



Brambletye

PREP

# South East

## ALDRO ●●

**Lombard Street, Shackleford, Godalming, Surrey GU8 6AS**  
**Website** [aldro.org](http://aldro.org)

**Head** Chris Carlier **Pupils** 232  
*day and boarding: 159 boys, 73 girls* **Ages** 7–13 **Term Fees** Day: £8,384; **boarding:** £11,400

A recent visitor described Aldro as ‘a lovely, special little school, with so much for the boys and girls to do’. Within its 30 acres on the edge of a charming Surrey village just an hour’s drive from London, childhood is sacred: den-making, fishing and cooking are all on offer; and no activities are uncool,

with even the oldest pupils hunting for conkers come autumn. Overseen by head Chris Carlier and his wife Nicky – who are described as ‘the benevolent parents at the head of this happy family’ – Aldro is the biggest it’s ever been, and girls now make up 31 per cent of the pupil body. (The school went co-ed in 2021.) Day pupils can come for breakfast and join in early morning gym and swimming. Last year, leavers won scholarships to Wycombe Abbey, Charterhouse and Radley, and Old Aldronians are known for their maturity and self-confidence.

*For Cumnor House leavers, Race the Sun is a rite of passage as they navigate the South Downs with a map and a Mars bar*

## BRAMBLETYE ●●

**Lewes Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 3PD**  
**Website** [brambletye.co.uk](http://brambletye.co.uk)

**Head** William Brooks **Pupils** 325  
*day and boarding: 164 boys, 161 girls* **Ages** 2–13 **Term Fees** Day: £8,690; **boarding:** £10,950

‘Will Brooks is a fantastic head and we have nothing but positive remarks,’ says one smitten parent. ‘Very nice and also funny,’ chimes in one pupil; ‘humorous’, concludes another concisely. The popular leader certainly presides over a happy school imbued with a sense of fun for pupils (and for parents, who have their own choir and hold a variety of dinners and events). While prioritising traditional values of good manners and kindness, Brambletye is also focused on innovation and looking to the future. The pre-prep is being extended to meet growing demand, AI is being woven into the syllabus, and a new head of the environmental, social and governance department will drive the sustainability agenda.

## BRUERN ABBEY SCHOOL ●

**Chesterton, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX26 1UY**  
**Website** [bruernabbey.org](http://bruernabbey.org)

**Head** John Floyd **Pupils** 156  
*day and boarding boys* **Ages** 8–13 **Term Fees** Day: £11,012; **boarding:** £13,248

‘Learning difficulties should not preclude academic success,’ they say at Bruern Abbey, where there’s a positive attitude towards children with dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. With chickens called Scruffy and Speedy-Do, haggis and kilts on Burns Night and a delightful head who teaches woodwork, this is a place of miracles for boys who have previously struggled in mainstream education. Creativity is encouraged: 60 per cent learn a musical instrument; and the drama department quivered with excitement at a visit from Charithra Chandran of *Alex Rider* television fame. But it was the arrival of Wallace and Gromit (aka Aardman Animations) for a modelling and film-making workshop that caused the biggest stir.

## CALDICOTT ●

**Crown Lane, Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire SL2 3SL**  
**Website** [caldicott.com](http://caldicott.com)

**Head** Jeremy Banks **Pupils** 245  
*day and boarding boys* **Ages** 7–13 **Term Fees** Day: £8,412; **boarding:** £14,061

At his interview, head Jeremy Banks was told that Caldicott was looking for a ‘radical traditionalist’. And since joining in 2018, that’s what he has been: making a good old boys’ prep work for modern families. (He has dropped Saturday school for lower years, and introduced flexi-boarding, whereby boys can opt to stay two nights a week.) ‘Mr Banks is very inspiring,’ one parent tells us, ‘and has great leadership skills.’ And you see his effect outside the classroom, with children participating in a hive of activities, from archery, golf and judo to model-making and playwriting. Rugby is big, but there is also a sports-for-all philosophy, which sees the department’s director (also the U18 England rugby coach) work with teams of varying abilities.