

In Perth and Kinross, 16% of secondary school-aged children and 11% of all school pupils are educated at independent schools. What do independent schools in Perth and Kinross 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 Perth and Kinross 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 Perth and Kinross 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 Perth and Kinross, all independent schools admit pupils of mixed abilities. The fact that they 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? In Perth and Kinross, there are six independent schools – two preparatory, two secondary, two all-through. The average size is around 400 pupils – small in comparison to schools in urban areas – which helps to foster a strong sense of community. 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. The independent schools in Perth and Kinross are:

School	Location	Age/Stage	Day/Boarding	Co-ed/Girls/Boys
Ardveck	Crieff	Prep	Day/Boarding	Co-educational
Craigclowan	Perth	Prep	Day	Co-educational
Glenalmond College	Perth	Secondary	Boarding/Day	Co-educational
Kilgraston	Bridge of Earn, Perth	All through	Day/Boarding	Girls (Boys 5-8)
Morrison's Academy	Crieff	All through	Day	Co-educational
Strathallan	Forgandenny, Perth	Secondary	Boarding/Day	Co-educational

Curriculum and qualifications

Independent schools have a strong tradition of academic attainment, reflected in pupils' performance in public exams. In Perth and Kinross, Kilgraston School and Morrison's Academy follow the Scottish curriculum with exams 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.) Glenalmond and Strathallan, the schools with the highest proportion of boarders, follow the English curriculum with GCSEs, AS and A levels awarded by English exam boards – the exception is that Strathallan also offers Scottish Highers.

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

School

Glenalmond College
Kilgraston School
Morrison's Academy
Strathallan School

Scottish

S, I1, H, AH
S, I1, I2, H, AH
H

English

GCSE, A, AS
A2, AS, GCSE

Boarding

In Perth and Kinross, four of the six independent schools admit boarders as well as day pupils. At Glenalmond and Strathallan, the majority of pupils are boarders while at Kilgraston the number of each is similar. At Ardvreck, around 10% of pupils are boarders. To accommodate different needs, weekly, flexi and full boarding are available.

A significant benefit of boarding is the “added value” provided, in terms of after school activities. Day pupils at boarding schools benefit too as they do everything the boarders do apart from sleep at the school! This, of course, is reflected in the fees. Another benefit of boarding schools is the strong sense of community that prevails and friendships are formed that last a lifetime.

Rural Perth and Kinross is an ideal location for a boarding school. As well as being a safe environment, the region offers plenty of outdoor pursuits for those who wish to take advantage of its beautiful hills, lochs and waterfalls. Transport links are good. Airports in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee are within easy reach. There are daily flights in and out of Scotland to and from all parts of Europe while London Heathrow, London Gatwick, Manchester and Amsterdam Schiphol provide onward connections to cities all around the world. Further information about Boarding is available in a SCIS leaflet, *Boarding Schools – your questions answered*, available www.scis.org.uk/publications

Faith schools

Kilgraston School, the only faith school in Perth and Kinross, is a Sacred Heart school. It admits 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 “Perth and Kinross” 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

Admissions deadlines

Parents are advised to make enquiries early – preferably a year in advance – although schools will be as accommodating as possible. 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 schools are currently around £9,000 (day schools) and 23,000 (boarding schools). All independent schools in Perth and Kinross 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 six independent schools in Perth and Kinross to enable both Primary and Secondary children from lower income households to benefit. 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 Perth and Kinross 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.