



“

I'd never boarded before so it is **fantastic** to be in a **homely** place. All the Housestaff are really lovely and can **help with everything** you need. ”

Olivia, age 11

THE BEST START TO LIFE AT DOWNE HOUSE
LOWER SCHOOL BOARDING



WELCOME TO D



“All our girls deserve the very best start for their first taste of boarding school life. Their comfort, well-being and happiness are only part of the story. The excellent foundations laid in the Lower School act as a springboard for the Upper School, igniting a love of learning and preparing the girls for modern life beyond Downe. We place the girls at the heart of everything we do and bring families with us on this wonderful journey as part of the Downe House community.”

Emma McKendrick, Headmistress

A new beginning at Downe House

A year in the making, our new Lower School boarding houses opened their doors in September 2015. The aim has been to make the transition to boarding school life as easy and comfortable as possible, providing the warmest of welcomes to the girls as they enter this new phase. All the feedback suggests that this has been a resounding success!

The brand new Hermitage and Hill, plus the refurbished Darwin, now provide outstanding living and working spaces, carefully planned around the pastoral and educational needs of the girls who join us at 11+ and 12+. The fourth Lower School boarding house in Veyrines, France, is also an exciting part of the Lower School experience at 12+.

Clustered in one key area, the Houses provide a wonderful setting for continuity of pastoral care in the Remove and Lower Fourth (Years 7 and 8), mirroring the pastoral care model across each of the other sections of the school and preparing girls for a smooth transition to the Upper School in due course.



OWNE HOUSE



Creating a home from home

The homeliness and comfort provided in the boarding houses are the direct result of working closely with an architect and designer specialising in large family homes.

The spacious bedrooms accommodate the 105 Lower School girls in groups of four across the three houses. Each room is comfortably furnished with ample storage, space to display photographs from home, study and relaxation areas. The girls make themselves at home in the family style kitchen or living room which provide the perfect spot for a chat and a hot chocolate.

The facilities, also featuring a music practice room and a study with computers, are designed to feel like an extension of family living, with a garden play area outside and Housestaff and their families in adjoining apartments.

Hermitage, Hill and Darwin are fully integrated with Veyrines, our fourth Lower School boarding house in France, which welcomes up to 24 Lower Fourth girls each term.

In each House, the resident Housemistress and her dedicated team look after the girls from a practical and emotional perspective and communicate frequently with parents. A pastoral assistant supports the Housemistress and plays a 'big sister' role to the girls, waking them in the morning, putting them to bed and being on hand to talk, problem solve or just have fun. Each girl also has her own tutor who oversees her academic progress and well-being.



A term in France at 12+

"It is impossible to sum up a term in France easily. From the moment I arrived it was an experience that exceeded my expectations." Eliza, age 12 (Summer term 2015)

At our beautifully restored French farmhouse in Veyrines the girls benefit from a unique educational adventure in the heart of the Dordogne countryside. The term spent here is much more than the opportunity to improve French language skills.

By experiencing different ways of learning, taking part in an extensive range of outings and workshops, living in a rural community and being immersed in a different culture girls also become more resilient, independent and confident about what they can achieve academically and personally in the future.

The Veyrines team communicates regularly with parents and works to ensure a smooth transition at the beginning and end of each term.

What makes boarding at Downe House special?

Judith Gilpin Jones, Head of Lower School explains, "Boarding is a very special proposition, letting the girls develop at their own pace without the distraction of outside pressures and allowing us the time to get to know them well and find their strengths, whilst giving each girl the confidence to be herself. Seeing the girls grow in aspiration and leadership throughout their time here is a huge privilege."

The Lower School aims to provide a gentle transition from home and, in time, a stress-free progression to the Upper School. Weekend and evening co-curricular activities and sporting fixtures keep the girls busy and allow friendships to develop from day one.

The girls are integrated with the rest of the School community through various inter-house activities, a buddy system and a link to one of the Mixed Age (Upper School) houses, giving them a sense of belonging and constant progression.



The story so far

"I feel extraordinarily lucky to be living and working in one of the new Lower School houses at Downe. The well-planned and generous facilities aside, Hill House is warm, inviting and really does feel like home. I have no doubt that the environment has played a huge part in how quickly the girls settled at the start of the year."

Annabel Brown, Hill Housemistress

"I am convinced the new Lower School houses have enabled the new girls to settle into boarding with ease - their warmth, comfort, space and facilities make Hermitage a place they want to come home to."

Anthea Nash, Hermitage Housemistress

"I hope we have created three boarding houses that the girls feel safe and happy in, that enable them to feel at home, allowing them to develop as well-rounded individuals in the best traditions of Downe."

Alasdair Heath, Director of Estates, Property and Services



In their own words:

"It's an exciting, wonderful and fun-filled environment where everyone feels at home." Chiara, age 11

"I love the fact that the Housestaff are so friendly and kind and they are always there whenever you need them." Antonia, age 11

"I love all the dorm moments we have." Mathilda, age 12

"I think the music room is a fantastic idea and it really helps me!" Katerina, age 12

"Downe House boarding is always fun and there is always something happening." Saskia, age 12

"The facilities are amazing! They have thought of everything we could possibly need." Rosalind, age 12

"I love how we can personalise and decorate our rooms however we like." Hannah, age 11





And finally... did you know?

Downe House is a full boarding school with 580 girls aged 11 to 18.

It is located on a 110 acre site, 60 miles from central London (Trafalgar Square).

14 dogs, 11 cats, 2 rabbits and a guinea pig also board at Downe.

Banoffee pie is the favourite Downe House school dessert.

There is 100% participation in sports match play at junior level.

Movie night, pamper evenings and baking are the favourite ways to relax in House.

Scholarships are awarded in drama, music, sport, art and all-round academic achievement.

Hot chocolate with marshmallows is the top treat in House.



DOWNE HOUSE

For further information
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For a tour of Downe House and admissions queries,
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