



Candidate Pack  
Leader of Geography 2025

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***Excellence: for each, for all***

# Welcome

Many thanks for taking the time to enquire about Thomas Gainsborough School. We are very proud of our school and the opportunities that it provides for our wonderful students, staff and our wider community.

Our school motto is 'Excellence: for each, for all' and this encapsulates our values and ethos. It is a school where every single individual matters. We strive to personalise a young person's education, putting them at the centre of their own learning, to ensure that each student achieves their full potential enjoying an education that focuses on their own individual skills, strengths and aptitudes. Each student has a voice here – it is their school and their education. Yet each student is also part of a community, locally, nationally and globally. We want our students to become outstanding citizens and contribute greatly to the society in which they live.

The values and the ethos apply to our staff also. We have excellent staff and we endeavour to make every individual, whatever their role in school, feel valued, respected and cared for. Your voice will be heard and you will be part of a supportive staff body where we have high expectations and standards but we also have the conditions and systems in place to help staff to be successful. Being part of the Unity Schools Partnerships also enables us to access wider opportunities and support for our staff and we have an active and effective governing body. We also ensure that we laugh together and have an on-going supply of cakes and biscuits for those more challenging days.

We pride ourselves in being an open school: one in which parents feel they play a full and proper role in their child's education. We encourage parents to come into school regularly and welcome their views, thoughts and opinions. We are providing a service, the singularly most important service a family can receive, the education of their children and that education is most successful when the school, the students and their parents form a strong partnership. However, we also provide outstanding student support to ensure that we remove students' barriers to learning.

Our school is oversubscribed; it has a growing Sixth Form and staff turnover is low. We are proud of all that we have achieved but we are not satisfied and eager to continue to improve and as a leader within our school you will play an integral role in this.

Please come and see our school; we will happily make time to answer your questions and take you on a tour.

I am certain that you will be impressed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H Yapp', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

Helen Yapp (Headteacher)

# Our Experienced & Supportive Geography Team

We have a strong team ethos in our humanities team, with clear systems and a collaborative approach to curriculum development. The team is highly committed to the success of our students and to supporting each other.

Each subject within Humanities at Thomas Gainsborough School is delivered by a specialist team with discrete allocation on the timetable.

Led by a dedicated Assistant Headteacher, we have a range of experience from ECTs to 30+ years in the profession. Every teacher plays a key role in the continuing success of each subject and the team as a whole.

All staff are well supported by an excellent CPD programme throughout the school.

In September 2015 the school moved into an award-winning new building, where Geography is taught in specialist rooms all on one floor, with a dedicated teaching room in the Sixth Form building.

Geography at Thomas Gainsborough School holds a unique and crucial place in our curriculum. At Key Stage 3, students are exposed to a wide range of skills which will enable them to think critically about important current global issues such as sustainability, equality and diversity.

The curriculum follows a series of enquiry questions which are sequenced to build on prior knowledge. These develop students' knowledge and understanding of locations, places & geographical features, as well as the processes & interactions that explain geographical features, and distribution patterns. Throughout key stage 3, 4 and 5, we also develop problem solving skills through geographical enquiry and fieldwork investigation.

Our key stage 3 curriculum leads into the AQA GCSE Specification, where students study the Changing Economies unit, The Changing Environments and Environmental Challenges units. At Key Stage 5, we offer the AQA A Level Geography course. Both courses have a fieldwork element where students undertake geographical enquiries.

Students thoroughly enjoy both courses and each year, many students, after 7 years at Thomas Gainsborough School & Sixth Form then continue to study Geography at a wide range of Universities.

As a member of Unity Schools Partnership, the department has strong links to other schools across the region. Teachers and leaders from TGS meet colleagues from other schools regularly and often have the opportunity to visit them to network and share best practice.



# Supporting You

## Professional Development

The success of our school is built on the dedication of our staff, and at Thomas Gainsborough School we are passionate about promoting professional development and training and are always looking for innovative ways to provide CPD as well as developmental and leadership opportunities for staff.

At the core of this is an extensive CPD offer which caters for the needs of our staff and students in terms of developing subject knowledge, pedagogy and the wider responsibilities that go with serving our community.

We are a leading school for a local teacher training providers, and working closely with the Unity Teaching School Hub, are able to support career progression through our bespoke middle leaders' programme in addition to being able to offer the full range of NPQs.

Key Elements of our CPD offer:

- Instructional Coaching linked to developing pedagogy, supported by lead practitioners
- Members of the National College portal
- 'Praxis' - our in-house half-termly CPD magazine
- Strong links with the Unity Teaching School Hub and the Unity Research School
- Support for NPQs



## Staff Wellbeing

Staff Wellbeing is prioritised to ensure that all of our colleagues feel valued and supported in the work they do. As a school we adhere to the DfE Wellbeing Charter and are pleased to be able to offer a range of employee wellbeing benefits, which include:

- Use of Great Cornard Leisure Centre (including gym and swimming facilities)
- Access to 'LifeWorks' mental health support
- Face to face wellbeing sessions
- Self-care resource pack
- Annual staff wellbeing survey and wellbeing group
- Clear and well-established systems to support behaviour
- Consideration of staff wellbeing and workload as a strategic priority

# Unity Schools Partnership

Through geographical hubs of like-minded schools and a vision of excellence that is shared by all, schools smash through barriers to achieve more than others think possible.

The vision of Unity Schools Partnership is to achieve the highest standards of education in its primary, secondary and special schools.

It is our intention that all trust schools, and the trust as a whole, be recognised locally and nationally for the exceptional quality of its educational provision.

We are a family of interdependent schools with a shared ambition to transform lives.

We are committed to the development of a very high-quality, and evidence-informed, model of how excellence is achieved.

Our work is fostered by geographical hubs of schools in close proximity that understand their specific communities.

The trust's work is characterised by:



The vast majority of schools are successful, well-performing schools and judged 'good' by Ofsted. The ambition over the next three years is that schools across the trust become excellent schools, characterised by top quartile performance and with the capacity to support more schools in the area that need support to benefit from being part of the trust.

In order to achieve this ambition, the trust focuses on:

**Excellent education** – we have plans for work in primary, secondary and special education which aim by 2026 to achieve top quartile performance in primary and secondary results and that has very high approval ratings externally and from parents for children with special educational needs.

**Excellent staff** – we have a People Strategy that includes the ambition of being the employer of choice for school staff in the region.

**Excellent support for schools** – we have included in our plans for work in primary, secondary and special education how schools are supported to provide excellent education and we have an operational plan for wider support for schools in the trust, those who wish to be associated with the trust and those who potentially might wish to join the trust.

You can find out more about Unity Schools Partnership at [www.unitysp.co.uk](http://www.unitysp.co.uk)

# Benefits of Working Together at Thomas Gainsborough School

We want to recruit and retain the very best people in their area of expertise.

Our primary focus is the children, providing Excellence, for each and for all. To make this a reality we have to allow teachers to teach and leaders to lead. Every role within the school supports them and enables them to concentrate on what matters – high-quality teaching and learning for all our pupils.

With that in mind, retaining quality staff and positively affecting their wellbeing is paramount. We want everyone to feel that they are important and valued in their roles, and that the right people have the right opportunities to progress within the school and trust. For staff and students consistency of support and consistency of relationships is important.

We love working together and supporting colleagues at every stage of their career.



Our Trust has also worked to provide numerous staff benefits, such as Wellbeing Support, Legal Advice Helpline, preferential rates for car leasing, discounted gym membership, Cycle to Work Scheme, salary sacrifice for discounted local nursery places, 24/7 Help and Advice Line for all family and work aspects.

We also offer a generous pension scheme, flexible working and professional development opportunities.

Staff also benefit from a two week autumn half term break.

All teachers are provided with an iPad and training to help deliver effective lessons. Our Sixth Form students also benefit from their own iPads to support and extend learning.



# Our School & Community

Thomas Gainsborough School is a consistently high performing, well resourced, and truly comprehensive school, with a firm belief in excellence for each and every student, placing students at the heart of their curriculum. Our school has remained incredibly popular with a growing Sixth Form of more than 200 students.

We are close to the vibrant and beautiful market town of Sudbury. The town has great independent shops, well preserved mediaeval town houses, a nationally significant art gallery and some of the finest scenery in Suffolk. The River Stour runs through the town, with extensive water meadows providing easy access for recreational activities. We are close to beautiful villages and within easy reach of Bury St Edmunds, Colchester, Ipswich.

We work hard to ensure that all our students have meaningful experiences which bring them closer to their local community, while also embracing national and global opportunities.

Our school is fully inclusive, our comprehensive careers provision is award winning and our arts programme has been recognised by the Platinum Arts award three times.



## Finding Out More & Joining the Team

We always welcome visitors and are happy to talk about this opportunity before you visit.

If you would like further information or to arrange a visit please contact Mrs Jess Woods, the Assistant Headteacher for Humanities subjects, or call the school to speak to Mrs Mel Griss, our HR manager, on 01787 375232.

Information about the school is available at [www.tgschool.net](http://www.tgschool.net) and the application process is supported by our Trust careers website [www.unitysp-careers.co.uk/](http://www.unitysp-careers.co.uk/)

