

## PRIOR'S FIELD ●

*Priorsfield Road, Godalming, Surrey GU7 2RH*

*Website priorsfieldschool.com*

*Head Tracy Kirnig, MA, since 2015; previously Deputy Head of Caterham Pupils 445*

*girls: 365 day, 80 boarding*

*Ages 11–18 Term Fees*

*Day: £6,300; boarding: £10,275*

*Oxbridge 2% Registration*

*By mid October of year before entry; £100 fee Admission School's own exam Alumnae Lily James, Victoria Hamilton, Baroness Warnock*

Prior's Field's priority is 'achieving happy girls, as we know that content and fulfilled girls succeed. Here they have the confidence to step outside the box, take risks, try new challenges and embrace every opportunity,' says Head Tracy Kirnig. According to parents and pupils, the catalyst for this pioneering spirit is Kirnig herself who, aged 50, set off to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. Proving that 'nurture and encouragement are the springboard to success', academics are thriving, with girls

achieving a record-breaking 50 per cent A\*-A and 100 per cent pass rate at A-level, putting PF in the top two per cent for value added. Boarders have to jostle for space on the sofa with the multitude of cats and dogs who help to create an extra homely feel. Sixth formers have their own room and have to do their own laundry to help prepare them for university life. The music and drama departments are thriving, and recently joined forces to put on the first ever girls-only production of *Les Misérables* (they secured permission from Cameron Mackintosh's production company). Home to its own tennis academy, headed up by Jorge Munoz Martin, a former Davis Cup captain for the UAE, tennis is in a league of its own here with pupils representing GB and winning scholarships to US universities. Arriving at Prior's Field, visitors are greeted by a giant silver unicorn, a recent art installation. One insider felt this was very apt for a school that could well be described as 'the unicorn of education' – the stuff of childhood dreams.

## QUEEN ANNE'S SCHOOL ●

*Henley Road, Caversham, Berkshire RG4 6DX*

*Website qas.org.uk Head Julia*

*Harrington, BA, since 2006;*

*previously Deputy Head of Prior's Field Pupils 449: 244 day, 205*

*boarding Faith C of E*

*Ages 11–18 Term Fees Day:*

*£8,205; boarding: £12,690*

*Oxbridge Occasional*

*Registration Early registration*

*advised; £100 fee Admission CE and school's own exam*

*Alumnae Tamara Taylor,*

*Jenny Seagrove, Posy Simmonds*

'This is a five-star school with five-star facilities and I wouldn't hesitate to send my own daughter here. It is practically perfect in every way,' reports a very enthusiastic reviewer. This year there's plenty of cause for celebration at QA's: the school is marking its 125th anniversary; applications are on the up; and the state-of-the-art Scott Music Centre, complete with iMac studio, sound-proofed practice rooms and not one but three grand pianos, is ready to open its doors. Sport is exceptional, as proved by rower and Queen Anne's old girl Olivia Carnegie Brown who took home a silver medal at the 2016 Rio

Olympics, and the L5 student who ranked first in the country for U15 discus and sixth in the country for U15 shot – the next Queen Anne's Olympian in the making perhaps. Sixth formers can work, eat and chill in The Space, an award-winning centre filled with beanbags, study pods and white board tables. At the helm since 2006, Julia Harrington is an educational pioneer: she has published papers on her neuroscientific approach to learning, 'BrainCanDo', which was nominated for Strategic Education Initiative of the Year at this year's TES Independent Schools' Awards. 'One of the things that makes Queen Anne's unique is our innovative approach to understanding the teenage brain. "BrainCanDo" is a Queen Anne's-led initiative, translating the latest psychology and educational neuroscience research into teaching practice. This benefits the girls' everyday learning,' Harrington explains. There is just one rumour that this Head is keen to dispel: 'There is no helipad at Queen Anne's.'

## RADLEY COLLEGE ●

*Abingdon, Oxfordshire*

*OX14 2HR*

*Website radley.org.uk*

*Head John Moule, MA, since*

*2014; previously Head of Bedford School Pupils 290 boarding boys*

*Faith C of E Ages 13–18*

*Term Fees £12,775*

*Oxbridge 10%*

*Registration From birth; £100 fee*

*Admission ISEB pre-test, previous school's report and assessment day*

*Alumni Andrew Strauss, Ted*

*Dexter, Andrew Motion,*

*Sandy Nairne*

A multitude of things may impress prospective parents and pupils on their tour of Radley College: the stunning 800 acres of carefully manicured lawns and parkland; the incredible sporting facilities including an athletics track, a new strength and conditioning suite and an indoor rowing tank; or the impressive Radley Hall built in 1847. For this year's reviewer, it was the art – she simply couldn't



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