



PREP

QUEEN MARY'S

## ARDVRECK ●●

**Crieff, Perthshire PH7 4EX**

**Website** [ardvreckschool.co.uk](http://ardvreckschool.co.uk)

**Head** Ali Kinge **Pupils** 109 day

and boarding: 63 boys, 46 girls  
**Ages** 3–13 **Term fees** Day: £4,987;  
boarding: £7,495

Ardvreck has a new lease of life under the watchful eye of its personable new Head Ali Kinge. Parents send their children here to have real, not virtual, adventures, from munro bagging to playing the pipes on the summit. Everyone is included in teams, bands and productions, while simultaneously clocking up an impressive scholarship tally: 19 for 14 pupils last year. Ardvreck children are always the 'first to volunteer,' says one parent, so it's no wonder senior schools are keen to bag them. The steep mountain terrain and vigorous staff (including a former Olympic swimming coach and one of Scotland's best bagpipe teachers) shape a spirited bunch.

# North & Scotland

## AYSGARTH ●

**Newton-le-Willows, Bedale,**

**North Yorkshire DL8 1TF**

**Website** [aysgarthschool.co.uk](http://aysgarthschool.co.uk)

**Head** Rob Morse **Pupils** 226 boys,  
day and boarding **Ages** 8–13 **Term**  
**fees** Day: £6,630; boarding: £8,630

As one mother proudly says, the 'rosy-cheeked and friendly' Aysgarth boys are in great demand at 13: of the 34 leavers in 2018, 22 were awarded scholarships to a raft of top schools. The teaching is evidently top notch here, but the boys are by no means glued to their desks – most days, only six

hours are allotted for lessons with the remaining time devoted to extracurricular fun; Head Rob Morse's philosophy is 'happy boys learn more quickly' (hear, hear). Pupils rave about the Nerf gun wars and indoor corridor golf, and the food has improved no end – the queue for waffles and toffee sauce is always the longest. It's clear why boarding is becoming increasingly popular (new dorms will soon be unveiled to meet growing demand) with weekend trips to watch Test matches, fishing and surfing all on offer.

## BELHAVEN HILL ●●

**Dunbar, East Lothian EH42 1NN**

**Website** [belhavenhill.com](http://belhavenhill.com)

**Head** Henry Knight **Pupils** 125

day and boarding: 63 boys, 62 girls  
**Ages** 7–13 **Term fees** Day: £5,625;  
boarding: £7,920

'Belhaven' is an apt nickname for a school that lies on the beach, where pupils enjoy hours of fun playing on the sand and in the surf. With weekend activities including paddle-boarding and riding, it's no wonder that day pupils pester their parents to let them board, and the clever 'one weekend in, one weekend out' policy offers a gentle introduction. However, Belhaven students aren't wrapped in cotton wool: a place in a team or recital has to be earned – a lesson that produces well-balanced students who go on to leading senior schools. Oliver Langton, currently a housemaster at Radley, will succeed Henry Knight as Head in 2020.