

Mount Kelly

Tavistock, United Kingdom



On the edge of Dartmoor, an Olympic-legacy 50m pool has sent swimmers to six straight Olympic and Paralympic Games.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	56/100
Academic outcomes	64/100
University placement	63/100
Prestige & heritage	67/100
Alumni network	0/100
Facilities	68/100
Transparency	57/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Mount Kelly’s case starts with place and one decisive asset. This is an Anglican British school in Tavistock, founded in **1877**, serving ages **3–18**, with both day and boarding options. The setting matters: a market town on the edge of Dartmoor, with the school a five-minute walk from Tavistock centre. That gives boarders and older pupils more freedom than an isolated rural campus, without the churn and distractions of a city. The real differentiator, though, is sport at serious level. The school’s own emphasis on performance swimming, backed by its Olympic-legacy 50m pool, puts Mount Kelly in a narrow national bracket. For families with a swimmer, this is not a decorative extra; it is the reason to visit. The school has sent swimmers to **6** consecutive Olympic and Paralympic Games. That record

gives Mount Kelly a **hard competitive edge** that many boarding schools cannot match.

Beyond swimming, the appeal is a blend of structure, small-town access and full-through schooling. A child can start at ***3*** and stay to ***18***, which suits families who want continuity rather than another admissions cycle at 11 or 13. The school also trades on a lived, not manufactured, connection to its surroundings: town amenities, local sports clubs, sailing in Plymouth, Dartmoor on the doorstep. That produces a **grounded daily life** rather than a hermetic boarding bubble. Parents who want glossy metropolitan sophistication will find stronger contenders elsewhere. Parents who want a school with **proper sporting seriousness**, clear routines and a town that teenagers can navigate safely will find Mount Kelly more convincing.

Why shortlist it? Because it offers a distinct proposition in a crowded independent market: credible boarding, a long-established British curriculum school, and elite swimming infrastructure without London prices or London sprawl. It also carries recognised badges of institutional seriousness through ISI and HMC accreditation. The school will suit disciplined swimmers, sporty all-rounders, and children who thrive with **rhythm, routine and purpose**. It will also suit boarders who benefit from **contained independence**: enough access to the outside world to grow up, not enough to drift. It is less suited to the child who wants a high-voltage urban sixth form, a visibly avant-garde culture, or a school whose public identity rests first on academic statistics. Mount Kelly's identity is **clear-eyed and specific**: sport-led for some, steady and traditional for others, with swimming as its unmistakable signature.

STRENGTHS

- Boarding and day options from age 3 to 18
- Full British curriculum taught in English, with published examination results and university destinations
- World-class performance swimming pathway and Olympic swimming alumni
- Compact, close-knit community of just over 600 pupils with small class sizes
- Practical Tavistock setting with the town centre a five-minute walk away

TRADE-OFFS

- Anglican character may not suit all families
- British-only curriculum limits non-UK pathways
- Tavistock location may feel remote to international families
- Non-academically-selective intake means results are solid rather than top-tier

ADMISSIONS

Mount Kelly is a co-educational British day and boarding school for ages 3-18, so admissions run from Lower Prep through Sixth Form. WSA describes the school as non-selective, with no rigorous entrance examinations. The school publicly signals several main entry routes: prep entry including 11+ and 13+, sixth form entry, lower prep admissions, and overseas admissions with English as an Additional Language support. Scholarships and awards are listed separately, including swimming awards and bursaries, which indicates that sport can form a distinct route into the school.

What the school does not publish in the material reviewed here are the practical details parents often want most: precise application deadlines, the format of assessments, or the structure of interviews. It does, however, present a staged admissions process and separate pathways for military families and overseas pupils. Financial support is available through bursaries, alongside non-discretionary awards and scholarships. For families considering Mount Kelly primarily for performance sport, the dedicated swimming awards route appears to be the most distinctive part of the admissions landscape.

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_ccecdca10.