



SKYLARK FEDERATION

Barcombe CE Primary School
Hamsey Primary School
Iford & Kingston CE Primary School
Plumpton Primary School

EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER RECRUITMENT PACK

Creative – Collaborative – Curious



An exciting opportunity to lead a forward-looking Federation of four lively, rural schools as Executive Headteacher

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in leading our Federation as Executive Headteacher.

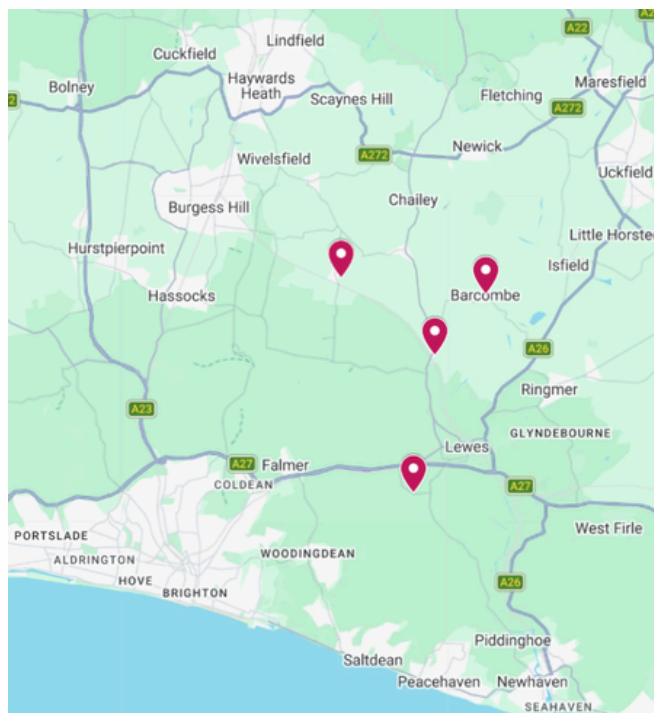
This is an exceptional executive leadership opportunity for an ambitious, forward-thinking leader. We are an established Federation of four distinct rural primary schools nestled in the East Sussex countryside: Barcombe, Hamsey, Plumpton and Iford & Kingston.

Together, we share an unyielding commitment to educational excellence, personal development, and nurturing the unique potential of every child in our care.

Our Federation at a Glance

Our four schools offer a rich, diverse educational ecosystem. By combining both Church of England schools and community state schools, our Federation reflects the varied communities we serve while maintaining a shared culture of inclusivity, character development, and academic drive.

Geographically, our schools form a compact, highly workable network across East Sussex, which are within a twenty minute drive of each other.



Shared Strength, Unique Identities

We firmly believe that small, rural schools offer an unmatched learning environment, close-knit, responsive and deeply rooted in local village life. While each of our four settings maintains its own distinct identity, ethos, and community character, coming together as a Federation gives us the strength, scale and financial resilience of a much larger institution.

Operationally, our Federation is built on strong, established foundations:

Centralised Business Infrastructure: Finance, HR, and site operations are managed centrally by our Federation Business Manager and team, removing administrative burdens from educational leaders.

Empowered Site Leadership: Each school site is led by a dedicated Head of School, fostering strong day-to-day operational leadership and staff support.

Outward-Facing Collaboration: We actively collaborate with neighbouring local school clusters and rural networks, driving cross-school moderation, shared professional development, and innovative outdoor learning initiatives.

About the Opportunity

The Governing Board of Skylark Federation is seeking to appoint an Executive Headteacher to provide professional leadership for all four schools, securing their success and improvement, ensuring high quality education for all pupils and improving standards of learning and achievement.

Discover Our Schools

We strongly encourage prospective candidates to visit our Federation. You will find welcoming classrooms, engaged and courteous pupils, and dedicated staff teams who are proud of their schools and excited for this next chapter.

To arrange a visit or to have an informal, confidential conversation with the governors, please contact the Federation Clerk on governor@skylarkfed.education

We look forward to receiving your application and exploring how your vision can shape our future.

Warmest regards
The Governing Board



Barcombe CE Primary School

A small and mighty school where everyone flourishes at the heart of the community.

Number on roll: 124

We are a small, rural primary school set in the heart of a delightful village. Barcombe School is proud to offer a broad, creative and ambitious curriculum which enables pupils to take pride in their learning and where the potential of every child is realised.

We are guided by our Christian values which shape our behaviours and attitudes both in school and out and are championed and promoted across the curriculum and in all aspects of school life. We have strong links with our local churches, attending St Mary's Church for Harvest, Easter and Christmas services.

At Barcombe, we follow the Skylark Federation Curriculum, which combines high expectations with meaningful learning experiences, helping pupils develop secure knowledge, strong skills and a lifelong love of learning.

Our pupils are aged 4 to 11 years and are taught in 5 classes by a strong team of highly committed and professional teachers and teaching assistants, who work closely together to ensure continuity in the teaching programme of the school.

Our website: [Barcombe CE Primary School - Home](#)

Our Ofsted Report: [Barcombe CE Primary School - OFSTED](#)



Hamsey Primary School

A kind, creative community where learning is an adventure.

Number on roll: 93

We are a thriving village school in Cooksbridge, enriched by the beauty of the South Downs and the support of our community. Our pupils are aged 4 to 11 years and are taught in 4 classes by highly qualified, dedicated and enthusiastic staff. Our small size is one of our greatest strengths, creating a nurturing environment where every child belongs, is truly known, valued and supported to flourish.

We are proud of our unique Skylark curriculum: creative and ambitious, it opens space for curiosity, imagination and confidence to thrive. Learning here is embraced as a true adventure, nurturing resourcefulness, resilience and co-operation alongside academic skill.

At Hamsey, kindness is at the heart of who we are. It shapes the way we treat one another, how we work closely with families, and how we nurture every child with care, trust and respect.

We have an extensive outdoor environment, which provides an invaluable extra resource to enrich both the play and learning of our children.

Our website: [Hamsey Community Primary School - Home](#)

Our Ofsted Report: [Hamsey Community Primary School - Ofsted](#)



Iford & Kingston CE Primary School

Rooted in love, growing in faith, stronger together.

Number on roll: 175 plus 15 in our Nursery

At Iford and Kingston Church of England School, we believe every child deserves a strong foundation to grow into a confident, happy and well-rounded learner. Situated at the foot of the South Downs, we are proud to serve our community with a warm, inclusive and nurturing environment, underpinned by our Christian values.

We are very proud of our recently opened Little Saplings Nursery. This is a bright and joyful space with strong links to our Reception class and wider school community, and offers the perfect springboard into school life.

Our school teaches pupils from 4 to 11 years in 7 classes and follows the Skylark Federation Curriculum, helping pupils develop secure knowledge, strong skills and a lifelong love of learning.

As a small school, we know our children well and value the close relationships we build with families. We have a dedicated and ambitious staff team and believe that a strong home-school partnership is key to helping children feel safe, supported, and able to reach their full potential.

Our website: [Iford and Kingston C of E Primary School – Home](#)

Our Ofsted Report: [Iford and Kingston C of E Primary School – Ofsted \(England\) and Performance Data](#)



Plumpton Primary School

We're kind and outward looking: learners today, leaders tomorrow.

Number on roll: 130

Plumpton is a warm and welcoming rural primary school at the heart of our village, where every child is known, valued and encouraged to thrive. We create a calm, nurturing environment where children feel safe, build confidence and develop a love of learning.

We follow the Skylark Federation Curriculum, providing a coherent, engaging and ambitious education for every child. We combine high expectations with meaningful learning experiences, that enable all pupils to achieve well, alongside strong personal development so children grow as resilient, thoughtful and active members of society.

Our curriculum is enriched by the unique character of our local community and aims to prepare pupils both for the next stage of their education and for life beyond the classroom.

Our school teaches pupils from 4 to 11 years in five classes and our dedicated staff work closely with families to support each child's progress and well-being, and ensure every child flourishes both academically and personally.

Our website: [Plumpton Primary School – Home](#)

Our Ofsted Report: [Plumpton Primary School – OFSTED report May 2023](#)



Description of the Role

Post: Executive Headteacher

Start Date: April 2027

Salary: L19 - L25

Contract type: Permanent Full-time

Responsible to: Skylark Federation Governing Board

Executive Headteacher Person Specification

The successful candidate will:

- Develop a compelling, achievable and sustainable strategic vision for the future of the federation
- Create a culture of high expectations among pupils and staff, raising pupil attainment across the board
- Empower Heads of School and other senior leaders to be creative, curious and responsible for the flourishing of individual schools
- Work in partnership with governors, parents/carers and staff
- Promote the Christian distinctiveness of our Church of England Schools and develop deep and effective partnerships with parish churches and the diocese

Your application will be judged on its content and its direct relevance to this person specification.

Applicants should pay particular attention to demonstrating their experience or ability to be able to meet the selected essential criteria highlighted in the following sections.

These will be further explored with those candidates selected for interview.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

1. Qualifications & Experience

Criterion	Essential or Desirable
Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).	Essential
National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) or equivalent senior leadership qualification.	Desirable
Substantial and successful teaching experience across the primary age range in more than one school, with a demonstrable record of securing strong pupil outcomes.	Essential
Successful head leadership experience with a proven record of whole-school improvement and measurable impact on pupil outcomes, teaching and leadership.	Essential
Experience of leadership within a Church of England school or a school with a strong and distinctive Christian ethos.	Desirable
Proven experience of strategic financial planning, budget management and effective deployment of resources to secure value and improved outcomes	Essential
Experience of leading safeguarding and leading an effective safeguarding culture and practice	Essential
Experience of undertaking safeguarding lead role and hold recent DSL qualification	Desirable
Proven experience of raising attendance and reducing persistent absence	Desirable
Proven experience of leading successful partnership work with other schools, external agencies and/or professional networks that has resulted in measurable improvements.	Essential
Proven experience of leading significant organisational change, embedding effective systems and processes, and securing sustainable improvement.	Essential

PERSON SPECIFICATION

2. Professional Knowledge

Criterion	Essential or Desirable
Deep and current understanding of national educational policy, research and emerging practice, and their implications for primary education.	Essential
Highly effective use and interpretation of assessment and performance data to identify priorities, close gaps, improve teaching and inform strategic decision-making.	Essential
Strong understanding of school self-evaluation, improvement planning and the use of evidence to secure and sustain improvement.	Essential
Clear understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of an Executive Headteacher and governing body within maintained and Church of England schools.	Essential
Comprehensive understanding of effective and inclusive teaching, learning and assessment, with a track record of using formative assessment to secure strong and improving pupil progress.	Essential
Thorough understanding of SEND code of practice and its practical application in schools	Essential
Thorough understanding of current inspection frameworks and expectations, with experience of contributing to successful inspection outcomes and demonstrating leadership impact.	Essential
Strong understanding of GDPR, data protection, Health and Safety and safeguarding-related statutory responsibilities and wider educational compliance requirements.	Essential

PERSON SPECIFICATION

3. Leadership Skills

Criterion	Essential or Desirable
Proven ability to articulate, develop and deliver a compelling strategic vision, translating it into clear priorities and measurable improvement.	Essential
Highly effective interpersonal, communication and influencing skills, with an authoritative yet approachable leadership style that inspires trust, confidence and professional respect.	Essential
Proven ability to motivate, coach, challenge and develop staff at all levels, promote distributed leadership and develop future leaders.	Essential
Capacity to lead and manage multiple sites effectively, securing consistency, equity, collaboration and high standards across the Federation.	Essential
Strong strategic thinking and problem-solving skills, with the creativity and judgement to develop effective solutions to complex organisational challenges.	Essential
Proven ability to make difficult and sometimes challenging decisions, communicating them with clarity, fairness, transparency and professional sensitivity.	Essential
Strong people-management and performance-management skills, with experience of setting high expectations, addressing underperformance rigorously and supportively, and securing improved staff performance.	Essential
Ability to lead an outward-facing organisation and build effective relationships with governors, the Local Authority, Diocese, other schools, external agencies and wider community partners.	Essential

PERSON SPECIFICATION

4. Personal Attributes

Criterion	Essential or Desirable
Resilient, adaptable and able to remain calm, focused and decisive under pressure, with strong time-management, prioritisation and organisational skills.	Essential
High levels of integrity and professionalism, demonstrated through ethical decision-making, sound judgement, consistent conduct and appropriate professional boundaries.	Essential
Reflective and self-aware, with a strong commitment to continuous professional learning and personal improvement.	Essential
Able to work sensitively and constructively with children, families and colleagues, using sound judgement to promote positive relationships, inclusion and pupil wellbeing.	Essential
Committed to empowering others and fostering a collaborative, inclusive and high-performing professional culture.	Essential
Motivated by working with children and committed to championing their welfare, achievement, inclusion and wider development.	Essential

PERSON SPECIFICATION

5. Commitment to Christian Ethos & Partnership

Criterion	Essential or Desirable
Demonstrable commitment to strengthening and modelling the Federation's Christian ethos and values through leadership, relationships and decision-making.	Essential
Commitment to constructive partnership with governors, the Diocese, church, parents, schools and the wider community in support of the Federation's vision and pupils' development.	Essential
Ability to lead engaging, inclusive and inspirational collective worship that reflects the Christian character of the Federation and is accessible to all in the school community.	Essential
Strong understanding of the role of a Church of England school within the life of the church and its wider community.	Desirable
Experience of leading, preparing for or contributing significantly to SIAMS processes, with evidence of securing or contributing to strong outcomes.	Desirable

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

Application Form

It is imperative that the application form is completed in full and signed. Please follow the instruction to use black ink or typescript as your form will very likely be photocopied. If you are submitting your application form electronically, you will be asked to sign the form should you be invited to interview.

When submitting your application, it is important that you relate your skills, experience and abilities against the person specification, identifying against each criterion, 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. Please refer to the information contained within the recruitment pack for the length and presentation of your personal statement.

Please note that recruitment packs for this vacancy will only be provided directly to an individual considering applying to our Federation for this opportunity. This Federation does not enter into business with Recruitment Agencies, or other commercial organisations, on behalf of their clients seeking employment.

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 post for which you have applied.

The selection panel will look to see how well you have focused your application on the needs of the school in addition to relating your skills and knowledge to the person specification with supporting evidence which demonstrates how you meet the range of criteria.

Referees

We take up references on shortlisted candidates. Please give your current or most recent employer as one of your referees; as an applicant for a Headteacher post, you should provide the name and address of your Director of Children's Services, together with a second referee who should be the Chair of Governors of your current school.

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 school for less than five years, the governing body may wish to seek further supporting information from your previous employer(s).

Qualifications

Please bring documentary evidence of your Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and other relevant qualifications (excluding GCSE, "O" and "A" levels) to your interview. The selection panel will ask to see the original certificate, and copies will be taken for your application. If you have achieved the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) or any other professional qualifications e.g. National Qualification for School Leaders (NPQSL), National Qualification for Middle Leaders (NPQML), please bring copies of these qualifications to the interview for checking.

Medical Information and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Disclosure

Prior to appointment, you will need to complete a health statement which will be assessed by OH Referral Service, Team Prevent.

East Sussex County Council 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 this Authority as the employer.

This disclosure will need to be approved by the County Council 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.

Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 ("the 2018 Regulations")

The post of Executive Headteacher is directly concerned with the management of early or later years provision, therefore the post is covered by the 2018 Regulations.

The Federation will need to ensure that they are not knowingly employing a person who is disqualified under the 2018 Regulations in connection with relevant childcare provision. Accordingly, the successful candidate will be required to demonstrate to the school, by completing a self-declaration form as part of the pre-employment checks process that they have not been disqualified under the 2018 Regulations.

If the preferred candidate is found to be disqualified under the 2018 Regulations, the offer of employment will be subject to the application by the preferred candidate to Ofsted for a waiver and the receipt of a waiver from Ofsted.

Eligibility to Work in the UK

In line with Safer Recruitment guidance issued by the DfE and other employment-related legislation, you will be required to provide evidence of your identity and eligibility to work in the UK. The evidence required is one of the following documents:

- a full British passport (current or expired) or national identity card issued by a state which is party to the Europe Economic Agreement or other passport stating your eligibility to work in the UK.
- a full birth certificate issued in the UK or Republic of Ireland AND an official document showing your National Insurance number, for example, P45, P60 or a document issued by HM Revenue & Customs or another Government Department. (A document showing a temporary NI number would not be satisfactory.)

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in working for schools within East Sussex County Council and wish you every success in the future.

Data protection

East Sussex County Council will only process the information you have provided in this form for the purpose of recruitment and selection and, if you are successful in securing this position, for purposes relating to your employment.

Your details will be kept both electronically and in hard copy. We will not disclose this information about you to outside organisations or third parties unless there is a legal requirement to do so, or for the prevention and detection of fraud.

For further information, see our privacy notice for job applicants at <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/privacy/job-applicants-and-employees/>

How to apply

Completing the application pack

The Executive Headteacher is required for April 2027.

Visits to the schools are encouraged to appreciate the potential of this unique opportunity and allow us to answer any questions you may have.

If you would like to arrange a visit, please contact the Federation Clerk on governor@skylarkfed.education

Preferred visit dates are: Thursday 22nd October and Tuesday 3rd November

Closing date: Monday 9th November at 9.00am

Interview dates: Wednesday 25th and Thursday 26th November

To apply for this role, please submit your completed application form to the Leadership Recruitment Team: leadership.recruitment@eastsussex.gov.uk

The schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This position is subject to a criminal records check from the Disclosure and Barring Service and will require you to disclose all criminal convictions.

Thank you

**on behalf of the governors of
the Skylark Federation**