



**TONBRIDGE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

Head Teacher

Candidate Information



WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in the role of Head Teacher at Tonbridge Grammar School. We are excited to invite applications from individuals who are ready to offer dynamic, innovative and ambitious leadership in a kind and caring school. This opportunity provides a rare opportunity to oversee 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 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.

Our intellectually challenging curriculum creates an environment where questioning, divergent thinking, and the freedom to learn from mistakes are encouraged. However, we also seek to provide a holistic education whereby valuable lifetime skills are developed within every student to support their future journey. Hence, we offer a very extensive programme of clubs in which all students are engaged, a thriving Duke of Edinburgh Award programme and an extensive line-up of arts activities, whilst a large number of students 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 Kent.

Whilst proud of past achievements, the School is not standing still. In September 2026, all of our Year 12 students will begin A level courses as we move away from the IB Diploma. 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 astro turf sports pitch, a Sixth Form centre, significant renovations to our assembly hall and dining facilities and further enhancement of our science and technology labs. Through initiatives such as the TGS Pupil Premium Promise, we are continuing to make the School more inclusive, ensuring in so doing that all can thrive and achieve.

Our new Head Teacher will be ready to lead change that will further enhance the School, developing the excellence for which we are already renowned. We seek an engaging and innovative individual to join this high-performing organisation who is ready to meet the challenges of a rapidly developing local, national and international 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.

Sarah Rolls
Chair of Trustees



INTRODUCTION

Tonbridge Grammar School opened in 1905 and is situated in 14 acres in South Tonbridge. 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 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 majority of teaching takes place in the Hands Building, which opened in 2009 and offers light, modern and airy classrooms, specialist drama facilities, a fitness suite and a large multi-use sports hall. All 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, the IBarn, 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 Science and Technology department extended and redesigned to allow more collaborative activities.



Curriculum

TGS offers a curriculum designed to inspire, challenge and grow minds. Teachers are encouraged to use cross-curricular 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. Subject learning is linked to the real world and experienced through global contexts: Identities and Relationships, Personal and Cultural Expression, Scientific and Technical Innovation, Orientation in Space and Time, Globalisation and Sustainability, Fairness and Development.

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 grow minds. 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.

Internationalism

Our ethos and curriculum are international in focus, and our students are encouraged to develop as global citizens. There are many opportunities for students to take part in initiatives which enable intercultural understanding and respect. Following the success of a music tour to Lake Garda in 2024, 80 students will be touring Barcelona, Catalonia and Northern France in summer 2026. Off-timetable culture days, when students celebrate their heritage through food, dress and student-led activities, further enhance our students' global awareness.

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 seriously our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all the children and young people entrusted to our care.



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.

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 Advisors, the Sixth Form Student Coordinator, the Mental Health Coordinator, the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, the Counsellor and a

fully qualified Nurse. 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 SENCO's 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.



Pupil Premium

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. The School actively promotes and encourages able students to apply to Tonbridge Grammar School from Year 7 and mitigates disadvantage.

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 can offer 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 students in Years 4 and 5 and provide a programme of 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 is a CIO established in July 2021 following a substantial legacy from a much-loved former staff colleague, Joy Debney. The objects of the Trust are to advance the education of the School, students and former students through promoting social inclusion. Although the Debney Trust is independent of the School, the serving Head Teacher is invited to be a Trustee.

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.



TRUSTEES, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance

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

Members

Tonbridge Grammar School has five Members whose role is similar to a company's shareholder – they sit above the Board of Trustees and have a largely hands-off role. 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 governing board.

The new Head Teacher will lead and line manage:

- The Strategic Leadership Team
- The School Business Manager
- The Facilities and Estates Manager
- The Executive Assistant to the Head Teacher

The Strategic Leadership Team consists of:

- Joe Jardine-Viner – Deputy Head Teacher
- Christopher Fitt – Deputy Head Teacher
- Darryl Barker – Assistant Head Teacher
- Jane Bishop – Assistant Head Teacher
- Caroline Ghali – Assistant Head Teacher
- Alison Newman – Business Manager



ROLE DESCRIPTION

The Head Teacher's key responsibilities can be described as follows:

Strategic Leadership

- To encourage and further cultivate Tonbridge Grammar School's existing strengths and to articulate a nuanced and sophisticated strategic vision for its continued future development.
- To ground this vision in the context of a rapidly evolving external landscape, educationally, politically, and economically, ensuring that Tonbridge Grammar School remains flexible and agile in its ability to seize the opportunities that change provides.

Organisational Leadership and Operational Management

- To lead, develop, and inspire to further excellence a committed and talented Senior Leadership Team.
- To build leadership capacity at all levels, cultivating an open, inclusive, and collaborative organisational culture in which colleagues are empowered to take initiative.
- To work closely with the Business Manager and other senior stakeholders to ensure effective finance and resource management.
- To engage constructively with parents and other stakeholders, communicating with authority and sensitivity to ensure a collaborative and supportive environment.

- To ensure the achievement of outstanding safeguarding standards so that the School is not only fully compliant but also meets the highest levels of student welfare.

Educational Culture

- To ensure that the School's key values are lived by the entire community of learners.
- To champion Tonbridge Grammar School's reputation as a centre of educational excellence and further strengthen the School's position as a leader locally and nationally.
- To maintain and further build upon Tonbridge Grammar School's commitment to offering a high-quality, challenging curriculum while exploring internationally minded, academic and holistic education that supports all learners.

External Engagement

- To build further connectivity and collaboration beyond Tonbridge Grammar School locally, nationally, and internationally, developing partnerships and networks from which the School learns and grows as an organisation.
- To learn from and contribute to the development of other schools and academies in the region, facilitating knowledge sharing and opportunities for shared professional development.

The salary will be competitive.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

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

Qualifications

- Qualified teacher status.
- A record of continuous accredited professional development.

Experience

- A proven track record of successful senior leadership experience gained as a Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher in a comparable setting. This does not necessarily need to have been in a selective school.
- A strong focus on wellbeing, reflected in an understanding of how a whole-school approach is developed, which integrates wellbeing into the culture, community and curriculum of the School.
- Experience of managing successful change and transition at a whole-school level.
- An understanding of the importance of holistic education that extends beyond the timetabled school curriculum.
- Demonstrable experience of leading and managing outstanding teams and supporting and empowering colleagues.
- Experience of responsibility for finances and budgets.
- A proven commitment to continuing professional development for all colleagues.

Skills and Knowledge

- An empowering and visible leadership style that inspires colleagues to show initiative and to take responsibility.

- Highly developed strategic leadership skills with the capacity to guide and shape the continued development of Tonbridge Grammar School.
- Outstanding communication skills, both verbal and written, and the people leadership ability to engage with parents, staff and other stakeholders with charisma and personal authority.
- An appreciation of the business dimensions of modern headship.
- An innovative and original thinker with an evidenced interest in the current thought leadership trends in education and the ability to bring fresh perspectives to bear on Tonbridge Grammar School.
- Highly developed pedagogical skills, with deep teaching and learning expertise.

Personal Attributes

- A strong commitment to the ethos and values of Tonbridge Grammar School.
- A strong alignment with Tonbridge Grammar School's focus on diversity, equality and inclusion in all that the School does.
- The highest levels of personal integrity, accompanied by the authenticity, adaptability, openness to new ideas and deep listening skills that will ensure that teachers thrive and innovate.
- An unwavering commitment to ensuring a strong safeguarding culture and compliance across all areas of the School.
- The courage to take bold actions to drive improvement.
- Strong personal drive, high levels of self-awareness, resilience, humility, and flexibility, alongside an appetite for risk and innovation.



APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested candidates are invited to contact RSAcademics to arrange a confidential discussion with one of the consultants handling this appointment:

- Sarah Glencross – Head of Senior School Search: sarahglencross@rsacademics.com
- Claire Oulton – Head of Leadership Appointments UK: claireoulton@rsacademics.com

Closing date: 10.00am UK time on Wednesday 25th February 2026.

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. To submit your application, please upload your documents according to the instructions on the RSAcademics [website](#).

You should submit the following (both in PDF format):

- A completed application form (available alongside this candidate information on the RSAcademics [website](#)).
- A covering letter addressed to Sarah Rolls, Chair of Trustees. The letter should explain your reasons for applying.

If you have any questions about uploading your application documents, please contact:

- Jonathan Barnes, Head of Operations (Leadership Appointments): applications@rsacademics.com / +44 (0) 204 6269 791

The process is as follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of sending it, please contact RSAcademics by telephone.
- **Preliminary interviews** will take place with RSAcademics on Friday 27th and Saturday 28th February 2026 via MS Teams.
- **Shortlist interviews** will take place at the School between Monday 16th and Wednesday 18th March 2026.

Tonbridge Grammar School is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.

The safeguarding responsibilities of this post are detailed in the candidate information brochure.

RSAcademics is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in schools and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

RSAcademics is a global executive search and consultancy firm working exclusively with schools. For more than 20 years, we've supported governors and leaders at pivotal moments – whether they are appointing senior staff or making complex strategic decisions.

What makes us distinctive is the depth of first-hand experience in schools across our team – as heads, governors, bursars and senior professionals – combined with specialist expertise in areas such as strategy, research, marketing and finance. This blend is continually enriched by our ongoing consultancy and appointments work with schools worldwide, so our advice is always current, practical and evidence led. Please visit www.rsacademics.com for more information.