



THE NORTON
KNATCHBULL
SCHOOL

Headteacher Candidate Pack



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Welcome from the Chair of Governors



Dear Candidate

Welcome to Norton The Knatchbull School.

Headteacher Opportunity

With the impending retirement of our Headteacher, Ben Greene, we are seeking a new leader who can continue to build upon the work of the last 7 years and lead the school as it approaches the 400th anniversary of its foundation.

About The Norton Knatchbull School

The Norton Knatchbull School is a high-achieving, boys' grammar school with co-educational Sixth Form. We are dedicated to fostering an environment of academic excellence, innovation, and inclusivity where every student is supported to thrive. Our culture inspires curiosity and resilience, equipping students with the skills and values required to succeed in an ever-changing world. Our community values achievement and embraces innovative education, personal growth, and well-being through the Knatchbull Baccalaureate (Knatch Bacc) —an approach whereby students' experiences are framed by four 'pillars' - academic, enrichment, community, and excellence.

The Role

We are looking for a visionary and progressive leader who will champion our ethos, enhance our achievements, and empower both students and staff to reach new heights in academic and personal development. A committed and engaged community, NKS is a place of opportunity and aspiration for everyone.

The successful candidate will demonstrate expertise in using innovative approaches to sustain and enhance high academic standards, while also valuing and developing the fabric of the school, including its estate, environment and sense of community. Working collaboratively with staff, students and all stakeholders, the Headteacher will play a key role in building strong partnerships and re-imagining spaces and resources as the needs of the school continue to evolve, ensuring its long-term success.

Our Recent Achievements

In recent years, we have achieved outstanding results in our GCSEs and continue to perform very well in A levels. Many of our students progress on to the most competitive universities and degree courses. As a governing board, we are very committed and take great pride in seeing our students develop into well-rounded, thoughtful, and enthusiastic individuals who are well-prepared to face the world beyond school.

Application Process

If you feel that this exciting opportunity is right for you, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact our recruitment partner, Ross Laird, at Academicis for further details and to arrange a visit to the school - rlaird@academicis.co.uk

The successful candidate will commence the post at the start of January 2027.

Best wishes,

Jane Burnett
Chair of Governors

Marianne Highwood
Designate Chair of Governors

About The Norton Knatchbull School



The Norton Knatchbull School (NKS) has a rich heritage dating back to the early 17th century. Founded in 1630 by Sir Norton Knatchbull, the school has evolved over centuries to become a forward-looking grammar school while retaining deep respect for tradition.

Located on Hythe Road in Ashford, Kent (TN24 0QJ), NKS is a selective academy for boys aged 11–18, with girls joining in the Sixth Form. As an academy converter and single-academy trust, the school adheres to high standards of governance and accountability.

The school educates a total of nearly 1400 students, with approximately 625 in Key Stage 3, 410 in Key Stage 4, and 325 in Key Stage 5, reflecting a strong and well-established Sixth Form.

The school is supported by a dedicated team of over 120 staff, including a Senior Leadership Team of around seven, a large body of teaching staff and subject leaders, and a wide range of support staff providing specialist, pastoral, technical and operational expertise.

Ethos, Values & Vision

At the heart of the school is the motto “Benefactorum Recordatio Jucundissima Est”, loosely translated as “the remembrance of benefactions is most delightful.” Also expressed in plain English, the tagline “Things done well make the best memories” underlines the school’s belief in excellence through effort and lasting impact.

NKS strives to combine traditional values with a vibrant, dynamic learning environment. Students are encouraged to be:

- Considerate, confident, and well-rounded individuals
- Creative, resilient, critical thinkers and communicators
- Leaders who act with integrity and responsibility
- Community-minded and globally aware

These goals are embedded in the school’s educational framework through the Knatchbull Baccalaureate (KnatchBacc) — a bespoke structure that organises students’ academic and enrichment journeys around four pillars: Academic, Enrichment, Community, and Excel. The KnatchBacc links directly to the school’s development strategy and is intended to allow each student to build a cohesive experience of learning, character, and opportunity.

Curriculum & Academic Achievement

The academic programme at NKS is rigorous and broad. All students are driven to engage deeply in their subjects, applying metacognitive strategies and subject interconnections.

Across all key stages, the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum encompassing languages, sciences, humanities, the arts and more, underpinned by the KnatchBacc philosophy and a strong focus on academic achievement.

The Sixth Form is a vital and vibrant part of school life, welcoming a small but growing number of girls and providing students with opportunities to specialise academically, take on leadership roles and act as positive role models within the wider school community. Sixth Form students are expected to uphold the highest standards of scholarship, maturity and leadership, making a significant contribution to the academic culture and life of the school.

Exam performance is strong. NKS consistently delivers above-average results.

The School’s 2025 exam outcomes indicated that NKS achieved the 6th best GCSE out-comes across Kent Boys Grammar Schools – including super selective schools. Overall A Level outcomes were in line with or better than national averages at A*-B and A*-C.

About The Norton Knatchbull School

Community, Enrichment & Student Support

Enrichment is not an afterthought at NKS — it's integral. Students benefit from a broad suite of co-curricular opportunities: sports, creative arts, clubs, leadership roles, volunteering, and more. The aim is to cultivate curiosity, adaptability, and a sense of service beyond the classroom.

Pastoral care is central to how NKS operates. The school places importance on ensuring that students feel supported, respected, and safe. As students transition into the Sixth Form, they are also expected to “act as role models” for younger students — guiding, mentoring, and contributing to the school's culture of aspiration.

Heritage, Growth & Facilities

Over its long history, NKS has grown and adapted. Its association with the Knatchbull legacy remains a defining feature of its identity. The physical campus has also seen careful development: in past decades, new buildings have been added, and older structures renovated to support modern teaching, science, arts, digital learning and sports.

Looking ahead, NKS is preparing for its 400th anniversary in 2030, a milestone that has spurred renewed reflection on its mission, identity, and ambitions.

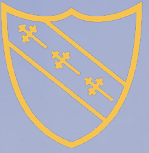
Our School Improvement Priorities

At Norton Knatchbull School, every student's learning journey is shaped by three interconnected priorities: **Aspiration, Culture and Creativity**.

Aspiration – Raising academic outcomes, particularly at the higher grades, so that all students are supported and challenged to achieve their full potential.

Culture – Ensuring every student feels a strong sense of belonging and identity, where “this is a school for people like me” is reflected in daily experience and practice.

Creativity – Placing creativity at the heart of the NKS experience, both through the curriculum and beyond it, ensuring students engage creatively across all subjects and opportunities.



Job Description

Job Title:	Headteacher
Salary:	Competitive and commensurate with experience of the successful candidate

The Headteacher is accountable to the Governing Body for the professional leadership, strategic direction and operational management of the School in order to ensure that the School's aims are implemented in accordance with the School improvement plan and the policies of the Governing Body. The Headteacher is required to monitor, evaluate and review the impact of policies, priorities and targets of the School and take timely action as necessary. The Governing Body of the School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young persons and the Headteacher must ensure that the highest priority is given to following the guidance and regulations which safeguard children and young people.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and management of student achievement, progress, diversity and safety

- Guarantee that student safety is at the centre of all of the School's functions.
- Ensure an aspirational culture and ethos of challenge and support where all students can achieve success and become engaged in their own learning and the learning of others.
- Provide a consistent and continuous School-wide focus on students' achievement, using data and benchmarks to monitor progress in every student's learning.
- Implement strategies which secure high standards of behaviour and attendance, student welfare, and citizenship.
- Ensure collaboration with other agencies in providing for the intellectual, moral, cultural, physical, social and emotional wellbeing of students



Job Description

Leading and managing staff

- Ensure that outstanding teaching is the primary objective for all teachers.
- Lead, motivate, support, challenge and develop staff to secure improvement.
- Ensure that all staff are engaged with the School's key priorities and the development of the School's aims and objectives, through effective communication across the whole School community, whether they be teaching or support staff.
- Maximise the contribution of staff to improve the quality of education provided and standards achieved.
- Implement and sustain rigorous procedures for monitoring the performance of all staff including objective setting and personal development plans.
- Acknowledge the responsibilities and celebrate the achievement of individuals and teams.

Leadership and management of curriculum

- Determine and ensure implementation of a diverse, flexible curriculum to ensure high quality and personalised learning experiences for students of all backgrounds and abilities.
- Develop and champion the impact of the School's specialisms on student opportunity and outcomes.
- Ensure that the curriculum is providing for the intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural, physical, social and emotional wellbeing of all students
- Protect a curriculum that enables students to progress to sustained employment, education or training on exit from the School.



Job Description



Managing resources

- Promote creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate existing and new technologies to achieve excellence.
- Agree and set appropriate priorities for expenditure with the Governing Body; allocate funds and monitor the effective administration and control of School budgets so that the School secures its objectives.
- Deploy and manage the School's financial and human resources efficiently and effectively to achieve the School's educational goals and priorities in line with the School's strategic plan and financial context.
- Ensure School buildings and facilities meet the needs of the students and staff and are of the highest standard of cleanliness and repair and compliant with health and safety regulations.
- Explore and develop additional sources of funding through innovative fund raising schemes.

Stakeholders and the local community

- Secure the commitment of all parents and carers, especially hard-to-reach parents, and the wider community to the vision and direction of the School.
- Act at all times as an ambassador for the School in a manner which upholds its values and ethos.
- Seek opportunities to communicate and enhance the value of the School to other sectors of the local community.
- Contribute to the development of the education system by sharing effective practice, working in partnership with other schools, especially feeder primary schools, and promoting innovative initiatives.
- Develop partnerships to build strong relationships with businesses, stakeholders and local communities to support the aims of the School.

Accountability and governance

- Formulate and deliver a strategic plan covering the curriculum premises, finance, partnerships and communications that produces an exceptional learning environment for all students.
- Work with the Governing Body to analyse and plan for the future needs and further development of the School within the local, national and international context.
- Translate the vision into a School Strategic Plan with agreed, prioritised, objectives and operational plans which will produce an exceptional learning environment for all students within an agreed timeframe.
- Encourage a School ethos which enables everyone to work together, share knowledge and understanding, celebrate success and accept responsibility for outcomes.
- Present a coherent and accurate account of the School's performance in a form appropriate to a range of audiences, including parents, the local authority, the local community, Ofsted and others, to enable them to contribute effectively.

Teaching

- Teach as necessary and appropriate relative to the other duties of the post.

Notes

The Headteacher may be asked by the Governing Body to undertake other duties reasonably regarded as falling within the duties and responsibilities of the post. This job description will be reviewed annually at the end of the academic year or earlier if necessary. In addition, it may be amended at any time after consultation with the potholders.

Person Specification

This Governing Body is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young persons and Headteacher must ensure that the highest priority is given to following the guidance and regulations to safeguard children and young people. An Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be required from the successful candidate

AREAS OF EXPERTISE	COMPETENCIES, KNOWLEDGE, QUALIFICATIONS
QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	A strong record of relevant professional development for Headship, demonstrating ongoing commitment to leadership growth (e.g. NPQH or equivalent)
	Relevant postgraduate qualification or evidence of advanced study that supports strategic school leadership
	Evidence that professional learning has been applied effectively to lead and deliver sustained school improvement, with demonstrable impact
EMPLOYMENT RECORD	Track record of leadership in secondary school
	Experience at either Deputy Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School level
	In depth knowledge and understanding of the wider educational agenda including current national policies and educational issues as well as the statutory and legal framework governing the operation of an academy
	Experience in a good or outstanding school, preferably in a school of > 1000 students
	Experience in headship in a good or outstanding School
	Successful track record of leadership of Sixth Form
	Experience of increasing the number of students on roll at a school which is below PAN, including leading and managing appropriate marketing initiatives aimed at primary schools
PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS	Stable and supportive to all stakeholders, resilience, energy, drive, confidence
	Capacity for personal development
	Ability to identify and grapple with priority issues and be adaptable and responsive to circumstances
	Consistency of judgement and inner integrity
STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP	Understanding of strategic mindset
	Creating/maintaining a School's character and desirability
	Development and execution of short and long-term strategic planning for a school including working on unique selling points, pride in the School and an Alumni programme
	Providing leadership to the SLT to enable them to perform their role strategically
	Working with the SLT to develop and implement the School's strategic plan
	Ability to interpret data and use it to inform decision making and strategic planning

Person Specification

AREAS OF EXPERTISE	COMPETENCIES, KNOWLEDGE, QUALIFICATIONS
LEADING AND MANAGING STAFF	High-level understanding and implementation of management structures and systems, with appropriate delegation, monitoring of accountability
	Able to inspire and maintain high morale, address problems and resolve conflict by applying skills of arbitration and reconciliation in the context of persistently pursuing accountability
	Positive and approachable with a commitment to equal opportunities, diversity, inclusion and high achievement
MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, PROGRESS, DIVERSITY AND SAFETY	Overall responsible for individual student needs; regards personal safety and achievement for each individual as the highest priorities
	Ability to inspire high levels of performance in students and a track record of robust achievements in GCSE and A Level;
	The ability to analyse the complex issues relating to students' attainment and progress and develop effective and creative strategies
	Successful track record in managing and higher appreciation of monitoring and evaluation techniques of student progress, translating into detailed plans with specific measurable targets
	Proven track record of fostering a culture of inclusivity and diversity
	Setting high standards and delivering educational excellence across both a mainstream and Sixth Form curriculum
	Successful experience of positive behaviour management and development of a student focused, inclusive and effective learning environment so that behaviour and attendance are outstanding
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM	Understanding and/or experience of developing technology (including the use of AI) for the best student outcomes
	Depth of knowledge of the curriculum and sound experience of curriculum delivery, monitoring and assessment
	The ability to analyse complex curriculum issues and develop effective and creative responses
	The ability to design, adapt and lead a curriculum that responds effectively to change, informed by current national education policy and an understanding of the evolving workplace and future skills, ensuring school priorities and development remain relevant, coherent and ambitious
MANAGING RESOURCES	Proven financial planning experience
	Strategic commercial acumen
	Ability to achieve value for money including working with a budget to increase School income
	Proven experience in budgeting and managing resources effectively at the academy level
	A vision for a 21st Century learning environment
	Experience in leadership and development of site

Person Specification

AREAS OF EXPERTISE	COMPETENCIES, KNOWLEDGE, QUALIFICATIONS
STAKEHOLDERS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY	Effective communication with staff, stakeholders and is keen to develop the School's role within the community
	Successful track record in developing partnerships that build strong collaborative relationships with businesses, stakeholders and local communities to support the school's aims
ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE	A strong track record of leading robust school development planning, underpinned by clear priorities, measurable outcomes and effective use of data to secure sustained improvement
	Proven ability to implement, monitor and evaluate improvement strategies, ensuring accountability at all levels and demonstrable impact on outcomes, culture and practice over time
	A clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, evidenced through curriculum design, leadership practice and employment processes, ensuring fairness, representation and opportunity for all
	Experience of working effectively with governance, providing clear, timely and transparent information, supporting strategic challenge, and ensuring statutory responsibilities and accountability requirements are met
TEACHING	Substantial and successful experience of teaching and leadership, evidenced by outstanding outcomes for pupils taught directly and sustained improvement and strong outcomes within areas of responsibility across more than one school





How to Apply

If you wish to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or would like to have an informal discussion, please contact Ross Laird at Academicis, our recruitment partner, on **rlaird@academicis.co.uk** or by phone on **07901 585959 / 01223 907979**

CLOSING DATE:

Friday 6th February 2026

SHORTLISTING:

Tuesday 10th February 2026

INTERVIEWS:

Tuesday 24th & Wednesday 25th February 2026



Hythe Road,
Ashford,
Kent,
TN24 0QJ