



MOULSFORD ●

MOULSFORD-ON-THAMES,
OXFORDSHIRE OX10 9HR

Website moulsford.com **Head** Ben Beardmore-Gray **Pupils** 323 boys, day and boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 4–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,300; boarding: £6,650 Moulsford is nothing short of heaven for boys, according to one heart-eyed mother. The *Swallows and Amazons* riverside setting lends itself to boat trips to Goose Poo Island or practice for the Moulsford Mudder. Led by the energetic Ben and Sarah Beardmore-Grey, boys are unbeatable at rugby, and the biennial tour to South Africa and Swaziland includes visits to local townships. They're ace at judo too, coming joint first at last year's IAPS Championships, and every Year 7 boy got involved in a recent performance of *Peter Pan*, whether on stage or behind the scenes. Boarding isn't the main event here; most are local (resulting in a thriving PA – they've just donated a drone), but the impending spruce-up of the dorms may change this. Boys scamper off to Bradfield, Radley and Wellington.

NEW COLLEGE SCHOOL ●

SAVILE ROAD, OXFORD OX1 3UA

Website newcollegeschool.org **Head** Robert Gullifer **Pupils** 160 day boys **Faith** C of E **Ages** 4–13 **Term fees** £4,983 'Everything about NCS is delightfully nonchalant,' reports a mother. 'There are no airs and graces.' Founded in the 14th century, this friendly, sometimes endearingly chaotic choir school is compressed between college buildings. Music here is not just for the superstar choristers – almost every boy plays a musical instrument. Sport, as head Robert Gullifer points out, is 'not ultra-competitive', but hockey is now forging ahead. School trips are more about the Cotswolds

than Chamonix. Leavers launch off to Abingdon, Eton, Magdalen College School and Teddies, and 75 per cent are scholars. They really make the most of their special founding relationship with New College and its treasures – how many schools can claim to possess a unicorn horn (even if it is really a narwhal tusk)?

PAPPLEWICK ●

WINDSOR ROAD, ASCOT,
BERKSHIRE SL5 7LH

Website papplewick.org.uk **Head** Tom Bunbury **Pupils** 215 boys, day and boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 6–13 **Term fees** Day: £7,145; boarding: £9,305

'Boys are like puppies,' says head Tom Bunbury. 'So long as they are fed and exercised then everything falls into place.' These perky chaps love their football – the 1st XI had an unbeaten tour to St Lucia, and the U8s trounced their own mothers 14-8 (we believe the pre-match drinks with the head proved fatal). Herpetology Club is a joy and its embroidered reptile tie (snake colours) holds kudos; the name of the school's American football team is the Papplewick Pythons. Staff are 'divine if a little eccentric,' says one mother – she means in the best way. Three teachers drove to Mongolia last year to deliver a minibus to an orphanage. Boarding is flexi and there are Wild West-themed sleepovers to ease the little ones in. Leavers head to Eton, Winchester and Harrow.

THE PILGRIMS' SCHOOL ●

THE CLOSE, WINCHESTER,
HAMPSHIRE SO23 9LT

Website thepilgrims-school.co.uk **Head** Tom Burden **Pupils** 220 boys, day and boarding **Faith** C of E **Ages** 4–13 **Term fees** Day: £6,045; boarding: £7,630 'These children just ADORE their school,' exclaims our mole. As well they might. Their dorms are the nicest we've seen, their theatre is the oldest wood-beamed hall in the country and their chapel is Winchester Cathedral. What lucky lads. Music here is terrific and at least a dozen boys a year gain music scholarships to Winchester and Sherborne. Choristers headed off to Rome and met the Pope, and geographers went to Iceland for Viking larks (including feasts and a kidnapping). Head Tom Burden has settled in nicely and is after boys who 'throw their heart and soul into the school'. The badges are stacking up for the 4th Winchester Cubs, with trips to Halfords for their Cyclist Activity badge and an overnight stay in a log cabin. Eat your heart out, Mr Grylls.

ROSE HILL ●●

CONISTON AVENUE, TUNBRIDGE
WELLS, KENT TN4 9SY

Website rosehillschool.co.uk **Head** David Westcombe **Pupils** 308 day: 174 boys, 134 girls **Faith** Non-denom **Ages** 3–13 **Term fees** £4,785

'It's hard work being a headmaster,' sighed one pupil after spending a day in Mr Westcombe's shoes – having granted extended playtime and chocolate bars all round, he was relieved to hand back the reins. Rose Hill may not win any aesthetic prizes, but it's just approved exciting plans for a swimming pool and outdoor classroom. Its smartly turned-out children are champs on the pitches, notching up a bumper nine sports scholarships last year,

and a new rugby sevens team is gaining pace. Industrious pupils are just as likely to head to the smattering of excellent Kent grammars as to Tonbridge and Sevenoaks. The (actual) head is 'brilliantly confident', approves our mole, and there's real gusto on stage too, with two musicals performed annually, *The Sound of Music* being the most recent showstopper.

SAINT RONAN'S SCHOOL ●●

WATER LANE, HAWKHURST,
KENT TN18 5DJ

Website saintronans.co.uk **Head** William Trelawny-Vernon **Pupils** 408 day and boarding: 212 boys, 196 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 3–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,641; flexi-boarding: £36 a night

As if this quirky, rambling, family-run Victorian mansion wasn't entrancing enough, a Hobbit House now squats at its forest-school entrance. The school is run by 'Mr T-V' (aka head William Trelawny-Vernon) and his very involved wife, Emma, and there's a sympathetic, traditional feel to what's firmly an all-the-way-to-13 Kent prep, with homegrown food, wooden lift-top desks in classrooms, an emphasis on boarding and a Land Rover called Boris. This lot achieve loads of scholarships, with leavers to more than 60 different seniors in the past decade. 'We look for all-round ability, not one-trick ponies,' the school tells us. Music is ubiquitous and all-inclusive; there's everything from beekeeping to sailing on offer; and the DT department is busy building a (fingers crossed) fully flyable Fokker. Beloved black pig Duchess takes pride of place in the school photo.

ST ANDREW'S PANGBOURNE ●●

BUCKHOLD, PANGBOURNE, WEST
BERKSHIRE RG8 8QA

Website standrewspangbourne.co.uk **Head** Jonathan Bartlett **Pupils** 290 day and boarding: 152 boys, 138 girls **Faith** C of E **Ages** 3–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,610; flexi-boarding: £30.50 a night New head Jon Bartlett arrived a year ago, along with his wife Lisa, but it was their naughty black-Lab puppy, Lyla, who made the first mark,

LITTLE SIBLINGS

The schools listed below also have prep schools. For their full listings, see the **South-East Public Schools** section, page 28

- ABINGDON SCHOOL ●●
- ARDINGLY COLLEGE ●●
- BANCROFT'S SCHOOL ●●
- BEDALES SCHOOL ●●
- BEDE'S ●●
- BEDFORD SCHOOL ●●
- BRIGHTON COLLEGE ●●
- CATERHAM SCHOOL ●●
- HABERDASHERS' ASKE'S BOYS' SCHOOL ●
- HEADINGTON SCHOOL ●
- THE KING'S SCHOOL ●●
- MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL ●
- NEW HALL SCHOOL ●●
- OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL ●
- ST CATHERINE'S BRAMLEY ●
- ST SWITHUN'S SCHOOL ●