

The Modern Family • Worldwide Travel

Top of the class

The United Kingdom offers some of the best schools, private tuition and further education in the world, as well as those all-important extracurricular activities

When searching for the best school, tutor or activity provider for their children, parents will often look to names and institutions they can trust, those with a solid track record and the results to match.

But in this age of change, and with the workplace and educational landscape constantly evolving — for what, and where, should parents be looking?

Best schools

One girls' school with a reputation for its sporting prowess is Kent College (kent-college.co.uk), an independent boarding and day school for girls aged three to 18. Headmistress Julie Lodrick says: "We're passionate about creating well-rounded individuals who develop 'growth mindsets' in all aspects of school life, particularly sport. As a keen runner myself, I'm passionate about finding ways for students to participate in exercise."

"I believe the key to getting students involved, in particular girls, is to open up their perspectives on exercise — the school offers a wide array of sporting activities, such as yoga, pilates and boxercise, which concentrate on personal development rather than winning."

For parents with an eye on their child's future in a global sense, then Sevenoaks School (sevenoaksschool.org) is one of the world's leading independent International Baccalaureate (IB) schools, teaching girls and boys aged 11–18. Deputy head Tim Jones says: "As well as providing students with a world-class IB education, the school is passionate about equipping the next generation with a global outlook. For the staff, it's essential they give the next generation the skills to keep Britain thriving on an international stage and build the talent for the next generation of jobs."

Private tuition

If you're looking to give your child an extra step-up, private tutoring is an obvious place to start.

Enabling Enterprise (enablingenterprise.org) is an award-winning social scheme working

with schools and businesses across the country. Founder Tom Ravenscroft says: "Working as a secondary school teacher in Hackney, it really struck me that my 15- and 16-year-old students simply weren't equipped with any of the skills they'd actually need in the workplace, or for effective learning and communication in the classroom itself. I started Enabling Enterprise in 2009 to solve this problem by teaching children aged from three to 18 interpersonal skills, communication, self-management and creative problem solving. Every child learns in a different way and at a different pace, and a child's desire to genuinely understand something — rather than just accept it at face value — may conflict with their ability to access the school curriculum effectively, which is why private tuition can help."

Nathaniel McCullagh is the founder and managing director of Simply Learning Tuition (simplylearningtuition.co.uk), a leading independent education company providing private tutors: "Many problems stem from a lack of confidence. An ineffective teacher, illness or a learning difficulty — or even just dealing with the pressures of growing up — can reduce a child's confidence so they no longer enjoy school in general, or studying in particular."

"Individual tuition can bridge this gap by getting to the root of the problem. Working together, the tutor and the child can rebuild the child's self-esteem and restore their will to try again and to begin to love learning."

Continue reading on page 12



Students taking guitar lessons. Image credit: Getty

The Modern Family recommends...

Lindamood-Bell Learning Centre Go back to school with confidence

You've enjoyed the summer break, but now it's time to ensure your child goes back to school with confidence. Good literacy skills are the key to success. Did your child struggle with reading last year? Were they having difficulty understanding lessons? Consider enrolling at the Lindamood-Bell Learning Centre which has been helping children and families for 15 years. lindamoodbell.com

Dwight London Reliable path to university

The International Baccalaureate (IB), an alternative to traditional A-levels, offers a well-rounded global education. The IB Programme at Dwight School offers students the opportunity to gain a world-class qualification. IB students study six academic subjects and a critical thinking course, write a 4,000-word research essay and participate in creativity, activity and service. IB is a reliable route to university. dwightlondon.org

Marymount International New direction and excellent education

New Headmistress, Mrs Margaret Frazier, joins Marymount International School from Stone Ridge in Washington DC. An experienced teacher and administrator, Mrs Frazier is perfectly matched to Marymount's unique qualities — a small day and boarding school for girls aged 11–18, with small classes and an outstanding record teaching the IB. Results are excellent and students gain places at the world's top universities. marymountlondon.com

Mayfield School Artist in Residence

Mayfield School is pleased to announce Dan Stafford has been appointed the school's new Artist in Residence. As an accomplished ceramicist, Dan produces hand-built architectural ceramics influenced by architecture and the built environment, specifically high-rise, contemporary and metropolitan structures, using earthenware slips and glazes. He'll develop his own work in the superbly equipped pottery studio as well as teach girls and adults from the school and local community. The Artist in Residence programme provides inspiration and experience for students to see original artwork first-hand and learn from professional art practitioners. mayfieldgirls.org

How an IB Education can lead your child to Oxford University and beyond

We are all familiar with the traditional A-level route to get into university, but have you considered there might be a better option for your child?

The International Baccalaureate (IB) could be your child's ticket to a well-rounded and outstanding global education. At Dwight School London, the IB programmes offer students aged 3–18, who represent a wide range of cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, the opportunity to gain a world-class qualification.

The IB Diploma in the sixth form is sometimes seen as an elite programme, only suitable for the most able students. It's true that IB students study six subjects across all academic areas, in addition to a course in the Theory of Knowledge (critical thinking), write a 4,000-word research essay and follow a programme of Creativity, Activity and Service. This is a platform for the most able students to achieve success, however, it's also a reliable route to university for students with a wide range of abilities, as the Dwight results have shown. An added advantage of the IB is that the results are published in early July, at which point university offers are confirmed, several weeks before A-level students get their results.

This year, Dwight's 21 IB graduates came from many countries and backgrounds, including the local north London area. Between them, they scored an average points total of 35.7, out of a maximum of 45, which is well above the IB world average of 29.95. Four of them scored more than 40 points (equivalent to more than 3A*s at A-level), putting them in the top 5% of candidates worldwide. Two students scored 44 points (equivalent to more than 5A*s at A-level), a feat

and saying, "It was fortunate that I've been surrounded by many peers at Dwight who always inspired me to work hard." Gakuto, who's also a keen tennis player, is looking forward to joining the tennis team at Oxford.

Nick, a local north London boy whose 43 points secured his place at Oxford to study Law, actually studied a seventh IB subject, making his result the equivalent of more than 5A*s. In addition to his more traditional academic subjects, the breadth of the IB Diploma allowed him to pursue his love of art and drama. Maya (37 points) and Slim (35 points) have been inspired by their international education to study International Relations at Edinburgh and Exeter, respectively.

However, an IB education cannot be summed up with numbers alone; the programme at Dwight cultivates young adults who are prepared not only for university, but for the world beyond. With more than 50 countries represented, Dwight is a school for local and international students alike. The school welcomes students for whom English is an additional language (EAL), as well as those with educational needs. Dwight's small class sizes and friendly, supportive community enables students to thrive. As a non-selective, inclusive school, Dwight couldn't be more proud of these results. The school is even more proud to know that these graduates are young men and women who are confident, compassionate and internationally-minded, and fully expects them to follow the IB mission to strive to make the world a better and more peaceful place.



The Modern Family • Education & Schooling

Continued from page 10

"With school and university entry becoming increasingly competitive, an holistic approach is essential. Parents can get the best results from their child's tutor by working closely with them."

Further Education (FE)

While the best universities are household names, the UK is home to other world-ranked faculties such as Manchester and its computer science programme or University College London and its arts programmes — but in the current FE climate, what of alternatives?

Colin Mansell is co-founder and CEO of RED Academy (redacademy.com), which offers hyper-relevant programming for the technology sector: "This is where the major growth is, in coding jobs and digital marketing and UX/UI design. Our programmes are taught 'real world'; students are in an office working nine-to-five with real clients on courses that last for 12-24 weeks."

"What we're seeing is that traditional education is barely able to keep up with the tech industry. If a degree lasts three to four years, the world has changed by the time you finish. Since we began the first coding programme two years ago, we've swapped out about 50% of the content because the languages have evolved. So, we stick by our students until they gain employment. University graduates can leave and realise their degree doesn't get them the job they wanted."

Other institutions offering ultra-modern, real-world courses include Milton Keynes College — one of the most innovative FE colleges in the country. This year it partnered with the BBC's *Bake-Off Creme de la Creme* judge Claire Clark MBE to offer a range of unique patisserie courses where students worked with industry leading

“

Every child learns in a different way and at a different pace, and a child's desire to genuinely understand something may conflict with their ability to access the school curriculum effectively, which is why private tuition can help

chefs, and also partnered with video production and media agency, Movey (movey.co.uk), to bridge the gap between education and employment. Julie Mills, CEO and principal of Milton Keynes College (mkcollege.ac.uk), says: "The college prides itself on giving the best possible opportunities to young people. The college's tag line is 'Transforming Lives Through Learning' and it practises this in all areas. Milton Keynes College also works with students with disabilities, including autism, ADHD, cerebral palsy, global delay and



moderate learning difficulties, to help them obtain and remain in employment."

Extracurricular activities

For those looking to explore the importance of activities and learning beyond the curriculum, there's much to consider, from academic 'hard' skills, to interpersonal 'soft' skills.

"Breadth of experience is crucial," says Huw Jones, housemaster at St John's School, Leatherhead (stjohnsleatherhead.co.uk). "Extracurricular activities offer opportunities to develop key skills like communication and collaboration."

"Building resilience in young people is vital. Involvement in a varied extra-curricular programme allows pupils to learn as much outside classrooms as they do inside them, and often those lessons learned provide a springboard to greater academic success."

One school offering its pupils extracurricular activities is Giggleswick (giggleswick.org.uk), a 450-pupil, independent, co-ed boarding school in the Yorkshire Dales. The school offers pupils the time of their lives while gaining excellent academic results.

Head teacher Mark Turnbull says: "We actively encourage interest in cycling, running, climbing, triathlon and cyclocross and are lucky to have the natural surroundings for these sports. Every child has the opportunity to try a wide range of sports, including traditional team games like rugby, cricket and hockey."

The Modern Family recommends...

King's Rochester

Star pupil's new role

King's Rochester pupil, Edward Hyde, is set to end his whirlwind year as BBC Radio 2 Young Chorister of the Year on a high note with a role in the current production of *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*) at the Royal Opera House. Since winning, Edward has performed to audiences across the UK and abroad. kings-rochester.co.uk

Royal Masonic School for Girls

A top education for girls

Founded in 1788, The Royal Masonic School for Girls (RMS) is one of the oldest girls' schools in the country. RMS is a school which values social and emotional intelligence as highly as academic intelligence. It prides itself on encouraging girls to excel through nurture and encouragement rather than relentless pressure. Girls can challenge themselves to realise their strengths, overcome weaknesses and find their passion during these years of discovery. rmsforgirls.org.uk

Hampton School

Performing arts and drama

One of the UK's top-performing schools, Hampton provides an outstanding boys-only education, combining academic and all-round excellence with exceptional pastoral care. Academically selective, results are consistently among the highest nationally. Virtually all boys go on to elite universities. A superb Performing Arts centre supports impressive music and drama provision. Pupils also benefit from 22 acres of on-site playing fields and a state-of-the-art 3G sports ground. Close links are enjoyed with neighbouring Lady Eleanor Holles School. hamptonschool.org.uk

Queenswood School

A modern girls' school

Since 1894, Queenswood has delivered truly progressive girls' education in the most idyllic environment close to London. From day one, Queenswoodians learn to be independent, creative thinkers. Without enforced gender boundaries, students can take intellectual risks, ask questions, and make judgements. The school's worldwide network of successful, entrepreneurial alumnae is one of the most active of its kind and provides a comprehensive networking service. Queenswood prepares pupils for the real world. queenswood.org

What makes a great school?

1 Donal Brennan, Head of The Hampshire School (thehampshireschoolchelsea.co.uk)
"I believe a great school is defined by its principles and values — everything we do is rooted in our ethos: 'we care for each other'. Children should leave a great school believing they can make a difference. A great school should see the arts and sport as a priority. A high quality, and quantity, of arts and sport provision will stimulate children's minds and benefit them in academic subjects, too. We offer everything from ballet to rugby, horse riding to chess, allowing our children to thrive in all areas and recognise their talents."

2 Jenny Brown, Head of St Albans High School for Girls (stahs.org.uk)
"Exam results and league tables can only tell you so much. To really judge the quality of a school, results should be seen in context. Parents can enquire about a school's value-added measure — this will tell them how much 'extra' the school adds to each pupil and will provide a figure that can be compared with competitors. Parents should also look for signs that schools are ambitious for their pupils beyond results and destinations — individual work-plans for students are a good indicator of this."

3 Nick Fisher, Head of Sherfield School (sherfieldschool.co.uk)
"Great schools should have a strong partnership with the home. Staff, pupils and parents need to work together and this requires excellent communication and shared core values. Communication with parents should be made as easy as possible. A great school also recognises that learning goes on well beyond the classroom. This shouldn't be confined just to sport, but should embrace a whole range of things, such as outdoor pursuits, debating, arts and crafts, music and drama."

A community where individuals flourish



The overwhelming characteristic of King's Rochester is its warmth and friendliness, in the beautiful setting of historic Rochester where the school sits beside the castle and cathedral on the banks of the River Medway. As *The Good Schools Guide* says: "A tangible sense of community where everyone knows each other well..."

Founded in AD604, King's Rochester is the second-oldest school in the UK and the oldest Cathedral Choir School. It's evolved into an outstanding 21st-century day and boarding school for around 650 girls and boys aged three to 18, with excellent facilities at all levels. Located in north Kent, just 40 minutes by train from London and a short walk from the station, it benefits from high-speed services from St Pancras and direct services from Victoria and Charing Cross.

The school has a strong reputation for maximising the potential of pupils with a broad range of strengths. A wide curriculum, including a plethora of languages and the EPQ, allows great choice for GCSE and A-level options. In summer 2017, record results were achieved at GCSE and the second-highest ever results at A-level, with a fifth of students achieving straight A*/A grades. These results helped them to secure places at top universities and scholarships to prestigious colleges and conservatoires, supported by an outstanding careers and university application service.

King's Rochester prides itself on knowing all students and parents very well: pastoral care

its chapel; indeed, the Cathedral Choristers are educated here and Music Scholars go on to leading conservatoires and even win Olivier Awards (for *School of Rock 2017*) before they graduate! Such is the personality of the school that many Old Roffensians return to play in concerts and musicals after they have left.

King's Rochester Sports Centre has recently had a £500,000 refurbishment to provide pupils with a state of the art facility in addition to playing fields, a heated indoor swimming pool and a boat-house for rowing. The hockey players benefit from playing on the same premierships hockey pitch as many of the Team GB Olympians and currently have representation on the Scotland U18 Women's Hockey squad.

A new drama studio, with the latest digital sound and lighting, supports pupils, who also benefit from involvement in the RSC Learning Network, and some current pupils perform with the National Youth Theatre.

The boarding community at King's Rochester reflects the personal approach of the school. With beds for 65 pupils, this ensures a real family feel to both the boys and girls' Houses where boarding starts from age 11 and comprises both British and international students. With fewer than 9% of all pupils coming from overseas and representing over a dozen nationalities, King's is a fully British school with the advantage of offering pupils a wider perspec-



Visit the school's next Open Morning on Saturday 30 September 2017, 9.15am to midday. The Principal will speak at 9.30am