



PUBLIC

GRESHAM'S

# Midlands & East Anglia

## BROMSGROVE SCHOOL ●●

*Worcester Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 7DU*

*Website [bromsgrove-school.co.uk](http://bromsgrove-school.co.uk)*

*Head Peter Clague, BA, since 2014, previously Principal of Kristin*

*School, Auckland Pupils 957. Day: 279 boys, 223 girls; boarding: 253*

*boys, 202 girls Faith C of E Ages 13–18 Term Fees Day: £5,695;*

*boarding: £12,740 Oxbridge 1% Registration Early registration*

*advised; £100 fee Admission CE or school's own exam, interview and previous school's report Alumni Vice Admiral Ben Key, musician Soweto Kinch, rugby player Ben Foden PREP Head Jacqui Deval-Reed Pupils 531 day and boarding: 279 boys, 252 girls Ages 3–13 Term Fees Day: £5,160; boarding: £10,215*

Head Peter Clague, a New Zealander who was lured from his role as Principal at one of the largest

schools in Auckland five years ago, describes his students as 'quietly going about the business of being brilliant'. Originally, he was reluctant to move into the British public school system: his preconceptions of its traditions and affectations put him off. But he was pleasantly surprised by Bromsgrove's 960-strong throng. 'We're a school that looks for well-grounded, unpretentious, hard-working children who immerse

themselves in their studies and the extracurricular life of the school,' he says. Here, any possible airs and graces are usurped by diversity and balance. The school has nearly 50/50 day pupils to boarders, and close to 50/50 boys and girls. This formula produces excellent results (GCSE grades were among the highest ever achieved by Bromsgrovians last year, with 41 per cent achieving A\*/9) and formidable sporting prowess (aided by a 25-metre pool, two Astroturfs and a gym). Thanks to Clague, the arts are also on the up: he's invested £11 million into performing arts facilities, including a 300-seat theatre. There is a growing focus on pastoral care, with pupils in the Senior School meeting their tutor on a weekly basis, always in their house, to discuss whatever they like.

ELLESMERE  
COLLEGE ●●

*Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 9AB*

*Website [ellesmere.com](http://ellesmere.com) Head*

*Brendan Wignall, MA, since*

*1996; previously Registrar and*

*Head of English at Denstone*

*College, Staffordshire Pupils 416.*

*Day: 130 boys, 52 girls; boarding:*

*151 boys, 83 girls Faith C of E*

*Ages 13–18 Term Fees Day:*

*£6,123; boarding: £10,977*

*Oxbridge 7% Registration No*

*specific deadline for registration;*

*£100 fee Admission School's*

*own tests, interview, and previous*

*school's report Alumni RFU*

*chairman Bill Beaumont,*

*The Duke of Westminster,*

*Lady Edwina Grosvenor*

*PREP Head Sharon Owen Pupils*

*123 day and boarding: 79 boys, 44*

*girls Ages 7–13 Term Fees Day*

*£4,293; boarding: £8,796*

This is a truly wholesome country school, where children grow up at their own pace, feeling safe, confident and comfortable in their own skin. When probed about Ellesmere's policy on smoking and drinking, students said they were sure the school wouldn't tolerate it, but in any case they had never heard of anyone 'being involved in anything like that'. Don't be fooled though, they're not all country bumpkins at this rural co-ed; pupils are always engaged and interested, throwing themselves into everything that's on offer (and there's plenty to choose from). They're known for their sporting prowess – and rightly so, 13 pupils gained qualifying times for the 2020 Olympics – and numerous sporting academies available at the school are run by an impressive line-up of professionals. Highly personable Head Brendan Wignall has been at the helm for more than 20 years and says he has 'a glorious job' at a very happy school where 'people feel valued as individuals'. Students are well-mannered and down to earth, and many have an entrepreneurial streak. Mr Wignall believes in giving them plenty of opportunities to fail: 'if they can learn failure in this environment,

*Girls at King Edward VI have introduced a flourishing current affairs breakfast club and a Sherlock club*

they build resilience and that sets them up for life.' He is the current Chairman of the National Dyslexic Charity, which would explain why the school's SEN department is one of the best in the UK, with fully qualified staff who are all totally tuned into the complex issues surrounding SEN support. It's no wonder that a new girls' sixth form boarding house is underway to accommodate the ever-growing demand for places.

GRESHAM'S ●●

*Cromer Road, Holt,*

*Norfolk NR25 6EA*

*Website [greshams.com](http://greshams.com) Head*

*Douglas Robb, MEd, since 2014;*

*previously Headmaster of Oswestry*

*School Pupils 500. Day: 105 boys,*

*95 girls; boarding: 160 boys, 140*

*girls Ages 13–18 Term Fees Day*

*£8,380; boarding: £12,010*

*Oxbridge 3% Registration By*

*autumn of year before entry; £170*

*fee Admission School's own exam,*

*interview, and previous school's*

*report Alumni Sir James Dyson,*

*Olivia Colman, Benjamin Britten*

*PREP Head Cathy Braithwaite*

*Pupils 220 day and boarding; 119*

*boys, 101 girls Ages 7–13 Term*

*Fees Day: £6,210; boarding: £8,700*

Set in 200 acres between the coast

and countryside of north Norfolk,

Gresham's certainly lucked out on

location. The school explains that

there's 'no such thing as a typical

Old Greshamian', adding that

'they can be academic or shine in

other ways'. One thing that does

characterise the students, accord-

ing to one trusted source, is a

'charmingly understated confi-

dence'. When asked if there were

any drawbacks to Gresham's life,

one pupil mused that 'there simply

aren't enough hours in the day to

do all that is on offer'. It's very easy

to see why; the extensive facilities

are impressive, including an out-

ward bounds course in the woods

that surround the school. A new

STEAM (that's science, technolo-

gy, engineering and maths plus the

arts) building is due to open in

2021, with the help of Old

Greshamian Sir James Dyson. 'It is

a fabulous place,' says Head Douglas



Robb, who claims that he can 'tell in two seconds if a child is up or down'. Unsurprisingly, this skill is very popular with parents; one says the Head is 'roundly admired'. As for results, last year's IB cohort (they're currently the only school in Norfolk offering it) achieved a 100 per cent pass rate with an average point score of 34, ahead of the global average of 30 points. As for A-levels, 60 per cent achieved A\*-B grades, with 29 per cent securing A\*-As.

KING EDWARD VI  
HIGH SCHOOL  
FOR GIRLS ●

*Edgbaston Park Road,*

*Birmingham B15 2UB*

*Website [kehs.org.uk](http://kehs.org.uk) Head*

*Ann Clark, MA, since 2013;*

*previously Deputy Head at Heanor*

*Gate Science College, Derbyshire*

*Pupils 602 day girls Ages 11–18*

*Term Fees £4,296 Oxbridge 20%*

*Registration By September of year*

*before entry; £25 fee Admission*

*School's own exam Alumnae*

*Lindsay Duncan, Reeta*

*Chakerabarti, Paralympian*

*Susannah Rodgers*

Ann Clark is going strong in her sixth year as Head at this selective Birmingham girls' school. She reports that the students are 'enthusiastic, committed, vibrant, free thinking, creative, innovative, mature beyond their years and modest about their not so insignificant achievements'. It would be impossible to refute her final point: 73 per cent of A-level results were A\*-A and 93 per cent of GCSEs were graded level 9–7 (A\*-A) in 2018. An impressive 20 per cent of last year's leavers secured places at Oxbridge, while 23 per cent of the upper sixth received offers this year. But there's much more to these high fliers than record-breaking results – sport is growing at an impressive rate. KES were the U14 National Badminton winners and U16 National Squash champions, while more unusual options – including the likes of ultimate frisbee and Zumba – continue to thrive. Girls are encouraged to start their ▷