputation for sport should not detract from its academic excellence, its considerable success in drama and music and its talent for cultivating a love of learning in all areas. We found a smorgasbord of cultures, characters and passions (including a maths-challenge expert, a drama aficionado and an accomplished musician who waxed lyrical about Hampton being an 'all Steinway school'), with pupils hailing from Surrey to Windsor, Ealing, Chiswick and Wimbledon. These boys are all united by a bright-eyed enthusiasm and an understated charm: there is a distinct lack of arrogance. That Hamptonians look out for and care for each other is something that popular, and visible, head Kevin Knibbs insists on. Pastoral care is superb and mental wellbeing is taken seriously; the school was one of the first to put Oxford Mindfulness Centre courses on the compulsory curriculum. They are big on digital awareness (every child is issued with an iPad on entry) but also on nurturing a love of reading ('the librarian is really helpful,' says one boy); lunch breaks are

◁ group of FHS girls went to the NASA Space Centre in Houston, Texas. They're high achievers in other areas too – the U12 netball A and B teams had unbeaten seasons, the school art Instagram account is gaining followers and the Entrepreneurship Fortnight encourages pupils to develop business skills (though these girls are no stranger to initiative, having set up a feminist society themselves). It's no wonder, then, that they're so oversubscribed. The school just celebrated its 140th birthday. Here's to the next 140 years.

FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL, SLOANE SQUARE ●

39 Graham Terrace, SW1W 8JF
Website fhs-sw1.org.uk **Head** Lucy Elphinstone, MA, since 2012; previously Senior Leader and Head of Sixth Form at Downe House
Pupils 408 day girls **Faith** C of E
Ages 11–18 **Term Fees** £6,970
Oxbridge 10% **Registration** by November of year before entry; £100 fee
Admission School's own exam and interview
Alumnae Jemima Khan, Vanessa-Mae, Sienna Miller
PREP Head Caroline Spencer
Pupils 162 day girls **Ages** 4–11
Term Fees £6,160
 Head Lucy Elphinstone has made it

her mission to prepare her girls for the digital age. The axiom around here is 'creativity, innovation and enterprise' – they're building a Centre for Creative Enterprise for the whole school as well as a sixth-form centre, where they'll teach new A-level subjects such as computer science. This is no longer a 'cosy safety school', and the academic bar has been raised high. FHS SW1 celebrated its highest-ever GCSE results last year (85 per cent A*–A), while plenty of leavers went to Oxbridge and Russell Group universities and 15 per cent to the US and Canada, one on a £30,000 scholarship to study film in LA. In sport, they dominate on the netball court: the U14s had an unbeaten season, and the U15s and U13s are off on a tour to South Africa. Meanwhile the choir went on tour to Athens and the school production of *The Snow Queen* played for one night only to the public in the West End. Tons of clubs include our favourite, the Festival Challenge Club, in which girls make recyclable rainproof clothing to wear to music festivals. Last year saw a record number of applications to the school, and the entry process for September 2019 has changed, with a cognitive ability test replacing the 'damaging effect' of 11+.