

# TATTLER<sup>®</sup>



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



**BRYANSTON ●●**

*Blandford Forum, Dorset  
DT11 0PX*

*Website* bryanston.co.uk

*Head* Richard Jones, MEd, since 2022; previously acting head

*Pupils* 693. *Day:* 59 boys, 56 girls; *boarding:* 319 boys, 259 girls *Ages* 13–18 *Term Fees* *Day:* £11,850; *boarding:* £14,450 *Oxbridge* 1% *Admission* ISEB Pre-Test and CE plus interview *Alumni* Designer Sir Terence Conran, actor Emilia Fox, painter Lucian Freud

By its own description, Bryanston – where an impressive 30 per cent of pupils receive fee-support – is an establishment ‘not bound by tradition’. There’s no formal uniform, and it prides itself on ‘looking to the future with boldness, ambition and creativity’. While most students hail from within a 90-minute radius, there’s a handful from London, and 12 per cent from overseas. The school has now joined forces with Knighton House Prep – allowing a seamless flow of learning from age three to 18. Spread across 400 acres, Bryanston has a campus feel and, at weekends, teens head into Blandford. Academically, it’s on fire, with 50 per cent of A-level grades A\*–A in 2021; and parents praise the way every child meets with their tutor one-to-one at least once a week – a system that ensures no one slips through the gaps. There are sporting options for everyone, including training off the Dorset coast for the Bry Solent Swim (a six-kilometre open-water race). Food is universally deemed ‘amazing’, especially the omelette bar. Maths teacher Mr Calver’s passion for knitting has got the whole school hooked: a pupil-led club now sends blankets to South Africa. Plus, there are house plays, fashion shows – and lately, a *The Masked Singer*-style talent contest.

**CANFORD ●●**

*Canford Magna, Wimborne,  
Dorset BH21 3AD*

*Website* canford.com

*Head* Ben Vessey, MBA, since 2013; previously senior deputy head of

*Christ’s Hospital Pupils* 647. *Day:* 139 boys, 103 girls; *boarding:* 222 boys, 183 girls *Ages* 13–18

*Term Fees* *Day:* £10,695; *boarding:* £14,049 *Oxbridge* 7%

*Admission* ISEB Pre-Test, assessment day and school’s own exam *Alumni* Booker Prize winner Alan Hollinghurst, Air Chief Marshal Sir Roger Palin, ASOS co-founder Nick Robertson

Glorious Canford is coming up to its 100th birthday, and there’s much to celebrate. Canfordians like to ‘give things a go’ and are renowned for being chatty, bright and engaging. Thirty-five pupils currently benefit from 80 per cent or more bursary funding; and some of the staff are Old Canfordians themselves, with a deep affection for the alma mater. Academically, it more than delivers – 24 places to medical schools and 30 places at Oxbridge in the last three years – and progress continues apace. A new high-tech library opened last year; two new boys’ boarding houses have recently been unveiled; plus, a new Sixth Form college is in the works that will feature a hub for careers advice. Clubs include everything from bushcraft to code-breaking; and 20 sports are offered across 250 acres. There’s even a thriving fishing club – its record for a salmon caught in the Stour is one that weighed in at over 34lbs. Valuing drama as a unifying force, Canford puts on six major productions every year. The pastoral care is nothing short of excellent. Always aware of pupils’ wellbeing, the school’s Sleep Programme sees trained ‘Sleep Champions’ on hand to be consulted, day or night.

**CHELTENHAM COLLEGE ●●**

*Bath Road, Cheltenham,  
Gloucestershire GL53 7LD*

*Website* cheltenhamcollege.org

*Head* Nicola Huggett, MA, since 2018; previously head of Blundell’s

*Pupils* 728. *Day:* 70 boys, 58 girls; *boarding:* 323 boys, 277 girls *Ages* 13–18 *Term Fees* *Day:* £10,845; *boarding:* £14,330 *Oxbridge* 3%

*Admission* CE or school’s own exam, interview and previous school’s report

*Alumni* Rugby player Ollie Thorley, racing driver Jamie Chadwick, polar explorer Dr Edward Wilson

*PREP Head* Tom O’Sullivan

*Pupils* 406 *day and boarding:* 228 boys, 178 girls *Ages* 3–13 *Term Fees* *Day:* £7,050; *boarding:* £9,130

First choice for many of the Daylesford set, this ravishing, honey-hued school has a reputation both for results (75 per cent of A-level grades were A\*–A last year) and for open-mindedness. The college has partnerships with local schools and is widening access with a raft of bursaries. Head Nicola Huggett says

her secret is ‘operating a big school on the principles of a small one’, but there’s nothing minor about her aspirations, with plans for a centre for innovation and excellence; a new nursery that will open this year; and the inauguration last September of Cheltenham Muscat in Oman. Students are encouraged to chase their dreams – and if there isn’t a group for their interest, they’ll start one. Case in point: the Investment club, established by tycoons-in-the-making. With 80 per cent of students boarding, their houses are ‘true refuges’, according to one father, and there’s always a sympathetic ear. ‘I had bad news, and 10 minutes later my matron was in my room with a mug of delicious hot chocolate and biscuits,’ recalls one pupil. Once, when a fire alarm went off during a social, everyone piled outside to dance under the stars and the event went down in history. And herein lies the essence of a Cheltonian: relentless positivity even in the face of adversity.



*Canford offers 20 sports and even has a thriving fishing club – its record for a salmon caught in the Stour is one that weighed in at over 34lbs*