

Around 10,000 pupils at schools in Glasgow and the west of Scotland are educated at independent schools. What do independent schools in the west of Scotland have to offer? Why are families choosing an independent education?

Parents say that the true measure of a school is whether their children are happy there. Research suggests there are three key reasons why independent schools are able to engage their pupils, which leads to a happy and fulfilling school life:

- 1. Development of the whole child**
- 2. Purposeful learning environment**
- 3. Quality of teaching**

Development of the whole child

Every independent school in the west of Scotland offers something unique, but all share a common goal of encouraging each individual child to be all that they can be. Developing the individual talents of children gives them confidence in their abilities and motivation to succeed. This seems to be what parents “buy into”. At every age and stage, children enjoy a rich mix of learning opportunities, both in and outside the classroom. The curriculum is broad and there’s a wide choice of activities and clubs to engage pupils – something to suit everyone. As pupils progress, they rise to new challenges, grow in confidence and make firm friendships.

Purposeful learning environment

The positive “can do” culture of independent schools in the west of Scotland is almost tangible. The work environment is purposeful which means that pupils can learn without disruption. Visitors are welcome during term time so that they can see schools “at work”.

Quality of teaching

In Glasgow and the west of Scotland, most independent schools admit pupils of mixed abilities - only a small minority are academically selective. The fact that all the schools produce consistently good exam results year after year suggests that the quality of teaching is high. Independent schools recruit committed teachers who also contribute to the wider life of the school – co-curricular activities, sports and outdoor education. This ensures that each school has a strong community and sense of belonging. Learning is an engaging experience for pupils with positive outcomes achieved. Independent schools enjoy the flexibility they have to enrich the curriculum to suit the needs of their pupils and there are many examples of innovative teaching in the independent sector. There are also sensible checks and balances and the national system of inspection ensures that pupils receive a consistent and balanced education.

Choice, diversity, excellence

Independent schools come in all shapes and sizes, so how do you choose the one that's right for your child? Around 10,000 children of mixed abilities from diverse social backgrounds are educated in west of Scotland independent schools. Each school has its own distinctive, almost tangible ethos, which is why a visit is essential. It's the only way to gain a true sense of whether your child is likely to be happy there.

Most of the independent schools in the west of Scotland are coeducational, although there are two girls' schools – Craigholme and Fernhill. All bar one are "all through" which means they admit children from age 5 to 18. The exception is Glasgow Steiner, part of the Waldorf Steiner Foundation, which takes children up to age 12. Most of the schools have a nursery.

School / Location	Roll (circa)	Age/Stage	Nursery	Girls/Boys
Beaconhurst, Bridge of Allan	400	all through	Yes	Coed
Belmont House, Newton Mearns	300	all through	Yes	Coed
Cedars School of Excellence, Greenock	100	all through	No	Coed
Craigholme, Glasgow	500	all through	Yes (boys 3-5)	Girls
Fernhill, Rutherglen	300	all through	No	Girls
Glasgow Steiner	100	preparatory	Yes	Coed
The Glasgow Academy	1250	all through	Yes	Coed
Hamilton College	700	all through	Yes	Coed
The High School of Glasgow	1050	all through	Yes	Coed
Hutchesons' Grammar, Glasgow	1500	all through	No	Coed
Kelvinside Academy, Glasgow	600	all through	Yes	Coed
Lomond School, Helensburgh	550	all through	Yes	Coed
St Aloysius' College, Glasgow	1250	all through	Yes	Coed
St Columba's, Kilmacolm	750	all through	Yes	Coed
Wellington School, Ayr	550	all through	Yes	Coed

Curriculum and qualifications offered

Independent schools have a strong tradition of academic attainment, reflected in pupils' performance in public exams. Most schools follow the Scottish curriculum and exams are awarded by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). SQA exams correspond to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in England and Wales and are recognised for entrance to all universities throughout the UK. A number of schools offer a combination of English AS and A Levels and Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers, based on what they believe provides the best course of study for their pupils.

A small number of independent schools – just one in Glasgow – now offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) and others are considering its merits. The IB is designed to develop a broad range of skills. Students take six subjects for two years and study English, Maths, Science, a language (ancient or modern) and a social subject. They follow a course in the Theory of Knowledge, undertake a programme of Creativity, Action and Service and write a 4000 word essay on a subject of their choice.

Below is a table of the qualifications offered at each independent school in Glasgow and the west of Scotland.

Scottish

Access	Access Courses
S	Standard Grade
I1	Intermediate 1
I2	Intermediate 2
H	Higher
AH	Advanced Higher

English

GCSE	General Certificate of Education
A	Advanced Level
AS	Advanced Subsidiary Level

International

IB	International Baccalaureate
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	Scottish	English	International
Beaconhurst School	S, I1, I2, H, AH		
Belmont House School	S, I1, I2, H, AH, Scottish Baccalaureate		
Cedars School of Excellence	S, I1, I2, H		
Craigholme School	S, I1, I2, H, AH		IB
Fernhill School	S, I1, I2, H, AH		
The Glasgow Academy	S, I2, H, AH	GCSE, A, AS (Art)	
Hamilton College	S, I1, I2, H, AH		
The High School of Glasgow	S, I2, H, AH		
Hutchesons' Grammar School	S, I1, H, AH	A	
Kelvinside Academy	S, I1, I2, H, AH		
Lomond School	S, I1, I2, H, AH		
St Aloysius' College	S, I1, I2, H, AH	GCSE, A, AS	
St Columba's School	S, I2, H, AH		
Wellington School, Ayr	S, I1, I2, H, AH		

Day and Boarding

In the west of Scotland, only one independent school admits boarders as well as day pupils – Lomond School in Helensburgh, which has a modern boarding house.

Faith schools

In the west of Scotland, there are a small number of faith schools. They admit pupils of all faiths and none, provided parents wish their children to be educated in a school that has an explicit religious, spiritual and moral foundation.

Fact finding – websites, admissions packs, open days

School profiles, contact details and website links can be found at www.scis.org.uk where you can search for schools alphabetically, under “Glasgow” or the relevant local authority area or by type of school. Most schools’ websites contain clear information about the admissions process. They also give fee details, payment terms and information about financial assistance that’s available for families who are unable to afford the fees unaided.

We suggest you contact two or three schools to request an admissions pack and arrange a visit. Admissions packs usually give details about entrance procedures, test dates, induction days, fees and financial assistance. Open Days, usually held from September to November, are promoted on each school’s website. The Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) has two leaflets, available online, that are helpful: *A guide to the admissions process* and *Questions to consider when visiting a school*. Both are available at www.scis.org.uk/publications

WOSIS – West of Scotland independent schools

In the west of Scotland, most independent schools take joint press adverts to promote the dates of their Open Days (usually September to November) and Entrance Tests (usually February to March). A website is also available at www.wosis.co.uk

Admissions deadlines and waiting lists

Given the demand for places at some independent schools in Glasgow, parents are advised to make enquiries early to avoid waiting lists – at least a year in advance – although schools will be as accommodating as possible. Waiting lists are most likely at the key entry stages of Primary 1 and Secondary 1. The usual admissions cycle is outlined below, although dates should be checked with individual schools.

September to November	Open days
November to December	Application deadlines
January to March	Entrance tests
June	Induction days
August to September	Start of school year

Fees, meeting the cost, financial assistance

Average fees for secondary day schools are currently around £9,000. All independent schools in the west of Scotland offer parents the convenience of monthly direct debit.

For most parents, affording an independent education requires careful financial planning and long-term commitment. The best advice, to ease the financial burden, is to plan ahead and to consult a fee-based Certified Financial Planner. In doing so, a financial plan will be devised for you, designed to generate sufficient funds to meet the cost of school fees over the period of your child's education, taking into account your current and future commitments and expenditure. This will give you confidence that you are receiving the best advice for your family's particular circumstances.

Fee assistance is provided by all independent schools in the west of Scotland to enable Secondary school children from lower income households to benefit. Some schools now welcome applications for Primary children too. Awards are based on ability to pay, with priority given to those whose need is greatest. The level of support varies considerably, depending on a family's circumstances. Some children receive a free place (where 100% of the fees are met by the school) while others receive a smaller contribution. Useful information is provided in a leaflet, *Meeting the cost of school fees*, available www.scis.org.uk/publications

Information, advice and guidance about choosing an independent, fee-paying school in Glasgow and the west of Scotland is available from the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) – the foremost authority on independent education in Scotland. Visit www.scis.org.uk or call 0131 220 2106.