

Westerford High School

Cape Town, South Africa



A public school beneath Table Mountain that outscores most private rivals, topping the province in 2025 matric results.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	63/100
Academic outcomes	67/100
University placement	64/100
Prestige & heritage	63/100
Alumni network	62/100
Facilities	59/100
Transparency	52/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Westerford occupies a rare position in Cape Town’s market: a secular public day school with the academic punch, sporting expectation and co-curricular breadth that many fee-paying schools use to justify far higher costs. Founded in 1953, it runs in English, teaches the IEB curriculum and keeps a **14:1** student-teacher ratio with average classes of **28**.

The school’s own account is blunt about its model: strong academics, compulsory sport and an enthusiastically embraced cultural life, all under the motto “Nothing But Our Best”. That combination gives Westerford its edge. This is not a loose, laissez-faire public school. It is a high-output institution with **serious expectations** and a **clear performance culture**.

What puts it on a shortlist is not branding but track record and structure. A public school that tops provincial matric tables in 2025 earns attention on results alone; a public school that does it while insisting on compulsory sport and more than forty clubs and societies earns a second look. Parents weighing Westerford against Cape Town’s established private schools will find the key distinction here: **private-school breadth without private-school insulation**. The setting beneath Table Mountain carries prestige, but the more important point is operational. This is a large, busy, multi-strand school where academic ambition sits alongside leadership, music, service and competitive sport. The school also states an explicit commitment to diversity, belonging and transformation, which matters in a city where many legacy schools still trade on older social codes. Westerford feels **ambitious, adult and unsentimental**.

The right student for Westerford is energetic, resilient and happy in a culture where participation is not optional window-dressing. A child who wants only classroom study and a quiet timetable will find the compulsory sport programme intrusive. A student who enjoys juggling lessons, fixtures, rehearsals, committees and friends will thrive. The school suits families who want **earned achievement**, **a full school life** and public-sector value rather than boutique pastoralism. It also suits academically strong children who do not need spoon-feeding. Westerford offers scale, standards and range from ages ***5-18***, but it asks for commitment in return. For the right pupil, that bargain is **hard to ignore**.

STRENGTHS

- Co-educational, secular public high school in Cape Town
- English-medium teaching suits many international families
- 14:1 student-teacher ratio is relatively manageable
- Compulsory sport and active cultural programme are explicit

TRADE-OFFS

- Day school only; no boarding for overseas families
- Public school setting may feel less tailored internationally
- Average class size is 28, not especially small

ADMISSIONS

Westerford is a co-educational, secular day school in Newlands, Cape Town, founded in 1953. The supplied context lists ages 5–18, though the school’s own site describes it as a public high school; in practical admissions terms, families should expect the main entry point to be secondary years rather than a through-school intake. The school presents itself as academically serious, with compulsory sport and a notably broad co-curricular offer, including more than 40 clubs and societies. English is the language of instruction, and the curriculum is listed here as IEB.

Publicly available information in the material provided does not set out the admissions mechanics in enough detail to be precise. Westerford does not, from these sources, publish specific application deadlines, assessment formats, interview requirements, or bursary and financial-aid arrangements. Nor is any unusual selection process explicitly described beyond the school’s emphasis on a holistic pupil experience. Parents should therefore expect to consult the school directly for year-specific timelines, testing requirements and any fee-support options.

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_6ce345d2d8.