



TONBRIDGE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

HEAD TEACHER CANDIDATE PACK



| WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in the role of Head Teacher at Tonbridge Grammar School.

We invite applications from individuals who are ready to offer compassionate, inspiring and ambitious leadership in a school where kindness sits at the heart of everything we do. This is a rare opportunity to lead the further development of a school which already holds a very strong reputation for outstanding academic achievement in an environment where the wellbeing of every student matters.

Tonbridge Grammar School (TGS) is a high-achieving, selective grammar school with academy status, educating girls between the ages of 11 and 16 and girls and boys in the Sixth Form. Our vibrant school community is a place where students and staff are encouraged to be the very best that they can be in a nurturing and kind climate where wellbeing is at the top of the agenda.

The School was ranked third in the South East and 14th in the UK in the 2026 Times Parent Power State Secondary School league table and was judged outstanding for overall effectiveness following an OFSTED inspection in December 2024.



Continued

Our intellectually challenging curriculum creates an environment where questioning, divergent thinking and the freedom to learn from mistakes are encouraged. We seek to provide a holistic education whereby valuable lifetime skills are developed within every student to support their future journey. With this in mind, we offer an extensive programme of co-curricular opportunities in which all students are engaged: a thriving Duke of Edinburgh Award programme, an extensive line-up of arts activities including a large number of students who participate in a variety of music groups, from orchestra and jazz band to musical theatre and choir. We welcome the inclusive nature of our community and celebrate the breadth and depth of opportunity this provides to young people from Tonbridge and across the South East.

Whilst proud of past achievements, the School is not standing still. We have an ambitious and ongoing building development programme, largely financed by generous private donations and grants, which, over the past decade, has allowed the building of an all-weather pitch, a Sixth Form centre, significant renovations to our assembly hall and dining facilities and further enhancement of our science and technology laboratories. Through initiatives such as the TGS Pupil Premium Promise, we are continuing to make the School more inclusive, ensuring students from all backgrounds can thrive and achieve.

Our new Head Teacher will be ready to lead the further development of the School, continuing the excellence for which we are already renown. We seek an engaging and innovative individual to join our community who is ready to meet the challenges of a rapidly developing local, national and international educational landscape and to take bold and principled actions when opportunities arise to pursue further excellence.

If you can fulfil this role, we would love to hear from you.

The Board of Trustees

INTRODUCTION

Tonbridge Grammar School opened in 1905 and is situated on a 5 acre site in South Tonbridge. With a PAN of 1,260 the School educates girls from 11-16, and boys and girls in the Sixth Form. Regularly oversubscribed in Year 7, it often features among the top-ranked schools in the South East and across the UK. We are a centre of excellence for learning where students and staff are encouraged to be the very best that they can be in a nurturing and kind community. Our enriching, academically ambitious curriculum promotes intellectual curiosity and personal growth, preparing students to mature as responsible global citizens. Our exceptionally dedicated team of over 100 staff support every student to success, and a deep engagement with diversity, equality and inclusion informs all our work as a school.

We are committed to:

- An inclusive environment – where no student is or feels left behind;
- Authentic learning – deeply rooted in the real world;
- Interconnected learning – promoting responsible action for a better world;
- Supporting individuals to thrive – securing social, emotional and intellectual wellbeing for all.

Members of our community are nurtured to be:

- Self-motivated, open-minded, and actively engaged in learning;
- Self-aware, adaptable, and creative – taking full advantage of all opportunities;
- Respectful and considerate – celebrating and encouraging in equal measure;
- Courageous and honourable – facing challenge with bravery and acting with integrity.

Facilities

Set on a hillside overlooking the town of Tonbridge, Tonbridge Grammar School comprises four separate buildings located around a central open area with extensive playing facilities to the front of the School.

The main Hands Building, which opened in 2009, offers light, modern and airy classrooms, specialist drama facilities, a fitness suite and a large multi-use sports hall. The School's science laboratories have benefitted from refurbishment in recent years, supported by funding from the Wolfson Foundation and a generous bequest.

In 2015, the School opened a brand-new Sixth Form Centre, and music facilities were significantly refurbished and enhanced to include a suite of soundproofed music pods and music technology and music recording facilities. Outdoor sports were further enhanced in 2018 with the levelling and reseeded of grass pitches alongside the construction of an all-weather pitch equipped for hockey in winter and tennis in summer. More recently, the assembly hall and dining facilities have been upgraded and the Technology department redesigned to better support the design process.

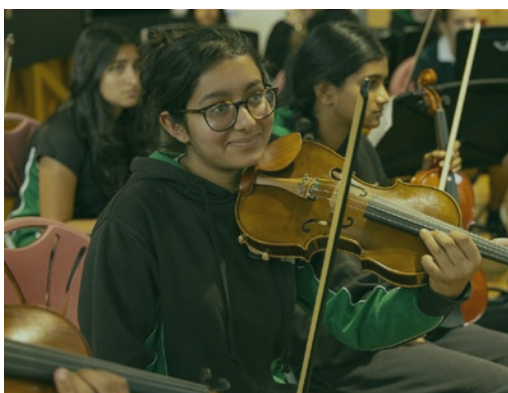
Our Commitment to Equality

As a provider of employment and education, we value the diversity of our staff and students. We consistently work to remove barriers to progress and are committed to fulfilling the Public Sector Equality Duty outlined in the Equality Act 2010.



Local Collaboration – WKSATA

Operating as a Single Academy Trust, the School works in partnership across a local network of schools in West Kent to secure and enhance educational opportunity for local students within and beyond the School. Arising out of this strong local networking, the West Kent Single Academies Trust Alliance (WKSATA) was formally established in September 2021. Governed by a memorandum of understanding, the aim of WKSATA is to ensure close collaboration across six local Single Academy Trusts that supports system-wide school improvement and staff professional development whilst retaining the individuality of each Alliance school.



An aerial photograph of Tonbridge, Kent, showing the town, the castle ruins, and the River Ton. The town is built on a hill, with a large stone wall and a river in the foreground. The castle ruins are prominent in the center, and the town extends to the background under a cloudy sky.

The School is situated in Tonbridge — in Kent, “The Garden of England” — close to Royal Tunbridge Wells, and an ideal base for trips into London and for exploring the beautiful Kent countryside on your doorstep. The area is highly sought after as a fantastic place to live and work: well connected to the countryside, easily commutable to central London and internationally, including road links to the Channel Tunnel, and within an hour’s drive of 4 major London airports. Public transport links to the School are good and on-site parking is available for staff.

Parents and carers extol the virtues of a school that ‘cares about the students as whole individuals’, is characterised by ‘supportive and respectful’ relationships and engenders pupils who are ‘freethinkers who have confidence’.

Staff have strong subject expertise. Their explanations are clear and precise. Staff know the typical misconceptions that exist in their subjects and teach them pre-emptively. This supports pupils in developing their understanding.

CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND OUR VISION

At Tonbridge Grammar School, academic success is only part of the story. Empowering young people with the understanding, courage and skills they need to be successful, happy, healthy and resilient in an ever-changing world has equal focus. Students learn how to learn, think critically and be positive agents for change, all in an environment where they can really be themselves.

“This is a school that cares about the students as whole individuals”.

Parent (Ofsted 2024).

The culture here is one of mutual respect, purpose and intent; student voice is at the heart of how we operate. Students are empowered to lead and manage projects; leadership in action can be witnessed every day in School. As well as creating and running their own societies and mentoring younger students, students take responsibility for many projects that would be taken on by adult leaders in other schools; for example taking the role of lead presenters at open events, event management and strategic reviews (for example, strongly influencing the School's approach to sustainability).

The wider school community is strong and cohesive with a community of engaged alumni, parents, partners and an involved and proactive PTA.



**“
An environment
where they
can really be
themselves”**



Supporting our community to

THRIVE

We champion social, emotional and intellectual wellbeing for all

Our community is safe and secure; providing a positive and nurturing environment to grow and develop intellectually, emotionally and socially. There is a consistent, holistic and properly resourced approach to positive health and wellbeing deeply embedded within the culture of our community.



Our learning is

AUTHENTIC

Learning deeply rooted in the real world

Our learning experience:

- Aligns with current and future world experiences, opportunities and challenges.
- Promotes and secures the development of important life skills.

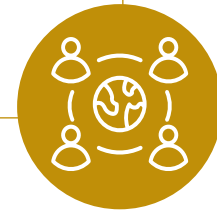


Our School Experience is

INCLUSIVE

Every individual is valued and supported to succeed

- We actively respect, value and celebrate the diversity of our community - ensuring everyone has a meaningful voice.
- The learning needs of every member of our community are properly recognised and supported.
- All members of our community feel accepted and secure with a strong sense of belonging.



Our learning is

INTERCONNECTED

Recognising our global connectedness - promoting responsible action for a better world

We educate for global citizenship:

- Learning that reaches beyond our community, making connections across cultures.
- Promoting an appreciation of different perspectives and the respectful interaction that makes a positive difference in the world.

Curriculum

TGS offers a curriculum designed to inspire, challenge and grow minds. Teachers are encouraged to use crosscurricular connections to develop students' intellectual curiosity, and learning often extends well beyond the requirements of the regular curriculum. Students are keen to learn, and teachers feel they have the space to be passionate about their subject. In this context, the School's 2024 OFSTED report states that

“Staff are adept at supporting pupils to develop increasingly complex understanding across subjects. Carefully selected activities foster a sense of achievement in pupils and an increasing independence. Staff ask probing questions that encourage pupils to think deeper still and develop critical thinking skills.”

In Years 7 to 9, the focus is on developing active, compassionate and lifelong learners through a broad and balanced curriculum and interdisciplinary learning opportunities, including annual Interdisciplinary Learning Week.

This is delivered through the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP), which encourages students to make connections between their studies and the real world, and to become reflective, principled thinkers.

The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 supports our students to acquire the learning skills and attributes to be successful independent learners and prepares them for outstanding success across a broad and balanced GCSE programme of study. Learning is designed to develop higher-order thinking skills and increases significantly in intellectual challenge as students progress through the School.

Our Sixth Form curriculum is designed to inspire, challenge and prepare students for their next chapter of education or life. In September 2026, whilst Year 13 students will complete their IB Diploma courses, all students entering Year 12 will follow an A Level curriculum, selecting three or four subjects, along with the opportunity to complete the Extended Project Qualification. Academic learning is supplemented by a core learning experience promoting critical thinking, research skills and the value of community service and engagement. There is a strong programme of careers education, including extensive support for higher education applications and programmes to support specific career pathways and destinations.

Whilst embracing the transition to A Levels, the School remains strongly committed to maintaining the established Sixth Form ethos, allowing our students opportunities to learn in breadth and depth in order to develop as well-balanced individuals and global citizens. Our students develop as active learners engaged in real-life projects and are encouraged to be passionate about making a difference in the world.

At the heart of our curriculum is a commitment to preparing students for success in an ever-changing world. This includes innovative STEM teaching, a programme of inspiring industry expert speakers and visits, for example to CERN in Geneva. The curriculum teaches research skills, critical thinking and digital literacy and guides students to understand the power (and limitations) of AI.



Internationalism

The ethos and curriculum at TGS are international in focus, our aim is for students to develop as global citizens who are empowered to make a difference in the world. Students are routinely encouraged to consider the global context of their learning. Being presented with real-world problems to solve is the norm as is the study of projects, texts, music, environmental solutions and art from around the world.

At the heart of this is a deep intercultural understanding, celebrated in our off-timetable culture days (run by the Sixth Form Diversity and Inclusion Alliance) when students celebrate their heritage through food, dress and student-led activities.

Naturally languages hold a central place in curriculum: all students study Spanish and French in Years 7 to 9 alongside Latin, continuing with at least one language to GCSE.

There are many opportunities for students to take part in initiatives which foster intercultural understanding and respect. For example, following the success of a music tour to Lake Garda in 2024, 80 students will be touring Barcelona, Catalonia and Southern France in Summer 2026. Other opportunities exist throughout the School and include a Ski Visit to Austria, visiting CERN in Geneva, running a Maths Challenge in the Netherlands and a Geography study trip to Iceland.

Safeguarding

Our aim is to educate able students and prepare them for life in an environment where all students and staff are treated with respect, and the safety and wellbeing of each individual in the School's care is prioritised. The Trustees and staff of Tonbridge Grammar School take responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all the children and young people entrusted to our care very seriously.



***“ As I walked to school this morning and saw all the colourful costumes, I felt proud to be part of such a diverse community.*”**

YEAR 12 STUDENT ABOUT CULTURE DAY

SUPPORTING EVERY STUDENT

Supporting every student from their transition into Year 7 until they leave as young adults is at the heart of everything we do. We aim to empower students to be happy and resilient in today's ever-changing world and ensure that no student is left behind, as reflected in the School receiving the 'Kent Resilience and Wellbeing Award' in 2025.



“Pupils not only feel supported in school, but also develop a toolkit of strategies to help support them beyond the classroom”

OFSTED 2024

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Wellbeing

Student and staff wellbeing is a priority at Tonbridge Grammar School. The School has invested in a dedicated Wellbeing Team, primarily based in our 'Wellbeing Hub'. However, our commitment to wellbeing extends into every aspect of school life, reflecting our understanding that a comprehensive wellbeing programme depends upon health, people, environment and skills, that happier young people make better learners, and that teacher wellbeing is a predictor of student wellbeing. The dedicated team includes Student Support Coordinators, the Mental Health Coordinator, a Safeguarding Officer, Counselling Services, a fully qualified Nurse and a wellbeing dog. Wellbeing staff work closely with our Safeguarding Team and external agencies to offer tailored, professional and timely support for individuals, groups and cohorts to support positive mental health and wellbeing.

SEND

Our aim is to educate able students and prepare them for life. Our curriculum is designed to provide a broad and balanced education for all students that allows them to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. We recognise that at any point in a student's career at school, they may have a special educational need. This may arise through an academic difficulty, physical difficulty or emotional difficulty. These needs can be temporary or may be permanent.

Our SEND Team provides professional guidance to support colleagues and works with staff, parents and other agencies to ensure that students with SEND receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching.

Supporting Every Student

At Tonbridge Grammar School, every student is supported to be the very best they can be, and we strongly believe that no student should be excluded from any aspect of the education and activities that we offer. These initiatives ensure a seven year support programme that includes uniform grants, support for travel costs, the loan of a laptop, essential equipment for classes (such as calculators and stationery), support to attend domestic and international school trips, and a contribution towards university set-up costs.

Up to 15 places are set aside in Year 7 for able local children in receipt of the Pupil Premium grant. Students in Years 7–11 at TGS in receipt of Pupil Premium support are assisted through our 'Pupil Premium Promise', whilst students in the Sixth Form who were previously in receipt of Pupil Premium benefit from our Sixth Form Promise. These initiatives include uniform grants, support for travel costs, the loan of a laptop, essential equipment for classes (such as calculators and stationery), support to attend domestic and international school trips, and a contribution towards university set-up costs.

Through our Horizons project, we work with local primary Heads to identify able disadvantaged boys and girls in Years 4 and 5 and provide a programme of academic support to raise their aspirations and readiness for grammar school.

Alongside grant income, our programmes of financial and wider support for economic disadvantage are supported by the Debney Endowment Trust.

The Debney Endowment Trust

The Debney Endowment Trust was established in July 2021 following a substantial legacy from a much-loved former staff colleague, Joy Debney. The objective of the charity is to advance social inclusion by promoting educational opportunity and wellbeing for all, regardless of circumstance.



“Enabling all students to fully benefit from, and participate in, the TGS Sixth Form experience”

TRUSTEES, LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Governance

As a Single Academy Trust, Tonbridge Grammar School is governed by Members and Trustees.

Members

Tonbridge Grammar School has four Members whose role is similar to a company's shareholder – they sit above the Board of Trustees. Members have an important role to play in overseeing and holding the Trustees to account for the general governance of the Trust. Their specific responsibilities are set out in the Articles of Association.

Trustees

The Trustee Board is the governing body of the Trust and is responsible for ensuring compliance with charity and company law and the Academy Trust's funding agreement. They are accountable to the Members of the Trust and the Secretary of State for Education.

The Trustee Board has three core functions:

Setting the strategic direction of the Trust

Holding the Head Teacher to account for educational performance

Ensuring financial health, probity and value for money.

Trustees set the aims and objectives for the School, as well as the policies and targets for achieving them. They monitor and evaluate the progress the School is making towards achieving its goals and act as a source of challenge and support to the Head Teacher, a critical friend.

Leadership and Management

The Head Teacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the School and the implementation of the strategic framework established by the Trustee Board.

It is envisaged that the new Head Teacher will lead and line manage:

- The Strategic Leadership Team
- The Personal Assistant to the Head Teacher

The Strategic Leadership Team currently consists of:

- 2 Deputy Head Teachers
- 3 Assistant Head Teachers
- 1 Business Manager



HEAD TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION

Role Overview

The Head Teacher is directly accountable to the Governing Board for the educational performance, financial management, and overall strategic leadership of Tonbridge Grammar School. The successful candidate will lead with emotional intelligence, balancing an unwavering commitment to student and staff wellbeing with a drive for continued educational excellence.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Lead

- **Cultivate Vision:** Articulate a sophisticated strategic vision to advance the School's existing strengths.
- **Navigate Change:** Ground strategies in a rapidly evolving educational, technological, and economic landscape.
- **Champion Innovation:** Provide visible, confident leadership in the responsible adoption of digital technology.
- **Honour Heritage:** Drive ambition while respecting TGS traditions and culture.



HEAD TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION

continued

Organisational Leadership & Operational Management

- **Inspire Teams:** Lead, develop, and empower a talented Senior Leadership Team and staff body.
- **Build Capacity:** Foster an inclusive, open-door culture rooted in peer coaching and shared practice.
- **Nurture Talent:** Create clear pathways and opportunities for future internal leadership progression.
- **Fiscal Stewardship:** Collaborate with the Business Manager to ensure robust financial sustainability and value for money.
- **Effective Partnerships:** Partner transparently with the Board of Trustees through accurate reporting and appraisal.
- **Engage Stakeholders:** Communicate sensitively and authoritatively with parents, alumni, and local networks.
- **Elevate Student Voice:** Actively integrate student feedback into the life and direction of the School.
- **Prioritise Wellbeing:** Value staff voices through empathetic leadership and active workload consideration.
- **Manage Performance:** Direct robust staff development frameworks and professional responsibility systems.
- **Ensure Compliance:** Be responsible for regulatory compliance, proactive risk management, and inspection readiness.



HEAD TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION

continued

Educational Culture

- **Live the Values:** Ensure TGS core values are actively lived across the entire community.
- **Foster Connection:** Deepen relationships between students, staff, and families so everyone thrives.
- **Champion Excellence:** Strengthen the School's reputation as a local and national educational leader.
- **Drive Social Mobility:** Widen access, eliminate barriers to success, and nurture intellectual curiosity for all backgrounds.
- **Enrich Curriculum:** Maintain a challenging, high-quality, internationally minded, and holistic curriculum.

External Engagement

- **Expand Networks:** Build local, national, and international partnerships to enrich school growth.
- **Share Knowledge:** Collaborate with other schools to facilitate shared professional development.



HEAD TEACHER PERSON SPECIFICATION

The successful candidate will demonstrate the following qualifications, experience, skills, knowledge, and personal attributes:

Qualifications

- **QTS:** Qualified Teacher Status.
- **NPQH:** National Professional Qualification for Headship.
- **CPD:** Documented record of continuous, accredited professional development.

Experience

- **Senior Leadership:** Proven track record as a Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher in a comparable setting.
- **Culture Change:** Demonstrated success in managing whole-school change, transition, and strategic development.
- **Wellbeing Integration:** Experience embedding a holistic whole-school approach to mental health and community welfare.
- **Holistic Focus:** Deep understanding of educational excellence extending beyond the curriculum.
- **Financial Management:** experience with budget oversight and strategic resource allocation.
- **DEI Advancement:** Evidenced success in driving tangible diversity, equality, and inclusion outcomes.
- **Governance:** Success working directly with, and being accountable to Governors or Trustees.
- **Curriculum Ethos:** Clear appreciation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) vision.
- **Global Exposure:** Direct experience or deep engagement with educational systems and cultures outside of the UK, informed by a genuinely international perspective.

Skills and Knowledge

- **Empowering Style:** Visible leadership that inspires autonomy, initiative, and accountability.
- **Exceptional Communication:** High emotional intelligence, charisma, and authority when engaging audiences.
- **Crisis Management:** Composure and skill to lead effectively under public and media scrutiny.
- **Commercial Acumen:** Strong grasp of the business and estates dimensions of modern headship.
- **Pedagogical Expertise:** Deep understanding of advanced teaching, learning, and curriculum design.
- **Tech Literacy:** Sound grasp of digital tools, AI implications, and digital safeguarding.
- **Strategic Judgement:** Capacity to respond thoughtfully to political and educational shifts.

Personal Attributes

- **Value-Driven:** Deep personal alignment with the ethos, history, and core values of TGS.
- **Empathetic Leader:** High emotional intelligence that places wellbeing at the heart of decision-making.
- **Authentic & Adaptable:** High integrity, deep listening skills, and openness to fresh pedagogical perspectives.
- **Student-Centric:** Unwavering focus on what is best for the student experience, balancing wellbeing with outcomes.
- **Safeguarding Champion:** Unwavering commitment to enforcing a strong safeguarding culture and compliance across all school areas.
- **Courageous Leadership:** Bravery and resolve to take bold actions to drive improvement and make difficult decisions amid financial or competitive pressures.
- **Dynamic Mindset:** Strong personal drive, resilience, humility, and flexibility, combined with an appetite for innovation and calculated risk.
- **Sustained Wellbeing:** The self-awareness and emotional intelligence to model and protect your own wellbeing, recognising it as a prerequisite for protecting staff wellbeing across the School.



HOW TO APPLY

If you wish to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or would like to have an informal discussion, please contact Ross Laird at Academicis, our recruitment partner, on rlaird@academicis.co.uk or by phone on 07901 585959 / 01223 907979.

CLOSING DATE:

14th September 2026

SHORTLISTING:

16th September 2026

INTERVIEWS:

21st & 22nd September 2026



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