

Haberdashers' Girls' School

Elstree, United Kingdom



Single-sex teaching by day, shared sixth-form classes by choice, on a 100-acre Hertfordshire campus built for top 0.5% GCSE results

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	71/100
Academic outcomes	86/100
University placement	84/100
Prestige & heritage	78/100
Alumni network	1/100
Facilities	75/100
Transparency	75/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

The defining draw here is the combination of single-sex schooling from age 4 to 18 with shared sixth-form classes by choice, all on a 100-acre Hertfordshire campus in Elstree. That structure gives Haberdashers' Girls' School a clear identity: academically *hard-driving* in the earlier years, then more outward-facing at the top of the school without abandoning the benefits of a girls-only environment. Founded in 1875 by the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers, it has the institutional weight and social confidence of an old London-linked independent school, but its value to parents rests on current substance, not heritage. The British curriculum and English-medium teaching are straightforward; the more telling signals are the school's day-only model, its non-religious character and accreditations from ISI and the GSA.

This is an expensive school at an average **£29,490** a year across ages 4 to 18, and it operates in the top tier of the UK day-school market. Parents are paying for a **high-pressure academic culture**, a long-established brand and a campus scale that most London day schools cannot match. The editorial tagline's reference to top 0.5% GCSE results places the school in the **sharply selective** end of the sector; a child who thrives here will want pace, competition and intellectual seriousness, not hand-holding. The day format also matters. This is not a cloistered boarding-school world but a commute-in school serving families who want elite academic standards without full residential life.

Why shortlist it? Because few schools combine **4-18** continuity, **100-acre** grounds, a girls-only framework and optional co-educational sixth-form teaching in one package. That mix suits ambitious families who want a **disciplined academic runway** from the early years through university preparation, with more social range in the sixth form. The pupil who will want Haberdashers' Girls' School is bright, resilient and comfortable in a **demanding peer group**. The pupil who will not is the one who needs a softer tempo, a broader vocational emphasis or a school that wears its pastoral side more visibly than its academic edge.

STRENGTHS

- In a recent leaving cohort the school secured 12 Oxbridge offers from 43 applications, comprising 7 from Cambridge and 5 from Oxford, and all were accepted, indicating strong university progression.
- The school was inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in February 2025 and all inspection standards were met.
- Up to £3.6m a year in means-tested financial assistance is available across the Haberdashers' schools for around six per cent of pupils, including full bursaries, alongside academic and music scholarships worth up to 25 per cent of fees.
- Music and drama both rate as world-class and sport and visual arts as outstanding, giving the school a genuinely broad co-curricular strength.
- The school occupies a rural outlook in 35-acre grounds within easy reach of London, and shares co-curricular activities with the neighbouring Haberdashers' Boys' School.
- The school admits students at four formal points, ages 4, 7, 11 and 16, giving families some flexibility about when to join.

TRADE-OFFS

- The school is single-sex (girls only) and day-only, with no boarding provision, ruling it out for families wanting co-education throughout or a residential option.
- Entry is highly competitive, with 11+ candidates typically expected in the top tier nationally, so only a minority of applicants secure a place.
- Annual fees inclusive of VAT run from around £26,000 in the junior years up to roughly £31,000-£32,000 in the senior school and sixth form, a substantial commitment without a scholarship or bursary.
- A 2021 Daily Telegraph report cited pupil claims of sexism and 'forced sex' linked to interactions with the neighbouring boys' school, with some pupils saying reported cases were downplayed, a reminder that the two single-sex schools operate on adjoining sites with shared activities.

ADMISSIONS

Entry points are 4+, 7+, 11+ and 16+, with the senior school also drawing internal promotions from its own junior school. Assessments for 11+ candidates cover English, maths and verbal and non-verbal reasoning, followed by interview; successful applicants are typically working within the top tier nationally. Sixth-form entry is based on GCSE performance and subject-specific tests. Registration generally closes some months ahead of the exam sittings, and places are oversubscribed relative to demand. Academic and music scholarships worth up to 25 per cent of fees are available, alongside means-tested bursaries that can cover a substantial proportion, or all, of the fees for eligible families.

WTS RATING 

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