

Boarding Schools: Regional Rankings

DESPITE ADOPTION OF AMERICAN LIFESTYLES AND NORMS which tend to favour day over boarding schools, British-style boarding schools with their rough and tumble public school ethos, continue to be much loved by India's westernised and aspirational middle class. But while throughout the 20th century, upper class households — which were quick to appreciate the value of disciplined primary-secondary education — were prepared to send their children across the country for a *Tom Brown's Schooldays*-type of cold-showers-and-the-lash education, in the new millennium the rationale for sending children to boarding school has undergone a sea change.

Residential schools, including new genre 'international' schools, which have mushroomed all over the country, especially in salubrious hill stations or sites far away from the nation's noisy, crowded and polluted cities where playing fields have almost disappeared, long commutes to school are routine and the very air is dangerous to inhale, continue to offer an attractive alternative to day schools. But with rules relating to visitation and weekends at home becoming more relaxed and liberal, latter day affluent upper and middle class households prefer to enrol the children in boarding schools within easy driving (or flying) distance.

Although some of the legendary glamour of traditional boarding schools has been stolen by highly capital-intensive international schools, the former continue to attract students far in excess of capacity available because they uphold traditions sanctified by time and custom, as also demand relatively affordable tuition and boarding fees. Moreover, the entry of almost 100 international schools affiliated with offshore examination boards such as the International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) and Advance Placement (AP) into India's booming private education market, has had the beneficial outcome of prompting managements of legacy boarding schools to get their act together and improve infrastructure and services to take on the new competition. All these developments have made the regional ratings and rankings of India's traditional boarding schools more important than they were hitherto.

Northern Region

THERE ARE ONLY MINOR RESHUFFLES IN THE TOP 10 TABLE of North India's famous legacy boarding schools presided by **The Doon School (TDS), Dehradun** which has quite clearly captured the imagination of the educationally knowledgeable public of North India. TDS' aggregate score of 1,263 derived from adding up the scores across 14 parameters is more than 40 points ahead of **Welham Girls, Dehradun** and **Bishop Cotton, Shimla** (jointly ranked second). The other venerated vintage boarding schools of northern India — **Lawrence, Sanawar** (estb. 1847); **Daly College, Indore** (1882); **Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun** (1922); **Sherwood College, Nainital** (1867) and **Scindia, Gwalior** (1897) — have retained their positions at top table with **Pinegrove School, Dharampur** moving closer to the salt following its higher No.12 (15) ranking this year.

"The EW-C fore annual survey of schools serves the very



VDJS' Bindra: conscious improvement effort

useful purpose of prompting school managements to take stock and figure out ways and means to improve themselves across the entire range of assessment parameters. The latest survey results have come as a shot in the arm for the Vidya Devi Jindal School where we are consciously working to improve performance across all the parameters. I am particularly pleased that you have introduced the new parameter of discipline and life skills education — aka values education — under which we are making a special effort to improve the communication skills of our girls. People in Indian society need to learn to become more polite and less aggressive. That's why I am happy to note that we have been highly rated on the parameters of life skills as also community service," says Gunmeet Bindra, the committed principal of the all-girls **Vidya Devi Jindal School, Hisar**, ranked No. 15 nationally, within the Top 10 in North India, and the No.1 boarding school in the state of Haryana (pop. 25 million).

North Zone league table

Rank					Total score
2008	2009	2010	2011		
1	1	1	1	The Doon School, Dehradun	1263
3	3	2	2	Welham Girls School, Dehradun	1222
5	5	3	2	Bishop Cotton School, Shimla	1222
4	2	3	3	Lawrence School, Sanawar	1219
10	8	4	4	Daly College, Indore	1194
7	7	5	5	Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun	1182
6	9	3	6	Sherwood College, Nainital	1179
7	10	6	7	Army Public School, Dagshai	1171
9	6	7	8	Welham Boys School, Dehradun	1157
2	4	7	9	The Scindia School, Gwalior	1152
NR	NR	10	10	Vidya Devi Jindal School, Hisar	1134

2008	2009	2010	2011	North Zone league table	Total score
8	11	8	11	St. George's College, Mussoorie	1117
NR	NR	15	12	Pinegrove School, Dharampur	1116
NR	NR	13	13	DPS, Pinjore	1092
11	14	11	14	Wynberg Allen School, Mussoorie	1089
14	15	9	15	Mussoorie International School	1086
NR	NR	NR	16	Motilal Nehru School of Sports, Rai, Sonipat	1085
13	16	16	17	G D Birla Public School, Ranikhet	1074
12	12	13	18	Birla Vidya Mandir, Nainital	1070
16	18	14	19	Shigally Hill International Academy, Dehradun	1066
18	13	12	20	SelaQui World School, Dehradun	1056
NR	19	16	21	Scindia Kanya Vidyalaya, Gwalior	1051

very encouraging for Orchid International which has been operational for only five years. I am really satisfied that we are now listed among the Top 10 residential schools in India and third in the western region. In particular, we have invested heavily in hiring and training the best teachers and establishing excellent sports facilities — including 12 dedicated playing fields and hiring professional coaches — for a wide range of games and sports. Therefore the rating Orchid International has received under the parameters of competence of faculty and sports education is very gratifying,” says Ravi Sapkal, managing trustee of the Nasik-based Kalyani Charitable Trust which promoted Orchid International in 2006.

Somewhat surprisingly, the vintage boarding schools of Panchgani — the scenic hill station of Maharashtra — St. Peter's, St. Joseph's and the Billimoria School, have gone below the radar and not made it to the league table, having been eclipsed by the **New Era High School**, ranked No. 4 this year. The thinly populated top table is completed by the **Maharani Gayatri Devi Public School, Jaipur**; **RiverDale International, Pune** and the Union defence ministry's two **Sainik schools** in Satara (Maharashtra) and Jamnagar (Gujarat).

Western Region

FOR HISTORICAL REASONS NOT UNCONNECTED WITH THE commercial character of its dominant metropolis, Mumbai, the western seaboard states of Maharashtra and Gujarat lack a boarding schools tradition. But for the inclusion of Rajasthan — usually classified as a northern state — in the western region by the C fore management, the sparse western region league table of traditional boarding schools would have been even more modest. However with the inclusion of the desert state in the western region, the top table is headed by **Mayo Girls, Ajmer** (estb. 1987 and ranked second nationally) which has trumped its older fraternal school **Mayo Boys** (estb. 1875). Yet it's refreshing reassurance the boarding school tradition is not dead in western India that the newly-promoted **Orchid International School, Nasik** has been steadily moving up the national and regional league tables and is ranked No. 3 this year.

“The conclusions of the latest *EducationWorld* survey are

Orchid's Sapkal (left): satisfactory Top 3 entry



West Zone league table

Rank				Total score	
2008	2009	2010	2011		
3	2	1	1	Mayo College Girls School, Ajmer	1263
1	1	2	2	Mayo College, Ajmer	1185
5	4	4	3	Orchid International School, Nasik	1176
NR	3	3	4	New Era High School, Panchgani	1171
2	5	5	5	Maharani Gayatri Devi Public School, Jaipur	1131
4	6	6	6	RiverDale International Residential School, Pune	1117
9	8	8	7	Sainik School, Satara	1083
6	7	7	8	Sainik School, Jamnagar	1072

Southern Region

DOWN SOUTH IN PENINSULAR INDIA WHERE OUR ERSTWHILE British masters built several cantonment towns in the plains to keep the natives in check and hill stations to school the children and repair to in summer, the boarding school tradition is alive and well. Yet somewhat surprisingly only one Raj-era school — Lawrence, Lovedale (estb. 1858) — is listed among the Top 10 traditional boarding schools of South India.

Inevitably, the southern region top table is headed by the new age **Rishi Valley School, Chittoor** which is the country's No.1 ranked boarding school this year, followed by **Lawrence Lovedale**. The rest of the seats at the southern top table have been allotted to relatively new boarding schools including the gurukul-style **BGS International, Bangalore** and **Chinnmaya International, Coimbatore**, ranked third and fourth



CIRS' Krishnamurthy: pleasant surprise

respectively, followed by **St. John's International, Chennai; Bangalore Military School** at No. 6; the capital-intensive **Jain International Residential School** and **Sarala Birla Academy** in suburban Bangalore (unsurprisingly rated second and first under the parameter of infrastructure provision); the resuscitated **Blue Mountain School, Ooty** and the newly-promoted (1996) **Coorg Public School**, which is Karnataka's top-ranked boarding school beyond Bangalore.

"Chinmaya International is a low-profile CBSE and IB school with strong emphasis on values-based education. Therefore our Top 20 all-India and Top 5 regional ranking among boarding schools has come as a pleasant surprise. And since our main strength is holistic values-based education, it's especially satisfying that we've been highly rated on the parameters of discipline and life skills, sports education and community service. There's a lot happening in CIRS to deliver quality education to our 550 students," says Shanti Krishnamurthy, a highly experienced teacher/principal who took charge as principal of Chinmaya International in 2009.

South Zone league table

Rank				Total score
2008	2009	2010	2011	
1	1	1	1	Rishi Valley School, Chittoor 1269
2	3	2	2	Lawrence School Lovedale, Ooty 1172
8	4	3	3	BGS International Residential School, Bangalore 1133
6	8	6	4	Chinmaya International Residential School, Coimbatore 1130
3	5	4	5	St. John's International Residential School, Chennai 1129
NR	7	5	6	Bangalore Military School 1124
4	6	7	7	Jain International Residential School, Bangalore 1115
5	2	8	8	Sarala Birla Academy, Bangalore 1089
7	9	9	9	The Blue Mountain School, Ooty 1079
NR	NR	NR	10	Coorg Public School, Kodagu 995

Eastern Region

IN EASTERN INDIA THE TRADITION OF SENDING CHILDREN OUT of inhospitable cities to boarding school, especially to the cool and invigorating climes of Darjeeling and its environs still survives, despite almost 35 years of communist rule in West Bengal which impoverished and/or exiled the middle class. Yet the imagination of the small SECA (socio-economic category A) middle class in eastern India seems to have been captured by the pristine **Assam Valley School, Balipara** (estb. 1995) which has surpassed the vintage **St. Paul's, Darjeeling** (estb. 1823), **St. Joseph's, North Point** (estb. 1888) and several older schools in public esteem. For the second consecutive year, Assam Valley (ranked No. 6 nationally) has been ranked higher than St. Paul's and St. Joseph's in the eastern region table of legacy boarding schools.

"I am delighted that the continuous investment of time, money and effort we have been making in improving and upgrading AVS is being appreciated by the discerning public of eastern and north-east India, and beyond," says Derek Mountford, the cheerful, can-do headmaster of the well-equipped and meticulously landscaped primary-secondary set in a Williamson Magor tea plantation near Tezpur, Assam. "We have been conscientiously investing in teacher training and development and encouraging extra-curricular and life skills education while reaching out to local communities, all of which is reflected in the survey," says Mountford, who is also highly rated under the parameter of leadership and management.

Also accorded places of honour in the Top 10 table of eastern India's most respected legacy boarding schools are **Himali Boarding, Kurseong** (ranked first nationally under the parameter of value for money) and several vintage boarding schools including **Dr. Graham's Homes, Kalimpong; Goethals Memorial, Kurseong** and the **Tashi Namgyal Academy, Gangtok** (estb. 1926) with the recently-promoted **Taurian World School, Ranchi**, a welcome addition.

AVS' Mountford: time, money & effort investment



East Zone league table

Rank					Total score
2008	2009	2010	2011		
3	2	1	1	The Assam Valley School, Balipara	1185
1	1	2	2	St. Paul's School, Darjeeling	1172
2	4	3	3	St. Joseph's School, North Point, Darjeeling	1149
5	3	4	4	Himali Boarding School, Kurseong	1134
NR	NR	5	5	Dr. Graham's Homes, Kalimpong	1103
NR	NR	5	6	Goethals Memorial School, Kurseong	1083
NR	NR	6	7	Taurian World School, Ranchi	1069
NR	NR	8	8	Tashi Namgyal Academy, Gangtok	1013
NR	NR	7	8	St. Augustine's, Kalimpong	1013
NR	NR	9	9	Mount Hermon, Darjeeling	996

Best in states: Boarding schools

States	School	All-India Rank	Region Rank
Uttarakhand	The Doon School, Dehradun	2	1
Himachal Pradesh	Bishop Cotton School, Shimla	3	2
Madhya Pradesh	Daly College, Indore	5	4
Haryana	Vidya Devi Jindal School, Hisar	15	10
Assam	The Assam Valley School, Balipara	6	1
West Bengal	St. Paul's School, Darjeeling	10	2
Jharkhand	Taurian World School, Ranchi	34	7
Sikkim	Tashi Namgyal Academy, Gangtok	38	8
Rajasthan	Mayo College Girls, Ajmer	2	1
Maharashtra	Orchid International School, Nashik	9	3
Gujarat	Sainik School, Jamnagar	32	8
Andhra Pradesh	Rishi Valley School, Chittoor	1	1
Tamil Nadu	Lawrence School Lovedale, Ooty	10	2
Karnataka	BGS International Residential School, Bangalore	16	3

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