



BARROW HILLS
**LIFE AT
THE TOP**

2
0
2
4



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

Part 1: New Opportunities

2

Part 2: Curriculum and Provision

3

Part 3: Results



INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents,

Our 13+ offer at Barrow Hills provides a distinct value add for our children. In addition to this, our long-standing and successful Year 7 and 8 provision benefits the character of our entire School. For example, it adds to our capacity to recruit and retain strong subject specialist teachers. This, in turn, leads to great learning for all.

As the Schools Inspectorate recently noted:

“Pupils are very successful within the formal curriculum and beyond. They achieve considerable success in entrance examinations to schools with high standards of entry. A good number of students are awarded academic and competitive scholarships. Pupils participate successfully in a wide range of academic, sporting and cultural activities.”

Recently we have been mindful to capture and act upon pupil voice. As a group, the vast majority of Year 7 and 8 report that they really enjoy school, feel challenged and enabled to do their best and become increasingly independent. They love learning and feel safe. We wish to ensure this overwhelmingly positive outlook continues to grow.

In 2024 -2025 we have developed new projects to enhance sports and social links working with our partner school, King Edward's Witley. You may find these of interest as they allow us to go above and beyond what a prep school our size might ordinarily offer.

This is followed by information from our Heads of Departments on what the pathway ahead looks like in Upper Prep.

Finally, we share some results to showcase how well Barrow Hills progresses the achievement of children going through Upper Prep.

I hope this work to reflect upon and clarify 'Life at the Top' is helpful. We are passionate about our 13+ offer and expect it to flourish over the coming years.

Kind regards,

Mr Towers



PART 1: NEW OPPORTUNITIES

New Sports and Social Opportunities

Our Upper Prep sport at Barrow Hills combines Years 7 and 8. This successful convention will continue where beneficial.

Our partner school, King Edward's Witley (KESW), provides us the opportunity to enhance our offer across sport. We hope this also encourages social connections.

In sport, we have a new two-year plan with regard to partnership work. During the 2023-24 academic year, we are pleased to provide the following options:

- On a Friday afternoon, our Year 7, and sports staff, join their counterparts at KESW to participate in their sports activities programme. Parents have the option of collecting their children at 5.15pm from KESW or they return to Barrow Hills for 5.30pm.
- On Saturdays, our Year 7 students are invited to join KESW for competitive sport fixtures.

From the start of the 2024-2025 academic year, we have a chance to align sections of our respective school timetables. This will allow us to extend this programme from September 2024 onwards. It is our intent to be able to:

- Deliver both training and fixtures with KESW Year 7 and 8 as part of our routine week day timetable. This will allow children to train and learn together. Through this approach, we anticipate that both schools will be able to field more teams and enter more competitive fixtures.
- With a more social intent, combine with KESW Year 7 and 8 across an enrichment programme. This rotation currently includes forest school, circus skills, debating, cookery, swimming and more.

PART 2: CURRICULUM AND PROVISION



Maths

A new, experienced Head of Maths has been appointed to start next term. Mr Pistorius has over 20 years teaching experience in both maths and science in South Africa as well as time working in the Independent Schools exam board.

In the interim, Mrs Tina Goddings, our prior Head of Maths, has stepped in. Mindful of managing this transition well and ensuring the cohort continues to move forward, we are increasing staffing for the rest of Autumn Term and will dovetail this into Spring Term 2024.

Mr Towers, who was previously a Lead Maths Teacher for the National Numeracy Strategy, will join Mrs Goddings to teach the group on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. He will develop whole class applied thinking skills and mental maths mastery and then tutor a group so we can provide some intense support and challenge. Mr Towers will extend this into Spring Term 2024 to support Mr Pistorius.

The syllabus for Common Entrance is rigorous and varied. It is designed to stretch the abilities of the most able mathematicians as well as support those that find maths challenging through three levels of papers. Each level also requires scientific calculator skills to be mastered.

The children start Year 7 with a brief recap of the Year 6 curriculum before plunging into new learning. Over the course of the two years, the curriculum is divided into five major areas of study:

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio and Proportion
- Geometry
- Statistics and Probability

There is also an emphasis on finding efficient and quick ways to solve a range of worded problems. It is important, in maths, that children understand what they are doing, ensuring problems and questions are broken down and showing working along each step.

English

The skills we teach in Years 7 and 8 prepare our children for the rigours of GCSEs and beyond. We aim to instil a love of literature by reading a wide range of prose, poetry and drama and then children are taught how to use these literary techniques and devices to enhance their own writing. Regular exam practice means the children are exceptionally well prepared and confident to tackle a range of texts in their 13+ CE exams.

Children are examined in two papers: reading and writing. The reading paper assesses the children's ability to comprehend what they are reading and children are encouraged to explore the effects of language choices through an in depth analysis of texts. The writing paper offers the children the chance to write creatively on a wide range of topics including arguments, letters and speeches as well as stories and descriptions.

Having a small class size, over the years, has allowed detailed differentiation of teaching to support pupil attainment. The class will cover the same core texts and curriculum areas, but then individuals will be supported or challenged across Level 1, or 2 Common Entrance or scholarship level with questions, materials and tasks.

Drama

Drama is a key part of life at Barrow Hills and never more so than in Years 7 and 8. Quite simply, your children have opportunities here that they would not have in a larger environment. Drama is compulsory, so even those who might be reluctant to audition in a bigger school, have a part to play in their year group production - and they love it!

In Years 7 and 8, children also have the chance to learn how to work the lighting board, operate the sound and manage backstage. Costumes are hired, and often so are props and scenery. Some of the Year 8 productions in recent years include: *Private Peaceful*, *Oliver*, *The Lion*, *the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Les Misérables*. Our production this year is *Annie*.

Years 7 and 8 children also have the opportunity to attend Drama Enrichment after school where they are prepared for drama scholarships and tackle some challenging play texts, as well as developing their improvisation skills. They also enjoyed a theatre trip to watch *Private Peaceful*. Last year all three children who auditioned were awarded drama scholarships to St. George's College, King Edward's Witley and Seaford College.

Drama captains compère events like World Poetry Day and Book Week and support younger children with their productions. This year, we have a trip planned to the Petersfield Wardrobe Company to select costumes for *Annie*.

Years 7 and 8 also took part in an all day drama and music workshop with professionals from the Garsington Youth Opera Company which culminated in a performance to parents.



Music

Last year saw the introduction of a Rock and Pop event and the Bridewell Showcase. The Bridewell Choir provided everyone with much pleasure at Carol services and Bridewell services. We realised two music scholarships to senior schools in 2023.

Leadership, Trips & Post CE Programme

At Barrow Hills, children have the opportunity to be at the top of the school at an extremely formative time in their development. It is a truly wonderful thing to be able to mature in a safe environment with people who know and understand you. The experiences we offer in Upper Prep aim to prepare the whole child for life beyond Barrow Hills, not only academically but also socially and emotionally.

Upper Prep is a transitional phase of education and we offer a high level of support here. Our teachers develop higher order thinking and analytical skills. We encourage the children to become independent learners and to work things out for themselves. Smaller classes mean we know children as individuals and we offer targeted support where needed, whether this is supporting those with learning differences or extending the academically gifted.

But it is not all about exams. Life at the Top is about sending our children off to their next schools as well rounded, responsible and resilient individuals who care for others and try their very best in all areas of school life. In Upper Prep at Barrow Hills, our children learn to be responsible and resilient by applying for Captaincies such as Head of School, Head of House or as a Captain of areas such as Pre-Prep, sport, drama, art or science. They can become Peer Mentors or Wellbeing Ambassadors and support the younger children. Weekly meetings over a hot chocolate encourage children to set targets for themselves so that they can fulfil their responsibilities to the best of their ability and offer real support to staff and other children.



Areas like sport, art, drama and engineering also offer children the opportunity to shine. Enrichment groups in sport, art and drama, alongside an academic enrichment group, help the children prepare for scholarships, as well as extending their interests and love of learning. Other educational opportunities in Upper Prep include a visit to the Science Museum, a theatre visit and the Café Scientifique.

We also aim to help the children to develop resilience and independent work skills. We encourage them to read around the subjects in areas like English, history and TPR and to listen to podcasts and talks. We teach them how to revise and consolidate their learning in their lessons. We support our Upper Prep pupils through study skills workshops and extra 'drop in' help sessions, helping them practise revision techniques and showing them how to manage stress and anxiety so that they can make progress.

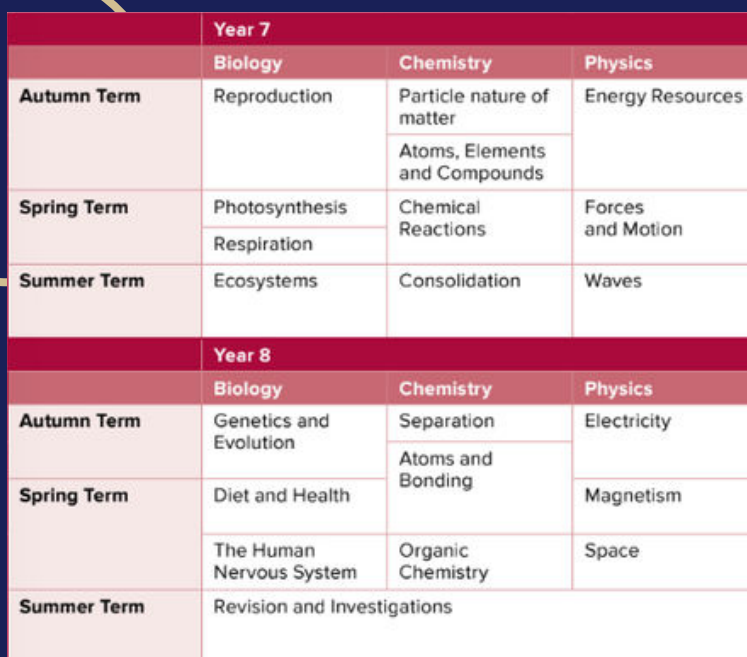
At Barrow Hills, we also recognise the importance in developing the practical skills of the children in Years 7 and 8. Through our Upper Prep Enterprise Project, the children learnt about working as a part of a team, how to develop their problem solving skills and how to manage money. This now runs alongside subjects such as TEDS (Technology, Engineering Design and Sustainability).

After their Common Entrance exams, our Year 8 children take part in an exciting and varied programme of events. Activities have included a theatre visit to London, a trip to Thorpe Park, overnight camping at Grayswood, lifesaving and first aid training, financial literacy, a retreat in Elstead, an Escape Room and a trip to the Ardèche. These are not only fun but promote leadership skills as well as cementing friendships and encouraging children to tackle new challenges.



Sciences

Specialising in Year 7, pupils progress from two to three hours of timetabled science per week, following a holistic and accessible curriculum. With Common Entrance examinations, scholarships, and future GCSE curricula in mind, specialist lessons are designed to support the needs of all pupils and increase in autonomy as they advance.



	Year 7		
	Biology	Chemistry	Physics
Autumn Term	Reproduction	Particle nature of matter	Energy Resources
		Atoms, Elements and Compounds	
Spring Term	Photosynthesis	Chemical Reactions	Forces and Motion
	Respiration		
Summer Term	Ecosystems	Consolidation	Waves
	Year 8		
	Biology	Chemistry	Physics
Autumn Term	Genetics and Evolution	Separation	Electricity
		Atoms and Bonding	Magnetism
Spring Term	Diet and Health		
	The Human Nervous System	Organic Chemistry	Space
Summer Term	Revision and Investigations		

Our ambitious teaching in science within our Upper Prep explores topics typically introduced during the later stages of GCSE study. Study is inclusive of organic chemistry and the human nervous system. With a strong emphasis on practical activity, children are provided the opportunity to immerse themselves in each and every lesson from within either of our purpose-built laboratories. The specialist department at Barrow Hills strives to guide our children's curiosity whilst capturing the creative mind as they design, and are guided through a plethora of practical investigations in strict accordance with CLEAPSS safety guidelines.

STEM

No one science is exclusive in its content or application. As such, we maximise the opportunities for our children to consolidate knowledge of science through shared activities across the curriculum; in particular technology, engineering and mathematics. With annual trips to the London Science Museum and Natural History Museum, and active involvement during our targeted STEM week (particularly by our STEM captains), all children are provided ample opportunity to extend and apply their knowledge of science in a real-world setting.

French

From Year 7, we start working towards the Common Entrance exam, which includes two levels. Level 2 is the equivalent to a 'foundation' GCSE. All the tenses are studied and the pupils are taught to extend their answers. The Level 1 curriculum is the same as Level 2 but the expectation is to use simpler structures.

In Year 8, there is a speaking practice in small groups to prepare the pupils for the exam. This helps make sure that all the children have the opportunity to speak.

With the more able, we practise extending the sentences by including different tenses and more complex vocabulary, which is again the expectation at GCSE.

Latin

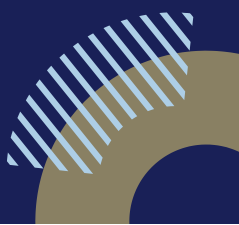
Latin offers the opportunity for pupils to learn the ancient language of the Romans, whilst also exploring classical mythology and history. Many go on to develop a lifelong interest in languages, literature and Roman and Greek history.

We aim to complete the Level 1 Common Entrance material by the end of Year 7, with the Level 2 course undertaken in Year 8. Latin is the root of many languages and therefore knowledge of its vocabulary and grammar is an invaluable advantage for learning modern languages such as French or Spanish. Pupils also strengthen their knowledge of English grammar, whilst expanding their vocabulary knowledge, by learning the root of different words in English. This helps with verbal based entrance tests.

Pupils learn to read passages of Latin whilst also learning how to form Latin sentences themselves. The Common Entrance syllabus gives pupils a solid grounding. Children are well prepared for the different senior school courses and many of our pupils go on to take Latin GCSE in their senior schools.

Theology, Philosophy and Religion (TPR)

The study of Theology, Philosophy and Religion (TPR) offers children of any religion, or none, a challenging and exciting means to evaluate responses to many of life's biggest and basic questions:

- Why is the world here?
 - What is our purpose in it?
 - Why is there suffering and evil?
 - What does it mean to be morally good?
 - Does God exist?
 - What does it mean to worship God?
 - Why are people devoted to different religions?
 - Why does the environment matter?
 - Does punishment work or are there more effective options?
- 

Our TPR course offers exceptional choice, with 18 different topics within three sections (theology, philosophy and religion), meaning there is great flexibility for teachers and children alike. We can tailor and design a course to suit the interests and competences of our children.

Above all, the skills offered by TPR are especially significant in contemporary plural 21st Century societies, enabling children to be independent and enthusiastic learners, engaging in a subject which has direct relevance to their lives. The focus on evaluating and debating issues and responses opens up tremendous learning opportunities.

The different topics are catalysts for independent and collaborative learning, allowing children to think critically and form their own ideas as well as developing learning attitudes for life. TPR teaches children to understand and respect values and beliefs which may not be their own, to evaluate them precisely, and carefully learn to reflect on their ideas and present them clearly and articulately. The class discussions and debates are a highlight of every topic!

Technology, Engineering Design and Sustainability (TEDS)

TEDS continues to evolve when the children enter Years 7 and 8. In the kitchen, the children plan and cook a variety of dishes using a range of ingredients as well as study for their Level 1 and 2 food hygiene certificates. Being able to choose, plan and cook their own food is a skill and the children enjoy learning this important life lesson. As our kitchen garden develops, more and more of the ingredients will be grown by the children for use in the classroom.

Sustainability lessons are based on the global Sustainable Development Goals, with each block of learning concentrating on these areas. These include climate change, eradicating poverty and hunger, water security, energy production, life below water and on land and being part of a sustainable local community. Our aim is to create well informed global citizens who take our planet and its ecosystems seriously.

In the engineering labs, pupils are able to use a wider range of tools. All our senior children are involved in a National F1 competition, designing, building and racing small cars, able to reach top speeds of 100mph. They learn all about acceleration, resistance and the need for cars to be aerodynamic. The children have built and used a wind tunnel to test their designs. There are also other smaller projects undertaken by the children involving traditional woodworking, building bird boxes and putting cameras in them as well as more modern units of study involving CAD and 3D printing.

Geography

The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 will enable children to become immersed in a variety of topics to understand better how the world works. The world is constantly changing and geography will address a number of the bigger challenges including population growth, inequality, environmental pollution and climate change to name a few. Pupils will investigate these types of challenges and present ideas to deal with them.

By the end of Year 8, our children will have covered six themes and two skills as well as have undertaken a fieldwork project to produce an assessed report. This will provide students with the skills and knowledge to easily tackle the GCSE syllabus. Indeed, many of the topics will already have been covered to a similar level.

The themes covered include-

- Tectonics (earthquakes and volcanoes)
- Meteorology (climate & weather)
- Geomorphology (rivers & coasts)
- Demography (population & settlement)
- Economy (transport & industry)
- Environment (sustainability & stewardship)

The skills covered include-

- Location Knowledge
- Ordnance Survey Map Reading Skills
- Fieldwork Skills

Learning in Years 7 and 8 will be supported by suitable field trips to investigate the themes covered.



History

The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 provides the opportunity for children to explore the many fascinating themes, battles and leaders within the Medieval period. Our children will start to question information, realising that there are often competing points of view and form their own ideas based on the evidence. The pupils then become more skilled at organising and expressing those ideas in a logical, coherent manner.

The history course will enable children to gain key learning skills which will place them in a strong position if continuing with the subject at their next school. This will be achieved through guided teaching but much greater emphasis is placed on independent learning with many case studies being undertaken. For many, the transition to GCSE level will prove relatively easy as many of the skills required will be well practised and our children should feel well prepared.

The course will focus on pupils' abilities to use and interpret a range of sources and draw conclusions from the unseen texts presented to them. They will also be able to demonstrate their understanding of topics and formulate arguments and judgements, in the form of an essay question. The curriculum is supported by day trips to relevant local historical sites.

Art

Art is taught in 1 hour lessons for Years 3 to 8. The broad and exciting curriculum allows children to think and express themselves creatively through the use of many mediums such as clay, paint, wire, plaster, mosaic and willow, collage and recycled materials. In Upper Prep the focus is to expand their knowledge and experience of using these different mediums and to apply it to more advanced methods.

In Years 7 and 8, children are encouraged to develop their creative sketchbooks and research skills, including art history and mood boards and then moving theory into idea and design. Projects such as mosaics, wood carving, advanced clay sculptures and formal elements of drawing, painting and portraiture are also covered.

Art scholars may join our art enrichment programme for those who show a creative talent and a passion for art. This is an opportunity for them to work on their own portfolios with more complex pieces of art and techniques. This portfolio is used for all those applying for art scholarships to senior schools.

Year 8 Art Captains and Year 7 Art Ambassadors are an integral part of the annual Spring Art exhibition in the Chapel helping to curate and set up the show.

Sport

As our children progress into Year 7 and Year 8, they can look forward to an enriching journey through a diverse range of sporting experiences that cater to all interests and abilities, fostering a well-rounded sporting education. A standout feature of our sports programme is the biennial hockey sports tour to Holland, which takes place during the October half-term. Open to children of all abilities, we form one or two teams that engage in spirited competition. During this tour, our young athletes play three evening matches against Dutch clubs and participate in invigorating morning training sessions. The afternoons are filled with exciting activities such as biking, tobogganing, shopping, and swimming. We make it a point to match our teams against similarly skilled opponents, ensuring a challenging yet rewarding experience that often results in victories.

Furthermore, for those children who display exceptional athletic potential, we extend an invitation to the Friday club at Barrow Hills, expertly guided by our Director of Sport. This club focuses on honing essential sporting skills and fitness levels, providing invaluable preparation for scholarship assessments.

In Years 7 and 8, children participate in games, lessons and matches together, split into ability teams. These weekly encounters see them proudly wearing the 1st team strip, fostering a sense of camaraderie and healthy competition among peers. Leadership opportunities abound, with many of our Year 8 children assuming captaincy roles in various sports. Additionally, we have elected Sports Captains who contribute to coaching Pre-Prep games during Friday lunchtimes and serve as referees for their matches once a term.

Our commitment to sports has yielded impressive results, exemplified by the achievements of our dedicated young athletes. Notably, in 2022, our Year 7 girls achieved a remarkable 5th place overall in the National Finals of the U12 Independent Association of Prep Schools hockey competition, showcasing their exceptional skill and unwavering determination. With small class sizes and dedicated coaching, every child receives individual attention and support as they progress through Years 7 and 8, allowing them to reach their full potential in the world of sports.

Computing and Digital Literacy

The study of Computing and Digital Literacy is a journey that takes children through a dynamic exploration of the digital world, providing them with essential skills and knowledge that are increasingly relevant in the 21st century. As the children progress into Year 7, they delve into the world of app development. This hands-on experience allows them to create, design, and code their own applications, gaining a deep understanding of the software development process. It's a foundational step where they learn the logic and creativity behind programming.

In Year 8, our children embark on an exciting Mars Rover project. This interdisciplinary endeavour combines aspects of robotics, engineering, and computer science. They are tasked with designing and programming a small scale Mars Rover to navigate and conduct experiments as if it were on the Red Planet's surface. This project not only enhances their coding skills but also fosters problem-solving and teamwork.

Beyond these specific projects, our curriculum delves into the broader world of computers and digital literacy. We explore topics such as cybersecurity, data analysis, and the societal impact of technology. We aim to equip children with the skills they need to navigate the digital landscape responsibly and ethically.

At the heart of our Computing and Digital Literacy programme is the emphasis on critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. We encourage pupils to think deeply about the world of computers, understand its implications, and respect the diverse perspectives and beliefs that shape this rapidly evolving field. Our classroom discussions and debates are a testament to the lively engagement that Computing and Digital Literacy offers, empowering children to become independent and enthusiastic learners in an ever-changing digital world.

Financial Literacy

Every year, our Years 7 and 8 children combine to form small companies and take part in the 'Tanner Challenge'. The pupils are encouraged to show their creativity and entrepreneurship as well as financial planning skills. The challenge earns money for charity as well as being spent on projects that benefit the school, such as playground equipment and eco projects.

Wellbeing

Being invigorated by the appointment of our own Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator in conjunction with King Edward's Witley, we have launched the Wellbeing Hub (TeenTips) to all parents, staff and Year 7 and 8 children. This valuable resource offers a trusted source of support for our parents, children and staff and is designed by experts to meet the social, emotional and educational needs of young people.

The School Counsellor is based at Barrow Hills every Friday morning and is currently meeting with a number of our children each week offering them the opportunity to talk through their concerns in a safe and confidential environment.



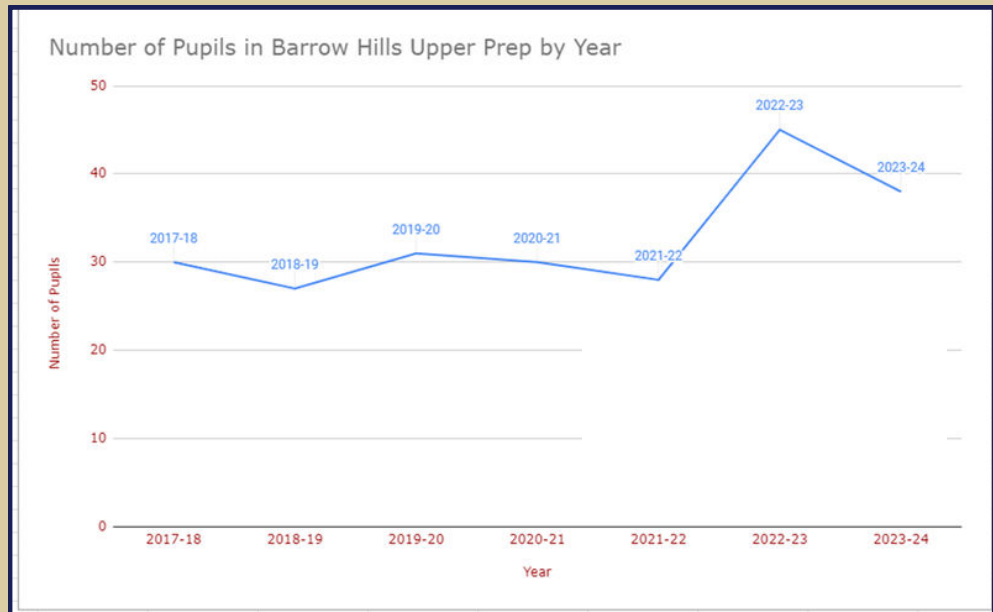


PART 3: RESULTS

Our results have been consistently strong and this is most often in the context of a small cohort. In fact, the Upper Prep cohort this year and last year were well beyond the average for Barrow Hills.

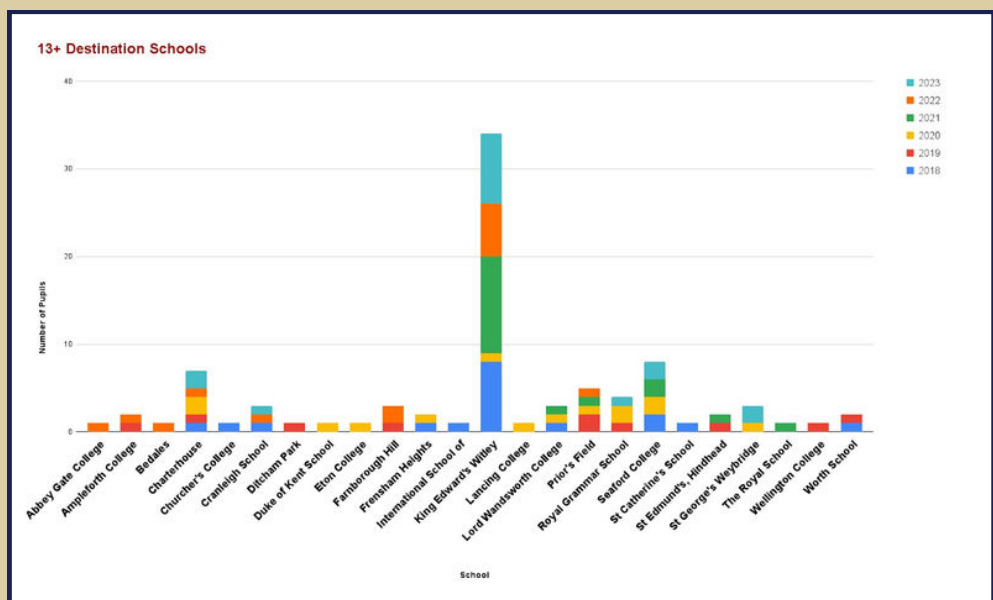
- 40% A* and A Grades
- 93% A* - B Grades
- 100% A* to C Grades

Common Entrance exam results for 2023 were excellent, particularly considering the very strong value add as pupils progressed from Year 6 to Year 8.



Over the last three years, children from our Year 8 cohort have gained over 30 scholarships in all fields, from Academic, Sports, Drama, Art, DT as well as All Rounder.

Destinations represent schools of choice. Although the firm favourite is our partner school, KESW, we successfully transfer our Upper Prep children to a dynamic range of well considered schools.



ALUMNI QUOTES



"He tells us that in all the subjects so far, he has previously covered the material in Barrow Hills and sometimes in more depth (science and maths). Clearly this is not a recap, as some of his classmates are encountering the material for the first time. It has meant that he can throw himself into extracurricular activities (rowing, rock climbing, rock school and jazz band!) and meet new friends rather than focus on academically keeping up. It is important as it helps build confidence in a much larger school and a new environment..... It is a Barrow Hills' secret sauce!"

"As a child who has to work extra hard at academics, he has entered his new school at Year 9 pleasantly surprised at the level of his knowledge, confident in his position in his classes and able to consolidate much of his learning. In addition, he has taken the transition in his stride, longer days, independence and a new environment have landed with him positively in all cases. He knows how to prioritise his work alongside his extra-curricular activities and is ready to engage in the senior school offering."