



**Head Of School
Damers First School**

Recruitment Pack

Wessex Multi-Academy Trust
Suite A, Paceycombe House
Paceycombe Way
Poundbury
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 3WB

www.wessex.ac

Tel: 01305 231510

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Head of School at Damers First School

Salary: Group: 3 (L14 – L20); £61,042 - £70,734

(There may be some flexibility around the salary range for an exceptional candidate)

Start date: 1st September 2023

This is an opportunity to lead a thriving and successful first school within the Wessex Multi-Academy Trust.

The Wessex MAT is made up of a family of 12 schools based in West Dorset. We cover the full age range from nursery through to post-16 and we are fiercely inclusive. Although we work together closely and collaboratively we do not believe in cloning schools or working to a formula. Schools retain a unique position in their local community pursuing common values and aspirations. We encourage innovation and we want staff to feel confident about testing boundaries. That is the route towards great schools for all.

Our mantra is 'learning is everything'. What goes on in the classroom is the most important part of our work and everyone who works for Wessex MAT, in whatever role or capacity, contributes towards that vision. That is why we put so much time and effort into continuous professional development. Everyone is encouraged to be involved in some form of learning or development, which may or may not lead to formal qualifications.

We are ambitious to become both an educator and employer of choice. Therefore, we work hard to create the best possible working conditions where staff feel supported and valued. Richard Branson said that we should, 'train people well enough so they can leave for any job they want, but treat them well enough so they don't want to'. That is something that resonates with our own philosophy.

Damers First School re-located to Poundbury into a new build school in 2017. It is in a magnificent setting at the heart of the community, making the most of the environment. We fully expect Damers to be judged 'good' again at its next inspection because it is a highly effective school. It has a complex communication base and caters for the full range of children living in the local community. It is a popular and over-subscribed school with 468 pupils currently on roll.

The school's strong values permeate its community, curriculum and pastoral identity and we are looking for someone with a positive and confident outlook who will embrace and strengthen that philosophy and can build on that legacy and further establish the school as a driving force within the MAT.

An application pack with further details, including how to apply, can be found on the Wessex website: www.wessex.ac

Wessex MAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires all staff and volunteers to share and demonstrate this commitment.

The successful candidate will be required to demonstrate that they meet the essential elements of the person specification and will be subject to pre-employment checks including a health check, an Enhanced DBS check Child Barred List check and satisfactory references. We will conduct online searches of shortlisted candidates. This check will be part of a safeguarding check and the search will purely be based on whether an individual is suitable to work with children. As care must be taken to avoid unconscious bias and any risk of discrimination, a person who will not be on the appointment panel will conduct the search and will only share information if and when findings are relevant and of concern. Applicants are advised that it is an offence to apply for the role if they are barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

Welcome

Dear applicant

Thank you for taking the time to consider an application to the Wessex MAT.

We are one of the fastest growing multi-academy trusts in the south-west. We put learning at the centre of everything we do, and we encourage all our employees to be involved in some form of training or development. We expect everyone to make a commitment to continuous improvement.

We offer plenty of opportunity for growth and development. If you are successful, you will be one of 12 school leaders working together in a family of schools. You will benefit from an extensive programme of induction coupled with regular coaching and mentoring. You will work alongside colleagues from all phases giving you a broad and informed picture of the education landscape and you will contribute to the progress of all schools in the MAT. We are committed to looking after our school leaders and part of your training will prepare you to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

I understand the time and effort that goes into making an application so please accept my thanks in advance if you decide to proceed beyond this initial interest. To apply you will need to:

- o Complete the application form on: www.jobs.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- o Write a letter (maximum two sides) outlining your relevant experience and explaining how you meet the sections of the person specification highlighted in italics.
- o A 150 word (max) statement about yourself that can be shared with staff. You might want to say a little more about your interests and your life outside school.

Supporting documents should be sent to Robyn Symes, HR Manager: rsymes@wessex.ac

I am also aware that choosing the right school and the right trust to apply to is an important responsibility. It is difficult to summarise our Trust in a brief letter so please visit the website for more information. The individual school will offer the opportunity of a visit if you would find that helpful; please see the letter from the Chair of Governors for details. If you are unable to visit but would like to have an informal discussion about the post, please contact Mike Foley at Wessex MAT: mfoley@wessex.ac.

I look forward very much to hearing from you.

With warm regards

Mike Foley
CEO

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APPLICATIONS CLOSE:

Thursday 9th February 2023

INTERVIEWS:

Held during 27th February—
9th March 2023



About us



Mission

Our mission is for every child in our care to have the best possible learning opportunities in a safe and caring environment where they can achieve their full potential.

Vision

Our vision is to work in partnership with our schools and staff to deliver outstanding contemporary learning opportunities that prepare every child to live a happy, healthy and fulfilling life.

Values

The Wessex Multi-Academy Trust believes that at the heart of a successful organisation that is focused on education, the following values are important:

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Excellence
- Respect
- Care

Please visit our website for more information:

www.wessex.ac



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Our Schools



Bere Regis Primary and Pre-School

Bere Regis is a happy, friendly, community school with a family atmosphere, where children and adults are encouraged to achieve their potential in a creative and supportive learning environment.



Damers First School

At Damers children are at the heart of everything we do and our school is a vibrant place in which to learn, work and play. As an inclusive school we are passionate about meeting all children's needs, both emotionally and academically.



Dorchester Middle School

At Dorchester Middle School we believe that every child is extraordinary and that education has the capacity and the possibility to change lives for the better. We are committed to providing children with the best possible educational experience.



The Purbeck School

The Purbeck School is a vibrant and exciting school community where everyone matters. Our approach to learning promotes and embeds our core values of respect, aspiration and perseverance.



St Osmund's CE Middle School

St Osmund's is a school built upon the Christian values of hope, community, respect and love. Children come first. We stand together and support each other.



The Thomas Hardy School

At The Thomas Hardy School we believe in the power of learning as a means to transform lives and that every young person has a talent that can be nurtured through relentless optimism.

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Our Schools



St Mary's CE Middle School

We are a 9-13 middle school situated on the outskirts of Puddletown. We are a church school with an ethos built on the core Christian values of respect, forgiveness, justice, uniqueness, equality, acceptance and kindness.



Frome Valley CE First School

We aim to nurture all children as individuals, enabling them to achieve their full potential. At the heart of our school is the belief that we all share a vision and values that help us to be responsible, respectful and caring members of society. We are proud of the Christian ethos of our school and our belief that citizenship and a sense of community are as important as academic achievements.



Milborne St Andrew First School

We are committed to providing an inclusive environment where children and adults can all flourish as part of a learning community, rooted in mutual respect for all. We have high expectations of ourselves and our pupils and we nurture every unique child and adult.



Piddle Valley CE First School

Our school is founded on Christian values, principles and beliefs. We are a small, happy school in which pupils work hard and learn well, within a nurturing and safe environment. We recognise that all members of our school community are unique and valued for the contribution they make.



Puddletown CE First School

We are proud of our school, its church heritage and the community we serve. We aim to inspire our children to learn and to see themselves as active learners with an infinite capacity to improve. We do this in a safe and caring environment based on Christian principles where individual progress is celebrated.



Manor Park CE First School

We are working together to provide an inclusive and nurturing environment where all are valued and everyone has the opportunity to flourish. Our school community is built upon the Christian foundations of compassion, trust, collaboration, creativity and resilience whilst embracing diversity and demonstrating mutual respect.

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WESSEX
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Dear Candidate

Thank you for taking the time to consider joining Damers First School as its Head of School; the vacancy has arisen due to the resignation of our current headteacher after 10 years of outstanding leadership.

Damers is a unique and distinctive place to learn. Serving a vibrant and diverse community, the school currently has a 3 form entry; it also has a specialist base provision for children with complex communication needs.

While first impressions of the school are often based on the purpose-built building which sits in the heart of the Duchy of Cornwall's Poundbury development, the beauty of Damers exists beyond the bricks and mortar and is firmly founded in strong relationships and the relentless determination to 'find the learner' within every single child, whatever their starting point, keeping children at the heart of absolutely everything that the school does.

The school's ethos is probably best summarised through its logo, the Damers butterfly. The butterfly was introduced at a time of transformation for the school when the new site opened in 2017. It reflects the aspiration to give children the wings to fly, both during and beyond their time at Damers. The logo was purposefully designed as a non-symmetrical butterfly to reflect an unwavering commitment to inclusion, it is bold to reflect the school's bravery in its relevant and meaningful curriculum design, and ultimately reflects the love of and care for the natural world, and how the school ensures that its children recognise their place within that and their role as agents of change.

Damers strongly believe that those within the school's community should be 'brave, unique, caring and kind' an expectation that permeates all aspects of school life.

The staff team at Damers are experienced, supportive, resilient and committed to creating incredible learning environments where there is a sense of awe and wonder for every child. As part of the values-based Multi Academy Trust, there is a strong support network, opportunities for professional development and further career progression.

The Governing Body are a committed and supportive critical friend and as a school leader new to the post, you will also receive extensive support from the Multi-Academy Trust.

While it is difficult to summarise our school in a brief letter, our school website will provide you with further information about our aims, values and learning ethos as well as our broad and creative curriculum that is underpinned by nature's principles of Harmony.

If you require any further information or you would like to talk through your application, Mike Foley (CEO) is available, and you will find his contact details in his letter. However, you are also very welcome to visit the school and see for yourself what an incredibly special place it is.

We would be happy to welcome you on the afternoons of Thursday 2nd, Monday 6th or Tuesday 7th February. Please contact the school office on 01305 264924 or email office@damers.dorset.sch.uk to arrange a visit.

I wish you every success with your application.

With very best wishes

Sophie Duke

Chair of Governors

HEAD OF SCHOOL JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title: HEAD OF SCHOOL (full time)

Responsible to: Wessex MAT

Responsible for: All staff, volunteers and children within the school

Main Purpose: To carry out the duties of Head of School in accordance with the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act and are built upon The Headteachers' Standards (2020) and the Teachers' Standards (2011).

Ethics and professional conduct

Demonstrate consistently high standards of principles and professional conduct; meet the teachers' standards and be responsible for providing the conditions in which teachers can fulfil them; uphold and demonstrate the seven Nolan principles of public life.

The Head of School will:

- Demonstrate the school's vision and values in everyday work and practice
- Serve in the best interests of the school's pupils
- Conduct themselves in a manner compatible with their influential position in society by behaving ethically, fulfilling their professional responsibilities and modelling the behaviour of a good citizen
- Uphold their obligation to give account and accept responsibility
- Know, understand, and act within the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities
- Take responsibility for their own continued professional development, engaging critically with educational research
- Make a positive contribution to the wider education system and to the family of schools in the Wessex MAT

Key Areas of Responsibility

1. School Culture:

Working with the Wessex MAT and other leaders, create a shared vision and strategic plan which inspires and motivates pupils, staff and all other members of the school community.

This vision should express core educational values and moral purpose and be inclusive of stakeholders' values and beliefs. The strategic planning process is critical to sustaining school improvement and ensuring that the school moves forward for the benefit of its pupils, providing a world class education for pupils it serves.

The Head of School will:

- Establish and sustain the school's values, ethos and strategic direction in partnership with those responsible for governance and through consultation with the school community
- Create a culture where pupils experience a positive and enriching school life
- Uphold ambitious educational standards which prepare pupils from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life
- Promote positive and respectful relationships across the school community and a safe, orderly and inclusive environment
- Ensure a culture of high staff professionalism

2. Teaching and Learning:

Take a central responsibility for raising the quality of teaching and learning. This involves high expectations, maintaining and evaluating outcomes and establishing a successful learning culture which will enable pupils to become effective, enthusiastic, independent learners, committed to life-long learning.

The Head of School will:

- Ensure high-quality, expert teaching across all subjects and phases reflecting the distinctive vision and values of the school in order that pupils flourish as learners and the highest possible standards are achieved.
- Establish and sustain high-quality, expert teaching across all subjects and phases, built on an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how pupils learn
- Ensure teaching is underpinned by high levels of subject expertise and approaches which respect the distinct nature of subject disciplines or specialist domain
- Ensure effective use is made of formative assessment

3. Curriculum and assessment

The Head of School will:

- Ensure teaching and learning reflects the distinctive vision and values of the school in order that pupils flourish as learners and the highest possible standards are achieved
- Ensure a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on pupils' achievement, using data and benchmarks to monitor progress in learning and using a robust system of assessment of pupil achievement in order to set ambitious but realistic targets for all children.
- Ensure a broad, structured and coherent curriculum entitlement which sets out the knowledge, skills and values that will be taught
- Establish effective curricular leadership, developing subject leaders with high levels of relevant expertise with access to professional networks and communities
- Ensure that all pupils are taught to read through the provision of evidence-informed approaches to reading, particularly the use of systematic synthetic phonics in schools that teach early reading
- Ensure valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum

4. Behaviour

Create and maintain an environment and implement a Behaviour Policy that reflects the school's ethos and promotes development and learning and secures safety and discipline. Provide a safe and calm and well-ordered environment for all pupils and staff, focused on safeguarding pupils and developing their exemplary behaviour in school and in wider society.

The Head of School will:

- Establish and sustain high expectations of behaviour for all pupils, built upon relationships, rules and routines, which are understood clearly by all staff, pupils and parents.
- Ensure high standards of pupil behaviour and courteous conduct in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
- Implement consistent, fair and respectful approaches to managing behaviour
- Ensure that adults within the school model and teach the behaviour of a good citizen

5. **Additional and special educational needs and disabilities**

Take responsibility for a professional community which enables all children to flourish ensuring that the curriculum is accessible and relevant to all children.

The Head of School will:

- Ensure the school holds ambitious expectations for all pupils with additional and special educational needs and disabilities
- Establish and sustain culture and practices that enable pupils to access the curriculum and learn effectively
- Ensure the school works effectively in partnership with parents, carers and professionals, to identify the additional needs and special educational needs and disabilities of pupils, providing support and adaptation where appropriate
- Ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties with regard to the SEND code of practice

6. **Professional Development**

Build a professional learning community which enables all to flourish. Manage the complexity of a school team and be committed to their own continuing professional development.

The Head of School will:

- Ensure staff have access to high-quality, sustained professional development opportunities, aligned to balance the priorities of whole-school improvement, team and individual needs
- Prioritise the professional development of staff, ensuring effective planning, delivery and evaluation which is consistent with the approaches laid out in the standard for teachers' professional development
- Ensure that professional development opportunities draw on expert provision from beyond the school, as well as within it, including nationally recognised career and professional frameworks and programmes to build capacity and support succession planning

7. **Organisational Management**

Provides effective management of the school and continuously seeks to improve organisational structures based on self-evaluation. Lead by example, modelling the professional conduct and practice of teachers in a way that minimises unnecessary teacher workload and leaves room for high quality continuous professional development for all staff.

The Head of School will:

- Ensure that the school's ethos and values are evidenced in how all work and learn.
- Create an organisational structure which reflects the school's values, and enables the management systems, structures and processes to work effectively in line with legal requirements.
- Ensure the protection and safety of pupils and staff through effective approaches to safeguarding as part of the duty of care
- Prioritise and allocate financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds
- Ensure staff are deployed and managed well with due attention paid to workload
- Establish and oversee systems, processes and policies that enable the school to operate effectively and efficiently
- Ensure rigorous approaches to identify, manage and mitigate risk

8. Continuous school improvement

Working with the Wessex MAT and other leaders, create a shared vision and strategic plan which inspires and motivates pupils, staff and all other members of the school community. This vision should express the school's core educational values and moral purpose and be inclusive of stakeholders' values and beliefs.

The strategic planning process is critical to sustaining school improvement and ensuring that this school moves forward for the benefit of its pupils, providing a world class education for pupils it serves.

The Head of School will:

- make use of effective and proportional processes of evaluation to identify and analyse complex or persistent problems and barriers which limit school effectiveness, and identify priority areas for improvement
- develop appropriate evidence-informed strategies for improvement as part of well-targeted plans which are realistic, timely, appropriately sequenced and suited to the school's context
- ensure careful and effective implementation of improvement strategies, which lead to sustained school improvement over time

9. Working in partnership

Engage with the internal and external school community. Work collaboratively at both strategic and operational levels with parents and carers and across multiple agencies for the well-being of all children.

Share responsibility for leadership of the wider educational system and be aware that school improvement and community development are interdependent.

The Head of School will:

- Forge constructive relationships beyond the school, working in partnership with parents, carers and the local community
- Commit their school to work successfully with other schools and organisations in a climate of mutual challenge and support
- Establish and maintain working relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues across other public services to improve educational outcomes for all pupils

10. Governance and accountability

Accept responsibility to the whole school community and be accountable to a range of groups, in particular: pupils, parents, carers, trustees and governors.

The Head of School will:

- Understand and welcome the role of effective governance, upholding their obligation to give account and accept responsibility
- Establish and sustain professional working relationship with those responsible for governance
- Ensure that staff know and understand their professional responsibilities and are held to account
- Ensure the school effectively and efficiently operates within the required regulatory frameworks and meets all statutory duties
- Welcome strong governance and provide information, objective advice and support to actively support trustees and governors to meet their responsibilities. These include the securing of effective teaching and learning; the highest standards of attainment and for achieving efficiency and value for money.

- Develop and present a coherent, understandable and accurate account of the school's performance to a range of audiences including trustees, governors, parents and carers.
- Support the Trust and the local governing body in fulfilling its functions to set school strategy and to hold the Head of School to account for pupil, staff and financial performance.

This job description outlines the key responsibilities for the role of Head of School and it may be necessary to undertake additional duties as required. This job description will be reviewed at least annually as part of the Head of School's performance management programme.

Dated: January 2023

We will seek to ensure that all existing and potential employees are given equal opportunities. We are committed to diversity and equality of opportunity in our employment policies and practices. Our aim is to promote diversity so that no employee or potential employee will be subject to unlawful or unfair discrimination because of gender, age, marital or civil partnership status, colour, race, nationality or other ethnic or national origin, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity or membership or non-membership of a trade union or political beliefs. We will seek to ensure that no applicant for employment is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be justified.

Person Specification

Description	Essential	Desirable
Professional Qualifications		
Qualified Teacher Status	√	
Evidence of professional development in preparation for school leadership, gained within the last two years	√	
Hold, or be working towards, NPQH or equivalent qualification		√
Evidence of further professional development (eg MA)		√
Knowledge and Experience		
Recent experience of significant leadership in a medium to large first/primary school setting		√
<i>Evidence of driving up whole school standards of teaching and learning to raise standards, particularly for disadvantaged pupils</i>	√	
Experience of tackling underperformance, with an appropriate outcome	√	
A good knowledge and understanding of the whole primary phase	√	
Outstanding classroom practitioner with the ability to inspire others	√	
Knowledge of base provision for pupils with complex needs		√
Knowledge and experience of SEND including effective resource management	√	
Experience of adhering to financial procedures and managing a significant school budget		√
Experience of teaching in more than one key stage with the full range of ability		√
Successful teaching experience in different schools		√
Leadership and Management		
A leader with presence and visibility who inspires, motivates and empowers others.	√	
The ability to develop others, and get the best from them, through inspirational leadership, managing teamwork, negotiating areas of conflict and influencing change through collective goals	√	
A person who sets high standards and holds others to account	√	
The ability to get the most from every member of staff, to conduct appraisals and to manage performance	√	
The ability to motivate and inspire the next generation of school leaders	√	
<i>Proven track record of leading and developing a team of professionals, delegating effectively and managing change</i>	√	
Articulate and approachable with excellent communication skills	√	
A strategic thinker with the ability to analyse, prioritise, operationalise and meet deadlines	√	
Well organised with the ability to anticipate and manage in a complex and changing environment whilst remaining measured and calm	√	
Evidence of successful working with governors	√	
Evidence of building relationships and working in partnership with parents, other schools, multi-academy trust or LA and commitment to collaborative working	√	
The ability to implement and evaluate appropriate evidence based improvement plans and policies	√	

Teaching and Learning		
Understanding of the wider, national agenda within education, including curriculum, assessment and inspection frameworks	√	
<i>Experience of organising and implementing a creative curriculum, with imaginative and effective approaches to teaching and learning</i>	√	
Experience of securing high standards of behaviour and attendance, ensuring an ethos of challenge and support	√	
The belief in a wholly inclusive environment, taking account of the richness and diversity of the school community, promoting positive strategies for challenging prejudice	√	
Safeguarding		
Have good knowledge of child protection and health and safety legislation and understanding the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead	√	
The ability to promote and safeguard the welfare of all the children within the care of our school in a 'culture of vigilance'	√	
The ability to ensure Safer Recruitment Practice	√	
Personal Qualities and Attributes		
A reflective person living by a clear set of values aligned and in sympathy with Damers First School	√	
A person with a passion for education and for the development of the whole-child in terms of learning and well-being	√	
A caring, individual who gets the most out of staff by being approachable, empathetic and who demonstrates a commitment to the well-being of staff, pupils and families	√	
<i>Demonstrates a collegiate approach in building a total school community actively including staff, pupils, parents and governors</i>	√	
A person with energy and initiative who can manage their own time effectively in order to achieve challenging goals	√	



Daisy and Harry for whom learning is everything

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