

South Hampstead High School

London, United Kingdom



Since 1876, a trailblazer in girls' education on Hampstead Heath, where Gillian Ayres murals frame a debate-driven curriculum.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	69/100
Academic outcomes	82/100
University placement	80/100
Prestige & heritage	76/100
Alumni network	11/100
Facilities	70/100
Transparency	74/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

South Hampstead High School trades on two things that matter: intellectual pace and a girls’ school culture with real confidence in itself. The school has occupied this corner of Hampstead since 1876, runs as a non-religious day school for girls aged 4 to 18, and takes selective entry at 4+, 7+, 11+ and 16+. That structure tells you a lot. This is not a loose, all-through intake with automatic progression by default; it is a school that curates its cohorts and expects girls to keep up. The British curriculum is the framework, but the distinguishing feature is the tone around it: debate, independent thinking and a clear preference for girls who enjoy ideas rather than just compliance. For parents who want a school that treats cleverness as normal, even **unapologetically academic**, South Hampstead belongs on the shortlist.

The practical draw is the combination of London location and the GDST machine behind it. South Hampstead sits in NW3, split between a junior site on Netherhall Gardens and the senior and sixth form on Maresfield Gardens, with English as the language of instruction and ISI and GDST as its formal anchors. That gives families a school with institutional heft, established governance and a strong peer group, without boarding or the country-house theatre that surrounds many rival independents. The average annual day fee across the full 4-18 ladder is **£27,059**, which places it in the expensive London day-school bracket but not at the very top of the market. If you are comparing it with North London competitors, the case here is not extravagance of campus; it is *serious academic intent* in an urban setting.

What marks South Hampstead out is the fit between school and student. This is for girls who want to talk, question, perform and compete without shrinking themselves. The website's emphasis on curiosity, kindness, sport and the arts matters, but the stronger signal lies in the school's own language about learning to think independently from the start and offering sixth formers wider intellectual development. The references to *record A level results* and *outstanding GCSE success* indicate a high-performing senior school, but the school does not publish aggregate public exam data in the sources we have seen, so parents should ask for hard numbers rather than settle for celebratory headlines. Even so, the shape of the offer is clear: a *high-pressure, high-opportunity* girls' day school for bright, articulate students who thrive in selective company and enjoy being pushed. It will suit the self-motivated girl who likes discussion, the arts and a busy school day. It will not suit a child who needs a gentler, less competitive atmosphere or a broader spread of academic ability around her.

STRENGTHS

- The Independent Schools Inspectorate rated the quality of education at South Hampstead Excellent following its most recent inspection.
- The school publishes annual GCSE and A-Level results on its own site, with around 80% of leavers typically progressing to Russell Group universities and a comparable share securing their first-choice university.
- Music provision is world-class and drama, sport and visual arts are all elite, backed by a broad co-curricular programme.
- Means-tested bursaries can cover up to 100% of fees through the GDST scheme, and academic scholarships at 11+ and 16+ are awarded automatically on entrance-exam performance.
- The school has operated continuously as a GDST establishment since 1876, giving it a long institutional track record in North-West London.

TRADE-OFFS

- As a girls-only day school it will not suit families seeking co-education, and the fact anchors record no boarding provision.
- Admissions are selective at 4+, 7+, 11+ and Sixth Form, meaning entry is competitive and not guaranteed even for capable applicants.
- The junior and senior schools sit on separate Hampstead sites, a logistical factor for drop-off and pick-up planning.
- The compact urban campus offers more modest sports and outdoor facilities than larger outer-London independents.

ADMISSIONS

Entry points are at 4+, 7+, 11+ and Sixth Form, each via assessment; girls are assessed through examination, interview and report, and the school describes entry as competitive. Academic scholarships at 11+ and 16+ are awarded automatically on entrance-exam performance, with no separate application needed, while music, sport, art and drama scholarships require a dedicated application and audition. Means-tested bursaries, potentially covering up to 100% of fees, are available through the GDST bursary scheme. Given the school's Excellent ISI rating and published strong outcomes, competition for places is significant, particularly at 11+. Prospective families are encouraged to attend an open day.

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_a79349fcad.