



HD NINGBO SCHOOL  
宁波赫德实验学校



# Academic Principal

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

# Introduction

The first of the HD Schools opened in August 2014 in the city of Ningbo, and now the group educates over 8,000 students across schools in Shanghai, Beijing, Qingdao and Nanjing. The group is leading the way in what it believes to be a vital and exciting educational project: cultivating globally fluent Chinese who lead, innovate and impact.

HD Schools are respectful of the need for academic rigor but also recognize that education is broader than this, so they provide opportunities for students to develop new skills and interests outside the core academic curriculum in a happy, creative environment where critical thinking is nurtured. HD Schools offer a broad, balanced, and caring approach to character development.

The Academic Principal of HD Ningbo High School will serve as the school's academic leader, shaping the curriculum across IGCSE, A-Level, and AP pathways while ensuring rigorous, engaging learning for every student.

Working closely with the Secondary Principal and key academic teams, the role oversees teacher development, classroom observation, and evaluation to build a shared understanding of excellent teaching and a coherent professional learning culture. This will require clear vision, excellent communication and outstanding listening skills. It will also demand considerable technical ability since the Academic Principal monitors student progress, strengthens core skills, ensures meaningful assessment, and leads scheduling, academic planning, and resource management. Empathetic collaboration with coordinators, counselors, parents, and subject heads is central to creating an aligned, student-centered environment that reflects the school's mission and supports strong academic outcomes.

The role will suit a kind, charismatic leader with appropriate expertise in academic leadership and a passion for HD Schools' belief in innovative, bilingual-bicultural education.

# HD Schools, China

The first of the HD Schools opened in August 2014 in the city of Ningbo. The group now comprises schools in Shanghai, Beijing, Qingdao and Nanjing.

Amongst private school brands in China, HD Schools pioneered a dual-immersion curriculum, enabling Chinese passport holders to benefit from a unique educational offering. The group is leading the way in what it believes to be one of the most exciting educational projects of our time – namely, the education of Chinese nationals, in a Chinese context, but with a bilingual-bicultural vision. Through this bilingual-bicultural approach, the group aims to nurture global Chinese citizens – individuals who retain a profound respect and knowledge of their own culture and language while also acquiring the linguistic skills, awareness and qualifications to be successful in an increasingly globalized environment.

Underpinning this aim is the group's mission – cultivating globally fluent Chinese who lead, innovate and impact through a holistic, personalized and future-ready educational journey. HD schools are respectful of the need for academic rigor but also recognise that education is broader than this: it is about individual students and their enjoyment of school; it is about creating an environment where creativity is fostered, collaboration is encouraged, and critical thinking is nurtured; it is about providing opportunities for students to develop new skills and interests outside the core academic curriculum. HD schools firmly believe that a broad, balanced, and caring approach is required for education to succeed in nurturing character.





# The Network of Schools Beyond Ningbo

## HD BEIJING

HD Beijing enjoys a prime location in Dongba, northeast of central Beijing, within the Chaoyang District. This area offers a wealth of high-end commercial and recreational amenities. The school opened in August 2017, and the first campus was designed to accommodate 600 students aged 3–18. The second campus, just 10 minutes from the first, opened in September 2021 with a construction area of approximately 13,000 square meters. Together, the two campuses now accommodate 1,200 students. The 240 teaching staff are 40% international and 60% Chinese.

## HD SHANGHAI

HD Shanghai is located in the Songjiang District, often referred to as the cultural heart of Shanghai. Opened in August 2016, the school is set to grow into a thriving educational community for 2,000 students aged 3–18. The second phase of development, completed in August 2020, introduced state-of-the-art facilities for upper-secondary education and boarding houses, further enriching the student experience.

## HD QINGDAO

HD Qingdao is located in Huangdao District within the prestigious Oriental Movie Metropolis. HD Qingdao opened its doors in September 2018. The Oriental Movie Metropolis, a landmark project by Wanda Group, represents the largest investment in the film industry base worldwide, complemented by a convention center, seven-star hotels, upscale residential areas, and an international hospital. The school has a capacity for 2,000 students aged 3–18.

## HT NANJING

HT Nanjing is situated in the Jiangning District's Airport Hub Economic and Technological Development Zone, an area designed to become a national hub for aviation economy demonstration projects. By offering top-tier educational resources, HT Nanjing supports the government's efforts to attract high-quality enterprises and talent. The school opened in September 2021 and is capable of accommodating 2,000 students aged 3–18.

# Living in China and Ningbo

In the school's own words:

Ningbo is a vibrant coastal city nestled in the heart of Zhejiang Province, where ancient maritime heritage meets cutting-edge modernity. As one of China's oldest port cities – with over 7,000 years of history – Ningbo has long been a gateway for trade and culture, and today, it thrives as a global logistics hub and manufacturing powerhouse. Its skyline blends sleek skyscrapers with preserved historic districts like Lao Wai Tan, offering residents a unique fusion of old-world charm and contemporary convenience.

The climate here is mild and humid, with four distinct seasons – warm springs, hot summers, crisp autumns, and cool winters – making outdoor exploration enjoyable year-round. From the serene beauty of Dongqian Lake to the rugged cliffs of Songlan Mountain, Ningbo's natural landscapes provide endless opportunities for hiking, cycling, and seaside relaxation. The city also boasts an efficient public transport system, including metro lines, high-speed rail connections to Shanghai and Hangzhou, and an international airport that links you to major Asian hubs.

HD Schools in Ningbo are strategically located in well-developed urban areas such as Yinzhou and Haishu, providing families with top-tier education options alongside premium lifestyle amenities. Residents enjoy easy access to upscale shopping malls, gourmet dining, world-class healthcare facilities, and lush green parks. Accommodation ranges from luxury apartments overlooking the Yong River to tranquil suburban villas near scenic reservoirs – all supported by China's robust telecommunications infrastructure, ensuring seamless connectivity with loved ones worldwide.

Beyond its economic dynamism, Ningbo offers rich cultural experiences: visit the Tianyi Pavilion (China's oldest private library), savor fresh seafood at Nan Tang Old Street, or immerse yourself in traditional opera performances during local festivals. With its balanced pace of life, strong community spirit, and proximity to both nature and metropolis, Ningbo delivers a uniquely rewarding expat experience – where tradition whispers through alleyways, while innovation pulses through every new development.



# Welcome to HD Ningbo

Founded in 2014 as the flagship campus of the HD Schools group, HD Ningbo has grown into a vibrant, bilingual-bicultural learning community of over 2,000 students and 368 dedicated educators – including 21% international teachers from more than 10 countries. Our faculty is thoughtfully balanced: 79% Chinese educators bring deep cultural insight and pedagogical excellence, while our global team infuses diverse perspectives and innovative teaching practices. Together, we create a dynamic environment where students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Located across two purpose-built campuses – Yinzhou (serving ages 3–18) and Haishu (focused on the early years) – HD Ningbo offers state-of-the-art facilities nestled in premium urban neighborhoods, just 30 minutes from downtown Ningbo. Our curriculum uniquely blends the rigor of the Chinese National Curriculum with internationally recognized frameworks such as IGCSE, A-Level, and now, our newly launched US High School Program (including AP options),

preparing graduates for top universities worldwide while nurturing creativity, critical thinking, and global citizenship.

At HD Ningbo, education extends far beyond exams. We believe in holistic development – fostering curiosity, collaboration, character, and joy in learning. From robotics labs to drama studios and from outdoor adventure programs to community service initiatives, every student is encouraged to explore their passions and grow into confident, compassionate leaders.

For international educators, HD Ningbo offers more than a career – it's an invitation to be part of a transformative educational movement in one of China's most livable coastal cities. Enjoy modern amenities, seamless connectivity, rich cultural experiences, and a supportive expat community – all while contributing to a school that's redefining what bilingual education can achieve.

Join us in shaping globally fluent Chinese leaders – and discover why HD Ningbo is not just a workplace but a home away from home.

# The Role

The HD School group's mission is unique, and as the schools continue to evolve, leaders will need to demonstrate not only passion for the mission but flexibility and adaptability as HD journeys through its second decade. This Academic Principal role is no exception. Growth has been spectacular within HD Schools, but as new opportunities emerge, only ceaseless evolution, sometimes involving radical innovation, will ensure success for the young people under HD's aegis. It is imperative that the Academic Principal can see beyond the confines of any job description and offer input and expertise where necessary. The successful candidate will be running academics at HD Ningbo High School, but expectations go beyond that.

The Academic Principal is unlikely to be coming from a pastoral background but will rather bring expertise in pedagogy and quality assurance along with ambassadorial skills, empathy and alignment with the mission of HD Schools. The job description sets out the exciting opportunities the role presents, but along with the requisite technical knowledge comes a need for warm, inspirational leadership, together with empathetic management of talented colleagues. HD Ningbo is the bilingual school of choice in a huge city, and expectations within the community are very high.

This is a wonderful opportunity to develop teams with outstanding potential, bring on new leaders, and enhance community confidence. The candidate will relish developing a coherent,

rigorous high school curriculum across IGCSE, A-Level, and AP pathways, ensuring smooth progression and meeting the needs of diverse learners. They will promote a shared understanding of excellent teaching, guide professional development, and support teacher growth. The candidate will be comfortable overseeing academic operations – including scheduling, resources, course planning, and alignment with post-secondary goals – while working closely with coordinators, counselors, parents, and subject heads to build a collaborative culture. Success will be measured by clearer expectations, stronger teaching, improved student outcomes, and increased community confidence.

The new Academic Principal will be a student-centered, collaborative leader who models strong instructional expertise, builds trusting relationships, and communicates clearly. They will be strategic yet practical, energetic yet pragmatic, and resilient under pressure. They will also be committed to high standards, continual improvement, safeguarding, and positive international teamwork, with the diplomatic skill to navigate internal and external partnerships effectively.

Candidates looking to progress their careers after this role will most likely be looking for a Headship or VP (or equivalent) in a major international school.



# Job Description

**Job Title:** Academic Principal  
**Department:** HD Ningbo High School  
**Entity:** HD Ningbo School  
**Reports to:** Secondary Principal

## POSITION OVERVIEW

The Academic Principal serves as the academic leader of HD Ningbo High School, overseeing curriculum development, teacher growth, instructional quality, and academic operations. This role is responsible for ensuring that the school's academic vision translates into daily classroom practice and that every student experiences rigorous, engaging, and meaningful learning.

The Academic Principal works in close partnership with the Secondary Principal, grade-level coordinators, subject heads, and the counseling team to build a cohesive academic culture grounded in the school's mission.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

### *Curriculum Leadership*

- Lead the ongoing development and refinement of the high school curriculum across IGCSE, A-Level, and AP pathways, ensuring coherence, rigor, and alignment with the school's educational philosophy.

- Ensure the curriculum meets the diverse needs of students, including high-achieving students, students with learning challenges, and those pursuing specialized pathways (e.g., the arts, STEM).
- Work with subject heads to balance curriculum breadth and depth, ensuring students have room for exploration while maintaining academic integrity.
- Lead curriculum mapping and articulation between grade levels to ensure smooth transitions and clear learning progressions.

### *Teacher Development and Evaluation*

- Establish a clear, shared understanding of what constitutes excellent teaching at HD Ningbo and support teachers in working toward that standard.
- Design and implement a professional development program that responds to teacher needs and aligns with school priorities.
- Conduct regular classroom observations, provide constructive feedback, and support teachers in improving instructional practice.
- Lead the teacher evaluation process, ensuring it is fair, growth-oriented, and connected to meaningful professional development opportunities.
- Identify and nurture teacher leaders, supporting their growth as subject heads, mentors, and instructional coaches.

### ***Instructional Quality and Student Learning***

- Monitor student academic progress across grade levels, identifying trends, gaps, and areas for intervention.
- Work with grade-level coordinators and subject heads to develop strategies for supporting students at all levels – those who need acceleration, those who need reinforcement, and those who are disengaged.
- Lead initiatives to strengthen core academic skills (literacy, numeracy, critical thinking) across disciplines.
- Ensure that assessment practices are varied, meaningful, and aligned with learning goals.

### ***Academic Operations and Systems***

- Oversee academic scheduling, ensuring that the timetable reflects pedagogical priorities and allows for student choice, teacher collaboration, and adequate instructional time.
- Manage academic resources, including textbooks, digital tools, and learning materials, in alignment with curriculum needs.
- Lead academic planning processes, including course selection, student placement, and graduation requirements.
- Work with the counseling team to ensure that academic planning connects meaningfully to students' post-secondary goals.

### ***Collaboration and School Culture***

- Work closely with grade-level coordinators to align academic expectations with student development and behavioral support.

- Partner with the counseling team to ensure that students receive coherent guidance on course selection, academic planning, and college preparation.
- Build strong working relationships with subject heads and grade-level coordinators, fostering a culture of shared responsibility for student success.
- Communicate regularly with parents about academic expectations, student progress, and curriculum updates.
- Contribute to the broader school leadership team, helping to shape school-wide strategy and culture.

### **KEY SUCCESS MEASURES FOR THE FIRST YEAR**

- A clear, shared understanding of academic expectations is established among teachers and reflected in classroom practice.
- Teacher professional development is responsive, coherent, and well-attended.
- Student academic progress shows measurable improvement, with targeted support in place for students at all levels.
- Subject heads and grade-level coordinators report stronger collaboration and clearer alignment between academic and pastoral priorities.
- Parents express increased confidence in the academic program.



# Person Specification

## QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- A university degree and a teaching qualification.
- Minimum eight years of teaching experience in international secondary schools, with at least five years in academic leadership (Head of Department, Curriculum Coordinator, Vice Principal, or equivalent).
- Demonstrated experience leading curriculum development and teacher professional development in an IGCSE, A-Level, and/or AP context.
- Proven track record of improving instructional quality and student learning outcomes.
- Experience working in a bilingual or international school setting in China or Asia is strongly preferred.
- Experience of an approach to education that resonates with HD Schools' ethos, values and aims.

## PERSONAL QUALITIES

- A genuine commitment to student-centered education and the belief that every student can grow and succeed.
- Strong instructional leadership – able to articulate what good teaching looks like and support teachers in getting there.

- A collaborative mindset: works well with Chinese and international colleagues, listens deeply, and builds trust.
- A relationship builder whose default position is to build teams and work collaboratively; someone who understands that the school's success will be based on his or her ability to build mutually respectful relationships at several different levels and, when necessary, to work to resolve conflicts.
- Energetic and determined to set out, achieve and personify the aspirations and priorities of the school, yet pragmatic enough to adjust priorities when necessary.
- A balance of vision and practicality: able to think strategically while also attending to the details that make things work.
- Resilient, patient, and steady – able to lead through complexity without being reactive.
- Excellent communication skills in English; proficiency in Mandarin is a significant advantage but not required.
- Committed to the highest standards and continual improvement while also recognizing the importance of support and compassion in achieving such standards.
- Thoroughly cognizant of responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection issues and with a clear commitment to delivering best practice in safeguarding.
- Diplomatic, politically astute and able to maintain good external relationships.

# Remuneration

HD Schools are committed to employing and rewarding teachers and leaders who share their ambition, aims and values. In addition to a competitive salary, the Academic Principal of HD Ningbo will also benefit from:

- Accommodation.
- A fee remission scheme for children.
- Private healthcare.
- Annual flights for self and dependants to country of origin.

The role comes with a three-year fixed contract, followed by mutually agreed three-year extensions. The school is committed to the professional development of all its staff and leadership so that they can continue to grow as teachers and educators.





# Application Process

This recruitment process is being managed by RSAcademics Ltd on behalf of HD Schools. Unless stated otherwise, all communication about the appointments will be via RSAcademics.

Two members of the RSAcademics team are primarily engaged in this process:

- Chris Edwards, Senior Advisor for International Appointments: [chrisedwards@rsacademics.com](mailto:chrisedwards@rsacademics.com)
- Hannah Green, International Appointments Consultant: [hannahgreen@rsacademics.com](mailto:hannahgreen@rsacademics.com)

For a preliminary, confidential conversation about the role with Hannah Green, International Appointments Consultant, please contact [hannahgreen@rsacademics.com](mailto:hannahgreen@rsacademics.com) with a copy of your CV/résumé.

Closing date: This is a rolling process, and applications will be considered as they arrive. Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. Applications for this role will be considered as they are received, and there will not be a fixed application window. Candidates are therefore encouraged to submit their applications at the earliest opportunity.

Please apply at [www.rsacademics.com](http://www.rsacademics.com) via the Apply Now link accompanying the announcement of the position. You will be taken to an online portal where you will be able to download an application form.

Please follow the instructions provided to complete and submit your application. You should submit:

- A completed application form.
- A completed data-sharing agreement.
- A copy of your curriculum vitae/résumé.
- A covering letter, preferably of no more than two pages, addressed to Chris Edwards, Senior Advisor (International Appointments), at RSAcademics. The letter should explain your reasons for applying, the attractions of this role and of the school, and the relevance of your experience and personal educational philosophy.

Should you have any queries relating to uploading your application documents, please contact:

- Amy Murphy, Operations Administrator: [applications@rsacademics.com](mailto:applications@rsacademics.com) / +44 (0) 204 6269 791

The recruitment process will proceed as follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received acknowledgement within two working days, please contact RSAcademics by telephone (+44 (0) 204 6269 791).
- Preliminary interviews (by video call with RSAcademics colleagues) will take place for selected candidates on a rolling basis soon after applications are received. Dates for further and final-stage interviews will follow shortly.
- RSAcademics will collect references for candidates who progress to the later stages of the process. No referees will be contacted until RSAcademics has received your express permission to do so.

*HD Schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any appointment to an HD School is conditional on criminal records clearance, and the successful candidate will be required to supply the necessary information and documentary evidence. References will be obtained for all candidates called for final interview, and applicants should be aware that questions relating to the candidates' suitability to work in a post involving children will be asked throughout the recruitment process.*

RS Academics 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 first-hand 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](http://www.rsacademics.com) for more information.



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