



# BELIEVING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Bennett Memorial Diocesan  
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[www.bennettmemorial.co.uk](http://www.bennettmemorial.co.uk)

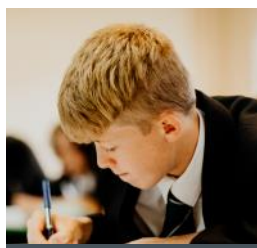
Bennett Memorial Diocesan School

## Headteacher CANDIDATE PACK

For further information, to arrange an informal conversation with Mr Richard Tyson, interim CEO, about this post, or to book a school tour, please contact Mrs Katherine Wagstaff on 01892 521595 or by email at [wagstaff@bennett.kent.sch.uk](mailto:wagstaff@bennett.kent.sch.uk)

**Closing date: 18 June 2024 at noon**

*Tenax Schools Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people and all applicants are expected to share this commitment. All appointments are subject to pre-employment checks, including satisfactory references and an Enhanced DBS check. More information on our recruitment checks can be found in the Guidance Notes for Applicants.*



# Welcome from the CEO of the Tenax Schools Trust

Dear Applicant

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming headteacher of Bennett Memorial Dicoesan School.

We are exceptionally proud of what has been achieved at Bennett. Inspired and informed by its Christian ethos and vision the school has exceptionally high ambitions for all its students. Excellent teachers deliver a sophisticated powerful curriculum that delivers powerful knowledge. Alongside academic excellence the school places great store in the development of character and values and providing highly effective care and support. Both this commitment to academic and character excellence consistently opens doors of opportunity and choice for all students. This has placed Bennett within the top echelons of co-educational schools in the country.

We are looking forward to appointing a headteacher who will sustain and develop Bennett as such a distinctive school. They will provide the strong and agile leadership that will allow the school to be ever more effective. They will understand and embody the Christian vision and tenacity that has been at the heart of the school since its foundation in 1951 and which is reflected in the school motto of 'Semper Tenax.'

Reflecting the philosophy of the Tenax Schools Trust the Bennett curriculum is firmly rooted in an understanding of the importance of knowledge. Our starting point is that all students, irrespective of starting point or background, can achieve and thrive in a school which offers the highest quality teaching. Our rigorous behaviour systems provide the context where such teaching has maximum impact. Bennett's designation as a Department of Education Teaching School hub helps ensure that such teaching is developed through high quality professional development based on the best available evidence from the UK and around the world.

The school is organised alongside traditional lines with clearly identified curriculum teams each led by a subject specialist leaders. These provide the engine room of intelligent curriculum design from which effective teaching can be implemented.

Complementing this is our pastoral framework which is currently articulated in year teams each led by a year manager who holds overarching responsibility for the welfare and development of children in their year group, supported by a team of tutors and welfare officers.

At a time when Tenax is poised to grow further this is an exciting time to be joining the trust as a headteacher. A growing trust is in a position to provide further opportunities for professional development and progression.

We look forward to hearing from you and are happy to discuss queries with all those who are considering the role. I would be pleased, too, to have those who are interested in the post come to visit Bennett and meet with me for an informal discussion about the role.

Yours faithfully

Richard Tyson, Interim CEO of Tenax Schools Trust

Mark Cole, CEO designate, Tenax Schools Trust (from 1st September 2024)

# About the school

Bennett Memorial Diocesan School was founded on 17th October 1951 by Lady Elena Bennett and Bishop Christopher Chavasse of Rochester. The school is situated in Tunbridge Wells and serves a large catchment including East Sussex and West Kent.

Bennett is a 11-18 co-educational school of just under two thousand students that is part of the Tenax Schools Trust. [Ofsted](#) graded the school in December 2023 as 'outstanding' in all areas.

*At the heart of its Christian vision are five words:*



**'Semper Tenax,'** the school motto, literally translates as 'ever holding fast.' This encourages all to always persevere and to keep on going so that all can strive for excellence in every possible field of our work in the classroom and beyond it.

Such tenacity is shaped by hope, wisdom and love.

**Hope:** this speaks to the hope we have for the potential in all of us to flourish. We anchor that hope through the Christian faith, its beliefs and values, that underpin the school.

**Wisdom:** this speaks to how what we learn in school gives us a wisdom to know how to live life well.

**Love:** this speak to the paramount importance of how we are called by God to care and support one another however far we may be from Him. These five words call us to be:

- Attentive to the teachings and eternal hope of Christ
- Learning the knowledge & courage we need to help make wise judgements
- Showing love and care to all through the warmth of our hospitality
- Conducting ourselves with a humility that respects the dignity of others
- Enriching our communities with joy & service for one another.



# About the school

Bennett's ambitious curriculum offer for all is most obviously characterised by the unusually high number of students (89%) entered for the English baccalaureate. In addition to the strong curriculum offer there are a plethora of extra curricular activities through week day clubs and activities and including visits around the UK and overseas. For example, the majority of students successfully complete the Duke of Edinburgh bronze award with a high number going on to achieve the silver and gold awards. Bennett is one of the largest centres for the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme in the south east. Underpinned by the school's distinctive Christian ethos provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong.



Staff are extremely proud to work at the school. They are a very committed and dynamic team who share the belief that the quality of teaching is the single most important factor in providing an education in which every child can flourish. They regularly work the 'extra mile' to make a difference to the lives of our students. Staff are supported by a leadership team that supports their workload and provides for systematic professional development described by Ofsted as being of, 'exceptional quality.'

Children have just one chance at school. At Bennett we are committed to ensuring that they get the best possible chance by having the best possible teachers and curriculum. Our next headteacher has the opportunity to take this team further forward by continuing the journey of providing a truly transformational education.



# Role description—Headteacher

**Reports to:** Chief Executive Officer

**Remuneration:** L32-36, School Teachers Pay and Conditions

## **Job purpose**

Inspired and informed by the foundation of Bennett as a Church of England school:

- To be responsible for leading a leadership and management team and working with the Tenax Schools Trust senior team to sustain and develop academic and character excellence for all.
- To secure and sustain evidence informed effective teaching and learning throughout the school
- Promote excellence in teaching, learning and pastoral care of pupils, ensuring a continuous and consistent focus on students' achievement and development, including moral, spiritual, physical, social and character development.
- To ensure that there is an absolute commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people within the school and our wider communities. Ensure appropriate policies and practices are in place and understood by all staff and volunteers
- To work in partnership with the CEO, Trust Senior Team, governors, staff and key stakeholders to ensure the continuous improvement of the school and the wider work of the Tenax Schools Trust.
- To provide high level strategic leadership and management across all aspects of the school's activities
- To motivate and empower the Leadership and Management Team, and all staff in their work
- To act as an advocate and ambassador for the school, including its Christian vision, modelling its approaches and policies, and contributing to the wider life of the Trust

In addition to the specific details set out in this job description, the postholder is required to fulfil all the requirements and duties set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document relating to the Professional Responsibilities of a Headteacher.

It is important that teachers and school leaders are fully aware that they uphold public trust in the profession, setting and maintaining high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school. At Bennett Memorial Diocesan School the inclusive Church of England ethos and vision provides the foundation and model for all relationships in which all are known, valued and loved.

## **Key duties and responsibilities**

### **Strategic leadership – values, culture and strategy**

- Create and maintain a safe and inclusive culture of raising aspirations, achievement and attainment across the school
- To work with leadership team colleagues, governors, the CEO and other stakeholders to define and implement the schools' vision and strategic direction so that it is understood and enacted by all stakeholders.
- Secure the commitment and enthusiasm of parents/carers and the wider community to the vision and direction of the school
- Develop and maintain positive relationships with students, staff, parents/carers and other stakeholders
- Enable the school's organisational design and operational systems to meet its current and future requirements and manage change effectively
- Lead by example, setting the highest expectations for your own performance and that of others



## **Quality of Education**

- Uphold and secure ambitious and high educational and behavioural standards for all students
- Promote further support for the most disadvantaged and those with additional educational needs and disabilities within a safe and secure environment
- Establish and sustain a broad, rich and ambitious curriculum entitlement for all students, supported by effective curricular leadership and delivered through high quality teaching, rooted in the best available evidence
- Ensure the school has high quality, expert teaching, based on an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and the cognitive science of how students learn
- Ensure effective, meaningful continuing professional development for all staff
- Use data pro-actively to improve practice and outcomes for all students
- Ensure that priority areas for improvement are identified and appropriately resourced
- Identify and tackle underperformance, ensuring effective support for rapid performance improvement is applied consistently

## **Finance, sustainability and compliance**

- Ensure, in conjunction with the School Business Manager and, where appropriate, with the Trust Chief Financial Officer, that sound financial management systems are in place
- Understand and apply the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook and Trust financial management scheme of delegation
- Prioritise and allocate financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds
- To ensure rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk
- Direct the school's activities to achieve the most efficient, effective and sustainable provision of education to the highest quality, prioritising and making the most effective use of the resources available
- Ensure the school complies with all statutory and legal requirements and understands all relevant Department of Education guidance and quality standards/benchmarks

## **People strategy**

- Lead and effectively manage the activities and performance of school staff
- Be attentive to managing own and others' workload to allow an appropriate work/life balance.
- Proactive in preventing additional, unnecessary workload
- Enable a people strategy that identifies talent, supports and develops all staff and sustains a culture of staff wellbeing and high staff professionalism
- Maintain an environment that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion, including ethical practices in the recruitment and retention of staff
- Ensure staff have access to high quality, evidence informed professional development based on the best available evidence from the UK and around the world, assured by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and which balances organisational and individual needs
- Ensure the effective induction of new staff to comply with statutory guidance, Trust procedures and the meeting of Health and Safety obligations

## **Accountability and Governance**

- Promote a culture of accountability that is recognised and accepted as an essential element of improvement at all levels
- Understand the role of relevant regulatory bodies and, with the support of the central Trust team, ensure the school is proactive in meeting their requirements
- Understand and welcome the role of effective school governance, upholding the obligation to give account and recognition that the Trust Board is ultimately accountable and responsible for the Trust's work
- Develop and maintain effective relationships with the Local Governing Body and Trust Board, recognising their key role in holding the school leadership to account
- Ensure the Local Governing Body and Trust Board receives quality information in the level of detail needed to make informed strategic decisions and fulfil their functions and legal obligations
- Hold all staff to account for their professional conduct, practice and development, challenging inappropriate behaviours. Working with school leadership and Trust colleagues where necessary to deal effectively with any staffing issues including those relating to attendance, capability and conduct.
- Ensure positive communications that promote the school and its work, and present the school effectively when dealing with the media in consultation with the Trust central team.

## **System leadership and civic responsibility**

- Be visible around the school and in the community, leading by example with integrity, creativity, clarity and resilience
- Protect and further enhance the school's distinctive Christian foundation, vision and ethos through:
  - Confidently articulating and upholding a theologically rooted inclusive Christian vision
  - Welcoming all through warm hospitality
  - Modelling a humility that respects the dignity of others
  - Leading and encouraging all to enrich the school through service to one another
- Create and maintain effective partnerships with parents, carers, Trust colleagues, trustees and governors
- In line with the Trust's and school's civic role, work with civic partners and stakeholders in the local area, to contribute to the wider 'common good'
- Exert external influence on behalf of the school by active engagement with sector organisations, local/regional networks and other partners
- Give public assurance of high standards of probity
- Demonstrate consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct, including always upholding and demonstrating The Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles)

This role description will be reviewed annually and may be subject to modification after consultation with the postholder. It is not intended to be a comprehensive statement but to set out the principal expectations of the Trust in relation to this role.

## **Key relationships**

### **Internal**

Board of Trustees  
Chief Executive Officer  
Chief Operating Officer  
Finance Director  
HR Director  
School staff

### **External**

Parents/care-givers  
Local Authority and its agencies (e.g. Children's Services)  
Diocese of Rochester  
Bodies responsible for quality assurance, such as auditors and Ofsted  
Other trusts, sector bodies and educational organisations locally and nationally

# Person Specification

This person specification is designed to enable potential applicants for this role to determine how fully they currently meet the requirements of the role. It will be used to shortlist applicants and as part of the selection process. As such applicants should show, with relevant examples where appropriate, how they meet the requirements detailed.

**Beyond the academic qualifications and safeguarding expectations it is not necessary to meet all points listed below in order to apply. We are very keen to hear from applicants who believe they meet a majority of the 'need to have' points.**

## Need to have:

### **Safeguarding:**

- Absolute commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people within the school and our wider communities
- Evidence of strategic level thinking and approaches to develop and implement policies and procedures to safeguarding children and young people

### **Ethos and values:**

- Commitment to the inclusive Church of England ethos of Bennett
- An understanding of, and the confidence to articulate, the centrality of a theologically rooted Christian vision as a key characteristic of an effective Church of England school.
- Demonstrate a clear approach to protecting and further enhancing the school's distinctive Christian foundation, vision and ethos

### **Professional qualifications, experience and CPD**

- Good honours degree
- Graduate with full Qualified Teacher Status and either NPQH or CEPQH
- Significant school leadership experience at deputy or headteacher level, ideally in a large school
- Knowledge of and commitment to rigorous evidence based pedagogy and professional practice based on the best available evidence from the UK and around the world, assured by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)
- An understanding of the 'golden thread' of high-quality evidence underpinning the support, training and development available to teachers through the entirety of their career through initial teacher training, Early Career Framework and the NPQ suite of qualifications.
- Good level of ICT competence for professional purposes
- Experience of accountability and working with governors and Trustees
- Experience of the principles of effective school financial management

### **Professional behaviours**

- Personal credibility and ability to motivate and inspire the confidence of staff, students, parents and other stakeholders
- The ability to demonstrate a range of outstanding, interpersonal and communication skills, both orally and in writing with students, parents, colleagues and other stakeholders.
- Capacity to manage complex and challenging interpersonal situations including conflict resolution
- Ability to establish and maintain productive professional relationships with colleagues and students
- Commitment to modelling and implementing the belief that a great teacher is one who is, 'willing to do what it takes to be demonstrably more effective next year than this.'



**Teaching and learning**

- Demonstrable commitment to a broad, ambitious and aspirational curriculum which provides the foundations for academic and character excellence
- Ability to assess education quality accurately and plan strategically for improvement
- A track record of outstanding classroom practice in any subject
- Substantial experience in successfully leading a significant team of professionals
- Demonstrable success in raising standards of achievement
- Experience in initiating and managing improvement in the quality of education (which may also include aspects of school pastoral leadership)
- Experience of successfully planning and leading professional development for colleagues

**Personal qualities:**

- Resilience and the capacity to work under pressure
- Capacity to inspire, motivate and challenge staff
- Be a reflective, strategic thinker demonstrating self-efficacy and an organized, professional response
- A willingness to work flexibly and supportively of colleagues
- A sense of humour and willingness to evaluate own work honestly and openly.

**Please tell us if:**

- You have experience of leading and managing a faith-based school or Trust
- You hold additional professional qualifications such as NASENCO, - or similar
- You hold additional qualifications at masters or doctorate level

## Vision statement:

Our foundation as a Church of England trust means we are a family of schools all with their own unique identities but in which all are known, valued and loved.

The inspiration of our trust name, Tenax, means that just as God never gives up on us we are called to be steadfast and persevere to help each child flourish. Informed by our knowledge that each of us is wonderfully made, known and loved by God however far we may be from Him we aim to build communities founded on hope and wisdom.

Our commitment to providing academic and character excellence aims to ensure that through our educational provision all in our schools are liberated to serve a thriving society which works for the common good. We aim to ensure that every child has a transformational education in which doors of opportunity and choice are consistently opened.

As we look to the example of Jesus, believe in God's love, and invite the sustaining presence of the Holy Spirit we can be equipped in this common endeavour. This Christian foundation helps us learn what we need to help make wise judgements. It can inspire us to show love through the warmth of our hospitality. It reminds us to conduct ourselves with a humility that respects the dignity of others.

## About our Trust:

Tenax Schools Trust is a Church of England multi-academy trust (MAT) that exists to provide outstanding education in both primary and secondary schools in Kent and East Sussex.

The name 'Tenax' is the Latin word for 'tenacious' or 'steadfast'. We are steadfast in our belief in the value of Church of England education, and the consequent commitment to high achievement and personal growth for all young people.

Our journey as a MAT began in 2016. Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, under the Headship of Ian Bauckham (who became our founding CEO), had long been rated Outstanding by Ofsted in all areas. Bennett's approach, rooted in mobilising good evidence of what works in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, and a strong emphasis on the professional development of teachers to equip them to be maximally effective in what they do, soon became the template for what we wanted to achieve at Tenax Schools Trust.

Our vision was to create a group of schools, initially Church of England schools but in due course a wider range of schools, who would work together under a unifying ethos and approach to support each other and improve education for children and young people. We opened a brand new two-form entry primary school in Tonbridge, Bishop Chavasse School, in 2018, and quickly a group of other primary schools across the area joined us. Although our very first schools, including Bennett, were Church schools in the Diocese of Rochester, we soon became formally linked also with the Diocese of Chichester and now have schools on both sides of the Kent – East Sussex boundary.

We aspire to be the centre of outstanding teacher training and development, providing rigorous, evidence based professional training for teachers at all stages on a local and regional scale. We deliver this through the Teach Kent & Sussex SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training), an "Outstanding" provision, who will be working in partnership with the Ambition Institute from September 2024 to deliver the high quality, evidence based initial teacher training for which it has become known. The Trust also includes the Kent Teaching School Hub, operated by Bennett, as the DfE's designated Teaching School Hub for East Kent and West Kent.

# About our Trust cont.

While our Church of England schools place particular emphasis on teaching children and young people about Christian values, beliefs and traditions, all of our schools subscribe to our underpinning educational, ethical and personal development principles. We value diversity and will preserve the distinctive local character of each school. We welcome pupils and families from all backgrounds and from all faiths and none.

Our educational philosophy derives from our founding values:

- We believe in the value and potential of every child and young person.
- We are committed to high standards of achievement and embrace a positive mindset that insists all students can make exceptional progress.
- We provide a rich curriculum designed to prepare pupils for future learning as they grow in knowledge and confidence.
- We invest in the expertise of our teachers by providing best in class professional development for all. We value our support staff and offer competitive employment packages for all. We aim to be an employer of choice.
- We focus on giving our pupils the richest personal development possible, so that they grow in character and acquire strong values to stand them in good stead in adult life.
- The Trust aims to maintain and further enhance its reputation for excellence in all aspects of its work.

Whilst leadership can be a lonely role in some organisations, this is not the case at Tenax where all school leaders are empowered and enable to deliver on their core roles. Our headteachers are supported to deliver this with access to experienced central services in functions such as governance, finance and HR, as well as having the benefit of direct access to the resources of the Teaching School Hub.

We aim to grow the Trust strategically and sustainably as a family of schools, attracting new schools that fit the tapestry of our Trust family. As we look to grow, we will continue to make the case locally and nationally for Church of England schools and fulfil our mission to incorporate non-denominational schools which share our values and approach to education.

As a Trust, we are now embarking on an exciting new phase of our journey following the recent appointment of Mark Cole as our new Chief Executive Officer who will join us from September 2024. Mark is a passionate advocate for pupils and students and unapologetically ambitious for the pupils, students, staff and communities that he serves. Mark has a fundamental belief that trusts are best placed to navigate a way through the challenges that the education sector faces, through the power of collaboration and shared resource and services. He will be joining the panel during the selection process, giving all shortlisted candidates the opportunity to meet with him.

# Appendix

## Guidance Notes for Applicants

Please submit your application by 12 noon on Tuesday 18th June 2024.

Completed applications should be emailed to Mrs Claire Isaacs, Trust Human Resources Director  
[Isaacs@tenaxschoolstrust.co.uk](mailto:Isaacs@tenaxschoolstrust.co.uk)

You are welcome to visit the school before you apply and have an informal discussion about the post with Richard Tyson, interim CEO of the Tenax Schools Trust. Tours will take place on 12th and 13th June. Please email Mrs Katherine Wagstaff, [wagstaff@bennett.kent.sch.uk](mailto:wagstaff@bennett.kent.sch.uk) to book a convenient time on 12th or 13th June.

Shortlisting will take place on 19<sup>th</sup> June with shortlisted candidates being contacted by 20<sup>th</sup> June. Our selection process will take place on **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> and Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024.**

### Accessibility

Any candidate identifying as having a disability, or diagnosed with a neurodivergent condition is encouraged to contact the Trust to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would enable them to participate fully and with equal access to the selection process. Please advise us as soon as possible if you require reasonable adjustments to enable you to participate in this recruitment process. This may include alternative arrangements at the application or interview stage. Please contact Claire Isaacs, Human Resources Director at [isaacs@tenaxschoolstrust.co.uk](mailto:isaacs@tenaxschoolstrust.co.uk) regarding such needs.

## Application Form

It is imperative that the application form is completed in full and where possible, electronically signed. As you will be submitting your application form electronically, you will also be asked to sign the form should you be invited to interview. Submission of an electronic application, whether signed or unsigned, will be considered to be a declaration that the form is complete and accurate.

We also ask that you complete our Equalities Monitoring form at <https://forms.office.com/e/BXDScZLry8>. Any details provided in that form are not shared with those involved in the shortlisting or selection process and the data is used strictly for statistical and monitoring purposes.

When submitting your application, it is important that you relate your skills, experience and abilities against the person specification, identifying examples of your expertise. The shortlisting panel cannot guess or make assumptions. Please make sure you complete the application form that was sent to you with the application pack as this will be the most up to date version.

Please do not attach a previously prepared CV as an alternative. It is important that we are able to compare candidates' experience by drawing on the same range of information. Statements in support of an application will often need to be longer than the space provided on the form and these should be attached to the application on a separate sheet. Your personal statement should be not more than two sides of A4.

## Letter of Application

In addition to the application form, we ask that you write a covering letter describing briefly the extent to which your experience has prepared you for the role of Headteacher at Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, what drives and motivates you as an individual, and in particular how this aligns to our vision and values.

## Referees

As part of our commitment to safer recruitment practices, we will take up references on shortlisted candidates. Please give your current or most recent employer as one of your referees; if you are working in a Headteacher or Local Authority Advisory post, please provide the name and address of your Director of Children's Services, together with a second referee who should be the Chair of Governors/Trustees of your current setting, if applicable.

We ask that you do not include photocopies of open testimonials. We will always write to your current or previous employer for a professional judgement of your suitability for the post. If you have been employed in your present post for less than three years, the Trust may wish to seek further supporting information from your previous employer(s).

## Qualifications

You will need to provide documentary evidence of your Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and other relevant qualifications (excluding GCSE, O and A levels) at your interview.

The Trust will ask to see the original certificate, and copies will be taken for your application. If you have achieved the National Professional Qualification for Head teachers (NPQH) or any other professional qualifications e.g. National Professional Qualification for Executive Leaders (NPQEL), you will be asked to provide the certificate for checking.

## Medical Information and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Prior to appointment, you will need to complete a health statement that will be assessed by Tenax Schools Trust's Occupational Health Team.

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All staff will be expected to hold or be willing to obtain an enhanced DBS disclosure issued with the Trust as the employer.

This disclosure will need to be approved by Tenax Schools Trust before we can fully confirm your appointment. Please note that having a criminal record does not automatically mean that an offer of appointment will be withdrawn.

## Key Dates:

School tours available on Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 June

Closing: Tuesday 18 June at noon

Shortlisting: Wednesday 19 June 2024

Interviews: Thursday 27 and Friday 28 June 2024

Start date: 1 January 2025

**Please submit your completed application form via email to:**

[Isaacs@tenaxschoolstrust.co.uk](mailto:Isaacs@tenaxschoolstrust.co.uk) or [recruitment@bennett.kent.sch.uk](mailto:recruitment@bennett.kent.sch.uk)

