

Herschel Girls' School

Cape Town, South Africa



Named for the Cape astronomer who once mapped the southern stars, this Claremont school has posted the country's top matric results.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	70/100
Academic outcomes	72/100
University placement	70/100
Prestige & heritage	71/100
Alumni network	70/100
Facilities	70/100
Transparency	64/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Herschel’s hold on the Cape Town girls’ market rests on two things that matter: hard academic credibility and a settled institutional identity. This is an independent Anglican school in Claremont, founded in 1922, teaching girls from Grade 000 to Grade 12 in English and leading to the National Senior Certificate through the IEB. The school’s own language leans heavily on belonging, kindness and personal growth; the more telling point is that Herschel has the ballast to carry both high expectations and a broad co-curricular life without collapsing into slogan. For parents who want a girls’ school with *serious academic intent* and an older, established culture, Herschel belongs on the shortlist at once.

What marks it out is the combination of age range, consistency and market standing. A school that starts at **age 3** and runs through **18** can shape habits early and keep momentum through the exam years, which suits families looking for a long runway rather than a tactical senior-school move. Herschel also carries real external markers of standing: ISASA, SAHISA, GSA and IEB accreditation place it firmly inside South Africa's established independent-school network. The average annual day fee is **ZAR 125,370**, which puts it in the expensive bracket locally and tells you the comparison set is Cape Town's top private schools, not the wider day-school market. Parents are paying for a **high-trust, high-expectation** environment with a strong all-through proposition.

The pupil who thrives here is bright, organised and comfortable in a school with a clear moral frame. Herschel talks openly about respect, equity, integrity, empathy and authenticity; in practice, that points to a culture with defined behavioural expectations rather than a loose, laissez-faire one. Girls who want to do everything at once — academics, music, drama, sport, community engagement, clubs and societies — have room to build a full school life. Girls who need a rougher, more anonymous environment, or who chafe at a school with a strong inherited identity, will find it a tighter fit. This is a **purposeful**, **well-bounded** school for families who want ambition without coarseness, tradition without stuffiness, and a girls' education that takes intellectual life seriously.

STRENGTHS

- Herschel Girls' School is an independent Anglican day school founded in 1922, giving it more than a century of continuous operation in Cape Town's southern suburbs.
- The school is described as one of the country's best-known schools for girls and was noted as one of the top performing schools in South Africa, achieving the highest academic results in the country for National Senior Certificate exams in 2019.
- Herschel spans the full schooling continuum from Pre-Nursery through Grade 12, allowing continuity of education on a single historic Claremont campus without a school change at age 13.
- The Preparatory School was awarded Platinum Status plus a Diamond Decade Award by the Eco-Schools Assessment Team, and Herschel is one of only three schools in the Western Cape to have reached this level.
- The school operates with a relatively low staff-to-pupil ratio, with roughly 100 full-time staff for an enrolment of around 927 girls.

TRADE-OFFS

- As a single-sex institution, Herschel is not an option for families wanting co-education or for families with sons who want siblings at the same school.
- Tuition fees run from roughly R80,000 to R170,000-R178,800 a year depending on grade, placing it firmly in the premium private-school bracket for Cape Town.
- The school is a day school only, with no published boarding option, which is a limiting factor for relocating expat families without a settled local base.
- Its Anglican religious affiliation and chapel-centred traditions may not suit families seeking a strictly secular or multi-faith environment.

ADMISSIONS

Entry points run from Pre-Nursery through Grade 12, with most competition for spaces in the Pre-Preparatory and Grade 8 intake years. Applications require a non-refundable R350 registration fee and a birth certificate; a further non-refundable Acceptance of Place fee (roughly R6,500-R22,000 depending on grade) is charged once a place is offered. Given the school's academic reputation, places at popular entry points are sought after, so early application is advisable. There is no boarding option, so day-pupil logistics and catchment proximity matter.

WTS RATING 

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