



# St Nicholas' School

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FLEET • HAMPSHIRE

## Headship

## April 2018

## Information for applicants



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## 01 The Application Process

Applications are invited for the post of Head of St Nicholas' School to take effect from **April 2018** (or possibly September 2018). The post becomes vacant following the retirement of Mrs Annette Whatmough after 22 years of outstanding leadership of the school.

An application form and full information about the post and the school can be downloaded from the online TES advertisement for this post.

**Completed application forms**, together with a covering letter setting out the reasons for your application, should be returned by email to

**Mrs Dawn Brown, Head's Executive PA, at** [headspa@st-nicholas.hants.sch.uk](mailto:headspa@st-nicholas.hants.sch.uk)

**no later than 12 noon on Friday 6 October 2017**

All applications will be acknowledged by email.

**First round interviews** are planned for **Monday & Tuesday 16 & 17 October**

**Final round interviews** are planned for **Monday 6 November**

Since we expect considerable interest in this post it is not feasible to offer pre-application visits to the school but all candidates invited for first round interviews will be given ample opportunity to tour the school, meet the current Head, staff, pupils and governors and become fully acquainted with St Nicholas'.

Interested applicants who wish to discuss the post in confidence are encouraged to speak to the governors' external advisor, Dr Peter Mason, on 01765 635475, or make contact by email: [prmyorks@aol.com](mailto:prmyorks@aol.com).

They are also very welcome to speak to the current Head, Mrs Annette Whatmough, by booking a call through Dawn Brown her Executive Assistant on 01252 850121 (Option 4).

## **02 St Nicholas' – a brief overview**

St Nicholas' is an independent day school taking girls from 3 – 16 years and boys from 3 – 7. The Head is a member of the Girls' Schools' Association (GSA).

Founded in 1935 it moved to its present spacious 27 acre rural site in autumn 1996 which been carefully and creatively developed to provide first class educational facilities across the age range. An extensive building programme over the last 20 years has seen the building of the Sports Hall ,the Textiles/Art Centre, the total refurbishment of the 4 school laboratories, a new Drama Studio ,An IT /resource Centre and a new school theatre with first rate technology. The theatre is used as an assembly and concert hall as well, benefiting from raked seating. March 2017 saw the opening an all weather pitch and new tennis courts.

The school is a registered charity (no. 307341) and is constituted as a company limited by guarantee.

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### **Education – what is our approach and what are our values?**

We value each child as an individual and to that end, there are small classes where we can encourage and guide each one to develop to the full. This is an environment where spontaneity and happiness are nurtured. St Nicholas' School is a special place where pupils and teachers alike enjoy and cherish learning. In summary our aims are:

- To encourage each pupil to achieve the highest possible standards in academic work and to benefit fully from the aesthetic and physical education programmes which we offer.
- To develop self-esteem, confidence and leadership and to cultivate a sense of responsibility in every pupil, together with a growing awareness of moral and spiritual values underpinned by our Christian ethos.
- To offer all pupils a caring and well run environment in which to develop the skills and knowledge they will need both in school and in their future lives
- To instil a sense of pride in everything pupils do and the vision to see the virtue in the endeavours of others.

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### **Admissions – when do pupils join, and how many?**

We admit boys and girls from 3 to 7 years of age and thereafter admit girls only. Pupils may enter the school at any age. If entry is at age 11, the prospective pupil is required to sit an entrance examination in English, Mathematics and Verbal Reasoning. Pupils come to the school from a range of feeder schools, both Independent and State.

Brothers and sisters of pupils already on the school roll are given some preference where waiting lists for places exist.

Although we are a school with a distinct Christian foundation, there is no discrimination on the grounds of faith. All are treated equally and pupils are admitted providing that their needs may be served by the school.

**For infant or junior entry** Parents are offered a tour of the school during which they can meet the staff and pupils and see the extensive facilities. Afterwards parents and children are invited to attend an interview with the Head.

**For entry into the senior school at age 11**, girls are required to sit an entrance examination in January in English, Mathematics and Verbal Reasoning. The candidates come to St Nicholas' School for the day to sit the papers and come from a wide range of feeder schools. Means tested

**Scholarships** (Academic, Music, Sport and Art scholarships worth up to 20% of the school fees) and **Bursaries** are available in the senior school.

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### **Public examination results – what do our pupils achieve?**

Academically St Nicholas' School is among the top schools in Hampshire with an impressive record of success at GCSE. The table below gives a summary of GCSE results over the past 6 years.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
% A* - A	61	46	54	44	48	49
% A* - B	82	80	79	77	71	72
% A* - C (pass rate)	93	98	97	97	97	94

As some pupils enter the school as early as age 3 the ability profile is mixed. Although pupils are selected at Year 7 the school has a relatively wide ability range where all pupils are encouraged and usually succeed in achieving results better than their abilities, Value added is assessed using PIPS, Midyis, Yellis and GCSE results.

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### **Destinations – where do our pupils move on to?**

After GCSE girls go on to sixth form colleges at Farnborough, Alton, Farnham ,Queen Mary's Basingstoke, Peter Symonds ,Winchester or major independent school sixth forms such as Marlborough, Wellington, Bradfield and Salesian College. Our pupils, who are well received in local sixth forms, have a deserved reputation for a good work ethic and high achievement. Many will go on to Russell Group Universities or Oxbridge,

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### **The wider school community – who are our supporters?**

St Nicholas receives strong support from its PTA which meets once a month and is very much part of the community. Although the school no longer has a formal Old Girls' Association, Facebook is used as an active social network.

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### **The campus – what are our facilities?**

Set in beautiful surroundings covering 27 acres St Nicholas' enjoys superb facilities including a purpose built Infant Department, full size Sports Hall, a large Art and Textiles Centre, four dedicated Science laboratories and specialist facilities for music, ICT, food technology and drama. The school's Performing Arts Centre provides a fully raked theatre seating over 335, a Drama Studio and an orchestra pit. The most recent development is our new floodlit Multi Use Games Area which provides pupils with a multi-use sports facility, including hockey, tennis, netball and football. The newly designed tennis courts are also floodlit, and enable twenty four pupils to play tennis at the same time! We are not the kind of school that focuses on facilities. The lovely environment here enhances the pupils' educational experience and gives them a sense of well-being which leads to the enjoyment of their time school.

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## Community - what relationship do we have with other schools?

There are several competitor schools in the local area but most are co-ed ,so this gives St Nicholas' a niche market. We participate in all kinds of sporting events and local competitions run by the Rotary Club in Fleet.

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## School improvement and development – what next for St Nicholas'?

St Nicholas' is an enthusiastic and forward looking school, constantly striving to build on the high standards achieved by the girls and always looking to improve facilities further. We are also keen to expand our current catchment by marketing more widely and supporting this by additional transport for these new pupils.

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## Inspection – how did the ISI inspectors judge us?

In September 2015 all aspects of teaching, pupils' learning and achievements, their extra-curricular involvement and personal development, and their pastoral care, safeguarding, and welfare were deemed by the inspectors as excellent. This accurately reflects the school across all 3 sections- Infant, Primary and Secondary. Please read the report for yourself; it is available from the Headship documents on our website or can be downloaded from the ISI website

(<http://www.isi.net/reports/?name=St%20Nicholas%27%20School>).

We are definitely not complacent. We constantly review the curriculum with an eye on education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century with all the implications on the acquisition of skills. We seek to be even better in all areas, making the content of our teaching and environment, relevant and on an upward path of improvement.

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**If this overview has captured your professional interest and fired your imagination then please read on.**

## 03 About the role and responsibilities – what do they entail?

Any atomistic attempt to describe the role and responsibilities of a Head is bound to result in failure; being the Head of a school is all encompassing – a vocation rather than being just a 'job'. That is certainly true for the Head of St Nicholas' School. Nevertheless a fuller job description and person specification are provided in the separate document: **Role, responsibilities and person specification** which can be downloaded from the Headship pack on our website.

**In summary**, the Head is the leading professional directly responsible to governors for the efficient, effective and successful operation of the school. It is high profile and wide-ranging in which the Head is responsible for

- personally setting and upholding the highest **professional standards** among all staff, establishing and promoting respect, self- discipline and good behaviour among the pupils
- promoting excellence and innovation **in teaching, learning** and the **curriculum**, including the wider curriculum, fostering a stimulating learning community both inside and outside of the classroom
- ensuring pupils have access to a wide range of **extra-curricular opportunities**



- ensuring pupils are carefully monitored and assessed to inform **pupil progress** and enable teaching and learning to be well planned.
- implementing good reporting channels and **communication with parents** so that they are well-informed about their child's progress.
- **appointing and managing all staff**
- ensuring the **safeguarding** and well-being of all pupils in an environment that secures the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors.
- ensuring the **school's finances** are well-managed in line with the approved budget and that all the school's resources are used to maximum effect
- **marketing and promoting** the school and maintaining good links with the local and regional community
- exercising a sound **financial and business grasp** of the school
- **working** closely and positively **with the governors**, reporting to governors' meetings as required, and keeping governors informed of the latest developments in educational thinking and national policy
- maintaining excellent working **relationships** with the **heads of feeder schools**.

In order to fulfil these responsibilities, the Head is supported by a very committed senior management team comprising: **Deputy Head (Pastoral), Deputy Head (Academic), Head of Junior Department and Head of Infant Department**. Of course, the Head also works closely with governors, considering their advice and utilising their professional skills where appropriate.

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#### **04 What kind of person are we looking for?**

As with the roles and responsibilities above, a list of micro-descriptors will fail to do justice to the qualities and experience of the person we are looking for in our new Head. In summary the primary qualities we are seeking are

- leadership that enables,
- vision which inspires,
- energy and drive to get things done
- a passion for working with children and young people
- a first class track record in education for whom a first headship is an obvious next step or a second headship an obvious move
- values that align with those of our school

We think these require some or all of the following qualities:

##### **Personal**

- Integrity, vision and ambition: you will be impeccable in your professional standards
- A role model with presence, style and flair to inspire pupils, staff and parents: you will be someone who leads by example, who obviously and quickly commands respect
- Approachability, excellent communication and listening skills supported by diplomacy and powers of persuasion: you will be someone who is personable and with first-class judgement
- Self-drive and self-motivation: you will be someone who does not delay or prevaricate in getting things done
- Strong intellectual, analytical, creative and innovative skills: you will be someone who deploys a range of skills according to the situation

- Flexibility and open-mindedness combined with shrewd judgement and emotional intelligence: you will be someone who is personable with first-class judgement
- Dedication, commitment and an unfailingly positive outlook: you will convey an optimistic temperament
- Enthusiasm, a sense of humour with a range of interests beyond education: you will be a well-rounded person, someone with whom colleagues can feel at ease

### **Professional – Educational**

- experience of and commitment to independent education: you must be passionate about the kind of school that St Nicholas' is able to persuade others likewise
- experience of teaching in a school covering the 3 – 16 age range
- the ability to think strategically and to drive the school's development and improvement: you must be someone who is able to look above the day-to-day minutiae, identify strategic objectives and lead people to achieve them
- an unshakeable determination to achieve the highest standards both academically, pastorally and in the wider curriculum: you must be someone who never accepts anything that is less than the best

### **Professional – Leadership and Management**

- The ability to develop and foster teamwork and get the best out of people: you must be someone who can build a highly respected SLT, who motivates senior colleagues and all staff
- Strong organisational and administrative skills: you must be someone who is well-ordered and gets things done efficiently
- Resilience, determination and an ability to see tasks through from beginning to end: you must be someone who completes the job
- An eye for detail as well as the broad picture: you must be someone who is meticulously thorough
- An ability to stimulate and manage change: you must be someone who is not afraid to challenge the status quo and, but having decided that change is needed, you must be someone who takes people with you
- The ability to investigate, analyse, resolve problems and make decisions: you must be able to assess issues easily, take the appropriate time to reach a decision and live with it

### **Education, Training and Professional Experience**

- A good honours degree with QTS: you will be someone of high intellectual ability
- A proven record as an outstanding teacher: you will be a first-class practitioner
- A proven record of leadership in education: you will be someone who has made a difference in your current or previous roles
- Current or very recent teaching experience in the UK: you will be someone who understands the UK educational scene and the particular demands and challenges for independent schools
- Excellent administrative skills and the ability to manage people effectively: you will be someone who is highly efficient yet always displaying strong personal qualities even when under pressure
- Experience of working as a member of a school senior leadership team or other senior position of responsibility with major whole school responsibilities: you will be someone who understands school leadership and does not shy away from taking responsibility
- An excellent understanding of pastoral matters: you will be someone who puts the well-being of pupils at the heart of school values

- Knowledge and understanding of the latest research on learning: you will be someone who is an active and reflective practitioner
- A wide view of the curriculum and curriculum planning: you will be someone who has demonstrated their commitment to whole person education

To all of the above we would add the overriding mutual requirement for St Nicholas' to 'fit' the new Head and the new Head to 'fit' St Nicholas'.

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## **05 About the area – what kind of place is it in which to live and work?**

Bordering the beautiful Hampshire countryside with numerous villages located between the fields and woodland, the school is within easy reach of Fleet which is a leafy suburban town with good facilities such as a newly refurbished Sports Centre and a wide range of high street shops. The area has excellent road and rail networks and is within easy reach of London (50 minutes to Waterloo), Guildford, Basingstoke and the south coast. Heathrow and Gatwick airports can both be reached within an hour.

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## **06 Terms and Conditions of the Appointment**

- A competitive salary range commensurate with the responsibility of the post will be offered to the successful candidate. Progression is performance related.
- The post is pensionable with the Teachers' Pensions.
- The vacancy is from April 2018 (or possibly September 2018).
- Appointment is subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS check.
- Governors expect the Head to live within easy travelling distance of the school.