



Kensington  
Aldridge Academy



**Director of Learning  
Candidate Information Pack**

**September 2024**



Dear Applicant,

Thank you for taking the time to find out more about Kensington Aldridge Academy (KAA). This pack is intended to give you information about this role and our school's vision and ethos. Further background information is available at [www.kaa.org.uk](http://www.kaa.org.uk), including in the parent prospectuses and recruitment pages you can find there.

KAA is an 11 – 18 academy situated in the heart of Notting Hill. We opened in brand new buildings in 2014 with just Year 7 and our facilities are second to none. This is our eleventh year of operation, and we are now a full school with 1,300 students in Years 7 to 13.

KAA is a high-performing academy with a strong local and national reputation. DfE performance tables consistently place us amongst the top schools nationally for student progress. Ofsted have judged the school to be “outstanding” in all categories and described our standards as “exceptional”. In 2018 we were named the TES “Secondary School of the Year”, and our 2022 Good Schools Guide review praises the “phenomenal” education students receive.

**Any success we have comes from the talent and dedication of our staff.**

KAA staff members are reflective, committed professionals, willing to do whatever it takes for our students to achieve the best results. This role is an opportunity to join a great staff team and make a significant contribution to our ongoing work.

As Principal, there is no higher priority for me than the recruitment and development of staff. **Like any school, we are a “people business” first and foremost.** We understand that we ask a lot from staff, but in return we provide extensive support and development opportunities, and the space to extend your skills more than you would find elsewhere.

If, after reading the enclosed information, you would like to apply, please complete the application form that can be found online at [www.kaa.org.uk/recruitment](http://www.kaa.org.uk/recruitment) and return it via e-mail to our HR Manager, at [recruitment@kaa.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@kaa.org.uk), or use the “quick apply” application form via the TES advert. If you have any queries, please contact our HR Manager and it may be possible to arrange a conversation with myself or one of the leadership team here at KAA.

With best wishes,

Anna Jordan  
Principal

## **Director of Learning – Job Description**

**Report to:** Senior Vice Principal - Pastoral

**Application deadline:** Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 9am

**Salary:** L1 – L4 (£56,100 - £59,731)

**Contract type:** We are appointing some full time / permanent posts, and one maternity leave post.

### **The Role**

Director of Learning – or ‘DoL’ – is the term we use at KAA for ‘Head of Year’. The term ‘Director’ reflects the seniority of the position, and that it sits on the leadership scale. The term ‘Learning’ speaks to the strategic focus that the role has.

DoLs are responsible for all matters relating to the achievement, attendance, safety and behaviour of their year group. They provide effective leadership to their team of form tutors, and the students themselves. They set a clear vision for their year group and inspire others to get on board with this vision. They are self-motivated and resilient in the face of setbacks, and able to strategically think through some of the most difficult problems the school faces. They are expert teachers in their own right, able to monitor and advise on the quality of teaching their year group receives, as well as plan and implement a high-quality PSHE offer. They are a key point of contact for parents and can maintain positive, professional relationships with families, including those whose lives are in turmoil, or who express criticism towards the school. DoLs take a collaborative approach and work effectively alongside a variety of teaching and support staff, building diverse relationships across the school. The candidate will also have safeguarding responsibilities for their designated year group which also includes being the main point of contact for external services.

In the larger year groups of Y7-I I, DoLs work in pairs, as ‘Co-DoLs’. In Sixth Form, there is one DoL per year group. There is no difference in terms of contracts or timetables between DoLs and Co-DoLs.

With a team of 12 DoLs in total, we anticipate opportunities in different key stages. Applicants can specify a preference for which year or key stage they wish to work with or apply generally. There is no advantage to either approach – and we anticipate appointing at least 2 candidates into a range of key stages.

The prospective candidate will ideally have experience of teaching English, French, RE or science. However, this can be discussed at interview and all interested parties should apply.

### **Key Responsibilities**

- To monitor the academic achievement of the year group in order to secure and sustain effective learning for all students (or as close to all as possible).
- To use assessment data such as CATs, RAs, KS2 or KS4 data, as well as KAA internal data, to inform an analysis of student progress across specific groups and the year as a whole.
- To have an overview of the range of barriers to learning that affect student progress, concerning behaviour and attitudes to learning in and out of the classroom.
- To lead and manage the year group day to day, acting as a role model for students and staff by demonstrating high quality pastoral care and support, rigorous expectations and a visible, professional presence with students.

- To monitor the effectiveness of interventions and report to other managers regularly on the progress being made by students in the year, to ensure excellent outcomes for all groups of students.
- To liaise with key staff, including Grandin, Mentoring and Learning Support, regarding student achievement in the year group, with particular reference to the progress and development of vulnerable and those with SEND students.
- To monitor the regular setting and quality of homework and parent engagement by managing the regular checking of planners.
- To model, through their teaching, the outstanding practice which we aim for as a school.

### **Outcomes and activities**

- To ensure all tutors understand and are actively implementing, all key aspects of the school's policies including those for behaviour, attendance, uniform and safeguarding.
- To set the agenda for year team meetings and ensure they are skilfully chaired and linked to whole school priorities as outlined in the SEF, AIP and other forms of planning / evaluation (e.g. monitoring reports, line management framework).
- To lead and manage a team of tutors and maintain regular formal and informal contact with all tutors to ensure high quality and consistent provision.
- To provide a link for parents, tutors, SEND team, teachers, subject leaders, SLT and external agencies.
- To initiate and respond to communications with parents ensuring that they are kept fully informed and involved in the progress of their children.
- To lead any parent information evenings and encourage and monitor parent attendance to such events.
- To monitor student attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis and to take all the appropriate steps to ensure that attendance and punctuality of students in the year group are at the highest levels. To liaise with the attendance team and external agencies in this respect.
- To monitor student behaviour, attendance and achievement using SIMS and, in consultation with key staff, decide on appropriate sanctions, interventions and rewards.
- To oversee students on reports and make contact with parents when necessary.
- To play the leading role in the disciplining of students, referring situations to the appropriate member of SLT when appropriate.
- To contribute to the management of key school events; for example, induction and transfer arrangements, trips and outings, and extracurricular and social events.
- To organise and through a team of tutors, implement a framework for daily tutorial activities and PSHE. This includes both day-to-day administrative tasks (signing of planners, checking absences etc) and year-specific tasks (preparation for exams, options, learning conversations etc).
- To maintain individual student records as necessary and ensure that they are kept up to date.
- To oversee the completion of reports by form tutors where appropriate.
- To be involved in policy development and decision-making across the school.

## **The leadership of vision and strategy including**

- To have a long-term or “big picture” view of what they are trying to achieve across the year, and peel back the layers of the problems that might prevent us from achieving these objectives.
- To instil an ethos of high expectations for behaviour and achievement in all students by expertly managing student behaviour and modelling for other staff what is expected.
- To ensure that no child is labelled and that no teacher talks about ‘ability’ or ‘potential’ as fixed attributes. At KAA we believe in a ‘growth mindset’.
- To contribute to the development of the academy improvement plan, and take personal responsibility for specific sections of the AIP and SEF relating to their year group.
- To ensure their personal demeanour and actions are consistent with the values of the school and the high standards we set ourselves as leadership staff.

***No job description can be fully comprehensive, and from time to time, the successful candidate may have to undertake other professional duties as directed by the Principal or SLT. In addition, candidates should understand their role may well broaden and that all roles will be reviewed annually to ensure the team is working as efficiently as possible.***

***This post is subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure and the post holder must be committed to safeguarding the welfare of children.***

## Person Specification

### *Qualification criteria*

- Qualified Teacher Status
- Permitted to work in the UK
- Evidence of relevant and substantial CPD
- All candidates are welcome to apply with preference to teach English, French, RE or Science.

### *General - experience of:*

- Working at a middle leadership level, or having the clear potential to.
- Having contributed to the work of an SLT or MLT team in a way that has resulted in significant or sustained success for the school.
- Having led a team in the development and implementation of a whole school programme, which relates to achievement, attendance or behaviour and ethos.
- Delivering staff training and undertaking professional development of other teachers, in particular with regard to the use of data, effective behaviour management and pastoral care.
- Effective engagement with external partners (e.g. parents, agencies).
- Using QA systems to evaluate the quality of provision across a class or year group or department team.
- Led intervention programmes at a department/year group/whole school level that have had a proven and sustained impact on attitude and attainment.
- Tracking and monitoring identified groups and designing intervention programmes, which have shown a positive impact on behaviour and progress.
- Being an outstanding form tutor and modelling excellent pastoral leadership for others.

### *Teacher development (all members of extended SLT are expected to be able to model great teaching and to develop others) - experience of:*

- Understanding what outstanding teaching practice looks like, how to diagnose weaknesses in teaching and deliver coaching and mentoring to improve it.
- Conducting lesson observations as a tool for improvement.
- Designing and delivering outstanding staff training.

### *Leadership and management – the ability to demonstrate:*

- An effective leadership style that inspires confidence and collegiality in those they lead, which motivates and encourages others to participate and go the extra mile.
- Versatility and flexibility in terms of one's own leadership style. To be aware of different management styles and in which circumstances it is appropriate to adopt an alternative approach.
- Strong interpersonal, written and oral communication skills.
- Strong organisational skills:
  - the ability to delegate
  - the use of effective time management
  - the ability to prioritise
- Resilience and motivation to lead the academy through day-to-day challenges whilst maintaining a clear strategic vision, staying positive, and focusing on key priorities.
- Genuine passion and belief in the potential of every student.
- Strategic thinking and the potential to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to the role.

## **About Kensington Aldridge Academy**

### **Culture & Ethos**

One of the distinctive aspects of being a start-up school is that you can define your culture from day one and set the bar sky high. When we opened KAA we had no existing population of students and teachers who were set in their ways – instead we set out our expectations clearly at the start and, because they were followed up with a consistently great ‘offer’, these expectations have been met.

The opportunity we had to start from scratch and grow carefully is still a defining feature of our school, all these years on.

Our culture remains strong and students and staff alike feel very proud to be part of KAA. Students and their immense potential are at the heart of the work we do.

We believe:

- Every child has the potential to excel
- It is through hard work and discipline that success is achieved
- Outstanding teachers, willing to do whatever it takes, can transform students’ lives
- We are all learners, and as teachers we must model the learning behaviour we ask of students
- School should be a caring, safe place where students are happy
- Parents are our most important partners

### **Teaching and Learning**

Teaching and Learning is the core business of any school. All aspects of school life - attainment, progress, behaviour, ethos, attendance - flow from outstanding classroom teaching and, because of this, the classroom experience of students is our main concern. Our top priority is to ensure that students have a consistent diet of excellent lessons each day.

At KAA we have a model for teaching and learning that is of a national standard, and which is constantly evolving. Our approach is to treat **all** learners as intelligent individuals, irrespective of their prior attainment, and to support them all to go on to achieve the very best results. We work hard to ensure this model of teaching is widely understood and consistently implemented across the academy, and that is continually refined and improved as the school develops.

There are **three main aspects** to our approach to **teaching and learning**:

**The Teaching and Learning Handbook:** This is more than just a teaching and learning policy that sits on the shelf, or, even worse, a few pages in the staff handbook that sets out expectations for lesson planning and offers a few templates. This is a developmental document; a research based handbook that provides clear guidelines on how to plan and deliver lessons. Our teaching and learning handbook is the central policy of the school – our ‘bible’ – and the basis of our on-going programmes of staff training and lesson observation. Candidates can review a copy in advance here: <https://kaa.org.uk/teaching-learning/teaching-learning-handbook/>

Our handbook is not overly prescriptive; instead it provides teachers with a helpful framework to guide their thinking about short, medium and long-term planning; questioning; discussion; group work; literacy; extended writing; and many other aspects of classroom practice. Within this framework they can develop their own lessons and activities to suit their style and subject.

**High-quality staff training:** One of our mantras at KAA is, *'we learn best when we learn together'*. For us, staff training is something which is relevant to all, not just new staff and ECT's. We don't just reserve training for INSET days – we have an on-going programme of twilight sessions that take place during most weeks of the year. The majority of our training sees our own staff training each other on their areas of expertise. It is grounded in the T&L model – we take ideas from the handbook and illustrate them through training.

Where appropriate, we partner with external training providers. In-house training draws heavily on our archive of video recordings of lessons - we have invested in technology to allow teachers to record 'model' lessons (although it's often even more useful to show colleagues less successful lessons, assuming you are brave enough!). Most importantly, our training is mapped out well in advance, and linked to the overall academy improvement plan. We never make up sessions on the hoof, but always use lesson observation and other monitoring and evaluative tools to establish which aspect of the model needs refinement, and then use training to address this. In short, our on-going, high quality staff training programme inspires and motivates staff, and in time we expect to gain teaching school status and conduct school improvement work with other schools in the borough and beyond.

**Lesson observation:** We adopt a radically different approach to lesson observation that places observing to learn at the heart of staff development. For us, observation is a formative tool and part of a teacher's entitlement to professional development; it is not a performance management exercise. It is expected that all our teachers will be involved in the academy lesson observation cycle, viewing the process as a powerful form of training. As part of their induction into the academy, all teachers will be trained in lesson observation and giving constructive feedback. We operate an open, non-hierarchical approach to lesson observation, in which people request to observe and be observed. It is expected that as lead professionals, members of SLT will be observed just as much as the rest of the teaching staff.

This extensive lesson observation process helps in two ways:

- i. Good ideas will spread quickly around the system, as teachers replicate the best techniques that they see in each other's classrooms
- ii. A culture will be created in which teachers are open to feedback and not defensive about their practice. They will understand that we are all still learning and no one has ever 'arrived' as a teacher

**As staff we understand how central teaching and learning is to the work of the school.**

**As such, there are three questions which are the hallmark of a KAA teacher:**

- **How do my students feel when they arrive at my classroom?**
- **Is my lesson worth behaving for?**
- **How could I have taught that lesson better?**



## Facilities

Distinctive features of our building include:

- A professional theatre
- Our own sports hall and dance studio
- A safe, enclosed rooftop football / sports pitch
- Specialist performing and creative arts classrooms for drama, art and performing arts
- Two music rooms and a professional recording studio
- State of the art design technology rooms, including Graphics, Resistant Materials, Food Technology and Textiles
- Flexible IT spaces – giving students safe access to the right technologies
- Three libraries
- Access to the brand new Kensington Leisure Centre and swimming pool next door to the academy

**We are extremely fortunate to have these facilities and will put them to the service of our students. However, we know the building alone is not the answer; it is the school's values, our strong ethos, and our focus on curriculum, assessment and teaching and learning that will be the keys to our success.**

## Our location

Situated in the heart of Notting Hill, Kensington Aldridge Academy is positioned in one of the most exciting and sought after parts of London. With Portobello Road, home to the famous Portobello Road Market, close by, there are plenty of bars, restaurants, shops and pubs to choose from. We have excellent transport links: just three minutes from Ladbroke Grove tube station, and within easy walking distance of Holland Park and Notting Hill stations, and many local bus routes.

## A commitment to equal opportunities

KAA is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our employees. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and the community and that each employee feels respected and able to give their best. To that end we are committed to provide equality and fairness for all in our recruitment and employment practices and not to discriminate on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

## Staff benefits

- Professional development that is of a national standard. In Ofsted's words: *"Staff morale is exceptionally high. They enjoy working at the school and benefit from high-quality training. Teachers new to the profession feel very well supported in settling into the school quickly and developing their practice."*
- Discounted membership of the new Kensington Leisure Centre.
- Two week half term in October.

- 180 school days, 10 training days (not 5 as you find in most schools) & 5 planning days per year, which include the opportunity for teachers to work from home.
- Free breakfast and lunch for any staff who eat with students in the Dining Hall.
- Free weekly staff wellbeing activities; yoga, circuits, salsa, football and more.

### **Terms and conditions**

The school governors are keen to ensure that staff remuneration is always competitive and that staff are fairly rewarded for their commitment and excellent performance in line with the academy's pay policy. We want to compete for the best staff and offer attractive pay and conditions and career development opportunities to do so. Salaries will be based on experience, qualifications, and the scope of job and the level of responsibilities. We operate our own terms and conditions, which broadly mirror national pay and conditions. Some key differences are:

- 180 not 190 school days and 10 not 5 training days with a further 5 planning days on top. This means we operate a 39 week year: 37 teaching weeks and 2 weeks planning and preparation with significant focus on CPD.
- A two week October half term.
- The school day will be from 8am to 5pm Monday to Thursday (with co-planning, mentoring, observation, marking & moderation etc built into the school day wherever possible).
- On Friday the working day finishes at 4pm

### **Response**

We very much regret that we are only able to inform short listed candidates of the outcome of their application. If you do not hear from us within four weeks of the closing date, please assume that you have been unsuccessful on this occasion. We would like to assure you, however, that every application we receive is considered in detail and a shortlist only drawn up after careful reference to a detailed person specification.

### **Recruitment Privacy Notice**

As part of your application to join us, we will gather and use information relating to you. For full details on our Recruitment Privacy notice please visit <https://kaa.org.uk/recruitment/>.

## **Biographies of Senior Team**

### **Anna Jordan – Principal**



Anna has been Principal at KAA since November 2023. She was appointed in 2013 as Vice Principal and has been central to the growth and success of KAA since the school's inception ten years ago. Prior to this role, Anna was Assistant Headteacher at Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College (BTHCC), an 11-18 school in South Manchester. At BTHCC role she was responsible for leadership training and the coordination and development of the middle leaders within the school. Through the school improvement work there, Anna designed and delivered leadership and coaching programmes for school leaders across the North West. As a Future Leaders participant, she has also supported other schools nationally in developing the quality of their teaching and structure of their curriculum.

### **Ryan Bernard – Senior Vice Principal**

Ryan is Senior Vice Principal at KAA. He joined the academy in 2014 as Lead Teacher of Physical Education. Ryan founded a dynamic PE department, led Pankhurst as Head of House for 2 years, and was Director of Learning for Year 7 before joining the Senior Leadership Team. He was appointed as Assistant Principal in February 2017 and promoted to Vice Principal in July 2019. He took up the Senior Vice Principal role in September 2024. Ryan graduated from the University of East London with a BSc (Hons) in Sports Coaching. He then completed his PGCE in Physical Education at Middlesex University and a Master's degree in Teaching & Learning at the Institute of Education.



### **Amy Gurnell – Vice Principal**



Amy is Vice Principal Pastoral & Designated Safeguarding Lead at KAA. She studied BA Drama at Queen Mary, University of London, prior to completing her Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at Goldsmiths, University of London. She joined KAA in 2016 as a Teacher of Drama and was promoted to Director of Learning for Year 7 in 2018. Amy developed the academy's Year 6 transition process during two consecutive years as the Director of Learning for the incoming Year 7s. She was promoted to Assistant Principal (Pastoral) in July 2020 and was then promoted to Vice Principal in June 2024.

### **James Waller – Vice Principal**

James is Vice Principal for Teaching & Learning at KAA. James completed a BSc in English at the University of Leicester before completing a PGCE at Sheffield Hallam University. Before joining KAA, James taught at Hungerhill School, an outstanding school in Doncaster, where he also held the role of Strategic Lead for Curriculum & Assessment. James joined KAA in 2016 as a Teacher of English and was promoted to Director of English in 2019. He was promoted to Assistant Principal (Teaching & Learning) in April 2022. James was promoted to Vice Principal in June 2024.



## QUOTES ABOUT KAA

***“I have visited many schools in my time and KAA is one of the most impressive. It is an amazing school with amazing students.”***

***Dr Lee Elliot Major, CEO of The Sutton Trust***

***“I was inspired by my visit to KAA. Talking to the students about their hopes and aspirations for the future and hearing them speak in such an articulate manner is clearly the product of a culture of high expectation and a belief that they can and will achieve. The team at KAA have made a fantastic start and well on the road to establishing a truly great school.”***

***Sir David Carter, National Schools Commissioner***

***“Staff and pupils are proud of their school. The school has fostered a strong community that is welcoming and warm. The school is led with both sensitivity and determination, building a vibrant school in which pupils excel.” - Ofsted, 2024***

***“Leaders, governors and staff have the highest ambitions for pupils. Together, they have created a school where pupils are happy, safe and making excellent progress. What the school has achieved and sustained is remarkable.” - Ofsted, 2017***

***“Bring an appetite for learning and hard work and the school will provide a banquet of opportunities – academic, cultural and sporting. Every community should have one.”  
- Good Schools Guide 2022***

# VISITORS & SUPPORTERS OF KAA



Gareth Malone



Justine Greening



Princess of Wales



David Carter



Gillian Anderson



Sadiq Khan



Prince Harry



Damian Hinds



King Charles



David Cameron