



CLAYESMORE

Head

Candidate Information

Welcome from the CEO

Following the announcement that after 10 years of service, Jo Thomson the current Head of Clayesmore, will be retiring at the end of the academic year, we are now actively searching for her successor. We take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to Jo for her extraordinary contribution to Clayesmore. Most recently, under Jo's leadership, Clayesmore joined Inspired Learning Group (ILG) in September 2025, ensuring the school's long-term future and continued success.

Becoming part of the Inspired Learning Group in 2025 has provided Clayesmore with security and stability for the future. We do recognise that the current economic climate and geography of Clayesmore will bring both challenges and opportunities for the incoming Head. We are therefore looking for an individual who is a creative and warm leader, an excellent communicator, has an eye for marketing and has the ability and ambition to take Clayesmore on the next exciting stage of its journey.

Leading and managing Clayesmore through the coming years will present the new Head with a wonderful opportunity to make a significant impact on the future direction of this already high-achieving school.

If this is a role that excites you and you feel you have the requisite skills and experience, we would be delighted to hear from you.



Mr Amit Mehta,
CEO, Inspired Learning Group

Overview and History

Clayesmore is a family school where students aged 7-18 can learn to study, learn and grow in an atmosphere that is warm, friendly and supportive. We know that to live their lives well, our pupils must first establish those firm foundations of self-belief and strong relationships, from which they can then build academic success and discover passions and skills that will nourish them throughout their lives. We know, too, that this is a journey and that no two paths will follow the same course but that ultimately our students will blossom and flourish, developing into impressive young people who will make a difference to their world.

Clayesmore School was founded in 1896 by Alex Devine, a visionary educational pioneer whose approach to education was strikingly ahead of its time.

Over the decades, the school has grown and evolved, moving from Enfield (1896) to Pangbourne (1902), and then to Northwood Park (1914), before settling permanently in Iwerne Minster, Dorset, in 1933. The campus, surrounded by rolling countryside, offers a setting ideally suited to reflection, learning, and exploration.

In 1974, Clayesmore Preparatory School (formerly Charlton Marshall School) integrated with the Senior School, paving the way for co-education in 1975 — a defining moment in the school's modern history.



The School's Aims

At Clayesmore our purpose is to provide a broad and flexible academic curriculum, tailored to each pupil's strengths and ambitions, complemented by a rich programme of personal development. Through this holistic approach, we equip our students not just for further study, but also with the skills, confidence, and character to thrive in the workplace and beyond.

Our promise is to respect and challenge every pupil in a supportive environment where they can discover their strengths and grow. This will provide them with strong foundations that will enable them to seize opportunities and contribute positively to the world.

At the heart of Clayesmore lie the values of Kindness, Integrity, Inclusion, and Equality.

Clayesmore's central belief is that success doesn't look the same for every child — and that is precisely the point.

For over 130 years, the school has helped young people uncover what success means to them, blending academic excellence with a strong focus on personal growth, confidence, and self-belief. Every pupil is known, seen, and supported — not just by name, but as an individual with unique strengths and aspirations.

From the Prep School, where children receive nurturing guidance and early access to specialist teaching, through to the Senior School and Sixth Form, Clayesmore provides a seamless, thoughtfully structured educational journey.

The curriculum inspires curiosity and challenge — from the creative arts and sciences to sport and outdoor learning. Alongside traditional academics, the LEX Programme and Duke of Edinburgh's Award enrich each child's experience, nurturing resilience, independence, and leadership.

About Inspired Learning Group



ILG currently owns and operates 31 schools and nurseries in the UK. Overall, we look after over 4,000 pupils, making us one of the largest independent school groups in the UK.

Clayesmore is one of 7 through schools in the group alongside Saint Felix School, Southwold, Yateley Manor School, Yateley, Rookwood School, Andover, Derby Grammar School, Shebbear College, Devon and St. Francis' College, Letchworth.

We see ILG as one extended family, allowing us to share best practice and innovation between schools in order to raise standards of teaching and learning for all our students. We recognise and respect that each school has its own history and identity. We encourage individuality, so that new ideas can grow naturally with the best ideas then being implemented right across the group. This collaborative spirit is an effective way of ensuring that education practices do not fall behind the times and it is why we encourage out-of-the-box methods such as Apple teaching and future thinking.

ILG schools may look reassuringly traditional in some ways, but our move away from standardisation toward customisation is not just modern but quietly revolutionary. We make the effort to understand the differences between individual children and tailor their teaching at a personal level. This means that all children, no matter their needs, are catered for. Our commitment to parents is that no one child will ever be left behind.

ILG empowers its schools to achieve their mission and vision through challenging yet supportive governance. We connect schools, stakeholders and professional associations to create opportunities and build capacity. We work with school leadership to set clear school improvement goals through engagement with pupils, parents, staff and the wider community.

We recruit, invest in and retain outstanding practitioners and ensure the provision and monitoring of a broad and balanced personalised curriculum for children with individual learning needs.

The Opportunity

This appointment is a great opportunity for an existing Head to make a lasting impression at Clayesmore. The new Head must work closely in partnership with ILG, but also have the strength and independence to make their own decisions for the benefit of the School and its community. The Head reports to the CEO, COO and Finance Director of ILG, but also has plenty of scope for autonomy in terms of the running of the school.

Understanding and nurturing this relationship with ILG is key to the new Head being able to maximise the considerable opportunities this role offers. It is by nature a reassuring and supportive relationship, not a smothering one.

ILG provides Clayesmore with strategic guidance, financial security and management, plus back office functions such as human resources/recruitment and estates, thus allowing the Head to focus on the educational leadership of the School.

The School's Advisory Board responsibilities align with standard Board of Governors' functions encompassing the school's vision, ethos, and strategic direction. It provides the governance structure within which the Head can be supported and guided.

Short and medium term challenges:

- There is a need for the new Head to consider carefully the priorities for further development of the School in order to see a return to pupil numbers which can assure its future.
- The decision to extend the offering to include reception and Pre-Prep at Clayesmore, will need clear management and implementation.
- The ability to open and develop a strong nursery facility which looks after children from 6 months old is a key priority which will contribute to the further growth of Clayesmore.

The School Sections

Clayesmore Nursery

Clayesmore's commitment to supporting each child's journey from the very beginning will soon include the introduction of a new Nursery, offering a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment for our youngest learners. The Nursery will serve as the foundation for Clayesmore's all-through educational experience, helping children develop early curiosity, independence, and a joy in learning



The School Sections

Prep

Clayesmore Prep provides a structured, nurturing, and stimulating environment where younger pupils develop the essential skills, confidence, and curiosity that will serve them throughout their education. Early access to specialist teaching in art, music, languages, and sport ensures a broad, engaging curriculum that encourages both academic achievement and personal growth.

Strong pastoral care underpins every aspect of school life, enabling children to thrive as valued members of a supportive community. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility and leadership, preparing them for the opportunities and challenges of senior school and beyond.



The School Sections

Senior

At the heart of the Senior School experience is a curriculum that challenges and inspires. Pupils are encouraged to think critically, collaborate effectively, and approach learning with curiosity and ambition. Whether through STEM, the Creative Arts, Humanities, or Sport, there are abundant opportunities for each individual to shine.

Sixth Form

The Sixth Form is a vibrant, forward-looking community. Alongside a broad selection of A-level and BTEC options, students benefit from academic lectures, enrichment activities, and formal occasions that prepare them for life beyond Clayesmore.

Highlights include: Formal dinners and social events, themed evenings and annual balls, the Year 12 Residential Camp, designed to build teamwork, leadership, and practical life skills.

Clayesmore's Sixth Formers leave as articulate, motivated, and compassionate young adults, well-equipped for university and future success.





Academic Results

Although non-selective, Clayesmore pupils' academic achievements are outstanding, and the school has a solid tradition of academic rigour. Students go on to their choice of university each year, with pupils attending Oxford, Cambridge and a host of other Russell Group Universities.



Boarding at Clayesmore

Clayesmore offers a vibrant boarding community, blending the warmth of a home environment with the structure and support of school life. There are five houses in the Senior School — two for girls and three for boys — each encompassing a strong sense of belonging and camaraderie.

All houses include a mix of boarders and day students, ensuring an inclusive and united community. Pupils are welcomed and supported by a dedicated team of House Parents, Tutors, Matrons, and senior pupils, with a buddy system to help new students settle in quickly.

Boarders enjoy a lively programme of evening and weekend activities, creating a dynamic balance between academic focus and personal development. Clayesmore's boarding ethos is built on kindness, trust, and mutual respect, providing the foundation for lifelong friendships and enduring confidence.



Beyond the Classroom

Clayesmore's extensive co-curricular programme nurtures creativity, teamwork, and resilience — ensuring that every child leaves not only with strong academic results, but with the character, confidence, and curiosity to thrive in the world beyond.

Sport, Drama and Music play a key role in the development of our pupils. We offer our pupils a wealth of opportunities to broaden their horizons, develop leadership, and pursue personal passions.

Sport

Clayesmore fully recognizes and embraces sport as essential in the development of an individual's character and an integral part of daily life at the school. The sporting programme is designed to develop pupils' confidence and resilience, and encourage teamwork and leadership opportunities.

We firmly believe that 'Excellence' and 'Sport for all' can co-exist. At the heart of our provision is our fixture and tournament programme, with A B and C teams in all major sports who compete against local, national and international sides, and termly inter-house competitions.

The major games are rugby, hockey and cricket for boys and hockey, netball and tennis for girls. Athletics, basketball, football, swimming, cross-country, squash, equestrian, rowing and sailing are also available. Every year group enjoys three afternoons of sport a week in these major sports.

Clayesmore is very well-equipped with fabulous playing fields, full size, flood-lit, all-weather pitch, Sports centre, Swimming pool and fitness suite.

Music

Music can be heard almost every hour of the day at Clayesmore. There are orchestras, choirs, jazz bands, and chamber music groups. Over 70% of pupils learn a musical instrument, and every year there will be children gaining excellent grades in their music exams.





Governance and Leadership

The Schools` Senior Leadership Team is responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of the School at all times, The Senior Leadership Team reports to the School Advisory Board periodically through formal meetings and regular contact with the Chair, Mr James Fowler and other members of the ILG executive team.

The Advisory Board operates through two committees, Education and Compliance, both of which feed into a Full Board, thus providing a comprehensive approach to direct our school's success and growth.



The Role

Key aims of the role;

- To lead, motivate and develop the school and its staff so that it fulfils the academic, pastoral, spiritual and social needs of the pupils and their parents, by providing an excellent, broad-based education in line with the school's ethos
- To work with the Advisory Board, drawing on their experience and expertise, to fulfil all the duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of the school; to ensure that the Chairman and Board receive timely notice and appropriate information on all relevant matters
- To work closely and cooperatively with the CEO, COO and Finance Officer, in accordance with the Board's strategic direction, in terms of financial matters and site development.

The Role

Key responsibilities of the role

The Head is responsible, directly and by delegation, for;

- The leadership and management of the School.
- The care and development of each child and for maintaining excellent academic standards within the School.
- The pastoral care and welfare of all staff and pupils.
- The overall financial performance of the School, for which they will be assisted by the finance team, and for meeting the annual budget agreed.
- Leading, managing, and motivating the Senior Leadership Team and, with them and through them, all academic and support staff.
- The appointment of all staff.
- The assessment, appraisal, guidance, support, and professional development of all teaching staff with the objective of achieving inspirational teaching at all levels.
- The marketing of the School, including fundraising, the production of publicity, literature and any advertising, the public relations profile, management of the School's website and the establishment of positive relations with prospective parents.
- Recruiting a full complement of pupils, and overseeing admission and entrance procedures.
- Planning and implementing an effective curriculum and timetable.
- Planning and implementing the academic organisation of the School, reviewing as appropriate.
- Monitoring pupils' progress and ensuring that parents are provided with regular and appropriate feedback setting realistic expectations.
- Creating the appropriate balance between all areas of school life, extra-curricular activity, and community involvement.
- Maintaining good communications and relationships within the School and with key stakeholders including neighbours, local schools, the local community, and former pupils.
- Developing and maintaining good professional relationships with the parents of pupils.
- Delegating effectively and appropriately to achieve the above.

The Role

Working with the Advisory Board

The Head is responsible, directly and by delegation, for:

- Ensuring that the School meets all its legal obligations including compliance with Child Protection, Data Protection and Health and Safety regulations.
- Taking overall responsibility for the delivery of excellent pastoral care – ensuring the security and pastoral care of all pupils in line with safeguarding legislation, including safer recruitment and working alongside external agencies as appropriate.
- Implementing policies agreed by the Board and contributing to the vision for the future of the School through strategic leadership and planning.
- Submitting policy proposals for the approval of the Board or assisting the Board in the development of tactical and strategic policies, as well as implementing and monitoring these policies.
- In partnership with the Chair, ensuring that the Board receives sufficient and timely information and advice in order to make informed decisions.
- Implementing Board decisions.
- Preparing and updating the School Development Plan.

General

- To undertake other duties appropriate to the general purpose of the post, which may from time to time be reasonably assigned by the Chair, COO or the CEO.
- To carry out teaching duties as appropriate and time permits.
- To set an example of continuous personal development, participating in appropriate training in order to maintain an up-to-date professional expertise.
- The new Head should be aware of trends in education, the requirements of schools and public examinations and, where appropriate, recommend policy changes to the Governors.
- It is expected that the Head will represent the School on sector bodies which the Advisory Board deem suitable.

The Person

Candidates must be genuinely committed to working in an environment where the happiness, wellbeing and safety of the children in our care is central to all that is done.

In addition, good candidates for the role are likely to demonstrate much of the following:

- Senior leadership experience.
- Strong academic credentials and preferably QTS status and NPQH.
- Understanding of and support for the values and ethos of the School, and commitment to embedding successful all-round education and co-education.
- Inclusive leadership, valuing and promoting the diversity of the community.
- Commitment to delivering top academic, co-curricular and pastoral provision for every pupil, mindful of their wellbeing.
- Natural and easy communication with pupils, staff, parents, prospective parents, the governors and alumni.
- The skills and integrity to win confidence and trust from all stakeholders
- Ability to articulate and promote the strengths of Clayesmore and raise the profile of the School.
- A strategic and analytical mind with vision but also a degree of pragmatism – ready and able to address the complex political, social and economic issues ahead.
- Change management skills.
- Commitment to partnerships and bursaries – with a strong sense of social responsibility.

The Person

- A primary commitment to Clayesmore but a broader interest in embracing, promoting and contributing to the Inspired Learning Group.
- A national and global perspective on the best in education with a forward-looking but discerning approach to selecting what is truly of value in a fast-changing educational climate.
- Effective team leadership, with the skills to motivate, inspire and enable all in the leadership team and the wider staff.
- The skills to appoint the very best people.
- Courage, high expectations and inner steel.
- Strength in the softer skills – the ability to listen, empathise and show compassion.
- Financial and commercial acumen.
- Commitment to ensuring that Clayesmore is compliant with all regulations, with a thorough understanding of the Head's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and Child Protection issues and a clear commitment to delivering best practice in safeguarding.
- Enjoyment of learning and the sense of humility which accompanies the desire and will to develop personally and professionally.
- A sense of joy and optimism in leading the Clayesmore community.

The Application Process

Interested candidates for the position of Head at Clayesmore are invited to contact Inspired Learning Group prior to application for a discussion.

The deadline for receipt of the application is **12 noon on Friday 31st October 2025**.

Applications should be made electronically to Inspired Learning Group. You should submit the following (both in PDF format):

- A completed application form
- A covering letter addressed to Mr James Fowler, Chair of the School Board. The letter should explain your reasons for applying.

If you have any questions about uploading your application documents, please contact Tom Havard, Head of Recruitment and Resourcing at Inspired Learning Group, tom@inspiredlearninggroup.co.uk, **07706323847**

The process is as follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by e-mail and initial call.
- Long List interviews with the Governors' panel will take place via Teams/at the ILG head office in Stanmore, the week commencing the **10th November 2025**.
- During the week commencing **17th November 2025**, short-listed candidates will be invited to visit the school and to undertake a personality test online.
- Short List interviews with the Governors' panel will take place at Clayesmore week commencing **1st December 2025**.

The Inspired Learning Group is totally committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and expects the same from its employees. All new staff will be subject to enhanced DBS clearance, identity checks, qualification checks and employment checks to include an exploration of any gaps within employment, two satisfactory references and registration with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).





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Inspired Learning Group