

**Parent Power****NORTHEAST**

Bright stars are proud of outstanding results but there is a long way to go for the region with the fewest leading schools

**T**he English region with the lowest participation rates in higher education inevitably is also the one with the fewest schools in our Parent Power rankings of the nation's best state and independent secondaries. Just 18 schools make the cut this year in our three-year analysis of pre-pandemic A-level and GCSE results from 2017-19.

The most recent data, from 2018-19, shows that 895 school leavers in the region achieved AAA or better at A-level, less than half the number in any other English region and less than a seventh of the number of pupils achieving the top grades in London and the southeast. Yet there are pockets of excellence to be found in a sizeable region stretching from the River Tweed in the north to the River Tees in the south, with the Tyne-Wear conurbation at its heart.

Two schools stand out academically. The Royal Grammar School (RGS) in Newcastle is the top-ranked independent school in the northeast and last year's

winner of our regional Independent School of the Decade award. With a national ranking of 56th= it is almost 100 places ahead of the second-placed independent in the region, Yarm School, our Northeast Independent School of the Year 2019.

Success at RGS starts early. The RGS Junior School is in the top ten in our prep school rankings based on the outcomes of standard assessment tests in 2017-19.

The senior school's exceptional examination performance at A-level (87.2 per cent A\*-B grades on average in 2017-19) and GCSE (84.4 per cent at grades 9-7) rose further still during 2020-21. An Independent Schools Inspectorate report published this month praised the school for its pupils' "excellent" attitudes to learning as well as their "high moral awareness and stance on fairness and social justice".

Social justice is also at the core of the region's highest-achieving state secondary, Durham Johnston Comprehensive School. It is the only



**Durham Johnston Comprehensive illustrates how state secondaries can help their pupils go far**



**RGS**

FROM  
**VIDEO  
LESSONS**

TO  
**DRAMATIC  
EXPRESSIONS**

**THERE'S MORE  
TO LIFE AT RGS**


  

  


Royal Grammar School Newcastle  
[www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk](http://www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk)



school with a mixed-ability intake at 11 to top one of our regional rankings. Although this reflects the absence of a grammar system in the northeast, the school's academic performance at A-level bears comparison with the most selective grammar schools.

With more than three quarters of all A-level grades returning A\*-B grades across the three years of our analysis, just 60 schools in our guide – all except seven of them grammars – notch up better results. Durham Johnston's academic outcomes in the sixth form are therefore better than more than half of England's 163 selective state grammar schools.

Its success is a magnet for pupils applying for a sixth form place from across Co Durham. Entry standards are consequently higher than average. At GCSE, Durham Johnston is also the top

performer in the region among schools disclosing their results to *The Sunday Times*, but its lead is smaller over the state secondary in second place, Queen Elizabeth High in Hexham. All the independent schools in the northeast except Longridge Towers, near Berwick-upon-Tweed, have a higher proportion of 9-7 grades at GCSE than the leading state schools in the region.

The city of Durham and its surrounding area is the education epicentre of the region. Of the ten northeast state secondaries in our national rankings, three are in Durham: St Leonard's Catholic School and Framwellgate School Durham in addition to Durham Johnston. The city has also produced two of the region's eight independent secondaries: Durham High School for Girls and Durham School. The city's Belmont C of E Primary School is one of six Co Durham primary schools in our English top 500 and one small primary – St Oswald's C of E – is in the Parent Power top 50.

The proposed Durham Maths School will aim to reach our rankings for sixth form colleges, following the outstanding success of the Exeter Maths School and the King's Maths School in south London.

Sedgefield Community College was named our Northeast State Secondary School of the Decade last year, the only regional winner without a sixth form.

About one quarter of all GCSEs gained grades 9-7 from 2017-19, placing the 11-16 school among the top 25 performers in its sector. This represents a significant improvement in outcomes for children over the past ten years: at the start of that period only about one in seven GCSEs gained the top grades.

At primary school level the northeast has 27 schools in *The Sunday Times* Parent Power 500 including five from Newcastle upon Tyne and four from Sunderland. St Joseph's RC Primary School in Sunderland is the region's highest-placed primary, ranking 24th= in England, while Newcastle's top performer is St Oswald's RC in Gosforth (74th=).

**TOP 10****STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

North east rank	National rank	Admissions	A-level A*-B (%)	GCSE A*/A1/9/8/7 (%)
1	128=	Durham Johnston Comprehensive	C 75.6	35.9
2	161=	Queen Elizabeth High School, Hexham	C 69.5	35.6
3	258	St Leonard's RC School, Durham	C 60.1	26.2
4	261	The King Edward VI School, Morpeth	C 56.8	31.9
5	270	Egglecliffe School, Stockton-on-Tees	C 57.6	29.2
6	271=	Carmel College, Darlington	C 57.2	29.9
7	274=	Sacred Heart RC High School, Newcastle	PS 56.2	31.3
8	276	Whitley Bay High School	C 57.3	28.9
9	334	Framwellgate School, Durham	C 53.7	21.7
10	360=	St Anthony's Girls' RC Academy, Sunderland	C 49.5	25.1

**TOP 8****INDEPENDENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

North east rank	National rank	A-level A*-B (%)	GCSE A*/A1/9/8/7 (%)
1	56=	Royal Grammar School, Newcastle	87.2 84.4
2	151	Yarm School	74.1 67.2
3	197=	Newcastle High School for Girls GDST	69.3 62.7
4	224	Durham High School for Girls	66.4 55.8
5	264	Durham School	67.4 41.1
6	308	Teesside High School, Stockton-on-Tees	54.5 43.5
7	326	Westfield School, Newcastle	49.3 39.4
8	331	Longridge Towers School, Berwick-upon-Tweed	52.3 30.0