



THE DOWNS SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM



Information
for candidates

www.thedownsschool.org



Welcome to The Downs School

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in joining The Downs School. This pack aims to provide you with information about The Downs School, the opportunity and the recruitment process.

Set in the heart of the West Berkshire Downs, The Downs School is a special place where the staff are totally committed to excellence and achievement at all levels. Ofsted has judged us as “outstanding” in every category, but we are not a school that wants to stand still. We know that there is always more to do to ensure that every child’s educational experience is rich, character-building and of the highest possible standard. We are striving to move “beyond outstanding” through our philosophy of “Learning together, learning for life”.

When our teachers are asked what they like most about their roles, the answer is nearly always the same, the students. Our students are a credit to our school, with exceptional behaviour and a desire to learn and achieve. With a wealth of extracurricular activities, we are proud to support the whole child and develop well rounded individuals for the future.

The Downs School is a Foundation, 11-18 comprehensive school and is a successful, oversubscribed and popular school serving the Downs area of West Berkshire. Currently the roll is over 1400 including a well-established and successful sixth form of over 400 students. The school is in a beautiful rural setting with good road links to Newbury, Reading, Didcot and Oxford – just 10 minutes from the A34.

We are confident that, should you be successful, you would find this role and The Downs School rewarding.

If you would like to have a discussion about this post or to arrange a visit, please contact Sarah Townsend, HR Manager on 01635 270022 or stownsend@thedownsschool.org.

I look forward to welcoming you to the school.

MR CHRIS PROSSER | Headteacher



Outstanding leadership and management pervade the school. Leaders ensure that exceptionally high achievement is sustained and that there is a continuous drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

OFSTED REPORT



Our School and our future

13% gained A* grades

30% gained A*-A grades

60% gained A* to B grades

83% gained A* to C grades

57% gained Distinction or Distinction* in vocational courses

At The Downs School, we give all our students the very best start in life, to help them develop into well-rounded young adults, able to venture into a rapidly changing world with confidence and determination.

Set in the heart of the Berkshire Downs, The Downs School is an exceptional place, where we pride ourselves on our small school feel and strong sense of community. Our ethos is formed from the strong partnership between staff, students and parents, who work together to create an environment in which young people are supported to realise their full potential and achieve their personal goals.

The Downs School is high performing with a proven track record of success with our young people, but we are not a school that wants to stand still. We know that there is always more to do to ensure that every child's educational experience is rich, character-building and of the highest possible standard. We do this by promoting equality of access and achievement for all, via a rich and diverse curriculum that allows students to become confident, well rounded and creative citizens who are ambitious for their future selves.

A Levels
2024

13%

of entries gained
A*

30%

of entries gained
A* - A

60%

of entries gained
A* - B

83%

of entries gained
A* - C

57%

of vocational courses
Distinction* -
Distinction

GCSEs
2024

13%

of grades
8 or 9

26%

of grades
9 - 7

60%

of grades
9 - 5

77%

of grades
9 - 4



Our Values

Educating today's students for the world of tomorrow. We will achieve this through Learning together, learning for life, which runs through the daily life of the school, providing us with the guidance we need to realise our vision and achieve outstanding outcomes for our students.

Learning together

Our school is a supportive community where we all learn together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and fairness, and everyone's contribution is valued. A place where:

- We embrace differences in cultures, beliefs and backgrounds.
- Our staff are passionate about teaching and about their own development.
- We support each other to discover new things, take risks and learn from our mistakes.

Learning for life

Our school supports students to be confident, well-rounded individuals who will keep learning throughout their lives. We do this by:

- Developing resilience; striving for excellence and responding positively to challenges.
- Cultivating the habits of independent thought and curiosity of mind.
- Emphasising the importance of contributing to the wider community.

Our values underpin everything we do:



COURAGE Be bold, having the self-belief to overcome your challenges and face your fears head on.

AMBITION Believe that you can succeed and then strive to make the success a reality.

EQUALITY Be respectful to others and earn respect in turn.

RESPONSIBILITY Be independent and self-reliant, taking the lead to make the world a better place.

INTEGRITY If It's not right don't say it. If it's not true don't say it. Do the right thing and earn the trust of the people around you.

RESILIENCE Tough times don't last; strong people do.

CREATIVITY Expand our horizons by asking questions, inventing, experimenting and being brave enough to make mistakes.



The exceptionally high achievement in the sixth form indicates that the quality of teaching is the same as that observed in the main school.



Wellbeing

At The Downs School we understand that the positive wellbeing of our staff is essential for retaining, motivating and in promoting the wellbeing of our students. Our staff balance a large number of tasks and demands on a daily basis, so it is important that they feel supported so in turn they can support our students. See how we actively manage workload and promote wellbeing at The Downs School.

Teaching & learning

- Developmental Walkthrus using Instructional Coaching
- Monday and Wednesday morning briefings to keep you updated
- Curriculum, Pedagogy, Assessment and Development time in Faculties every other Wednesdays
- Clear communication through staff and student bulletins
- Comprehensive support for ECTs
- Time given for ECTs for training
- Time given to Mentors for mentoring
- Time given to undertake NPQs
- Clear Downs Development ladder
- Head of Faculties lead their faculty assessment and feedback policy.

Behaviour

- Clear and effective Therapeutic behaviour structures in place to support all staff
- Senior staff on call presence around school everyday
- After school and Saturday school detentions run by SLT
- Clear communication through student updates every other Wednesday briefing

Managing workload

- Email protocol - no expectation to answer emails out of working hours and holidays
- Remote access to allow staff to work flexibly
- No detailed written reports to parents and carers
- No direct emails from parents to teaching staff
- Flexibility for individual needs for discretionary leave
- Regular staff surveys to get honest feedback on what needs to improve
- Well established Wellbeing and Workload working group
- Time for you Tuesday – no meetings



The school's relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching has ensured improvements are evident across the school. Parents and carers endorse the view that teaching is outstanding, Inspection report: The Downs School, 6–7 June 2013 5 of 9 and students hold a similarly high opinion.

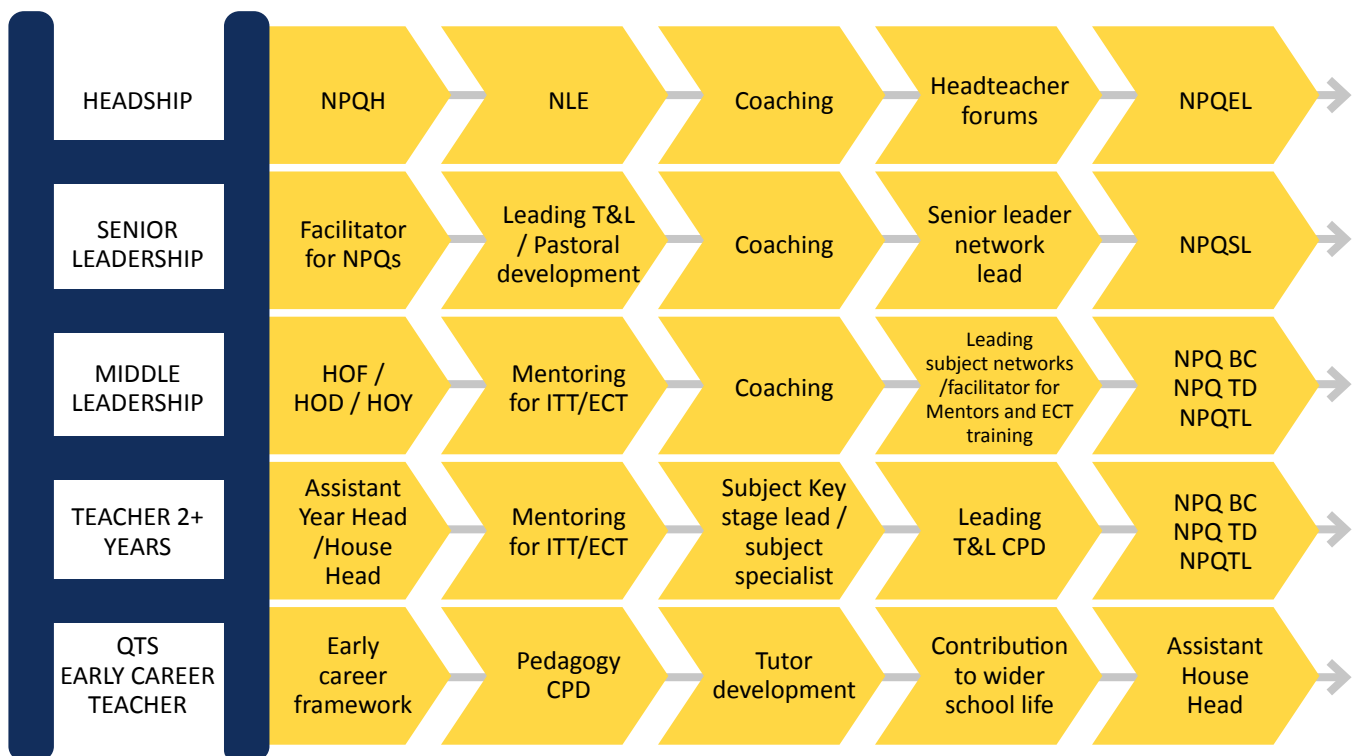
OFSTED REPORT



The Downs Development Ladder

In keeping with our motto, 'Learning Together, Learning for Life' we place a lot of emphasis on professional growth of our staff. We have a well developed bespoke CPDL programme (developed together) that allows all staff to grow and develop along carefully chosen pathways.

Learning together, learning for life.



Electric car charging stations



Tea and Coffee at every break

Wellbeing and workload group



Countless opportunities to get involved with wider life of the school - e.g. Duke of Edinburgh, ski trips



Employee Assistance Programme

Flu jab available to all staff



Social events throughout the year

Heads breakfast – opportunity to say how things are going



Opportunities at The Downs School

At The Downs School we understand that the positive wellbeing of our staff is essential for retaining and motivating them and in promoting the wellbeing of our students. Our staff balance a large number of tasks and demands on a daily basis, so it is important

that they feel supported so in turn they can support our students. The list below highlights what we actively do at The Downs to manage workload and to promote wellbeing.



School closes at 6pm



Gym and Swimming Pool available for staff use... available to 5.30pm



£5 personal printing



FREE coffee for January blues

Book swap box in staff room



Loyalty card at Café 6 if you bring your own mug



Counselling available to all

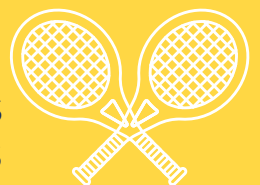
Refreshments before parents' evenings and school events



High level of support for trips and visits



Staff sports teams





How to Apply

If you would like to learn more, we warmly invite you to visit our school, so that you can experience our ethos in person. Visits to the school will not form part of the selection process. Please contact Sarah Townsend, HR Manager on 01635 270022 or email stownsend@thedownsschool.org.

As well as the completed and signed application form, we would request that in support of your application you provide a covering letter indicating how you meet the requirements at The Downs School. **Please return your applications to Sarah Townsend, HR Manager at the above address or e-mail at stownsend@thedownsschool.org.**

As part of any recruitment process, the school collects and processes personal data relating to job applicants. The school is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses that data and to meeting its data protection obligations. Please view our privacy notice for job applicants for further information. Please address any enquiries on this to the data protection officer by emailing DPO@thedownsschool.org.

Successful candidates will be subject to social media checks, a DBS enhanced check along with other relevant employment checks.

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.



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