

Whitgift School

Croydon, United Kingdom



A 1596 archbishop's foundation set on a 45-acre Croydon park where peacocks roam and bursaries can cover the full cost of fees.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	76/100
Academic outcomes	78/100
University placement	76/100
Prestige & heritage	77/100
Alumni network	76/100
Facilities	78/100
Transparency	72/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Whitgift’s pitch starts with the setting: a boys’ school founded in 1596 on a substantial Croydon campus, with day and boarding places for ages 10 to 18. That combination still matters. In London terms, this is a *serious independent school* with room to do things at scale: sport, music, cadets, clubs and the sort of institutional life that needs space and money behind it. The school’s own messaging leans hard on breadth, and the public evidence backs that up more than the usual brochure language does. There is a junior years structure from 10 to 13, middle years from 13 to 16, and a sixth form that the school frames as academically demanding. Whitgift also carries HMC membership and ISI accreditation, which places it squarely in the established British independent mainstream rather than the newer aspirational tier.

What puts Whitgift on a shortlist is the mix of old-school heft and access. The fees are expensive: an average annual day fee of **£31,000** and an average annual boarding fee of **£57,000** across the full age range. That buys a great deal of provision, but the more important point is that Whitgift is not only a school for full-fee dynasties. Its bursaries can cover the full cost of fees, which changes the social proposition of the place. The alumni base is also deep and unusually broad, with **119** notable alumni catalogued in Wikidata across politics, business, science, writing, the arts and **23** elite athletes. That matters because it tells parents what the institution has actually produced over time: not one narrow house style, but a large professional footprint with strong sporting output.

This is a school for boys who want a **big, structured, opportunity-rich education** and can cope with a clear institutional culture. The Anglican foundation is part of the identity, though this does not read as a cloistered or niche religious school; it reads as a large British public-school model in south London with strong pastoral scaffolding and high expectations. Boys who thrive here will want stretch, competition and plenty to join. Boys who need a tiny, informal or radically progressive environment will find Whitgift too **traditional**, too organised and too invested in collective standards. For families who want a school with history, visible ambition and enough scale to support both scholars and all-rounders, Whitgift is a **formidable contender**.

STRENGTHS

- Whitgift's extra-curricular provision was rated a significant strength in an ISI inspection rated Excellent, with every regulatory standard met at the 2025 visit.
- The school runs a genuinely broad senior curriculum, offering A-Levels, the IB and BTEC and tailoring programmes of study for the individual pupil.
- Whitgift operates one of the country's larger means-tested support schemes, currently providing 47% of pupils with some level of fee assistance from a bursary or scholarship.
- Exam results are strong at both GCSE and A-level: in 2025, 87% of GCSE grades awarded were at 7, 8 or 9, with 43% at grade 9, while the 2025 Upper Sixth achieved 62% of grades at A*/A and 90% at A*-B or IB equivalent.
- Sport is a genuine institutional strength, with the school named the No. 1 Boys' School for Sport in 2025 and having won more than 300 national titles over the past decade.

TRADE-OFFS

- Whitgift is a boys' school, so it is not an option for families seeking coeducation.
- Fees are substantial: for 2026-27, day fees run to around £31,410 a year including VAT, while weekly boarding costs roughly £51,966 and full boarding around £61,614 a year.
- Boarding is a minority provision rather than the school's core identity: boarders are taken from age 13 and approximately 7% of pupils are full or weekly boarders, with only limited places available.
- Entry is competitive at every stage: the school takes a small intake at 10+, its principal 11+ round of around 120 places, then smaller 13+ and 16+ cohorts, with the 11+ round the busiest.

ADMISSIONS

Whitgift admits boys at 10+, 11+, 12+ (limited), 13+ and 14+ (limited), plus into the sixth form at 16+; 11+ is the largest and most competitive round. Junior candidates sit papers in English, maths and verbal/critical-thinking skills followed by interview; 13+/14+ candidates add science. Sixth-form applicants sit a critical-thinking paper and two subject papers, and are expected to reach around 54 GCSE points in practice, mostly at grades 7-9. All exam candidates are automatically considered for academic scholarships; sport, music, art, drama and design-technology scholarships require separate assessment and audition. Boarding places are limited and oversubscribed; bursaries are day-place only and means-tested.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (119)

SPORT: Adam Thompstone, Freddie van den Bergh, Jason Roy, Stan South, Nico Reifer, Olly Hartley, Sean Kerr, Danny Cipriani

MUSIC: Bob Stanley, Conrad Leonard, Jeremy Sams, Jon Pearn, Pete Wiggs

DRAMA: Jeremy Sams, Paul England, Derren Brown, Harcourt Williams, Eric Barker, Peter Ling, Basil Dean, Kit Connor

VISUAL_ARTS: Francis Skeat, Gordon Kaufmann, Derrick Knight, Anthony McCall, Derren Brown, Ed Dubois, Walter Godfrey, Eric Gray

LETTERS: Bob Stanley, E. W. F. Tomlin, Gary Taphouse, Jeremy Sams, Derrick Knight, Patrick J. Brenchley, Derren Brown, Colin Watson

POLITICS: Colin Campbell Mitchell, David Kerr, Eddy Butler, Edward Archer, Malcolm Haydon-Baillie, Graham Tope, Baron Tope, Peter Bowness, Baron Bowness, John Howard

SCIENCE: Patrick J. Brenchley, Gordon MacKinney, Gilbert Walker, Michael Posner, Martyn Jope, John William Henry Eyre, Andrew Holding, D. J. B. Hawkins

BUSINESS: Scroop Egerton, 1st Duke of Bridgewater, Gerry Grimstone, Jerry Buhlmann, Kevin Kalkhoven, Tim Davie, Bernard Ashley, Peter Michael

WTS RATING 

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