



The Priory School

Educating Students for Success in Life

The Priory School
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Headteacher: Mr Geraint Edwards

Dear Applicant

I have been the Headteacher of The Priory School since September 2013. As a local Hitchin resident of more than 25 years, I am in the privileged position of being able to serve my community directly.

The Priory School came into existence in 1988 when two single-sex secondary modern schools amalgamated. As a foundation school (July 2016) we remain part of the Local Authority 'family of schools', the Governing Board are our employers, we own our school site and we control our admissions. We are a school that very much supports our local community by sharing our facilities, sponsoring the 6th Hitchin (Priory) Scouts group and working with key local charities.

We have excellent working relationships with our main feeder primary schools. The Priory School is part of the Hitchin Post 16 Consortium, which offers students a broad range of level 3 qualifications. Our Sixth Form numbers have steadily risen over the last few of years, which is a trend we expect to continue.

The Priory School is well regarded as an inclusive school and we have a strong reputation for the work that our Learning Support Department does along with our Pastoral and Wellbeing team. In September 2022, the school opened a Specialist Resource Provision hub for 20 students with EHCPs for SLCN and ASD. To accommodate the hub and the expansion of student numbers, the school has secured funding of approximately £6 million to upgrade our facilities.

The term 'staff wellbeing' is often bandied about, but it is sometimes hard to identify what the constituent parts of this term are. At The Priory, the foundation for staff wellbeing is ensuring that we have rigorous systems in place that allow colleagues to do their work in a stable environment. We have strong behaviour for learning and attendance protocols, which all stakeholders are fully aware of. An annual strategic calendar allows colleagues to see what additional commitments are coming up and to plan accordingly within the allocated 1265 hours. Whereas quality assurance and performance appraisal in some schools are seen as onerous and even intrusive, we have created a professional culture of responsibility, accountability and support. As a Senior Leadership Team, we engage with colleagues whenever new initiatives are being planned to ensure that the impact on workload has been fully taken into consideration.

'Staff are loyal and committed to the school. Leaders support them well. The systems and processes used in the school do not add to staff workload.' - Ofsted October 2022

There is a strong culture of colleagues being involved in out-of-school activities and we run an annual staff weekend challenge. We have a well-embedded DofE programme, which is supported by our in-house TPS Awards enrichment offer. Staff turnover is low and what is particularly pleasing is that colleagues have directly sought employment at the school because of our reputation or even returned after taking a post elsewhere.

All students have Chromebooks and the key is now to translate this into high-quality blended learning. We aim to create opportunities for all our students to develop the key attributes of Responsibility, Respect and Resilience.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Geraint Edwards". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'G'.

Geraint Edwards