



LITTLEGARTH

Big Opportunities

Head

APPOINTMENT: SEPTEMBER 2027

Candidate Information



Welcome



Thank you for your interest in the Headship of Littlegarth School.

Nestled in the picturesque Stour Valley where Essex meets Suffolk, Littlegarth is a distinctive and flourishing co-ed prep school with a proud heritage spanning more than eight decades. Throughout this time, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to nurturing children who are confident, curious and kind – young people who carry with them a lifelong passion for learning.

Our pupils thrive within a rich and stimulating curriculum, supported by exceptional pastoral care and an authentic sense of belonging. At Littlegarth, every child is truly known, valued as an individual, and encouraged to discover their unique talents within an environment that is both nurturing and aspirational.

The Governors are now seeking an exceptional leader who will continue to embody our core ethos and values in their leadership as successor to Kathy Uttley. Following sustained growth, significant investment in our facilities, and the cultivation of a formidable reputation

across the region, we will continue to build upon our solid foundations – enhancing our profile while remaining faithful to the values that have defined Littlegarth since its inception.

The incoming Head will be an inspiring and reflective leader with a deep understanding of what makes a prep school community truly flourish. They will bring strategic vision, warmth and integrity and will relish the privilege of collaborating closely with pupils, staff, parents and Governors to shape our collective future.

Above all, we seek someone who shares our unwavering commitment to educational excellence and who will ensure that every child at Littlegarth continues to flourish in every sense.

I very much hope this opportunity resonates with you and that you will be inspired to explore it further.

JIM KEOHANE

Chair of Governors

Littlegarth School is a thriving co-ed prep school for around 265 pupils between the ages of 2 and 11, located in Horkesley Park on the Essex-Suffolk border in the beautiful Stour Valley. Recently, the school has expanded to three forms in Years 4 and 5.

Founded in Dedham in 1940 by Miss Barbara Erith and Miss Betty Mallett, two cousins by marriage, the school moved to its current location in 1994. The school's site, centred around a fine Georgian Grade 2 listed building, has undergone significant transformation since it was a family home as the school has grown and developed over the years. The core commitment to instilling in pupils a lifelong love of learning in a kind and nurturing environment remains very much at the heart of Littlegarth's approach.

The school is proud of its distinct heritage, which has not only informed its successes to date, but also its ambitions and aspirations for the future. The school's inspiring surroundings create an atmosphere that allows the pupils' confidence to flourish in a range of areas, which span from the broad curriculum

tailored to meet the needs of the individual to the impressive offering in sport and access to the outdoor classroom in the Forest School. Littlegarth pupils also thrive in music and drama, with modern performance facilities further serving to enhance the creative side of school life.

There have been many innovative and creative initiatives taken recently to develop the school as a business, including onsite advertising for large-scale sporting events, a regional art competition, expansion of rental facilities, and the introduction of 'Learn with Littlegarth' – an 11+ tutoring service for Colchester.

Described by The Good Schools Guide as 'a day school which channels the boarding school ethos', Littlegarth's distinctive offering is geared towards maximising the opportunities available to the individual child in an environment underpinned by pastoral care which is second to none. The school's broad and inclusive curriculum, combined with its committed staff and supportive parent body, makes it one of the leading prep schools in the region.



The School



Ethos and Values



Littlegarth's ethos centres on inspiring a lifelong love of learning in a safe, stimulating and happy environment with a culture that promotes in its pupils a sense of confidence combined with kindness and humility. Pupils live these values throughout their time at the school and take them into the next phase of their educational journey upon leaving. Children are encouraged to reach their potential in all aspects of school life, and teachers work hard with every child and their parents in order to:

- Educate each child to the best of his or her ability.
- Value each child as an individual.
- Provide a stimulating and well-ordered environment.
- Encourage children to develop a sense of responsibility.
- Develop self-motivation and independence.
- Provide opportunities for children to value their school and the wider community.
- Enable children to broaden their horizons.
- Encourage close relationships between parents and the school.

Curriculum

Learning at Littlegarth is typified by the infectious sense of energy and interaction in the classrooms and the commitment of the school's dedicated staff. The school caters for pupils of mixed academic ability across the Nursery, Pre-Prep and Prep departments. Underpinned by the National Curriculum, pupils explore a full range of subjects in a broader and deeper way, developed to prepare them for the demands of the 11+ schools, pre-tests, scholarships and senior school entrance. Tailored to the individual, core skills in reading, numeracy, writing, speaking and science are taught to ensure that pupils move on to the right senior schools for them with the confidence to approach all subjects and develop real-world skills.

Aside from the core subjects of English, Maths and Science, pupils at Littlegarth enjoy

a varied curriculum – taught by talented subject-specialist teachers – which includes Information Technology, Verbal Reasoning, Languages (pupils learn French from Nursery, with Latin and German introduced in Years 5 and 6), Humanities (History, Geography and a weekly lesson in Religious Education), Sport, Music, Drama, Dance and Art and Design Technology.

The bespoke facilities ensure that pupils have the best possible learning experience, including a spacious, modern library, newly repurposed science labs and fully resourced spaces for music, art and drama. Pupils also have access to a dedicated learning support team, who are equipped to deal with specific learning difficulties, as well as additional support and confidence boosting in small groups or one-to-one.





Sport

Sport plays a big part in life at Littlegarth, and all year groups, from Reception to Year 6, are taught by PE specialists. Pupils enjoy a great variety of sport options, which include badminton, basketball, tennis, netball, rugby, football and hockey, as well as cricket, rounders and athletics in the summer. From Year 2, the local pool is used once a fortnight for swimming. Outdoor pitches and an all-weather surface allow for multi-sport practices, and everyone is encouraged to have a go, with every child from Year 4 given the opportunity to represent the school each week in matches.

The school regularly hosts large national and regional sporting events and enjoys individual and team success at a national level, too.



Co-Curricular Life

There is an impressive co-curricular offering at Littlegarth, with several clubs available to participate in every evening, ranging from sports clubs to Lego, gardening, baking, IT coding and mindfulness. Lizzie's Kitchen, dedicated to the memory of a former pupil, is used for lessons and clubs and is a popular choice amongst pupils.

Learning is reinforced through trips provided for every year group, including visits to Colchester Castle and Kentwell Hall, as well as several local Nature Reserves. In addition to this, Year 6 have an annual trip to France and Year 5 a residential trip to Norfolk. Pupils thrive on the integrated approach taken to learning through these trips.

Excellent pastoral care is at the heart of Littlegarth's distinctive offering. Small class sizes ensure that all pupils receive individualised care and promote strong relationships between teachers and pupils. Every class has their own form tutor, who they meet at registration every morning and is always the first port of call for parents and staff. Nursery have dedicated key workers in a close-knit team; Reception to Year 3 have their own class teachers, whilst Y4-6 have form teachers who meet them three times a day and teach them for one subject. The school also has a qualified therapist on site three days a week who works 1:1 with children and on an informal basis, too.

The strong pastoral care at Littlegarth is underpinned by the house system, with three Houses named after local artists: Gainsborough, Constable and Munnings. The House Cup is awarded each week in assembly, based on the House with the highest number of merits awarded that week, and all pupils participate in

the Inter-House Competition and regular inter-House sports matches.

Assemblies are held twice a week and are an important opportunity for the whole-school community to gather and celebrate successes, as well as consider a range of issues. A distinctive feature of the school is the strong relationship between pupils and staff, which results in a warm and positive learning environment where children are relaxed, purposeful and confident.

In Year 6, all pupils become School Prefects, a responsibility which is taken very seriously and gives pupils important leadership experience as ambassadors and role models to younger year groups. The happiness of its pupils is the priority for Littlegarth, with real emphasis placed on the individual, their achievements, successes and future development.



Pastoral Care

Creative and Performing Arts

Performing Arts is another huge strength of the school. There are specialist music and drama teachers throughout the school, as well as peripatetic Speech and Language teachers for additional lessons. Pupils take part in a wide range of musical activities throughout the school and benefit from several weekly music clubs, which include Orchestra, Senior Choir, Percussion, Chamber Choir, African Drumming, Samba Band and Guitar Ensemble. The large music room allows plenty of space for everyone to get involved, and many pupils take up individual music lessons.

Drama is a popular subject. Pupils have represented the school in the annual Colchester and Sudbury Festivals, and

many participate in year-group plays, which include annual productions for older year groups. There are also popular dance clubs run by peripatetic dance teachers. Up to Year 2, children take part in assemblies and nativities; in Year 3, there is a three-day performing arts workshop; Year 4 put on their own production (this year, 'Annie'); and Year 6 perform a Shakespeare production in the summer. In addition to this, older children have the additional opportunity to be in a major, auditioned production with a professional orchestra, sound and lighting.

The school enjoys regular and recent successes at a national level in creative writing, STEAM, debating and e-sports. Littlegarth was also nominated recently for Best Performance in Children's Theatre.





Forest School

Pupils are encouraged to learn through play and discover new skills in the Forest School, which makes the most of Littlegarth's location in an area of outstanding natural beauty. As pupils learn to give back to their environment (2,000+ trees have been planted by the children over the past 10 years), they enjoy a variety of outdoor activities which range from den-building to making elder-bead jewellery and digging clay mines. Recent additions also include a wildflower meadow and an outdoor stage in the centre of the woodland area to be used for concerts and productions. Up to Year 2, Forest School visits are very regular, and from Year 3 on, visits form part of different areas of the curriculum.



The Nursery

Most pupils join in the Nursery, with almost all making the transition to Reception. With its own gated playground and two interconnected classrooms, the Lower Nursery has up to 16 children at any time, and the Upper Nursery has up to 24, in either morning or whole-day sessions. Up until the age of 4, children in the Nursery learn in a safe, stimulating environment with the help of highly experienced Nursery staff. Following the EYFS programme, the curriculum is closely linked with that in Reception to make for a smooth transition. In 2025, the Nursery provision was extended to all year round, and at the same time, government funding was accepted. The Nursery hours (and the whole school) are 7.30am – 6.30pm.

Life After Littlegarth

Littlegarth pupils move on to a wide range of excellent senior schools. Some progress to local grammar schools, while others join leading independent schools such as Ipswich School, Norwich School, Woodbridge School, St Mary's Colchester, New Hall and The Royal Hospital School.

Each year, pupils achieve a number of academic, music, drama and sporting scholarships:

- **2023:** 39 leavers achieved 54 scholarship offers to independent senior schools and six grammar school places.
- **2024:** 33 leavers achieved 46 scholarship offers to independent senior schools and six grammar school places.
- **2025:** 39 leavers achieved 67 scholarship offers to independent senior schools and seven grammar school places.

The school's focus is always on helping each child find the senior school that best suits their individual strengths and ambitions.



The Opportunity

The Governors are seeking an outstanding educational leader to become the next Head of Littlegarth School.

The successful candidate will:

- Articulate a compelling vision for the future of the school.
- Build on Littlegarth's strong reputation and distinctive ethos.
- Inspire staff and pupils to achieve the highest standards.
- Strengthen the school's profile within a competitive educational landscape.
- Work closely with Governors to ensure the school's long-term sustainability and success.

The next Head will be a visible and engaging leader who values community, partnership and collaboration.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Vision and Direction

- Develop and articulate a clear and compelling vision for the future of the school in consultation with the Governors.
- Develop and implement a strategic plan that delivers the school's vision while remaining grounded in practical and financial realities.
- Communicate the school's ethos, aims and values and secure commitment from staff, pupils, parents and the wider community.
- Remain aware of the local and national educational environment and respond strategically to opportunities and challenges.
- Continually seek opportunities to enhance and develop the school and make recommendations to Governors accordingly.

Professional Leadership and Management

- Provide strong and effective leadership to all staff, fostering commitment to the ethos, standards and values of the school.
- Develop and lead a cohesive and proactive Senior Leadership Team with clear roles, responsibilities and expectations.
- Ensure staff resources are deployed effectively and that roles, objectives and targets are clearly defined.
- Lead with openness and collaboration, empowering colleagues and building a culture of trust and involvement.
- Recruit and retain high-quality staff who act as role models and inspire pupils.
- Oversee effective performance management systems for teaching and support staff.
- Foster a culture of professional development and plan strategically for staff progression and succession.

Marketing, Communications and Engagement

- Ensure effective marketing and admissions strategies are in place, including appropriate use of digital and social media.
- Maintain strong relationships with feeder nurseries, local schools and prospective parents.
- Act as a visible figurehead for the school and participate actively in school events and activities.
- Promote and enhance the school's reputation among current and prospective parents and the wider community.
- Maintain strong relationships with senior schools to support pupils transitioning at 11+.
- Build links with key organisations within the independent sector, including the Independent Schools Council (ISC), IAPS and ISA.
- Lead development and fundraising initiatives that support the school's future projects.



Educational Leadership

- Maintain an environment that promotes outstanding teaching and inspiring learning.
- Oversee the development, organisation and implementation of the academic curriculum and co-curricular programme.
- Ensure systems are in place to assess performance and meet statutory requirements.
- Promote pupils' personal, social and moral development.
- Support and develop co-curricular activities, including sport, drama, music and the arts.
- Ensure the school maintains its strong inspection record and is well prepared for regulatory inspections.
- Maintain a culture where safeguarding and pupil welfare are the highest priorities.

Management of Finance and Operations

- Ensure major financial and operational decisions are taken in consultation with Governors and within delegated authority frameworks.
- Provide leadership to senior staff responsible for non-academic functions.
- Work closely with the Bursar and Senior Leadership Team to ensure the effective use of financial, human and physical resources.
- Ensure the school operates with an effective administrative and operational structure.
- Maintain a strong understanding of financial planning and budgeting.
- Ensure the school maintains the highest standards of governance and regulatory compliance.
- Oversee risk management, safer recruitment procedures, health and safety and safeguarding compliance.



The Governors of Littlegarth School now seek a new Head to succeed Kathy Uttley in September 2027 after six years of exceptional and dedicated service. This person will lead the school with compassion, vision and drive. The successful candidate will understand, value and nurture the school's ethos whilst building on its many achievements to date.

It is likely that the successful candidate will have the following key skills, experience and attributes:

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Good university degree, with any management, leadership, and teaching qualifications an advantage.
- Proven leadership track record at Head or Deputy Head level in a high-performing independent prep, junior or leading international school environment.

- Substantial and successful teaching experience and experience in curriculum development.
- Good understanding of the co-educational school environment, education for the 2-11 age group, and current opportunities and challenges in the independent prep and junior school sector nationally.
- Demonstrable experience of engaging and building relationships with the whole-school community, both internally and externally.
- Experience of developing, implementing and monitoring strategic plans in support of the aims, mission and values of a school.
- Experience of the leadership and management of staff and developing an open, inclusive and supportive working environment and culture.
- Experience of, or the potential capacity to supervise, the full range of staff

management processes, e.g. recruitment, development, retention and performance management.

- Experience of, or the potential capacity to supervise, resource management (financial, human and physical).
- Detailed knowledge of safeguarding legislation and an understanding of whole-school safeguarding policy.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Clarity of vision with an ability to articulate such vision and translate it into meaningful specific plans and objectives, gaining full commitment from staff, parents, pupils and Governors.
- Ability to genuinely delegate and devolve responsibility to staff and, in doing so, build organisational capacity.
- Demonstrable skillset in building and maintaining strong relationships, both internally and externally.

- Excellent communicator (both verbally and in writing) with the confidence to engage a wide range of audiences.
- Excellent decision-making and problem-solving ability, including evidence of having dealt successfully with a range of challenges.
- Strong financial and resource planning skills.
- Excellent digital skills with an understanding of the critical role technology must play in education, both today and in the future.
- Ability to work with conflicting demands and timescales.
- Excellent up-to-date knowledge of and ability to manage risk and regulatory issues, including inspection, legal compliance, child protection, safer recruitment and health and safety.



The Person



PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Inspirational and enthusiastic leader able to empower and motivate others.
- Ambitious for the aspirations of the school.
- An inclusive and collaborative approach to leadership and management, building trust, inspiring confidence and fostering team spirit.
- Approachable, visible and accessible to everyone within the school community.
- Strategic and forward-looking with the ability to design and communicate a clear and compelling vision.
- Front-facing and engaging; able to present compellingly in front of pupils, staff, parents, and external bodies.
- Strong sense of moral values and their importance in education.
- A strong commitment to the academic, personal and social development of pupils, understanding the needs and concerns of their age group and having a natural empathy with them.
- Open, participative, and collegiate by nature, receptive to new ideas and thoughts, with an ability to listen, consult and discuss.
- Excellent judgement, integrity and sense of fairness.
- Able to act as an ambassador and professional advocate for the school, with strong personal credibility and the capacity to build relationships with a wide range of people.
- Calm and collected under pressure.
- Resilient, driven and determined with a good sense of humour.

Terms and Conditions

The successful candidate will receive a competitive remuneration package appropriate to the seniority of the role.

This will include:

- A highly competitive salary.
- TPS or Aviva pension provision.
- Private healthcare.
- Relocation support where appropriate.

Further details will be discussed with shortlisted candidates.



The Application Process

The recruitment of the next Head of Littlegarth School is being supported by RSAcademics. Interested candidates are invited to contact RSAcademics to arrange a confidential discussion with one of the consultants handling this appointment:

- Angela Short,
Head of Search (Appointments):
angelashort@rsacademics.com
- Andrew Nott, Senior Advisor:
andrewnott@rsacademics.com

Closing date: 10.00am on Friday 15 May 2026.

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. To submit your application, please upload your documents according to the instructions on the [RSAcademics website](#).

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

- A completed application form (available alongside this candidate information on the [RSAcademics website](#)).
- A covering letter addressed to Jim Keohane, Chair of Governors. The letter should be a maximum of two pages and explain your reasons for applying.

If you have any questions about uploading your application documents, please contact:

- Laura Cave, Project Manager (Leadership Appointments):
applications@rsacademics.com /
+44 (0) 204 6269 790

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 contact RSAcademics by telephone.
- **Preliminary interviews** will take place with RSAcademics via Teams in the week commencing 18 May 2026.
- **Longlist interviews** will take place online via Teams on Monday 1 and Tuesday 2 June 2026.
- Visits to the school for the shortlisted candidates will take place in the week commencing 8 June 2026.
- **Shortlist interviews** will take place at the school on Thursday 18 June 2026.

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

RSAcademics is a global executive search and consultancy firm working exclusively with schools. For more than 20 years, we've supported governors and leaders at pivotal moments – whether they are appointing senior staff or making complex strategic decisions. What makes us distinctive is the depth of firsthand experience in schools across our team – as heads, governors, bursars and senior professionals – combined with specialist expertise in areas such as strategy, research, marketing and finance. This blend is continually enriched by our ongoing consultancy and appointments work with schools worldwide, so our advice is always current, practical and evidence led. Please visit www.rsacademics.com for more information



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