

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# SOUTH EAST

### ABINGDON SCHOOL

Park Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 1DE

We're not sure how thrilled Abingdon boys will have been with head Felicity Lusk's restructuring of the working week, which means that lessons are now 55 minutes instead of 35. But they must be delighted with the pay-off: longer lunches and no academic lessons on Saturday mornings, making more time for all the extracurricular delights. The school's sporting reputation is fearsome, with boys competing nationally in rugby and rifle-shooting, and rowers (who won the Princess Elizabeth Cup at Henley this year), hockey teams and cross-country runners all top of their game. Musicians play in the National Youth and National Youth Wind Orchestras, and got through to the national final of the Pro Corda Chamber Music Festival. Students recently put on the first production of a new play written by an Old Abingdonian, and two were awarded Arkwright Scholarships for their DT work. Awesome academic results (91.9% A\*-B at A-level last year) put Abingdon near the top of the pile; chemists recently visited the International Chemistry Olympiad in Tokyo; and the mathematicians have been flexing their skills in a heap of mind-boggling challenges. The school says that there's no typical Abingdon boy and, with these opportunities on offer, why would there be?

Tel 01235 521563

Email [admissions@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:admissions@abingdon.org.uk)

Website [abingdon.org.uk](http://abingdon.org.uk)

Head Felicity Lusk, BMus, since 2010; previously head of Oxford High School

Pupils 875 boys: 750 day; 125 boarding

Faith C of E Ages 11-18

Term fees Day: £4,835; boarding: £9,915

Class size 20 (12 in sixth form)

Oxbridge 20%

Higher education 99%

Registration By end of November of year before entry; £100 fee

Admission Common Entrance or school's own exam; school's own exam

and at least three As and two Bs at GCSE for sixth form

Founded 1256

Alumni Rower Robin Bourne-Taylor;

Tom Hollander, Francis Maude MP;

all five members of Radiohead

### ARDINGLY COLLEGE

Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6SQ

Ardingly had its best-ever set of A-level and IB results last year, which might explain why its sixth form has been oversubscribed for four years; why the school is growing in numbers and reputation; and why boarding is more popular now than at any time in the past 20 years. But we think all that is down to the wonderful whizz-bang, anything's-possible feel of the place. Ardingly 'isn't just a school but a catalyst', says one pupil; 'a vibrant, can-do environment', says another. Pupils win prizes galore, with particular distinction in maths and sciences. One boy is even working on a research project with astronomer Professor Carl Murray of the Cassini-Huygens mission to Saturn. Music sings - the college's musicians-in-residence organised an a cappella festival, and the chapel choir have performed at Westminster Cathedral. There's a new fitness centre and business and economics building, and head Peter Green has big plans to transform the campus with a new upper-sixth-form block and a sports dome. Ardingly hosted a Theory of Knowledge conference last year that ended with a debate on the motion 'This house believes that education should simply prepare young people for the workplace'. History doesn't relate which side was victorious, but with its chock-a-block extracurricular timetable, busy sporting calendar and family ethos, the Ardingly experience offers much more than a conveyor belt to employment.

Tel 01444 893000

Email [registrar@ardingly.com](mailto:registrar@ardingly.com)

Website [ardingly.com](http://ardingly.com)

Head Peter Green, MA, since 2007; previously second master at Ampleforth College

Pupils 538. Day: 188 boys, 98 girls; boarding: 144 boys, 108 girls

Faith C of E Ages 2½-18

Term fees Day: £6,880;

boarding: £9,105

Class size 15 (12 in sixth form)

Oxbridge 10%

Higher education 98%

Registration No deadline;

£100 fee

Admission Common Entrance or school's own exam; school's own exam and at least six Bs at GCSE for sixth form

Founded 1858

Alumni Author Neil Gaiman, FI world champion Mike Hawthorn, Ian Hislop,

Terry-Thomas

### BANCROFT'S SCHOOL

Woodford Green, Essex IG8 0RF

We asked whether Bancroft's pupils had picked up any prizes or accolades in the past year - 'the short answer is yes, lots', was the swift reply. Gold D of E awards by the bucketload (we understand only Harrow trumps them in the South East); countless netball, hockey and cricket victories; four Explorer Scouts picked for an expedition to Tanzania; an RAF sixth-form scholarship; and the CCF named as one of the best corps in the region in a biennial inspection. Good, eh? Add to this, of course, the usual excellent academic results (87% A\*-B at A-level; 98% A\*-B at GCSE). But head Mary Ireland is still battling against local rumours that Bancroft's piles on the pressure, and insists that it isn't madly selective. They're an ambitious, industrious lot at this cosmopolitan, multi-faith school. The traditional curriculum plays to science and maths enthusiasts - pupils do individual rather than combined sciences at GCSE, and many go on to study medicine or engineering at university. The traditional setting - a Victorian red-brick quad - is home to a new art block with space for ceramics and printing, and there's also a new sixth-form library. We can only echo the school's words: 'Bancroft's consistently punches above its weight.'

Tel 020 8505 4821

Email [office@bancrofts.org](mailto:office@bancrofts.org)

Website [bancrofts.org](http://bancrofts.org)

Head Mary Ireland, BSc, since 2008; previously deputy head of Christ's Hospital

Pupils 787 day: 432 boys, 355 girls

Faith C of E Ages 7-18

Term fees £4,396

Class size 22 (12 in sixth form)

Oxbridge 12%

Higher education 99%

Registration By December of year before entry; £60 fee

Admission School's own exam, interview and previous school's report; interview, previous school's report, exam in two proposed AS subjects and at least six As at GCSE for sixth form

Founded 1737

Alumni Alan Davies, Ladbrokes chair

Peter Erskine, author Hari Kunzru, Lord David Pannick QC

### BEDALES SCHOOL

Steep, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 2DG

You don't need us to tell you that Bedales is a pretty extraordinary school. 'The most insane place I've ever worked,' one member of staff told us, and he meant this as a compliment. It's a proudly informal, non-conformist school, where teachers are addressed by their first names and pupils wear their own clothes (one student reports that the competition over who's wearing what isn't always as friendly as it might be). The mantra is 'learning through doing' and students take a combination of GCSEs, IGCSEs and UCAS-recognised Bedales Assessed Courses; they've recently introduced the Extended Project Qualification for sixth formers; and Oxbridge offers are at their highest level since 2004. Those who don't enjoy team sports can opt for 'outdoor work' instead, such as building a gypsy caravan or growing veg. We were blown away by the drama production we saw, and by the quality of the student art on the walls. But as recent headline-hitting expulsions have shown, it's not as relaxed and bohemian as it used to be: discipline is on the up, and there's an uncompromising penalty-points system. If you exceed the permitted points, you're out. Bedales is a little universe of its own and there's no pretence that it suits all comers. But for creative, self-motivated types, its approach definitely works.

Tel 01730 300100

Email [admissions@bedales.org.uk](mailto:admissions@bedales.org.uk)

Website [bedales.org.uk](http://bedales.org.uk)

Head Keith Hudge, MA, since 2001; previously head of Loretto

Pupils 461. Day: 69 boys, 79 girls;

boarding: 145 boys, 168 girls

Faith Non-denom Ages 13-18

Term fees Day: £7,850; boarding: £9,985

Class size 24

Oxbridge 10%

Higher education 99%

Registration By April of year before entry; £100 fee

Admission Residential assessment; interview and at least 50 points (where A\* = 8, A = 7, etc) at GCSE, with Bs in proposed A-level subjects, for sixth form

Founded 1893

Alumni Lily Allen, Kirstie Allsopp,

Sophie Dahl, Daniel Day-Lewis, Minnie Driver, Viscount Linley

### BEDFORD SCHOOL

De Parys Avenue, Bedford MK40 2TU

Bedford School is a single-sex, take-your-breath-away stunner set on a 50-acre estate. More than 1,000 boys