



Information for candidates applying for the role of:

## Head of biology

Permanent, full time

Salary: MPS/UPS + TLR 2C(i)

Required: Easter or September 2025



**Highlands**  
School & Sixth Form



Dear candidate,

I am delighted that you are considering applying for the position of head of biology at Highlands School. Highlands is a very successful and popular school with a thriving sixth form. Our students come from a range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and we are proud to be one of the most popular and high achieving schools in London.

Our stated goal is “To provide a world class educational experience for our students. In whatever we do, to be held as an example of best practice to other schools.” This is an aspirational goal, but one we judge ourselves against at all times. If you are successful in your application you will play a key role in improving Highlands towards achieving this.

We are judged ‘Outstanding’ in all areas by Ofsted. When we were recently inspected in November 2024, [the Ofsted report](#) highlighted the excellent curriculum, behaviour, safeguarding and personal development the school offers. The report said that students “thrive in this diverse and inclusive school”. Academic achievement is excellent at Highlands and we are featured in the Times ‘Parent Power’ lists of the top schools in England.

I am committed to developing staff and supporting their wellbeing. We have two hours of CPD every Wednesday; no other meetings are held during the week. We use centralised collaborative resources to support planning. Pastoral leaders oversee centralised detentions to free up other teaching staff. We have a two week October half term break.

Our approach to curriculum and teaching is influenced by the writings of theorists such as Christine Counsell and the principles of Rosenshine - yours should be too. We want to recruit a hard working and driven colleague with very high standards, someone who wants to make a real difference at Highlands. The successful candidate will be ambitious and we will support them towards fulfilling their own career potential.

Before reading on, I recommend you watch this [video](#), which will introduce you to our school. I look forward to receiving your application and meeting you in person,

Vincent McInerney, Headteacher



## History, ethos and values

Highlands was opened by Tony Blair in 2000, the first PFI school in the country. It is set in beautiful grounds and has a modern building in excellent condition. Mr McInerney is the third headteacher at Highlands. The previous head, Mr Goddard, led the school on a successful journey from 'Satisfactory' in 2007 to 'Outstanding' twice. The school's Outstanding status was confirmed in the November 2024 Ofsted inspection. The school has a strong reputation in the area for high academic standards and high standards of behaviour.

Our stated goal is "To provide a world class educational experience for our students. In whatever we do, to be held as an example of best practice to other schools." We take this very seriously and we have very high expectations of ourselves and each other. We are outward facing and research focused. We look at what the very best schools are doing nationally and internationally and then try to do it better here.

Our values are determination, aspiration, respect and equality (DARE) . These values underpin all of our work, and are our guiding principles. They summarise what we expect from students and staff. Our motto is 'Dare to flourish'. We chose this very carefully. The word 'dare' was chosen as it links to our values. The word 'flourish' was also carefully selected. The origin of the idea of flourishing dates back to Aristotle, who believed that the human purpose is to try and flourish, or live well. The modern spelling of the word is derived from the Latin, *flos*, which means flower. We like this word because we want all of our school community to grow and to develop. We know not everyone will grow and develop in the same way, but we will support them and be proud of them regardless.

## Curriculum

Our curriculum has been carefully sequenced by highly skilled heads of department and faculty with the support, where appropriate, of nationally recognised experts such as Christine Counsell and David Didau. Our curriculum intent statements will give you a good sense of our philosophy towards the curriculum:

The Highlands School curriculum is highly ambitious and designed to educate students in the best that has been thought and said in each subject and to build cultural capital. At Key Stage 3 the curriculum goes beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum, introducing students to carefully sequenced core knowledge and ideas that will allow them to participate in the community of educated citizens.

The Highlands School curriculum supports a culture of reading. Reading and literacy open the doorway into the other subjects in the curriculum and to future success. The curriculum at Highlands encourages reading for pleasure and ensures students can access texts across the curriculum.

The wider curriculum at Highlands is an entitlement, not a privilege. All students take part in 28 days of carefully selected trips and visits over their seven years at Highlands to support the learning in lessons, build cultural capital and broaden their horizons to a world of opportunities.

The taught and wider curriculum, particularly through PSHE, teaches students about diversity, equality, inclusion and British values.

A photograph of two students in school uniforms sitting outdoors. The student on the left is a young woman with long, curly dark hair, smiling broadly. The student on the right is a young man with short brown hair, also smiling. They are both wearing dark green school jackets with light green trim. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and a bright sky.

Dare to flourish

## Teaching, Learning and CPD

Our approach to teaching is underpinned by Rosenshine and the principles of direct instruction so, before applying, we advise potential candidates to be familiar with the principles and comfortable using them in the classroom. We value the teacher as the subject expert and we expect key knowledge to be delivered to students in a scaffolded and 'chunked' manner. We expect understanding to be checked throughout the lesson with the use of hinge questions, no hands up questioning and mini whiteboards. We buy all students mini whiteboards at the start of the year so they can all participate. Paired discussion is encouraged as a carefully planned part of the learning process. All departments have shared resources that are collaboratively developed and which staff are expected to use. This significantly reduces planning time for staff and means that every class has access to the same high quality resources.

Staff have CPD every Wednesday and this is built into the school day. This is a valuable opportunity for staff to share best practice, and work on curriculum development.

Highlands staff have unique access to a range of professional development opportunities, delivered by the school. These include middle and senior leadership programmes. Uptake on these programmes is high amongst our staff. For ECTs, the school offers the early career framework.

We are committed to developing our staff. You can watch some of our current staff talk about their professional journeys by clicking on the videos below:

[Alice](#), [Mia](#)

For more details of our benefits package and tailored CPD programme you can read our [people offer](#) here.



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## Enrichment

At Highlands we think about more than exam results. The extracurricular provision at the school is excellent. In recent years Highlands students travelled to Madrid, Morocco and New York. This year students studying physics will be visiting Cern in Switzerland, language students will be visiting Madrid and there are international trips to Morocco and Eswatini planned. Our students take part in the Duke of Edinburgh programme and other visits locally and nationally.

The performing arts are a strength at the school and the shows and performances are very popular. Last year students performed in the school show, Matilda, at the Millfield Theatre. Sports are another area of success at the school; girls' football at Highlands is amongst the strongest in the region.

At Highlands students leave with excellent results but also with experiences and an appreciation for the world beyond school that will stay with them forever.

All students at Highlands participate in 'DARE days'. These are four days each year when all lessons are suspended and students and staff participate in a range of trips and activities designed to enrich their learning experience and broaden their horizons.

When school finishes early on Wednesdays for staff CPD, we run compulsory Ed-Extra for year 7 and 8 students. These range from rugby to fashion, from dance to judo. It is a good example of an area in which the school does something that other schools look to as an example of best practice and innovation. We believe our extracurricular programme at Highlands should rival that of any other secondary school in London.



## The Sixth Form

Highlands has an Ofsted *Outstanding*, high performing and oversubscribed sixth form. The summer 2024 results put Highlands Sixth form in the top 10% of schools nationally for a third year in a row. Students go on to a range of destinations including top universities (Oxford, Cambridge, UCL, King's College London), others have gone on to do degree apprenticeships at companies like Blackrock and law firms such as Allen and Overy and others have gone on to pursue apprenticeships. Whether it be A levels or BTECs we support students to the next stage of their life.

At Highlands it is not just what students achieve academically that matters, but what type of young people they become and what they choose to do when they leave. It is for this reason that we have built a diverse and challenging curriculum, along with excellent enrichment opportunities for our students. We are an inclusive sixth form, with a welcoming, diverse and grounded community in which our students feel cared for and supported.

Supporting students to make the right university or career choices is a priority at Highlands. We have a dedicated team of staff who bring outside speakers into the school to develop students' understanding of the world of work. We have a flourishing enrichment programme which encourages sixth form students to take up leadership opportunities. We have a special pathway for students wishing to enter careers such as law or medicine, study at Russell Group universities or who wish to study at Oxford or Cambridge. We are committed to supporting each student into the career or university of their choice.

Learn more about the sixth form on our [sixth form website area](#).

## School priorities

Our goal is to provide a world class educational experience for our students. In whatever we do, to be held as an example of best practice to other schools.

To achieve that the school has three strategic priorities:

1. Achieve academic excellence, underpinned by a curriculum that meets the needs of all learners.
2. Create a culture that celebrates diversity and equality and that supports inclusivity and excellent behaviour.
3. Promote a culture of leadership, self-reflection and professional development across all staff.



## The science faculty

The science faculty is a dynamic and experienced team of teachers and technicians with a passion for encouraging excellence in all students. We have eleven fully furnished laboratories and all teachers are well equipped with individual chromebooks and visualisers to support effective teaching. Science is an incredibly popular subject, many students opt to study the separate sciences at GCSE and so biology, chemistry and physics are amongst the most popular subjects at A-Level. The department is committed to ensuring that all staff have the opportunity to direct their professional development through high quality CPD and robust support for early career teachers. This is evidenced most palpably in the excellent outcomes seen at KS4 and KS5 year on year. This is evidenced most palpably in the excellent outcomes seen at KS4 and KS5 year on year. In chemistry, biology and physics student progress puts Highlands in the he top 10% of schools nationally for those subjects. Our teachers are dedicated to ensuring that all students have access to enrichment as portrayed in our various STEM opportunities. We are excited for an energised and ambitious leader to join the outstanding Biology, and lead it though its next phase of transformation.



## The Role: Head of biology

### Job Purpose

To lead the biology department to deliver consistently excellent lessons that leads to high levels of student progress and engagement.

### Job Details

The position is full time

The successful candidate will report to the director of science

The salary is MPS/UPS + TLR 2C(i)

The post starts Easter or September 2025.



# Job description

## Key responsibilities

### Leadership and management

- Monitor, evaluate and continually improve the quality of planning, teaching, and assessment of all members of the biology department.
- Participate in quality assurance to monitor and develop staff performance.
- Manage departmental budget and resources effectively and efficiently.
- Lead behaviour management in the department, securing strong routines for learning, consistent with the school's policy, and liaising with tutors and parents when necessary.
- Develop strong partnerships and ensure regular communication with parents and carers.
- Evaluate your department through the school self evaluation process.
- Contribute to the wider aims of the school improvement plan.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues as a committed team member, building successful, high performing teams.

### Curriculum and assessment

- Lead and develop a rigorous and inspirational, knowledge rich curriculum.
- Pursue an evidence and research based approach to curriculum development that puts your department at the forefront of innovative curriculum design.
- To develop the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all students including SEND, gifted and talented and EAL students.
- Develop and maintain curriculum maps clearly outlining intent and implementation.
- Ensure that GCSE and exam courses are planned in line with exam specifications.
- Be accountable for student progress across the school at all key stages, ensuring that every student achieves better results in line with, or better than, national expectations.

- Track student progress and make intelligent use of data to identify underperformance, plan appropriate support and achieve excellent outcomes for our students.
- Predict student outcomes as required.
- Monitor student progress through formative and summative assessment and ensure assessment records are kept at a departmental level.
- Ensure a range of intervention strategies are in place to respond to underachievement and to promote best possible outcomes for all students.

### Quality of teaching and learning

- Model outstanding teaching and lead collaborative planning and development, including the sharing of resources and best practice within the department.
- Be responsible for tracking student progress across the department, analysing all relevant data to develop data-driven changes and intervention strategies and using the data to monitor the performance of subject staff.
- Be accountable for student progress in biology at all key stages, ensuring that all students achieve results in line with, or better than, value-added predictions.
- Monitor the work of the department through rigorous and regular lesson observations, book checks and provide detailed, constructive feedback
- Monitor provision for students with individual needs, and develop differentiated learning and teaching methods and resources.
- Keep up to date with developments in pedagogy, research and teaching practice relevant to the department's subject area.

## Job description continued:

### Professional development

- Lead, develop and line manage the department's staff, through the provision of CPD, inset training days, supervising ECTs, ITT students and support staff, etc.
- Identify needs and participate in training opportunities in school and within the local authority.
- Participate fully in the School's induction, CPD and appraisal process.

### Teaching responsibilities

- Teach a timetable as allocated to the head of department.
- Set high expectations so that all students are inspired, motivated and challenged to reach their full potential, and in doing so meet their progress and attainment targets.
- Plan and teach well-structured, differentiated lessons that are aligned to the school and/or network curriculum and cultivate every student's intellectual curiosity.
- Use data to inform teaching and learning, identify areas for intervention and provide feedback to students, staff and families in order to promote progress and outcomes.
- Manage behaviour effectively to create a safe, respectful and nurturing environment so that students can focus on learning.

### Other responsibilities

- Actively promote the safety and welfare of our students.
- Ensure compliance with the school's data protection rules and procedures.
- Liaise with colleagues and external contacts at all levels of seniority with confidence, tact and diplomacy.
- To undertake, as required, the duties of a form tutor, taking responsibility for the support, guidance and welfare of a group of students.

- To undertake, as required, the duties of a form tutor, taking responsibility for the support, guidance and welfare of a group of students.
- To undertake weekly duties as directed, including the supervision of pupils at the beginning of school, during break times and at the end of the school day.
- To follow school policies and procedures as laid down in the staff handbook and guidelines as provided by line managers and the school's senior management team.
- To attend meetings, parents' evenings and other functions, as required by the Headteacher, within directed time.

To uphold agreed standards of dress, behaviour and discipline around the school and when supervising pupils outside the school.

### Equal opportunities

To work within and encourage the school's Equal Opportunities Policy and contribute to diversity policies and programmes in relation to discriminatory behavior. Click [here](#) for our equal opportunities statement.

### Review Arrangements

The details contained in this job description reflect the content of the job at the date it was prepared. It should be remembered, however, that it is inevitable that over time, the nature of individual jobs will change, existing duties may no longer be required and other duties may be gained without changing the general nature of the duties or the level of responsibility entailed. Consequently, the Headteacher will expect to revise this Job Description from time to time and will consult with the postholder at the appropriate time.

All schools in Enfield are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Therefore, all employees working at this school are expected to share this commitment as and when required.

## Person specification

The following outlines the key knowledge, skills and experience required for this position. As part of the shortlisting process, the selection panel will assess each candidate against the criteria listed below.

### Knowledge, skills and experience

- To have qualified teacher status and appropriate qualifications in biology or related disciplines.
- Successful teaching experience across a range of key stages.
- The ability to motivate students and staff (teaching and non-teaching).
- Good interpersonal skills: the ability to work well with a wide range of people and also to use initiative - taking the lead when necessary.
- The ability to work flexibly and share in workloads, particularly during periods of pressure.
- Experience of working with pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- Experience of improving the quality of teaching and learning through curriculum development and high quality resources.
- A belief in and commitment to the school's equal opportunities policy.
- The ability to demonstrate a proactive approach in taking responsibility for quality of own work and that of others, problem solving and using one's own initiative as appropriate.
- Confident use of technology to promote learning.

### Personal Qualities

- Ability to work well under pressure.
- Ability to prioritise and meet deadlines.
- Commitment to continued personal development.
- Commitment to contribute to the wider life of the school.
- A sound understanding of safeguarding.
- An acceptance of the need for continuing development and training, particularly in ensuring a proactive approach to planning CPD.
- Rigour.
- Very high expectations of oneself and students.
- High levels of personal integrity.
- A passion for promoting and celebrating diversity.
- A willingness to give and receive respectful and candid feedback on the quality of work.

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## The application process

Please apply by visiting the [vacancies page](#) on our website and complete an application form (at the bottom) in full with a personal statement of no more than two sides of A4 outlining how you meet the person spec. This can be typed in the space on the application form or as a separate document.

**Closing date:** 9am on Monday 24th February 2025. Interviews will be held shortly afterwards.

If you have any questions, please contact Trudi Steiner, HR Officer, at [hsjobapp@highlearn.uk](mailto:hsjobapp@highlearn.uk) or **020 8370 1166**.

The Governing Body are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS check.



**Highlands**  
School & Sixth Form

**Highlands School & Sixth Form**  
148 Worlds End Lane  
London  
N21 1QQ  
020 8370 1000  
HR Officer: Trudi Steiner  
[steinert@highlearn.uk](mailto:steinert@highlearn.uk)