

Queen Elizabeth's School, Barnet

Barnet, United Kingdom



A 1573 royal charter grammar school that still tops England's grammar-school A-level tables -- and is now exporting its model to Dubai.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	80/100
Academic outcomes	86/100
University placement	82/100
Prestige & heritage	80/100
Alumni network	79/100
Facilities	69/100
Transparency	75/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Queen Elizabeth’s School, Barnet occupies a rare position in the English state sector: a **fiercely academic**, highly selective boys’ day school with roots in ***1573*** and the cultural confidence that long history brings. This is not a gentle comprehensive with a grammar stream attached; it is a grammar school in the full old sense, built for boys who can handle fast pace, heavy competition and a peer group stacked with able students. The headline attraction is simple. Parents who want a state education with the intensity, expectations and university focus of a top independent school will put QE Barnet on the list. The school’s reputation rests on academic performance, selective intake and a strikingly established brand in north London.

What marks it out is the combination of age, selectivity and institutional self-belief. A school founded under a royal charter still trades on **serious intellectual ambition**, and that matters to families who value scholarship over pastoral rhetoric. The public face is less polished than many fee-charging rivals, but the substance is clear: this is a place that prizes attainment, independence and high-performance habits. A student-teacher ratio of ****14:1**** and average class size of ****27**** tell their own story. Individual attention exists, but this is not a boutique environment. Boys need to be self-propelling, resilient and ready to compete without constant hand-holding.

It belongs on a shortlist for families who want **academic pressure with purpose**, a state-school route into top university applications, and a cohort that treats hard work as normal. It suits boys who enjoy exams, think quickly, absorb challenge and do not need elaborate persuasion to study. It will also appeal to families drawn to **institutional gravitas** and the cachet of an old grammar school with modern reach. It will not suit every child. Boys who need a softer pastoral culture, broader mixed-ability intake or a less exam-centred atmosphere will find better fits elsewhere. For the right student, though, QE Barnet offers **prestige without fees** and a **hard-edged academic culture** that few schools match.

STRENGTHS

- Selective state grammar school and academy for boys aged 11-18 in Chipping Barnet, founded in 1573, with no tuition fees.
- Rated Outstanding by Ofsted in all areas at its May 2022 inspection, the sixth consecutive time it has been awarded the highest grade.
- Placed first in national state-school rankings combining GCSE and A-level performance, and named The Sunday Times State Secondary School of the Year for 2026.
- World-class music provision, with an enrichment programme extending to international music tours.
- No catchment area, so eligible boys can apply from across London and beyond rather than being restricted by postcode.

TRADE-OFFS

- The school admits boys aged 11-18 only, so it is not an option for families with daughters or those wanting co-education.
- Entry is fiercely competitive, with well over 2,000 applicants each year for roughly 180 Year 7 places and recently reported combined-score cut-offs above 220.
- The intake is socioeconomically narrow, with free-school-meal eligibility well below the national average.
- Admission runs through the UK state system: parents must complete both the school's online registration form and the local authority Common Application Form, which can be a hurdle for families newly relocating to the UK.

ADMISSIONS

Entry at age 11 is decided almost entirely by a competitive 11+ exam. The school uses GL Assessment English and Maths papers, taken in the same session, alongside the school's own registration form and the home local authority's Common Application Form. There is no catchment area, so boys nationwide may sit the test, but with roughly 180 places against well over 2,000 applicants and recently reported combined-score cut-offs above 220, competition is severe. As a state grammar school there are no tuition fees, but families must track separate school and local-authority deadlines many months ahead of entry, and late applications are rarely accepted.

WTS RATING 

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