

## **Prince George arrives for first day at £18,000-a-year prep school**

[Prince George](#) has started school; a royal enrolment that has upped the desirability of properties in the well-heeled environs of the south-west London prep school chosen to tutor the four-year-old.

Plans for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to accompany their firstborn on his first day were changed due to her recently announced pregnancy and the severe morning sickness she has been experiencing. Instead the duke did the school run solo.

A crowd of well-wishers had gathered outside the school gate to watch. The young prince arrived shortly before 8.50am and was driven through a side entrance and a security gate closed behind them.

The third in line to the throne arrived for his first day at £18,000-a-year Thomas's Battersea, where he will learn to "be kind", acquire "confidence, leadership and humility" and not have a best friend to prevent other children having hurt feelings.

Holding his dad's hand and looking a little apprehensive, George walked from the car and then had a formal handshake with Helen Haslem, head of lower school. the duke was holding his son's school bag.

It was a low-level arrival as far as media were concerned. Unlike William's first day, which was witnessed by a bank of photographers, the fiercely protective Cambridges stipulated only one TV camera and one photographer would be there to capture the moment of George's first day.

The newest and most famous pupil, who will be known as George Cambridge, was escorted into the reception class.

Kitted out in his John Lewis uniform (also available at Peter Jones in Sloane Square) – winter and summer uniforms, red art smock, and PE kit including black ballet shoes total more than £365 – the young prince can look forward to a broad education.

Along with maths, English and science, the curriculum includes classes in "understanding the world", "expressive arts and design" and "communication and language". Art, ballet, drama, ICT, French, music, and PE are all taught from day one.

If, like his great-uncle Edward, he inclines towards thespianism, the school performs eight different productions and a nativity play every year, and has its own sound and lighting crew. Any musical leanings will be encouraged enthusiastically through weekly concerts and summer and winter galas.

He may, of course, prefer to just charge around the rooftop playground, with climbing frames and stunning views across the river Thames and Battersea Park.

Ben Thomas, principal of Thomas's [London](#) Day School, who was headteacher at Thomas's Battersea for 18 years, said he hoped George would learn to be himself.

“The whole aim of these precious early years of education is to give children that confidence in who they are. So we are not going to try and mould him into any kind of particular person and we wouldn't do that with any of our pupils.

“I hope he will have the confidence to be himself with all his quirks and his idiosyncrasies and characteristics.”

The choice of Thomas's Battersea makes him the first direct royal heir to be educated south of the river, but then he is only the third-generation heir to attend public school.

His father, the Duke of Cambridge, attended Wetherby school in Notting Hill, west London, gaily waving to photographers on his first day, and leaving the establishment with the distinction of winning the Grunfield Cup for the child with the best swimming style.

His paternal grandfather, the Prince of Wales, then the Duke of Cornwall, did not start at Hill House school, Knightsbridge, until the age of eight. On his first day, he painted a picture. Breathless newspaper reports, based on the imaginative accounts of witnesses, described it variously as a red and blue seascape, a green ship going under Tower Bridge, or the royal yacht Britannia. “One thing is clear, on his first day at school the Duke of Cornwall painted a picture,” the Manchester Guardian reported.

With just 560 boys and girls between the ages of four and 13, Thomas's Battersea school, in a Grade II-listed building, parts of which date to 1700, has a ballet room, science labs, a pottery room, two libraries and a one-acre playground with AstroTurf.

Morning snacks include organic milk, freshly baked pain aux raisins and wholewheat breadsticks. For lunch, pupils are promised freshly cooked meals which, whenever

possible, include organic meat, vegetables and dairy, all of which grandpapa Charles will undoubtedly approve.

According to the Good [Schools](#) Guide, it has a wide-ranging mix of international parents, with 19 different foreign languages spoken at home. Competitive and oversubscribed, it is looking for children who “have a measure of confidence, are responsive, sociable, and with a light in their eyes”.

It is “busy” and “slightly chaotic” and for cosmopolitan parents who want “the best English education money can buy”, the guide continues. “That is what they want and, to a large degree, that is what they get.” It adds: “Withdrawn types might find it all overwhelming.”

Tatler advises to get children’s names down at birth. According to the society magazine, new headmaster Simon O’Malley, who, like George, starts this September, is a “silver fox” whose previously stated mission is for pupils to leave school “confident and comfortable, the sort of people others turn to”.

Known for his attention to detail, O’Malley once told the Daily Telegraph how it was the little things that count: such as emailing the parent of an expat pupil to say they performed a great rugby tackle because the parent is not at the match to see it and say “well done”.

The school, whose alumni include model and actor Cara Delevingne and singer Florence Welch, is said to discourage pupils from having best friends, instead encouraging lots of friends to stop others having their feelings hurt.

Its website stresses along with the “highest academic standards”, the school’s “ethos, aims and values actively support the upholding of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

“These are British values which we cherish and which equip pupils for life in modern Britain.”