

Alleyn's School

London, United Kingdom



A 1619 theatre fortune built this Dulwich day school, whose junior houses still bear the names of Edward Alleyn's playhouses.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	78/100
Academic outcomes	81/100
University placement	79/100
Prestige & heritage	79/100
Alumni network	78/100
Facilities	76/100
Transparency	75/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Edward Alleyn’s theatre money still shapes the character here. This is a Dulwich day school with a long institutional memory, but not a museum piece: the school’s own public face pushes 3D tours, AIQ, TEDxAlleyns School Youth, sustainability, and a heavy co-curricular offer alongside the core senior school. Alleyn’s is Anglican, co-educational, and British in curriculum, serving 11–18 in the senior years, with junior schools feeding in below that. That combination matters. Parents get the depth and ritual of an old south London independent, without the boarding frame or the social distance that can come with it. At an average annual day fee of **£30,585**, it sits in the expensive London day-school bracket, but not at the very top of the market.

The academic picture is strong and, crucially, legible. In the 2024 leavers' cohort of **155**, **87%** went to top-100 universities; **18** secured Oxbridge places, with Cambridge taking 10 and Oxford 8, and 40 went on to Russell Group universities. Those are serious destination figures. They place Alleyn's in the *hard-driving* end of the London day-school market, even if the school's public messaging gives equal weight to pastoral care, sport, performing arts and enrichment. Parents who want a school that does only one thing — pure hothouse academics, or pure sporting muscle, or pure creative looseness — have cleaner options elsewhere. Alleyn's strength is breadth with real outcomes, not boutique specialisation.

What is special about it is the mix: a school founded in 1619 with genuine cultural inheritance, a conspicuous commitment to public-facing ideas work, and an alumni base that reaches well beyond the usual old-boy list. Wikidata alone records 74 notable alumni, including 21 actors and directors, 10 scientists and scholars, and five star-tier drama award winners. That reinforces a point the destinations data already hints at: Alleyn's does not produce one narrow type. It suits bright, energetic students who want a *high-pressure but not monastic* education — children who will use the studios, audition for things, turn up to talks, play sport, argue in MUN, and still expect strong university outcomes. It is *not* for the diffident* or for families who want a small, sheltered atmosphere. It belongs on a shortlist for parents seeking a *full-spectrum* London independent with intellectual credibility, cultural range and a *properly ambitious* peer group.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1619 by the Elizabethan actor Edward Alleyn, giving the school over four centuries of continuous history and a long-established co-educational ethos in Dulwich.
- Strong 2024 A-Level results, with 38 per cent of grades at A* and 71 per cent at A*-A, and 87 per cent of leavers progressing to top-100 universities.
- Extensive bursary programme offering means-tested financial assistance to widen access at the Senior School.
- World-class music and elite drama provision, backed by a broad co-curricular programme including Combined Cadet Force and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- Rated Excellent by ISI and a member of HMC, placing it firmly within the established British independent sector.
- Substantial south London campus with strong sport and performing-arts facilities, publicly documented on the school website.

TRADE - OFFS

- Fees are a significant commitment at £30,000 a year for day pupils.
- Entry is academically selective and competitive, particularly at 11+, where candidates sit written papers followed by a group activity and interview, with in-year vacancies rare.
- It is a large all-through school, which may not suit families seeking a smaller, more intimate day-school setting.
- Day-only provision means it will not suit families needing boarding or a residential campus.
- As an Anglican foundation with a conventional British academic identity, it is less suited to families wanting an explicitly international or markedly progressive ethos.

ADMISSIONS

Alleyn's is an academically selective co-educational day school admitting at 4+, 7+ and 9+ into the Junior Schools, and at 11+ or 16+ into the Senior School; there is no general mid-year entry. The main 11+ intake offers around 150 places, with roughly two-thirds going to applicants from outside Alleyn's own junior schools. Entry involves written assessments (English and Maths at 11+) followed by a group activity and interview. Registration for 2027 entry opens 1 September and closes 13 November 2026, with a non-refundable registration fee (waived for Pupil Premium applicants). Means-tested bursaries and merit scholarships are available at 11+ and 16+.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (74)

SPORT: Terence Higgins, Baron Higgins, Henry Cotton, Micky Stewart, Mike Edwards, John Pretlove, Peter Lyons, Theo Dan

MUSIC: Jessie Ware, David Hemmings, Jack Peñate, Eddie Hardin, Frank Thornton, Florence Welch, Dobrinka Tabakova, Pixie Geldof

DRAMA: Leslie Howard, Jude Law, David Hemmings, C. S. Forester, Julian Glover, Ray Cooney, Simon Ward, Samuel West

VISUAL_ARTS: Jessie Ware, Jack Peñate, James Bolivar Manson, Jack Bridger Chalker, Kenneth Spring, Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen, Alan Younger

LETTERS: Leslie Howard, C. S. Forester, Ray Cooney, V. S. Pritchett, Arthur Watson, Kelvin MacKenzie, Michael Hastings, Zezi Ifore

POLITICS: Terence Higgins, Baron Higgins, Stuart Blanch, Ajay Kakkar, Baron Kakkar

SCIENCE: Reginald Victor Jones, V. S. Pritchett, James Bolivar Manson, Colin Robbins, Thomas Gerald Room, Frank George Young, Leonard James Hooper, Samuel Dalziel Heron

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_740dc768be.