



THE  
HAWTHORNS  
SCHOOL

Brief for the appointment of

# Head



ODGERS 



# Contents

- 03 About The Hawthorns School
- 04 Background
- 08 Caterham Family of Schools
- 09 The Role
- 11 The Person
- 13 How to Apply



## About The Hawthorns School

The Hawthorns is a thriving co-educational Prep School in Bletchingley, Surrey, known for outstanding pastoral care, excellent academic outcomes for all children and for providing an amazing breadth of opportunity for all children to find success and enjoy their time at school. The co-curricular life of the school is a particular strength, with the school nationally recognised for its strength in sport and an exceptional performing arts programme with a track record of producing professional-level talent. The school is set in a beautiful Jacobean mansion, Pendell Court, on an idyllic 35-acre estate. The campus is also home to some incredible sporting and cultural facilities.

In 2025, The Hawthorns joined the award-winning Caterham Family of Schools which has further enhanced the opportunities available to children and staff, as well as its reputation as one of the leading prep schools in the southeast.

The Hawthorns has built a formidable reputation and culture over recent years, promoting a high achieving, highly ambitious and warm school environment in which children and staff can achieve their best and are encouraged to be themselves. At The Hawthorns tradition is blended with informality and innovation, ensuring a vibrant and stimulating environment for learning.



*‘Preparing each child for life and inspiring a love of learning.’*

# Background

The Hawthorns School has a clear sense of purpose and ambition, combining outstanding outcomes and experiences for all our children with a deep commitment to the wellbeing of the community.

The school's approach to a high achieving and holistic education has been the hallmark of The Hawthorns since its founding in 1926 by Christopher and Dudley Bull, who established a school which created a happy, supportive community in which every child is given the opportunity to realise their potential through academic achievement and by engaging in an exceptional breadth of activities which build confidence and character. With a healthy set of values, Hawthorns children are loved, feel secure and learn from their mistakes, endeavours and successes. Laughter and energy abound as pupils and staff make the most of school life.

A Hawthorns education is underpinned by the school values of kindness, respect, honesty, resilience, curiosity and creativity.

The school facilities have grown extensively, now housing an impressive Sports Centre, which holds a 20m pool, outdoor flood-lit all-weather pitch, Multi Use Games Area and outdoor courts. The investment in state-of-the-art facilities and resources is an on-going programme; 2023 saw the opening of a purpose-built nursery, enabling the school to offer year-round childcare and early education for babies aged six months to children aged four.



### Academic Excellence

Each year over 30% of Hawthorns children win scholarships and awards to senior school, whether at 11+ or 13+. Children move on to a rich variety of schools, many of which are highly selective academically.

Children at The Hawthorns follow the Compass Curriculum. Based on the

National Curriculum and the ISEB Common Entrance syllabuses, this has been developed by the school through a desire to underpin the learning of a deep foundation of factual knowledge with the development of the skills required in senior school and beyond: analytical skills, critical thinking, problem solving and a growth mindset.

Learning opportunities are holistic in nature and not compartmentalised by subject boundaries, examining issues of local, national and international interest. European and wider cultural links are developed, and children experience opportunities ranging from the latest e-learning to stimulating talks and presentations, residential field trips and visits.

Public speaking, leadership, service, teamwork skills and active citizenship are developed through a rich variety of projects and challenges. Self-evaluation is encouraged as part of each child's development towards more independent learning.

*‘High levels of pupil engagement in their lessons are a result of knowledgeable teaching that is well planned and which captures their interest.’*

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL INSPECTORATE, 2024





## Co-Curricular

### Learning to embrace Creativity

Creativity is nurtured in each child through a rich programme of Art, Music, Dance, Drama, Textiles and Design & Technology. Children are challenged in an engaging manner to develop their creativity and build confidence.

### Learning how to Perform

In support of every child being able to learn how to perform, children start in an atmosphere of encouragement. Nativity plays and carol concerts ensure young children learn to enjoy performing musically. Music concerts, dance shows and school drama form the foundation of performance. School dramatic productions are a regular feature of every child’s life at The Hawthorns. Poetry recitals and LAMDA competitions encourage children to enhance their public speaking talents.

### Learning to be Sporty

Sport plays a large and important part in the life of a pupil at The Hawthorns. “Sport for All” provides a wide breadth of opportunity so each child can feel sporty.

### Clubs and Activities

Countless other clubs and activities provide the children with a rich and stimulating environment. Every teacher is expected to contribute significantly to the co-curricular programme and there are a wide variety of ways in which to do this, from Woodland Games to 3D Art, and Street Dance to Orchestra!



## Pastoral Care

The school follows a wholly inclusive approach, with all staff embracing responsibility for the wellbeing of the children in partnership with parents. Throughout the Early Years, Lower School and Middle School children are predominantly taught in classes. It is the class teacher who develops a close relationship with the child and is predominantly responsible for each child's pastoral care, supported by the Heads of Year. Upper School children are further supported by tutors from across the teaching staff, who have additional pastoral responsibilities for small groups of children. Tutors meet with their group of tutees once a week, and with individuals on a regular basis.

Much of the school's culture of looking after one another is fostered by the House structure. Each child is assigned to one of the four School Houses and becomes part of a smaller House 'family' with other children from different

year groups. This gives a wonderful opportunity for children to get to know one another across age groups and for the older children to guide others in their House 'family' as a 'family leader'. House staff oversee House and House 'family' activities.

Expectations of positive behaviour, including good manners and friendship, and of learning from challenges and mistakes as much as from successes, are made clear and reinforced from the earliest age. A wealth of opportunities and experiences exist both inside and outside the classroom to enable Hawthorns children to develop in these ways: such as participating in a teamwork day; 'buddying' peers and younger pupils; showing prospective parents around the school; discussing citizenship within a PHSEE lesson; presenting an assembly and having the chance to lead as one of a variety of School Officers.



*‘At The Hawthorns, each child’s wellbeing is at the heart of the work of the school, and the school prides itself on delivering the highest standards of pastoral care.’*

# Caterham Family of Schools

The Hawthorns was welcomed into the award-winning Caterham Family of Schools in January 2025, in a sole membership structure, joining Copthorne Prep School and Caterham Prep School in the group.

The purpose of coming together was to create a strong group of schools with a shared philosophy and ethos. Each school retains its independent identity within the wider group, located in different physical sites, offering different contexts and unique educational experiences for pupils.

Underpinning this is a strong shared commitment to providing the highest standards of educational excellence and outcomes to all pupils, and a shared conviction that education should be enjoyable, transformative and unique to each child. An outstanding Prep education prepares children to enter the senior school of their choice and also prepares children to thrive and see opportunity in a world of opportunity.

The Family of Schools structure gives all schools within it greater stability. It also offers exciting opportunities to grow the schools' collective ability for innovation in teaching and learning, building future skills for all pupils.

The Family of Schools are working towards a greater alignment of academic standards, sharing best practice in delivering an innovative curriculum, teacher training, and also sharing resources across professional services.

The Head of The Hawthorns will have the autonomy and opportunity to build on the existing excellence of The Hawthorns, with the support of an Executive Head of Prep Schools, who will provide support and challenge to the post holder.

## Other Partnerships

The Family of Schools also works closely with a number of local state maintained primary schools, the East Surrey Learning Partnership, and the Head of The Hawthorns will be expected to develop and deepen this relationship as the group seeks to be a partner and supporter of educational ambition and achievement across East Surrey.

For more information on The Hawthorns School please visit [www.hawthorns.com](http://www.hawthorns.com)



# The Role

With a direct reporting line to the Board of The Hawthorns School and to the Executive Head of Prep Schools for the Caterham Family of Schools, the Head of The Hawthorns School is responsible for the day to day running of The Hawthorns School and Nursery.

The postholder will be given wide-ranging influence and autonomy to ensure an excellence and breadth of education for every child in the school, and that the experience of pupil and parents reflects the aims and ethos of the school.

The postholder will be a member of the Caterham Family of School Executive group and, as such, will be expected to contribute not only to the strategy and success of The Hawthorns School but also to the strategy and success of the group as a whole.

The Head of The Hawthorns will report to the Board of the Hawthorns and attend Board and sub-committee meetings of the school. S/he will attend meetings of the Caterham full board and the Caterham Education Committee.

## Key Purpose

To ensure that The Hawthorns School and Nursery provide an outstanding education for all children, and an education that prepares each child for success in life irrespective of future destinations. To provide an education which inspires, supports and challenges children of all backgrounds to be confident, innovative and curious. The Head is expected to build culture and community which is ambitious and warm, creating an environment and pupil experience that gives each child every opportunity to realise their potential through academic achievement and by engaging in activities which build connection and belonging, creating opportunities for success for children of all abilities and interests. Each child will be fuelled with a lifelong love of learning and encouraged to engage meaningfully and purposefully with the world around them.





## Key Responsibilities

- Inspire staff, pupils and parents with an educational vision and experience that matches the ambition of the school ethos and aims, and which supports and underpins that of the wider group of schools.
- Monitor pupil attainment through robust tracking systems to ensure every child reaches their potential.
- Create a culture of ambition, curiosity and care in which wellbeing and nurturing are central, and in which teachers are encouraged to be creative, innovative and passionate.
- Inspire and lead outstanding classroom practice and experience.
- Ensure inspection readiness and regulatory compliance at all times.
- Ensure the curriculum is broad, challenging, and innovative and prepares pupils in all respects for successful transition to a range of senior schools, but which also ensures that more children have the opportunity to successfully apply to Caterham School.
- Set, monitor and continuously improve standards of teaching and learning across the school.
- Foster a culture of excellence and continuous improvement and ensure continuity and consistency of experience across the school.
- Ensure that staff are supported and challenged to seek continuous improvement through professional development.
- Lead the observation and appraisal of teaching staff, fostering a culture of continuous professional development (CPD).
- Ensure effective and proactive safeguarding measures are in place and that the school culture is one in which wellbeing and safeguarding are central.
- Provide a breadth of sporting, artistic and cultural opportunities which inspire interests and develop passions through delivering a wide variety of teacher-led clubs and societies open to all pupils.
- Act as the primary ambassador for the school; meet prospective parents, lead Open Mornings, and work closely with the Registrar to meet recruitment targets.
- Create and communicate a clear marketing and communications strategy to ensure we continue to attract the best talent in the area (both pupils and staff).
- Create and foster links with other schools and nurseries, assisting the Admissions team.
- Manage the annual budget, control costs, and identify new revenue streams (e.g., facility hire, holiday clubs).
- Ensure financial discipline and effective use of resources through effective budgeting, scrutiny and 'best value' practice.
- Define and communicate a clear strategic vision that differentiates the school in a competitive local market.
- Create and implement a rolling 3-5 year development plan.



# The Person

## Qualifications and Professional Development

- Qualified teacher status with a graduate level qualification.
- Evidence of regular, recent and relevant professional development.

## Leading Teaching and Learning

- Experience of overseeing successful Primary teaching.
- Recent leadership and management experience at Head or Deputy Head Level.
- Experience of recruiting, developing and retaining excellent staff.
- Knowledge and understanding of current educational, regulatory and policy issues.
- Experience of developing teaching and learning strategies to inspire, engage and challenge pupils of all abilities.
- Understanding of and enthusiasm for the implementation of new technologies.

- Experience of analysing data and using this to inform planning and practice.
- An ability to articulate clearly how the aims and ethos of the school translate into excellence and strong achievement for all pupils.
- Experience of effective and constructive performance management.
- A track record of inspiring and collaborative leadership.
- An ability to create, motivate and inspire a strong team.
- Clear experience of change management.
- A strong understanding of strategic financial planning and budget management.
- An understanding of and experience in creating strong and meaningful partnerships with the local community.





### Professional Skills, Experience and Knowledge

- A track record of creative and innovative curriculum development which has improved pupil experience and outcome.
- Commitment to a broad and enriching co-curriculum to support and supplement the classroom experience.
- Understands what excellent learning looks like.
- Understands and recognises the contribution of outstanding teaching to pupil outcomes.
- Understanding of and use of new technologies in the classroom.
- A commitment to the wellbeing of pupils and staff as cornerstone of an outstanding education.
- The ability to promote an environment in which behaviour and values are underpinned by positive reinforcement.
- Support for the notion that academic ambition, challenge and achievement for all pupils is underpinned by strong pastoral care.

### Personal Skills and Attributes

- An open, self-reflective, authentic and caring leader who will inspire, listen and collaborate.
- An excellent communicator and motivator.
- The willingness to listen to all opinions and be open to admitting mistakes, but also to see through an agenda where necessary.
- The capacity and ability to work hard and to meet deadlines.
- The ability to work under pressure.
- A belief in the power of education to transform the lives of young people.
- A role model for the values of the school.
- A sense of humour and perspective.
- The willingness and ability to challenge the views of others.



# How to Apply

The Caterham Family of Schools and The Hawthorns School have engaged the services of Odgers to assist with the recruitment of the next Head of The Hawthorns School.

The closing date for applications is **9.00am BST Wednesday 3 June 2026**.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interviews during **week commencing 15 June 2026**.

In order to apply, please submit a 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 current salary details and the names and addresses of three referees, one of whom must be your current employer.

The preferred method of application is online at: [www.odgers.com/96046](http://www.odgers.com/96046).

All applications will receive an automated response.

For an initial discussion, please contact:

**Ruth Lewis:**

[ruth.lewis@odgers.com](mailto:ruth.lewis@odgers.com)

**Isabel Howard:**

[isabel.howard@odgers.com](mailto:isabel.howard@odgers.com)

## 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 expressed 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.

*The Hawthorns School and the Caterham Family of Schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and third parties to share this commitment. Safer recruitment practice and pre-employment background checks will be undertaken before any appointment is confirmed. Enhanced disclosures from the Disclosure and Barring Service will be sought on all successful applicants.*





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