

# City of London School

London, United Kingdom



*A 1442 bequest from the City's own Town Clerk still funds this rigorous day school perched on the Thames at Blackfriars.*

## RANKING DIMENSIONS

|                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Overall              | 71/100 |
| Academic outcomes    | 82/100 |
| University placement | 80/100 |
| Prestige & heritage  | 81/100 |
| Alumni network       | 13/100 |
| Facilities           | 74/100 |
| Transparency         | 76/100 |

## EDITOR'S VERDICT

The selling point is plain: this is a boys’ day school in the City, on the Thames at Blackfriars, with the weight of the Corporation of London behind it and a serious record of university placement. City of London School was founded in 1834, but its identity is older and sharper than the date alone implies; the school still sits inside a civic tradition funded by the City’s Cash, alongside its partner schools for girls and at Freeman’s. That matters. CLS is not a country-house boarding school importing metropolitan polish after the fact. It is a *\*hard-edged urban academic school\**, built for bright boys who want London itself as part of the experience.

The academic case is strong and concrete. In the Class of 2024, **88%** of 165 leavers went to top-100 universities; **18** went to Oxbridge, with 10 to Cambridge and 8 to Oxford, and 45 to Russell Group institutions. Those are serious outcomes at scale, not a boutique sixth-form triumph built on a tiny cohort. HMC membership places the school firmly in the established top tier of British independent education, and the average annual day fee of **£29,545** across ages 11 to 18 pitches it as expensive but not absurd by central London standards. Parents paying that sum are buying access to a *fiercely academic* boys' school with clear traction at the most selective universities.

What is special here is the combination of place, purpose and alumni depth. The school is for boys only, aged 11 to 18, taught in English on a British curriculum, and it has at least 117 notable alumni catalogued in Wikidata across politics, scholarship, writing, the arts and sport. That breadth reinforces the point that CLS does not educate for one narrow professional lane, even if its City location invites assumptions about finance and law. The more telling pattern is intellectual seriousness. This is a school for boys who will thrive in a *high-pressure*, *argumentative*, *fast-moving* environment and who want classmates with similar horsepower. It is *not for the faint-hearted*, and that is part of its appeal.

It belongs on a shortlist for families who want a rigorous London day education without the social theatre of the grander boarding names. Boys who will do well here are academically ambitious, verbally confident and happy in a school with a strong sense of tradition but no pastoral soft-focus in its public identity. If you want bucolic grounds, co-education or a visibly progressive institutional mood, look elsewhere. If you want central London, strong university outcomes, deep civic roots and a *serious intellectual culture*, CLS earns close attention.

STRENGTHS

- City of London School is a boys' day school with roots to a 1442 bequest by town clerk John Carpenter, formally established by Act of Parliament in 1834, giving it one of the longest continuous educational lineages in London.
- The 2024 A-level cohort was strong, with 39% of grades at A\*, 71% at A\*-A and 94% at A\*-B per the school's published results.
- The school offers transformational bursaries that can cover up to 100% of fees, opening access to boys from the state sector.
- It occupies a purpose-built site beside the Thames in the City of London, giving pupils ready access to the Square Mile's museums, livery companies and transport links.
- University progression is strong, with 88% of 2024 leavers heading to top-100 universities, including 18 to Oxbridge and 45 to Russell Group institutions.

TRADE - OFFS

- It is a single-sex boys' school with no boarding provision, so it will not suit families wanting co-education or a residential option.
- Entry is highly competitive at every stage, particularly at 11+ and 13+, where applicants far outnumber places.
- The annual day fee of £30,000 places it firmly in the higher tier of London day-school costs.
- A cottage industry of specialist tutoring firms exists specifically to prepare boys for CLS entrance tests and interviews, indicating an exam-preparation intensity some families may find off-putting.
- On-site sport and outdoor space are limited by the constrained central London site relative to schools with suburban or rural estates.

## ADMISSIONS

Entry points are 10+, 11+ (the largest intake, into Year 7), deferred 13+, and 16+ into the Sixth Form. All routes require registration, computerised or written assessments (English, maths, reasoning) and an interview; 16+ candidates also sit subject-specific papers and a cognitive ability test. Competition is intense, particularly at 11+ and 13+, where places are far outnumbered by applicants. Bursaries covering up to 100% of fees are available but require passing the standard entrance assessment first.

## NOTABLE ALUMNI (117)

**SPORT:** Barry Pryer, Bertram Louis Abrahams, Cyril Hawker, W.B. Young

**MUSIC:** Joe Alwyn, Herbert Bedford, Daniel Radcliffe, Ernest Lough, Peter Callander, Wilfred Ernest Sanderson

**DRAMA:** Skandar Keynes, Roy Ward Baker, John Lawrence Toole, Alfred Sutro, Joe Alwyn, Daniel Radcliffe, Denis Norden, Raj Ghatak

**VISUAL\_ARTS:** William Huggins, Arthur Rackham, Ralph Knott, Isaac Snowman

**LETTERS:** Sidney Lee, Julian Barnes, Edwin Abbott Abbott, Edward Garnett, George Newnes, Alfred Sutro, Arthur Henry Bullen, Charles Edward Montague

**POLITICS:** H. H. Asquith, Charles Ritchie, 1st Baron Ritchie of Dundee, Howard Pearce, Geoffrey Finsberg, George Newnes, Charles Stone, Lancelot Hare, Thomas Spurgeon Page

**SCIENCE:** William Huggins, Sidney Lee, Peter Higgs, Max Newman, William Henry Young, William Edwin Anderson, William Henry Perkin, Arthur Henry Bullen

**BUSINESS:** Albert Samuel Pam, Colin Southgate, Cyril Hawker, John Davis, Maurice Wohl, Tim Jackson

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\\_27c0b28783](https://WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_27c0b28783).