



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE
PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

**Headteacher
Candidate Pack**



Welcome

from the Chair of the Board

Dear Prospective Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the position of Headteacher at the University of Cambridge Primary School (UCPS). We are delighted to invite applications from exceptional leaders who are deeply committed to excellence in education and who share our vision for inspiring and inclusive learning.

UCPS is the first University Training School at primary level in the UK and we are proud to have been recognised as an Ofsted Outstanding school (2025). Our unique partnership with the University of Cambridge enables us to combine cutting-edge educational research with exemplary classroom practice. This research-inspired approach is woven through every level of our school, from our leadership and teaching to the daily experiences of our children, ensuring that learning is always reflective, innovative and evidence-informed.

Building on the outstanding leadership and vision of our previous Headteachers, we are now seeking a successor who will both honour and evolve their legacy. The successful candidate will demonstrate a strong alignment with our ethos and values, a passion for nurturing the whole child, and the strategic acumen to guide the school through its next exciting chapter.

You will lead a talented and dedicated team of senior leaders, teachers, and non-teaching staff, fostering learning cultures of collaboration and curiosity while also 'releasing the imagination' with the whole primary school's community. Working closely with the Governing Body and wider stakeholders, you will ensure that UCPS continues to deliver exceptional educational outcomes and remains a national exemplar for research-informed practice.

This is a pivotal leadership opportunity, requiring a visionary and inspiring individual who can balance strategic insight with empathy, creativity, and operational excellence. Your ability to build strong partnerships, lead with integrity, and champion innovation will be key to sustaining and further developing our school's success.

If you are ready to take on this exciting and meaningful challenge, we warmly invite you to apply and share your expertise, passion, and vision for the future of UCPS.

Thank you once again for your interest in joining our exceptional school community. We look forward to learning more about how you could contribute to the next stage of our journey.

I look forward to receiving your application.

Yours sincerely,



Marcin Mieczkowski
Chair of UCPS Trust Board



About UCPS

There are three defining features of our University Training School.

1

Firstly, we are committed to being an exceptional primary school – one that is inclusive, ambitious for every child, and innovative in its practice.

2

Secondly, we work in close partnership with the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, and other partners, to play a central role in Initial Teacher Education. By offering placements within our school, we support and inspire new teachers as they begin their professional journeys, helping to shape the next generation of primary school educators.

3

Thirdly, we are both research-informed and research-generating. From our earliest days, we have developed and delivered high-quality professional development programmes rooted in academic scholarship and designed to bring theory, research, and classroom practice together in meaningful ways.

We continually seek opportunities to extend our thinking and collaborate with others, ensuring that our research-engaged practice not only raises educational standards but also contributes positively to society. Aligned with the vision and values of our sole Trust member, the University of Cambridge, we remain deeply committed to educational excellence, inclusion, and innovation.

Since opening in September 2015, UCPS has grown into a thriving three-form entry primary school, educating over 600 children and serving as a vibrant hub for learning, teaching, and research.



Our ETHOS

Our ethos is built on three core principles: inclusion, ambition, and innovation. These values shape everything we do and define the culture of the University of Cambridge Primary School.

We believe in the power of collaboration, founded on strong relationships, mutual respect, and clear communication. We believe that every child has the capacity to learn and to flourish, and that each one brings unique strengths, perspectives, and potential to our community. We see children as capable, curious, and powerful learners who thrive in an environment that is both kind and caring, yet grounded in clear boundaries and high expectations. We balance challenge with support, enabling our children to grow as independent, confident, and reflective learners.

Our approach goes beyond academic success. We aim to nurture values of empathy, respect, trust, courage, and gratitude, ensuring our pupils develop both the knowledge and character to lead fulfilling and purposeful lives.

As the first University Training School for primary education, we strive to be a brilliant and forward-thinking primary school, informed by both academic research and the professional wisdom of teachers and learning coaches. Our work continues to build on the Cambridge Primary Review (2010), striving not only for excellence within our school but also to create networks of educational innovation locally, nationally, and internationally.

In all that we do, we are guided by Professor Maxine Greene's call to "release the imagination and celebrate the art of the possible" – inspiring our children, staff, and community to envision and create a better world through education.



About the role

The University of Cambridge Primary School (UCPS) is an inclusive, ambitious, and innovative school with a pioneering mission - to reimagine what primary education can be. As the first University Training School for primary education in the UK, we are committed to challenging convention, engaging deeply with educational research, and inspiring both children and adults to approach learning with curiosity, courage, and creativity.

We are seeking a Headteacher who will lead with vision, integrity, and imagination. The successful candidate will uphold our culture of high expectations, care, and community, ensuring that every child achieves and thrives within a joyful, inclusive environment.

This is a rare opportunity to lead a school that not only delivers exceptional education but also acts as a hub for research and professional learning. Working in close collaboration with the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, the Headteacher will continue to strengthen UCPS's role as a centre for educational innovation and research, shaping thinking and practice both locally, nationally and globally. At UCPS, learning is a shared, lifelong endeavour. Inspired by the words of John Dewey, we believe that

“the most important attitude that can be formed is the desire to go on learning.”

The Headteacher will model this spirit - empowering staff, pupils, and the wider community to keep asking new questions, exploring new ideas, and re-imagining what is possible in futuring education and living well.



Job Description

Job Title	Headteacher
Reporting to	The Board of Trustees
Line-managing	Executive Leadership Team
Salary Scale	Competitive, depending on experience

The University of Cambridge Primary School (UCPS) is a unique, research-led, Ofsted Outstanding (2025) University Training School and the first of its kind in the UK at primary level. The Headteacher provides the strategic leadership, vision, and direction for the school, ensuring that its ethos of inclusion, ambition, and innovation continues to flourish.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND STANDARDS

- Build and sustain excellent relationships with pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community.
- Provide visionary and influential leadership, underpinned by a deep personal commitment to continuous learning and professional growth.
- Inspire confidence and trust through intelligent, research-informed articulation of the philosophy and educational theories that drive the school's practice.
- Be accountable for the standards of education, ensuring that all teams are high-performing and that data is used effectively to monitor progress, inform planning, and improve outcomes for every child.
- Keep governors well-informed of the school's strengths and areas for development, demonstrating clear impact through evidence-led improvement.
- Model the school's values and engagement competencies (Levels 5/6) consistently, demonstrating a proactive, positive, and solution-focused approach that places the best interests of children at the centre of all decisions.
- Handle serious concerns raised by parents, staff, or external partners in a professional, transparent, and constructive manner.

STRATEGIC VISION AND RESEARCH-INSPIRED LEADERSHIP

- Lead and communicate with passion, integrity, and courage, unafraid to challenge assumptions about education and to innovate for the 21st century.
- Build strong relationships and professional trust with individuals, teams, and communities, influencing both local and national educational discourse.
- Work collaboratively with the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education and other key partners to strengthen UCPS's role as a centre of research, innovation, and professional learning.
- Create new opportunities for educational research, dissemination of ideas, and professional development that bridge theory and practice.
- Develop and maintain extensive professional networks, positioning UCPS as a leader in research-informed and inclusive education.



DIMENSIONS OF THE ROLE

Trailblazer for Inclusive and Imaginative Education

- Demonstrates an unwavering commitment to inclusive, research-informed, and creative learning.

Strategic Leadership and Accountability

- Holds overall responsibility and accountability for the school's strategy, vision, and educational standards.

Moral and Educational Purpose

- Leads with moral clarity and purpose, seeking innovative responses to the evolving questions of education, with a determination to improve outcomes for all children, everywhere.

Strategic and Relational Expertise

- Thinks and operates strategically, forging strong relationships (as evidenced in leadership research by Harris et al., 2006; NCLS, 2010; Hummerstone, 2012).
- Models moral and personal attributes (NCLS, 2010; Barnes, 2006; Hummerstone, 2012) and drives purposeful, values-led change.

Leadership of the Executive Leadership Team

The postholder will have a direct and profound influence on the Leadership Team by:

- Taking professional responsibility and accountability for the quality of education and the experience of all children.
- Ensuring high-quality, inclusive education and measurable progress for every learner.
- Managing and reviewing the performance of the Leadership Team, promoting a culture of excellence, distributed leadership, and reflective practice.
- Overseeing robust quality assurance processes, school self-evaluation, and effective action planning.
- The successful candidate will also need to demonstrate an exceptional ability to balance strategic leadership with operational oversight. This requires strong delegation skills, the capacity to empower senior leaders, and confidence in their leadership team to deliver consistently at a high standard. The role will therefore demand a leader who can maintain strategic focus while enabling others to take ownership of day-to-day operational delivery

Governance and Accountability

- Reports regularly to the Governing Body on school performance, progress, and outcomes, providing clear analysis and strategic recommendations.

Compliance and Financial Accountability

- Fulfils all duties and responsibilities as defined by the Department for Education's Academy Trust Handbook and the school's Terms of Reference, ensuring financial probity, ethical leadership, and regulatory compliance.

Sustainable and Healthy Leadership

- The Headteacher must demonstrate not only exceptional leadership capacity, but also an ability to lead sustainably in a role that can be intense and highly complex. We are committed to supporting leadership practices that safeguard wellbeing, promote healthy workload management, and ensure long-term effectiveness. The successful candidate will role-model sustainable leadership for the entire organisation, prioritising clarity, calm decision-making, purposeful delegation, and a culture where staff can excel without compromising their wellbeing.





STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

- Develop and maintain positive relationships with the local communities;
- Engage at a strategic level with multi-agency partners and the local authority to secure any support needed by pupils to remove barriers to learning,
- Actively participate in community liaison and build rapport with the range of communities in locally, nationally and internationally.

Variation in Role

As the School develops, there may be a need for adjustments to the role and responsibilities of the post. The duties specified above are, therefore, not to be regarded as either exclusive or exhaustive.

Commitment to Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The post-holder must ensure that the highest priority is given to following guidance and regulations to safeguard children.

Equality and Diversity

The School is committed to equality and diversity for all members of society. The postholder must demonstrate a commitment to diversity, inclusion and being equitable in all aspects of their work.




This job description is subject to annual review.



Person Specification

	CRITERIA In assessing these criteria, the focus will be on demonstration of the necessary experience/knowledge to fulfil the overall strategic function as the Headteacher.	ESSENTIAL (E) DESIRABLE (D)		WHERE ASSESSED
		E	D	
A	EDUCATION/QUALIFICATIONS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
1	An honours degree and Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).			A
2	Evidence of relevant Continuous Professional Development e.g. leadership training, qualifications through NCTL, and having been involved in teaching school professional learning opportunities.			A
3	Hold a higher degree e.g. MA or Doctorate.			A
B	PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE			
4	Inspire confidence in people through their intelligent articulation of the philosophy, theories and research that drives all that the school does. Prioritises the progress and creativity of all students.			A, I, R
5	Provide significant visionary and influential leadership in their pursuit of knowledge and learning for themselves – both self-directed (including professional reading) and provided by the school.			A, I, R
6	Effective coaching, mentoring and line-management of senior leaders, with the effect of professionally developing others to become effective leaders.			A, I, R
7	Evidence of inspiring leadership, building and communicating a clear vision, translated into strategic planning, which prioritises the progress of all students, in order to maximise their potential.			A, I, R
8	Knowledge and experience of what constitutes quality in educational provision and outcomes, particularly with regards to SEND, the characteristics of effective schools.			A, I, R

9	Proven successful experience of systematic, rigorous school self-evaluation, combined with external evaluation, to inform school planning to maintain educational standards.			A, I
10	Experience of monitoring SBM along with knowledge and understanding of strategic financial planning and budgetary management in relation to school improvement and pupil achievement, balanced with efficiency and value for money.			I
11	Knowledge of the statutory requirements of KCSIE together with experience of Child Protection, Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding procedures.			A, I, R
12	Proven track record in leading, monitoring and managing staff including delegating effectively and implementing change.			A, I
13	Experience of working with, and advising a Governing Body /Trustees in strategic school leadership, providing clear and transparent communication which enables them to make informed decisions.			A, I
14	Experience of HR as a Headteacher with knowledge and understanding of the key legal issues relating to the leadership of a school including: equal opportunities, disability/SEND, employment (including formal procedures), health and safety and public relations.			I
15	Unafraid to take risks and with the courage to challenge assumptions about the purpose of education in 21st century.			A, I, R
C	PUPILS, STAFF, PARENTS/CARERS, COMMUNITY, GOVERNORS			
16	Outstanding communication skills with the ability to build rapport with a range of audiences, including all stakeholders and external agencies.			A, I, R
17	Credibility of being an outstanding classroom practitioner with an excellent understanding of how young people learn, barriers to learning, and the core features of successful and creative classroom practice.			A, I, R
18	Plans for the implementation of innovative practice and effectively disseminates to all stakeholders, nationally and internationally.			I, R
19	Personally aligns to the global vision of the school and demonstrates a pioneering approach to communicating this to a worldwide educational audience.			A, I

20	A commitment to building teams, to coaching staff and growing and developing people with a track record of delivering on this, recognising the importance of work-life balance and CPD for staff.			A, I
21	Is recognised as a credible and visionary figure head that lives the ethos and values of the school in all they do.			I
22	Introduces and leads major system change projects and is receptive to new ideas. Considers education globally and develops change strategies to respond to these.			A, I, R
23	Commitment to maintain good communication channels with parents and carers; ensure home/school links enable support for pupils at home.			A, I, R
D	ACCOUNTABILITY			
24	Skillful in giving and receiving feedback, in having challenging conversations and holding others to account. Also, acknowledging and showing appreciation for the work of the team.			A, I, R
25	Experience and evidence of highly developed skills of robust appraisal and performance management of direct staff and systems for all staff, recognising high performance and tackling under-performance to resolution.			A, I
26	Proven successful experience of systematic, rigorous school self-evaluation, to inform school improvement planning, building on existing strengths to further raise educational standards and improve student outcomes.			A, I
E	PERSONAL QUALITIES AND PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES			
27	Energetic, adopting a collaborative approach, with a willingness to take appropriate risks and show flexibility to changing circumstances, including the willingness and ability to co-author creative opportunities as they arise.			I
28	Embody School's core values driven by a demonstrable commitment to inclusion and social justice. Conveys a clear view of the future; setting goals and objectives to realise the vision.			I
29	Be able to work effectively and maintain positive, respectful relationships with parents/carers, pupils, stakeholders across both the School and the wider community.			I

Key: A = Application I = Interview R = References

PLEASE NOTE: The Selection Panel will use the Person Specification criteria above to shortlist. Please demonstrate how you meet the criteria in order to be shortlisted



How to Apply

APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply, please send the completed Application Form, along with your supporting statement via <https://mynewterm.com/jobs>

Your supporting statement should be no more than three sides of A4 paper, font size 11, and should demonstrate how you meet the requirements set out in the Person Specification.

CLOSING DATE

Applications must be received by no later than **Friday 8th May 2026, 9am**.
Shortlisting will take place on **Monday 11th May 2026**.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews will be held on **Friday 15th May 2026**.

References will be taken up shortly after shortlisting and prior to interview using the contact details you supply on your application form. School visits have been arranged to take place on **Friday 1st May** (pre-shortlisting) and **Wednesday 13th May** (for shortlisted candidates). Both visits are 11.00 -13.00.

NOTIFICATION & FEEDBACK

Candidates who have been interviewed will be notified of the outcome as soon as possible – please ensure that you have provided day and evening numbers on which you can be reached. Unsuccessful candidates will also be given constructive feedback.

SAFEGUARDING

University of Cambridge Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Candidates are expected to demonstrate a sound understanding of the leadership of and contribution to a safeguarding environment. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS with barred list check followed by safeguarding training as part of their induction.

DATA PROTECTION

As part of our recruitment process, UCPS collects and processes personal data relating to job applicants. The School is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses that data and to meeting its data protection obligations. For further information about this and to read our Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policy, please visit the school's website.



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