

Godstowe Prep



Best for girls' sport

Godstowe Preparatory School

Girls at this Buckinghamshire school love their sport and regularly reach the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS) finals in netball, athletics and tennis. The under 11 team were crowned 2016 IAPS national champions in swimming. Unusually for a prep school, lacrosse is also on offer and the biannual tour of the US is a highlight. Those who don't make it into teams are encouraged to take part in development clubs. And for girls who want to keep fit but not compete, the school's enrichment programme offers rock climbing, fencing, judo, ballet and gymnastics. Godstowe is one of the last remaining all girls' boarding prep schools – and an inspiration for Enid Blyton's *Malory Towers* books (though not the only contender). The school is non-selective and prides itself on offering a broad but highly structured curriculum. At 13, girls head to schools like Wycombe Abbey, Cheltenham Ladies' College and Downe House.

www.godstowe.org

Other contenders:

Cumnor House Girls'

Tormead School Junior School

Eagle House School



Best for extra-curricular

Eagle House School

Wellington College's prep school takes extra-curricular activities very seriously. The Golden Eagle programme of 60-plus clubs and activities (from ballet to Minecraft) starts in the pre-prep. Golden Eagle Saturdays focus on service, community action and teamwork – pupils take part in litter clearing and learn skills like lifesaving and sign language. Year 3 children build shelters in the school grounds and by years 7 and 8 pupils are abseiling in Wales and kayaking in the Ardèche.

www.eaglehouseschool.com

Other contenders:

Pinewood School

Wellesley House School

Best for STEM

Parsons Green Prep School

The Good Schools Guide says that this 200-pupil co-ed school in Fulham, south west London is "well ahead of the curve" when it comes to STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths). Parsons Green Prep (PGP for short) recently won the Independent Schools Association (ISA) award for outstanding STEM provision. Stand-out STEM projects at the school range from growing rocket seeds (which British astronaut Tim Peake had taken into space) to inviting STEM ambassadors – zoologists, climate change scientists, nuclear physicists and the like – into the classroom to talk about their areas of expertise. The PGP teaching staff firmly believe that primary school age is the perfect time to encourage children to explore science and technology and to develop their enthusiasm for these subjects. Along the way the pupils also learn skills like teamwork, independence, reasoning and critical and creative thinking.

www.parsonsgreenprep.co.uk

Other contenders:

Alton Convent School

Hatherop Castle, Gloucestershire ▶