



Downe House



CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

PIANO ACCOMPANIST & ORGANIST
F/T MATERNITY COVER WITH
POTENTIAL FOR ONGOING
PERMANENT P/T POSITION



Message from the Headmistress

Thank you for the interest you have shown in joining Downe House. I hope this information pack provides a clear overview of the position and of what it is like to work at our School. If you have any queries, please do get in touch - we are always happy to help. I would also recommend visiting our website, where you will find a wealth of information about us.

Downe House is a very special place, where we work together with a shared purpose: to support our pupils in reaching their full potential. There is a strong sense of community here, and every member of staff, whatever their role, plays an important part in our success.

We seek to recruit the very best staff at Downe House, and I could not be more proud of our dedicated team. Our expectations are high, but in return we offer a supportive and friendly working environment, generous benefits, extensive CPD opportunities, and the chance to make a real difference.

I hope you will feel encouraged to apply, and we look forward to hearing from you.

With all good wishes

EMMA MCKENDRICK

About Downe House

Downe House is a leading UK independent day and boarding school for girls aged 11 – 18. Downe has long enjoyed a reputation for delivering a world-class education, focused on outstanding academic and extracurricular provision, and pastoral excellence.

Downe House was founded in 1907 by Olive Willis, who held a strong belief that a school should meet the needs of young women by prizing the individual and creating a strong community. With over 550 pupils, today's Downe House lives out the message that "each individual matters", alongside its Christian foundation and core values of kindness and respect for others. A Downe education sets out to inspire our pupils to succeed – and to prepare them to become inspiring role models as citizens of a global community.

Our immersive education gives girls both the freedom and support to develop their talents and interests. Inspirational teaching, enriching co-curricular opportunities and personalised curricula bring out the best in each girl, with holistic pastoral support. The lifelong friendships formed here create an unrivalled network of talented alumnae helping each other succeed beyond Downe House.



The School has an established reputation for academic excellence as well as outstanding pastoral care. We offer a flexible approach to suit the individual needs of our families, and girls have the choice of joining us as full boarders, flexi boarders or day pupils. Many of the girls are boarders, and they live in one of the ten on-site boarding houses. The emphasis is very much on creating a 'home from home' environment, and each house is staffed by a committed and caring team – some of whom are residential. Our ethos is to put families at the heart of our education, from creating the right balance between family time, to working in partnership with parents to ensure every girl gets the most out of school life.

Our international focus reflects our commitment and ambition to share our education management expertise on a global scale and to provide opportunities for staff and young people all over the world. Academic staff have the opportunity to participate in a global teacher exchange programme with our partner school in Australia. Selected pupils can also participate in our Global Schools Exchange or Global Internships programmes. We are committed to creating a diverse and global community within our founding School in Berkshire, alongside our international Schools in Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



EXCELLENCE IN PARTNERSHIP

In September 2026, Downe House School and Harrow School entered into a strategic structural partnership.

Building on our schools' shared ethos and commitment to single-sex boarding education, the partnership will strengthen academic, co-curricular and social opportunities for pupils, encourage innovation, and support staff development through shared expertise and resources. Families and alumni will also benefit from greater collaboration.

Both schools retain their distinct identities, traditions, sites, charities, governance structures and leadership.

Working for us

Downe House employs over 450 staff across a wide range of roles, including teachers, administrators, accountants, technicians, school nurses, housekeepers, matrons, and chefs. Working here means joining a welcoming, ambitious, and forward-thinking community where every member of staff is valued for the part they play in shaping the lives of our pupils. As a leading UK independent school with a proud heritage and a modern outlook, we strive to create an environment where students and staff alike can thrive. Colleagues describe Downe House as a place of genuine collaboration, where professional expertise is respected, and development is encouraged at every stage of your career.

Staff benefit from exceptional facilities, a beautiful campus, and strong investment in wellbeing and training. Whether your role is in teaching, pastoral care, administration, or support services, you will be supported by a highly professional team and offered many opportunities to get involved in all aspects of school life. Our culture is shaped by kindness, inclusivity, and a shared belief in the value of holistic education.

At Downe House, you will make a meaningful difference each day, enjoy a vibrant workplace, and contribute to an institution that strives for excellence while remaining grounded in community. We welcome talented, caring, and enthusiastic individuals who want to grow with us and help our pupils flourish.

Inspiring people



The position

PIANO ACCOMPANIST & ORGANIST

START DATE: January 2027

REPORTING TO: Director of Music

CONTRACT TYPE: Approximately 1 year Maternity Cover
Potential for permanent part time position beyond maternity cover period

SALARY: £30,000 - £36,000 p.a. actual salary inclusive of holiday pay
dependant on experience and qualifications
Full time, during 34 weeks p.a.

JOB PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

To be the accompanist for choir rehearsals, concerts, recitals, music in Chapel, competitions and other key music events throughout the academic year. In addition, to accompany pupils for termly graded instrumental and vocal music examinations.

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

We are proud of our award-winning, vibrant department where pupils are inspired to learn, love and lead music. Whether it is singing in choirs, composing film soundtracks, listening to music from a range of cultures, or recording songs in our studio - we are committed to the belief that music is for everyone. Our pupils regularly go on to study Music at University and Conservatoire level.

The department has 3 full-time teachers and 30 visiting music teachers. Students can have lessons on any orchestral instrument, voice, piano, organ, drum kit, orchestral percussion and guitar. Our facilities include 16 practice rooms, 2 academic teaching classrooms, a concert room, studio and 2 auditoria. We have a busy programme of events and concerts throughout the year.

There are an exciting range of musical ensembles including 4 large choirs, 4 instrumental ensembles, as well as a number of smaller ensembles. We actively encourage the involvement of Visiting Music Staff, both existing and new, in these ensembles! Our pupils regularly achieve highly in both internal and external music competitions.
Visit Music - Downe House School



KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide musical accompaniment for choir rehearsals, concerts, recitals, Chapel music, competitions and other key music events during the academic year, as well as termly graded instrumental and vocal music examinations.
- Play the organ for chapel services and events throughout the academic year. Chapel services take place weekly on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Weekend services include morning matins or Evensong on either Saturday or Sunday during term time.
- Organise and accompany (where applicable) solo/small ensemble performances before chapel services on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Facilitate the music accompaniment on either organ or piano for the beginning and end of term assemblies throughout the year.
- Be involved with trips, musical events and other initiatives in the Music Department such as the Minority Instrument Scheme, Prep Schools' Orchestral Fun Day, House Music, School's Young Musician of the Year Competition, and lunchtime concerts.
- Help prepare girls for auditions for national ensembles and competitions.
- Work with the Chaplain to facilitate the planning of music for services.
- Be the accompanist for the choir tour to Tuscany during 11th to 15th March 2027.
- Opportunities to get involved with leading co-curricular music ensembles.
- Teach individual and/or small group theory lessons (ABRSM Grades 1-5) and grades 6-8 aural coaching sessions in preparation for students' graded music exams.
- Fortnightly meetings with music award holders to mentor the scholars during the academic year.
- There may be the opportunity to prepare and deliver piano lessons to a range of pupils of different ages and abilities depending upon experience.
- Proactively encourage and facilitate girls to participate in internal and external musical activities including concerts and competitions.
- Participate in weekly departmental meetings, parents' meetings and whole School training events.
- Give other assistance to support the work of the Music Department as required by the Director of Music.



Person specification

Essential

- A relevant music degree and/or performing diploma and/or teaching qualification.
- Experience in the accompaniment of a wide range of instruments/voice from beginner to diploma level.
- Excellent sightreading skills and ability to learn repertoire quickly.
- Experience of accompanying students for graded music exams.
- Experience in accompanying choirs.
- A flexible approach to working hours on occasions.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal and people facing skills and an ability to form respectful working relationships with pupils, colleagues and within the School community.
- The ability to relate well to adolescents and enjoy their company.
- A strong commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- A genuine interest and enthusiasm for working in a school environment.
- Experience of teaching in a boarding and / independent school environment is desirable.
- A sense of humour.
- Sound organisational skills, and able to prioritise workload.
- The ability and desire to work collaboratively as part of a team.



Downe House is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and expects all staff to share this commitment and adhere to, and comply with, the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures at all times. Appointed candidates will be subject to an enhanced DBS check and an online social media check.

We promote equality of opportunity and support an environment that values and promotes diversity and inclusion.

Employee benefits



ANNUAL LEAVE

25 days + Christmas shutdown + Bank Holidays



BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

practical, probate & emotional support



COMMUNITY & SOCIAL

regular social events for staff & family



CPD

weekly opportunities for learning & development



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

confidential advice & counselling service



EYE TEST

free eye test & contribution towards glasses for regular VDU users



FLU VACCINATIONS

annual on-site free vaccinations



FREE MEALS

daily nutritious & delicious meals



EMPLOYEE REFERRAL REWARD

£300 for successful referrals



FEE REMISSION

generous discounted fees



GROUP INCOME PROTECTION

75% salary



GYM

free access to on-site gym & discounts at local gyms



HEALTH & WELLBEING

a range of health benefits i.e. Virtual GP & Online Physiotherapy



LIFE INSURANCE

3 x salary



LINE MANAGER SUPPORT

in house workshops & Aspiring Middle Leaders programme



LOCATION

well connected, within easy reach of A34 & M4



PARKING

plenty of onsite parking



PENSION

generous employer contributory schemes



SWIMMING POOL

access to heated on-site swimming pool



TECH

Microsoft showcase school using leading technologies



WORKING ENVIRONMENT

beautiful semi-rural campus on 104 acre estate



CYCLE TO WORK SCHEME

savings on purchasing a bicycle & accessories for commuting purposes



“I benefitted hugely from the coaching and mentoring that was available to me. Whilst Downe prides itself on seeking the best possible route for each student, this is true of their approach to their staff as well.”

“Downe House is a very busy, vibrant and exciting place to be a part of. The expectations within my role are high, but I have felt very supported since I started, and there is a tangible culture of collaboration and kindness at the school.”

“I’m enjoying being part of such a supportive team and a community that empowers young women to succeed. Downe House’s reputation and beautiful setting make it a truly inspiring place to work.”



Inspiring girls

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Downe
House

