

TATLER[®]



Schools Guide 2023
The top prep and public schools in the UK



PREP

Brambletye

South East

ALDRO ●●

Lombard Street, Shackleford, Godalming, Surrey GU8 6AS
Website aldro.org

Head Chris Carlier **Pupils** 202
day and boarding: 163 boys, 39 girls **Ages** 7–13 **Term Fees** Day: £7,515; *boarding:* £9,755

'No one is forgotten' at this 'gem of a school' set across 30 acres of secluded Surrey countryside, according to one parent. Excitingly, Aldro flung open its doors to girls in September 2021: by all accounts, the integration has been smooth – 'It's like the girls have always been here' – and the school is now at full capacity. Head Chris Carlier, who 'brought new energy to an already thriving school', and his wife Nicky make a fantastic team, and they are a major draw for prospective parents. The bucolic

environment allows pupils to row boats on the school's lake, play pétanque and hunt for conkers in the autumn. Sports day is a highlight of pupils' time here and, according to one, it's a mêlée of 'gazebos, picnics, medals and ice cream' and 'everyone gets involved in the fun, even the dogs!' Pastoral care is 'excellent'. Aldro's counselor runs mindfulness sessions; discussions on important issues such as gender, equality and racism are encouraged; and the school prepares Christmas hampers for elderly locals. The vibe here is that of a very happy extended family. 'Delightfully engaging and polite pupils who are ready to give anything a go' head to top schools, with scholarships to the likes of Charterhouse and Tonbridge School in 2021.

BRAMBLETYE ●●

Lewes Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 3PD
Website brambletye.co.uk

Head Will Brooks **Pupils** 290 *day and boarding:* 151 boys, 139 girls **Ages** 2–13 **Term Fees** Day: £7,435; *boarding:* £9,065

Applications are on the rise at this happy school, which describes itself as 'a global village, celebrating diversity in the heart of Sussex', and whose pupils cheerily don pink blazers. 'We feel like we're giving our children some of the best days of their lives at Brambletye,' says one parent. Head Will Brooks is 'approachable, engaging, but not afraid to make tough decisions' and is known to tease and laugh with pupils. Art is strong: 2021's leavers were awarded 17 scholarships and one parent reports being 'desperate to take the art department canvases home'. Pastoral care is 'watertight' and its multilayered approach is the prep's overwhelming strength. One pupil's only criticism: Brambletye should also be a senior school.

BRUERN ABBEY ●

Chesterton, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX26 1UY
Website bruernabbey.org

Head John Floyd **Pupils** 153 *day and boarding boys*

Ages 7–13 **Term Fees** Day: £8,990; *boarding:* £10,820

'I hated school before coming here, and now I really love it,' says one contented child. At Bruern, 'every minute of every day is planned with SEND in mind'; there are tailored timetables, small classes and specially trained teachers. Head John Floyd is 'charismatic, open and clear', and hopes to demonstrate that 'difficulties such as dyslexia should not preclude academic success'. One pupil says the food is 'better than at home' – picture sushi and *moules marinière*. There's a new theatre, 60 per cent of pupils learn an instrument, and trips to Norway and Sri Lanka are laid on. The experience can now be prolonged: the senior school is opening its doors to boys aged 13 to 16 from September 2022. Form an orderly queue!

CALDICOTT ●

Crown Lane, Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire SL2 3SL
Website caldicott.com

Head Jeremy Banks **Pupils** 250 *day and boarding boys*

Ages 7–13 **Term Fees** Day: £7,281; *boarding:* £12,170

Visitors may be greeted by the sight of Caldicott pupils re-enacting the Battle of Hastings, making kites or playing power-chords in its newly formed rock band. 'I've never seen my son so happy,' says one parent. Jeremy Banks is a 'thoughtful and calm leader', and parents praise the 'phenomenal' teaching staff. Thanks to the daily bus service from west London, boys living in the capital can enjoy a country prep education; and Years 3–6 can now flexi-board. Every week, pupils complete wellbeing surveys and a newly launched scholarship offers a range of bursaries up to full provision. All pupils pass CE, and Caldicott takes a personal approach when determining the best senior school for each individual pupil.