

Headteacher
Highdown School & Sixth Form Centre
GLF Schools

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James Lombardo

in partnership with:





Welcome to Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre



Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre, set within 28 acres of parkland in Caversham and featuring three Grade II listed buildings, has been a beacon of comprehensive education since 1971. Serving c.1,560 students aged 11 to 18, Highdown has consistently upheld its commitment to excellence. Achieving academy status in 2010 and securing a 'Good' rating from Ofsted in 2015, 2018, and most recently in 2024, the school is now poised to elevate its standards from Good to Outstanding.

Highdown is distinguished by many outstanding features and on a trajectory of rapid improvement. The school's comprehensive range of improvement strategies consistently delivers measurable advancements in academic performance with highly aspirational students consistently exceeding national and local averages at GCSE, while progress at A-Level is outstanding.

The recent Ofsted report highlights the excellent provision for pupils' wider development at Highdown, showcasing their embodiment of the school's values of Aspiration, Respect, and Excellence that shape the school's ethos, fostering pupils' talents and interests through a rich curriculum and diverse activities.

Highdown's vision is to inspire students from day one, engaging them with high-quality teaching that fosters a lifelong love of learning, reinforcing the school's goal, in partnership with home and school, to cultivate active, independent, and resilient learners. Supported by exceptional pastoral care, extracurricular activities, and strong community ties, the students' personal development is unparalleled. This foundation allows them to leave Highdown as confident global citizens, ready to make positive contributions to society.



Highdown School believes in all students achieving academic success in an environment where young people are happy, stimulated and supported in all-round development and wellbeing. Students leave Highdown at 16, or more usually at 18, ready to move on to the next stage in their education or employment. The school's inclusive provision ensures that no one leaves without a positive destination.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. Progression through the compulsory years leads to a wide range of A levels and vocational courses in our outstanding Sixth Form. One of Highdown's unique selling points is its offer of Mandarin, which is embedded in the curriculum with students progressing to Mandarin and Oriental studies at university. It is also one of the few state schools to be part of the Mandarin Excellence Programme led by University College London.

A global perspective is part of Highdown's philosophy. Students are encouraged to take full advantage of a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular trips: China, Iceland, Poland, and Spain are among regular destinations. Highdown's House System underpins its all-round provision in celebrating the Arts, Sports, Sciences, Careers and Community. The system promotes inter-year-group collaboration and is the basis of the school's student leadership programme. All students take part in leadership skills development through the accredited PiXL Edge programme, and many are successful in The Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Highdown students are prepared to achieve in the modern world following a Highdown education.



Highdown is dedicated to the ongoing professional development of all staff, offering a stimulating work environment enriched by a dynamic Joint Professional Learning (JPL) programme, highly acclaimed Early Career Teacher (ECT) induction, and Coaching for Excellence initiatives. Additionally, Highdown upholds a 'Fair Workload Charter' and staff benefit from membership of the PiXL Club and the Princes Teaching Institute. This dedication to professional learning and leadership development ensures that colleagues can tailor their training to their development goals, exemplifying Highdown's commitment to pedagogical excellence.



From September 2024 Highdown will join the GLF Schools Trust, bringing with it the school's strong reputation and stable position. Highdown is poised to further solidify its strength within the community as part of this collaboration. GLF Schools are delighted to welcome such an established institution into their family, as this partnership represents a significant step in their goal to grow as a Multi-Academy Trust. The inclusion of Highdown, the first secondary school in the area within the GLF network, allows the trust to expand its influence and impact, enhancing educational opportunities and support for the community.



GLF Schools was established in 2012 and embarked on a journey that culminated in it becoming one of the largest Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) in the UK. Today, GLF Schools employs over 2,500 staff members dedicated to educating approximately 19,000 students across 43 schools in 7 local authority regions in Southern England, with a foundational philosophy of schools working together as like-minded partners for the benefit of all students.

GLF Schools central objective is to provide children and young people with an outstanding, engaging, and rewarding education, ensuring the best possible start in life. Guided by core values of Respect, Inclusivity, Integrity, and Kindness, the Trust fosters a culture of high standards and exceptional education. Highly qualified and dedicated teachers drive this goal, promoting the growth and success of every student.

The appointment of CEO Julian Drinkall in 2023 marks a pivotal step in the Trust's 5-year vision to become the UK's leading Multi-Academy Trust. While individual GLF Schools already have an outstanding reputation for performance and collaboration, Julian is committed to driving further excellence by working closely with each school to identify key growth drivers and leverage their unique strengths and autonomy. Julian's vision also includes developing a strong central approach to support schools in achieving continuous improvement and serving their communities effectively.

GLF has 8 secondary schools and 35 primary settings, each serving the needs of their own communities but united by the desire to deliver outstanding educational outcomes.



**HIGHDOWN SCHOOL
AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE**



Role

This role is for an exceptional and inspiring Headteacher to lead the school within the GLF Schools family. The successful candidate will play a pivotal role in shaping the strategic direction and future of the institution, working closely with the School Standards Board (SSB) and key stakeholders. This is a unique opportunity for a visionary leader to inspire, challenge, and motivate dedicated staff and ambitious students, ensuring that both GLF and the school's ethos and values are deeply embedded in all aspects of school life.

As Headteacher, the individual will be at the forefront of delivering high-quality teaching and learning, driving academic excellence, and fostering an environment where every student can thrive. Strategic acumen will be crucial in maintaining a consistent focus on student achievement, employing data-driven approaches to monitor progress and implementing innovative strategies to enhance learning experiences. The role requires working rigorously with the SSB to ensure that school evaluations inform improvement priorities, and that the school's budget is managed effectively.

Community engagement is a key aspect of the role, requiring the Headteacher to build on strong partnerships with parents, carers, and local organisations. Leadership will be instrumental in promoting equity, development, and the well-being of all students, extending learning opportunities beyond the classroom. This position is suited for a dedicated leader with a commitment to excellence and a passion for fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment, providing a significant impact on the school and community.

Continuous career support and development is a top priority for GLF Schools, and the Trust is dedicated to offering professional development opportunities for all colleagues within the organisation and beyond, catering to various career stages. The GLF School Support Team, along with skilled leaders and specialist staff, delivers top-tier professional development and teacher training to all schools and academies. The CPD programme addresses both national and regional issues and, when appropriate, covers operational and strategic matters related to key school development priorities. The range of courses is continuously updated to meet evolving educational needs.



Key Responsibilities and Duties

Strategic Direction & Shaping the Future

- To work with the Executive Leaders, the SSB, the Trust Board and other key stakeholders to ensure that the school's vision is clearly articulated shared and understood and translated into effective action by all.
- To inspire, challenge, motivate and empower others to secure the vision.
- To model - for the students and staff – the values, vision and ethos of the school.
- To enhance opportunities through collaboration with other schools both within and outside the GLF family.
- To lead the GLF vision in elevating Highdown School & Sixth Form Centre from a “Good” to an “Outstanding” Ofsted-rated school

Leading, Teaching & Learning

- To sustain high quality teaching that leads to outstanding outcomes for all students.
- To ensure a consistent school-wide focus on students' achievements, using data and benchmarks to monitor progress in every student's learning.
- To ensure that learning is at the centre of strategic planning and resource management.
- To demonstrate & articulate high expectations that set challenging targets for the whole student body.
- Implement strategies that secure high standards of behaviour and attendance.
- To take a strategic role in the development of new and emerging technologies to enhance and extend the learning experience of students and the pedagogical skills of staff.
- To monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching to ensure high attainment and achievement.
- To acknowledge excellence and challenge areas for development in the school.
- To access, analyse and interpret information and use it effectively.

Securing Accountability

- The Headteacher is legally and contractually accountable to GLF Executive Leaders, the SSB and the Trust Board. The Headteacher also fulfils wider accountabilities in relation to students, parents, carers, and other relevant groups.
- The Headteacher will demonstrate an understanding of educational issues at a local and national level and anticipate trends.
- The Headteacher will engage the school community in the systematic and rigorous self-evaluation of the work of the school and work closely with the SSB to ensure that effective school evaluation informs school improvement priorities.
- The Headteacher will ensure effective management of the school budget and best practice in financial and employment matters.
- Ensure individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, understood and agreed and are subject to rigorous review and evaluation.
- The Headteacher will develop and present a coherent, understandable and accurate account of the school's performance to a range of audiences including GLF Executive Leaders, the SSB the Trust Board, parents & students.



Strengthening Community

- The Headteacher will engage with the internal and external school community and GLF Schools to secure equity and entitlement. This includes collaboration with other schools, parents, carers and other agencies for the well-being of all students.
- The Headteacher will work with local primary schools to develop clear marketing plans, including fostering collaboration, creating engaging and informative content, ensuring consistency in messaging, and aligning the marketing efforts with the overall goals of both schools and supports student transitions.
- The Headteacher will work effectively with other educational institutions locally and further afield building effective partnerships.
- The Headteacher will develop the provision of out of hours learning and extended learning opportunities.
- The Headteacher will build and maintain effective relationships with parents, carers, partners and the community that enhance the education of the students and the wider community.



Profile

Commitment to Values and Vision:

- Demonstrates a strong commitment to upholding and promoting the values, vision, and ethos of both the school and GLF Schools. This includes fostering a school culture that aligns with the trust's mission and principles, ensuring that every decision and action taken supports the overall objectives and values of the institution.

Leadership and Strategic Planning:

- Demonstrates a proven ability to lead and manage a large secondary school and sixth form centre effectively. This involves overseeing all aspects of school operations, from academic programming to staff management, ensuring the school runs smoothly and efficiently.
- Demonstrates skills in developing and implementing strategic plans for school improvement. This includes setting clear, achievable goals for academic excellence, creating actionable steps to reach these goals, and continuously evaluating progress to drive ongoing improvements.

Innovation and Student Development:

- Demonstrates an innovative approach to maintaining and enhancing the school's reputation and success. This involves integrating new educational technologies, teaching methods, and curricular innovations to keep the school at the forefront of education.
- Demonstrates a commitment to the holistic development of students, ensuring their academic, social, and emotional growth. This includes providing a supportive environment that nurtures each student's potential and addresses their individual needs.

Collaborative Leadership:

- Demonstrates a collaborative and inclusive leadership style that empowers educators and support staff. This includes fostering a team-oriented environment where all staff members feel valued and motivated to contribute their best efforts.



High Expectations and Achievement:

- Maintains high expectations with a commitment to setting challenging targets that drive continuous growth. This includes pushing both students and staff to reach their highest potential and celebrating their achievements.
- Maintains a strong focus on student achievement, effectively using data and benchmarks to monitor progress and inform instructional strategies. This ensures that teaching methods are data-driven and outcomes-focused.

Inclusive Environment and Student Well-being:

- Fosters an inclusive and supportive educational environment. This involves creating a welcoming atmosphere where all students feel safe and valued, regardless of their background.
- Fosters a commitment to promoting equity, entitlement, and student well-being. This includes implementing policies and practices that ensure all students have equal access to educational opportunities and support services.

Safeguarding:

- Possesses a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This includes adhering to and implementing safeguarding policies and procedures to protect students from harm.
- Possesses a strong understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures, ensuring that all staff are trained and vigilant in maintaining a safe school environment.

Technological Proficiency:

- Knowledgeable about emerging technologies that can enhance learning and teaching. Staying up to date with the latest educational tools and integrating them into the curriculum to improve student outcomes.

Educational Insight:

- Strong understanding of local and national educational issues and trends, including awareness of changes in educational policy, best practices, and new research.
- Strong ability to anticipate and respond to changes in the educational landscape, ensuring the school remains adaptable and forward-thinking in its approach.

Staff Development and Professional Growth:

- Dedicated to continuous professional development and reflective practice. This includes regularly seeking out opportunities for personal growth and encouraging staff to do the same.
- Dedicated to designing and executing robust professional development programmes for staff. This ensures that teachers and support staff have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective in their roles.
- Dedicating to promoting high teaching standards and ensuring continued staff retention through effective management and support.



Financial Management:

- Demonstrates effective management of school budgets and financial matters. This includes ensuring that the school's resources are used efficiently and transparently, and that financial decisions support the school's strategic goals.

Staff Accountability:

- Ability to define, review, and evaluate individual staff accountabilities. This includes setting clear expectations for staff performance, providing regular feedback, and conducting performance evaluations to support professional growth.

Communication and Community Engagement:

- Ability to present school performance by tailoring communication styles to various audiences as required including parents, staff, and SSB. This ensures transparency and keeps stakeholders informed about the school's progress and achievements.
- Ability to build lasting partnerships with parents, carers, and local organisations. This involves engaging with the community to create a supportive network that enhances student learning and well-being.
- Ability to effectively collaborate with internal and external school communities, strengthening ties with local businesses, universities, and community organizations to enhance opportunities for students. This ensures that the school is well-connected and can offer students a wide range of experiences and support.



Requirements and Skills

Proven Track Record:

- Successful leadership as Headteacher or school leader in a secondary school and sixth form centre environment.
- Sustaining high-quality teaching standards and achieving outstanding student outcomes.
- Creating and enforcing policies for a positive and disciplined learning setting and working within a network of schools to share best practices and resources.
- Overseeing budgeting, staffing, and resource allocation at senior level to maximise educational outcomes.
- Developing effective staffing structures and fostering team building.
- Creating a positive, inclusive, and ambitious school culture with familiarity working in a multi-cultural setting with a diverse school community.

Extensive Experience:

- Working in a school that has transitioned from 'Good' to 'Outstanding' or having experience in an 'outstanding' school, or the aspiration and ability to lead the school to 'Outstanding.'
- Working in a Multi-Academy Trust is desirable, as it demonstrates the ability to navigate and thrive in a complex educational environment.
- Working with the SSB, parents, and key stakeholders to foster a collaborative school community.
- Implementing innovative teaching strategies and continuously improving educational practices with an understanding of quality in learning and teaching and how to achieve excellence.
- Leading rigorous self-evaluation and comprehensive school improvement initiatives, using data and feedback for continuous improvement.
- Collaborating with educational institutions and external agencies to enhance educational provision and student opportunities.
- Managing school resources efficiently to support strategic goals.
- Communicating and implementing a clear, strategic vision, translating it into practical actions that drive school improvement and student success.
- Creating a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment for all students and staff.

Demonstrated Dedication & Ability:

- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people with in-depth knowledge and experience of Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures.
- Creating and maintaining effective partnerships with parents, educational bodies, and the community.
- Adapting practices and procedures in response to changes at national, school and Trust level.
- Driving improvements and challenging underperformance.
- To effectively communicate, both orally and in writing, to a range of audiences and a diverse school community.
- Creating a vision and strategy for the school and secure commitment from others by leading by example.



Qualifications

Essential

- Honors Degree or Equivalent
- Qualified Teacher Status

Desirable

- NPQH
- Master's degree

Compensation

- L28 – L34
- GLF Schools are open to receiving applications from applicants who are willing to relocate with support available for the transition.

Application Closing Date

- **4th September 2024**

GLF Schools is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will have to meet the person specification and will be required to apply for DBS disclosure. GLF particularly welcome applicants from under-represented groups including those based on ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. The Trust's registered office is: GLF Schools, Picquets Way, Banstead, Surrey, SM7 1AG.

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