

Brief for the appointment of

Head



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Background

St Christopher's is one of London's leading preparatory schools, educating some 250 girls aged 4 to 11 in North London's Belsize Park.

St Christopher's prides itself on its close-knit community and has developed a unique magic and charm in which an atmosphere of happiness and security pervades. The School nurtures an environment where each pupil feels known and valued, further engendered by a staff body that shows deep commitment and loyalty to its pupils.

With a rich history dating back to 1883, St Christopher's School has had a range of incarnations, but throughout has provided a nurturing education in Hampstead with a distinct emphasis on creativity. In 1972, a Charitable Trust was formed to take over the School and today strong and committed governance has ensured the School is financially secure and well resourced.

The School is a member of IAPS and the Girls' Schools Association.



Aims and Values

St Christopher's aims to offer an all-round, intellectually stimulating and inclusive education to girls that broadens their academic horizons whilst nurturing kindness, generosity, emotional intelligence and individuality. The School celebrates its girls as individuals so that they feel supported and challenged, able to thrive and be the best versions of themselves today and tomorrow.

Through its curriculum, pastoral care and co-curriculum, St Christopher's:

- Nurtures creativity, curiosity, freedom of thought and intellectual ambition. St Christopher's girls find joy in understanding.
- Cares for girls and inspires them to discover their sense of self and their heart. St Christopher's girls find their passion and their voice.
- Champions their dreams and ambitions. St Christopher's girls grow into inclusive, courageous, and principled young women, to be change-makers, for themselves and the good of others. St Christopher's girls find gratitude in challenges.

The core values of St Christopher's are **creativity, curiosity, challenge, community and kindness.**



Academics

St Christopher's is proud of its distinctive creative curriculum and creativity in all its forms is integrated throughout the academic provision. Through a personalised academic approach, girls grow a passion for learning that sees them achieve exceptional academic results and go on to some of the leading senior schools in London and further afield.

An inclusive and rigorous curriculum encourages critical thinking and inspires awe and wonder. Independence and creativity of thought are encouraged, mistakes are considered a useful tool for learning and pupils are taught to appreciate that change is the norm.

Pupils learn in small classes. Alongside English and Mathematics, girls also study humanities, science and computing, music and singing, drama, art,

design and technology. Chess is taught to all girls and philosophy is a fundamental part of the curriculum. The curriculum is highly personalised and flexible, and teaching and learning is made as cross-curricular as possible.

St Christopher's prepares girls for some of the most successful day and boarding schools in the UK and beyond. In 2024 over 30 awards, including Academic, Sport and Dance Scholarships, were offered to girls leaving St Christopher's, and places were accepted at 13 different senior schools including: Belmont Mill Hill, Channing, Cheltenham Ladies' College, City of London School for Girls, Francis Holland Regent's Park, Godolphin and Latymer, Haberdasher's Girls' School, Highgate, North London Collegiate School, Queen's College, South Hampstead High School, St Paul's Girls' School and Wycombe Abbey.

“Pupils' attainment successfully reflects the school's aims to provide an inspirational educational experience which equips pupils with the confidence and life skills to succeed in the next stage of their education.”

ISI Report, 2022



Co-Curriculum

Music and Creative Arts

Music is an important unifying factor at St Christopher's, featuring regularly during the school day and in all assemblies. All pupils are in one of three choirs and senior girls may audition for the Chamber Choir. There is a school orchestra, and all pupils have a one-hour music lesson and a half-hour singing lesson each week. Individual tuition for a range of instruments is also available.

Drama is considered a fundamental part of a St Christopher's education, fostering both teamwork and confidence. All pupils have drama lessons and from Year 4 these are taught by a drama specialist. Every year group performs a play which will always have a musical component.

Sports, Clubs and Trips

All girls take part in an extensive Physical Education programme at St Christopher's. Lessons cover a diverse offering including gymnastics, rhythm and dance, yoga, netball, hockey, rounders, health-related fitness and athletics.

Girls in Years 4 to 6 are all involved in a large number of netball and rounders fixtures across the year. Squads from A to C ensure that every girl is involved and has the opportunity to compete for the School. Whether playing at home under the floodlit all-weather court or away against a variety of opponents, all girls experience the enjoyment and benefits of competitive fixtures.

On top of strong creative arts departments and a variety of sports, a rich array of co-curricular clubs offer girls the space to foster their unique interests. Most pupils attend two or three clubs each week and popular activities include debating, Latin, judo, gymnastics, animation, coding and STEAM.

Every year group participates in at least three trips each academic year, making the most of the rich resources on offer in and around London. These include trips to the theatre, galleries and museums. Years 4, 5 and 6 also attend residential trips in Surrey, Wales and Dorset respectively.





Pastoral Care

Ensuring the happiness and wellbeing of pupils is at the heart of St Christopher's and the goal is to help each pupil choose their own path with confidence, knowing that they will remain safe and secure in the School's care. Staff members are well placed to support pupils pastorally, dealing quickly with issues that arise and facilitating resolutions, whilst developing self-assurance in the girls. The School has Emotional Literacy support assistants who support children one to one or in small groups.

Girls are assigned to one of four vertically grouped Houses. This system enables pupils across all year groups to work together on shared projects such as fundraising for charity and merits for behaviour and endeavour. House meetings often include time to focus on key themes, such as happiness, kindness and wellbeing. The girls work together on mini projects and pupil-led discussions that offer them a voice in how they want their school to be, empowering them to drive forward any changes that they would like to see.

Kindness, thoughtfulness and inclusion are central tenets of the School's ethos. The shared acceptance and encouragement of pupils allows them to become expressive, confident girls with voices that are not afraid to be heard. St Christopher's is a Silver UNICEF Rights Respecting School and is currently working towards the Gold award.

“Pupils are proud of their school. They appreciate the richness of diversity, are sensitive towards each other and understand how much they can learn from each other.”

ISI Report, 2022

Facilities

The School's original Victorian building houses Years 1, 2 and 3 as well as the Music and Art departments, dining hall and gym. An extensive rebuilding programme was completed in September 2008, introducing new classrooms with sedum roofs and energy efficient heating and lighting systems. There is also a library, IT suite and specialist science laboratory. Outdoor space is used to great effect and includes an outdoor classroom, an Alice Garden and a science themed garden, as well as an all-weather court so that girls have plenty of opportunity to work and play outdoors.

The School has recently embarked on a Reception extension and new building project which will be complete in September 2024.

Governance and Leadership

St Christopher's School is an educational charitable trust and the Board of Governors is an ambitious, committed group with a diverse mix of professional skills and experiences including several leading educationalists. The new Head will benefit from the full support of this engaged, collaborative team in leading St Christopher's into the next exciting phase of its development.

The Head of St Christopher's School will lead a Senior Leadership Team currently comprising:

- Bursar
- Deputy Head Academic
- Deputy Head Pastoral
- Head of Lower School
- Head of Upper School
- Head of IT and Digital Innovation
- Head of EYFS



The Role

The headship of St Christopher's School is an exciting opportunity to lead one of London's leading standalone preparatory schools.

The appointee will inherit a highly successful organisation underpinned by a committed Governing Board and sound finances. This, paired with the School's impressive reputation, will afford the next Head the opportunity to build on strong foundations and realise significant ambitions for St Christopher's future.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Vision

- Develop and articulate a contemporary and compelling vision for St Christopher's which builds on the School's many existing strengths and traditions whilst embracing new ideas.
- Translate this vision into a comprehensive strategy, engaging all members of the St Christopher's community in its development and implementation and ensuring the School retains its magic and charm.
- Be aware of, and proactively respond to, strategic considerations posed by the needs of the local and wider marketplace, adapting plans and strategies in an agile manner, as necessary.

Leadership and Management

- Provide inspiring leadership, delegating effectively and empowering each member of the Senior Leadership Team to deliver their remits to the highest possible standard.
- Recruit and retain staff of the highest quality with the ability to act as role models, inspire pupils, innovate and develop the reputation of the School.
- Foster a culture of excellence and continued professional development at all levels and across all roles in the School.



Academic and Educational Leadership

- Create a culture which promotes and safeguards the welfare of pupils and staff as the top priority.
- Ensure the School's creative curriculum is regularly reviewed, championing a culture that continues to foster independent learning and a stimulating, creative learning environment.
- Promote excellence in teaching and learning and encourage a culture of debate, research and reflection on best practice.
- Determine, organise and implement policy for excellent pastoral care which prioritises the wellbeing and happiness of the pupils and instils in them the School's values.
- Support and develop the programme of co-curricular activities that provides enriching and diverse opportunities, including but not limited to Sport, Drama, Music and the Arts.

External Engagement

- Be a visible, accessible figure for current parents and champion a close, productive partnership between parents and the School.
- Maintain a detailed understanding of the selection and admissions processes at 11+ and good relationships with Heads and other key individuals in relevant senior schools both in London and nationally, to support and advise parents and girls in their transfer to senior school.
- Manage strong relationships with a wide range of other stakeholders including alumni, destination senior schools and the broader local community, such as with local schools and charities.

Marketing and Recruitment

- Be an engaging ambassador for St Christopher's, communicating the School's unique ethos to prospective parents.
- Lead a purposeful marketing strategy and admissions process which ensures the School continues to attract talented and motivated girls and families who will thrive at St Christopher's and enrich the community.
- Continue to establish a successful alumnae network.
- Maintain a strong understanding of the changing London market and ensure that St Christopher's remains responsive to the challenges and opportunities this will present.



Finance and Operations

- Work in partnership with the Bursar to set budgets and to ensure that the Governors are briefed fully on the School's resource and development needs based upon forecasted pupil numbers and the educational requirements and aspirations of the School.
- Develop an excellent knowledge of strategic financial planning and budgetary management for the School and ensure its strong financial performance is maintained.
- In collaboration with the Bursar and the Governors, prioritise and plan capital expenditure linked to the School's strategic aims and overall vision.
- Work with the Bursar and other members of the Senior Leadership Team to ensure the appropriate deployment and management of all resources (financial, human and physical) across the School in support of the overall vision.
- Ensure a highly effective administrative and support structure is in place and that operational matters are dealt with efficiently to improve the quality of learning and teaching at the School and secure value for money.

Governance

- Set excellent standards for governance and ensure that the School maintains legal and regulatory compliance, that risks are monitored and mitigated, safe recruitment procedures are in place and are followed and that the health and safety of all members of the school community is safeguarded and prioritised above all else.
- Maintain open lines of communication to develop and maintain good relationships with all the Governors.
- Report regularly to the Governors on progress towards the strategic priorities and the achievement of Board policies.
- In partnership with the Chair of Governors, ensure the Board receives sufficient and timely information and advice to make informed decisions.



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The Person

The next Head of St Christopher's will possess the energy and ambition to drive the School forward to achieve even greater success.

The successful candidate will have the following experience, skills and attributes:

Experience

- A track record of highly successful school leadership experience.
- Proven experience of leading and inspiring high-calibre teams and of appointing and developing talented colleagues.
- The academic and intellectual credentials to uphold and develop the academic tradition of the School and command the respect of staff, pupils, parents, destination senior schools and the wider St Christopher's community.

Skills and Knowledge

- First-class communication skills with the capacity to operate as a confident and compelling ambassador for St Christopher's.
- The strategic acumen to hold in balance St Christopher's unique ethos, magic and charm with the impetus for continuous improvement such that the School is able to further strengthen its position.
- A broad understanding of the rapidly evolving education sector and the changing London market and the opportunities and challenges these will present for St Christopher's.
- A good understanding of the business aspects of effective school leadership.

Personal Attributes

- The inner confidence, personal authority, sensitivity, strength and resilience to lead a high-achieving standalone preparatory school in London.
- An ability to lead a team and develop a team spirit at senior leadership level and throughout the staff body.
- A belief in distributed leadership with a collegiate and collaborative approach which empowers, supports and builds leadership capacity in others.
- A warm, engaging figure with the excellent interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence to be a highly visible leader at the heart of the community.
- An authentic commitment to St Christopher's philosophy and aims.



How to Apply

The search for a new Head at St Christopher's School is being led by Odgers Berndtson and the new postholder will be selected by a committee chaired by the Chair of Governors.

The closing date for applications is **09:00 BST Friday 3 May**.

Initial interviews with Odgers Berndtson will take place w/c 13 May. Shortlist interviews with the Selection Panel will take place on **Tuesday 11 June**. Candidates invited to the final stage will be invited to have briefing visits to the school **13 or 14 June** ahead of a final interview which will take place on **Thursday 20 June**.

In order to apply, please submit a comprehensive CV and a covering letter which sets out your interest in the role and encapsulates the aspects of your experience relevant to the required criteria. Please include the names and addresses of three referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.

The preferred method of application is online at: www.odgers.com/91117

All applications will receive an automated response.

For a conversation in confidence, please contact:

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St Christopher's School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Applicants will be required to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Personal data

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/ application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.



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HAMPSTEAD

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