

APPLICANT PACK

HEAD

Knighton House School, Dorset

FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

A unique IAPS coeducational boarding and day country prep school for children from 3-13.

Apply by: Monday 22nd February 2021



KNIGHTON
HOUSE

DORSET



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Knighton House is at an exciting and pivotal moment in its development.

In October 2020 Knighton entered into a new and deeper cooperation with our neighbouring senior school Bryanston. At the same time we became fully coeducational for the first time in our history. We have also recently moved away from the narrow strictures of Common Entrance and are continuing to develop our bespoke KED (Knowledge Education Discovery) curriculum, which is aiming to be a model for teaching children at these ages.

Taken together, these major strategic developments will be transformative for Knighton. The governors of Knighton House are now seeking to appoint a new Head with exceptional qualities of leadership, vision and energy to drive this change, inspiring pupils and parents, leading our common room and working with both the Knighton governors and with Bryanston's senior leadership team.

The aim is to create a true centre of excellence, a 21st century vision of a country prep school education.



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History, grounds, ethos

Founded as a 'home from home' by John and Peggy Booker in 1950, Knighton House pioneered a warm and caring approach to prep school life – at a time when the norm was very different. Knighton now aims to provide a unique and outstanding all round education for its pupils.

One of the most beautifully situated schools in the country, Knighton stands in 30 acres of rolling chalk downland in Dorset's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The heart of the school is a large manor house on the Bryanston estate that includes classrooms, dormitories and common rooms.

Knighton is an outdoor school. Pupils are free to roam across the lawns, paddocks, orchards and woods and teachers incorporate the beautiful surroundings into the children's learning. Riding is a big part of life at Knighton and pupils keep ponies at the school and compete nationally in eventing, show-jumping and dressage. Sport and music, drama and art are given equal prominence here – and the new relationship with Bryanston now gives us the opportunity to supercharge these areas, becoming a centre of excellence for a modern, creative education in its widest sense.

The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. Knighton underwent an educational quality inspection in 2017 by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). We were delighted to be graded 'excellent' in pupil achievement and personal development. An ISI compliance inspection was successfully completed in 2020.

The KED curriculum

Knighton has always had a 'nurture not pressure' approach while still delivering excellent academic results. All Knighton leavers go on to their first choice senior schools, with around a quarter securing awards and scholarships. But in 2019 we broke decisively with Common Entrance and created instead our bespoke KED curriculum. It is founded on the principle that how you learn is as important as what you learn, and so at every stage of our pupils' journey through the school, we build important learning dispositions: optimism, curiosity, independence and self-awareness are just some of the many concepts our pupils learn and will take with them into secondary education. This is a curriculum which prepares Knightonians for learning at all stages of their lives.



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Our new head

The School Governors (Co Chairs Paul Slight and Iain Weatherby) are looking to appoint an inspiring new head to refresh and renew Knighton, working closely with Bryanston, while bringing new energy and ideas to the school.

The successful applicant will be a graduate with experience of leadership and teaching this age group, probably in a coeducational setting. She or he is likely to have held a position of seniority and responsibility in a prep or senior school, to have experience of school management and to have strong leadership skills.

The head is the school's chief executive and is responsible to the board of governors for the development of the school and its smooth running, both in the daily routine and during special events. The head is responsible for the recruitment, care, safeguarding and nurture of the pupils and for maintaining the highest standards – both academic and pastoral. The head is expected to guide, inspire and encourage all staff and pupils to fulfil their potential.

Knighton is a charity but it is also a business: our new head will lead the school's admissions and pupil recruitment team using their profile and reputation to attract and retain both day pupils and boarders and so build the school roll driving commercial performance. The head is responsible for planning and overseeing the implementation of the

curriculum, timetable and organisation of the school day and reviewing these as appropriate. The head oversees the regular monitoring and recording of pupils' progress and ensures that parents are provided with regular reports.

There is a need to keep abreast of current educational thinking, the requirements of senior schools at entrance and scholarship levels and the National Curriculum while helping shape our distinctive programme. An important part of the head's role is proactive maintenance of good relations with senior schools and advising parents on suitable choices for their children.

The head will be responsible for ensuring that there is an appropriate balance between all areas of school life such as art music, drama and sport – and for ensuring sure there is enough downtime for play, fun and community involvement. The head should also maintain good relationships with the local community and schools, with professional bodies and former pupils.

The head is responsible for overseeing the boarding provision and maintaining the highest possible standards of pastoral care. There is a need to ensure that appropriate systems of care are in operation in accordance with the statutory regulatory requirements.



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The pupils

Knighton House welcomes boarders (full and flexi) from across the United Kingdom, including military families, London families bridging the gap from 11 to 13, and international students from across Europe and Asia.

Day pupils are drawn from the local area: many quickly persuade parents to allow them to flexi-board – especially on the fun themed weekends. Knighton's 'outstanding' Pre-Prep The Orchard welcomes local girls and boys from 3 to 7.

The vast majority of pupils stay until 13 and go on to a mix of prestigious day and boarding schools. Recent Leavers have gone on to Bryanston, Canford, Godolphin, Leweston, Marlborough, South Wilts Grammar, St Mary's Calne, Sherborne Girls and St Swithun's. Old Knightonians – including distinguished figures in all walks of life – use the bedrock confidence that Knighton gives them to go on to build happy and successful lives.

The staff

The new head will lead a staff of 26 full and part-time staff members plus a roster of peripatetic music and other specialist teachers. The head is responsible to the Governors for the appointment of all teaching staff, giving attention to their support, guidance, assessment, in service training and professional development. The head is responsible to the school council for the financial management of the school with the assistance of the school business manager.



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Specification

Outstanding candidates will possess the following qualities:

- Proven and successful experience in Prep/Senior school management.
- The ability to be collaborative yet also capable of decisive management.
- The confidence of a natural communicator who will fire the imaginations of staff, pupils and parents. Someone who will spearhead marketing and public relations.
- Kindness, empathy and integrity – always putting the needs of the pupils first.
- The educationalist's appetite to stay abreast of change, with the capacity to inspire great learning and outcomes.
- The natural teacher's instinct for what is inspiring: the ability to set an example.
- The able manager's ability to prioritise delegate and manage time well.
- The businessperson's understanding that the school must be successful in a commercial context.



Remuneration

A competitive salary package, will reflect the importance of this appointment.

Candidates wishing to apply should:

- Send a CV and application form, with covering letter to Jodi Twist at Knighton House: sbm@knightonhouse.co.uk
- Call Jodi Twist on 07775374854 to find out more about the opportunity or to arrange an informal discussion with Iain Weatherby or Paul Slight.
- Applications will be acknowledged and then evaluated against the selection criteria: telephone or online discussions will precede shortlisted in-person interviews.
- Full references will be required for the shortlist interviews.
- Shortlisted candidates will be required to bring original documentation, proof of identity and certificates with them to interview.
- Shortlist interview panels to be held in late March.