

WHITEHILL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Headteacher Recruitment Pack
Spring Term 2026



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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the post of Headteacher at Whitehill Junior School. I am delighted that you are considering leading our school and I hope this letter adds a personal perspective to the information elsewhere in this pack.

This opportunity arises following the retirement of our current Headteacher after 13 years of dedicated leadership. Whitehill has benefited from remarkable continuity over time; the next Headteacher will be only the fifth in the school's history. This stability has helped shape a strong culture, clear identity and deep-rooted sense of community, all of which the Governing Body values highly.

Whitehill is a school with a great deal to be proud of: it is a place where children are known well, where staff work with confidence and professionalism, and where families feel connected to the life of the school. Our ambition is not about changing what already works, but about safeguarding these strengths while ensuring the school continues to grow and respond thoughtfully to the future.

We are fortunate to have an experienced and committed staff team, a positive learning culture and strong foundations on which to build. Leadership at Whitehill is collegiate and collaborative, with staff trusted to lead and to refine practice together. The Governing Body is committed to working in close partnership with the Headteacher, offering both support and appropriate challenge as the school moves into its next chapter.

Our most recent Ofsted inspection in March 2023 confirmed that Whitehill remains a Good school and recognised that there was sufficient evidence of improvement to suggest the school could be judged Outstanding at its next graded inspection.

While our academic achievements are strong, we believe that education is about more than data and inspection reports. At Whitehill, we champion the development of the whole child, offering a vibrant and inspiring enrichment programme that sparks curiosity, creativity, and personal growth beyond the classroom walls.

We are seeking a Headteacher who will lead with clarity, warmth and integrity; someone who understands the importance of relationships and who can balance high expectations with care and humanity. The successful candidate will be excited by the opportunity to take on a well-established school, to honour its history and values, and to shape its future alongside a capable and motivated team.

I would encourage you to visit the school to gain a fuller sense of its character and to meet some of the people who make it such a special place to work and learn. Visits can be arranged via the School Office at admin@whitehill.herts.sch.uk or on 01462 621313. I am also very happy to speak informally with prospective applicants; please contact me at Emma.Dorrell@whitehill.herts.sch.uk if you would welcome a conversation.

On behalf of the Governing Body, thank you for your interest in Whitehill Junior School. We are ambitious for our children and proud of our community, and we look forward to meeting candidates who are inspired by the opportunity to lead Whitehill into its next phase.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Emma Dorrell
Chair of Governors
Whitehill Junior School

SCHOOL STATISTICS



241
pupils on
roll



7 – 11
age range



98% attendance



Located in
Hitchin



Rated Good in
March 2023

10%

of children
speak English
as an
additional
language

13%

of children
with SEND

7%

of pupils
receive Free
School Meals

9%

of pupils in
receipt of
pupil
premium.



ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Whitehill Junior is more than a school, it is a vibrant, close-knit community where pupils, staff, and families work together to create an environment of joy and ambition. Our guiding principle, "happy children learn and happy teachers teach well," is not just a slogan; it is a lived reality that shapes every aspect of school life, creating a positive and purposeful atmosphere which visitors notice the moment they walk through the doors. Our pupils enjoy coming to school, attendance is consistently around 98%, and our staff attendance is even higher.

We are proud to be a true community school. When we talk about Whitehill, we don't just mean the building; we mean the people, our pupils, families, staff, and governors, working together to make our school a place where everyone feels valued. Over the years, we have created a school that is open, collaborative, and outward-looking. We welcome visitors and share best practice freely because we believe that helping others doesn't diminish what we do, it strengthens education for all.

Our ethos is centred on profound individual growth. Every child should leave school each day as a better version of themselves, whether that's through academic achievement or discovering a talent that could take them to the Olympics. We don't chase league tables, but our results speak for themselves: attainment is consistently above national and Hertfordshire averages. We achieve this by focusing on opportunity, not pressure, and by creating an environment where pupils embrace learning and staff feel trusted and supported.

Our team is highly experienced and committed. For over a decade, pupils have been taught by adults they know. We invest in professional development, and many of our staff have completed NPQ qualifications. Leadership at Whitehill is collaborative; we give subject leaders real autonomy and back them with the resources and trust they need to succeed. Wellbeing matters too. We offer flexibility and understand that life beyond school is important, which is why our staff choose to stay, and stay happy.

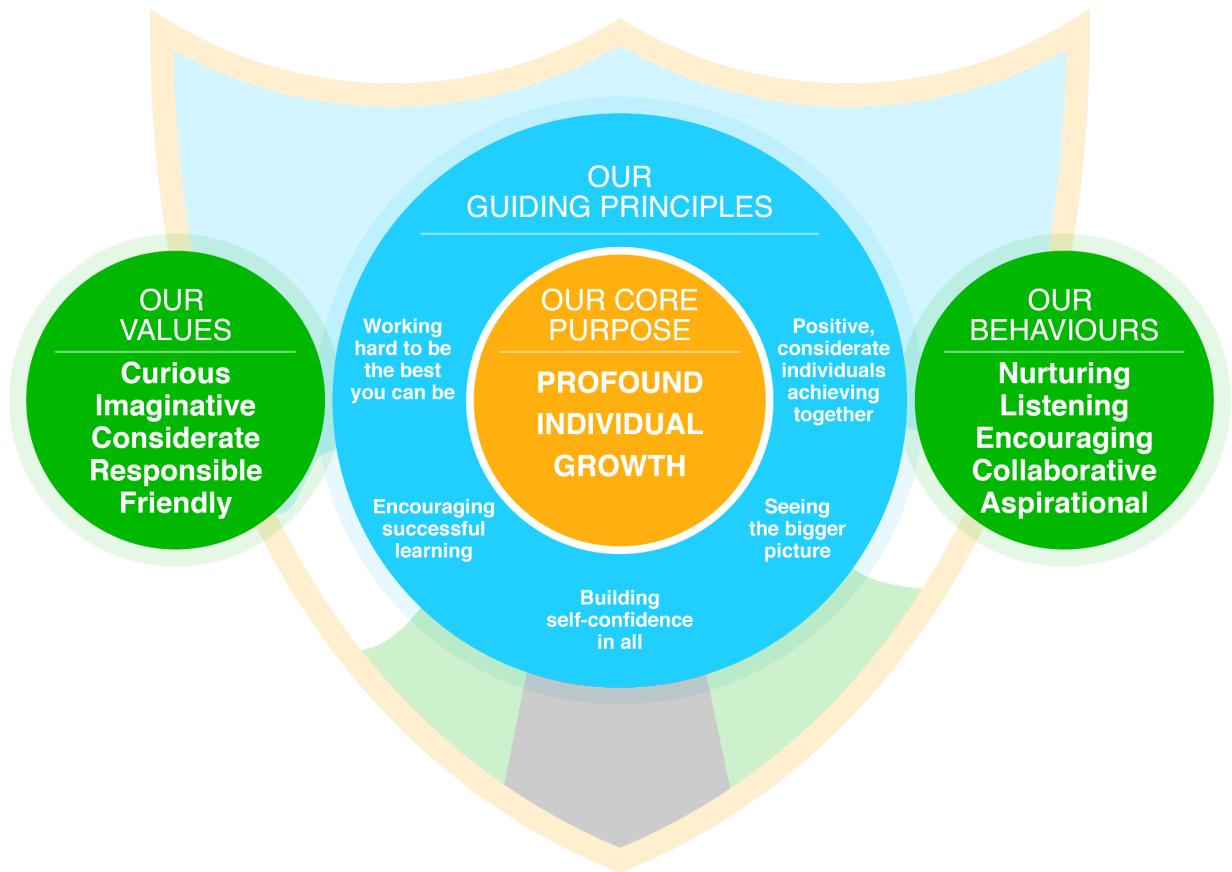
We maintain strong links with our feeder school, Highbury Infant School, and are committed to building those relationships even further. Our approach is forward-thinking, but our foundations are strong. Whitehill is a school that values curiosity, collaboration, and positivity.

OUR ETHOS AND VALUES

A great deal of time has been spent looking to articulate our ethos at Whitehill Junior School and the graphic below, based on a theory by Simon Sinek, defines our 'core purpose', our 'guiding principles', our 'values' and our 'behaviours' which you will see whenever you visit our school.

Our core purpose of 'Profound Individual Growth' underpins all that we do at Whitehill as we prepare children for the future – a generation who learn how to learn and love doing it; who look back at their time at school and say, 'I remember when...' It is our belief that education should be seen as a process rather than as an end product and that future success balances curiosity with understanding.

OUR BELIEF: Future success balances curiosity with understanding





OUR NEW HEADTEACHER

We are looking for a leader who will embrace everything that makes Whitehill special while bringing fresh perspective and energy to help us grow. Our school is a happy, high-performing community with strong foundations. What we need now is someone who can build on that success and guide us through the next chapter with confidence and care.

Our new headteacher will understand the importance of relationships. Our pupils thrive because they feel supported, and staff flourish because they are trusted and valued. We want a leader who will invest time in getting to know our team, our families, and our community, and who will maintain the culture of openness and collaboration that defines us.

You will need to be thoughtful and considered in your approach to change. We are proud of our ethos and achievements, but while we value continuity, we welcome innovation. The right person will ask questions, listen carefully, and make decisions that respect our strengths while identifying opportunities for improvement.

Strategic thinking will be essential. Falling pupil numbers across the area mean we must continue to strengthen our links with our feeder school and maintain our position as a school of choice. You will need to balance ambition with pragmatism, ensuring financial sustainability while protecting the things that matter most - our ethos, our staff wellbeing, and the quality of education we provide.

We are looking for someone who is positive and resilient. Education is challenging, and we need a leader who can inspire confidence, maintain morale, and keep our community focused on what matters: happy children, happy teachers, and great learning.



WHAT WE CAN OFFER

Joining Whitehill means stepping into a school with strong foundations, and a culture that makes people want to stay. You will inherit a highly experienced and committed team, a supportive governing body, and a community that values its school. This is a school where relationships matter and where collaboration is at the heart of everything we do.

For those stepping up into headship, we can provide access to HFL Education's New to Headship Programme, which offers a network of peers to share ideas and support, along with structured training on strategic leadership, school improvement, and operational management.

Professional growth is part of our DNA. Many of our staff have completed NPQ qualifications, and we actively encourage leadership development at all levels. You will find a senior team that is capable, trusted, and ready to work with you to shape the next chapter.

Our school is in good financial health, and while budgets are tight everywhere, we have a clear plan for sustainability. We also have strong links with our feeder school, Highbury Infant School, and a shared PTA that brings families together and supports enrichment opportunities.

Above all, we offer a school that is secure, purposeful, and well positioned for continued improvement, supported by a team that is committed to working with you. Our pupils enjoy learning and our staff take pride in what they do. This is an opportunity to lead a school that values collaboration and continuous improvement, and to do so with the support of a dedicated team and engaged community.

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 Assistant Headteacher (**E**)
- NPQH or equivalent leadership development training (e.g. coaching, mentoring, strategic leadership programmes) (**D**)

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 (**D**)

Strategic Leadership and School improvement

- Proven ability to establish and maintain a culture of high expectations and professional integrity in daily practice, including ensuring staff accountability for their contributions. (**E**)
- Set and uphold high expectations for all pupils - academically, personally, and socially - ensuring they thrive in school and beyond (**E**)
- Committed to prioritising the continued professional development of all staff (including themselves) in the best interests of the individual, the team and the school (**E**)
- Demonstrates leadership in analysing key data to shape and implement impactful, evidence-based school improvement strategies (**D**)
- Experience of leading change effectively and successfully (**E**)

Teaching, learning & curriculum

- Experience of designing and implementing a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum, with assessment strategies that support progress for all learners (D)
- 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)

Working in partnership/Governance & accountability

- Experience of managing school finances effectively, understanding their contribution to school development and pupil outcomes (D)
- Able to assimilate and manage financial and other data to achieve sound financial decision-making (E)
- Proven ability to build strong relationships and manage expectations across diverse stakeholders, including governors, partners and the wider community (E)

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)
- Adaptable leadership style, 'hands on' when required, balanced with knowing when to delegate (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:	L15 – L21 (£73,105 - £83,860)
Start date:	September 2026
Closing date:	Friday 20 th February 2026 at 9am
Shortlisting date:	Friday 27 th February 2026
Interview date:	Friday 6 th March 2026
Visits to the school:	To make an appointment, please contact Mrs Granger on 01462 621313 or email us at admin@whitehill.herts.sch.uk
School website:	Whitehill.herts.sch.uk
School address:	Whitehill Road. Hitchin. SG4 9HT

Whitehill Junior 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).

Whitehill Junior School is committed to the aim of ensuring that everyone who applies to work for us receives fair treatment and we positively encourage applications from suitably qualified and eligible candidates regardless of age, disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership and caring status. We believe that a diverse team leads to better outcomes and a more enriching workplace. We are committed to fostering a culture where everyone feels they belong.



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. CVs will not be considered. Should you need support, please contact leadership.recruitment@hfleducation.org. Please ask us if you require information about this vacancy in an alternative format.

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.

Person specification and 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.



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