

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH SCHOOL



Candidate Pack Geography 2023

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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 his or her 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 extending to the right underneath it.

Helen Yapp (Headteacher)

Our Experienced Humanities Team

We have a strong team ethos, 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.

Schemes of work in geography are well developed and clearly articulated with excellent shared resources to support teaching.

As part of our innovative curriculum, enabled as part of a successful and over-subscribed school, all students are offered a place in a Grammar, STEM or Arts pathway.

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.

In September 2015 the school moved into an award-winning new building, where humanities is taught in dedicated rooms across two floors, with classrooms in the Sixth Form building.

The curriculum in each subject from key stage 3 – 5 is ambitious for all students, leading to strong outcomes at key stage 4 and 5, with exceptional performances from different groups of students. Humanities is regularly one of the highest performing subjects in the school, at both GCSE and A Level, achieving outcomes in the top 20% of the country.



Geography Curriculum & Progression

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 EDUQAS GCSE Specification B , 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.

In September 2022 students started Geography degrees at the Universities of Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester and Nottingham.

The school supports a range of field work opportunities across all key stages, and also extra-curricular clubs on the environment, "Geography Rocks" and outdoor pursuits.

The Trust has a supportive humanities and geography community across all of its schools. Regular meetings with other heads of department act as a support for experienced and new heads of department.

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 ITT provider, 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:

- Free 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

Recent Comments by Staff

“TGS is not just a school, we are a community that cares for and looks after one another, whilst also delivering an impeccable standard of education to all of our students. I have only been here three years but from the moment I started I knew this school was special, somewhere that was different and stands out from other schools and I am so proud to be a part of it. This is the main reason I was so eager to stay here after teacher training and even more excited when I secured a head of department role.”

“TGS thrives thanks to the amazing leadership in place and the commitment which is being demonstrated from the very top by Mrs Yapp. She shows us kindness and motivates us every single day to be the best we can be.”

“A very professional and supportive school. I feel I can approach anyone to discuss concerns and I am supported in my teaching here. I really enjoy working here and value the school, having had experiences in many other schools over my 27 years.”

“After 10+ years' work in education it is the best school I have worked in.”

“High expectations of staff with high levels of support and culture for students and staff.”

‘Thomas Gainsborough is a dynamic, supportive, forward-thinking school which wants the best for both the pupils and the staff. People are happy to go the extra mile for others because they know that they are appreciated and that it is valuable.’

“This is the first school I've worked in during my 17-year career where I feel supported with behaviour.

The systems the school has in place for the behaviour policy work. SLT have your back. We are all here to ensure the learning of all students and on the occasions where the odd student is not allowing that to happen, SLT will support you to ensure learning in the classroom can happen.”

“Helen is a highly approachable headteacher. She is constantly visible around the corridors throughout the day. She takes the time to say hello and to talk to you. When she thanks the staff, she means it.”

“Working at TGS has allowed me to progress in my career and continue to be the parent I want to be. This is down to the support and understanding of a fantastic leadership team.”

“All the staff provide an incredible school that supports students' learning and their wellbeing, superior to any I have seen before. The standards they expect are high, which I believe is why the majority of students and staff perform so well. I class myself as very lucky having a job I love, in a school I love, that is local to where I live.”

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 walking & rowing. 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 Mr Chris Ryall, cryall@tgschool.net or call the school to speak to Mrs Kerry Fuller, the Headteacher's PA, on 01787 375232.

Information about the school is available at www.tgschool.net and the application process is supported by our Multi-Academy Trust careers website www.unitysp-careers.co.uk/

