



 **ASTRA** School-Centred
Teacher Training



DR CHALLONER'S
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Astra Secondary Course Director

Start Date: September 2026

Challenge with reward



 **ASTRA School-Centred
Teacher Training**



Astra Secondary Course Director

Salary	L2 - L6 (£54,496 - £60,001 pa inclusive of Fringe allowance) (starting salary commensurate with experience) plus generous pension scheme.
Contract	Permanent; to start September 2026
Hours per week	Full time

Astra School Centred Initial Teacher Training is a network of over 60 primary, secondary and special schools across Buckinghamshire and beyond. Based at Dr Challoner's Grammar School in Amersham, a central team works with our mentors, tutors and trainers to support and nurture the next generation of teachers.

We are currently seeking a Secondary Course Director with the vision and skills to lead the development and delivery of our SCITT secondary programmes, working with the Co-Principal to steer Astra's ITT provision into its next phase of development. Committed to our foundational values of excellence, collaboration, support and innovation, the ideal applicant will be an excellent classroom teacher, with a genuine interest in teacher training, education and pedagogy, and a commitment to developing practice that is both research informed and evidence led. The role requires the ability to work with a wide range of different stakeholders at all levels in schools across Buckinghamshire, from trainees to senior leadership.

Working alongside our teams of subject specialists and visiting tutors, you will have current or recent experience of working with trainee teachers, as a mentor, tutor or similar, and a strong understanding of ITT issues. In addition to having responsibility for our secondary Professional Studies provision and development of our mentor training programmes, for the right applicant there will be the opportunity to lead in the development of a secondary subject, and, by negotiation, to take on a small teaching timetable within DCGS.

If you would like to discuss the role further please contact Andrew Millar, Astra SCITT Co-Principal, on ami@challoners.org

Closing date: Monday 13 April 2026, 12 noon.

To apply for the post, please complete an application form via My New Term (<https://mynewterm.com/school/Dr-Challoner's-Grammar-School/136419>)

At Dr Challoner's Grammar School we ensure breadth of opportunities for all and actively promote open and outward facing attitudes to diversity and inclusion. As such, we actively encourage suitably qualified people from all backgrounds to apply for roles at our school. If there are any issues which you feel could be barriers to your application, as part of this process, please let us know.

Dr Challoner's Grammar School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, therefore successful candidates will be required to complete an enhanced DBS check.

A warm welcome...

From Mr David Atkinson, Headteacher, Dr Challoner's Grammar School



Dear Applicant,

I hope that the information which follows will help inform your decision about whether to make a formal application for this post. Like most job applicants you will want to find out a bit more about us. These days there is a wealth of data about schools which you may wish to look at. Proud though we are of that data, such research never tells the whole story and you will only be sure that you want to work here when you get 'that feeling' within the first few minutes of walking through the door.

When you do your research you'll find that our Ofsted inspections, in 2019 and 2024, graded the school as outstanding in every respect. We believe this is an accurate reflection of the school as a genuinely special place. The reports echo what many visitors tell me - that we have a distinctive ethos of teamwork, loyalty and aspiration, with the well being of staff and students at the heart of what we do. Our students are intensely proud of coming to school here, and our staff feel similarly about their place of work. The relationship between staff and students is a very special one, and we see ourselves as running the school with the students rather than for them.

We want our students to leave Dr Challoner's equipped for academic and career success, and ready to lead lives of integrity and service, contributing to a society that is fairer, kinder and stronger for all. This shared mission involves our whole community: staff parents, governors, and students. By working together, we aim to shape a better future, one where our students make meaningful contributions as leaders in society, guided by their values and strengths. All our staff are committed to preparing our students to flourish personally and professionally in adult life. To achieve this, we foster a rigorous school culture focused on two pillars: excellent learning & teaching and deep character development. Through this we ensure students gain the knowledge, understanding, and skills needed to succeed, while also helping them develop resilience, empathy, and a clear sense of purpose.

Our motto - Excellence with Integrity - drives this purpose. We also highlight three key values which we believe can underpin the effective education of all our students. These are Aspiration, Kindness and Resilience. Our staff demonstrate these characteristics in their own ways, and inculcate the same attitudes in our students. This is not an attempt to produce a 'standard Challoner' student, but a means of encouraging our young people to find their own ways of demonstrating those crucial characteristics to help them flourish in the future.

Despite its impressive academic record, Challoner's is not an examination hothouse - it's a place of genuine creativity, fun

and comradeship. In staff we appoint, we look for that much undervalued quality of humanity, along with an acceptance that young people will always make a few mistakes - and that it's our job to ensure that they learn from them.

Two of the most immediately noticeable qualities of the people who work here are their humour and their sense of proportion. Even on the dullest of days, laughter pervades the school and reflects a genuine warmth and professional respect amongst colleagues. Sharing a laugh and a joke with the students is the norm and serves to brighten our daily work no end. One of the reasons our staff are prepared to give up so much of their time to run educational visits (we do more than any other school I know) and other co-curricular activities is that spending time with our students is so rewarding and enjoyable.

You will find a lot more information about the school on our website www.challoners.com, which we hope encapsulates that intangible 'feel' of the school, and about the Astra Teaching School Hub and SCITT at www.astrahub.org. If you would like further clarification, or just an informal chat with someone, please feel free to contact us by phone or email. I enclose some information about your subject at Challoner's along with some general information about the school, a Role Profile and a Person Specification. When I read your application, I will be trying to assess whether you would be a 'good fit' for our school, so I hope that some of the things I have said will be useful to you in writing your supporting statement. I do hope that you will decide to make an application to join us and that we will have the chance to welcome you to our school.

With best wishes

Mr D Atkinson,
Headteacher

Challoner's is the Teaching School Hub for Buckinghamshire, a function we fulfill through the Astra Teaching School Hub. As a result we offer a wide and diverse range of professional development opportunities for staff. Astra is also a School Centred Initial Teacher Training provider (SCITT) ensuring Challoner's is at the cutting edge of curricular and pedagogical developments in education. Now leading the delivery of the ECF and NPQ programmes across the county, colleagues at Challoner's are able to contribute to, and benefit from, our leadership of high quality teacher training and CPD across over 200 schools in the local area.



Information about Astra and this role



Based at Dr Challoner's Grammar School, our vision is for the Astra SCITT to be a transformational partnership of primary, secondary and special schools across Buckinghamshire and beyond, working together to see improved educational outcomes for all.

Astra encompasses both primary and secondary training and includes the full range of secondary subjects. The majority of trainees are full time and following the PGCE route, though we are keen to accommodate a number of part time trainees as well as offering QTS-only and Assessment Only routes. With an average of approximately sixty trainees each year, we have recruitment hubs both in Amersham and Aylesbury.

Committed to excellence, our programmes blend theory and practice and are both evidence led and research informed, seeking not only to meet but exceed the demands of the Core Content Framework. At secondary level we have particularly strong subject specific training, and our aim is that trainees leave us as genuine experts, committed to inclusive professionalism, with the knowledge and skills to be outstanding classroom practitioners in the full range of school contexts in Buckinghamshire. Tutors are based not only at Dr Challoner's but at schools throughout our area.

We have a first class team of highly committed support staff, and designated offices for the Astra team. Leadership and management was recognised as Outstanding in our most recent Ofsted. Since 2013, over 550 teachers have qualified through Astra and our passion is to develop teachers who thrive in the classroom and go on to develop successful careers.

We are seeking a Secondary Course Director with a genuine interest in teacher training and education, who possesses the vision and skills to help lead the next phase of our development. Able to work sympathetically with trainees and our full range of stakeholders, the Course Director will have an understanding of current issues in ITT. Leading our overall Professional Studies provision and developing our mentor training, there is also the opportunity to lead the training in one of our secondary subjects and, by negotiation, the option to take on a small teaching timetable within the school. In this, the role enables the Course Director to develop expertise in initial teacher training whilst also remaining grounded in the life of a school.

See www.astra-alliance.com for more information about the Astra SCITT.



'The facilities are outstanding in many respects. The forward-thinking management and leadership ensure learner-led environments are possible'.

Why work for Dr Challoner's Grammar School?



- Outstanding modern facilities, including recently modernised sports, music, arts and science facilities
- High staff retention
- A friendly working environment with supportive and caring colleagues
- Culture of teamwork, loyalty and aspiration



- Engaging, able and well-motivated students
- An innovative approach to learning
- Outstanding facilities in every subject
- Access to an Employee Assistance Programme including financial and legal advice, counselling and health programmes
- Preferential admission for qualified children of staff (some restrictions apply)
- Access to onsite cardio fitness and weights room
- Access to Blue Light card benefits
- Generous pay based on the London Fringe Allowance



- Staff Buddies - all new staff are allocated a staff buddy
- Hero of the Week! - recognition for staff who go above and beyond
- Free onsite parking

- Access to join the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS"). The TPS is a Career Average Related Earnings ("CARE") Defined Benefit Pension Scheme.



- A successful and well recognised professional development scheme, which all colleagues have access to and are encouraged to make use of
- Support for National Professional Qualifications (NPQs)
- Teaching staff are issued with a Chromebook computer for use during their employment at Challoner's
- An extensive induction programme for all staff joining the school, with components tailored to individual requirements, such as for those new to the teaching profession



Our commitment to Character Education



Character Education

As well as our enviable track record of academic performance, we are equally proud of our focus on character, and our development of young people who will go on and improve their lives and our society with their education. Our core vision, to deliver education of excellence with integrity, is underpinned by values of Aspiration, Kindness and Resilience. We want to support students so that they develop their own well informed aspirations for their futures. We help our students understand how to flourish as young adults, with the resilience to adapt and be flexible while also helping others. We emphasise the need to be kind by looking after yourself, and through positive and productive personal relationships with others.

We encourage our staff, whatever their job, to play a part in this. This may be through classroom teaching, but role modelling good habits in these areas is something we expect of all our colleagues. As a result we have a cohesive staff body with a shared belief in the school's purpose, to develop thoughtful young people who can make a noticeably positive impact on society as a result of their education at Challoner's.





Our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

At Challoner's, we strive to create a safe environment where everyone feels they belong, and kindness, respect and equity inform everything we do. Our school is a rich and diverse community, so we must develop thinking and attitudes appropriate for the global society in which we live.

Our DEI charter is for current and prospective students and staff, as well as the wider community, to understand the commitments of our school in this vital area, and to outline the expectations of all members of the school community:

Our key commitments:

Maintain a positive ethos: We stand for an atmosphere of empathy, inclusion and respect that empowers all members of the community.

Commitment to curiosity: We will retain a curiosity about others in our diverse community; whilst also remaining tolerant of others who might make genuine mistakes along the way.

Accountability: We will accept responsibility for our actions and any negative impacts our comments and actions have upon those close to us and the wider community.

Stand strongly against discrimination: We will actively oppose any form of discrimination including the protected characteristics of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. This will be treated with the same protocols and rigour as other harmful acts.

Our DEI pledge:

Educate: Address problematic stereotypes and prevalent prejudices by showing each other how such intolerance directly affects individuals and society as a whole.

Encourage dialogue: Offer a safe space in which everyone can openly discuss issues they feel are important, share their own experiences and ask questions.

Set clear expectations: Make clear in the school's code of conduct that any form of prejudice and discrimination is unacceptable and detail the consequences. Breaches of these rules will be followed with swift action.

Promote diversity and inclusion: Encourage the celebration of diversity and sharing culture through activities that can be enjoyed by all.

Promote & empower upstanders: Encourage students and our whole school community to challenge intolerance and teach them how to support those affected by intolerance effectively.

Involve parents: Ensure that families are aware of the positive work being undertaken by school. Involve them in what students are learning and encourage them to reinforce the same messages in a more direct and personalised way at home.



DR CHALLONER'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

ROLE PROFILE

Job Title

Astra Secondary Course Director

Job Purpose

To lead the design and delivery of the Secondary trainee curriculum, taking a leading role in the teaching of Professional Studies through developing a research-led and evidence-informed approach to course development. To lead the assessment and progress monitoring of Secondary trainees, and the development and co-ordination of high quality mentor provision across the partnership. As part of the Astra senior leadership group, to ensure high quality experiences for all Astra stakeholders.

Reports To

Astra SCITT Co-Principal

Direct Reports

SCITT Officer and Data Analyst
Lead Mentor(s)

Principal Responsibility Areas

- A Curriculum Design and Delivery
- B SCITT Trainee Assessment
- C Lead Mentor and Mentor Curriculum Design, Delivery and Quality Assurance
- D SCITT Logistics and Administration

Key Tasks

A	Curriculum Design and Delivery
A1	Lead and plan the delivery of an integrated, coherent weekly core QTS Professional Studies Programme including Intensive Training and Practice. This includes the coordination of internal and external staff in the delivery of PGCE and secondary subject based sessions, liaising with the Primary Lead and Subject Tutors as appropriate, and drawing on evidence-led and research informed practice.
A2	Lead the development and training of one of the secondary subject courses.
A3	Ensure the Professional Studies programme complies with the ITT Criteria, ITTECF, Ofsted and other relevant criteria as well as the ongoing needs of each cohort of trainees, based on rigorous and ongoing evaluation of the programme.
A4	Provide and update the course handbooks and other curriculum documentation, ensuring that mentors, trainees and other stakeholders have access to the relevant resources.
A5	Working alongside the core Astra team, take a leading role in the teaching of the Astra curriculum (including Intensive Training and Practice), and liaising with other trainers, both internal and external, where relevant.
A6	Lead the co-ordination and development of the subject specific element of the Astra course, including appropriate regular training and communications for subject tutors.
A7	Ensure timely and accurate publication of subject-specific handbooks for trainees via the effective management of subject tutors.
A8	Ensure the timely and accurate updating of Subject Knowledge Audits.
A9	Contribute to the development of the ITE curriculum through keeping up to date with changes in the evidence base underpinning the ITTCF.
A10	Organise and manage trainee second placements in a contrasting setting in a timely manner, liaising with partner schools as necessary.
A11	Plan, manage and lead the delivery of trainee pre-course induction days, liaising with the SCITT Co-Principal and other members of the Astra SCITT Team.
A12	Ensure that the programme design includes effective operational training in SCITT systems, including Mosaic, to manage trainee and mentor workload, whilst ensuring all relevant data is submitted to the SCITT on time.
A13	Manage the Additional Support and Cause for Concern processes, liaising with the SCITT Director (Primary) and Astra SCITT Co-Principal. This includes monitoring and supporting trainees, liaising with partner schools and other external sources of support as appropriate.
A14	Provide bespoke support for trainees in terms of well-being and progress on a regular basis, making referrals to the Astra Professional Coach or other identified colleagues as necessary and ensuring that accurate records of trainee support are maintained.
A15	Working with the Recruitment and Compliance Manager and the core Astra team, contribute to the development and regular review of trainee support plans.
A16	Review feedback from stakeholders on the impact and effectiveness of the trainee curriculum and summarise key findings and trends for the Astra SCITT Co-Principal to take to the periodic SCITT Steering Group and Astra Governors Committee Meetings.
B	SCITT Trainee Assessment
B1	Undertake the role of Lead Mentor, with oversight of secondary provision and accurate assessment of trainee progress on the secondary course.
B2	Oversee and review an appropriate range of assessment to identify patterns regarding secondary trainee progress, including monitoring of mentor meeting records, trainee target setting, trainee assignments and reporting, sharing key findings with the Astra SCITT Co-Principal on an ongoing basis.

B3	Ensure secondary trainee assignments are assessed and marking standardised in a timely fashion and, working with the Primary Lead, play a full part in the process.
B4	Manage the logistics of the termly External Moderator visits and final assessment moderation.
B5	Guide subject tutors on the assessment process, with a specific focus on ensuring the end of year report is consistent with the Astra assessment framework.
B6	Moderate termly trainee reports from the Mentors, ITTCo and Visiting Tutors, analysing patterns in terms of outcomes by different groups of trainees.
B7	Support the Astra SCITT Co-Principal in a rigorous programme of Quality Assurance, including action points arising from Visiting Tutor reports and Meetings and ensuring that appropriate feedback is shared with mentors, trainers and partner schools.
C	Lead Mentor and Mentor Curriculum Design, Delivery and Quality Assurance
C1	Undertake all initial training as required by the DfE to be assigned as a Lead Mentor, together with any other ongoing training required for the role.
C2	Design and, working with the core Astra team, take a role in the delivery of the mentor training programme that it is consistent with the trainee curriculum and meets DfE requirements.
C3	Coordinate the quality assurance of the provision of mentoring across the partnership via a suite of visiting tutors, taking a lead role in the delivery of the training of visiting tutors.
D	SCITT Logistics and Administration
D1	Attend weekly SCITT and pastoral meetings. Deputise as necessary for the Astra SCITT Co-Principal in leading such meetings, including establishing work priorities for the team.
D2	Deputise as necessary for the Astra SCITT Co-Principal to chair and manage the agenda for the termly Steering Group meetings and, from time to time, attend Astra Governors Committee Meetings.
D3	Support the Astra SCITT Co-Principal and SCITT Recruitment and Compliance Manager in the selection and interview process in compliance with current ITT criteria as outlined by DfE, assisting with interviews as appropriate.
D4	Attend recruitment fairs / 'Train to Teach' events, and assist with wider marketing strategy and implementation, recognising that this may necessitate occasional Saturday working.
D5	Work with the SCITT Recruitment and Compliance Manager in conducting appropriate exit interviews with trainees who withdraw or defer from the programme.
D6	Oversee the assessment work of the SCITT Officer and Data Analyst, Visiting and secondary Subject Tutors, and ensure that half termly reports are completed in a timely fashion.
D7	Manage the SCITT Officer and Data Analyst in the logistics of delivering the Professional Studies programme and weekly communication with trainees, ensuring high levels of accuracy and efficiency.
D8	Coordinate curriculum resources to support the core and subject-based sessions.
D9	Manage the SCITT Officer and Data Analyst in ensuring trainee timetable returns are completed monthly and liaise with the Astra SCITT Co-Principal following analysis of timetables, contacting schools and trainees with any issues.
D10	Contribute to the weekly email to trainees, liaising with other staff as required.
D11	Draft secondary trainee references when they are requested.
D12	Line manage the SCITT Officer and Data Analyst, and Lead Mentor(s).

D13	As a leader within Astra SCITT, undertake other duties as necessary to fulfil the needs of the organisation.
D14	Comply with all school policies and procedures including reporting any concerns to the appropriate person in relation to those covering safeguarding, child protection, health, safety, welfare, security, confidentiality and data protection.
D15	Undertake any other reasonable task required by the Headteacher or Line Manager.

Person Specification



ASTRA SECONDARY COURSE DIRECTOR

At DCGS we want to employ people who share our desire to deliver the best experience and outcomes for our students. This person specification is designed to show the personal and professional characteristics that we would like to see in a successful applicant for this post.

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	EVIDENCE
Qualifications			
A strong academic background, to honours degree level or equivalent	Y		Application, Certificate
Qualified Teacher Status	Y		
Evidence of ongoing further professional development, such as an NPQ, MEd or other higher qualification		Y	Application, Certificates
Previous work experience			
An outstanding classroom practitioner	Y		Application, Interview, Reference
Middle or senior management experience in a school		Y	Application, Interview, Reference
Experience of working with/mentoring trainee teachers or ECTs	Y		Application, Interview, Reference
Experience of leading and delivering adult training such as ITT or school based INSET		Y	Application, Interview
Professional skills, abilities and knowledge			
Understanding of current issues in ITT	Y		Application, Interview
Understanding of school centred teacher training	Y		Application, Interview
Evident interest in pedagogy and teacher development	Y		Application, Interview
A high level of personal ICT competence	Y		Interview

Well developed project management skills	Y		Application, Interview
The ability to develop course resources, including training materials	Y		Application, Interview
Experience of creating and leading development plans		Y	Application, Interview
Knowledge and experience of safeguarding and child protection issues	Y		Interview
Ability to plan and prioritise work to manage competing demands	Y		Application, Interview
People management skills and experience			
Excellent communication skills, both verbally and written, in order to communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders	Y		Interview, Reference
An effective team player, who enjoys working collaboratively with colleagues, willing to get involved at all levels	Y		Application, Interview
Evidence of ability to build good working relationships	Y		Interview, Reference
Ability to act as a positive role model for staff and students	Y		Interview
Other Personal qualities			
Well developed planning and organising skills, including time management, delegation and administration	Y		Interview, Reference
A full clean driving licence and the use of a car	Y		Application, Interview
Commitment to uphold the school's Child Protection Policy	Y		Interview
Commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion	Y		Application, Interview
Commitment to continued professional development	Y		Interview
Willingness to contribute to the wider life of the school, including a small teaching commitment and duties	Y		Interview
Commitment to the school's values of aspiration, kindness and resilience	Y		Interview

Making an application



The purpose of the selection process is to assess your suitability for the post and give both the panel and yourself an opportunity to gain further information before making a successful appointment. It is also an opportunity to seek clarification on information which you have provided on the application form and accompanying information. As this post holder will be working in regulated activity and will have contact with children, the interview will also assess your suitability to work with children and will include questions relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

How to apply

To apply for this position, you will need to complete an application form, which can be found on the Vacancies page of our website, or via the My New Term website.

Please note that only fully completed application forms will be considered. CVs will not be included in the short-listing process

Short-listing

Applications will be assessed based on the information provided on the application form; only those best fulfilling the criteria for the role and the person specification will be short-listed.

Subject to the number of applications, short-listing may take place before the deadline for applications has passed.

If you have not heard from us within three weeks of the closing date, you can assume that your application is not being progressed on this occasion.

Interview

Short-listed candidates will be interviewed initially informally by a member of the senior team.

Candidates will also be given a tour of the School, and there will be a chance to meet members of the department informally over lunch or coffee.

The interview will also include a lesson sample for teachers or administration task for support staff.

Selected candidates will then be formally interviewed by the Head and other members of the School management team.

(Teachers) Sample Lesson

Teaching candidates invited to interview in person will be expected to prepare and deliver a sample lesson of one hour, which will be observed by the Head of Department or Subject Leader. Details of the material to be covered will be sent in advance.

Candidates are advised to avoid trying to cover too much in the lesson, but to have enough material to fill the time available: pupils at the school are of differing degrees of high ability and will expect to be involved in lessons that challenges them.

As part of our safer recruitment process please find here links to our Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Statement and Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy.

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013 and 2020) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', are not subject to disclosure and cannot be taken into account. Further information about filtering offences can be found at DBS filtering guide. It is an offence for any applicant to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) guidance, we will conduct online searches to research information on shortlisted candidates, to determine suitability to work with children and keep them safe. This is not part of the shortlisting process; if there are any findings of concern, you will be given the opportunity to address them at interview.

DR CHALLONER'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL



PURPOSE AND VALUES

We want our students to leave Dr Challoner's equipped for academic and career success, and ready to lead lives of integrity and service, contributing to a society that is fairer, kinder, and stronger for all.

This shared mission involves our whole community: staff, parents, governors, and students. By working together, we aim to shape a better future, one where our students make meaningful contributions as leaders in society, guided by their values and strengths.

All our staff are committed to preparing our students to flourish personally and professionally in adult life. To achieve this, we foster a rigorous school culture focused on two pillars: excellent learning & teaching and deep character development. Through this we ensure students gain the knowledge, understanding, and skills needed to succeed, while also helping them develop resilience, empathy, and a clear sense of purpose.



DCGS Learning and Teaching Purpose

The classroom culture at DCGS is consistently positive and inclusive, with staff upholding the highest expectations for every student, without exception. This is reflected in learners who actively engage, build expertise, and show strong motivation across all areas of their learning.

DCGS Character Development Purpose

DCGS students develop into young adults with a sense of belonging, purpose and contribution, and an understanding of themselves and others. They demonstrate this through aspirations to use their education wisely and kindly, whilst understanding how they can flourish and feel personally fulfilled.

Dr Challoner's Grammar School, Chesham Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 5HA

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