

Keystone Academy

Beijing, China



Five houses named for the Chinese elements anchor a bilingual boarding culture on Beijing's Shunyi plain, near the Great Wall.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	75/100
Academic outcomes	78/100
University placement	76/100
Prestige & heritage	74/100
Alumni network	72/100
Facilities	78/100
Transparency	72/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Five houses named for the Chinese elements tell you a good deal about Keystone before you reach the timetable. This is a bilingual boarding school built with intent, not an expat add-on with Mandarin bolted to the side. Founded in 2014 in Beijing’s Shunyi district, it runs from age 3 to 18, teaches in English and Mandarin, and stakes its identity on a three-way blend of Chinese, American and global traditions. The school calls that “a new world school”; stripped of slogan, the substance is clear enough: IB framing, bilingual immersion, and a residential model that treats community life as part of the education rather than a logistical extra. With ****1,670+**** pupils, ****500**** faculty and a striking ****3.3:1**** student-teacher ratio, Keystone has scale, but not the anonymity that often comes with it.

What sets Keystone apart in the Beijing market is the seriousness of its cultural proposition. Many international schools in China promise global education with local relevance; Keystone goes further and makes Chinese culture and identity central to the design of the school. That matters for families who want children fluent across more than one educational code, not just conversational in two languages. The boarding offer reinforces that ambition. This is not a token weekly boarding wing attached to a day school. Residential life sits inside the school's stated mission, and that gives Keystone a more *self-contained*, *high-commitment* character than many day-led competitors in the capital. Accreditation from the IBO and CIS gives it the external markers parents expect, but the more important point is that the school has a coherent thesis and sticks to it.

Fees place Keystone firmly in the premium bracket: an average annual day fee of **US\$45,091** across the full age range, and **US\$60,727** for boarding. Parents paying that level need clarity on outcomes, and this is where the picture is less complete than it should be. The school publishes its scale, mission and institutional architecture clearly; it does not publish the kind of hard aggregate academic outcome data that would sharpen comparison with Beijing's most academically transparent rivals. That does not erase the school's appeal, but it does matter. Keystone belongs on a shortlist for families who want a *deliberate bicultural education*, a genuine boarding environment, and a child who will thrive in a school with a *strong internal culture* rather than a loose, cosmopolitan day-school feel. It suits intellectually confident students, internationally minded Chinese families, and boarders who want structure and belonging. It is not the obvious choice for parents who want a conventional British or American template, or for children who prefer a lighter-touch school culture.

STRENGTHS

- Fully authorised IB World School offering both the Middle Years Programme (Grades 6-10) and the Diploma Programme (Grades 11-12).
- A reported fourth-cohort Diploma class achieved an average score of 37.6 out of 45 with a 98.6% pass rate, among the strongest results recorded by the school.
- Maintains a low student-teacher ratio of roughly 1:5, with around 60% of faculty drawn from outside China.
- Distinctive bilingual model that runs Chinese-English immersion through the primary years before shifting to predominantly English instruction, paired with a dedicated "China Thread" curriculum strand.
- Accredited by WASC and a member of the Round Square network, giving access to a wider community of international partner schools.

TRADE-OFFS

- Boarding becomes compulsory for every student from Grade 9 onward, which is a significant lifestyle commitment for day-school families with older children.
- Annual fees run into several hundred thousand RMB depending on grade and boarding status, placing it among Beijing's costlier international options.
- Campus is located in Shunyi District's Houshayu Town on the northeastern edge of Beijing, a commute-heavy location for families based elsewhere in the city.
- The bilingual, China-focused curriculum design means families seeking a purely English-medium or purely Western-style programme may find the model less conventional than other international schools.

ADMISSIONS

Keystone admits students from pre-kindergarten through Grade 12, making it a through-train school where early entry points (younger grades) are generally less competitive than lateral entry into upper secondary. Applications are processed through the OpenApply platform, and older applicants (Grades 9-12) may face additional testing requirements. Because boarding is mandatory from Grade 9, families joining at that stage should factor residential life into their decision alongside the standard application, interview, and record-review process.

WTS RATING 

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