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ARDINGLY COLLEGE ●●

Haywards Heath RH17 6SQ

Website ardingly.com

Head Ben Figgis, since 2017;

previously deputy head of Oakham

Pupils 1,045. Day: 395 boys, 325

girls; boarding: 167 boys, 158 girls

Ages 3–18 Term Fees Day: £8,995;

boarding: £14,925 Bursaries 15%

of pupils, up to 100% Alumni

Private Eye editor Ian Hislop, former

diplomat Sir David Manning,

archaeologist Sue Hamilton

Besides its excellent sporting and academic reputation, parents choose Ardingly for its ‘friendly, open and unpressured feel’. Pupils, too, praise the ‘really nice community’ atmosphere that extends from the head, who is ‘always smiling and willing to have a chat’, all the way down the rest of the school: ‘Everyone knows each other and people are approachable’. But what really stands out here is the quality of teachers. The pupils told us how they are able to ‘really instil a passion in you for their respective subjects’, while parents ‘truly can’t believe how above and beyond some go’, adding that they consistently ‘achieve the impossible’. The proof is in the pudding: last year’s cohort won Ardingly the honour of being placed the top school in West Sussex for A-level and IB results, with 90 per cent gaining A*–B grades (and the school is particularly proud that one of its Ukrainian refugee pupils, on a full bursary, achieved results of 9s and 8s in all her GCSEs). No wonder applications are healthy, with two or three for every place. Though selective, Ardingly strives ‘not to be too narrowly so’, and takes into account character and performance in team activities, not just exam scores. The establishment has just signed an agreement to open its next two international schools in Kazakhstan – and plans to use the income from these to fund additional bursaries back home – while the appointment of a dedicated director of enterprise and employability will help students prepare for the jobs of the future and the rapidly changing world of work.

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Ardingly College

South East

TATLER

SCHOOLS GUIDE 2024