

# Principal Search







# Introduction

**T**he International School of Ahafo (ISA) serves the community associated with the Newmont Ghana gold mine in western Ghana. It is a small, ambitious Cambridge curriculum school in a remote location that has developed significantly under the six years of leadership of Principal **Meg Sutcliffe**, who is retiring. ISA recently completed its first CIS accreditation, a process that has proved transformational for the school. It is a non-profit school, funded by Newmont and governed by an independent Board. All staff except the Principal are Ghanaian, as are all of the students.

The school is an integral part of Mensah Kumta Village (MKV), a green, attractive settlement housing the mine's senior employees and their families. MKV has 91 residences and good amenities, including a swimming pool, tennis courts, squash court, gym, restaurant and even a small golf course. Education is free aside from uniform and field trip costs.



The location of the school and its circumstances mean that the Principal will need to be resilient, comfortable in their own company or that of their family, and able to live within the community that the school serves. There is a rhythm to the community so that time away from the village is part of what makes life there work so well; the Principal can expect to have six good breaks a year, and this is supported by a competitive remuneration and benefits package.

The school offers a Cambridge education up to Year 9, when students either move to the Ghanaian system or to UK curriculum or IB schools in Ghana or overseas. The role would therefore particularly suit a leader with primary or middle school experience – although someone with a secondary background may also be suitable. It will also suit candidates with experience in Ghana or elsewhere in Africa and who are accustomed to a small school environment.





## History

Newmont established a school in MKV to attract and retain senior managers, as the location lacked quality education. Initially a homeschooling effort, it evolved into a purpose-built school in 2008 with 27 students, growing to 60 by year-end. With support from International School Services, the school gained U.S. accreditation. In 2014, Newmont sought to divest itself of the school, but parents intervened, re-launching the school in 2015 as an independent entity aiming for financial self-sufficiency within three years. Newmont reversed its decision in 2017, re-owning the school for managers' children under an independent board.

To boost numbers, a nursery was added in 2020, and online classes were introduced during COVID-19, which were extended to all Newmont employees' children. Onsite classes resumed in 2021 with 50 students, some of whom lived outside MKV, rising to 86 by 2023 as more families moved to MKV. Currently, all students are Ghanaian, and except for the Principal, all staff are national, aligning with government policy.







# The School



## VISION

ISA will be the school of choice in the Ahafo Region, providing a high-quality international education for families in order for Newmont to recruit and retain a high-quality workforce.

## MISSION

We offer an international education to the diverse children in the Newmont Ahafo community by promoting a broad curriculum that shapes our students to be competent, well-rounded young people, who are compassionate, resilient, versatile and equipped to face the opportunities of the future.

## CORE VALUES

### Integrity

- Doing the right thing even when no one is watching
- Being honest and reliable
- Taking responsibility for your actions
- Respecting academic honesty.

### Global Citizenship

- Being aware, appreciative and respectful of the cultural differences and diversity around the world
- Promoting actions that positively impact the environment, society and humanity
- Being open-minded and willing to learn from others and respect what they say
- Being kind and empathetic towards others, regardless of their nationality or background.

### Growth Mindset

- Believing that your talents, skills and intelligence can improve through time, practice and effort
- Embracing challenges and change
- Being curious, persistent, resilient and flexible
- Learning from mistakes and being open to feedback.

### Wellbeing and Safety

- Doing no harm to self, others and the environment
- Addressing physical, emotional, psychological barriers to our wellbeing and safety
- Maintaining a non-violent, inclusive learning environment
- Seeking help when needed







# Community



ISA is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This is the School's north star. Staff receive annual safeguarding and child protection training. ISA employs safer recruitment strategies, and staff undergo criminal background and references checks. Most staff have received training in First Aid and there is a rigorous procedure for addressing the school's health needs. The school liaises with the Newmont Emergency Response Team and the Clinic on all emergencies.

The ISA Board is made up of Newmont senior managers, some of whom are parents, the PTFA Chair, and the Principal of the school. The Board is attuned to the roles and responsibilities of a healthy governing body and is clear about the needs of ISA today and into the future. Board meetings are held once in each term.



ISA staff are experienced, passionate and committed. Though all Ghanaian, the staff body is diverse and students “learn to learn” from a panoply of internationally minded teachers. CPD is provided through workshops with both Cambridge and CIS, as well as National College online courses. Teachers are warmly encouraged to grow and develop while working at the School.

The school has an active Student Council. Students are encouraged to use their voice and actions for the greater good. The Student Council organises a number of student events throughout the year and raises funds for community service projects. A commitment to service is part of the ethos of the school, as is a palpable appreciation for global citizenship. This is incorporated in the curriculum, ambience, interactions and activities of the school.





# Curriculum

## Early Years

The Nursery and Reception classes are in the Early Years Centre. It is only offered to MKV residents. The Early Years Centre caters to the needs of 2- to 5-year-olds. The Centre is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and English is the language of instruction. Children are exposed to an academic environment similar to the Cambridge Primary curriculum used from Year 1 to Year 6 at ISA

## The Curriculum – Early Years Foundation Stage

The main objective is to provide children with a structured learning programme. The EYFS allows children to grow at their own pace, retain their individuality and develop their own unique personality. Emphasis is placed on developing children's personal and social skills. Free play, practical activities, sensory exercises, music and dance are a large part of our educational programme.

## The programme reflects the four overarching principles of the EYFS:

- Every child is unique and the school plans for all their individual needs and interests.
- The importance of developing positive relationships with children and parents.



- Creating stimulating and positive environments to support and respond to children's individual needs and interests.
- The individual interests, needs and next steps of all children are taken into account and planned for in order to support each child in making good progress from their starting points.

The school day ends for Nursery at 12:30pm and for Reception at 1:55pm.

## Primary

From Year 1 (age 5-6) to Year 6 (age 10-11), students follow the Cambridge Primary Curriculum. The Cambridge curriculum focuses on the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and Social Sciences. There is a clear framework for each subject in which teachers have the flexibility to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of their students.

Progress is measured by use of the Cambridge Progression Tests from the end of Year 3 until Year 6, and the externally marked Cambridge Checkpoint assessments at the end of Year 6 in English, Mathematics and Science. The school also administers the Cambridge CEM online baseline assessments each year. These tests compare our children's performance to that of other children around the world. In this way, we know that ISA's academic standards compare appropriately with





other international schools. ICT, PE, Swimming, Art, African Drumming and Dance, French, Ghanaian Language and Culture and Music are offered as discrete subjects. The school day for Years 1 to 6 ends at 2:40pm.

### **Lower Secondary (Year 7 to 9)**

Students move to the Lower Secondary stage of their education as they enter Year 7, where the Cambridge Secondary 1 curriculum is used. Classes in the Secondary school are mixed-ability and work is differentiated to address individual needs.

The Cambridge Lower Secondary Programme is a framework for educational success for students approximately 11–14 years old. It builds on the Primary Stage and develops children's knowledge and skills in Mathematics, English, Science and Social Sciences. ICT, Art, PE, Swimming, African Drumming and Dance, Ghanaian Language and Culture, French and Music are offered as discrete subjects. These subjects are continually developed and reviewed by ISA staff to ensure that the curriculum stays broad and rigorous.

The Cambridge Lower Secondary programme provides excellent preparation for students embarking on the International General Certificate of Secondary





Education (IGCSE), the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IBMYP) or the Ghanaian system. The programme also offers schools a means of tracking student progress through the Lower Secondary phase, with an integrated package of teaching, learning and assessment tools.

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These tests compare our students' performance to that of other students around the world. In this way, we know that ISA's academic standards compare appropriately with other international schools. The school day for Years 7 to 9 ends at 2:40pm.





# Facilities

**T**he school has a countryside feel. It is housed in a purpose-built complex, nestled within the Senior Staff residence compound of Newmont Ghana's Ahafo mine, also referred to as MKV. It has an open courtyard design and offers a secure learning environment, including good academic, sporting and recreational facilities.

The library is the central hub of the school and consistent efforts are made to develop children's reading habits. It is well-stocked with a wide range of books and is well-equipped to support and facilitate teaching and learning. The library also provides a variety of books for leisure reading.

ISA has an array of sporting facilities nestled within MKV, including a basketball court, two football fields, volleyball nets, a squash court, a tennis court and a swimming pool.

Students have two PE lessons per week and swimming once a week, ensuring regular physical activity and holistic development. Music, Dance and Art are all catered for in bespoke facilities.



# Living in Ghana



**W**ithin MKV, the Head will be part of a close-knit community. Beyond the MKV gates lies the rich cultural, historical and natural diversity of Ghana, waiting to be explored. Political stability stands out: Ghana has maintained a consolidated democracy since 1992 and became the fifth African country to offer visa-free entry for all African nationals in January 2025, demonstrating its progressive stance and regional leadership. Ghana has also enjoyed robust economic growth. With GDP growth of 7.2% in Q3 2024 and projected GDP of USD 396 billion in 2025 (PPP), Ghana's economy is among the fastest-growing in the region, creating substantial opportunities across sectors.

It is a regional business hub enjoying ongoing investments in roads, hospitals, and schools across major cities. Secondary towns are also steadily enhancing quality of life throughout the country. Crucially, Ghana provides an opportunity to save through cost-effective living: Ghana living costs in cities like Accra are 45% lower than the United States, for example, allowing for a comfortable lifestyle at moderate expense levels.



Ghanaian cuisine is rich and varied and includes the famous jollof rice which is cooked in spicy sauce with meats or fish. Shopping can be done in lively traditional markets or, in the cities, in air-conditioned malls. Sport and leisure activities abound, as do UNESCO World Heritage sites such as the coastal forts and castles that are linked to the transatlantic slave trade. National Parks abound in wildlife, including large mammals such as elephants and buffalo.

The closest domestic airport is Sunyani Airport (approximately a one-hour flight from Accra), with a larger airport in Kumasi (Prempeh I International Airport). International arrivals will fly into Kotoka International Airport in Accra and connect onwards to Sunyani by domestic flight. This will be followed by a road journey of approximately one and a half hours to the school in Kenyasi.







# The Role

If such a thing as a run-of-the-mill Headship exists, this is not it. Serious applicants need to approach this position with eyes wide open and should bring with them a sense of adventure, fun and, at times, stoicism. Experience in the region is not essential, but it would stand a candidate in good stead. After six hugely successful years, Meg Sutcliffe is leaving a thriving school that has proudly achieved CIS accreditation. Unusual it may be, but ISA is professional and ambitious.

ISA follows the Northern Hemisphere academic calendar, which runs from August to July. The Principal oversees the day-to-day operation of the school and is supported by a School Board, which is made up of Newmont Ghana's Ahafo mine senior



managers and parents. The Board takes a close interest in the policies, strategy, and financial affairs of the school, as well as providing expertise on the school's relationship with Newmont Ghana Gold Limited, its sole benefactor, and the parent community. The Principal is also supported by an able support staff team led by a Business and Communications manager who effectively oversees CFO/ HR/ Facilities/ Health and Safety and several other functions. There will be no pressure to grow the School: ISA is running at its optimum size.

Success will mean finding the right person at the right point in their career. That is likely to mean someone who will appreciate the time and space that the role affords them; for example, someone without extensive family commitments, someone with younger children, or a leader who is pursuing research may revel in the opportunity. Various personal attributes will be necessary: resilience and resourcefulness; comfort in their own company, or just with their partner; an ability to live within the compound environment; a readiness to live without too many luxuries; and the awareness to balance the joy of living among

the school community with maintaining an appropriate distance. The holiday periods are key to flourishing in the role. The Board appreciates the special nature of the role and that is why the Head has six breaks in any given year. Currently, Meg Sutcliffe chooses to spend around half of those in Accra and half out of the country, but how those breaks are used is entirely up to the Head. There are also regular trips into the local town.

The School is value-driven, and so the Principal must be too, but ISA is also looking for somebody who is passionate about standards, details, monitoring and following up. The teaching body is stable and happy, but there is much work still to do. The current Head has pointed to technology, documentation, mapping a child's journey through the school, face-to face PD, student voice, building resilience and wellbeing as areas that could all be further developed.

For the right person, this is an extraordinary opportunity to lead a unique, thriving community in a fascinating country.





# Job Description For The Principal

Position: **PRINCIPAL**

**Reporting to:**

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF AHAFO

**Job Purpose:**

TO ENSURE THE SCHOOL DELIVERS A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL ITS STUDENTS WITH CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENT ATTAINMENT THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL AND ITS ACTIVITIES AND STAKEHOLDERS, IN LINE WITH THE OVERALL DIRECTION AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE GOVERNING BOARD. ISA IS A SMALL SCHOOL, AND THE PRINCIPAL WILL BE REQUIRED TO TEACH SOME OF THE TIME.

## **Key Accountabilities**

**Leadership:**

- Provide inspiring and purposeful leadership for staff and students and uphold the School's Vision and Mission, values and philosophy.
- Develop and sustain an outstandingly high reputation for the school that is validated by external accreditation and awards.
- Build a school culture that celebrates diversity and mutual respect.
- Liaise with the Board and the BCM to prepare a Strategic Plan for the school and to link it to a Financial Plan.
- Ensure continuous improvement is achieved through the development and implementation of an ambitious School Development Plan (SDP).
- Review and establish all school policies to ensure that relevant policies and procedures and systems are up to date and fit for purpose.
- Ensure that parents and other stakeholders are well informed about students'

achievements and the school's progress

- Monitor and evaluate the performance of the School and report to the Board.
- Ensure that the school is well represented in the local community
- Establish good, reliable and well-planned engagement with the school board.
- Elicit the support of the school board in implementing Strategies and school plans.

### **Management:**

- Lead the establishment of a fulfilling curriculum, timetabling, and extra-curricular programme, which supports the vision and mission of the School.
- Create an environment and set expectations that promote excellent teaching, effective learning, high standards of achievement and good behaviour.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning to improve student achievement, using assessment data to drive standards upwards.
- Provide sports, extra-curricular activities and additional educational support programmes that support the vision and mission of the School.
- Ensure effective management of staffing levels which meet the needs of the curriculum and students, identifying and recommending future recruitment needs, and the implementation of timely and effective recruitment.
- Plan, allocate, support, and evaluate work undertaken by teams and individuals, ensuring clear delegation of tasks and devolution of responsibilities, ensuring all staff are held to account for their professional conduct, performance, and practice.
- Implement and maintain effective systems for the management of staff performance, ensuring systems are fair and transparent and adequately address concerns and value excellence.
- Promote and monitor ongoing professional development of self and staff.

### **Organisation, Structure and Resources:**

- Work closely with staff to prioritise school decision-making.
- Provide opportunities to staff to contribute to school initiatives and projects.



- Ensure the efficiency and prioritisation of IT systems for staff and student use and assure the integrity of student management information system data and usage.
- Respect the contribution and support of the school community and all other stakeholders.
- Develop the profile of the School, grow enquiries and enrolment and promote retention, in line with expectations set by the Board.
- Work with the Business and Communications Manager to provide an annual budget for the school that incorporates all the school's needs for the year, indicating the key capital needs and ongoing expenditures.
- Work with the Business and Communications Manager to operate appropriate financial control processes and procedures within the School in line with the authorities delegated by the Board in order to manage resources efficiently and effectively.
- Work with the Business and Communications Manager to ensure an annual audit of the school's accounts, sharing of financial reports with the Board and filing with relevant state authorities.
- Work with the Business and Communications Manager to establish all the Human Resource requirements of the school in line with the authorities delegated by the Board.
- Work with the Business and Communications Manager to ensure all resources and facilities are maintained in good order.

### **Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment**

- Ensure Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment policies are fully implemented and followed by all staff.
- Designate a Senior Lead in Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- Ensure the security of the school building and safekeeping of property.







# Person Specification

## **Qualification And Training**

- Advanced degree in education or educational leadership
- Qualified Teacher Status or equivalent

## **Teaching And Leadership Experience**

- A minimum of 7 years of sustained leadership and management success (as a Principal, Vice Principal or equivalent)
- Experience leading and monitoring curriculum delivery and assessment
- Familiarity with high international school standards
- Experience in more than one school, preferably some experience in Africa
- Experience in teaching young children or adolescents in a mixed-age class

## **Professional Experience and Understanding**

- A record of sustained leadership and management success in an international school
- Familiarity with an international curriculum, preferably the Cambridge curriculum
- Experience in Council of International Schools (CIS) accreditation
- Ability to think strategically and support the Board in realising the school's long-term goals
- Experience in financial and operational management in a limited budget, including allocating resources and planning for sustainability
- Experience in designing and implementing school improvement strategies to raise standards
- Proven experience in safeguarding, child protection, and promoting the wellbeing of learners and staff
- Proven experience in staff development, coaching, and performance management

### **Leadership Qualities**

- Integrity and values-driven leadership, maintaining discretion and confidentiality in a close-knit community
- Strategic thinker capable of aligning operations with long-term vision
- Student-centred approach with a passion for challenging and nurturing learners
- Ability to lead by example with a strong work ethic
- Resilient and adaptable leader, capable of maintaining calm, clear judgment, and continuity of learning during periods of operational disruption
- Ability to represent the school to external stakeholders
- Builds confidence and trust among staff and students
- Cultural sensitivity – appreciation and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds
- Willingness to make a long-term commitment to the school









# Personal Skills and Qualities



- Comfortable embracing the gentle unpredictability of life in Ghana and enjoying a peaceful, quiet lifestyle.
- Self-sufficiency and ability to cope with life in a remote community
- Resilient in crises situations
- Versatile leader with multiple skills
- A collaborative team player who fosters a strong school culture
- Dynamic, and mature leader, very visible and engaged in the life of the school
- Supports a culture of high aspirations in a caring environment
- Careful, empathetic and reflective listener
- Dedication to building a strong, collaborative school community
- Flexible and adaptable to unpredictable circumstances
- Skilled and creative problem-solver, adept at conflict resolution
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Actively participates in life beyond the classroom, supporting extra-curricular activities and MKV community events







# Remuneration

IS Ahafo is committed to offering a very competitive package that reflects the seniority and importance of this role.

# The Application Process

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

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

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

Interested candidates are invited to contact Hannah Green by email for an initial confidential discussion and include a copy of your CV/résumé.

**Closing Date:** 13th February 2026

Preliminary interviews with RSAcademics may commence before the application deadline, and IS Ahafo reserves the right to appoint candidates in advance of the intended timeline; early applications are therefore encouraged.

## **You should submit:**

- A completed application form.
- A copy of your curriculum vitae/resumé.
- A covering letter, preferably of no more than two pages, addressed to Chris Edwards, Senior Advisor, RSAcademics. The letter should explain your reasons for applying, the attractions of the role and the school, the relevance of your experience, and how you relate your educational philosophy and your experience to your understanding of the school and the role.







Please make sure your letter is bespoke to this position; a generic letter may result in your application not being fully considered. Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. 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.

When you submit your application, you will receive an automated email from RSAcademics confirming that we have received it. If you have not received the automated email within two working days of submitting your application or if you have any other queries relating to uploading your application documents, please contact **Alison Hooper** (*Project Coordinator*), at [applications@rsacademics.com](mailto:applications@rsacademics.com). Alison can also be reached by calling **+44 (0) 204 6269 791**.

The recruitment process will proceed as follows:

- *Preliminary interviews with RSAcademics colleagues will commence in February 2026 (preliminary interviews may also take place before the application deadline).*
- *Longlist interviews are scheduled to take place by video call with members of the ISA team in March 2026.*
- *Final-stage interviews are scheduled to take place by video call with members of the ISA team in April 2026.*
- *Acceptance of the offer is subject to the successful candidate completing a familiarisation visit to the school in May 2026.*

RSAcademics will collect references for candidates invited to attend the final-round interviews. No referees will be contacted until RSAcademics has received your express permission to do so. RSAcademics is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in schools.

### About RSAcademics

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 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.