



DURLSTON
PREP & SENIOR SCHOOL

*Head of Durlston
Prep and Senior School*

Candidate Information



“The teachers and staff are incredible, my children are thriving!”

Durlston parent

“There is a real feeling of belonging at Durlston, it is a community not just a school.”

Durlston parent

Welcome

On behalf of the Board of Governors, I am delighted to welcome you to Durlston Prep and Senior School. Our school has a long and proud history of nurturing children from the age of 2 through to 16, providing an education that balances academic excellence with personal development, creativity, and well-being.

I am delighted that you are considering the role of Head at Durlston Prep and Senior School. You will be joining a thriving day school and a warm, inclusive, and close-knit community. Durlston provides an outstanding academic education from Pre-Prep through to Year 11, while maintaining a genuine commitment to the holistic development of every pupil. Our children flourish in a supportive, family-focused environment, enjoying both academic challenge and rich co-curricular opportunities.

This year marks a particularly exciting milestone, as our first Year 11 cohort prepares to sit Durlston's inaugural GCSE examinations in summer 2026. This reflects our careful planning, ambition, and dedication to providing a fully rounded education across all parts of the school. Pupils benefit from excellent facilities, specialist teaching, and a broad and balanced curriculum, including sport, music, drama, and the arts, ensuring they can explore their talents and interests fully.

Durlston's smaller size is a significant strength. Staff know each child individually, providing tailored support and fostering strong relationships across the school community. Pastoral care is central to all we do, helping pupils to become confident, resilient, and happy individuals, ready to embrace future challenges.

The Governors are proud to support a dedicated Senior Leadership Team and staff committed to the highest professional standards and the continued success of the school. We look forward to welcoming an exceptional new Head to lead Durlston into its next exciting chapter, working closely with the Governors, staff, pupils, and parents to further enhance the school's reputation as a leading 2-16 independent day school in the Hampshire and Dorset region.

We look forward to hearing from candidates who share our ambition, passion, and commitment to the academic and personal development of every pupil at Durlston.

Chandra C Ashfield
Chair of Governors

About Durlston

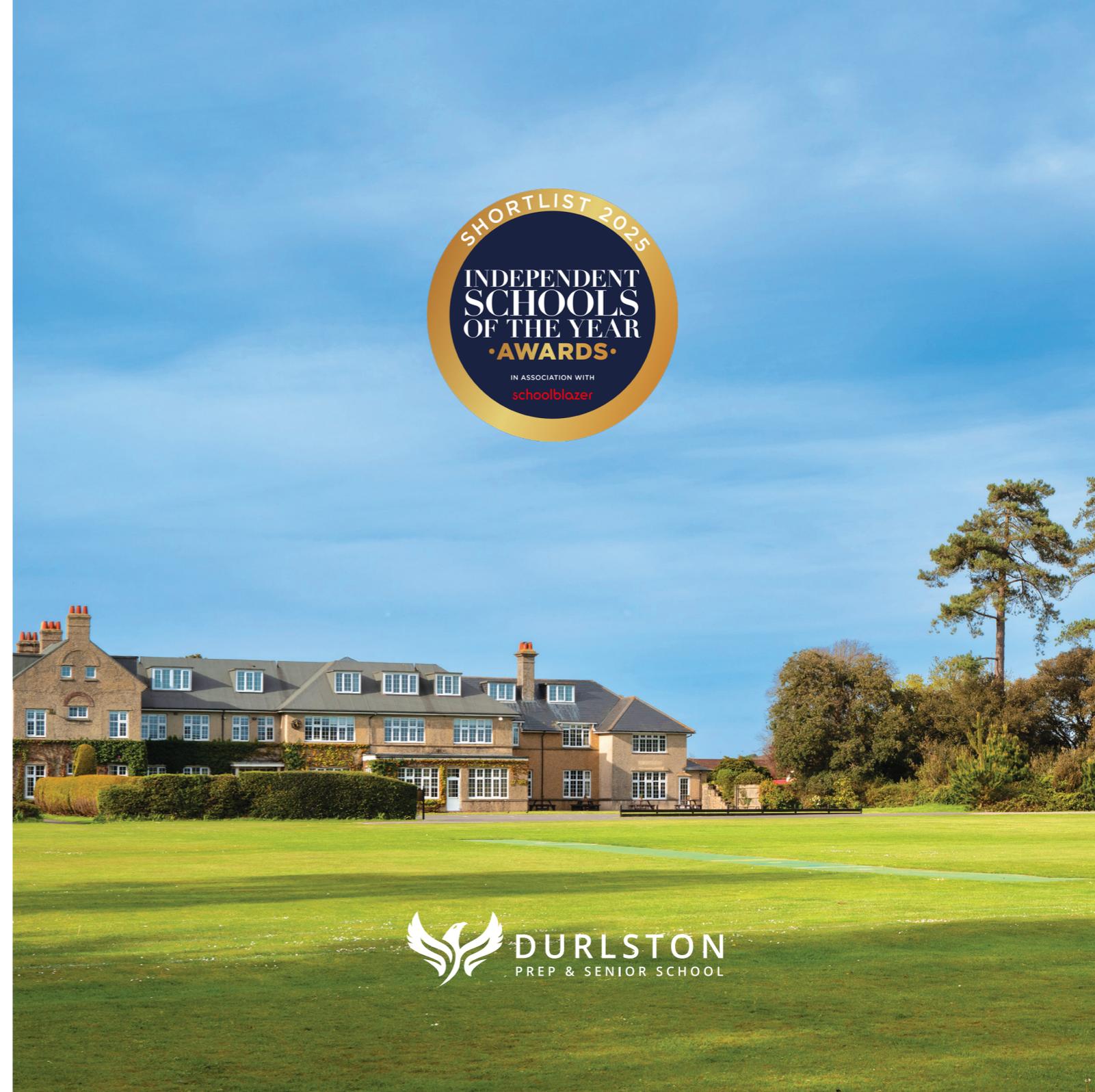
Durlston Prep and Senior School is a thriving independent day school for boys and girls aged 2-16. Beautifully located in Barton-on-Sea, on the border of Hampshire and Dorset at the edge of the New Forest and by the sea, the school attracts families from Lyndhurst, Lymington, Beaulieu, Brockenhurst, Ringwood, Christchurch and Bournemouth.

Founded in 1903 as a boys' boarding school at Durlston Head, Swanage, the school moved to Barton-on-Sea during the Second World War, subsequently becoming co-educational and expanding to include a Pre-Prep. In 2000, it transitioned fully to a day school.

In 2023, the school welcomed its first Year 9 pupils as part of its planned expansion to GCSE. This academic year marks an exciting milestone, as Durlston's first group of Year 11 pupils are now preparing to sit the school's first ever GCSE examinations in summer 2026. Their progress and achievements so far have been extremely positive, and this marks a significant step in the school's development as a fully fledged 2-16 independent school.

Durlston is a family school at heart – nurturing, inclusive and non-selective. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to flourish academically, socially and personally within a warm and supportive environment.

With excellent facilities and a strong local reputation for academic, sporting, artistic, and performing arts success, Durlston prides itself on the advantages of its smaller size. This close-knit environment allows staff to know each pupil individually, provide personalised support, and foster a true sense of community, while maintaining high standards across all areas of school life. The school combines the benefits of a nurturing, family-focused atmosphere with the ambition and achievement expected of a leading Prep and Senior School in the Hampshire and Dorset region.



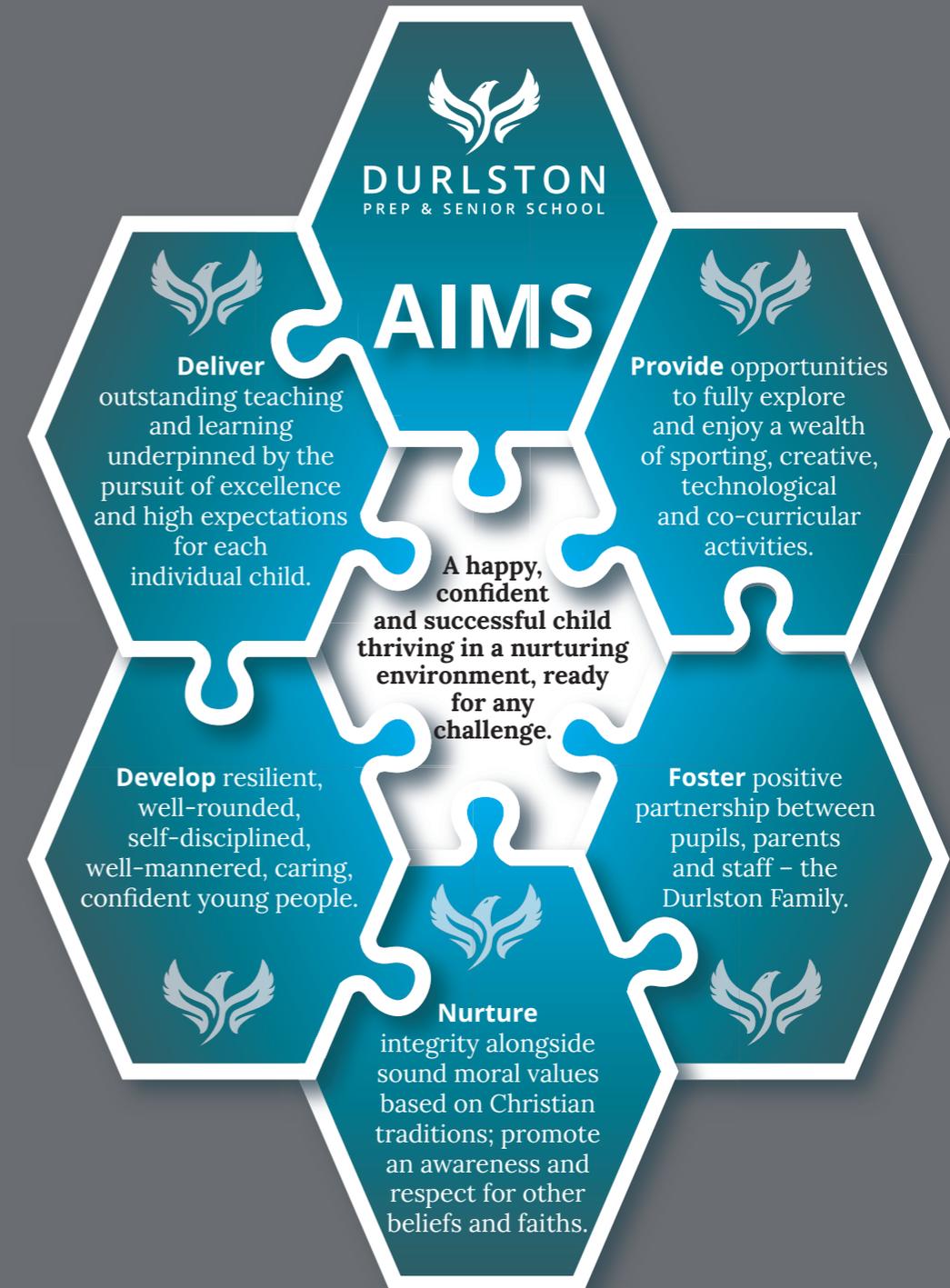
School Aims

The school's mission is to enable children to be happy, confident and successful – to thrive in a nurturing environment and to be fully prepared for life's challenges.

Excellence is pursued in all areas. Highly qualified teaching staff deliver a first-class education from Pre-Prep through to GCSE level, with small class sizes that allow each child to fulfil their academic potential.

There is a vibrant programme of sport, drama, music and art, with opportunities for all pupils to participate in teams, performances, concerts and exhibitions.

A strong tutorial system, together with dedicated pastoral support (including ELSA and FEIPS), ensures outstanding care of every pupil. Traditional values, good manners and positive behaviour underpin daily school life, creating a happy, respectful and purposeful atmosphere in which pupils truly flourish.



Durlston Prep School

Durlston Prep School provides children with an exceptional foundation for lifelong learning, beginning in our nurturing Kindergarten and continuing through to the end of Year 6. We are proud to offer a broad and stimulating curriculum, delivered in small classes where every child is known, supported and encouraged to thrive.

Our Prep School is characterised by warmth, care, and high expectations, and is divided into three distinct areas: Kindergarten, Pre-Prep, and Middle Prep. Academic excellence is a key priority, with specialist teaching introduced progressively to build strong skills in core subjects and to ignite curiosity across a wide range of disciplines. Alongside this, we place equal importance on creativity, sport, languages, and outdoor learning, ensuring that every pupil 'has a go', develops confidence and discovers their individual strengths and passions.

Pastoral care sits at the heart of all we do. The close relationships formed between staff, pupils and families are a defining feature of Durlston. Children are encouraged to be kind, respectful and responsible, and to embody the values of our school community. Our size allows us to offer genuine personal attention, while still providing breadth and opportunity.

The Prep School benefits from the outstanding facilities across the wider campus, including science laboratories, a music school, art and design studios, sports fields, outdoor learning in our dedicated Den wildlife area and a swimming pool. Every child is encouraged to take part in performances, concerts, competitions and matches, developing confidence and skills of teamwork, resilience and leadership.





Durlston Senior School

Durlston Senior provides a supportive yet challenging learning environment, enabling pupils to consolidate the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed as they begin their journey towards GCSEs and beyond.

The size of the school ensures that every pupil is truly known, allowing dedicated and talented teachers to engage, inspire and motivate each individual. Within a friendly, well-disciplined and nurturing community, pupils are encouraged to achieve their academic potential while flourishing as confident, well-rounded individuals.

While the school is fortunate to have excellent facilities, its greatest strength lies in its outstanding teachers. Their passion, expertise and commitment help every pupil to reach their potential. Personalised learning plans and continuous progress monitoring ensure that pupils and staff work together to celebrate achievements and set ambitious goals. It is this close relationship between staff and pupils that makes a Durlston education so distinctive.

In August 2026, Durlston's first-ever Year 11 cohort will be receiving their own well-deserved results. This will mark an exciting milestone in Durlston's development as a fully-fledged 2-16 independent school.





Campus & Facilities

Durlston Prep and Senior School is situated in a stunning coastal location at Barton-on-Sea, on the border of Hampshire and Dorset, with the New Forest and the sea on its doorstep. The School benefits from an accessible setting that combines natural beauty with excellent transport links, making it easy for families across the surrounding areas, including Lyndhurst, Lymington, Beaulieu, Brockenhurst, Ringwood, Christchurch, and Bournemouth, to reach the campus.

The school occupies extensive grounds that provide an inspiring environment for learning and outdoor activities. Over the years, significant investment has been made in purpose-built and specialist facilities to support pupils across the full age range from Pre-Prep to Year 11. Highlights include an IT Suite, Library, Art and Ceramics Studio, Design and Technology Centre, Science Laboratories, Drama Studio, Food Preparation and Nutrition Hub, Music School, Swimming Pool, Gym, Sports Hall, AstroTurf, Outdoor Learning, and natural habitat areas.

Durlston supports a wide range of individual and team pursuits. From traditional sports pitches to creative art studios, the campus encourages pupils to explore their talents fully in a nurturing environment.

While the school is smaller than some local competitors, our size is a strength, fostering a close-knit community in which every pupil is known, valued, and able to thrive. The combination of well-maintained facilities and the school's intimate scale ensures a supportive, and stimulating environment for academic, artistic, and sporting excellence.

Governance & Leadership

Durlston Prep and Senior School is a private company limited by guarantee and registered as a charity. The Governors, who are also directors and charity trustees, are responsible for the strategic direction, oversight and overall management. The Governing Body meets regularly and comprises individuals with expertise in education, business, and the local community, alongside representatives of alumni. The Head, Bursar and other senior staff attend meetings to provide operational insight and support the implementation of strategy.

The work of overseeing strategy, monitoring performance, and implementing policy is devolved to sub-committees covering Education, Finance and General Purpose, Risk, and Marketing. The Head and Bursar attend relevant sub-committee meetings to ensure close alignment between governance and day-to-day school operations.

Executive day-to-day management of the School is delegated to the Head, supported by the Senior Leadership Team, which includes the Deputy Heads, Heads of Section, and Bursar. This team works collaboratively to ensure that the school maintains its high standards of academic excellence, pastoral care, co-curricular provision, and operational effectiveness.

The School is subject to regular inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate, and reports are publicly available. These inspections ensure ongoing accountability, transparency, and adherence to best practice in independent education.

The Opportunity

This is an outstanding opportunity for an inspirational, visionary, and ambitious leader to take the helm of Durlston Prep and Senior School, consolidating its successful expansion to GCSE and shaping the school's future with confidence and ambition. The new Head will work closely with the Governing Body and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to build on the school's strong reputation for academic excellence, pastoral care, and co-curricular achievement, shaping and implementing the next phase of strategic development while ensuring the school continues to thrive as a happy, supportive, and academically rigorous environment.

Reporting to the Chair of Governors, the Head will provide overall leadership of the school across all key areas, including academic provision, pastoral care, co-curricular programmes, staff development, safeguarding, and operational management.

Candidates will have a proven track record of senior leadership in education, demonstrating the ability to inspire, motivate, and develop high-performing teams. They will combine strategic vision with operational acumen, capable of leading change while maintaining continuity and excellence across the school. Outstanding communicators, they will be confident, approachable, and articulate, able to build strong relationships with pupils, parents,

staff, governors, and the wider community. The successful candidate will be forward-thinking and innovative, with energy, resilience, and empathy. They will have a deep commitment to nurturing the academic, personal, and social development of pupils aged 2–16, ensuring every child achieves their potential. They will be a role model of integrity, professionalism, and good humour, fostering a positive, inclusive, and collegial school culture.

Prior experience in independent education is highly desirable but not essential; Durlston welcomes applications from outstanding leaders from a diverse range of educational backgrounds who share the school's ethos, values, and commitment to holistic development.

The Head will lead a dedicated SLT including the Deputy Heads, Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Seniors, and Bursar. They will work closely with teaching and support staff to ensure operational excellence and a thriving, happy, and academically ambitious school community.

Person Specification

The successful candidate will be an experienced educator with a strong academic background and a proven track record of senior leadership. They will demonstrate the ability to deliver strategic vision, effect positive change, and inspire excellence throughout the school. Above all, the Head will possess a genuine passion for the education and development of young people aged 2–16.

Qualifications and Experience

- A good honours degree or equivalent professional qualification.
- Qualified teacher status (QTS) or equivalent.
- Proven track record of success in senior leadership roles within an educational setting.
- Experience of leading curriculum development and raising academic standards across multiple year groups.
- Experience of managing staff effectively, including recruitment, appraisal, and professional development.
- Experience in managing budgets, resources, and operational aspects of a school.
- Experience in safeguarding and pastoral care at a senior level.
- Understanding of inspection frameworks, educational legislation, and regulatory requirements.

Skills and Knowledge

- Strong strategic and operational planning skills.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to inspire confidence in staff, pupils, parents, and governors.
- Ability to lead and motivate a team, fostering collaboration and a positive working environment.

- Skilled in curriculum development and assessment, with a commitment to high academic standards and a record of outstanding teaching in the classroom.
- Strong understanding of current educational trends and pedagogy.
- Proficient in the use of technology for administration, teaching, and communication.
- Excellent in promoting the school externally, maintaining and enhancing its reputation.
- Ability to analyse data to inform decision-making and school improvement.

Leadership and Personal Attributes

- Lead by example and command the respect of pupils, staff, and parents.
- Visionary and forward-thinking, with energy, dynamism, and the ability to drive positive change.
- Strong integrity, professionalism, and discretion.
- Approachable, empathetic, and supportive, with excellent listening skills.
- Resilient, adaptable, and able to manage competing priorities effectively.
- Committed to the pastoral care and personal development of pupils.
- Charismatic and engaging, able to represent the school effectively in the local community and beyond.
- A team player who values collaboration but is confident in making strategic decisions.
- Enthusiastic about the School's mission, culture, and values, and committed to sustaining and enhancing them.

Key Responsibilities

The Head provides strategic leadership and direction, working in close partnership with the Chair of Governors to ensure that Durlston continues to thrive as a centre of academic excellence, pastoral care, and community spirit. In doing so, the Head holds overall responsibility for shaping the school's vision, culture, and daily operations. The Head will:

Educational and Strategic Leadership

- Shape and deliver a clear, ambitious vision and ethos for pupils aged 2–16.
- Provide strategic and operational leadership to ensure every pupil receives an outstanding education.
- Maintain high academic standards and a broad, balanced, stimulating curriculum, taking into account national guidelines.
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement and professional excellence, and also ensuring an effective staff training programme is in place.
- Lead and inspire the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Ensure the school meets all regulatory standards and receives excellent inspection outcomes.
- Be a visible and active presence throughout school life, leading by example and promulgating the school's culture.
- Recruit, develop and motivate high-calibre staff.
- Foster a culture of positivity, respect and enjoyment of learning.
- Ensure rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and pupil outcomes.

Management

- Ensure staff at all levels are informed of strategic and operational objectives.
- Maintain full compliance with statutory regulations and inspection requirements.
- Uphold effective policies and procedures across the school.
- Ensure high standards of discipline among both staff and pupils.
- Oversee staff appraisal and professional development in line with policy.
- Support the Bursar in financial oversight and planning.
- Ensure the School Development Plan is updated annually.
- Uphold the cohesion of Pre-Prep, Middle Prep, Upper Prep and Senior School as a united "One School".

Governance

- Be accountable to the Board of Governors for the smooth running of the school.
- Provide the Governing Body with timely information and support.
- Report termly to the Board and liaise regularly with the Chair, fostering transparency and keeping Governors apprised of key developments.
- Sit on Governor subcommittees (Finance and General Purposes, Education, Risk Management, Marketing).
- Carry out additional duties as reasonably requested by the Governing Body.

Marketing and Admissions

- Take overall responsibility for the recruitment and retention of pupils.
- Act as a powerful ambassador for the school, promoting its values and reputation.
- Work closely with the Marketing Manager and Marketing Committee.
- Ensure the Marketing and Development Plan is effective and current.
- Ensure the school plays an active role in the local community and maintains its "Happy and Successful" ethos.

Pupils, Safeguarding and Pastoral Care

- Demonstrate a genuine interest in every pupil, earning their trust and respect.
- Ensure the highest standards of safeguarding and pupil welfare at all times.
- Ensure full compliance with statutory guidance on child protection.
- Ensure all safeguarding concerns are appropriately reported and followed up.
- Ensure first-class pastoral provision throughout the school.
- Line-manage the Designated Safeguarding Lead and ensure safeguarding procedures remain robust.
- Promote a nurturing, inclusive environment in which every pupil feels valued.

Parents

- Inspire confidence in current and prospective parents.
- Be visible and accessible to parents.
- Communicate openly with parents about pupils' progress and future schooling.
- Fully support the Parents' Association and its events.
- Respond promptly and sensitively to parental concerns.

Teaching

- Maintain a visible and active teaching role within the school community.
- Promote a love of learning.
- Understand that each child will have different needs and ensure that the culture of the school understands that and welcomes that.
- Take an active interest in pedagogical developments.

Terms of Appointment

The role will commence on 1st September 2026 and a competitive remuneration package is offered, reflecting the seniority and importance of the role, with a salary commensurate with experience and qualifications.

The main benefits will include:

- Contributory pension scheme through Royal London, with a 15% employers' contribution, income protection and life cover.
- At least 35 days annual leave per year.
- A fee remission for children who meet the entrance criteria.
- Complimentary school lunch.
- Free on-site parking.

This is a full-time permanent appointment. The first year will serve as a probationary period, which may be extended at the discretion of the school.

Durlston School is an equal opportunities employer and committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This role will bring you into contact with children; you are expected to share this commitment. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. 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) and a review of their social media presence.

All appointments are subject to satisfactory reference, DBS and other statutory checks, proof of identity and eligibility to work in the UK, completion of a medical questionnaire and proof of qualifications.

Application Process

Interested candidates are required to submit:

- A completed application form, available to download via the TES advert.
- A covering letter addressed to the Chair of Governors, Mr Chandra Ashfield. The letter should be a maximum of two pages and should explain your reasons for applying, your vision for the school and your education philosophy.
- Send the cover letter electronically to bursar@durlstonschool.co.uk
- **10am, Wednesday 15th October 2025:** Deadline for receipt of applications.

The process is as follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of sending, please contact our office by telephone.
- **Thursday 6th November 2025:** Longlist interviews will take place at the school.
- **Tuesday 18th November 2025:** Shortlist interviews will take place at the school.