

The GDST Teacher

Based on values, being valued, adding value



In joining the staff of a GDST school, you are not just joining a highly successful and excellent school, you are joining a powerful network of schools and academies that is united not simply in organisational terms, but drawn together by shared aims and objectives.



Schools

- 1 Blackheath High School
- 2 Brighton & Hove High School
- 3 Bromley High School
- 4 Croydon High School
- 5 Howell's School, Llandaff, Cardiff
- 6 Ipswich High School
- 7 Kensington Prep School
- 8 Newcastle High School for Girls
- 9 Northampton High School
- 10 Northwood College for Girls
- 11 Norwich High School for Girls
- 12 Nottingham Girls' High School
- 13 Notting Hill & Ealing High School
- 14 Oxford High School
- 15 Portsmouth High School
- 16 Putney High School
- 17 The Royal High School, Bath
- 18 Sheffield High School
- 19 Shrewsbury High School
- 20 South Hampstead High School
- 21 Streatham & Clapham High School
- 22 Sutton High School
- 23 Sydenham High School
- 24 Wimbledon High School

Academies

- 25 The Belvedere Academy, Liverpool
- 26 Birkenhead High School Academy



Schools in London



Welcome to the Girls' Day School Trust

“ I would like to welcome you to the Girls' Day School Trust. As an organisation, our principal aim is to educate girls 3-18 brilliantly, providing the best possible all-round educational experience to prepare them to succeed in life. ”

First-rate teaching lies at the heart of this, and self-evidently requires excellent teachers. Accordingly, we seek to provide you with a stimulating environment within which to perform at your best, and a professional development framework within which to fulfil your ambitions. Opportunities abound to connect with colleagues from the community of teachers across the Trust. Do jump in and seize these chances! ”

Helen Fraser
Chief Executive

About us

Founded in 1872, the GDST (Girls' Day School Trust) has a long history of pioneering innovation in the education of girls, and of achieving our charitable purposes by delivering outstanding teaching and learning. We are the largest single educator of girls in the UK (and one of the largest educational charities). The GDST is the UK's leading network of independent girls' schools, with nearly 4,000 staff and 20,000 students between the ages of 3 and 18. As a charity that owns and runs a network of 24 schools and two academies in England and Wales, we reinvest any surplus in our schools.

Our radical tradition is maintained in our continued promotion of and insistence on the 'no limits' education of girls – reflected in the numbers opting for science and maths subjects at school and beyond; in the GDST's championing of risk-taking and intellectual curiosity; and in the provision we make for bursaries in our fee-charging schools.

Organisational structure

The GDST as a charity owns and operates the 24 **independent schools** and employs the staff at these schools and at Trust Office. It also sponsors the two **academies**.

The **Council** of the Trust is legally responsible for the GDST's activities, including financial viability and control, and the safety and welfare of our pupils. Council also sets the budgets and fees for the schools, authorises building and other capital development programmes and oversees matters of educational policy. The **GDST Academies Trust**, a subsidiary of Council, is the governing body of the academies in the group.

The **Chief Executive** and **Senior Management Team** work together as the executive to support Council and manage the activities of the Trust.

Each GDST school has a local **School Governing Board** (SGB), whose members provide support and inspiration to the head, as well as being vital links between the schools and their local communities. The SGB provides insight into local opinions and members act as ambassadors for the school in the local community.

GDST schools and the network

Schools in the GDST gain strength from being part of a community of like-minded institutions, eager to promote similar values and share best practice. A culture of collaboration in the pursuit of excellence predominates.

Schools benefit from the central services of Trust Office in three main ways:

1 Scale

At the most basic level, gains can be made by the group of schools acting together in bulk purchasing of services and products – for example in the provision of the Wide Area Network (WAN) which serves as the basis of the networks IT infrastructure. Indeed, the IT infrastructure is organised and serviced centrally.

2 Expertise

Individual schools benefit from access to advice and guidance at the centre – including legal, health and safety, safeguarding, marketing and communications, fundraising, finance, HR, sustainability, buildings maintenance and school design. In key areas such as health and safety, safeguarding and employment, policy is set from the centre, with schools adopting template policies and procedures.

GDST teachers can also benefit from access to specialist teachers, known as Trust Consultant Teachers or School Consultant Teachers, and the shared expertise of all GDST teachers through collaboration platforms.

3 Innovation

In the development of its curriculum, the choice of qualifications and approaches to teaching and learning, each school is autonomous, with the head setting the school's educational policy. However, schools benefit from access to the central services of the Trust's Innovation and Learning team, which exists to support them in developing and delivering an outstanding education for all their pupils; and to position the GDST as a leader in girls' education, in terms of innovation and quality.

It does this through a programme of professional development and research; dissemination of ideas, innovation and best practice; support for curriculum reviews; and events for pupils.



The aims and objectives of the GDST

The GDST exists today to

- Educate girls aged 3-18 brilliantly, providing them with the best possible all-round educational experience that will prepare them to succeed in life
- Provide our staff with a stimulating environment within which to fulfil their ambitions
- Fulfil our overall charitable purpose by extending our educational expertise beyond our schools

Our strategy has four principal dimensions...

- **Leading in girls' education:** making sure every one of our schools and academies offers the best education at every age and every stage
- **Sustaining a high performance culture:** creating experts and leaders among our staff, enabling and empowering them to be the best and work together
- **Embedding social responsibility:** extending our activities beyond the school, and being recognised as a good neighbour in the communities we serve
- **Driving innovation:** encouraging creativity and original thinking among our staff and students

...and is informed by a core set of values that were arrived at and agreed after extensive consultation with colleagues and pupils across the network

- **Girls first:** put the girls' interests, happiness and wellbeing first at all times. Encourage each girl to be the best she can be, to reach her full potential
- **Networked:** work together productively within our schools, our communities and within the GDST as a whole. Share inspiration among ourselves and with others
- **Bold:** take risks, push hard and overcome setbacks. Do things in a new way. Have a go. Have fun
- **Principled:** always do the right thing. Be open, honest and accountable

Our key aim is excellence in the education of the pupils in our schools. In designing and developing the educational offer (which includes approaches to teaching and learning, curriculum, and the design of learning environments), we work backwards from the desired end: girls who are confident, courageous, composed and committed.

The GDST learner profile

This amounts to a description of what we want our girls to be and to be able to do by the time they leave school and enter the worlds of higher education and work:

Confident

GDST girls are secure in their knowledge, and unwilling to take things for granted. Motivated by a spirit of enquiry, they seek to explore and evaluate ideas and arguments in a generous, critical and constructive way. They are able to reflect on, communicate and defend their own views, and are respectful of the views of others. They are equipped to grapple with big ideas and make connections.

Courageous

GDST girls welcome new challenges, and meet them with resourcefulness and resilience. They are enterprising and adventurous, willing to take the initiative, and not afraid to aim at tough targets. They can apply their knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts, are creative and can adapt to situations requiring new ways of thinking. They have experience of and aptitude for leadership.

Composed

GDST girls are intrinsically motivated, are self-directing, and take responsibility for their own learning. They value fairness and act with integrity, are aware of themselves and their impact, and are aware of and respectful towards others. They are sensitive to and appreciative of culture, context and community. They are collaborative and supportive in team situations.

Committed

GDST girls put value on connectivity – in creating and sharing knowledge. They are receptive to new ideas and are keen to learn new things and new skills. They seek to participate critically, considerately and constructively in their community, society and environment. They tend to be engaged in life-enriching interests and activities, and are determined to see things through.

Teaching in a GDST school

Teachers in GDST schools aim to get their pupils the best possible exam results, but they also commit themselves to developing pupils who can succeed in the long term because of their attitudes and dispositions, as well as their knowledge. In this sense, GDST teachers understand that *how* things are taught is at least as important as *what* is taught. Our teachers are also aware that learning takes place in many settings, including creative, cultural and sporting ones, and they welcome opportunities to participate fully in the co-curricular life of the school.

Every GDST school engages with its neighbouring schools and wider community through a range of collaborations, activities, events and partnerships, and GDST teachers are fully involved in initiatives to share best practice and extend our educational expertise.

Research conducted in some of our schools, in association with the University of Cambridge, identified what our pupils think about what makes a great teacher: they put the highest value on subject knowledge, to be sure, but they describe the most effective teachers as those who combine this with being approachable and accessible; engendering respect and maintaining control; being empathetic, helpful and supportive; setting out to 'really explain'; setting clear targets; conducting lessons that are lively and engaging; and readily taking and encouraging intellectual risks.

GDST Teacher Standards

We have developed a set of standards as descriptors of effective teachers, to help us to promote in teachers the attitudes and dispositions that we expect in our pupils; to provide a framework for self-evaluation; to contribute a common language for use in the appraisal process; to encourage continuous professional development; and to inform the central training programme:



Confident

GDST teachers know their subject and how to teach it: fostering a love of learning, involving all pupils actively in their own learning; encouraging them to take ownership; and setting them all clear, challenging goals.

Effective

GDST teachers show commitment and care for the progress of every pupil: assuring individual progress and attainment through astute use of a variety of inspiring, engaging and differentiated teaching and learning strategies.

Caring

GDST teachers are committed to the safety, welfare and happiness of their pupils: creating a calm, supportive, secure, respectful, affirming but nevertheless challenging learning environment; reinforcing by demonstration the values that are expected of pupils.

Reflective

GDST teachers know their pupils and how they learn: they are committed to building on and developing their own knowledge and skills, constantly seeking to improve their own practice; they are prepared to take intellectual risks in stretching and challenging students.

Creative

GDST teachers are resourceful and creative and open to new challenges: trying new ideas and pursuing a collaborative, evidence-based and enquiry-driven approach to teaching; incorporating up-to-date subject developments, pedagogical thinking and new technologies.

Engaged

GDST teachers are passionate about learning within and beyond the classroom: being involved in and contributing to the wider life of the school; developing constructive relationships with colleagues; exemplifying and communicating the school's values within and beyond the school.

The appraisal process

The GDST Teacher Standards are used explicitly within the appraisal and development process, known as PDP (performance and development planning), which is operated across GDST schools. Individual teachers, in discussion with their line managers, are able to use the standards to identify areas of strength and areas for development: setting themselves appropriate targets, and identifying opportunities for professional development that will help in meeting these goals.

Cross-Trust opportunities for teachers

Teacher professional development

In addition to each school's own programme, the GDST provides opportunities for targeted professional development.

The **Central Training and Staff Development Programme (CTSD)** is calibrated to the Trust's strategic priorities, and informed by schools' own requirements. Many of the central sessions are led by or involve expert input from GDST teachers across the network. Examples include the use of data in ensuring pupil progress, personalised learning, classroom observation, teaching towards linear exams, ensuring effective transition from KS2 to KS3. The central theme for 2016/17 is evidence-based practice, application and research. Regular seminars bring together communities of practice on, for example, SEN, as well as subject specialisms.

The GDST also offers financial support for **external qualifications**. As a learning organisation, we actively encourage teachers to undertake programmes leading to additional qualifications. The Trust contributes to the costs of programmes including master's degrees and post-graduate qualifications.

Participation in GDST pupil events

Teachers in Trust schools offer support for the increasing number of events that we organise for pupils from across the GDST. These offer teachers an opportunity to operate beyond the individual school.

'Flagship' events include the Young Leaders' Conference; Digital Leaders' Conference; the annual Oxbridge conference; the GDST Student Council; Young Musician of the Year; Junior Mathematicians day; GDST art exhibitions, Junior School Choir of the Year, and more.

Cross-Trust teacher collaboration

There are many opportunities for teachers in the GDST to join and participate in communities of practice, collaborating with colleagues from other schools, and getting involved in cross-school initiatives.

These include regular subject meetings; role-based gatherings such as the Heads of Sixth Conference; and opportunities for involvement in research projects.

All GDST staff also have access to an **online collaboration site**, which is a hugely valuable tool for personal and professional development. As well as providing opportunities for teachers to discuss broad aspects of pedagogy, areas of the site dedicated to curriculum subjects allow specialists across the GDST to discuss and share ideas and resources and develop cross-school links. By creating opportunities to work collaboratively across schools that are geographically dispersed, we can optimise the power of being a group of high-performing schools.



Opportunities for career progression

Examples of recent collaborations

The GDST Cambridge research project

In partnership with the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, we carried out research to identify the ways schools optimise the effectiveness of single-sex settings to promote learning and academic achievement.

Feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive. Typical responses were 'The school produces well-rounded people with diverse and healthy interests'; 'It's a place of learning and enjoyment'; 'In this school it is cool to be bright', and 'The school succeeds in stretching her without stressing her'.

The girls appreciated the educational benefits of a single-sex environment in educational terms (classroom dynamics; relationships of trust with teachers; supportive environment; focus on learning; and 'can-do' approach), and were very astute in describing what in their view makes for an excellent lesson.

Teachers tended not to think in terms of adapting their pedagogy to any particular *learning style* – taking the view that excellent teaching is excellent teaching. But lesson observations confirmed that teachers were, in practice, very sensitive to girls' *learning needs*. Typically, choices of curriculum content reflected this, as did the more clearly articulated structure of lessons, and dynamics that were strongly supportive of girls trying things out and taking risks. Teachers were clear that teaching able, conscientious girls presented a substantial and rewarding challenge.

Maths in Junior Schools project

This began in 2011 and continues to support maths teaching across the network.

The project aims to instil pupils and teachers with mathematical confidence, allowing them to enjoy their learning and applying of maths and to embrace all aspects of the subject; and to bring maths more into line with the experience of teaching and learning in other areas of the Junior School creative curriculum. Ultimately, of course, the aim was to enhance pupil attainment in maths, but it was recognised that the way to do this was to focus on developing teacher confidence, and to re-stock their supply of exciting and engaging classroom strategies.

Through regular meetings of school maths coordinators and visits to schools by the project's leader, a community of practice has been established amongst teachers in GDST junior schools. The Junior Maths conference showcases and celebrates the creative approaches GDST pupils use with maths.

GDST Digital Leaders Conference

Over 200 students, aged 10–18, gather from schools across the Trust for a day of inspiration and challenge. The aim of the conference is to encourage students to pursue studies, and eventually careers, in the field of digital technology. The winning team from the day win money and support to pilot their digital product ideas.

Recognising and rewarding excellence in classroom teaching

Many teachers aspire to excellence in teaching without wanting to move into school management roles. The GDST aims to provide a platform for such practitioners, for example in designating **subject champions** to coordinate the online subject collaboration areas; and inviting colleagues to help design and deliver professional development sessions across the Trust.

In its review of teachers' pay and progression, the GDST seeks to recognise and reward truly outstanding teaching, and to identify a cadre of 'consultant teachers' who operate across the Trust, sharing their expertise.

School Consultant Teachers are defined as those who use their knowledge, skills and dispositions to improve the practice of their colleagues and enhance learning across their school. Centrally provided training and collaborative digital learning platforms support this career pathway.

Trust Consultant Teachers have expert skills in their specialism, such as SEND or digital learning, which they use to improve provision for pupils across GDST schools. They do this through offering support and development to all GDST teachers. They fulfil this role one day a week while remaining in the classroom for the remaining time.

Stepping into leadership roles

Middle Leaders Development Programme

The MLDP is being delivered in both Junior and Senior GDST schools, to middle leaders (e.g. department or Year heads) who are hoping to progress their leadership career. The course aims to empower middle leaders to make a positive impact on the performance of their department and their school, and to raise the attainment of students, specifically by helping them:

- Understand the role and responsibilities of the middle leader and how these link to supporting the SLT and the success of the school;
- Develop a vision and strategy for the department that raises its profile and fits with the vision and strategy of both the school and the GDST;
- Become a more effective leader by understanding what leadership is and how it relates to the middle leader role; developing key leadership skills, and reflecting on development and the impact on the department and school;
- Learn how to lead people and develop a high performing team to contribute to the success of the department and the overall success of the school and the GDST;
- Lead teaching and learning within the department or area of expertise, to improve standards, promote the sharing of best practice and enhance the overall attainment of students.

Aspiring Leaders Programme

The aim of the ALP programme is to encourage aspiring leaders and develop their leadership capacity, increasing the pool of potential heads and senior leaders across the Trust. It is a one-year development programme focusing on senior management and leadership skills contextualised within the GDST. The principal qualities for those nominated to participate in the course are high performance, potential, commitment and aspiration. The course consists of face-to-face workshops, mentoring, coaching and whole-school focused projects to be undertaken by participants.



Finding out more

The Innovation & Learning team at Trust Office exists to support GDST schools in developing and delivering an outstanding education for all their pupils, and to position the Girls' Day School Trust as a leader in girls' education, in terms of innovation and quality.

You can find out more about the Innovation & Learning team on our GDST pedagogy website at www.innovateandlearn.co.uk where you can also read articles, reviews, research and more.

If you have any questions, would like to talk to us about an idea, or want to tell us about an innovation in your school, you can contact us by using the details below.

More information about GDST support, policies and processes, as well as spaces where you can collaborate with colleagues across the GDST network, can be found on the GDST Hub.

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