



*Bedford*

# Move to Bedford

A guide for teachers and leaders of education



## Bedford is central - that's why people love living here.

Many people and families are drawn to Bedford by its reputation for education, good value houses and quality of life. 35 minutes north of Central London, Bedford Borough is close enough to the capital to attract commuters but far enough away to be neither too expensive nor too crowded.

Bedford is a great place to call home... take a look at what we've got to offer!





## Getting Here & Around

In a world where everywhere claims to be 'central', Bedford's location actually means something. It's a place that benefits from its neighbours and yet retains its own individuality. Bedford is perfectly placed to enjoy the attractions that are on offer in nearby Milton Keynes, Cambridge & London.

With Bedford's central location, travel by road, bus, train or air is easy. Just 35 minutes to London by train (or four hours to Paris), Luton airport is less than a 30 min drive away and there are fantastic road links using the M1 and A1. There are five airports within easy reach, including trains to Luton and Gatwick airports and the X5 bus travels from Oxford to Cambridge via Bedford and Milton Keynes.

Moving around the Borough is easy once you are here. From walking or cycling to bus, car and train, Bedford's transport network can get you from A to B in the easiest and quickest way.



[www.visitbedford.co.uk](http://www.visitbedford.co.uk)

[www.travelbedford.co.uk](http://www.travelbedford.co.uk)

## Housing

Being in a prime housing location, property usually comes at a cost, but not in Bedford. The Borough offers a fantastic environment to live in, with better value house prices than much of the South East.

The urban area of Bedford and Kempston offers a great mix of modern housing developments and established Victorian terraces while the villages of North Bedfordshire showcase quintessential rural life with traditional thatched cottages, renovated farmhouses and exclusive executive homes. Many of the villages are real hidden gems with very welcoming communities set in picturesque countryside.

[www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk)

[www.zoopla.co.uk](http://www.zoopla.co.uk)

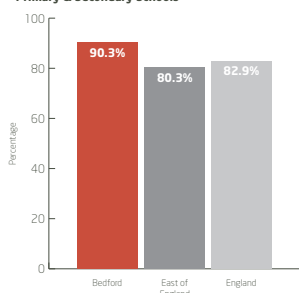


## Education

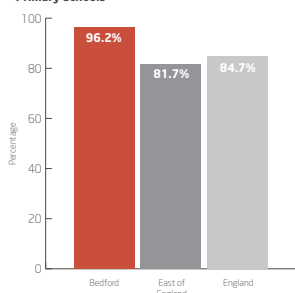
Many families are drawn to Bedford for its excellent schools including the independent Harpur Trust ones. Today as in the past, its schools are a big draw. Many of the town's Victorian suburbs grew as a result of families' lured to the area by Bedford's reputation for education. Today, Bedford is home to an impressive network of public funded and independent primary and secondary schools.

Percentage of Schools judged as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'

Primary & Secondary Schools



Primary Schools



Our local schools remain top in the region for performance in Ofsted inspections. Ofsted's annual report (2015) highlighted that 96.2% of all Bedford Borough Lower and primary schools are judged as good or outstanding. This ranks us fourth out of 163 Local Authorities in the country. In 2015, our A-level attainment also bucked the trend, increasing against a national decline.



Our independent schools offer an impressive and broad range of educational opportunities, with the area also home to the highly '*regarded and outstanding*' (OFSTED) Bedford College. The College offers courses at all levels from entry through to degree-level in many subjects suiting different qualifications and experience.

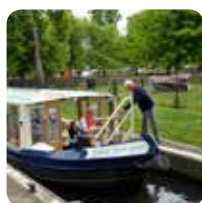
A number of universities are easily accessible from Bedford, including London, Cambridge and Oxford to name a few, as well as the more local Cranfield University and University of Bedfordshire.

 [www.bedford.gov.uk/education\\_and\\_learning](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/education_and_learning)

## Things to do...

### Eating, Drinking & Socialising:

Whether it's gourmet food or a quick bite to eat you are after, there is a world of variety in Bedford's fantastic (and often independent) restaurants, from Mexican to Greek, Indian to Lebanese or Italian to Japanese. Take time to stop for a coffee and relax in the bustle of the town or take afternoon tea (a tradition that has its roots in Bedfordshire) at a number of venues across the Borough.



There is also an annual Beer and Cider Festival which takes place at Bedford Corn Exchange organised by CAMRA for those wanting to sample real ales from around the country. In short, there really is something for everyone!









## Live Events:

There is a great live music scene in Bedford, showcasing amongst others, jazz and blues and the Philharmonia Orchestra. Bedford Corn Exchange plays host to a variety of cultural events; an array of music, comedy, dance and entertainment performances. Performances have included The Moscow Ballet's The Nutcracker, Bedford Orchestral Society's 'A Tchaikovsky Celebration' as well as Bedford Pantomime Company and many national and international comedians, bands and children's shows. Bedford's calendar of events celebrates its unique cultural heritage with traditional and innovative festivals for local people and visitors alike to participate in and enjoy. The biennial River Festival sees Bedford's riverbanks packed as over 350,000 people come to enjoy one of the biggest free events in the country. Bedfringe brings internationally renowned artists to Bedford theatres while the Bedford Film Festival brings cinematic variety to locations around the town.



## Heritage:

The Higgins Bedford tops the list of local culture spots exhibiting some of the world's finest art and fantastic pieces from local talent. It showcases wonderful and varied collections from world renowned artists alongside collections of archaeology, social history and ethnography. This is adjacent to the fascinating Panacea Museum and the John Bunyan Museum. Discover for yourself Bedford's history, spanning more than a thousand years with a wealth of historic buildings and areas to view. The village of Cardington, famous for its connections with the airships industry is now home to a new hybrid air vehicle as well as film studios, whilst Elstow Moot Hall has strong connections to John Bunyan. Bromham is home to a restored 17th Century watermill and the Glenn Miller Museum at Clapham hosts a unique collection dedicated to the bandleader housed in the original control tower at the airfield where he was last seen alive in 1944.

## Shopping:

Bedford has a vibrant town centre offering shoppers a range of high quality shops, from large department stores and major chains like Debenhams and Marks and Spencer to niche retailers and designer boutiques. The pedestrianised shopping centre hosts over 300 shops, a historic open-air market, arcades and a shopping mall with all the well-known names, makes it an excellent choice for shopping that attracts millions of people a year. As you drive into the countryside, you'll find plenty of fresh local produce – from roadside stores to abundantly stocked farm shops. But, in the unlikely event you can't find what you're looking for locally, then Milton Keynes, Cambridge & London are all on your doorstep.

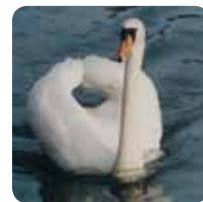
## Green Spaces:

Whether in town or in the countryside you will notice that the area has a wealth of parks and green open spaces providing opportunities for relaxation, exercise and adventure. The Bedford area, with its Victorian parks, open green spaces and stunning countryside lies on the iconic River Great Ouse and is blessed with some beautiful parks and open space. Bedford Park is part of the town's Victorian legacy, and with its formal gardens, carriage circuit and lake, it provides the perfect environment in which to take the air. The Embankment is renowned as one of the country's finest river settings with its gardens and water meadows.



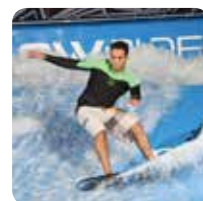
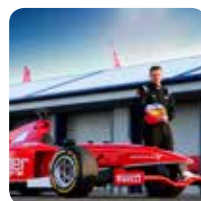
## Sport:

Sport is important to Bedford and the Borough has a rich Olympic heritage (evidenced by the gold post box in St Paul's Square!). Bedford International Athletic Stadium is the top athletics venue in the region, attracting national and international athletes and the town has been home to top sportspeople Paula Radcliffe, Tim Foster and Etienne Stott. The Borough has a strong rowing tradition with a number of active clubs as well as regular regattas making the most of the river. For families, the impressive Oasis Beach Pool offers crazy water flumes, wave pool or a leisurely laze in the beach area while the outdoor pool with river float ride is the main attraction in the summer. Canoeing, paddle boarding & other water sports are also available for families.



## Arts, Crafts and Other Local Pursuits:

There's so much to get involved with on your doorstep. From knit and natter, drink and draw to community choirs, there's plenty to keep you occupied. The Borough also has a plethora of clubs; supper, literary, amateur dramatic and even a whisky one! Our pubs offer you great opportunities to get out and about through quiz nights, bingo in the pubs and open mic sessions where you can go & join in or just be entertained. We also have a very active and engaging voluntary sector who are always on the lookout for new volunteers. All this and we're on the edge of the North Beds Wolds for riding, cycling and walking.



## Adrenalin Junkies:

For those who crave a sense of adventure when it comes to their days out, Bedford is the place to be. From paintball to freefall, off-road to on-target, Bedford has got just what you need to give you your adrenalin fix! You can skydive at Bodyflight, home of the world's largest wind tunnel and also enjoy the thrill of the surf there, in the purpose built Flow House. Get up close and personal to jet fuelled cars at Santa Pod Raceway, home of drag racing, or if you prefer to be in control of the wheel, Palmer Sport at Thurleigh offers a world class driving experience.

🌐 [www.visitbedford.co.uk](http://www.visitbedford.co.uk)

🌐 [www.bedfordcornexchange.co.uk](http://www.bedfordcornexchange.co.uk)

“It’s in a class of its own”

**The Independent**

“The phrase “a well-kept secret” is overused but it can be applied to Bedford. It seems to have it all”

**The Times (Bricks & Mortar)**

“Now Londoners have started to adopt Bedford with its good schools, excellent facilities and quality period homes”

**London Evening Standard**

“There is a countryside with a strong heart”

**The Telegraph**

“Consider a new beginning in Bedford, the river town”

**The Guardian**

We look forward to seeing you soon...

**[www.bedford.gov.uk](http://www.bedford.gov.uk)**



**BEDFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL