



LONDON ACADEMY
OF EXCELLENCE
STRATFORD

APPOINTMENT OF HEAD

JANUARY 2026

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

The London Academy of Excellence (LAE) is an outstanding and innovative place of learning which has won a strong and deserved reputation for all-round academic achievement. The Academy is one of the best performing sixth form schools in the country and a beacon of progressive education and social mobility internationally.

The LAE achieves a unique combination of exceptional academic standards and positive social impact. The percentage of students joining the school from under-resourced homes far exceeds the national average, particularly at this phase of education. Those same students and their peers progress to the most competitive universities and degree-level apprenticeships in the UK and around the world in greater numbers than from almost any comparable school.

Our current Head, Mr. Alex Crossman, is leaving at the end of the Summer Term 2026 to take up an international post following five years of outstanding leadership. We are now seeking an inspirational individual to lead the school through the next, particularly exciting, phase of its evolution. The LAE is relocating to brand new facilities in Summer 2026 and expanding its student roll to meet overwhelming demand from aspirational applicants.

We are looking for a special individual who will be dynamic and responsive; a superb communicator; an ambassador who can court philanthropy; someone who will determine strategy in conjunction with any political changes in the sector; and someone with a business sense –who will do everything to enhance the lives of our young people and to continue to improve the LAE experience for all our students and stakeholders.

The successful candidate will take over a school with a strong sense of mission, an effective and stable leadership team, an invested teaching faculty, a range of corporate partners, and brand new facilities. They will benefit from the support of a highly engaged board, including several experienced Heads and former Heads from both the maintained and independent sectors.

We look forward to making this appointment and to working with the new Head to build on the positive momentum the school enjoys.

Tony Little

Chair of Governors

January 2026



SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The London Academy of Excellence (LAE) is an outstanding Inner-London school for aspirational and hardworking 16- to 19-year-old students looking for a high-quality learning and enriching co-curricular experience. The LAE is known as '*the academic school for independent thinkers*' and cultivating a sense of responsible agency among students is core to its mission.

The LAE is located in Stratford, London Borough of Newham, and the substantial majority of its students are drawn from the seven East London boroughs. Demand for places is exceptionally high. In 2025, more than 6,000 students applied for what were then just 250 available places in Year 12. Students are attracted by the school's holistic approach to education, which includes an extensive co-curricular and elective studies programme alongside its core A Level offer.

LAE opened in 2012 with the active sponsorship of seven leading independent schools. Four of those schools - Brighton College, Caterham School, Eton College, and Forest School -- continue to support the LAE as 'partner schools'. The LAE also benefits from the generous philanthropic support of its lead community partner, Latham & Watkins, one of the world's leading commercial law firms, as well as a number of individual donors. Partnerships with leading commercial organisations and philanthropic support is key to the school's ability to offer students an experience well beyond the norm at this phase of education.

The LAE has won a number of awards: it was the first free school in the country to be named 'The Sunday Times Sixth Form College of The Year' and was the first primarily state-funded school in the world admitted to the World Leading Schools Association. The LAE continues to be one of the highest achieving mainstream sixth form providers in the whole of the UK per the Sunday Times 'Parent Power' reports. Ofsted has twice judged the LAE to be Outstanding in All Areas (see official report [here](#)).

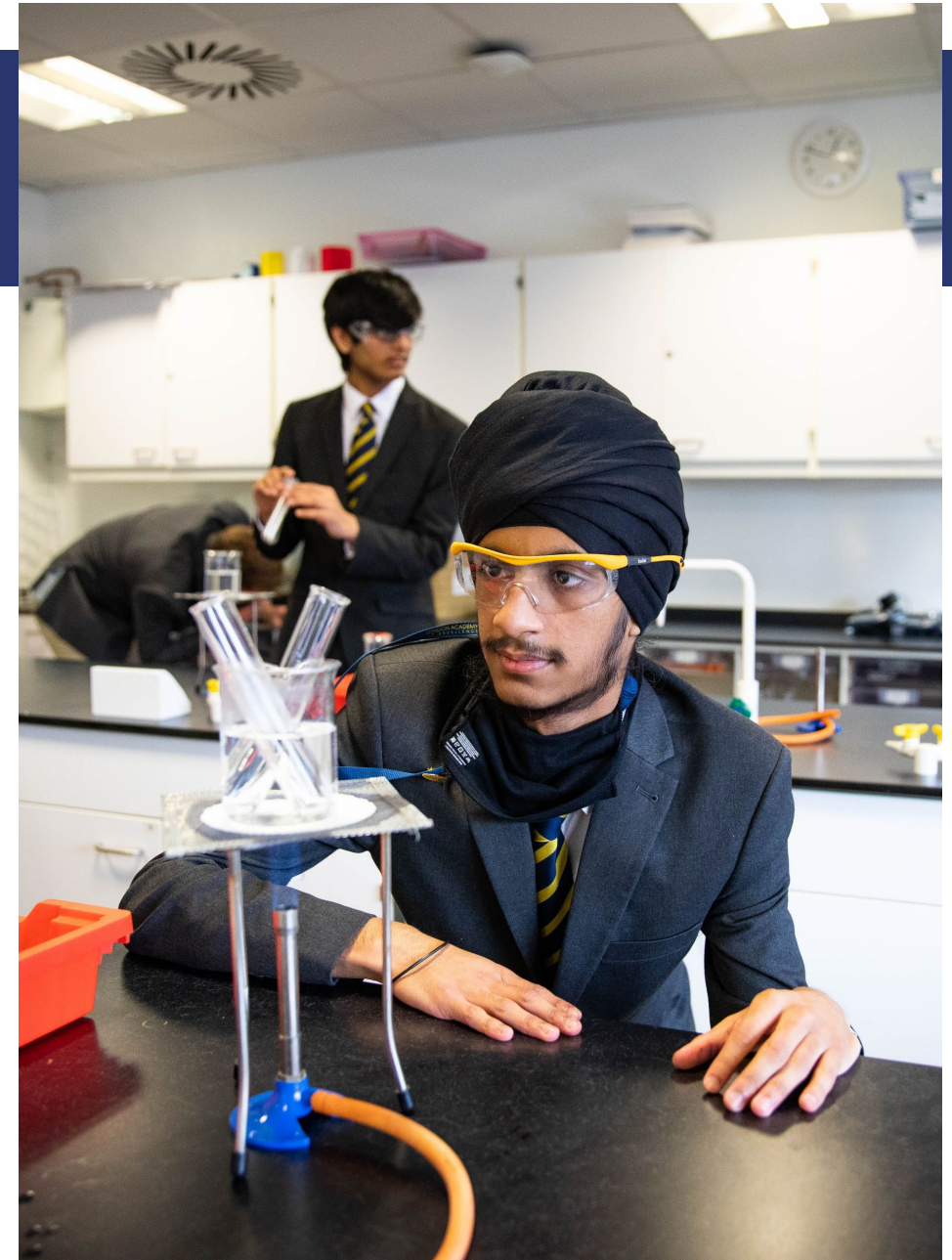


LOCATION & FACILITIES

From September 2026, the LAE will occupy a fine new, purpose-built site on Stratford High Street. The government's investment in this new space is testament to LAE's success. The new school building, extending over eight floors, is equipped with excellent spaces for teaching and learning, modern science laboratories, an IT suite, a lecture theatre, a well-equipped school library, music practice rooms, an extensive school canteen and substantial supervised study spaces.

The LAE is close to modern high-quality sporting facilities including the Queen Elizabeth Park, the Olympic stadium and Velodrome. The school makes active use of these facilities to mount its extensive sporting and physical activities programme. A growing range of cultural facilities are also located nearby on London's bustling 'East Bank'. These include the Sadler's Wells East dance theatre, the V&A East Museum, and the BBC Music Studios (opening in 2027). The school is also located directly opposite the Westfield Stratford Shopping Centre, with its extensive range of shops and restaurants.

The LAE is three minutes' walk from Stratford Station, one of London's main public transport hubs. The school is easily accessible via London Underground lines (Central, Elizabeth and Jubilee), the London Overground, Docklands Light Railway, mainline trains to London and to northern home counties and East Anglia, and an extensive network of bus routes.



ETHOS & VALUES

The LAE is proud to be an inclusive school that promotes equality and where cultural and religious diversity is respected and valued. The school's core values are: Excellence, Humility, Independence, Kindness, Resilience, and Respect. These are evident in all aspects of school life. Examples include:

- the school's Student Council plays an active role in evaluating school performance and in suggesting improvement strategies
- students present about their experience at every meeting of the five governors' committees listed above
- student-led networks play an essential role in the life of the school, providing vital support for students during testing times, leading engagement with the wider community and raising funds for charitable causes
- the school house system provides every student with a more accessible community of peers within the school from which they can derive support and develop friendships
- academically, students are encouraged to engage intellectually but positively with controversial and contemporary issues through a regular lecture programme, PSHE tutorials and educational trips and visits

The LAE wants students to be excited by attending the school, helping to create an 'academic buzz' and to leave the school with a strong love of learning for its own sake, something they will carry forward with them to their chosen universities.

Students take their studies seriously: LAE is not a drop-in sixth form where students come and go during a school day or week. Students expect to be present for the full school day and to engage academically well beyond the narrow confines of any specific A Level specification.

While academic progress and A Level success are key aims for its students, LAE is also keen to ensure they develop an enthusiasm for the world beyond the classroom – in particular sport, music and the performing arts. The school has one of the widest co-curricular programmes available anywhere in the state sector.



LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

As well as the Head, the Senior Leadership Team currently comprises a Deputy Head and Business Director and four Assistant Heads (Academic, Research in Learning, Pastoral and Safeguarding, Personal Development). A highly qualified teaching staff also supports the Head. A significant proportion of LAE teachers hold PhDs and almost all hold masters' degrees to read in the subjects they teach.

LAE has an extremely experienced Board of Governors that comprises current and former heads of the leading independent schools that sponsor LAE, amongst others. The Board oversees the Head's day-to-day leadership of the school and helps to set strategic objectives for the school's future. The Chair of Governors is Tony Little, former Head Master of Eton College.

The governors support and challenge the LAE to ensure that it is fulfilling its vision, not only for its students but also for the wider community. A rich and diverse range of skills, knowledge and interests are represented on the Board of Governors, and it aims to play a role of "critical friend" to the school and its leadership team. There are five governors' sub-committees: Education, Safeguarding, Finance, Development and Compliance. These committees bring together governors, staff and external advisors, some of whom are drawn from our commercial partners, to enhance the quality and ensure the efficiency of the school's operations.

The finances of the school are healthy and stable. In addition to government funding, the LAE has been fortunate to receive funding from sponsors, enabling it to offer a much wider curriculum and more support for students in the greatest need. In addition to the school's lead sponsor, Latham & Watkins, a number of other companies and foundations make significant contributions and The Friends of LAE Scheme has successfully engaged parents in partner schools to support the education of LAE students.

The LAE Development Committee's remit is to steward those who have been generous to LAE and to help the Head identify and court new funding sources including possible matched funding schemes with larger corporations. Continuing to cultivate philanthropic support in pursuit of the school's mission is a core responsibility of the Head.



ACADEMIC & CURRICULUM

The school offers a choice of 15 A Level subjects. These are mainly the A-Levels most commonly required or preferred by leading universities to get on to a range of degree courses, i.e. Biology, Chemistry, Economics, English Literature, French, Geography, History, Italian, Maths, Further Maths, Philosophy, Physics, Politics, Psychology, and Spanish.

In addition to their three or four A Levels, all LAE students are expected to engage enthusiastically with the school's bespoke programme of Elective Studies, which cultivates a breadth of academic interests and a love of learning for its own sake. Electives include Biochemistry, Data science, Life-Writing, Linguistics and Robotics. Along with an opportunity for community engagement, sports, music and drama are available outside the academic curriculum.

Ofsted described careers education at the LAE as "of a quality unlike any we've ever experienced". All LAE students benefit from a Futures Programme designed to orient them in the five key industry sectors in which most aspire to build careers: law, finance, medicine, engineering and technology. Bespoke careers and destinations advice is available from the school's dedicated careers advisor. All students are eligible for a professional mentor employed by Latham & Watkins or one of the school's commercial partners.

Academic results are clearly outstanding. In 2025, students achieved A Level grades far above the national average: 30% of grades were at A*, 67% of grades were A*-A, and 91% were A*-B. This year has seen a record number of Oxbridge offers with 62 offers across both universities with four more under consideration for foundation degrees. Almost all LAE students will go on to study at Russell Group universities or their equivalents in other countries. LAE's alumni cover all 24 Russell Group universities and the US Ivy League.



PASTORAL

The LAE aims to be a close and supportive community where students are encouraged and supported because it recognises that the A Level study period can be intense. The student retention rate is more than 99%.

Through the House system, every student has a tutor whom they see daily and who is responsible for their wellbeing. Tutor groups deliberately mix year 12 and year 13 students. Time is set aside every week for individual mentoring, and LAE also runs wellbeing sessions.

The LAE adopts a proactive approach to identifying and supporting sixth formers who are likely to benefit from Learning Support and this is underpinned by a strong and highly organised programme designed to address individual learning needs. The school regards Learning Support as crucial to each individual's success. All teachers are trained to ensure that lessons challenge and support all their students and Learning Support is provided to those students who are likely to benefit from it.

As part of the school's strong commitment to ensuring wellbeing and a strong sense of community, students can be supported academically, pastorally and financially to help them reach their potential and ensure they are healthy and happy. This ranges from free school meals to valuable bursaries for students who fall into one or more groups defined as vulnerable. The LAE discretionary bursaries are also available to help students pay for academic resources, travel to school, educational visits and sports kit.



CO-CURRICULAR

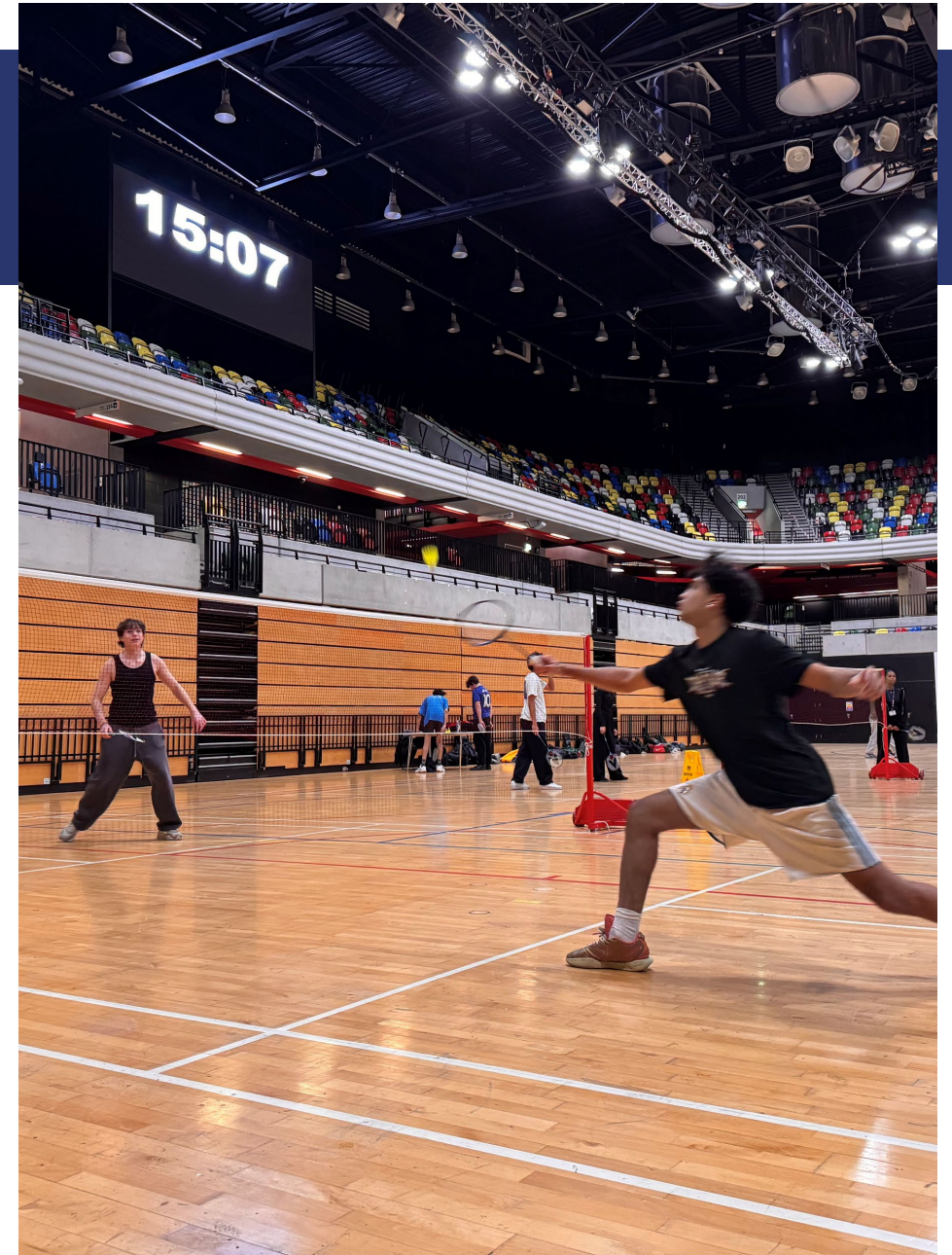
The LAE offers a wide range of activities to help complement academic learning – in sport, the arts and in other clubs and societies. It is unusual for a state sixth form school to place such store on a well-resourced co-curricular programme but this is seen as a very important part of the LAE experience.

On Thursday afternoons, students participate with staff in a wide-ranging programme of sports including: football, basketball, netball, swimming, running, tennis, badminton, cricket, self-defence, table tennis, yoga, and Zumba. As the school does not have its own extensive facilities, sports are mainly accessed using local facilities that include those at Queen Elizabeth Park, including regular use of the Velodrome and the Copper Box Arena.

There is a broad selection of weekly clubs and societies on offer including: BAME Network, Book Club, Chess, Coding Club, Cooking Club, Debating, Drawing, Environment Club, LAE News, Maths Club, Music Appreciation, Historical and Political Research Society, Philosophical Discussion Club, Classical Greek, Linguistics, Amnesty and STEM Club.

Many students like to take part in Music, Dance and Drama. There are dance workshops, a Drama group that stages regular performances, Music lessons (in guitar and piano), a school band and singing groups.

In addition, the school offers the LAE Diploma and Gold Diploma. These 'in-house' qualifications are awarded in recognition of co-curricular achievement in sports, music, drama, House competitions and volunteering.



PARTNERSHIPS & ALUMNI

Partnerships

The LAE continues to benefit from the support of four of the UK's leading independent schools: Brighton College, Caterham School, Eton College and Forest School. Each House at LAE is linked to, and named after, one of these schools, which greatly enhances the range of opportunities on offer to students. The school also works closely with London Academy of Excellence, Tottenham – a sibling school established under the purview of Highgate School.

Corporate partnerships are integral to the school's offering, with City-based companies providing mentorship, work experience and lectures to the student body. They also provide an invaluable stream of additional income.

Strong relationships with the Sutton Trust, the Fulbright Commission and universities including Oxford, Cambridge and King's College London enable LAE students to take part in summer schools in the UK and abroad. There are also excellent work experience opportunities available through governors, partner schools and their alumni.

Further, in partnership with the Laidlaw Schools Trust, the LAE is supporting a venture to deliver a rigorous academic programme to children in the North East of England – centred on Durham, Newcastle and Sunderland.

Alumni network

Many students join the school's recently established alumni network to remain in touch for years after they leave. Alumni play an increasingly important role in the life of the school, giving talks, mentoring students and making introductions to employers, helping with university applications and orientation and, increasingly, by joining the teaching faculty or volunteering on a governors' committee.



THE ROLE

The Appointment

The LAE's next Head will join one of a select few schools held up as a national beacon of education delivering a purposeful social agenda at an exciting stage in its evolution. The school has thrived for the past five years under the leadership of Alex Crossman. With key strategic goals, such as the development of the new school building, achieved, the next Head will be in a unique position to lead the LAE to even greater heights. For the right candidate, this career-enhancing role will present an exciting and highly rewarding challenge.

Key Objectives

The Head will work to fulfil the following objectives in several key areas:

Development and expansion:

- To grow the student role and deliver an exciting transition to new adjacent premises with a capacity of 750 – an increase of 50%
- To ensure the continuation of a strong strategic and operating framework that enables sustained growth and high performance, including excellent education and pastoral care.
- To deepen the school's engagement with existing commercial partners and philanthropic supporters, and to develop new relationships that can enhance the quality and sustainability of students' experience.

Social mission:

- To continue to recruit and retain students who embody the School's ethos, with admissions supporting access for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- To transform society and, in particular, provide otherwise unavailable life opportunities to local young people, many from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- To ensure aspirations for life beyond LAE are ambitious and purposeful where leaving students have a desire to give something back to society and are in a position to influence and deliver this.

Leadership and advocacy:

- To act as the School's principal ambassador and evangelist, securing the commitment of staff, students, parents, alumni, donors and the wider community to the School's ethos and strategic direction.
- To lead on external relations, communication and advocacy, developing strong partnerships with the School's lead corporate sponsor, independent sector partners, local secondary schools, universities—including those represented on the Board—and the local and national media.
- To support the Governing Body in its stewardship of the School through active engagement with Governors and working committees.
- To lead the continual drive for the highest standards in all areas of school life, setting and monitoring ambitious annual performance targets, including student recruitment, achievement and destinations.
- To lead the development of a decisive, cohesive and proactive Senior Leadership Team, ensuring that roles and responsibilities are clear and that the highest standards of performance are expected and delivered.
- To lead the development of a culture of continuous improvement and to ensure effective professional development and performance management for the whole staff, supporting an exceptional educational experience for the School's students.
- To develop and maintain constructive working relationships with all local and national stakeholders.

Staffing:

- To appoint and retain high quality staff who will create and deliver innovative teaching and learning, continuing to achieve some of the best value-added results of England's sixth forms

THE PERSON

The Appointment

The role of Head of LAE requires an inspirational leader with the vision, presence, and communication skills to further develop the sixth form in an increasingly competitive environment, enhancing opportunities for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Candidates need stamina, energy, and clarity of thought to provide strong leadership for the senior team; interpersonal skills to earn the respect of diverse stakeholders; and the intellect, sensitivity, and humility to engage widely while shaping strategy and policy alongside the Board of Governors.

They must demonstrate commitment to LAE's mission, values, and educational philosophy, and be able to articulate LAE's unique offering to the community and media. Applications from both maintained and independent school sectors are welcome. The Head is responsible for the effective leadership and management of LAE, its financial health, and, as a senior postholder, is appointed by and accountable to members and trustees, working within the Trust's Articles of Association.

Experience

- A proven track record of highly successful school leadership experience (perhaps as a Deputy Head seeking their first headship, or an experienced Head seeking a new socially minded opportunity), and an understanding of the challenges faced by a school provided for by public money in an urban context
- Proven experience of leading, developing and motivating high calibre, diverse teams with a strong commitment to the continued professional development of all colleagues
- Strong academic and intellectual credentials to command the respect of staff, students, parents and the wider community.

Skills and knowledge

- A first-class strategic thinker with the capacity to provide clear leadership in a changing and complex external environment
- A university graduate with appropriate teaching qualifications
- Excellent communication skills with a demonstrable ability to act as an effective and compelling ambassador for LAE with parents, students, feeder school heads and potential donors
- Commercial and political acumen and an understanding of how to deliver great education cost effectively
- An ability to recognise financial priorities and to work constructively with the business director
- A proven track record of successful delivery of the academic curriculum and a demonstrable commitment to the importance of a rich co-curricular programme
- A demonstrable appetite for educational innovation and a broad knowledge of a changing sector and the opportunities and risks this creates
- High levels of emotional intelligence and the cultural sensitivity and perspective to relate well to people across sectors, at all career stages, and from a diversity of backgrounds and cultures

Personal attributes

- A genuine commitment to the LAE values, ethos and educational philosophy
- A highly visible leader with the charisma, energy and ambition to inspire and motivate the different constituencies which make up the LAE community
- An empathetic relationship-builder with a sophisticated understanding of how to work effectively with multiple stakeholders, build strong teams, delegate effectively and bring out the best in colleagues
- Sensitivity towards different cultures and backgrounds
- Sound judgement, high levels of self-awareness, resilience and stamina, and a strong sense of personal and professional integrity
- A sense of humour, though not essential, is desirable.

HOW TO APPLY

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to London Academy of Excellence on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role via www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **LASACB**. Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application

The closing date for applications is noon on **Wednesday 18th February**.

Key Dates:

- First round panels will be held **Thursday 5th March**
- Final round panels will be held on **Thursday 12th March**

GDPR personal data notice:

According to GDPR guidelines, Saxton Bampfylde Ltd are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.

Safeguarding:

LAE is committed to safeguarding young people and promoting the welfare of children. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening and safer recruitment checks appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service. All positions within LAE are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

