

HIGHGATE

Pre-Prep School Principal

Candidate Information Pack



Welcome

We are delighted that you are interested in coming to work at Highgate and in leading the Pre-Prep: thank you so much for getting to know us and finding out about this opportunity.

Highgate Pre-Prep is happy, vibrant school welcoming our youngest learners to the Highgate community. Fully part of the Highgate family of schools – Pre-Prep, Junior and Senior – for over 25 years, the Pre-Prep, which led the way in Highgate’s journey to becoming a co-educational school, has grown in popularity as Highgate’s reputation as a successful co-educational school took shape and took root in North London.

Our Year 2 pupils move on to the Junior School having enjoyed a lively, innovative education free of entrance tests and prescription, and subsequently to the Senior School. We believe that the Pre-Prep building and playgrounds, recently extended and improved, are the physical expression of our belief that children in academically selective schools need not grow up quickly or miss out on play: the deliberate playfulness of the architecture and the openness of our sports fields underline our commitment to

a happy, fulfilling childhood where excitement and curiosity are the motors of our pupils’ learning. Learning at the right pace for each child is a key driver for our curricular values and decision-making.

The new Principal will enjoy collaborating with colleagues in the Junior and Senior Schools to maintain and foster a vision for children growing up, for their learning, for their development as people and for their welfare. To this end the Principal is a full member of the Senior School’s leadership team as well as the Strategy and Management Committee which brings together senior leaders from across the three schools and the support staff. The Principal attends Governing Body meetings and certain sub-committees, reporting on the progress of the Pre-Prep and its development plan, of course, but contributing to strategy discussions and advising Governors. Busy as the Principal is in leading the Pre-Prep, s/he is [they are] a very significant player in the wider life of the whole school.

We very much look forward to meeting short-listed candidates and to exploring the future of the Pre-Prep with you. We are excited about the future and the opportunities which this appointment will create. Good luck with your application and many, many thanks for your interest.

Adam Pettitt

Head, Highgate School

Bob Rothenberg

Governor, Highgate School



The Role

The Head of Highgate, Governors and staff are aspirational for the Pre-Prep and see this as an exciting opportunity for the incoming Principal to develop the school further from its existing place of strength.

The Pre-Prep is a place of innovation and collaboration and the atmosphere is welcoming and supportive and the new Principal will embody these traits. The Pre-Prep lays the foundation for learning at Highgate and whilst distinct from the Junior School and Senior School, it is important for all three schools that collaboration and co-operation between them is effectively maintained. Reporting to Adam Pettitt, Head of the Senior School, the successful candidate will lead on the day-to-day running of the Pre-Prep. The Principal has key responsibilities for the pupils and their parents, staff and the general administration of the School. They will take an active role in admissions and the building of relationships that this entails. Candidates will work with a dedicated senior team to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is of the highest standard, as well as to drive key topics such as diversity, inclusion, sustainability and future partnerships.

Highgate School supports anonymous recruitment. This means we hide your personal, identifying information to remove bias from the hiring process. We encourage applications from candidates who experience barriers and inequity due to their ethnicity, gender identity, physical or mental health, sexuality, and/or socio-economic background.



"At Highgate we are like one big family. We really try to make the children feel at home here, because it's so important for them to feel safe and comfortable in their learning environment"

Pre-Prep Teacher

The School

Highgate is one of the UK's leading independent co-educational schools. Recently named Sunday Times London Independent School of the Decade, we were established over 450 years ago in 1565.

Highgate is both steeped in history yet propelling forward; a progressive, entrepreneurial, and creative community, we educate around 1,800 pupils across our three schools; Pre-Preparatory School (ages 4-7 - c. 150 pupils), Junior School (ages 7-11 c.420 pupils), and Senior School (ages 11-18 - c.1,250 pupils).

We currently employ approximately 650 teaching and support staff. Working at Highgate is an opportunity to be part of a vibrant, diverse and welcoming community, committed to academic excellence and the highest standards of pastoral care.

Aims and Ethos

We cultivate individual curiosity, intellectual rigour and passion to prepare our pupils intellectually and emotionally for the real world. Academic standards are high; our pupils obtain outstanding exam results and the vast majority go to university.

Charity and Community

Aside from our academic success, we ensure pupils are taught the importance of humility, community and charity. This culture is led by

Head Adam Pettitt who co-founded the award-winning London Academy of Excellence with Tottenham Hotspur Football Club in 2017; the free sixth form college has seen dozens of disadvantaged teenagers from Tottenham achieve record breaking success with top grade A levels and places at leading universities in less than five years. Additionally, Highgate launched their Chrysalis Partnership Programme in 2008, which now works with over 50 schools and over 2,000 children, including those classed as LAC (Looked After Children) and those impacted by special needs.

Sustainability

Care for the environment is a key aim at Highgate; we have an active pupil-led Environment Committee on both the Junior and Senior School, both of which have spearheaded Eco-Conferences with other schools to promote greener education and lifestyles.

Diversity and Inclusion

In Summer 2020, Highgate appointed a Director of Inclusion and has since founded an Inclusion Working Group of over 60 teaching and support staff from all three schools. From the Pre-Prep right up to the Sixth Form, we are actively seeking to embed a real sense of belonging at Highgate. To do this, we are evaluating diversity in our curricular and co-curricular life; exploring how to attract pupils and staff from all backgrounds to work and learn at Highgate; and providing opportunities to share our own experiences as well as learning from alternative perspectives.



The Pre-Preparatory School

Highgate Pre-Prep is for pupils aged 4-7 and we have around 140 pupils within our Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes.

From September 2021, we move to a three-form entry in Reception and the following two years we will grow into a three-form entry school from Reception to Year 2. We have planned for this expansion and will be embarking upon an exciting new building project to be completed in August 2022. The great majority of pupils transfer at age 7 to Highgate Junior School.

We are a School that takes a creative and reflective approach to education, with a focus on how children learn, not just what they learn. Throughout their time at the Pre-Preparatory School the children develop resilience, creativity and a sense of responsibility not only as a learner but also as a member of the Highgate community and wider society.

The pupils are bright, well-motivated and responsive and the school itself is extremely well-resourced in both human and material terms. With these advantages, the Pre-Prep can afford to be both aspirational and ambitious in the quality of education it offers. It attracts top-class teachers who enjoy the freedom from preparing pupils for entrance tests. It offers a very happy and engaging environment in which to teach and learn.



Take a 'virtual' tour of the Pre-Prep School

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/456984223>

"The care, kindness, and passion the teachers have at Highgate Pre-Prep means that it is more than just a school; it's a second home for our children"

Parent



The Curriculum

Highgate's Pre-Preparatory School celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2018.

Visitors invariably remark on our high standards of learning and behaviour and the warm and friendly atmosphere. Highgate's innovative teaching, and outlook ignites our pupils' learning within a stimulating and exciting curriculum. Our pupils are happy and confident children who are encouraged to take risks.

Within our Pre-Prep (Reception and Years 1-2), our academic priorities are effective use of play and the learning environment to promote independent and enquiry-based learning. In Reception we follow the Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, based around the seven areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Both the classroom environments and outdoor spaces create learning opportunities based on investigation, collaboration and play.

Our Key Stage 1 curriculum is designed to extend our pupils academically, whilst ensuring innovation and playful learning continue to be core to the children's experiences. Pupils consolidate all that has been taught before, as well as being introduced to new and challenging experiences to foster independent learning. From the start of Year 1, swimming is introduced and taught by specialist teachers from our Sports and Exercise Department. Pupils can also undertake individual violin and cello lessons. In Year 2 we add chess and recorder lessons, and all pupils belong to our School Choir.

"Pastoral care is a core guiding principle, focusing on nurturing and growing the pupils' minds, bodies, and spirits"

Parent



Co-Curriculum, Pastoral care, Charity/Community

Within our Pre-Prep, we aim to foster a reflective and supportive atmosphere, marked by mutual respect between adults and pupils.

Pastoral care is our number one priority and underpins all that we do. All staff offer pastoral support to children and are supported in doing this by the Deputy Principal (Pastoral) and play therapist.

Positive behaviour is encouraged through our PSHEE programme, Circle Time and the School Values that set out the moral code which underpins our School life. We have regular assemblies, including one for all pupils each Friday, where successes are shared and celebrated.

Across Highgate's three schools, we aim to provide as many opportunities as possible in which our pupils develop qualities of self-reliance, endurance and leadership, serve the community, and develop their interests and enthusiasms.

A variety of co-curricular clubs are offered to our Pre-Prep pupils during lunch (for example, Year 1 Chess Club, Year 2 Science and DT Club, Football Club, Running Club, Scooting Club, and Music and Drama Club). We have recently introduced after-school sports activity clubs and, as outdoor learning is a focus at Highgate, a new Gardening Club has been established.

We have a trained Forest School leader, and our pupils attend our Forest Classroom, located in the School grounds, on a weekly basis.

Our Pre-Prep teachers plan varied and exciting visits and excursions, such as a trip to the Tower of London, to the Royal Albert Hall and to Tolmer's Scout Camp.

Alongside all of this activity, we aim to develop pupils' understanding and experience of our Pre-Prep as a reflective community through our charitable and voluntary work. In 2017 we introduced a charity badge scheme that encourages our pupils to perform a range of charitable acts at home, in school and within the wider community. Efforts are then recognised through an awards assembly, where pupils receive a badge depending on the number of kind acts they have carried out.

Highgate's co-curricular offering continues to grow and develop in response to the changing needs of our pupils and the world around us.

"Highgate Pre-Prep understands that pastoral care is just as important as everything else - it can't ever just be about the grades"

Parent



North London life

Our School is situated in one of the most attractive and popular areas of North London, a short distance from central London and adjacent to Hampstead Heath.

We endeavour to be a sustainable school and are well served by good public transport links, including bus routes and the London Underground (Northern line). There is limited parking a short walk from the school, and additional parking a 10-minute walk away.

During term time, a wholesome lunch is provided with daily vegan, vegetarian and meat options, except for on 'meat-free Mondays' in line with our sustainability ethos. We also provide a generously stocked salad bar, pudding station and soup and sandwich selection in addition to free-flowing hot beverages.

Our staff body are friendly and caring community, who, throughout lockdown, hosted regular quiz and comedy nights to keep everybody connected socially. Pre and post Covid, staff enjoy using our gym, squash courts and weekly fitness classes, as well as our newly refurbished 25-metre indoor pool at designated times. Staff are also able to attend many fascinating talks, exhibitions and shows throughout the year from our visiting speakers, pupils and alumni should they wish.



Responsibilities and duties of Pre-Preparatory Principal

This role offers a fantastic and rewarding career move to lead our award-winning Pre-Preparatory School!

You will lead a dedicated and skilled team of teaching and support staff, as well as directing the wellbeing and education of over 140 pupils aged 4 to 7.

Reporting to the overall Head of Highgate School, you will also play a pivotal role in making strategic leadership decisions alongside the four deputy Heads in the Senior School and the Junior School Principal, and work collaboratively with the Bursar and senior support staff, in addition to senior academic colleagues to benefit the entire School foundation.

Educational and Wellbeing Strategy

Leading the Pre-Prep will give you direct responsibility for the implementation of safeguarding policies, monitoring the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the Pre-Prep, ensuring compliance with all statutory, legal or regulatory obligations.

The Pre-Prep Principal sets the educational vision for this part of the school in line with our ethos and values, and educational aims and priorities of the whole school.

You will be responsible for ensuring that the curriculum and quality of learning is of the highest standard and that each pupil makes rapid and sustained progress. You will model a love of learning and will often be seen leading learning and playing with the pupils and facilitating conversations with staff that challenge and support them to learn and grow.

Smooth and happy pupil and parent journeys

As Principal, you will understand the role that parents play in the educational journey of a child and will also liaise closely with local nurseries and the Junior School to ensure that pupils experience a smooth transition into the Pre-Prep and Junior School. In turn you will select and, after consultation with the Head and others on the Admissions team, offer places to pupils for admission to the School.



You will enjoy maintaining a visible presence around the school for parents, pupils and staff, especially at the beginning and end of each day. You will also market the Junior School, liaising with the Head and the Communications Team and meeting with prospective parents at major Open Days and smaller group or individual visits. You will foster appropriate and constructive relationships with parents and carers, ensuring that they feel confident about bringing any concern to the school's attention.

Leading the Energy and Culture of a Thriving Staff and Pupil Body

The Pre-Prep has an atmosphere of innovation and playfulness and you will ensure that staff are encouraged and supported to develop themselves professionally to continue driving the Pre-Prep forward. You will inspire and lead a team of 30 staff, appointing new members if required, and advise on the admission of pupils in line with the school's policies on inclusion and partnership. You will ensure your team undertake regular training for both their personal career progression and are familiar with educational issues and initiatives.

You will construct, with the Bursar and the Head, an annual budget for the Pre-Prep, as well as keep both, along with the School Governors fully informed on what is going on in the Pre-Prep via written and oral reports.

As the Pre-Prep Principal, you will be responsible for maintaining both staff and pupil conduct, having the authority to manage staff performance, as well as set the standards for pupil behaviour. It will also be your responsibility to ensure that the Pre-Prep meets independent school regulatory requirements and that it is ready for external inspection at any time.

"Our son and daughter have emerged happy, confident and with a clear sense of their own identity - as parents, we could not have asked for anything more"

Parent



Person Specification

As Pre-Prep Principal, you will have the ability to make reasonable, reasoned and balanced decisions and to create consensus where possible and to know when to hold ground.

You will be able to work harmoniously and constructively with all Highgate colleagues, support staff, the Head, the Bursar and governors, pupils and parents, to foster a strong sense of community.

You will have a good, visible and reassuring presence, creating mutual respect and showing emotional intelligence that inspires confidence and encourages staff and pupils.

You will have the ability to nurture and promote a warm and positive atmosphere for pupils, staff and parents and show warmth, even-handedness and sensitivity, as well as an understanding of and empathy with others' feelings and motives, and to be able to see things from other people's perspectives.

As leader of our Pre-Prep, you will know how to manage conflict and to defuse situations by careful listening, sensitive use of praise, humour and recognition, as well as a demonstrable and sensitive understanding of what current and prospective parents want from the school and an ability to respond to them.

You will have the ability and outstanding judgment required to solve problems decisively and to explain issues and decisions clearly and evenly.

You will encourage talented colleagues in whatever role, and high-achieving and aspiring pupils, in the delivery and pursuit of excellence; and to give advice supportively and effectively.

You will have the ability to market and promote the School effectively, to present information and decisions clearly to prospective and current parents, staff and governors, as well as to the wider community, including the local press, and to foster relationships with a wide range of other (especially our partner) schools.



Terms of Appointment

The successful applicant will take up the appointment in September 2022 or as soon as possible thereafter.

The School will offer a competitive salary and generous benefits to reflect the candidate's qualifications and experience. The Principal's salary is normally subject to annual review.

Highgate School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced DBS check and other statutory checks.

Highgate School is committed to equal opportunities and welcomes applications from all sections of the community as we aspire to attract staff that represent the social and cultural diversity of our pupils.

Process

The closing date for applications is noon on Friday 24th September 2021.

Following a meeting on **Thursday 30th September**, candidates will be notified as to whether they will be invited for preliminary discussions with a consultant at Saxton Bampfylde. These meetings will take place during the **week commencing 4th October**.

Subsequent to a shortlisting meeting on **Wednesday 13th October/ Thursday 14th October**, selected candidates will be invited to a first round of panel interviews. Saxton Bampfylde will notify candidates who are not moving forward.

The first round of interviews will take place on **10th or 11th November** at Highgate School. The final round of interviews will take place on **24th or 25th November**.

How to Apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Highgate School on this appointment.

Applications should be made via Highgate's website:
www.highgateschool.org.uk/work-with-us/staff-vacancies



HIGHGATE