



HIGHOVER JMI SCHOOL

Headteacher recruitment pack

Start date: September 2026

CONTENTS

Welcome from the Chair of Governors	3
Key facts & statistics	4
About our school	5
Our vision & values	6
Our new headteacher	7
What we can offer	8
What makes Highover special	9
Person specification	10
Job description	12
Important information	15
Application process	16



“Pupils enjoy being part of this cheerful and welcoming school. They embrace every educational opportunity, in part because of the staff’s enthusiasm for learning. Ofsted 2025”



WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the headteacher role at Highover JMI School.

This vacancy has arisen because our current head Lisa Hayes is taking early retirement at the end of the academic year after 20 years with the school and I hope you find this information pack a useful introduction.

We are proud to have created a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all our children and staff. Highover JMI opened in 1950 and has grown to a two-form entry school where children are encouraged to rise to any challenge and never give up, even when it seems impossible. The school has embedded a strong culture of inclusivity and support where everyone works together as a team and looks after one another, showing kindness and respect. The school's vision is to develop independent and confident learners, while recognising we all learn in different ways.

Although we believe a successful school is about more than ratings, the governors were delighted when everyone's hard work was recognised in our latest Ofsted inspection at the start of 2025, with Highover achieving "outstanding" in every area. The inspectors found the school provides pupils with "an excellent, well-rounded education", with strong leadership ensuring the school meets pupils' changing needs. Staff are effectively supported to develop a well-thought-through and carefully considered curriculum and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs identified accurately, with staff, parents and carers working together to create individual plans for pupils who need them.

We are now looking for a new headteacher who embraces Highover's culture of collaboration, support and innovation, someone who has the vision to drive the school forward and the leadership experience to recognise the strengths and individuality of staff.

The closing date for applications is Tuesday 27th January 2026. For further information about our school, please visit our website at <https://www.highover.herts.sch.uk/home>.

If you would like to discuss the role, please contact me at w.johnson@highover.herts.sch.uk or telephone 07971 243061.

We would encourage interested applicants to visit the school. Visits will be scheduled for January 2026. Please contact the school office at admin@highover.herts.sch.uk or on 01462 622333 to arrange a time.

Thanks again for your interest in Highover, and we wish you the best of luck with your application.

Yours faithfully,

Wesley Johnson
Chair of Governors



SCHOOL STATISTICS



Community school, Local Authority maintained



426
children on
roll



Age range
3-11



Hitchin,
Hertfordshire



Leading Parent
Partnership Award

2019–2022



Ofsted made the following key judgements following school inspection on 28th January 2025:

Quality of education:
Behaviour and attitudes:
Personal development:
Leadership and management:
Early years provision:

Outstanding
Outstanding
Outstanding
Outstanding
Outstanding



EAL 13.3%



SEND 19%



Pupil Premium
5.6%



FSM 4.9%



Attendance 96.8%



ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Welcome to Highover – A Community of Learning, Growth and Belonging

Highover JMI School & Nursery is a large, thriving, inclusive and happy school at the heart of the Hitchin community. Set within spacious grounds and two main buildings, Highover offers a vibrant and nurturing environment where every child is encouraged to flourish, and every member of staff feels respected and empowered.

Our motto, **‘Enjoying and Achieving Together’**, reflects our commitment to lifelong learning. Staff model positive learning behaviours and celebrate success at every level, helping children leave Highover with confidence, a love of learning and lasting memories. Staff are fully aligned with our values and work collaboratively to create a school where kindness, respect and teamwork are not just taught but lived.

Highover is a “no outsiders” school, fully inclusive of all children and staff regardless of background, belief, or identity. Individuality is celebrated, and both children and staff are encouraged to take risks, innovate, and grow. The school culture is built on mutual respect, support, and high expectations. Staff wellbeing is prioritised through flexible working, wellbeing days, and a supportive leadership approach.

We are recognised as a leading school in terms of our SEND provision and receive regular visitors from other local schools as an example of best practice.

Our dedicated staff work in well-established phase teams - Early Years, Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2 and Upper Key Stage 2 - delivering high-quality teaching and a strong, forward-facing curriculum that inspires curiosity, creativity and a love of learning. We have a well-established and experienced staff team, many of whom have been developed internally. Staff are encouraged and challenged to grow professionally, supported by a culture of trust and continuous improvement.

The wellbeing of all our community is incredibly important for us and pastoral care is central to life at Highover. Our specialist team works alongside teaching staff to ensure every child feels safe, supported and valued. We take a proactive approach to wellbeing, embedding kindness, respect and teamwork into daily school life for children and for staff. The team provides guidance and emotional support, helping pupils build resilience and navigate challenges. Families are active partners in school life, with opportunities to engage through book showcases, workshops, learning reviews and digital platforms like Class Dojo, as well as informal check-ins - so home and school work effectively together.

Community engagement is another cornerstone of our success. We work closely with the Hitchin Partnership, provide outreach services, host careers talks and maintain strong local connections that enrich learning and broaden horizons across our local area.

Beyond the classroom, our extensive extracurricular programme - from sports and music to coding, yoga and the arts - supports holistic development and ensures every child can discover their passions.

The school immerses pupils in learning about and understanding equality and diversity... pupils are impressively well informed. They are also proud of their uniqueness. The school's work to prepare pupils for life in modern British society is exemplary.
Ofsted 2025

OUR VISION & VALUES

“

Enjoying and Achieving Together

At Highover, we are independent and confident learners.

We rise to any challenge and never give up,
even when it seems impossible.

We work together as a team and look after one another, showing
kindness and respect.

We love learning creatively and we know we
all learn in different ways.

We are part of a bigger community.

”

We aim to work in partnership with parents and pupils in order to:-

- create a high quality learning environment which is happy, caring and stimulating allowing all children to thrive;
- realise each child's full potential by providing a wide range of learning opportunities for academic, social, emotional, moral, spiritual, cultural and physical development;
- provide a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to the children's needs, and in accordance with the Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum;
- raise self-esteem and confidence by helping each child to gain a sense of achievement and to take a pride in that achievement;
- develop high standards and quality work across the curriculum;
- develop self-discipline and mutual respect for all members of the school and the wider community;
- develop skills that the children will need in order to be active citizens and take their place in a multicultural society;
- promote and encourage a caring, thoughtful attitude towards others;
- foster a sense of responsibility for the environment in which we live.



OUR NEW HEADTEACHER WILL:

Highover JMI is seeking a new Headteacher who can maintain our strong culture and ethos while bringing fresh ideas and leadership.

The incoming leader must be experienced, confident and capable of managing change sensitively.

They should be able to lead a highly experienced SLT, manage increasing SEND needs, and maintain high standards of teaching and wellbeing.

We are looking for someone who:

- Leads with empathy, integrity, clarity and confidence.
- Is passionate about inclusive education and child-centred practice.
- Will maintain a strong focus on high-quality teaching and learning, recognising that, as the school continues to grow in inclusivity, pupil outcomes may reflect a broader definition of success.
- Is able to manage change sensitively and bring staff along with them.
- Has the resilience and judgement to navigate complex challenges.
- Is able to hold others to account while maintaining morale and wellbeing.
- Values individuality and empowers staff to innovate and grow.
- Has experience of leading strong teams and understands the dynamics of a well-established SLT.
- Can communicate a compelling narrative around the school's evolving context.

Whether you are an experienced Headteacher or a Deputy Head ready for your next step, we are looking for someone with the depth of experience—professional and personal—to lead Highover with authenticity and vision.

This is not a role for someone looking to make sweeping changes. It is a role for a leader who understands the value of what already exists, and who can build on it with care, courage and conviction.



WHAT WE CAN OFFER

At Highover JMI, we believe that great leadership flourishes in a culture of trust, support and shared purpose. As our new Headteacher, you'll be joining a school that is not only successful, but deeply rooted in its values—where inclusion, individuality and wellbeing are at the heart of everything we do.

This is a rare opportunity to lead a school that is:

- **Outstanding in its provision** – with a recent Ofsted judgement that reflects our high standards and inclusive ethos.
- **Well-resourced and financially stable** – with no deficit budget and a proactive governing body.
- **Staffed by a highly experienced and committed team** – many of whom have grown professionally within the school.
- **Supported by a strong and engaged leadership team** – including two deputies with complementary strengths in curriculum and pastoral leadership.
- **At the forefront of SEND provision** – with the highest number of EHCPs in North Hertfordshire and a dedicated pastoral team working alongside SEND colleagues.
- **Connected to its community** – with strong relationships with parents, local organisations, and the wider Hitchin Partnership.

We are proud of our staff wellbeing offer, which includes:

- Flexible working arrangements
- Paid time off for personal and family appointments
- Wellbeing days for all staff
- Time off in lieu for extracurricular commitments
- A culture of respect, support and professional autonomy

You'll be supported by a knowledgeable and pragmatic governing body who understand the challenges of leadership and are committed to supporting you in your new role, and to maintaining the school's inclusive ethos.



WHAT MAKES HIGHOVER SPECIAL

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the headship of our wonderful school.

It has been the greatest privilege of my professional career to serve as Headteacher at Highover for the past twenty years. During that time, I have had the joy of working with an exceptional team of staff, governors, parents, and—most importantly—our remarkable children. Together, we have built and sustained a school community that is truly inclusive, vibrant and forward-thinking, embracing and celebrating the diversity that strengthens and unites us.

Ours is a school that never stands still. We are proud to be a community school in the truest sense—rooted in our locality, yet outward-looking and ambitious for every child. Our staff are talented, dedicated and endlessly creative; they are driven by a shared belief that every child deserves the very best we can offer. There is a strong culture of collaboration, professional growth and mutual support, where innovation is encouraged and success is celebrated.

We place equal importance on academic achievement and personal development. Children are encouraged to think creatively, to take risks in their learning and to build resilience. Staff and pupils alike are nurtured to be reflective, curious and compassionate individuals who contribute positively to our school and beyond.

Wellbeing lies at the heart of what we do. We recognise that happy, confident children and staff achieve the most—and that success can be measured in many ways. The sense of belonging and shared purpose within our community is something very special, and I have no doubt it will continue to flourish under new leadership.

Being Headteacher here has been immensely rewarding, challenging, and joyful in equal measure. It is a role that offers the chance to make a profound difference every single day—to shape lives, inspire futures and be part of a team that truly believes in the transformative power of education.

If you are looking for a school where you can lead with vision, creativity and heart, and where you will be supported by a dedicated and talented community, then this is the place for you.

With very best wishes,

Lisa Hayes



PERSON SPECIFICATION

To be considered for shortlisting, candidates must clearly demonstrate how they meet the essential - and where possible, the desirable - criteria outlined in the Person Specification below.

- Please structure your statement using the **STAR format** (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to provide **clear, evidence-based examples of your experience and impact**.
- If shortlisted, we will assess additional aspects of school leadership - including alignment with the **Headteacher Standards (2020)** and the **specific needs of our school** - through a series of tasks and a formal interview on the assessment day.

Qualifications, knowledge and experience

- Degree and qualified teacher status (E)
- Recent successful leadership experience as a Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or similar (E)
- NPQH or equivalent leadership development training (e.g. coaching, mentoring, strategic leadership programmes) (D)
- Successful completion of child protection and safeguarding training (E)

Safeguarding

- Unwavering commitment to safeguarding, health and safety, and promoting the welfare and emotional wellbeing of both pupils and staff, embedding these principles into all aspects of school life (E)
- Knowledge and understanding of current legislation, guidance and best practice for child protection, including safer recruitment (E)
- Experience of working with relevant agencies to protect children (D)

Strategic Leadership and School improvement

- A clear focus on maximising the impact of available resources to drive educational excellence and secure long-term sustainability (E)
- Inspires, challenges, motivates and empowers others, sustaining a culture of high expectation, professional integrity and accountability across all staff (E)
- Leads school improvement through rigorous self-evaluation, strategic planning, and inclusive change management - bringing staff with them and embedding sustainable improvement across the school (E)
- Has had active involvement in effective school self-evaluation and development planning (E)
- Experience of leading change effectively and successfully (E)



Teaching, learning & curriculum

- Deep understanding of high-quality teaching and learning across the primary phase (E)
- Absolute commitment to inclusion and to ambitious expectations for all pupils underpinned by knowledge and experience of supporting children with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and higher attainers (E)
- Forward-thinking approach to curriculum development; adapting to the educational landscape, the context of the school and to pupil needs (D)
- Commitment to keeping up to date with educational research and evidence-based practice, with the confidence to trial new approaches, take informed risks, and adapt pedagogy and systems to meet evolving needs and drive improvement (D)

Working in partnership/Governance & accountability

- Proven ability to build strong relationships and manage expectations across diverse stakeholders (E)
- Experience of managing school finances effectively, understanding their contribution to school development and pupil outcomes (D)
- Demonstrates integrity, openness, and courage in communication with governors and stakeholders, fostering trust through honest and transparent dialogue - even when delivering difficult messages (E)
- Understands and welcomes the role of governance, upholding accountability and taking responsibility (E)
- Demonstrates a commitment to maintaining and strengthening the school's reputation within the local community and positioning the school as a centre of excellence (E)
- Experience of working within a school that serves as a model or support for others (e.g., teaching school, hub or outreach) (D)

Personal qualities/ Ethics and professional conduct

- Passion for education and for the school community – always leading with empathy and emotional intelligence (E)
- Confident in supporting pupil and staff wellbeing, and ensuring that systems of support are robust, inclusive and future-facing (E)
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills across a range of stakeholders, including written communication (E)
- Actively promotes an inclusive school culture that celebrates diversity, ensuring that all pupils, staff and families feel seen, valued and respected (E)
- Exercises sound judgement and confident decision-making, guided by integrity, strategic insight and the best interests of pupils and staff (E)
- Demonstrates self-awareness and the ability to manage pressure effectively, modelling use of healthy strategies to sustain wellbeing (E)
- Demonstrates consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct both within and outside school, Seven Principles of Public Life (E)

JOB DESCRIPTION

Main purpose:

The core purpose of the Headteacher is to provide professional leadership and management of the school. This will promote a secure foundation from which to achieve high standards in all areas of the school's work.

To gain this success, the Headteacher must

- Establish high quality education by effectively managing teaching and learning and using personalised learning to realise the potential of all students.
- Develop a strategy with our community and other schools in order to provide clear educational pathways for our students as they grow older.
- Ensure sustainable growth and financial security for the school.
- Meet the expectations set out in the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers and School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD).
- Have responsibility, as with all staff, to promote and safeguard the safety and welfare of children and young people.

Key responsibilities:

- Understand, contribute to and promote the school's vision and values through personal work and teaching practice.
- Secure the understanding and commitment of all members of the school community to the direction of travel and particularly those holding posts of responsibility.
- Work with colleagues to promote creativity, innovation and appropriate use of technologies to achieve excellence.
- Develop and implement the agreed School Improvement and Development Plan.
- Ensure that curriculum intent and implementation is of the highest possible standard and leads to strong outcomes for all pupils.
- Support the operational efficiency, effectiveness and safety of the school on a day-to-day basis, including arrangements for behaviour, safeguarding, SEND and vulnerable learners.
- Lead the school effectively through periods of change.
- Build upon the school's strong foundations and reputation within local networks and partnerships.



Leading Teaching and Learning:

- Manage and develop the curriculum in accordance with the policies applicable to the school and taking account of relevant advice given by national bodies.
- Maintain a strong focus on high-quality teaching and learning for all pupils.
- Encourage the development of teaching methods which promote effective learning by all.
- Prepare efficient arrangements for the timetabling of staff so that the requirements of the curriculum may be adequately met.
- Ensure the progress of pupils is monitored, recorded and reported to parents and others who have a right to know.
- Ensure the development and implementation of strategic policies of the school, for example, in relation to equal opportunities.
- Demonstrate the principles and practice of effective learning and teaching to an exceptional standard.

Health and Safety:

- Oversee the development and implementation of policies and procedures relating to child protection, health and safety, confidentiality, security, data protection; and ensure that all concerns are recorded and reported appropriately
- Promote the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff.
- Maintain good order and discipline among pupils, managing behaviour effectively to ensure a safe and successful learning environment.

Management of resources and communication:

- Ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for the management of the school budget and school finances including proper procedures to account for these.
- Implement policies for the procurement, use and protection of all resources, including teaching material, equipment and accommodation.
- Establish effective channels of communication among all staff and users of the school.
- Consult and communicate with parents about the school and the progress of their children, in particular by arranging regular meetings between parents and teachers to assist such communication.
- Be the school's official correspondent with the Local Authority, external agencies, other schools, parents and the wider community.
- Contribute to the recruitment, selection, appointment and professional development of teaching and support staff.

Working with colleagues and professional development:

- Maintain effective working relationships with all members of the school community, with other schools, external agencies and the wider community.
- Work with governors and stakeholders to develop a long-term vision that balances excellence with inclusion and sustainability.
- Work with governors to ensure resources are used efficiently and aligned with strategic priorities.
- Take part in the school's appraisal procedures.
- Take part in further training and development in order to improve overall performance.
- Take part in the appraisal and professional development of others.

Additional Notes:

The Headteacher is expected to operate within the parameters of the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers and School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) and HCC's contractual and financial frameworks.

The role is defined as Regulated Activity and subject to an enhanced DBS, children's barred list check and satisfactory references.

The duties listed are not an exhaustive list of requirements. The specific nature and balance of these responsibilities will vary according to the needs of the school.

This job description will be reviewed annually as part of the performance management programme.

The headteacher will have access to a range of professional development activities, including conferences, support groups and appropriate training courses.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Pay range:	L18-L24 (£78,702-£90,255)
Start date:	September 2026
Closing date:	Tuesday 27 th January 2026 at 09:00
Shortlisting date:	Monday 2 nd February 2026
Interview date:	Tuesday 10 th and Wednesday 11 th February 2026
To discuss the role:	Please contact Chair of Governors, Wesley Johnson on Telephone: 07971 243061 Email: w.johnson@highover.herts.sch.uk
Visits to the school:	To make an appointment, please contact the school office on Telephone: 01462 622333 Email: admin@highover.herts.sch.uk
School website:	www.highover.herts.sch.uk

Highover JMI School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Appointment to this post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check as well as other pre-appointment checks, including an online check, as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025).

To help us continue to meet our aspirations of a fully diverse and inclusive workplace, we welcome applications from all suitably qualified individuals regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or religion.



“

Older pupils are positive role models. They help younger pupils with reading and play, showing them kindness and consideration. Ofsted 2025

”



APPLICATION PROCESS

How to apply

This recruitment is managed by HFL Education, in line with the latest guidance on safer recruitment.

Please apply on the Teach in Herts website, using the standard online application form.

Should you need support with your application, or require information about this vacancy in an alternative format, please contact leadership.recruitment@hfleducation.org

Application form

Applicants must use the standard application form provided (CVs are not accepted).

Please complete all aspects of the form fully.

Include your full work history, explaining any gaps since leaving school education, and include any relevant training you have completed, particularly those in recent years which have helped to prepare you for headship.

Personal statement

When writing your personal statement, it is important you address each of the requirements in the person specification.

Be sure to evidence additional aspects such as training and qualifications together with your background and experience.

You should use the **STAR format** (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to provide **clear, evidence-based examples of experience and impact.**

References

In line with safer recruitment guidance, we normally request references after shortlisting. Please make sure your referees are aware of your application and are able to provide a swift turn around if needed. Preferred referees are your last two employers, and you should provide their official organisation email address for us to contact. One referee will be your last Headteacher or Chair of Governors.



HIGHOVER JMI SCHOOL

Cambridge Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 0JP

Telephone: 01462 622333

Email: admin@highover.herts.sch.uk

www.highover.herts.sch.uk

