



PRIESTLEY COLLEGE **PRINCIPAL APPLICANT PACK**

SERVE CHALLENGE EMPOWER

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For more information on the academy and the Trust visit our websites:

www.priestley.ac.uk

www.tcat.uk.com

Welcome from the CEO

Dear candidate,

Thank you for the interest you have shown in the position of Principal at Priestley College.

Priestley College is a thriving and well-established 16-19 academy located in the heart of Warrington. This is a unique opportunity for an inspirational leader with proven senior management experience in post 16 education or secondary settings and the drive to continue Priestley's journey of excellence and innovation

With around 2,000 learners and a wide curriculum offering of over 70 A Level, T Level and vocational courses, Priestley plays a vital role in shaping the future of young people across the area. As a proud member of The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT), the college works collaboratively with local schools to drive educational excellence and improve outcomes for all young people in Warrington. Priestley is recognised for its inclusive culture, high-quality teaching, strong student motivation, and ambitious, well-planned curriculum.

The successful candidate will become part of a thriving community with a committed and talented staff body, amazing students, supportive parents and a strong local governing body. We are looking for a talented and ambitious leader to lead the academy on the next exciting chapter of its journey.

I would like to thank you again for your interest in the post and look forward to receiving your application.

Yours faithfully,

Andy Moorcroft
Chief Executive Officer

About Priestley Sixth Form College

Priestley College is a founder member of The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT); it is an inclusive, successful and ambitious Sixth Form College which has been serving young people from Warrington and the surrounding areas since 1979.

The college offers a broad and flexible curriculum which includes more than 70 A-Level, T-Level and Level 2 courses, as well as a range of extra-curricular opportunities. The majority of students build a study programme from three Level 3 pathways: Academic A Level, a mixed A Level with vocational pathway and a full vocational pathway. Over 100 students undertake a Level 2 programme each year and approximately 300 students resit GCSE English and maths. We also run a thriving Level 4 Art Foundation course.

Priestley students have a consistent record of achieving a pass rate of 99% or better in A-Levels and each year around 30 A-Levels see a 100% success rate. Similar accolades are secured in Vocational subjects and in T-Levels. We are proud of the achievements of our students, many of whom progress to top universities, higher apprenticeships and employment. Close to 1 in 4 UCAS applicants accepted offers at Russell Group/Sutton 30 Universities and we have an above national average success rate of interview to offer rates at Oxford and Cambridge.

The quality of education we provide in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths was recognised when we became the first dedicated sixth form in the country to receive STEM-assured status. Priestley was one of the first colleges in the country to provide T-Levels and we also boast the UK's first dual rugby academy, acknowledging the level of coaching received by both girls and boys. We consistently support progress to competitive Degree Apprenticeships, Drama, Art Colleges and Music Conservatoires.

We place a strong emphasis on high-quality teaching, personalised support and creating a positive learning environment where students can thrive. Our values focus on respect, responsibility and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Priestley hosts over 2,000 students, recruiting from 55 schools across Warrington and the North-West. 46% of students live in POLAR 4 quintile 1 and 2 postcodes, 14% of students are from BAME backgrounds. 32% of students have access arrangements and we also have a number of high funded students.

Priestley has a vibrant, modern campus with specialist facilities, strong links with employers and universities, and a dedicated staff team who work hard to help every student reach their potential.

About The Challenge Academy Trust

TCAT was formed in 2017 by like-minded leaders of local primary and secondary schools in Warrington along with Priestley College. Our vision is rooted in our mission – to serve, challenge and empower the educational community. We embody this mission by offering highly effective services to our academies, fostering strong leadership, investing in our workforce and inspiring the children and young people in our care.

These guiding principles are anchored in our core values, which encompass:

- Inclusivity and social justice
- Educational excellence
- Collaboration and interdependence
- Challenge and service
- Care and sustainability
- Celebrating difference

These values underpin everything we do as a trust, shaping our services and working practices. We operate around three core principles:

- **Continuous professional development:** An extensive range of training for teacher and support staff at all levels of the organisation. We invest in our staff to ensure they feel valued, develop as practitioners and provide the best outcomes for our young people.
- **Collaboration:** We aim to create strength through interdependence and collective accountability in our working practices via our extensive professional hub network.
- **Challenge & support in equal measure:** A programme of quality assurance provides our academies with a ‘mirror on themselves’ with the expertise and experience to support improvement where necessary.

There are currently 14 member academies based in Warrington, St Helens and Wirral, including six primary academies, seven secondary academies and a sixth form college, all rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. We also operate our own outdoor education company located on the island of Anglesey which sits within 35 acres of land on its own peninsula.

We have around 12,000 children and young people in our care along with over 1,500 staff and revenue of more than £130 million. These may seem like huge numbers; however, we pride ourselves on maintaining an intimacy within this which is built upon positive and professional relationships.

Recognised by the Department for Education as a ‘strong’ trust, we are proud of the current financial and educational health of the trust. Ours is a trust that is financially secure and fully compliant, with a record of clean audits, positive ESFA reviews and a healthy surplus linked to a strong investment strategy.

Follow the links to learn more about TCAT:

[TCAT Annual Impact Report 2024](#)

[TCAT Prospectus](#)

[About Us – The Challenge Academy Trust](#)

We are not an organisation prone to resting on its laurels; this trust is growing in size, diversity and in influence and this is an exciting time to join our Trust. We encourage candidates to get in touch for a conversation about the role and look forward to receiving your application.

About the role

Job Title:	Principal – Priestley College
Salary:	£122,306 - £141,693
Terms & Conditions:	Sixth Form Colleges Association Leadership Terms
Pension Scheme:	Teachers' Pension Scheme
Start Date:	August 2026

We are seeking to appoint an exceptional and visionary Principal to lead our vibrant and ambitious Sixth Form College to continue Priestley's journey of excellence and innovation. You will be a dynamic and self-motivated professional with a proven track record of leadership within education.

The Principal is the leading professional at the academy. Accountable to the Local Governing Challenge Board (LGCB) and the Trust Board; the Principal provides vision, leadership and direction for the academy and ensures that it is managed and organised to meet its aims and targets. We are looking for an individual with ambition and drive to deliver the next chapter of Priestley College's exciting journey. This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced leader with proven experience of school/college improvement, impact and delivery.

The Principal, working with others, is responsible for the academy's academic performance and operational management. This will include ensuring equality of opportunity for all; developing policies and practices, ensuring that resources are efficiently and effectively used to achieve the academy's aims and objectives and for the day-to-day management, organisation and administration of the academy.

The new Principal will also become a member of The Challenge Academy Trust's Central Executive Team, who are responsible for the key strategic direction of the trust.

You will be expected to attend regular meetings and work with other Principals and Headteachers within the trust to deliver the trust's key charitable aim of educational advancement. To this end, you will need to be a team player with the skills and qualities to support system leadership.

Working for The Challenge Academy Trust

At The Challenge Academy Trust, we want to embed a culture that champions better work and working lives across the Trust; a framework to support and develop our workforce all through their time with us.

KEY GOALS

Our staff workload, wellbeing and benefits offer demonstrates our commitment to ensure we can:

- Provide a workload that is fair and reasonable.
- Foster an environment where employee health and wellbeing are actively supported and promoted.
- Develop employee's personal and professional skills and knowledge continuously throughout their careers.
- Provide structured routes for career progression.
- Reward people fairly with transparent and appropriate pay and conditions of service alongside additional benefits.

The TCAT Offer

Alongside an extensive professional development programme and coaching methodology, our TCAT Plus Rewards Platform offers discounts, rewards, and well-being resources to staff. Benefits include an interest-free technology purchasing scheme, a salary sacrifice green car lease scheme, and a mortgage advice resource, enhancing our overall staff offering.



- Continuous Professional Development
- TCAT Plus (Health, Wellbeing & Staff discounts)
- Cycle to Work scheme
- Smart Tech
- Car Benefit scheme
- Hub support model
- Pension
- Workload strategy
- Maternity, paternity, adoption & shared parental leave
- Enhanced annual leave for support staff
- Entitlement to occupational sick pay

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title:	Principal – Priestley College
Responsible to:	Local Governing Challenge Board / TCAT Chief Executive Officer

PURPOSE

Accountable to the LGCB and the TCAT CEO, the Principal will provide strategic and operational leadership of Priestley College so that the academy's aims are implemented in accordance with and subject to:

- The provisions of all applicable legislation and any orders and regulations having effect under any such legislation
- The provisions of the funding agreement between the Trust, College and the Department for Education.
- Any rules, regulations or policies made by the Trust

The Principal will be responsible for the overall leadership and management of the College, including the development and implementation of its strategic planning process, the management of quality and standards, the organisation of its internal structures and administration, and the application of efficient financial management targets and reporting systems.

MAIN DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

1. Develop a shared vision, which inspires and motivates students, staff and all other members of the college community.
2. Provide positive leadership to college staff to ensure that the college delivers the highest standards.
3. Promote equality of opportunity for all through the college's policies, procedures and practices.

Strategic Direction

1. Work with the LGCB and TCAT, to analyse and plan for the future needs and further development of the college within the local, national and international context.
2. Work to translate the vision into agreed objectives and operational plans which will promote and sustain academy improvement.
3. Secure the commitment of parents and the wider community to the vision and direction of the college.
4. Promote creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate existing and new technologies to achieve excellence.
5. Ensure all policies and procedures deliver best practice and drive a highly efficient academy.
6. Ensure that the management, finance, organisation and administration of the college support its vision and aims.
7. Monitor, evaluate and review the impact of policies, priorities and targets of the college and take action if necessary.

Leading Teaching & Learning

1. Create an ethos and provide educational vision and direction which secures effective teaching, successful learning and achievement by students and sustained development in their intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural and physical growth.
2. Ensure a culture and ethos of challenge and support where all students can achieve success and become engaged in their own learning.
3. Ensure that all students receive a good quality education through programmes designed to promote a stimulating style of learning in a safe and healthy academy environment.
4. Determine, organise and implement a diverse, flexible curriculum and implement an effective assessment framework.
5. Ensure a consistent and continuous academy-wide focus on students' achievement, using data and benchmarks to monitor progress in every young person's learning.
6. Ensure that teaching and learning is at the centre of strategic planning and resource management.
7. Implement strategies which secure high standards of behaviour and attendance.
8. Take a strategic role in the development of the new and emerging technologies to enhance and extend the learning experience of students.
9. Monitor, evaluate and review classroom practice and promote improvement strategies to ensure that underperformance is challenged at all levels and ensure effective corrective action

Leading and Managing Staff

1. Lead, motivate, support, challenge and develop staff to secure improvement.
2. Ensure that all staff are engaged with key priorities and the development of the academy's aims and objectives, through effective communication.
3. Maximise the contribution of staff to improve the quality of education provided and standards achieved and ensure that constructive working relationships are formed between staff and students.
4. Plan, allocate, support and evaluate work undertaken by groups, teams and individuals, ensuring clear delegation of tasks and devolution of responsibilities, ensuring a reasonable balance for teacher and other members of staff, in work carried out in the academy and work carried out elsewhere.
5. Implement and sustain effective systems for the management of staff performance.
6. Acknowledge the responsibilities and celebrate the achievement of individuals and teams.

Managing Resources

1. Agree and set appropriate priorities for expenditure with TCAT and the LGCB, allocate funds and monitor the effective administration and control of academy budgets.
2. Deploy and manage the academy's financial and human resources efficiently and effectively to achieve the academy's educational goals and priorities in line with the academy's strategic plan and financial context.
3. Recruit, deploy and develop all staff effectively in order to improve the quality of education provided.
4. Manage and organise accommodation efficiently and effectively to ensure all academy buildings meet the needs of the curriculum, are of the highest standard of cleanliness and repair and comply with health and safety regulations.

Managing Resources

5. Ensure adherence to appropriate Health and Safety regulations and ensure that risk assessments are undertaken before sanctioning participation in any potentially hazardous activity.
6. Ensure the range, quality and use of all available resources is monitored, evaluated and reviewed to improve the quality of education for all students and provide value for money.
7. Use and integrate a range of technologies effectively and efficiently to manage the academy.

Public Relations

1. Act at all times as an ambassador for the college in a manner which upholds its values and ethos.
2. Actively promote the college within the local community being responsible for handling the media and all aspects of public relations.

Community

1. Build a college culture and curriculum which takes account of the richness and diversity of the academy's communities.
2. Ensure a range of community-based learning experiences.
3. Collaborate with other agencies in providing for the intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural, physical, social and emotional well-being of students and their families.
4. Co-operate and work with relevant agencies to protect young people.
5. Promote positive strategies for challenging prejudice and dealing with all forms of harassment and bullying.
6. Maintain an effective partnership with parents and carers to support and improve students' achievement and personal development.
7. Contribute to the development of the education system by sharing effective practice, working in partnership with other academies and promoting innovative initiatives.
8. Seek opportunities to invite parents and carers, community figures, business or other organisations into the academy to enhance and enrich the academy and its value to the wider community.
9. Ensure that the academy offers appropriate extended services.

Accountability

1. Encourage an academy ethos which enables everyone to work together, share knowledge and understanding, celebrate success and accept responsibility for outcomes.
2. Adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty / Equality Act and the need to eliminate discrimination and any other prohibited conduct and advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and foster good relations amongst all staff and students
3. Ensure individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, understood and agreed and are subject to rigorous review and evaluation.
4. Work closely with the LGCB to provide any information, objective advice and support which enables the governing body to meet its responsibilities.
5. Present a coherent and accurate account of the academy's performance in a form appropriate to a range of audiences, including parents, the local authority, the local community, Ofsted and others, to enable them to contribute effectively.

6. Ensure that parents and students are well-informed about the curriculum, attainment and progress and about the contribution that they can make in achieving the academy's targets for improvement.
7. Develop an organisation in which all staff recognise that they are accountable for the success of the academy.

PRINCIPAL – PRIESTLEY COLLEGE PERSON SPECIFICATION			
CRITERIA		Essential/ Desirable	Evidenced From
Qualifications	Qualified Teacher status	Essential	Application form
	NPQH (possession of, or working towards if the application is for first Principalship)	Essential	
	Post-Qualification study relevant to post	Desirable	
Professional Development	Updated professional skills including management development	Essential	Application form Selection process
	Participation in work with other academies/agencies	Desirable	
	Experience of leading in-service activities for others	Desirable	
Experience	Proven track record of successful management in secondary / post 16 education	Essential	Application form
	Experience of post 16 education	Essential	
	Leadership experience in secondary / post 16 education	Desirable	
	Experience in at least two academies	Desirable	
Leadership	Capacity to provide creative and enriching leadership to the academy and the community	Essential	Selection process
	Able to demonstrate behaviours that inspire and motivate others	Essential	
	Capacity to recognise the gap between 'expected' and 'strong' standards.	Essential	
Shaping the Future	Strategic thinker	Essential	Supporting statement
	Possessor of an educational vision	Essential	

	Awareness of national and global trends	Essential	Selection process References
	Commitment to sustained academy improvement and a desire to enhance provision for all	Essential	
	Awareness of the way in which developing technologies can impact upon teaching, learning and management	Essential	
	Successful experience of initiating, supporting and implementing change processes that had a beneficial impact	Desirable	
Leading Learning & Teaching	Commitment to student engagement and achievement being at the centre of strategic planning and resource management	Essential	Supporting statement Selection process References
	Success in raising student achievement through review, evaluation, intervention and challenging target-setting	Essential	
	Understanding of practical teaching and learning strategies and developing curriculum structures	Essential	
	Evidence of curriculum leadership	Desirable	
	Experience of monitoring and evaluating teaching	Desirable	
	Experience of delivery to the 'Every Child Matters' and the 'Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development' Agendas	Desirable	
	Experience of employing data to enhance attainment and achievement	Desirable	
Leading and Managing Staff	Ability to lead and manage decisively within a collaborative ethos	Essential	Supporting statement Selection process References
	Ability to identify and develop strengths in individuals, groups and a commitment to prioritising the professional development of staff	Essential	
	Experience of leading performance management processes	Desirable	
Managing Resources	Experience of management of human and financial resources at a strategic level	Essential	Supporting statement Selection process References
	Experience of setting and managing a budget	Desirable	
	Experience of establishing and developing academy administrative systems	Desirable	
	Experience of IT systems for resource and budget management	Desirable	

Securing Accountability	Capacity to establish and monitor accountabilities	Essential	Selection process References
	Empowering staff at all levels with well-defined responsibilities and clear accountability	Essential	
	Experience of working with a Governing Body	Desirable	
Strengthening Community Links	Commitment to enhancing provision and raising attainment in collaboration with the community as a whole	Essential	Supporting statement Selection process References
	Demonstrate commitment to extra-curricular enrichment	Essential	
	Supportive of the 'extended schools' agenda	Essential	
	Achievement in developing links with external partners and the wider community	Desirable	
	Experience of promoting academy activities within a community	Desirable	
Developing Self and Working with Others	Fluent and effective communicator	Essential	Supporting statement Selection process
	Able to establish professional working relationships with all members of the academy community	Essential	
	Adheres to and encourage in others professional standards of fairness and integrity	Essential	
	Success in fostering parental support of students' learning, attendance and behaviour	Desirable	
	Leadership of the professional development of staff	Desirable	
Personal Qualities and Attributes	Enthusiastic, energetic and self-motivating	Essential	Selection process
	Intellectually versatile, perceptive and innovative	Essential	
	Able to prioritise and delegate as circumstances require	Essential	
	Accessible, responsive and accountable	Essential	
	Comfortable in the public domain	Essential	
	Resilient and respond well to pressure	Essential	
	Able to self-evaluate in order to manage change	Essential	

	Capable of responding constructively to criticism	Essential	References
	The ability to prioritise own workload and that of others to allow for appropriate home/work balance, and to model this to others	Essential	
	Commitment to uphold the 7 principles of public life (Nolan Principles) at all times	Essential	
Safeguarding Children	Committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people	Essential	Selection process References

How to apply

To arrange an informal discussion about the role, please contact Andrew Moorcroft, TCAT CEO, via email: a.moorcroft@tcat.uk.com

Tours of the academy can be arranged on request by contacting Victoria Briggs TCAT Director of Education via email: v.briggs@tcat.uk.com

Applications can be made by visiting our website.

[Careers & Vacancies – The Challenge Academy Trust](#)

All applications will be acknowledged. If you have not received confirmation within 24 hours during academy hours, please contact Ben Logan on 01925 948815.

The closing date for applications is **noon on Monday 09 March 2026**

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an **assessment centre, to be held on Thursday 26 March 2026**

Following the assessment centre, candidates will be reviewed with successful candidate being invited to a **formal panel interview on Friday 27 March 2026**.

Priestley Sixth Form College & The Challenge Academy Trust are committed to promoting the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All appointments are made subject to an Enhanced DBS check. We are an Equal Opportunities Employer, and our employment policies, procedures and practices are regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation. We are committed to creating a workplace culture that is inclusive, positive, and fair with opportunity for all.