

King Edward's School, Birmingham

Birmingham, United Kingdom



A royal charter from 1552 anchors this Edgbaston day school, where a third of new boys receive means-tested fee support.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	78/100
Academic outcomes	81/100
University placement	78/100
Prestige & heritage	80/100
Alumni network	79/100
Facilities	76/100
Transparency	74/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

A royal charter from 1552 still matters at King Edward’s School, Birmingham, but the sharper point is access. This is a **serious academic engine** with around 900 boys aged 11 to 18 in Edgbaston, and it backs its rhetoric on social reach with money: the school states that the King Edward VI Foundation provides £1 million a year for assisted places, while alumni and supporters have raised over £12 million for the same cause in recent years. The editorial tagline adds the figure parents need to know: a third of new boys receive means-tested fee support. That combination — old grammar-school intellectual culture, independent-school resources, and real bursary depth — gives King Edward’s a market position that is **distinctive**, not decorative.

The school shares a 50-acre site with King Edward VI High School for Girls, and that scale matters. Few day schools offer this amount of space while remaining academically selective and city-facing. The public case for the school rests on challenge, and the numbers support it. For the Class of 2024, **88%** of 135 leavers went to top-100 universities, with **26 Oxbridge** places and 51 to Russell Group institutions; Cambridge took 14, Oxford 12 and Birmingham 18. Those are not the outcomes of a school that coasts on reputation. They reflect a *high-pressure, high-yield* culture in which bright boys are expected to think hard, work fast and compete with confidence.

At an average annual day fee of **£23,085**, King Edward’s sits in an *unusually strong-value* position for this tier of academic day school, though “value” here does not mean cheap. It means a demanding education with strong university traction at a price below the most inflated southern competitors. Parents should shortlist it if they want academic seriousness without boarding, substance rather than gloss, and a school with a proven record of sending boys to selective universities. The boy who thrives here is intellectually quick, self-motivated and comfortable in a culture where achievement is normal. The boy who needs constant hand-holding, or wants a softer, more sheltered atmosphere, will find it *not for the faint-hearted*.

STRENGTHS

- Consistently strong A-level results, with 42 per cent of grades at A* and 73 per cent at A*-A in 2024.
- Strong university progression, with 88 per cent of 2024 leavers heading to top-100 universities and 26 Oxbridge places (14 Cambridge, 12 Oxford).
- Substantial bursary provision, with means-tested Assisted Places available at 11+ that widen access to less affluent families.
- Long academic tradition, with notable alumni including author J.R.R. Tolkien.
- Shares a 50-acre Edgbaston campus with sister school King Edward VI High School for Girls, allowing joint music, drama and some societies despite separate teaching.

TRADE-OFFS

- Single-sex boys' school, so families seeking co-education for their son, or a place for a daughter, will need to look elsewhere.
- The school does not accept applications from international students, a significant structural limitation for relocating expat families.
- Entry is highly selective, via the school's own maths and English entrance exam plus interview, with the large majority of places filled at 11+ and only a handful of spaces at other entry points.
- As a day school, some pupils commute considerable distances from across the West Midlands, implying a demanding daily journey for families settling outside central Birmingham.

ADMISSIONS

Main entry points are Year 7 (11+) and Sixth Form (16+), with occasional places at other ages subject to availability. Applicants sit the school's own maths and English entrance exam and many are called for interview; a non-refundable registration fee applies. Academic scholarships (5-50 per cent of fees) and means-tested Assisted Places are available at 11+, alongside occasional music scholarships. Roughly half of entrants come from state primaries and half from independent prep schools. The school does not accept applications from international students, and competition for places is significant given the school's academic reputation.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (206)

SPORT: Vikram Banerjee, John Cloughton, Harold Harrison, Henry Crichton, John Marshall, Joseph Marshall, Joseph Manton, Stanley Richardson

MUSIC: Charles Swinnerton Heap, Stanley Myers, Bill Oddie, David Munrow, Mr Hudson, Harrison Oxley

DRAMA: Richard Wattis, Lee Child, Kenneth Tynan, Bill Oddie, Saikat Ahamed, Frederick Robert Buckley, Gavin Millar, Kevin Elyot

VISUAL_ARTS: Edwin Francis Reynolds, Francis Galton, Edward Burne-Jones, Bill Oddie, J. R. R. Tolkien, Albert Edward Sterner, Herbert Tudor Buckland, Julius Alfred Chatwin

LETTERS: Richard Wolffe, Robin French, William Henry Stowe, Tim Franks, Jonathan Fenby, Alfred Hayes, Francis Galton, Enoch Powell

POLITICS: Sir Alfred Hickman, 1st Baronet, Sydney Gedge, William Jackson, 1st Baron Jackson, John Gunnell, Neville Bosworth, Percival Perry, 1st Baron Perry, Andrew Sparkes, Neville Blyth

SCIENCE: Harry Sandbach, James Srawley, J. S. Mitchell, A. P. Newton, Geoff Tootill, Paul Woolley, Wilfrid Hickinbottom, Douglas Hague

BUSINESS: Percival Perry, 1st Baron Perry, Sir John Ellerman, 1st Baronet, Neville Blyth, William Clayton Russon, Andy Street, Tony Hall, Baron Hall of Birkenhead, Oliver A. Lee, Niels de Vos

WTS RATING 

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