



Head

Candidate Information

Welcome

I'll never forget my first visit to Gayhurst School, 16 years ago. The confident and engaging Year 6 pupil who showed us around on an open day was the perfect illustration of the benefits of a Gayhurst education, alongside the obvious enthusiasm of all the staff we met. As a result, our son joined the Nursery two years later. His seven years at the school instilled a love of learning and respect for others while building that crucial blend of confidence and resilience.

I've had the privilege of being Chair of Governors since 2023 and now have the rare opportunity to help choose a new Head to lead Gayhurst into the next stage in its illustrious history.

In this brochure, we'll give you a flavour for the school: its history of innovation and achievement, its ethos and objectives. We're looking for an outstanding leader who will build on what

previous generations of Heads have achieved while always striving for improvement and the highest possible standards for pupils and staff alike. That leader will be a true team player while acting as Gayhurst's key ambassador within the school and wider community.

Gayhurst is very well placed to thrive at a time of challenge for the independent school sector. The school enjoys a healthy financial position and pupil numbers. And we continue to improve our attractive and impressive campus: Dame Denise Lewis officially opened our stunning new auditorium, sports hall and dance studio in May 2025. There couldn't be a more exciting time to lead the school.

Rob Skinner
Chair of Governors





Introduction

Gayhurst School has a proud history combined with an enviable record of innovation. It prides itself on its high academic standards, excellent pastoral care and strong sense of family and community. Gayhurst is an inspiring and lively place to work and to learn. This is achieved through the hard work of dynamic and inspiring leaders and staff, who contribute fully towards the school's aims.

Founded in 1908, Gayhurst was originally a boys' independent preparatory boarding school. It moved to its present extensive and attractive site on the edge of Gerrards Cross in 1930. The school is surrounded by peaceful fields and woodlands, yet central London is within around 20 minutes by fast trains from nearby Gerrards Cross station.



Gayhurst became co-educational in its centenary year and is now co-educational in all year groups with around 340 children aged 3–11; girls account for around a third.

The school is divided into Nursery, Pre-Prep (incorporating EYFS) and Prep departments, which are separate units within the school. The Pre-Prep comprises Reception to Year 2, while Year 3 to Year 6 form the Prep School. Children progress from class-based teaching in Year 3 to subject-specialist teaching for all subjects in Year 5.

As a prep school, Gayhurst offers parents a wide range of options for their children's secondary education after Year 6. We pride ourselves on the support we give in helping secure a place at the secondary school best suited to their children. Many pupils take the 11+ exam for entry into Buckinghamshire grammar schools, while others move on to independent day and boarding schools. In recent years, pupils have won academic, art, sport, music, drama, DT and all-round scholarships at a range of senior independent schools.

Gayhurst is VAT registered and is also a charity. It is a member of IAPS, ISBA and AGBIS and is inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), which rated the school 'Excellent' in all areas in June 2023.

For further information, click [here](#).



A co-ed, mixed-ability all-rounder which focuses on the social and personal journey as much as academics. Caring and inspiring staff know each child and what makes them tick. It's not a pressure pot but a stimulating and nurturing environment where children can breathe and grow. Gayhurst understands happy children learn, and they have buckets of fun doing so.

The Good Schools Guide



BE KIND WORK HARD



Vision & Values

Gayhurst's motto, *Be Kind, Work Hard*, is at the heart of everything the school does as it strives to create an environment in which kindness shapes interactions and dedication fuels achievement. The school's core values, which guide its overall approach, are encapsulated in the **#ELDRIC** framework:

Enriching Learning, Developing Resilience, Independence and Confidence

This philosophy has become so embedded as a fundamental part of Gayhurst that Eldric is now personified as a baby emperor penguin as the school's mascot! An emperor penguin was chosen as they echo Gayhurst's ethos in being sociable, family-centric animals who work together to thrive, displaying huge resilience as they survive in extreme conditions. Nursery and Reception have their very own Eldric dressed in their PE kit, and Eldric makes frequent appearances at school events.

Gayhurst is a very special place, offering its pupils a broad, rounded, co-educational experience in a happy and caring environment where children's pastoral needs, happiness and wellbeing are paramount.

The school aims:

- To provide all children with varied opportunities, enrichment and support to develop their academic, sporting, musical and creative interests and talents
- To focus on children's personal and social development alongside their academic, physical, social and mental development
- To create confident and independent children with an understanding that effort, perseverance and resilience contribute to their development
- To prepare all children for their successful transfer to secondary school

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Pupils' overall high achievement is strongly supported by their willingness to reflect on their learning and to regard mistakes as an opportunity to develop.

ISI Inspection Report, June 2023

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The Opportunity

This is a tremendous opportunity for an energetic, empathetic and ambitious leader to become the Head of Gayhurst School, taking up the post in September 2026 or sooner.

Gayhurst is a thriving co-educational prep school set in an attractive area of Buckinghamshire. It enjoys a strong position, with stable pupil numbers and full Nursery and Reception classes. In a competitive market, Gayhurst's transition to co-education differentiated it from the local competition, which is predominantly single-sex. But it never stands still, and there is an enviable opportunity for the new Head to build a strong relationship with parents and staff, enhance Gayhurst's already very positive reputation in the local

area and continue an ambitious programme of innovation and development.

The role will present many exciting opportunities for a leader who is empathetic, but tough when needed; a good listener with strong people skills; someone who knows how to lead teams well and is a confident communicator with all stakeholders, particularly adept at building rapport with parents; and a cool-headed strategic thinker with business acumen.

All these factors make this an extremely attractive proposition for high-quality and ambitious candidates. The Governors are looking to meet individuals who personify and champion the school's #ELDRIC tagline by enriching learning and developing resilience, independence and confidence.



Location & Facilities

Gayhurst sits on an attractive two-hectare site bordered by woodland and fields. It is close to the centre of Gerrards Cross in Buckinghamshire and is easily accessible via road, being near the M40 and M25. The nearest mainline station is Gerrards Cross, which is a five-minute car journey or 15-minute walk away, providing regular fast connections to London.

In May 2025, the school completed a major development to add a sports hall, auditorium, dance studio and staff rooms. The development, officially opened by Dame Denise Lewis, gives pupils tremendous facilities for sport and the performing arts. It is also a fantastic space for



parents and visitors to attend performances and other events.

The handsome main building is an extended Georgian-style house, supplemented by newer buildings that host large, inviting classrooms and outside play areas. The science and DT labs in the main building provide ultra-modern facilities and as much technical equipment as might be expected in a senior school, such as laser and 3D printing, as well as EdRobot, a 20cm high robot the children love to program to dance! The popular Nursery has its own wood-clad building close to the main building with a cosy, colourful interior and a well-equipped outdoor play area.

The grounds also contain a traditional-style wooden garden room, used for LAMDA, as well as a popular archaeological digging site and an imaginative science garden. The school also boasts an all-weather AstroTurf area, an outdoor classroom, beautiful woodlands with an adventure playground and three further rugby fields.

Map of the School

“Set back from the leafy residential road, it’s both tranquil and secure.”

The Good Schools Guide



School Structure & Curriculum



Nursery

The purpose-built Nursery is a lovely, bright and spacious environment for the school's youngest pupils. Children attend Nursery for morning, afternoon or full-day sessions.

Pre-Prep School

The Pre-Prep is for children from Reception to Year 2. It has modern, well-equipped classrooms, individual tuition rooms, IT resources and activity rooms, a dedicated Pre-Prep library, an all-weather playground and an adventure playground. The children arrive in Reception the September before their fifth birthday and are placed in one of three non-selective classes, each with up to 18 children. Entry into Reception is by registration and the successful attendance at an activity session

in the spring Term before admission. Children are observed at the activity session for their suitability to join Gayhurst. Later entry in Years 1 and 2 includes a taster session at the school, where the child will be observed and their aptitude in maths and English assessed by the form teacher. Reports are requested from their current school. Children in the Pre-Prep are taught most of their subjects by their form teacher, although specialist staff teach them for Music, PE and Games. IT is taught in the main Pre-Prep space and is fully resourced with brand-new touch-screen computers. Learning assistants help with all the year groups but particularly with the youngest children. All children enjoy a hot lunch in the dining room.



Prep School

The Prep School has impressive facilities, including 10 subject teaching rooms, a spacious art and design room with a kiln, its own library, a modern science lab, a very well-equipped STEM laboratory, and a large music room with individual practice rooms.

If children are entering the school in Year 3, they attend school for a computer-based assessment before being invited back for a taster day. Reports are requested from their current school. There are three parallel forms across the school, and children are put into sets for English and Mathematics from Year 4. All the children move to and from the various specialist subject classrooms during each teaching day. In this respect, the 45-period, weekly timetable resembles that of a secondary school, and the children find the changes enjoyable and stimulating.

Spanish is introduced from Nursery and French from Year 3. Science, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Art and Design, IT, Sport and Music are all taught by subject specialists. Lessons are 35 minutes, and there is an assembly every Monday morning, which is led by the Assistant Head of Prep. On Thursday afternoons, house assemblies and musical performances take place on alternate weeks. Recent developments have

seen additional pastoral time created and a prep session for children to complete independent work at school rather than take any home at the end of the school day.

A key objective in Gayhurst's teaching is that children are happy, challenged and resilient. We thoroughly encourage growth mindsets and independence.

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“A mix of youth and experience, caring teachers are on board with the idea that learning needs to be fun, that creativity requires time and space, and that the learning journey is key, not just the result.”

The Good Schools Guide

“... pupils have exemplary attitudes to learning.”

ISI Inspection Report, June 2023

“... pupils' communication skills are outstanding. They are articulate, confident when speaking both in public and in conversation.”

ISI Inspection Report, June 2023

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Sport, the Arts & Activities

Sport

Gayhurst prides itself on the inclusive nature of its sports, with every child being able to represent the school whenever possible. The school has an outstanding record of sporting achievement, and the extensive facilities enable it to offer a wide range of sports, including rugby, netball, football, hockey and gymnastics. All children are taught by the sports staff. Alongside weekly fixtures, Gayhurst pupils also compete in many regional and national tournaments.

Art

An exciting curriculum in Art, Craft and Design is offered to all Gayhurst pupils in the purpose-built art studio. Pupils are encouraged to reach their full artistic potential, and they are inspired by regular trips to museums and art galleries. An annual whole-school art project is an important event, when the children work together (often with artists and craftsmen) to make artworks that are displayed throughout the school. The Advanced Art Programme provides promising artists with additional creative opportunities and the potential to develop a scholarship portfolio.





Music

All pupils have timetabled Music lessons, and a large number receive specialist tuition on a wide range of instruments from a team of talented visiting teachers. Numerous ensemble groups and choirs of all standards provide performance opportunities for children in assemblies, concerts, musical productions and competitions in the school and locally. The Musician of the Year competition is always keenly contested, enjoyable and of a very high standard. Children are regularly entered for grade examinations.

Drama

At Gayhurst, Drama is exciting, enjoyable and inclusive. Within the Prep School, there are timetabled class lessons, as well as opportunities to perform in the annual productions and musicals, nativity plays and in-form assemblies. Every year, Gayhurst holds a prose and verse competition, public speaking performances and debates. LAMDA is also available, with around 150 children having lessons.



Trips and Visits

Enrichment is highly valued at the school, and as part of the wider cocurricular programme, Gayhurst pupils enjoy a large variety of curricular and extracurricular trips, workshops, performances and competitions. In the Prep School, residential courses in Britain and abroad help the children to flourish and learn while developing independence, confidence and resilience. Themed weeks of enrichment are also a common theme, and the Year 6 leavers' programme is highly valued.

Extracurricular

A wide variety of clubs and activities take place before, during and after school, and all children are encouraged to participate. The school offers a wide choice, from photography and chess to street dance and current affairs. Wraparound care with activities is offered in the form of a breakfast club from 7.25am in the morning and a wind-down time for children across the school. Supper club is also available for all children until 6.00pm.

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... the school successfully meets its aim to enable pupils to fully develop their academic, physical and creative interests.

ISI Inspection Report, 2023

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Pastoral Care & Safeguarding

The Deputy Head and the Assistant Heads of the Prep and Pre-Prep Schools oversee the pastoral care of all pupils and are members of the safeguarding team. Weekly pastoral meetings provide a regular opportunity for staff to gather to monitor pupil wellbeing.

In the Prep School, there are 'form teams', and each form is allocated an assistant form teacher who works alongside the lead. In Years 3 to 6, these two members of staff oversee the wellbeing and progress of the children and have three designated form times each day, which encompass registrations and prep. The form teachers remain an integral part of the children's daily lives at Gayhurst right through to their transition to secondary school at the end of Year 6.

The school emphasises that everybody shares the responsibility for safeguarding children. Gayhurst's child-centred approach is fundamental

to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every pupil. A child-centred approach means each child is kept in focus when making decisions about their lives. Staff work with them and their families, as well as with partner agencies. All staff are expected to be vigilant to the needs of children and always act in the best interests of any child so that they have the best outcomes. All staff receive annual safeguarding training.

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Pupils, strongly supported by staff and leaders, are highly inclusive and accepting of one another. They recognise that everyone is different, and this can mean that on occasions, they have different needs.

ISI Inspection Report, 2023

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The Wider School Community

Gayhurst pupils make a significant contribution to the school's community and beyond. They are readily involved with activities such as litter picking in the local area, and they engage actively with charitable fundraising, for example, by collecting and delivering donations of food for those in need locally. They enthusiastically support fundraising for international, national and local charities. Pupils show an active interest in sustainability and environmental issues on the school campus and in the local area.

The school has an exceptionally active and supportive parent body, the Gayhurst Parents' Association. As well as raising funds for the school, it plays a crucial part in enhancing Gayhurst's true sense of community. The school has recently boosted its relationship with alumni as part of its development work. It also holds a series of alumni events throughout the academic year.



Staff, Leadership & Governance

Gayhurst has around 50 full-time and part-time teachers and teaching assistants. These are supported by ten administrative staff and three maintenance and grounds staff. The Senior Leadership Team includes the Head, Deputy Head, Assistant Head (Pre-Prep), Assistant Head (Prep School), Assistant Head (Data, Assessment and Reporting), Bursar, and Director of Admissions & Marketing. The staff form a strong community and are very supportive of one another and the pupils. All staff share a strong commitment to excellent pastoral care and the safeguarding, protection and welfare of children. All new staff are expected to share and embody

this ethos. The school is an equal opportunities employer, welcoming applications from a range of diverse backgrounds.

Gayhurst has a committed, supportive and enthusiastic team of Governors with a range of expertise, including education, finance, law, marketing, communications and business. The full Governing Board and its committees (Education, Admissions, Marketing & Development, and Finance & General Purposes) meet termly but more frequently if required. The Governors are committed to supporting the Head and the Senior Leadership Team in every way possible to ensure Gayhurst achieves its vision as a school.



The Role

The Governors are seeking to recruit an inspirational, experienced, enthusiastic, creative and ambitious school leader for Gayhurst School.

The Governors are looking for all or most of the personal and professional requirements listed below.

Qualifications and Experience

- Degree-level education (essential); postgraduate or NPQH (desirable)
- Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and experience of outstanding classroom practice
- Substantial leadership experience within a high-performing school, including line management of senior staff
- Proven ability to lead whole-school improvement and manage strategic plans
- Prior experience in an independent prep school setting (essential) and familiarity with the EYFS and KS2 curriculum
- Track record of leading safeguarding and child protection culture; trained DSL or equivalent level of understanding (desirable)
- Knowledge and oversight of compliance, including ISI Inspection frameworks, health and safety, and regulatory requirements
- Experience working with governing bodies and contribution to governance-level strategy
- Exposure to or involvement in school marketing, admissions and parent engagement strategies
- Financial literacy: experience working with budgets, participating in finance committees, and knowledge of independent sector-specific issues (e.g. VAT and charitable status)
- Experience in the planning and development of school development and improvement plans
- Experience in the planning and implementation of whole-school curriculum frameworks and schemes of work



Skills and Knowledge

- Strategic thinker with the ability to develop and implement a compelling school vision
- Deep understanding of educational best practice from Nursery to Year 6
- Excellent communicator: capable of engaging effectively with staff, pupils, parents, and Governors in both written and oral forms
- Skilled in the use of data and assessment tools to track progress, raise standards and inform decisions
- Proficiency in digital tools, including school MIS; safeguarding software, e.g. CPOMS; performance systems, e.g. BlueSky; and awareness of the risks and potential of AI in education
- Effective in HR processes, including recruitment, staff development, performance management, and difficult conversations (e.g. disciplinary, capability)
- Skilled at building strong teams, nurturing talent, and ensuring a culture of continuous development
- Commercial awareness with an ability to manage resources (financial, human, physical) efficiently
- Deep understanding of safeguarding legislation and best practices, including safer recruitment and mental health support
- Clear understanding of school admissions, senior school transition processes, and parental expectations in the independent sector

Leadership Style and Personal Attributes

- Confident and credible, yet grounded – leads with clarity, not ego
- Resilient under pressure; maintains composure and steadiness through scrutiny or conflict
- Morally principled, modelling integrity, fairness, and courage in complex or ambiguous situations
- A curious, reflective practitioner – open to feedback, willing to listen and learn, and capable of changing tack
- Highly visible and approachable across the school; not a closed-door or remote leader
- Committed to the full life of a prep school and actively enjoys being around children
- Balances warmth with authority; strong presence without being an authoritarian
- Creative problem-solver with a proactive approach to change and challenge
- Demonstrated long-term commitment to school leadership – not seeking a stepping-stone role
- Builds trust and psychological safety; promotes team cohesion and shared accountability
- Brings joy and humour to their work; sees leadership as a service, not status

Terms & Conditions

A generous salary will be offered, which will reflect the skills and experience of the successful candidate, and this will be negotiated when an offer of employment is made. Pension arrangements for the new Head are to be confirmed.

Staff at Gayhurst are offered 60% remission on fees should their children be eligible to join the school and have satisfied the entry criteria.

All term time meals and common room refreshments are free for members of staff.



Application Process

The search for a new Head for Gayhurst School is being led by RSAcademics, and the new post-holder will be selected by a panel chaired by the Chair of Governors, Rob Skinner.

Interested candidates should contact RSAcademics to arrange a confidential discussion with one of the consultants handling this appointment:

- Angela Short, Head of Search:
angelashort@rsacademics.com
- Liz Francis, Senior Advisor:
lizfrancis@rsacademics.com

Closing date: 10.00am on Friday 10 October 2025.

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. To submit your application, please upload your documents according to the instructions on the [RSAcademics website](https://www.rsacademics.com).

You should submit the following (both in PDF format):

- A completed application form (available alongside this candidate information on the [RSAcademics website](https://www.rsacademics.com))
- A covering letter addressed to the Chair of Governors, Rob Skinner. The letter should explain your reasons for applying.

If you have any questions about uploading your application documents, please contact Laura Cave, Project Manager (Leadership Appointments), at applications@rsacademics.com.

Laura can also be reached by calling our Head Office on +44 (0) 20 4626 9791.

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 it, please phone RSAcademics
- Preliminary interviews will take place with RSAcademics via Teams on 20 and 21 October 2025
- Longlist interviews with the Governors' panel will take place via Teams on 4 November 2025
- Between 11 and 14 November 2025, shortlisted candidates will be invited to visit the school
- Shortlist interviews with the Governing Body will take place at the school on 18 November 2025

N.B. Safer recruitment checks will be made at all stages in the recruitment process.