



PINEWOOD



Candidate Brief

INFORMATION FOR HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL
(SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM)
for September 2025

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Introduction

Pinewood School invites applications from outstanding candidates for the post of Head of Lower School (Years 3 & 4) from 1st September 2025. This is a key position within the School sitting as one of nine members of the Senior Leadership Team alongside the other Heads of Schools and other senior roles.

The School

Pinewood School is set in 84 acres of rolling countryside on the border between Wiltshire and Oxfordshire and is situated in the small village of Bourton, within easy reach of towns such as Shrivenham, Marlborough, Faringdon and Cirencester. It is approximately seven miles from Swindon with its direct road and train links to London, Oxford and Bristol.

Pinewood is widely recognised as an outstanding school and is thriving. Academic excellence, superb pastoral care and an inspiring and broad curriculum form a sound foundation for the education of our pupils and future registrations are strong.



Vision, Aims and Values

Manners, self-reliance and a regard for others are valued principles upon which the School's ethos is built. The School propounds the following vision, aims and values:

Vision: To be regarded as one of the leading independent co-educational, 3–13 day and boarding Preparatory Schools in the country.

Aims: To release the potential of Pinewood children by developing character, curiosity, learning and skills through a variety of opportunities that present themselves within the academic, sporting, musical, dramatic and artistic arenas, as well as through our boarding, activity and adventure programmes.

Values: The Pinewood co-educational philosophy; country location; flexible approach to boarding; size and high levels of pastoral care, as the result of an excellent teacher:pupil ratio; all combine to create an environment that allows Pinewood children to enjoy a happy, secure and fulfilled childhood that engenders courteous, kind, cultivated and considerate children who possess a degree of independence and a bedrock of traditional values.



History

Pinewood has a fascinating and eminent history. Founded by the Reverend F.F. Brackenbury in 1875 at Maiden Erlegh in Berkshire, it moved to Farnborough from 1883 to 1938. The School led a nomadic existence during the Second World War, moving four times before its arrival at its current home in Bourton with 75 pupils in May 1946. The School is a Charitable Trust and became a Limited Company in 1938. It is administered by a Board of Governors, known as the Council. Originally a boys' boarding school, Pinewood has admitted girls and day pupils since 1978. Additional facilities were added in this era, including the Music School and the Lower School, and our thriving Pre-Prep was opened for pupils aged 3+ to 7+ in 1993.

Campus and Facilities

Pinewood benefits from an excellent campus and superb facilities. A major new Teaching and Learning Centre was opened in 2020 and the kitchens, servery and boarding areas have also been extended and updated.

The School has a music building for both class and individual music teaching and art studios for use by the Prep School. There is also a theatre for school drama productions, music ensembles, weekly assemblies and lectures.

In addition to the Sports Hall, other sporting facilities include our extensive pitches for rugby, football, hockey, cricket and athletics, as well as tennis and netball courts, two all-weather pitches, cricket nets, mountain bike trail and an adventure play structure. A major refurbishment has just been completed on our swimming pool with the addition of a new enclosure to allow the pool to be used all year round.

Structure of the School – Staff

Pinewood currently has 136 employees, including both teaching and support staff. All employees are welcomed into the Common Room.

Under the current leadership structure, the Head is supported by a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of eight and a broader Senior Management Team (SMT) of 15, including the members of the SLT.

The SLT is currently comprised of the Bursar, the Deputy Head (who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead), the Head's Wife, the Head of Pre-Prep, the Head of Upper School, the Head of Middle School, the Head of Lower School and the Senior Master/Director of Sport.

The SMT is a wider group of senior managers who discuss policy and ensure its implementation at the operational level. Each team member has responsibility for different aspects of the School, and Heads of Departments are responsible for their own curriculum area.

Structure of the School – Pupils

Whilst we pride ourselves on being one community the School is divided into four schools for teaching and learning purposes each of which are overseen by a Head of School. These being Pre-Prep

(Nursery – Year 2), Lower School (Years 3 & 4), Middle School (Years 5 & 6) and Upper School (Years 7 & 8).

Pupils are prepared for top independent senior schools at general assessment and scholarship level. The School combines traditional and forward-thinking approaches to teaching, and encourages independent thinking in its pupils. Pupils at the School benefit from small class sizes. The normal class maximum in the Prep School is 18, and there are usually three forms per year. Setting is gradually introduced from the Spring Term of Year 3. Class sizes in Pre-Prep are normally between 12-16 pupils.

Our pupils achieve highly successful Common Entrance results and move on to a variety of senior schools including Marlborough, Cheltenham, St Edward's Oxford, Radley, Stowe, Bradfield, Eton, Sherborne, Dauntsey's, St Helen and St Katharine, Abingdon, St Mary's Calne, Dean Close, Downe House and Tudor Hall - to name a few. Pinewood also prides itself on its scholarship record and Year 8 pupils gain a significant number of academic, music, sports, art and drama or other awards. Following a review of the Common Entrance subjects studied and a discussion with all destination senior schools, Pinewood introduced a new Humanities course for candidates sitting Common Entrance in 2018. This is not examinable and has proved a successful and stimulating change for staff and pupils. Other academic highlights include running our annual Maths Challenge for local schools and our Science Outreach morning.





Sport, Music and Drama

In both the Prep and Pre-Prep, learning outside the classroom, together with music, drama, art and sport, is considered vital to a child's development at Pinewood. The School is proud of its magnificent grounds and facilities, allowing us to offer pupils a full and diverse range of sports and activities.

Every child in the Prep School has the opportunity to represent the School in matches on a regular basis and pupils within the Pre-Prep enjoy a wide variety of sporting activities.

Pinewood SKILLS Programme

In addition to academic and extra-curricular performance, senior schools are placing an increased emphasis on the holistic development of each individual. The breadth of opportunities on offer through SKILLS plays an important role in developing Pinewood children beyond the classroom to gain new attributes and experiences, which could be transferable later in life.

SKILLS is driven by some key principles, with three words at the heart of the curriculum, which encapsulate the relationship we want the children to have with the programme:

- **Explore** new interests from a range of cross-curricular activities and pursuits.
- **Experience** new skills within a supportive and encouraging environment.
- **Excel** as an individual by embracing the opportunities that life has to offer.

With the different activities categorised within six different skill strands, there is variety and breadth in the offering and learning opportunities available:

- **Service and Society** – Supporting the community and the environment, making a difference to the lives of others.
- **Knowledge and Curiosity** – Stimulate and challenge the mind by exploring new material with an intellectual focus.
- **Imagination and Creativity** – Let the imagination take over and get the creative juices flowing, through various expressive mediums.
- **Leisure and Activity** – Discover what the body can do by experiencing new active and sporting disciplines.
- **Life Skills and Acquisition** – Develop skills to enhance one's enjoyment and impact in life.
- **Surroundings and Adventure** – Explore beyond one's comfort zone, embracing the outdoors and our idyllic surroundings.

The **Pinewood SKILLS programme** offers every child an exciting opportunity to challenge themselves and learn exciting and varied new skills. Skills currently on offer include gymnastics, karate, British Sign Language, cooking, digital art, visiting within the community, engineering, stargazing, code breaking and many more!





Boarding

Pinewood continues to pride itself on the boarding experience which it offers. Pupils can board between Years 5 and 8 on a flexible arrangement, either on a weekly basis (Monday to Friday/Saturday) or on a regular boarding pattern based on a set number of nights a week. No pupils stay over the weekend. Boarding numbers vary but there can be up to 90 children boarding on busy nights. We provide a full evening activity programme and the pupils are cared for by a dedicated boarding team including a Head of Boarding, Matrons, Nursing staff and Gap helpers. In addition to this, numerous members of the teaching staff assist on a rota basis.

At weekends, the Prep School is in session every other Saturday morning when sports take place.



Finance and Development Plans

The School continues to have strong pupil numbers and is in a good financial position. The Core Proposition of the most recent Strategic Review sets a target to maintain an outstanding experience for pupils, staff and parents and develop the holistic offering and success criteria of the School, ensuring it is a parents' first choice for their children's schooling until the end of Year 8. There is a Whole School Development Plan to show how the strategy will be implemented.



The Head of Lower School's Role

The main responsibility of the Head of Lower School is to ensure the smooth day-to-day running and organisation of Years 3 and 4, supporting and upholding the School discipline, disseminating and explaining information to the staff and dealing with any issues or concerns.

The Head of Lower School's Duties and Responsibilities

Main Tasks will include but are not limited to:

Management & Professional Standards

- To be a member of both the Senior Leadership Team and School Management Team.
- To support the aims and ethos of the School.
- To be a conduit between the staff within Lower School and the Head and Deputy Head treating all members of the school body with respect and consideration.
- To be an ambassador for Pinewood, both within and outside the School, promoting the School to current and future stakeholders.
- To lead in ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of Lower School.
- To set the highest example to pupils and other staff in all regards.
- To take responsibility for disseminating and explaining information to the Lower School staff.
- To maintain an overview of the pastoral needs of Lower School pupils and staff, working closely with the Headmaster's Wife and Head of Emotional Well-Being.
- To liaise and work with the Director of Educational Development regarding academic matters within Lower School.
- In conjunction with the Director of Educational Development, to act as a curriculum lead for Years 3 and 4, promoting necessary development and change.
- To be available to parents and staff as required.
- To lead on upholding School discipline within Lower School and implementing the School Discipline Policy working with the Deputy Head.
- To build strong working relationships with senior leaders from other local schools.
- To be part of a team supporting the Head in any whole school review.
- To support staff in preparation for Inspections (ISI).

- Being an ambassador for Pinewood, both within and outside of School.

Regular responsibilities

- To attend all relevant meetings to include Senior Leadership Team meetings, Senior Management Team meetings, Governor Meetings, as and when requested, and Staff meetings.
- To organise and run regular Lower School meetings bringing items forwards to SMT and SLT when required.
- To help organise and run Year 3 and 4 academic meetings.
- To organise and chair pastoral meetings for Years 3 and 4.
- To oversee the report writing, review and sign off for Lower School.
- To oversee the running of trips and activities for Lower School.
- To complete normal supervisory duties as required.
- To run Lower School assemblies.
- To liaise regularly with the other Heads of School to build strong productive working relationships.
- To quickly and efficiently deal with minor problems and unexpected eventualities as they arise.

Teaching, Assessment and Reporting

- Uphold the School's high standards of preparation, teaching and discipline.
- Support the work of the School to ensure the highest possible levels of achievement.
- Plan lessons in accordance with the School's schemes of work.
- Contribute to the development, evaluation and monitoring of the policies, syllabuses and schemes of work of the School.
- Liaise with relevant colleagues on the planning of work for collaborative delivery.

- Set and mark examinations and other forms of assessment.
- Use ICT effectively within the curriculum.
- Establish high and appropriate expectations for learning, motivation and presentation of work.
- To teach an appropriate number of lessons.
- To offer Games and SKILLS sessions where appropriate.
- To be available and actively involved on “in-school” Saturdays. (We operate a two-weekly timetable, in that every other weekend is an exeat.)
- Set and mark homework.
- Provide constructive oral and written feedback, with clear goals for future learning.
- Reporting on pupil progress in line with School policy.
- Regularly keep parents informed of pupils’ progress at parents’ evenings, and at other times whenever necessary.
- Treat all pupils fairly, consistently and without prejudice.

Pastoral Care

- Be fully conversant with, and applying, the School's Child Protection Policy and all related issues.
- Promote good attendance and monitor it in accordance with School policy.
- Promote the general progress and well-being of pupils in your care.
- Support each pupil to achieve their potential.

Providing Support for the School (outside of normal hours)

- To be available to meet with parents outside of normal working hours as required.
- To attend all relevant Parent meetings and social evenings.
- To attend any relevant Governor meetings and events.
- To attend networking events to build relations with other schools and associations.
- To attend School social and charity events outside of normal working hours such as the Christmas Fair and Friends of Pinewood events.



Candidate Profile

The Head of Lower School will have the personal qualities and charisma to motivate and inspire students and to build excellent relations with the staff and all stakeholders within the School community.

In addition, the successful candidate will:

- Be able to inspire, motivate and challenge both pupils and adults.
- Have a passionate commitment to the academic, personal and social development of the pupils, understand the needs and concerns of their age group (and of those who board) and have a natural empathy with them.
- Have self-confidence and inspire confidence in others. He/she will be considerate of the needs of others, with an ability to deal calmly and sensitively with conflict.
- Display energy, vision and imagination, with the courage to innovate and an unwavering commitment to the continuing development of the School.
- Be a role model for all sections of the school community.
- Have an open, participative and collegiate style with an inclusive and empowering approach to management and the ability to build trust and team spirit.
- Relate to, value, nurture and communicate effectively with all members of the School community including staff, pupils, parents, Members of Council, former pupils, other independent and maintained schools, and the local community.
- Develop and maintain strong and positive relationships with the Headmaster, members of the SLT/SMT and other colleagues (including both teaching and support staff).
- Demonstrate personal strength of character through transparency, integrity and fairness.
- Be at ease with and actively promote and support the School's traditional ethos.
- Have a genuine interest in striving for excellence in every area of the School.
- Display suitable self-awareness and an appropriate sense of humour.
- Have a wish to fully involve themselves in all areas of the School.

Skills, Knowledge and Experience

Applicants for the post will be expected to show that they:

- Have a good University honours degree and teaching qualification, and can show evidence of continuing professional development over the course of their career.
- Have relevant experience of the independent sector of education.
- Have relevant educational management experience, for example as a successful Head of School or Department Head or in another relevant management role.
- Are a well-qualified, experienced and successful teacher, with a love of teaching and an awareness of developments in the wider educational environment.
- Are empathetic to the boarding ethos at Pinewood.
- Can demonstrate proven administrative skills and confident use of IT for communication, management and education without developing an over-reliance on it.
- Have up to date knowledge of compliance with all statutory and inspection requirements.
- Are able to prioritise and remain calm under pressure, being flexible, resilient and organised.
- Committed to personal ongoing professional development.



Terms and Conditions of Employment

Salary will be competitive, and based on qualifications and experience. It will reflect the importance which the School places on good leadership and be subject to annual review.

The post is pensionable under the School's chosen Teachers' Pension Scheme currently managed by Royal London.

Full details of the terms and benefits of the post will be discussed with the successful candidate at the time of the initial offer. This offer will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory written references, DBS and other regulatory clearances and to completion of a Medical Questionnaire.

Application and Interview Process

Candidates are requested to complete the following electronically:

1. The Application Form (located on the school website vacancies page).
2. A letter of application of not more than 500 words stating why you are interested in the post and how you feel your experience, skills and personal qualities qualify you for the role. Please address the letter to Mr Neal Bailey, Headmaster.

On the Application Form, candidates are required to provide the names and contact details of two referees, the first of whom should be their current Head or equivalent. We may contact your referees at any stage of the process, but please inform us if you would prefer us not to contact them before the interview. Written references will normally be requested shortly after the selection of candidates for interview.

Please save your completed Application Form and covering letter as PDF documents, and do not attach or enclose a Curriculum Vitae (CV). Once completed, your Application Form and letter should be sent to the Director of HR, Mrs Jo Ranstead at:

joranstead@pinewoodschool.co.uk

The final deadline for acceptance of applications is 9am Monday 6th January 2025.

Please note the School will be closed for the Christmas Holidays from 12pm on 13th December and will re-open on Monday 6th January. All applications submitted by email during this time will receive an automatic email response which will then be followed up with an individual email response on 6th January. Please also note that unfortunately the School is unable to provide staff accommodation for this role.

All applications received will be handled by the School in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Candidates selected for interview will be informed by **Thursday 9th January 2025** or as soon as practicable thereafter. First round interviews will be held at the School on **Monday 13th January 2025**.

To comply with current legislation and Safer Recruitment guidelines, all prospective candidates will be asked to supply evidence at their interview of their qualifications and eligibility to live and work in the UK. We will ask to see and to photocopy an appropriate official document, such as your passport or Birth Certificate, and original certificates of your academic and teaching qualifications (A levels or equivalent onwards). All documents supplied must be originals only. Further information will be sent to you if you are selected for interview – please do not send these documents at this stage.

Pinewood School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All applicants must share this commitment and be willing to undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Pinewood School is an equal opportunities employer.



PINEWOOD

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