

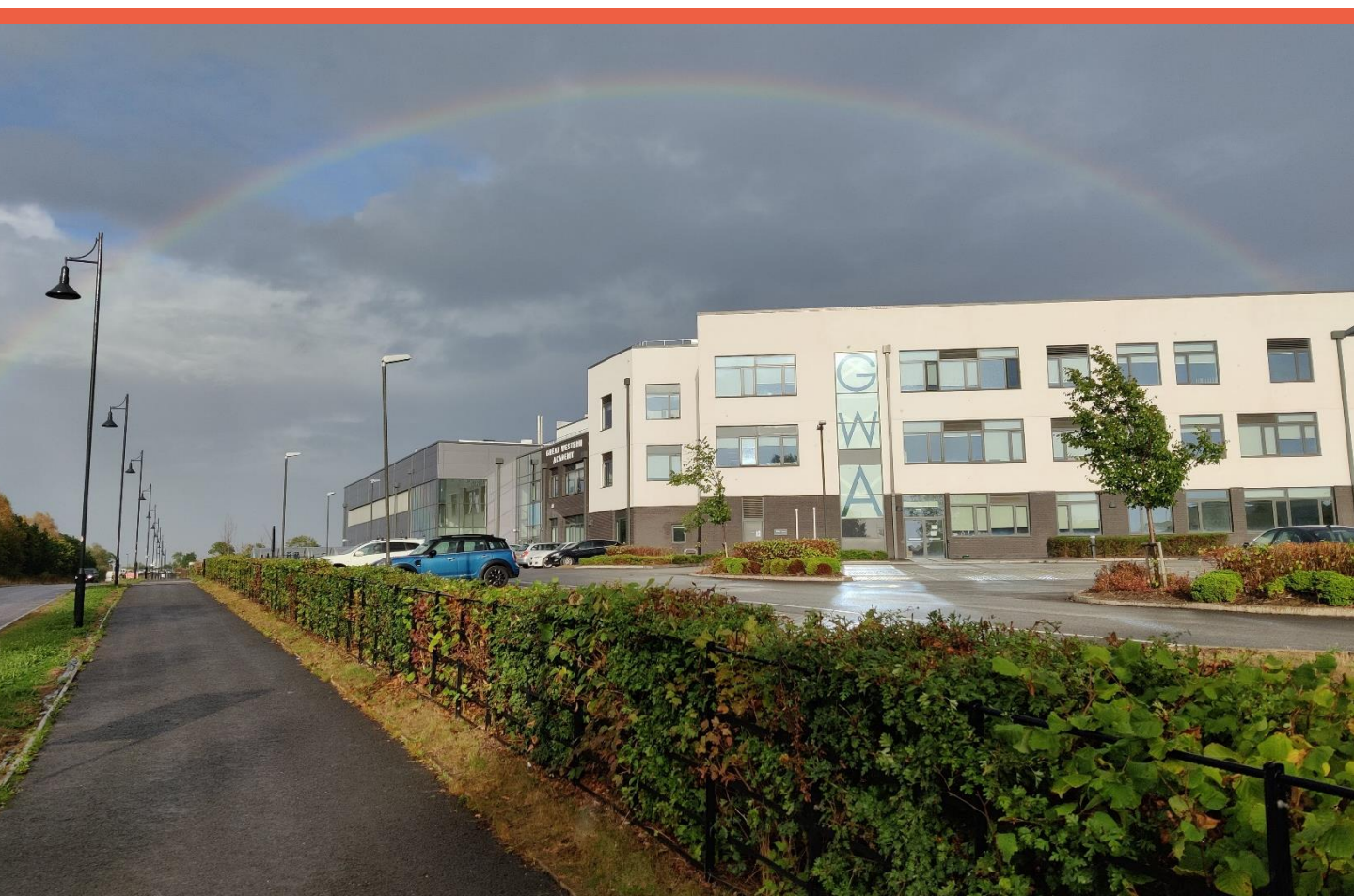


Principal

Candidate information pack

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Welcome from the Chair of Governors

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the position of Principal at Great Western Academy, Swindon.

Great Western Academy (GWA) is a vibrant, inclusive school and strives to provide an excellent standard of education for all students, regardless of ability or background. We offer outstanding pastoral care, a compassionate learning environment and a broad and balanced education that prepares our young people to be successful and confident, ready for their next steps in life and education.

In 2013, following extensive consultation, an application was made to open a new free school in the Tadpole Garden Village area of Swindon. Great Western Academy opened its doors in a splendid new building in September 2018 and the building itself won the Education Building of the Year award in 2019.

The Governors are proud to be part of an academy rated by Ofsted as 'Good' in 2023. As a free school we have greater control of the school's resources and the autonomy to shape an overall strategy that best meets the needs of the students, staff and the wider community. We believe a key part of this success to be the strong links and relationships that have been developed between these groups. We have been able to recruit and retain passionate staff who share our optimism about young people and their potential and who believe that, with exceptional teaching and a culture that values and supports them whatever their background, all young people can thrive and flourish. We strive to be an exceptional school in every way.

This vacancy has arisen due to the retirement of our founding Principal, Graham Davis. During Graham's tenure the academy has grown from opening in 2018, with year 7 only and with the 6th form yr 12 starting in our second year, to be a successful and oversubscribed school embedded in the community. Today, Great Western Academy, under Graham's leadership, continues to make progress across a whole range of key areas, resulting in a positive academic community that students and staff are proud to be a part of.

In recruiting a new Principal, we are seeking someone who shares our vision and ethos with the enthusiasm, drive and energy to move our academy to the next phase of its development journey. The successful candidate will have the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to further develop our academy and possess the leadership qualities to work collaboratively with our valued senior leadership team, teaching and support staff, the Governing Body and the community.

The closing date for applications is Monday 2nd February 2025, 12:00. For further information about our academy, please visit our website at www.gwacademy.co.uk

Interview dates are set for Tuesday 11th and Wednesday 12th February 2025.

If you wish to discuss any aspects of the role, please contact me as Chair of Governors, awild@gwacademy.co.uk to arrange a time. I would also encourage interested applicants to visit GWA. Visits will be scheduled from Monday 20th through to Friday 26th January. Please contact Liz Frobisher, on 01793 209705 or efrobisher@gwacademy.co.uk to arrange a time.

I wish you the best with your application and look forward to meeting you.

Andrew Wild

Chair of Governors

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Key Facts and Statistics

14.1%
SEND

16.3%
Pupil
Premium

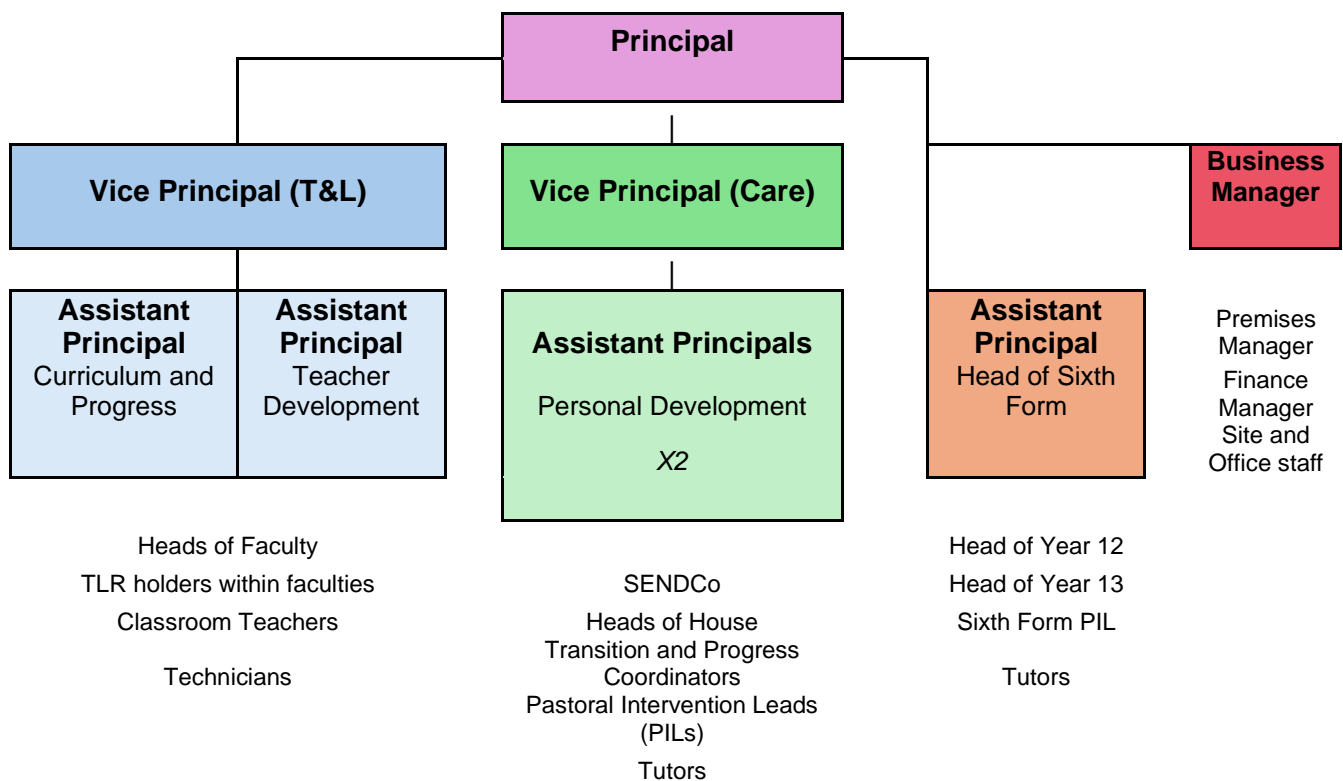
12.4%
Free School
Meals

10.7%
English as an
Additional
Language

Great Western Academy- Age range: 11-18 yrs

Number on roll: 1038 - PAN:1210, Further growth is anticipated in the Sixth Form

Leadership structure:



About Our Academy

Great Western Academy is a popular 11-18 co-educational academy with a very high proportion of first choice places from Swindon admissions. The academy is fully staffed and occupies a spacious site on the edge of Swindon. Tadpole Farm estate is a highly sought-after area with excellent local amenities and transport links.

Our site includes a playing field, a 3G all-weather pitch (floodlit) and MUGA, excellent indoor sports, dance, science and arts facilities, which we are pleased to share with various community groups, including Swindon Supermarine football club, which delivers some of our sports qualifications.

We offer outstanding pastoral care, through our House, Year group and tutor group structure, a compassionate learning environment and a broad and balanced education that prepares our young people to be successful and confident citizens. At GWA we strive for excellence in all we do. We apply our high standard to students and staff alike – we expect everyone in the GWA community to be the best they can be.

Whilst we are focused on achieving the best results and academic progress for our students, we also believe in developing happy, well rounded, community active students ready for the next stage in their lives.

In our last Ofsted inspection in 2023, GWA was awarded 'Good' status and the high aspirations of the academy are praised throughout the report, with the "ambitious and broad" curriculum seen as a very positive feature. Students are "respectful and friendly" and "understand staff want them to do well". The Sixth Form was also praised with the report saying that the teaching at the academy "encourages Sixth Form students to think deeply". These are just a few of the many hugely positive comments in the report.

We are immensely proud of our Sixth formers, who are true ambassadors and role models for the rest of the academy community, demonstrating our key values of achievement, care and excellence.

Exam results (2024) are strong at A level with 40% of students achieving at least 1 A-grade. Destinations are 70% to university (42% Russell group), with the rest going into apprenticeships and work. We have been very proud of the four students to date who secured places at Oxbridge universities, with a further three applicants this year. who secured places at Oxbridge universities.

GCSE results (2024) had particularly strong outcomes in Maths, English, Science and Humanities with no major Pupil Premium gap in results – approx. 0.2 grades, significantly smaller than the national gap. The progress 8 score was positive for both 2023 and 2024 (DfE have confirmed +0.14 for P8). 52% of students gained grade 5+ in both English and Maths, well above national averages, from a cohort that was just below average on entry.

We have the best attendance of all secondary schools in Swindon, and in the top quartile nationally - but we still aim for even better.

Other activities include educational visits such as careers visits (including to Williams F1), Life Drawing Day, RIAT Trip, Valencia international football tour, a skiing trip and students completing their Gold Duke of Edinburgh expedition last summer. Just a flavour of the many trips and activities which support our students

Culture and Values

Our Ethos

Great Western Academy is an inclusive, community, co-educational school with a commitment to fairness, diversity and inclusion. We provide our students with a rounded education, focused on both progress and attainment, whilst promoting the values of Achievement, Care and Excellence.

Our Values

The values of the GWA are summed up in the acronym ACE: Achievement, Care and Excellence. The ACE acronym underpins everything that GWA does and provides a secure basis for all to strive for and to accomplish.

- **Achievement** in academic, artistic, cultural and other forms with a focus on teaching and learning
- **Care** for students, staff and others beyond the academy
- **Excellent** standards, manners, honesty, personal integrity and uniform

Our Vision

As well as providing a strong academic foundation we ensure our students have the skills to thrive as independent thinkers, creative problem solvers and adaptable, lifelong learners. Inspirational teaching, enrichment sessions in our longer academy day and many other opportunities to learn beyond the classroom, combine to give every GWA student the best possible chance to succeed.

Community Work

We believe that charity and community work is an invaluable part of the wider curriculum. It is a way for students to demonstrate our academy values of respect and responsibility. We encourage our students to be active citizens through volunteering, charity work and working with the local community. Volunteering can take many forms, from litter picking locally to singing in a local care home. We also maintain a focus on supporting local charities which the students research and learn about, helping them to understand exactly how their efforts can make an impact.

Extended day (Tuesday + Wednesday 4.15 finish)

The extended day enables us to provide a rich co-curricular programme, which is compulsory for Years 7 and 8. We offer a huge range of additional experiences including public speaking, drama and music clubs, chess, computing, technology and Food Technology, as well as including homework clubs, extra support and extra challenge. We believe this helps build staff/student relationships and provides valuable cultural and social capital to our students. The extended day is also used for academic support activities for Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme

We introduce students to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme from Year 9 onwards. The Scheme offers a constructive individual challenge which encourages personal development, team work, absorbing activities and helps develop initiative. This includes volunteer work in the community. Students get the opportunity to seek adventure in the great outdoors with students aiming to achieve bronze, silver and gold levels. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is an entirely voluntary activity.

Reading

At GWA we agree with Dr. Seuss;

The more you read,
The more you know.
The more you know
The more places you'll go!

Encouraging a lifelong love of reading is something we are passionate about. Every day, our entire school stops everything so that we can read, with a 20-minute session built into the middle of the day.

Continuous Improvement

However good we are, we can be better. We constantly look for improvements and implement them with pace. We look for ideas for improvement inside the organisation and out; we observe one another; we adopt good ideas and look to make them better; we work together to improve. We always look at the evidence and are rigorous in evaluating impact. We stop or change things which aren't working; we improve things which are. We aim for high leverage and high impact. We constantly look to be cost effective and efficient – to have real impact and to spend every pound wisely.

Continuing Professional Development

We believe that successful organisations make a priority of developing their staff. At GWA people are its most important asset. Successful educational organisations make a priority of developing their staff. This is important with the development of our Principal and senior leaders, teachers and support staff (e.g. IT and Finance) given that they all impact on success and quality improvement. We work on the basis that each of us, however effective, can always improve.



Our New Principal

We are looking for an experienced leader, who is excited to take on a new challenge and will be proud to lead this inclusive, co-educational academy.

Great Western Academy is above all else a community school. It is important to us that our new Principal should share and represent our core values as a visible and active member of the community, both inside GWA and outside.

You will have the experience and skills to build on existing good practice and the confidence to work collaboratively with our diverse, talented and dedicated team of staff and governors to develop and implement a strategic and ambitious vision.

You will have strong communication skills, enabling you to engage successfully with staff, students and parents and to lead the school in a friendly, positive manner, empowering staff and ensuring that they continue to feel valued and that the academy remains a great place to work.

We are looking to appoint a Principal who can lead (not just run) the school, manage and be good at leading change effectively.

Our new Principal will be progressive, forward-looking and visionary, with the enthusiasm and energy to inspire staff and students and stakeholders.

You will need to be bold, able to challenge preconceptions to drive change and innovation, working continuously to lead further improvement in teaching and learning and to set the school apart from others in the local community and beyond. We aspire to be an exceptional school.

You will continue to offer a broad, varied range of activities and curriculum options for students, delivering a diverse, broad school experience for learners.

You will have good analytical and numeric skills able to interpret data and trends to identify actions which will improve results and the student experience.

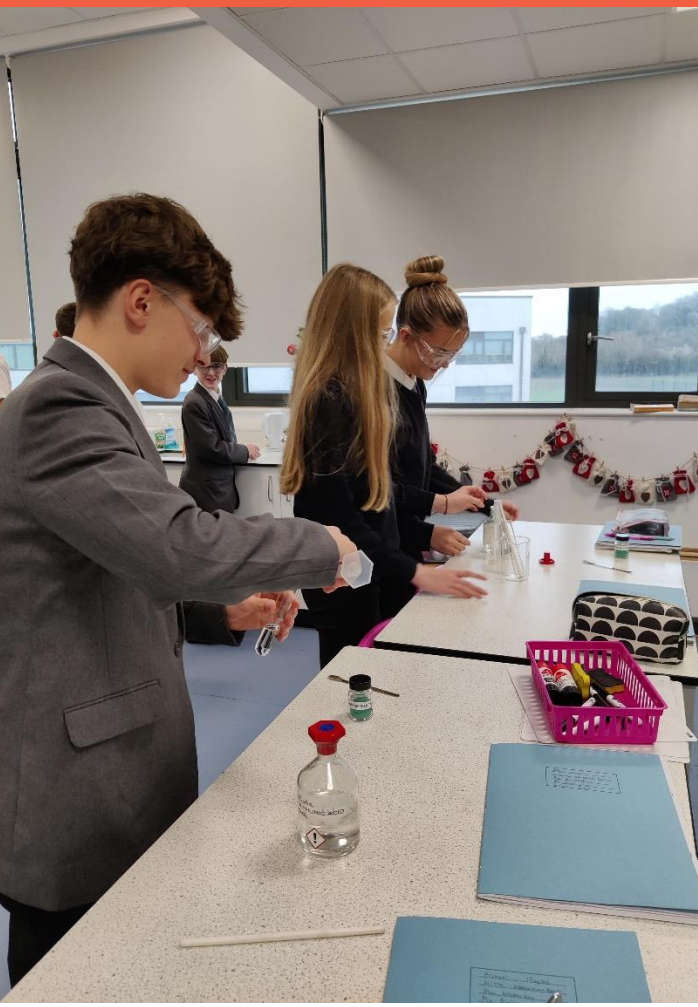
You will have a good understanding of school finance and budgets, be able to identify cost effective solutions and maximise opportunities to increase resources for the school.



Our Strategic Priorities

Areas for focus at the school include:

- Delivering excellent teaching and learning – driving for progress and improved results.
- Continuing to support and develop our focus on staff and student wellbeing and inclusion.
- Improving progress for disadvantaged students.
- Further developing our sixth form provision
- Increasing accountability for all staff in the academy.
- Maintaining GWA as an oversubscribed academy with financial stability in light of the national trend towards falling numbers and challenging budgets.
- Maintaining and improving upon parental and community engagement.
- Harnessing technology to improve teaching and learning and exploring positive use of AI.



What We Can Offer

Great Western Academy is a strong, inclusive academy rooted in the local community, and a genuinely nice place to work, with a talented and dedicated team of staff and governors.

This is an exciting opportunity for the right person to develop our thriving school, in line with our shared ethos and values.

We can offer:

- Students who are keen to learn and take part.
- A dedicated and experienced teaching team, SLT and middle leaders.
- A professional and experienced support team.
- A modern and well-resourced school, equipped with fantastic facilities on an expansive and well-maintained site.
- A strong and engaged Governing Board who are passionate about the GWA and bring a wide range of expertise.
- Excellent links with a wide range of local community groups as well as other local schools.
- A very competitive remuneration package.
- Extensive CPD and support to meet your individual needs.



Job Description

Accountable to: The governing board.

Accountable for: All aspects of school performance.

The Principal will undertake their responsibilities in accordance with the standards set out in the National Headteachers' Standards and all relevant statutory requirements.

The Principal has overall responsibility for providing leadership to the school to secure its success and continuous improvement, ensuring high quality education for all its students and improved standards of teaching and learning in line with statutory requirements.

To gain this success, the Principal will:

- Further develop the high-quality education by effectively managing teaching and learning to realise the potential of all students.
- Demonstrate consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct both within and outside school.
- Always serve in the best interests of the school's staff and students, with safeguarding central to all activities.
- Share and represent our core values.
- Be a visible and active member of the community, both inside and outside of school.
- Lead (not just run) the school and manage change effectively, to build on existing good practice.
- Exhibit a friendly, positive manner with all stakeholders.
- Empower the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and staff, ensuring they continue to feel valued.
- Forge a compelling vision alongside the Governing Body, to guide GWA to its next stage of development.
- Proactively manage school budgets and ensure financial security, identifying cost-effective solutions to increase resources for the school.
- Focus on staff and student wellbeing and engage well with parents.
- Be equally supportive of all student groups (including Pupil Premium, Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and all others).

Note: This job description is not an exhaustive list of the tasks that the Principal will carry out. The Principal may be expected to carry out other duties commensurate with the level of the role.

Person Specification

In your application, it is important to provide examples using the STAR acronym (situation, task, action, result) to demonstrate how you meet the following criteria.

Please note that these essential criteria will be used by the panel for shortlisting.

Qualifications, knowledge and experience	Essential/ Desirable	Application form	Assessment stage
Degree and qualified teacher status.	E	*	
Appropriate training for senior leadership	E	*	
Experience of working with KS3, KS4 and KS5 students.	E	*	
Recent experience of senior leadership as a Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or School Improvement Lead with a proven track record of continuous improvement and outstanding impact.	E	*	*
Thorough understanding of Child Protection and Safeguarding and commitment to safeguarding as part of the duty of care.	E	*	*
School culture			
Demonstrates an awareness of the wider education context.	E	*	*
Ability to articulate a clear vision for the future and provide strategic direction for staff, students, and the community.	E	*	*
Proven record of inspiring, enabling and motivating others, promoting positive and respectful relationships.	E		*
Ensures a culture of high staff professionalism, holding others to account.	E		*
Upholds ambitious educational standards for all students.	E		*
Teaching, curriculum & assessment			

Clear understanding of the curriculum and how to ensure this can be effectively accessed by all.	E	*	*
Reviews and monitors progress against agreed, measurable targets.	E		*
Absolute commitment to inclusion and to ambitious expectations for all students including those with SEND and higher attainers	E	*	*
Knowledge and experience of working with children with SEND across the secondary phase	D	*	*
Able to understand the needs of children with challenging behaviours and develop successful management strategies.	E	*	*
Experience of deploying and managing staff to deliver effective outcomes.	E		*
Evidence of quality assurance strategies and the impact thereof on school improvement	E	*	*
Professional development			
Evidence of appropriate and recent professional career development for the role of Principal.	E	*	*
Has successfully undertaken approved safer recruitment training.	D	*	*
Commitment to prioritising the continued professional development of all staff (including themselves) in the best interests of the individual, the team and the school.	E	*	*
Successful track record of developing staff through effective career progression development	E		*
Organisational management/ continuous school improvement			
Have had active involvement in effective school self-evaluation and development planning.	E	*	*
Have had responsibility for whole school policy development and implementation	E	*	*
Experience of leading change effectively and successfully.	E		*
Clear commitment to promoting health and	E	*	*

safety and the wellbeing of children and staff.			
Ability to review and analyse key data to develop evidence and use informed strategies for school improvement.	E		*
Working in partnership/ Governance & accountability			
Experience of working effectively with stakeholders including governors, school improvement partners, other schools and organisations to improve outcomes for students.	E	*	*
Understands and welcomes the role of effective governance, upholds their obligation to give account and accept responsibility.	E		*
Experience of managing school finances effectively, understanding their contribution to school development and student outcomes.	D		*
Able to assimilate and manage financial and other data to achieve sound financial decision-making.	E		*
Personal Qualities/ Ethics and professional conduct			
Passion for education, coupled with ability and enthusiasm to see every child fulfil their potential.	E	*	*
Excellent communication skills, including written communication. A sense of humour	E	*	*
Belief in school improvement through objective self-evaluation.	E	*	*
Visible and approachable, empathetic and enjoys engaging and inspiring others.	E		*
Adaptable leadership style, 'hands on' when required, balanced with knowing when to delegate.	E	*	*
Capacity for sustained hard work with energy and enthusiasm.	E		*
Able to take a dynamic approach to the changing needs of the school population.	E		*
Demonstrates consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct both within and outside school, upholding the Seven	E		*

Principles of Public Life at all times.			
Upholds fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.	E		*



Important information

Salary:	Group 7 – Individual Salary Range (ISR) In line with National leadership scale dependent on experience.
Start Date:	September 2025
Closing Date:	Monday 3rd February 2025, 12:00 noon
Shortlisting Date:	Wednesday 5 th February 2025
Interview Date:	Tuesday 11th and Wednesday 12th February 2025
Visits to our school:	Monday 20th through to Friday 26th January Please contact Liz Frobisher, on 01793 209705 or efrobisher@gwacademy.co.uk to arrange a time to visit the school:
To discuss the role:	Please contact Andrew Wild Chair of Governors, on awild@gwacademy.co.uk or Mobile 07747 010324

Appointment is subject to the current conditions of employment of Principals, contained in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document and all other current education, employment and health and safety legislation.

The post holder is expected to have regard to the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers at all times.

To help us meet our high standards and aspirations of a fully diverse and inclusive workplace, we strongly encourage suitably qualified applicants from all backgrounds to apply and to join us.

Great Western Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and visitors to share this commitment. Appointment to this post is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) as well as other pre-appointment checks outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024).



How to apply

Please apply through [eteach](https://www.eteach.co.uk) or send your completed application form to: recruitment@gwacademy.co.uk You can also contact us on 01793 209700. 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 and provide examples using the STAR acronym (situation, task, action, result) to demonstrate how you meet the criteria.

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.

Applications will be considered in order of receipt. We reserve the right to withdraw this vacancy should a suitable applicant be found prior to the closing date. Great Western Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its staff and pupils and expects those working in the trust to share this commitment. Applications from ethnic minority candidates and other diverse groups are welcomed. Online checks will be completed for shortlisted candidates. The successful candidate will be required to undertake a criminal record check via the Disclosure and Barring Service as well as qualification and reference checks. Copies of our Recruitment and Selection policy are available from recruitment@gwacademy.co.uk.

