

a hop from Clapham Junction, has a long queue of families from SW postcodes who want in. Last year, leavers scored 72.5% A*-B at A-level but head Mark Hanley-Browne looks beyond the league tables – he wants to nurture artistic and sporting souls too, something the parents love. 'Many of our students go on to art college or drama school or music college or to study sport... That's why they come to us. So the academic side of things is not all that we do here,' he says. The just-finished Fiennes Theatre has the thespians all abuzz (there is strong dramatic tradition) and the choir, who have toured Finland, sang so well at St Paul's that the Dean has invited them back. Travel is a big deal, with trips all over the Continent and to partner schools in India. There's a super-impressive sixth-form centre and a great boat club at Barnes Bridge – rowing is booming with crews boasting several wins and a silver at the National Schools Regatta for the boys' first IV last year. The first cricket team and U15 rugby squad have also been doing exceptionally.

Tel 020 8870 4171
Email mhbm@manuel.org.uk
Website emanuel.org.uk
Head Mark Hanley-Browne, MA, since 2004; previously deputy head at Highgate School
Pupils 752 day; 452 boys, 300 girls
Faith C of E **Ages** 10–18
Term fees £5,245
Class size 13–16 (10 in sixth form)
Oxbridge 3%
Higher education 99%
Registration By November of year before entry; £110 fee
Founded 1594
Alumni Michael Aspel, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, Peter Hain, Michel Roux

FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL NW1

Clarence Gate, NW1 6XR

We're huge fans of the ever-glamorous and enthusiastic Vivienne Durham, and her Christian Louboutins (we don't often experience shoe envy when we meet headteachers). She describes her school as 'academic and kind'; she interviews all applicants personally, because, she says, a girl might have poor exam technique but be 'sky-high clever'. Her pupils are unpretentious and less jet-set than their peers at the SW1 sister school, over whom they have the academic edge – for the time being, at least. Francis Holland makes a virtue of its inner-London location – there are lots of trips and plenty of visiting speakers. OK, there's no playground

to speak of, but Regent's Park provides ample space to run around in, and the building has a fabulous swimming pool in its basement. Last year's GCSE grades were the best ever (79 per cent A*-A grades; 85.3 per cent A*-B at A-level), and extended-project results are consistently excellent. The school reports increasing numbers of girls applying to US universities: one was offered a place at Cornell's prestigious School of Architecture in New York. Speaking of architecture, we make no apology for quoting the school motto again, because it's such a corker: 'That our daughters may be as the polished corners of the temple.' We note in passing that Mrs Durham's husband, Kenneth, has just retired from University College School, where he's been head for 17 years. Mrs Durham assures us she has no plans to follow suit at this point.

Tel 020 7723 0176
Email admin@fhs-nw1.org.uk
Website francisholland.org.uk
Head Vivienne Durham, MA, since 2004; previously deputy head of South Hampstead High School
Pupils 460 day girls
Faith C of E **Ages** 11–18
Term fees £5,270
Class size 20 (8 in sixth form)
Oxbridge 10%
Higher education 100%
Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee
Admission London Girls' Schools' Consortium exam and interview; school's own exam and interview for sixth form
Founded 1878
Alumnae Joan Collins, Jackie Collins, Amanda Donohoe, Emilia Fox

FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL SW1

39 Graham Terrace, SW1W 8JF

Exciting times in SW1 – FH's new head Lucy Elphinstone is the talk of the town. She describes her former boss at Downe House, Emma McKendrick, as 'a phenomenal woman who never slept' and we get the impression she's in the same mould. 'She has so much energy and bounces around the school,' said our sixth-form guide. Mrs Elphinstone talks in terms of 'grit and grades': she's a great believer in 'multiple intelligences', so aims to provide something for everyone. The school chalked up 71 per cent A*-B at A-level last year (a blip, we think – the average for the three preceding years was 84.3 per cent). This is, says Elphinstone, the happiest school she has ever worked in, but she wants to raise everyone's aspirations. She's introduced business studies and politics at A-level, and the EPQ for the most able sixth-formers. Snakes of girls in pink tutus keep up the fine tradition of excellent ballet but they can now also be found (sans tutus) honing their survival skills in Battersea Park. The sixth-form centre is being overhauled, with a gym (open from 7.30am), café and technology area. Music and drama get better and better in the fabulous Carmel Hall performing-arts centre. Mrs Elphinstone tells us her remit was to 'come in and transform Francis Holland'. She's off to a cracking start.

Tel 020 7730 2971
Email education@fhs-sw1.org.uk
Website francisholland.org.uk

Head Lucy Elphinstone, MA, since 2012; previously senior leader and head of sixth form at Downe House
Pupils 460 day girls
Faith C of E **Ages** 4–18
Term fees £5,375
Class size 18 (6 in sixth form)
Oxbridge 8%
Higher education 100%
Registration By November of year before entry; £100 fee
Admission London Girls' Schools' Consortium exam and interview; school's own exam and interview for sixth form
Founded 1881
Alumnae Jemima Khan, Vanessa Mae, Sienna Miller

THE GODOLPHIN & LATYMER SCHOOL

Iffley Road, W6 0PG

How on earth do you find space for a full-size astro-hockey pitch in Hammersmith? Beats us, but somehow one has been added to Godolphin's already-enviable sports facilities. Staff talk about head Ruth Mercer in superlatives. She comes across as quiet and thoughtful, but ultra hands-on – she takes particular pride in the extracurricular programme. (We'd love to join the Ancient World breakfast club.) 'We want our girls to learn for life,' Mrs Mercer says, 'so if you want a hothouse... this school is not for you.' There were 750 applicants for 110 places last year; a small handful of girls head elsewhere for sixth form ('Westminster and boys,' an insider says sagely), but the mini-exodus is more than made up for by entrants. A third of sixth-formers opt for the IB;

FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL NW1



GIRLS 
MIXED 
BOYS 