



Withington
GIRLS' SCHOOL EST 1890

**Appointment of Head
For September 2026**

Introduction from Chair of Governors

Thank you for your interest in the position of Head at Withington Girls' School. We are proud of our reputation as one of the country's leading independent day schools for girls aged 7 to 19.

Withington combines academic excellence with a strong sense of purpose and genuine care for each individual. Our commitment is to develop confident, independent young women who not only achieve their full academic potential but are ready to meet the challenges that face them in the world outside. Our approach ensures that every pupil is truly known, understood and supported throughout her journey with us, yet the scale and quality of opportunity we provide matches that of much larger schools.

The Sunday Times Parent Power Schools Guide 2025 named us Independent School of the Year for Academic Performance in the North West – the sixth consecutive year we have been recognised in this way. While our results speak for themselves, we judge success by the calibre of the young women who leave us – ambitious, capable, and ready to make their mark, having been nurtured in an environment where their wellbeing and personal development have been prioritised alongside academic achievement.

Respect (for oneself and for others), responsibility, and inclusion underpin school life. Within our caring community, pupils are encouraged to aim high, develop their talents, and embrace the many opportunities available through our clubs, societies, and wider enrichment programmes. Our excellent pastoral system ensures each girl receives the individual guidance and support she needs to flourish.

As Head, you will lead a highly regarded school with a clear identity and strong foundations. We will look to you to build on our heritage and ensure Withington continues to thrive in the years ahead. In return, you will have the full support of a talented and dedicated governing body, staff, and school community who share our commitment to the holistic development of every pupil.

I encourage you to visit and see for yourself what makes Withington such an exceptional place to learn and lead.

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm Pike
Chair of Governors



About Withington Girls

WHERE GIRLS SHINE

Withington is a leading independent day school for girls aged 7 to 19, achieving some of the best academic results in the country with dedication, compassion and joy.

We prioritise knowing each pupil as an individual, providing tailored care and support in a nurturing environment. This allows us to maintain our position as the North West's top-performing independent school, whilst ensuring our girls grow into happy, confident and independent young women who feel genuinely valued throughout their journey with us. Above all, Withington is a place where enthusiastic learners flourish, supported by staff who are deeply committed to pastoral care and personal development. Our proactive wellbeing programme ensures every pupil receives the support she needs to thrive academically and personally.

The most recent ISI report recognised our commitment to cultural understanding and respect as **"a significant strength of the school"**, highlighting the opportunities we provide for discussion and reflection across all faiths. Read more [here](#)

Finances:

With an annual turnover of over £10M, Withington is in a healthy financial position and can look to the future with confidence. The Governors are keen to explore potential increases to commercial income, currently derived from facility lettings and holiday activities.

WGS Trust:

Withington Girls' School is a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. The WGS Trust is a separate registered charity supporting the School's educational advancement, with nine Trustees appointed by the Governors. The Head is appointed as one of the trustees. The School's Development Team supports fundraising activities with integrated finance functions and the Trust currently invests over £900,000 per annum to provide outstanding educational opportunities for talented girls, irrespective of financial background.



“Withington's motto is 'Ad lucem' (towards the light), a most fitting way of encapsulating the standard of education at this remarkable school. It's an inspiring place where very able girls who thrive on being fully engaged in a broad and stimulating curriculum will shine brightly.”

The Good Schools Guide



“Leaders provide a warm, caring and supportive environment. The school has a clear sense of community.”

ISI Report 2025

About Withington Girls

True to our founding principles, we believe that the pleasure of learning brings its own reward, sustaining and enriching individuals throughout their lives. We aim to open as many doors as possible for our pupils in terms of learning. Respect for ourselves and others alongside personal responsibility underpin our school community. We celebrate diversity, value teamwork, and encourage everyone to play their part, with older pupils and alumnae providing inspirational role models.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We're an inclusive school and our proactive approach to equality, diversity and inclusion reflects this culture. It enables everyone, whatever their background, to feel safe, respected and valued here, drawing on diverse voices and experiences that make us proud to be the best possible reflection of Greater Manchester's diversity. We never take these principles for granted, which is why we continue developing our strategy so that every girl feels welcome applying here.

Proudly All Girls

Our single-sex environment is a powerful catalyst for unlocking every girl's potential. Without the subtle pressures of gender dynamics, our pupils feel genuinely free to explore every aspect of themselves – speaking up fearlessly, taking creative risks, and pursuing leadership without hesitation. When they leave, our young women carry an unshakeable confidence that they belong anywhere, pursuing any ambition.

Being proudly all girls means creating an environment where young women don't just succeed – they soar.

Bursary Programme

We don't want financial circumstances to be a barrier preventing girls who have demonstrated their potential to take up a place at our school. Our ambitious bursary programme is central to the ethos and values of the school and 1 in 6 senior school pupils receive means tested financial support.

ETHOS

OUR WITHINGTON ETHOS

WELLBEING and INCLUSION

All pupils are nurtured, supported and encouraged to reach their full potential, academically, socially and personally within our caring community

RESPECT and RESPONSIBILITY

The golden rule of respect for self, respect for others and personal responsibility underpins our school community and extends beyond the classroom into the wider world

BEYOND the CLASSROOM

Pupils develop talents, skills, interests and character through the wealth of extra-curricular opportunities on offer

WHERE GIRLS SHINE

LOVE of LEARNING

The pleasure of learning is its own reward; valuing and understanding how to learn sustains and enriches us throughout our lives

COMMUNITY and DIVERSITY

We are a community where diversity is celebrated, teamwork valued and every pupil is encouraged to play their part: older pupils and alumnae provide inspirational role models

AIMS

OUR WITHINGTON AIMS



TO INSPIRE PUPILS WITH AN OUTSTANDING EDUCATION...

...through a strong, regularly reviewed curriculum, evidence-based teaching strategies, and transformative technology, ensuring relevance, inclusivity, engagement, and enhanced pupil outcomes



TO CULTIVATE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, WELLBEING AND A SENSE OF SAFETY...

...by fostering an inclusive school environment, holistic pastoral care and enshrining strong values that shape the school's culture and community relationships



TO CHAMPION OUR COMMUNITY...

...by ensuring the quality, motivation, and wellbeing of its staff, fostering meaningful relationships with parents, alumnae, and local stakeholders, and strengthening the school's influence through robust community engagement



TO EMPOWER FUTURE GENERATIONS...

...by further securing long-term financial health, maintaining a strong and stable pupil body, developing additional income streams for the school, and implementing a well-defined marketing strategy to remain competitive and attractive to all

VALUES

OUR WITHINGTON VALUES

RESPECT

FOR SELF

RESPECT

FOR OTHERS

PERSONAL

RESPONSIBILITY

LOVE OF

LEARNING



School Structure

Withington offers pupils a continuous and supportive journey from Junior School through to the Sixth Form. At every stage, the school combines academic challenge with dedicated pastoral care and opportunities to develop confidence, curiosity and a strong sense of community.

Junior School

Pupils begin their Withington journey in a welcoming environment that encourages confidence, curiosity and independence. Teachers get to know each pupil well personally and academically, whilst specialist teaching in subjects such as IT, Music and Languages, and well-used outdoor spaces, enrich learning. The House system, varied activities and wraparound care help build a strong sense of belonging and community, with Form Tutors providing consistent support and guidance. Outdoor play and learning form an important part of daily life.

Senior School

As pupils move into the Senior School, they enjoy a broad curriculum whilst having opportunities in sport, music, drama and a wide range of clubs. The House system, dedicated form time and assemblies create strong friendships and allow for personal growth, whilst trips, visiting speakers and enrichment activities broaden horizons. Academic challenge is balanced with strong pastoral support from Heads of Year and Form Tutors, and pupils are encouraged to discover and develop their talents both in and beyond the classroom within a caring environment that celebrates individual achievement.

Sixth Form

In the Sixth Form, pupils join a close-knit community where they are encouraged to excel whilst taking on new challenges. Small classes, a wide choice of A Levels, the Extended Project Qualification and a varied enrichment programme prepare pupils for life beyond school. Sixth Formers take on leadership roles, support younger pupils and contribute to the wider life of the school, with many progressing to Russell Group universities and other competitive courses.



“We were bowled over by the girls. Every single one was confident, but not arrogant. In discussion with us they were respectful of their peers and made some extremely mature and insightful comments, often well beyond their years.”

The Good Schools Guide



Academic Success

A genuinely outstanding school isn't judged solely on its results and league tables.

That's why a Withington education is about so much more than academic performance. However, we can't help but feel a deep pride in the remarkable results achieved by our students. They're a credit to our dedicated staff – and, most importantly, the results are a testament to our wonderful girls.

But please don't just take our word for it. We've been named **Independent School of the Year for Academic Performance in the North West** in the prestigious Sunday Times Parent Power Schools Guide 2024. It's our sixth consecutive year of receiving awards from The Sunday Times, including being named as **North West Independent Secondary School of the Decade** in 2021.

“Girls told us they came to Withington because, ‘It has an amazing academic reputation, I knew I would be able to meet my goals here. I've gained such self confidence, you feel you can do anything.’”

The Good Schools Guide

Ambitious attitude: Our students' university destinations

When our girls leave us to continue their educational journey, we're delighted to see that 80% of leavers gain places on their preferred degree courses at their chosen universities. We're proud of each and every student. The breadth of subjects our students progress to study reflects the wide range of opportunities they experience here at Withington.

In the last five years:

Oxbridge:

12.6%

Russell Group:

74.2%

Other
(including gap
years):

13.2%



82%

of GCSE grades achieved
at 8/9 in 2025

91%

of A level grades were
A*-B in 2025

12.6%

Five year average of leavers
securing Oxbridge places



“Parents and girls praise pastoral care... One girl told us, ‘There’s lots of people you can turn to for help like heads of year and the counsellor, but we are also good at finding resolutions to problems ourselves.’”

The Good Schools Guide

Pastoral Support and Wellbeing

At Withington Girls' School, we believe that exceptional education flourishes when both students and staff feel genuinely supported and valued.

Pupil Wellbeing

By knowing and understanding each pupil as an individual, we can nurture her potential within our exceptionally warm, friendly and caring environment. Withington girls achieve outstanding academic success alongside vital personal and social development.

We work closely with families throughout each girl's time at Withington, helping us identify anything that might impact her personal development so we can offer relevant support at every stage. Through our proactive Personal, Social, Health & Citizenship Education (PSHCE) programme, pupils learn about themselves and the wider world. Our specialist team, including Form Tutors, Heads of Year and health professionals, works together to ensure their wellbeing.

Staff Wellbeing

We recognise that outstanding teaching comes from staff who feel valued and well-cared for. Our comprehensive wellbeing package includes highly attractive remuneration and pension schemes, healthcare through Simply Health, death in service benefit, and complimentary school lunches. Staff benefit from our fitness suite and classes, on-site parking, EV car charging, library access, and additional PPA time for teaching staff.

This approach to staff wellbeing contributes to our notably stable and happy staff community - colleagues who are genuinely invested in the school's mission and enjoy long, fulfilling careers here. It's this stability that helps create the supportive environment in which our pupils flourish.

Co-Curricular

Our broad curricular and co-curricular programmes help pupils to develop a life-long love of physical activity and to foster an appreciation that a healthy, active lifestyle supports all areas of our wellbeing.

We believe that co-curricular activities are key to a full and rounded education, contribute to physical and mental wellbeing and help our pupils to develop confidence and skills in creativity, communication, time management, leadership, critical thinking and resilience.

An extraordinary array of clubs and societies means there is something for everyone, from coding to garage band, photography to sign language and much more in between.

Enquiring minds can dig deeper into a subject that captures them and engage beyond the curriculum through our clubs. And of course, there is the opportunity to take the lead by joining a committee, running activities for younger pupils or by starting a new club or society.

Clubs meet at lunch time or after school and many of the school buses provide a late service to make taking part easy.



“Co-curricular activities are many and diverse. Pupils have the opportunity to experience a variety of physical, creative, fun and thought-provoking activities, enabling them to develop their talents and explore their interests.”

ISI Report 2025





Community and Partnerships

As a forward-thinking, outward-looking school, our ethos of respect for self, respect for others and personal responsibility underpins our connections beyond the school gates.

We have a strong track record of delivering sustained, mutually beneficial partnerships with state schools and community organisations that benefit local, national and international communities. Hundreds of pupils each year benefit from enterprising, fun and engaging activities that develop their skills and knowledge while forging new experiences and friendships.

Locally, our partnerships create meaningful impact across Manchester and beyond. One of our longest running programmes, SHiNE Together, provides Saturday morning classes for boys and girls in Years 5 and 6 in an exciting range of subjects. Our musical partnership, Manchester Sings, brings together hundreds of children from our region to celebrate music and recognise the power of community. Meanwhile, our Science Communicators – Sixth Form scientists who deliver exciting science shows and activities to primary and secondary school partners – inspire younger audiences while developing valuable communication and personal skills alongside their subject knowledge.

Looking ahead, Future Focus represents our commitment to empowering the next generation of young women. This series of conferences aims to inspire confidence, develop self-esteem and improve mental health – equipping participants with essential skills to succeed and flourish in their future lives and careers.

Our reach extends far beyond the UK through our transformative Gambia programme, which has developed over the last 20 years to advance educational opportunities in remote rural locations. We have established a strong partnership with the Mama Tamba Nursery School in Illiasa, a small village in inland Gambia, where we are guided by local contacts who work with village elders to assess needs and advise how we can best support the community.

“Pupils’ sensitivity to and awareness of the needs of others are reflected in their voluntary work and community and fund-raising activities where they participate in local, national and international projects.”

ISI Report 2025

Our Location

Withington Girls' School is ideally situated in Greater Manchester, one of the UK's most dynamic and culturally rich regions. The school benefits from excellent transport connectivity, with direct rail links to London, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, and York. Manchester Airport is conveniently nearby, and the school's proximity to the M6 and M62 motorways allows for good road connections.

The school sits within reach of some of Greater Manchester's most sought-after residential areas, including Didsbury, Cheadle, and Altrincham - leafy suburbs that offer the best of both worlds: metropolitan amenities alongside green spaces and a strong community feel.

Manchester's cultural landscape is particularly compelling, with the city attracting world-renowned artists and hosting internationally acclaimed festivals such as the Manchester International Festival. The region is home to leading universities, including The University of Manchester, recognised as a centre of teaching excellence and world-class research.

For those who appreciate the outdoors, the location offers excellent access to the Peak District and Lake District, both within easy reach.

As the birthplace of the industrial revolution, Manchester has always been a place where things happen. Today, that energy translates into a forward-thinking region that provides an exciting backdrop for anyone working and living in the area.



Picture: Manchester Cathedral



The Role

The Head of Withington Girls' School reports to the Governing Body and is responsible for the strategic and operational leadership of the whole school. The Head will provide educational vision and direction, ensuring the highest standards of teaching, learning and pastoral care while maintaining the school's academic excellence and distinctive ethos. The Head also acts as a trustee on the WGS Trust Board.

Key Responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership and Management

- Develop and implement a long-term strategic plan for the school, working with the Senior Leadership Team to determine priorities and measurable goals
- Communicate the vision and strategic direction to all stakeholders with clarity and conviction
- Demonstrate dynamic leadership that empowers the Senior Leadership Team and staff
- Ensure sound financial management and explore opportunities for sustainable growth
- Foster an open, collaborative and supportive working culture throughout the school
- Model the school's values and ethos through professional conduct and decision-making

Compliance and Governance

- Ensure compliance with safer recruitment practices and maintain robust safeguarding procedures in all staffing matters
- Oversee adherence to employment law and statutory requirements, ensuring policies and practice across the school meet regulatory standards
- Work effectively with the Governing Body, providing accurate information and professional advice to support robust decision-making and accountability

The Role

Educational Leadership

- Provide inspirational educational leadership that maintains and enhances academic standards
- Recruit, develop and retain outstanding teaching staff committed to excellence
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the school
- Ensure the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and prepares them for future success
- Oversee assessment, tracking and intervention strategies to maximise pupil achievement
- Maintain the school's position as a leading academic institution with consistently outstanding examination results
- Champion innovation in teaching and learning while maintaining proven best practices
- Ensure effective provision for pupils with additional learning needs

Pupil Welfare and Development

- Take ultimate responsibility for the welfare, safety and safeguarding of all pupils
- Ensure excellent pastoral care that supports pupils' academic, personal and social development
- Maintain high standards of behaviour and discipline throughout the school
- Promote the school's values and ensure an inclusive, supportive environment for all
- Oversee the co-curricular programme to provide rich opportunities for personal growth
- Support pupils in securing places at leading universities and support pupils in their transition to the next stage of their education and careers

Staff Leadership and Development

- Recruit, lead and manage high-quality staff across all areas of the school
- Implement effective performance management and professional development programmes
- Foster staff wellbeing and maintain high levels of morale and retention
- Ensure all staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and other statutory requirements
- Create opportunities for career progression and leadership development
- Handle staff disciplinary matters and performance issues with appropriate support

Stakeholder Relations

- Build and maintain positive relationships with parents, providing clear and timely communication
- Represent the school at external events and within the wider educational community
- Work with alumnae and support development and fundraising initiatives to strengthen the school community and bursary provision
- Engage with local partnerships and educational initiatives
- Handle complaints effectively and maintain the school's reputation
- Support marketing and admissions activities to ensure sustainable pupil numbers

The Person

Qualifications and Experience

- Successful senior leadership experience in a school, preferably as a Head or Deputy Head
- Evidence of recent and relevant training at senior level
- Proven track record of raising academic standards and delivering outstanding pupil achievement
- Experience of financial management and strategic planning
- Knowledge of current educational policy and regulatory requirements

Personal Qualities

- Outstanding communication skills, both written and verbal
- Ability to inspire, motivate and lead staff at all levels
- Strong interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence
- Evidence of building successful relationships with diverse stakeholders
- Commitment to the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people
- Strong advocate for a single-sex educational environment
- High standards of personal and professional integrity
- Resilience and ability to work effectively under pressure
- Vision and strategic thinking capabilities
- Unwavering commitment to academic excellence and continuous improvement
- Understanding of and commitment to promoting equality and inclusion

Skills and Competencies

- Excellent decision-making and problem-solving abilities
- Ability to manage change effectively and sensitively
- Ability to analyse academic data and use evidence to drive continuous school improvement
- Financial acumen and understanding of budget management
- Knowledge of employment law and HR practices
- Understanding of marketing and public relations in an educational context
- Ability to use technology effectively to enhance educational outcomes
- Capacity to work collaboratively while providing clear direction

Personal Attributes

- Enthusiasm for girls' education and belief in their potential
- Sense of humour and ability to relate to pupils, staff and parents
- Flexibility and adaptability in a changing educational landscape
- Commitment to the school's ethos and values
- Professional discretion and confidentiality
- Energy and stamina for the demands of headship

Safeguarding, Child Protection Policy & Procedures

Withington Girls' 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 candidate must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

It is the post holder's responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of children. You will comply with the Withington Girls' School Safeguarding, Child Protection Policy and Procedures and the requirement to report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any concerns relating to the safety or welfare of children.



How to Apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Withington Girls on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code LAXAXB

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on 30th September.

Key Dates:

- The shortlist meeting will be held on Friday 7th November – please note this date is for information only, candidates not required.
- First round panels will be held on Monday 10th November
- Final round panels will be held on Wednesday 26th November

*The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

Please note we will be collecting first references prior to the shortlist meeting. We will not contact referees without your prior consent.

An application form will be required for all longlisted candidates.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.

Saxton Bampfylde

A young woman with dark hair, wearing a dark blue school blazer over a blue and white striped shirt, is smiling and raising her right hand in a classroom. In the background, another student in a similar uniform is also raising their hand. The setting appears to be a typical classroom with desks and a whiteboard.