

H E A D T E A C H E R

Candidate Information Pack

Freegrounds Infant School

Hobb Lane · Hedge End · Southampton · Hampshire

A warm, vibrant community where every child is at the heart of everything we do.

Closing date for applications: Monday 7 September 2026

For appointment from January 2027



What's inside this pack

WELCOME	A message from the Co-Chair of Governors	3
OUR SCHOOL	Freegrounds — at a glance	4
OUR VISION & VALUES	Rights, respect and a lifetime of learning	5
OUR CURRICULUM	How we bring learning to life	6
OUR COMMUNITY	What our children, parents and team want in a headteacher	7
OUR TEAM	Staffing structure	8
THE ROLE	Headteacher — at a glance	9
	Top 3 priorities for year one	10
	Key responsibilities	11
	Person specification - Essential	12
	Person specification - Desirable	13
WORKING WITH US	What Freegrounds offers you	14
	Education in Hampshire	15
SAFEGUARDING	Our shared commitment to children	16
HOW TO APPLY	Key dates and timeline	17
VISIT US	Come and see Freegrounds for yourself	18
THANK YOU	We look forward to hearing from you	19

A message from the Co-Chairs of Governors



Welcome from the Co-chairs of Governors

Thank you for your interest in the position of Headteacher at Freegrounds Infant School. On behalf of the Governing Body, we are delighted to introduce you to our school and to share what makes our community such a warm, ambitious, and rewarding place to lead.

What we value and are looking for

We are proud of our friendly, family-oriented atmosphere and the strong partnerships between staff, families and governors. We seek a Headteacher who will:

- **Lead with warmth and integrity**, building on our strengths while setting ambitious goals for every child.
- **Be visible and approachable**, supporting staff wellbeing and fostering a culture of professional learning.
- **Champion early years practice and inclusion**, ensuring every child is known, valued and challenged.
- **Inspire the whole school community**, celebrating what makes Freegrounds special and raising aspirations for all pupils.

Our governance

Our governing body is active and skilled, working closely with staff to provide clear strategic direction, sound financial stewardship and strong accountability. Visit our website for more information: <https://www.freegrounds-inf.hants.sch.uk/governors>

Visit us

We warmly encourage you to visit Freegrounds Infant School to see our pupils and staff in action and to experience the positive atmosphere for yourself. Thank you for considering this role. We look forward to receiving your application and learning about the experience and vision you would bring to Freegrounds Infant School.

With warm regards,

Gill Wright & Ian Rolls

Co-chairs of Governors, Freegrounds Infant School



Freegrounds — at a glance



208

pupils on roll

5-7

age range (Years R-2)

2FE

form entry · PAN 60

Good

Ofsted, Feb 2023

12.5%

eligible for FSM

~13%

SEN support / EHCP

Freegrounds Infant School is a community infant school in the heart of Hedge End, Southampton. We share our site with Freegrounds Junior School, offering a seamless 5-11 educational journey for local families.

Rights, respect and a lifetime of learning

OUR VISION

We encourage every child to develop confidence, a strong sense of identity, and the skills to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. We want our children to grow into responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to local, national and global communities — and who carry a love of learning with them long after they leave us.

"Pupils are at the heart of this warm and vibrant school. They are safe and happy here. Everyone is welcome."

An Ofsted Inspector, 2023

OUR VALUES

Our Values underpin the way we at Freegrounds work, behave and treat all members of the school community.

For detailed descriptors of our values, see our website:
<https://www.freegrounds-inf.hants.sch.uk/our-values>

Creativity

Respect

Independence

Teamwork

Resilience

Thinking

How we bring learning to life

Our curriculum is built on early reading, oracy and the Rights of the Child — with signature programmes anchoring our practice in each core area. In addition to the national curriculum covering the key subjects for EYFS and KS1, we have adopted whole-school approaches & ethos in a number of areas.

For more information on aspects of our curriculum, please see our website: <https://www.freegrounds-inf.hants.sch.uk/curriculum>



Whole-School Approaches & Ethos

Cultural Capital

Kinetic Letters Handwriting

Protected Characteristics

Rights Respecting Schools

SMSC and British Values

The Empowerment Approach

Thrive

Wellbeing

ELSA

What our children, parents and team want in a headteacher

Our staff said



Approachable, caring and relationship-focused

Builds strong relationships and maintains an open-door culture.

Fair, consistent and supportive of staff

Treats everyone equally and supports wellbeing

Clear and effective communicator

Communicates clearly, listens to ideas, and works collaboratively.

Trusts and empowers staff professionalism

Champions staff expertise, supporting and empowering colleagues to contribute effectively to a solutions driven culture

Forward-thinking, organised and visible leader

Is proactive, open to change, and present within the school community.

Our parents said



Warm, approachable and caring

Gets to know children and families, builds trusting relationships, and creates a welcoming school where everyone feels valued.

Puts children's wellbeing first

Makes sure children are happy, safe and supported, while creating a positive environment where they can grow and thrive.

Listens and communicates clearly

Keeps parents informed, listens to their views, and works together with families to make the school the best it can be.

Supports staff to do their best

Values teachers and staff, trusts their experience, and creates a supportive team that helps children succeed.

An engaged leader with a clear vision

Is present in the school community, leads with confidence, and looks for ways to keep improving the school for all children.

Our children said



Kind, friendly and approachable

A headteacher who is caring, smiley, and easy to talk to.

Fun, positive and engaging

Brings humour, energy, and enjoyment to school life. Someone who knows magic tricks.

Visible and involved in school life

Spends time with children, comes and visits us in our classrooms.

Fair, calm and supportive

Not "strict and shouty"; understanding and helpful, someone who knows what a Megalodon is.

Enjoys making school exciting and rewarding

Encourages fun experiences, rewards effort, and shows enthusiasm for being there.

Staffing structure

A two-form entry infant school team of around 30 colleagues, working across leadership, teaching, support and operations.

ROLE	INDICATIVE COUNT	REMIT
LEADERSHIP		
Headteacher	1	Strategic leadership, vision, safeguarding (DSL) and accountability to Governors.
Deputy Headteacher & SENDCo / Inclusion Lead	1	Deputises for the Headteacher; leads curriculum, teaching and learning across EYFS and KS1. Coordinates SEN support and EHCPs; works with families and external agencies.
TEACHING		
Class Teachers (Years R, 1, 2)	7	2x Reception classes, 1x mixed KS1 class, 2x Year 1 and 2x Year 2 (2FE, PAN 60).
EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 Leads	3	In addition to teaching commitment, lead phase planning, assessment and transition; champion early reading, phonics and oracy.
SUPPORT & INCLUSION		
Higher-Level Teaching Assistants	3	Cover classes and lead targeted interventions in reading, phonics and maths.
Teaching Assistants	14	In-class support across all classes, plus SEN, EAL and 1:1 support where needed.
ELSA / Pastoral & Family Support	1	Emotional literacy support and family liaison, linking school, home and external services.
OPERATIONS & GOVERNANCE		
School Business Manager & Office	2	Finance, HR, admissions, communications and front-of-house for families.
Site, Catering & Lunchtime Team	10	Site management (1), and lunchtime supervisors keeping the school safe and welcoming.
Governing Body	9	Co-Chairs, Vice-Chair and committees providing strategic direction and holding leaders to account.

Headteacher — at a glance



TITLE	Headteacher
REPORTS TO	Co-Chairs of Governors / Governing Body
SALARY	Leadership scale — ISR L12-L18
CONTRACT	Permanent, full-time
START DATE	January 2027
LOCATION	Hobb Lane, Hedge End, Southampton SO30 0GG
LOCAL AUTHORITY	Hampshire County Council

Top 3 priorities for year one

1

Build on strengths, address key challenges

Leveraging existing strengths while addressing key challenges; maintaining high quality teaching and learning whilst strategically focussing on behaviour, attendance and finances.

2

Know the school and nurture relationships

Develop a strong understanding of the school and maintain the excellent, trusting, and collaborative relationships with pupils, staff, parents, governors, and the wider Freegrounds community.

3

Lead the digital transformation strategy

Leading the school in modernising its IT infrastructure by migrating systems to cloud-based services.

Key responsibilities

Vision & strategy

Set, articulate and lead the strategic direction of the school, embedding our values and the Rights of the Child.

Inclusion & SEND

Champion inclusion so every child — including those with SEND or EAL — thrives and belongs.

Safeguarding

Act as Designated Safeguarding Lead, ensuring children's welfare is always the first priority.

Family & community

Build strong relationships with parents, our Junior School partner, and the wider Hedge End community.

Teaching & learning

Drive excellent EYFS and KS1 practice with reading, phonics and oracy at the heart of the curriculum.

People leadership

Inspire, develop and care for staff; nurture talent and build a culture of trust and high expectations.

Governance & finance

Work in partnership with Governors to secure sound financial health and effective accountability.

Personal leadership

Be a visible, generous, values-led presence — every day, for every child.

Essential

Evidence: A = Application I = Interview

A. Qualifications & Experience	
Qualified Teacher Status	A
Proven experience as a Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher in an infant or primary school setting	A
Experience of leading in a Key Stage 1 / infant setting, with a strong understanding of EYFS-to-KS1 and KS1-to-KS2 transition	A/I
Experience of working collaboratively with local schools to share best practice and raise standards	A/I
B. Safeguarding & Inclusion	
Maintains robust, effective safeguarding practices and an open culture that protects children and staff	A/I
Deep commitment to SEND and inclusion: a whole-child approach aligned to the school's United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ("UNCRC") values	I
Commitment and understanding of diversity and willingness to celebrate differences and understand how that may impact on children's education	I
Understanding and commitment to supporting children's behaviour through a relational approach utilising the Empowerment Approach	I
Commitment to seeing children as individuals through a child-centered philosophy	I
C. Financial Management & Governance	
Able to set, monitor and balance a school budget in service of the school's vision	A/I
Understands and welcomes effective governance and the duty to give account	I
Proven ability to hold self and others to account, with transparent reporting	A/I

D. Leadership, Management & Culture	
Experience of evaluating, reviewing and developing a broad, coherent curriculum entitlement	A/I
Ensures effective use of formative and summative assessment across the curriculum	A/I
Sustains high-quality, expert, evidence-informed teaching across all subjects and phases	A/I
Upholds ambitious educational standards that prepare all pupils, including those with SEND, for their next phase of education and life	I
Ensures staff know their professional responsibilities and are held to account	A/I
E. Communication & Stakeholder Engagement	
Excellent verbal and written communication, tailored to varied audiences and stakeholders	A/I
Proven track record of meaningful engagement with parents, families and the wider community	I
Communicates decisions, vision and direction in a way that brings stakeholders on the journey	I
F. Vision, Curriculum & Continuous Improvement	
Forward-thinking and ambitious to improve outcomes while maintaining the school's distinctive ethos	I
Curious about current trends in education, with ambition to drive school improvement	I
Committed to a high-quality, personalised, arts-rich curriculum promoting creativity and exploration	I
Invested in the local educational community, building partnerships and raising standards locally	A/I

Desirable

Evidence: A = Application I = Interview

A. Qualifications & Experience	
Experience within a primary school (Reception–Year 6), giving a broader view of children’s educational journey	A
NPQH or equivalent senior leadership qualification	A
Familiarity with schemes used at the school (e.g. Kinetic Letters, Pip & Pap phonics)	A/I
B. Safeguarding & Inclusion	
Experience ensuring the protection and safety of pupils and staff through effective safeguarding	A/I
Experience and understanding of health and safety policies and procedures	A
D. Leadership, Management & Culture	
Established effective curricular leadership, developing subject leaders with relevant expertise and networks	A/I
E. Communication & Stakeholder Engagement	
Understands the particular importance of parent engagement in an infant setting, at the start of formal education	I
F. Vision, Curriculum & Continuous Improvement	
Willingness to leverage emerging technology to improve outcomes for children and the staff experience	I
Experience with cloud-based technology to support the transition, for a cloud emerging school	A/I

What Freegrounds offers you

- 1 A school children love**
A genuinely warm, vibrant community where pupils thrive and behaviour is calm and kind.
- 2 A supportive Governing Body**
Engaged, experienced Governors who challenge well and support you fully.
- 3 A dedicated staff team**
Talented teachers and support staff who care deeply and want to keep getting better.
- 4 Strong community and local partnerships**
Supportive PTA which raises over £20,000 per year for the school and close working with Freegrounds Junior School.
- 5 Investment in you**
Tailored CPD, coaching and access to Hampshire leadership development pathways.
- 6 A great place to work**
Wellbeing-first culture, family-friendly policies and a beautiful Hedge End setting.



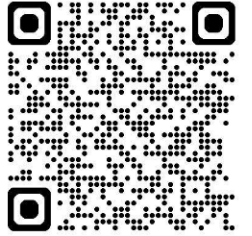
Life in Hedge End

Hedge End offers a vibrant, supportive community — a close-knit town with excellent amenities, green spaces and strong links across wider Hampshire. Freegrounds enjoys a positive reputation, with engaged families and dedicated staff. Quick access to the M27, M3 and A3 makes commuting easy. As Headteacher, you would lead a school at the heart of its community with a nurturing, ambitious culture.

Education in Hampshire

Make your best career move and choose to teach in Hampshire!

Hampshire has so much to offer, and we hope you will join us!



Why choose to teach in Hampshire?

Hampshire is committed to excellence in education and will continue to strive for the best possible outcomes for each and every child.

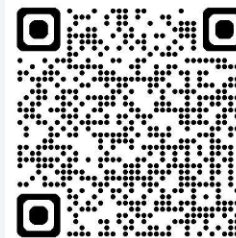
As one of the largest authorities in the country, we offer an incredible variety of teaching opportunities. Whether you're drawn to the challenges of urban and city schools or the close-knit community of rural primary schools, you'll find a vibrant setting for your next career move.

Inclusive workforce

Hampshire schools are committed to on-going partnership working across the Authority to ensure our communities are represented.

Our schools are dedicated to being diverse and inclusive employers and aim to recruit the best people from a wide range of backgrounds and talents.

Please see Inclusion and Diversity Partnership for more information.



Community and Diversity

Our schools are dedicated to serving their local communities and reflecting the rich cultural diversity of Hampshire.

We believe in local management, with the Local Authority providing support wherever needed, ensuring each school can thrive.

A Place for Every Student

Hampshire is home to over 170,000 school-age children across approximately 438 primary, 71 secondary, and 26 special schools.

While most are community schools, we have strong partnerships with Diocesan bodies to maintain places in church schools. Our 26 special schools and 42 Resourced Provision in mainstream schools offer tailored education and support for children with various needs, including learning difficulties, physical and sensory disabilities, and social and emotional needs.

Professional Development

We pride ourselves on offering first-class learning opportunities for our teachers, both internally and through external course providers.

For new headteachers, we offer a structured induction development programme in partnership with governors, helping to build close working relationships with other headteachers and Local Authority colleagues.

Support and Collaboration

We foster a strong ethos of collaboration and communication, with regular meetings of headteachers in various groupings to facilitate effective working relationships between the Local Authority and schools.

Hampshire Authority maintains an established network of advisers providing responsive and flexible support.

Our shared commitment to children

Freegrounds Infant School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Safer recruitment

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment. All successful candidates will be subject to Disclosure & Barring checks along with other relevant employment checks.

Privacy Notice

The School collects information about you in order to provide you with recruitment and employment services. We will use the information for the recruitment and selection process and, if successful, to activate employment with the School.

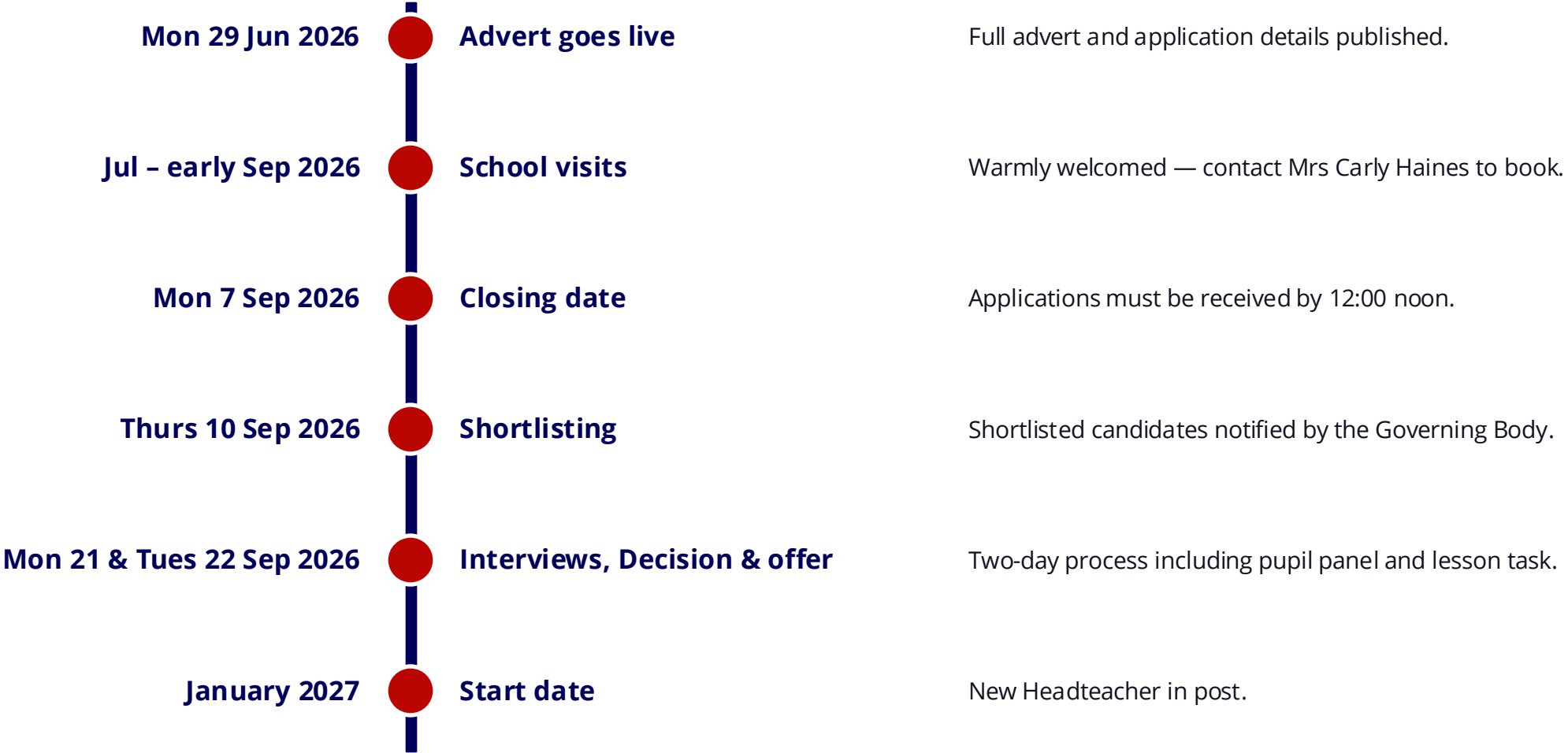
The legal basis for processing your personal data is that it is necessary for the performance of the employment contract or in order to take steps before entering into a contract and is necessary for the County Council to comply with a legal obligation.

The legal basis for processing special category data is that processing is necessary for the purposes of carrying out the rights and obligations in the field of employment, that it is necessary for the reasons of substantial public interest and that it is necessary for the purposes of the assessment of the working capacity of the employee.

You have some legal rights in respect of the personal information we collect from you. Please see the School's website for further details on their privacy notice and data protection policy.

You can contact the School's Data Protection Officer if you have a concern about the way they collect or use your data.

Key dates and timeline



Come and see Freegrounds for yourself



Arrange a visit

We warmly encourage prospective candidates to visit the school ahead of applying. Visits are available between July and early September 2026. To book a tour, please contact Mrs Carly Haines at the school office.

C O N T A C T

Freegrounds Infant School

Hobb Lane, Hedge End
Southampton, Hampshire SO30 0GG

Telephone: 01489 782075

Visits: adminoffice@freegrounds-inf.hants.sch.uk

Applications: htrecruitment@hants.gov.uk

Web: www.freegrounds-inf.hants.sch.uk



T H A N K Y O U

**We look forward to
hearing from you.**

*Every great school is built by the people in it. We hope you'll
choose to write the next chapter of ours.*

Freegrounds Infant School · Hedge End · Hampshire