

General information for applicants for teaching posts at Highgate

If you need this or any other information in an alternative format, please contact the School for assistance.

Highgate School was founded in 1565 and is governed as a single charitable Foundation. Highgate has for some years been an entirely day school, although in earlier times a proportion of the pupils were boarders. There are at present about 1420 pupils in the three sections: Pre-Preparatory School (130 age 3-7), Junior School 324 age 7-11), Senior School (957 aged 11-18, Sixth Form of 328 including 86 Sixth Form girls). Highgate embarked upon full coeducation in 2004 and that process is reaching completion: in September 2010 there will be boys and girls in all fifteen year groups across the Foundation, with the 50:50 ratio already achieved in the Pre-Preparatory and Junior Schools and in Years 7 and 8 determining the pattern for future recruitment.

In the Senior School, there are usually six or seven sets of between 22 and 24 pupils (often in smaller set sizes) per year, with an additional 40-50 pupils joining the Sixth Form. Entry to the Senior School is either directly from the Junior School or by means of entry tests at 11+ or 13+; 400 children apply for about 40 places at 11+; almost all boys at this level come from State primary schools, as do 60% of girls. They join about 70 pupils from the Junior School. The School is heavily oversubscribed at all entry points. There are 108 teachers in the Senior School, 72 men and 36 women.

The School is situated in one of the most attractive and sought after areas of North London, only a short journey from Central London and adjacent to Hampstead Heath, the largest open space in the capital. The hilltop site in Highgate village is the historic heart of the Senior School. The Northern line underground station is a short walk away, and it is four miles to central London (City or West End). A few hundred yards along Hampstead Lane in Bishopswood Road lie the extensive school playing-fields, adjacent to the open spaces of Kenwood and Hampstead Heath. In this road are the Junior and Pre-Preparatory Schools, the Mallinson Sports Centre, indoor swimming pool, squash, tennis and Eton Fives courts and the Caen Wood Hall for dance and fencing, and the dining hall. The Mills Centre for Art, Design and Technology, a major new centre of excellence for the whole Foundation, opened in 2005; an all-weather pitch for hockey, netball, tennis and athletics opened in April 2009 and a major restoration project of the Senior School is under way. A new performance space for music opens in April 2010 in Dyne House.

The great majority of pupils live nearby and the pupil population reflects the diversity of North London. 5% of pupils are assisted by the Friends of Highgate School Society or by means of Bursaries and Governors are committed to increasing this number. The School has had a Christian (Church of England) tradition since its foundation and Christian pupils or those of no faith attend Chapel once a week. Those of other faiths are welcomed and separate assemblies are held for them.

Curriculum

The curriculum is broad; core subjects at GCSE are English, English Literature (IGCSE), a modern language (IGCSE), Mathematics (IGCSE) and three separate sciences or double award (core and additional: IGCSE from 2012); these and three other optional subjects are generally taken at the end of Year 11. In the Sixth Form pupils take four subjects at AS level and three or

four A2 courses. Almost all leavers go on to take degree courses at leading universities in the UK and abroad.

Results

Results at A level have improved significantly over the last sixteen years. In 2009 the A, AB and ABC rates and UCAS points were 70%, 89%, 96% and 399 points compared with 16%, 37%, 60% and 17.1 (old tariff) points in 1990. A similar improvement at GCSE has resulted in 42% of papers being graded A*, and 81% A*A in 2009. Highgate is a member of the Eton Group and of the St. Alban's/Haileybury Group whose Heads of Department and other senior staff meet annually.

Knowledge Curriculum

In 2009-10 we are embarking on our own Knowledge Curriculum. We have asked ourselves what an educated young adult at Highgate ought to know about at each stage of their education, in addition to what is provided by the formal curriculum. The Knowledge Curriculum follows a historical sequence from Year 7 (where pupils look at the civilisations of the near east) to Year 13 (who study the modern world), though the topics stretch far beyond just history. There is one study day each term devoted to this curriculum; in addition, many departments devote a lesson in the week prior to the Study Day to the relevant theme. A full description of the Knowledge Curriculum and the philosophy behind its introduction is available on the School's website. It is expected that all members of staff contribute to this curriculum in some way.

Co-curricular

All teachers are required to participate in co-curricular activities, of which there is a wide range, and act as a tutor either to a form in Year 7 or 8 or to a group of about ten pupils in one of the twelve houses. Music and drama flourish. There are also many societies for pupils of all ages, and regular visits are arranged to concerts, plays and exhibitions in central London. There is a voluntary Combined Cadet Force and large numbers participate in either the School's own Urban Survival Award Scheme or the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. The School's field studies centre in North Wales is used for a wide range of expeditions, fieldwork visits and other outdoor activities. The main sports include athletics, basketball, cricket, cross-country, dance, Eton fives, fencing, hockey, netball, rugby, soccer, swimming, tennis and water polo. The provision of co-curricular and sporting activities has evolved as the school has become coeducational and relies on staff willingness to support these programmes; training is provided for staff to develop their confidence and expertise.

Working with the community

Highgate is a socially responsible school. The School works actively with the local community to develop sustainable projects that help address the needs of the society around it. Teachers are expected to show commitment to this principle, and to participate, to a sensible degree, in the partnerships which Highgate School supports.

Significant activities take place with local state schools (primary, secondary and academies). There is a strong tradition of fundraising for the Foundation's nominated charities: usually the three Schools raise in the region of £45,000 each year, but this can easily surpass £100,000 in the years when there is the Foundation Sponsored Walk.

Support and induction

Support for teachers is excellent. All teachers, regardless of their experience, follow in the first two years of their teaching at Highgate a strong programme of induction and professional development, run by the Head of Staff Induction, Ms Joanne Gosney. A member of the Senior Team, Mr Paul Aston, is responsible for the welfare of teaching staff. The Common Room is characterized by warm, informal relations; teachers come from a wide range of professional backgrounds which include both state and independent sectors.

There is also excellent support for teachers from administrative staff: the Bursar directs a staff of over 300 employees, including administration, media, IT, finance and catering; all staff have a free lunch, access to administrative support and are provided with laptops (all classrooms also have desk tops and interactive whiteboards). An annual appraisal scheme allows and encourages staff to develop their careers and identify training or study which would help them continue to develop as teachers.

Future plans

Governors have driven an ambitious programme of development, allocating £25 million in recent years to new buildings and the restoration of the School's Victorian fabric, and have plans to invest a further £35 million, funds permitting, in the continuing work to ensure all Highgate's facilities are fit for purpose. A campaign to raise funds for bursaries and capital projects is being launched, overseen by the Director of the Charity and a Governors' sub-committee.

The School's aims and ethos may be viewed on the School's website. This statement captures recent thinking about the Governors' and the Head Master's vision for Highgate in the next ten to twenty years.

Further details about Highgate may be found in the Independent Schools' Year Book, the Good Schools Guide and on the school website (<http://www.highgateschool.org.uk>).

Highgate School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Potential employees' attitudes to and experience of safeguarding will be explored at interview.