The Ashcombe School

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

2026

WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL

A Message from the Headteacher

Thank you for being interested in The Ashcombe School – we want to attract and retain the best people with the most potential and in return offer a stimulating and worthwhile environment and great opportunity.

The Ashcombe School is a genuinely comprehensive school with high academic standards for all, a strong and caring pastoral system, and a wide range of extracurricular activities aimed at preparing and enabling young people to lead fulfilled lives.

We are very proud of our students and what the school can help them achieve, and are not only ambitious for our students but for our staff as well - this is an exciting opportunity to join a widely recognised, friendly, welcoming and supportive team and to take advantage of the many developmental and other opportunities we provide.

I hope that this pack will give you a positive and meaningful insight into the life of The Ashcombe School and that you will take the opportunity to join us online and visit to experience it for yourselves. I am very much looking forward to meeting and working with you.

Chris Panting

About The Ashcombe School

Overview

The Ashcombe School is a high-achieving genuinely comprehensive school with a very successful Sixth Form and is a vibrant and inspiring place to work. We continually look to support exceptional pastoral care, high levels of attainment across the ability range and provide an enviable range of extracurricular activities to prepare and enable young people to lead fulfilled lives.

Ethos

The core elements of our ethos are focused on providing a caring environment that enables every individual within the school to realise their potential:

- We are a fully inclusive school that focuses equally on students of all ability levels.
- We provide a calm and welcoming environment with a significant emphasis on pastoral care.
- Our community is based on mutual respect and high quality teacher-student relationships.
- We encourage a culture of self-betterment for all who work at the school, with high quality training and development opportunities for all staff.
- The school operates a no-blame culture that emphasises the importance of collaboration and mutual support.

We strive to create well-rounded individuals, believing that great education is about much more than the lessons we deliver in the classroom.

What we do every day

- Curiosity and challenge
- Compassion and decency
- Consistency
- Courage

"The school has an ethos which matters"

About The Ashcombe School

Structure

With almost 1500 students, including 290 in the Sixth Form, and over 170 teaching and support staff, the school is at the heart of the community in Dorking, and benefits from a spacious and attractive setting at the foot of Box Hill.

Our key successes include:

- High value-added scores across the full breadth of subjects and ability ranges
- A long tradition of students gaining places at Oxbridge and Russell Group Universities
- A student-centred approach for pastoral care and careers support
- A thriving Sixth Form, encouraging a wide intake where we believe students have the ability to succeed at A Level
- Many high-quality events which link students, staff and the whole community.

Our most recent OFSTED in May 2024 highlighted the continuing strengths of the school for staff and students - they said: "***Staff are proud to work here, and there is a great sense of teamwork. Leaders take exceptional care of staff well-being and workload, enabling staff to concentrate on continuing to develop the education the school offers."***

We are part of a small independent Multi-Academy Trust (South East Surrey Schools Education Trust - 'SESSET') comprising three secondary schools: The Ashcombe School, Therfield School in Leatherhead and Carrington School in Redhill. The Trust was established in 2017 and allows the schools to benefit from an overarching supportive umbrella whilst still retaining their unique character and ethos.

"Vision for an academic curriculum, supported by high quality teaching and learning…is shared by all staff at the school"

About The Ashcombe School

Our core aims

The school is highly regarded and oversubscribed as a direct result of its outlook, approach and values as demonstrated by its academic results, standards of teaching and outstanding pastoral care. The four strands which inform teaching and learning for staff and students are:

- **Learning knowledge - Curriculum and its delivery**

We will provide all students with an inspiring and ambitious curriculum that equips every student with the knowledge and skills to flourish. .

- **Learning to develop my own story - Strong relationships and community**

We will provide an inclusive community which allows all members to feel safe and supported. This is underpinned by decency, compassion, and humility. Every child matters - there is an adult for everyone, and everyone is noticed.

- **Learning about others - School is more than the classroom**

We will educate beyond the classroom, to develop resilient, creative, and life-ready citizens with a strong sense of social responsibility, leadership, a sense of curiosity, adventure and a global perspective.

- **Learning for the next chapter - Preparation for life after school**

We will provide expert career and life guidance, so our students make informed decisions about their futures which facilitate their transition to life beyond the school.

"A society grows great when people plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit"

What We Offer

A Strong Culture of Self-Betterment

We believe that great training is always at the heart of an effective school and recognise that investing in staff development helps us to remain open to innovation, and directly improves the offer to our students and enables our staff to grow. The whole-school coordinated CPD programme is led by an experienced middle leader. The highly successful ECT programme is led by a group of experienced mentors and a coaching programme is offered to all staff. Staff are actively encouraged to engage in leadership courses, which sit alongside less formal groups such as a group discussing emerging pedagogy, as well as teaching and learning discussion workshops. Ideas and feedback are encouraged through many different channels, including direct access to the Headteacher who maintains an open door policy.

A Friendly and Welcoming Teaching Community

We pride ourselves on treating people well and this was identified by Ofsted in May 2024 which noted that “Staff at all levels feel supported, including teachers in the early stages of their careers”. We offer a genuinely warm and welcoming environment at all levels and there is real support from Leadership staff who are visible around the school at all times.

A Beautiful and Well-Connected Location

In the foothills of the North Downs, the school is within walking distance of some of the most beautiful countryside in Surrey, including direct access to Box Hill and Denbies Vineyard – the surroundings are used by the school for sports lessons, sponsored walks and Duke of Edinburgh practices. There are excellent rail links to London, Brighton, Guildford, Reading, Horsham, Reigate and Redhill, along with access to the major road networks via the A24, A25 and the M25 which is just 5 miles away. Dorking is a thriving town with excellent sports and leisure facilities, entertainment venues and a wide range of food and retail outlets.

“the school is an inclusive place where difference is celebrated”

What we offer

Financial

- Competitive salaries at all levels, London Fringe, Teacher Pension
- Free meals for lunch duties and INSET
- Competitively priced dining service
- Full benefit and protection of Teacher National Pay & Conditions
- Complimentary tea and coffee and regular staff treats
- Green Commute Scheme.

Community

- New staff Fitness Suite
- Staff Association and regular social events
- Staff choir
- Participation in cultural trips locally and abroad
- Half-termly Good News Raffle to recognise staff and teams
- Culture of self-improvement
- Open channels for feedback.

Work/Life Balance

- Two-week timetable and 4-period day
- Family supportive - “no-one misses a child’s nativity/graduation”
- Opportunities for part-time working
- Staff laptop
- Staff meetings recorded for convenient access
- Online parents’ evenings with refreshments if staying after school
- E-mail etiquette.

"Amazing pupils, excellent parent engagement, warm and friendly staff"

What we offer

Location and Travel

- Ample free and secure car and cycle parking
- 5 minutes walk to 2 main rail lines
- Short walk to Dorking High Street and amenities
- Easy access to London, Redhill, Leatherhead, Crawley, Horsham and Brighton
- 15 minutes from junction 9 of the M25
- On the A24 and near A25.

Wellbeing

- Well-equipped and spacious work areas
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Up to 10 days paid leave for dependent care
- Term-time Nursery on site with preferential staff rates
- Wellbeing newsletter and activities
- Health checks available on INSET days.

Career

- Regular CPD programme
- Dedicated CPD Teams page with extensive resources
- Middle leader and advanced middle leader courses
- Opportunities to complete NPQH courses
- Coaching programme
- Participation in the SAfE network courses encouraged
- National College programmes of professional development supported
- IRIS Connect to help with professional development
- Rich programme of INSET run by national experts such as Marc Rowlands, Michele Miller, and Tom Sherrington
- New staff induction programme.

" a caring school community"

Why we love The Ashcombe

Geography and Criminology Teacher

I'm Lucy and I joined The Ashcombe School in September 2025 as a Teacher of Geography and Criminology. I started my teaching career down in Sussex and was keen for a new challenge, particularly KS5 teaching. I've really enjoyed developing my professional skills, and I have felt completely supported throughout. The staff at the Ashcombe have made the transition seamless and I have felt part of the school community from day one. The students have also made my experience so positive; they are engaged and proud of their school. This is something I have really noticed in the classroom and is unique to the school. The opportunities beyond the classroom are also excellent. As part of my department, we have international trips along with UK trips to bring the curriculum to life. Along with this, the extra-curricular provision is outstanding. This ranges from after-school clubs to international excursions such as Tanzania. I feel the school prides itself on kindness, transparency and warmth - something I noticed from the very start of my time here.

Head of Year 7

I'**m Michael and joined The Ashcombe in September 2023 as Teacher in charge of Media**, also teaching English. Having taught in schools nearer to London, I was looking for a location that offered community and a balance of family life. The Ashcombe School is at the heart of the community in Dorking and, despite its size, the strong pastoral provision has confirmed to me that every student is known and that kindness is at the forefront of the education available. I am currently working as Head of Year 7 and have had opportunities to contribute to both pastoral and curriculum development, as well as to participate in high-quality professional development, which has supported my practice and involvement in the wider life of the school. I have felt warmly welcomed to the great range of school events that are on offer, including the Careers Fair, Christmas Fair, We will rock you production, Christmas Carols, several residential trips and visits to the West End. The calendar this term has been full of activities beyond the classroom for all students. Staff and students are given many opportunities to challenge themselves and develop, and the school is truly open to feedback and review. When I walk around the school, I see warmth, kindness and authenticity.

Physics Teacher

I'm **Deirdre and I joined the Science Department in September 2022 as a Physics teacher,** after qualifying and spending 5 years in another Surrey school. I was ready for a change but what made the biggest impression on me was when our Headteacher hosted a Zoom call to introduce us to Ashcombe before I even applied – it was so personal and I could appreciate the ethos of decency at The Ashcombe straightaway. I have found this ethos being embodied every day among the staff I have met. I enjoy being an ECT mentor, and planned a Year 12 to CERN in Switzerland next year – I've found my ideas are encouraged and enabled. Oh, and a 4-period day is a definite planning plus! From an international IT career to now, what keeps me loving my work is that **every day I find joy and reward in supporting our wonderful students whilst also feeling supported by my colleagues and leadership team.**

Our staff say :

- a culture of community where students and staff feel supported
- a safe and calm learning environment
- camaraderie and shared dedication amongst staff
- compassion and support
- strong student/staff relationships
- education is holistic
- collaboration between staff and students, shared ambitions and high aspirations
- staff feel listened to
- culture of openness, trust and support
- caring about individual students
- understanding, friendly and caring environment
- **the warmth of the school towards the students - it's tangible!**

We hope this has given you an understanding of some of the key features of The Ashcombe School and why we believe it is such a special place to work - at the heart of the community and with a wonderful ethos.

Come and join us!

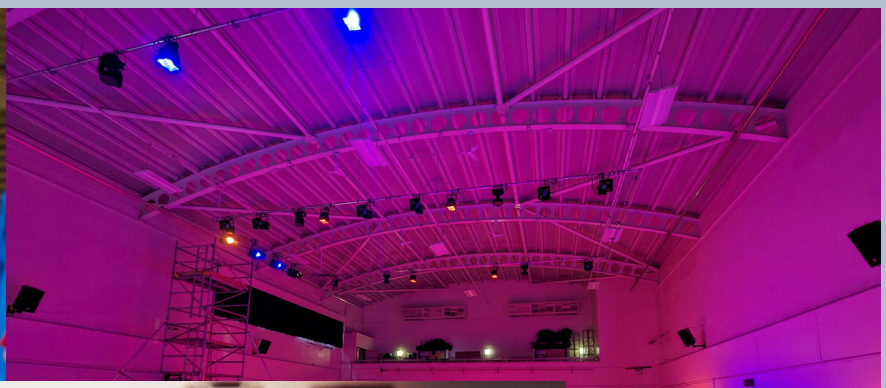
Sport at The Ashcombe

PE and sport at The Ashcombe are a vital and vibrant part of the curriculum and life of the school. Popular as GCSE and A Level subjects, every week sees over 25 extracurricular sports activities, attracting a large number of students, with opportunities to compete against local schools and in county and national competitions.

Facilities include: two large changing rooms, a Sports Hall (with 6 Badminton Courts, 2 full size Basketball Courts, 1 full size Volleyball court and 2 indoor Cricket Nets), Gymnasium (with 2 Trampolines), Fitness Suite, 3 Tennis Courts, 2 Hard Court areas, grass full size pitch for Football and grass full size pitch for Rugby, In the summer term, a Long & Triple Jump pit, 300m Athletics Track, throwing areas for Javelin, Shot and Discus, Softball Pitch, 3 Rounders Pitches and a Flicx Cricket Pitch.

Trips to major and other sporting events are extremely popular and the Sports Ambassadors programme offers students a variety of leadership opportunities including organising and running primary school sports events. Each summer also sees a very enjoyable Sports Awards evening, with well-known guest speakers. And we have swimming and equestrian teams too!

"students thrive on the extracurricular clubs in PE"



MUSICIAN
OF THE TERM

MUSE
HEAVY SOUL
SADE
Supergrass
Roxy Music
ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN