

Your career at the GDST

Where girls learn without limits



GDST
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

Global leaders in girls' education

We are delighted to welcome you to the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST).

Founded by four fearless suffragists over 152 years ago, the Girls' Day School Trust has a strong history of pioneering innovation.

Today, the GDST is a family of 25 girls' schools, including two academies and 23 independent schools, and is recognised as among the global leaders in girls' education. Each school in the GDST has its own distinct identity, but all are united in our collective mission to ensure that girls learn without limits, so they can go on to lead lives without limits. Our purpose is to reach as many girls as possible, with the aim of supporting and empowering young women to achieve their full potential.

We pride ourselves on offering excellent academic and pastoral provision in our schools. Every member of staff, regardless of their role, contributes to our success in providing an irresistible education. We tailor our approach to how girls learn best, providing them with an environment in which they can flourish, and helping them develop the attributes they need to excel. This means that GDST girls are supported to be happy, confident, and fearless.

As global leaders in girls' education, our mission has always been to deliver an education that empowers girls to thrive when they leave our schools, in a world that remains far from equal. Understanding girls' perspectives on the challenges they face is central to helping us achieve that mission.

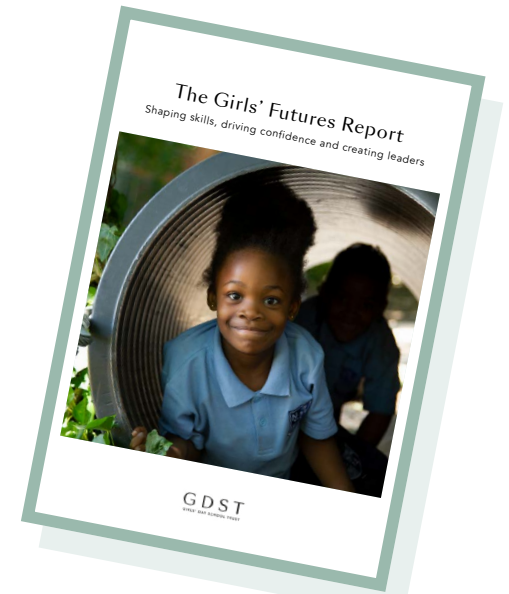


To mark the GDST's 150th anniversary, we commissioned a landmark survey of 5,000 girls in state and independent schools and academies across the UK; *The Girls' Futures Report*. Our aim was to understand what matters most to girls today and how they feel about what lies ahead in their futures – in both their personal and professional lives. Our parallel survey of a control sample of boys revealed the persistence of significant gender disparities in young people's levels of confidence about themselves and their world.

The research was widened to include a large sample of GDST pupils, and the results showed unequivocally that girls from GDST schools have greater confidence that they can achieve their goals and greater belief in their schools' ability to prepare them for the future than girls attending non-GDST schools. We believe this demonstrates 'the GDST difference'.

We further analysed these findings in our complementary publication *The GDST Difference*, which breaks down why GDST schools and all-girl learning environments evidently offer the best start in life for young women.

Our pioneering work in girls' education never stops as we continue to demonstrate that girls-only education leads to higher academic achievement, greater diversity of subject choice, stronger self-confidence and resilience, and enhanced career progression.



READ THE GIRLS' FUTURES REPORT

gdst.net/education/the-girls-futures-report

Our values

Girls First

They are the focus of everything we do.

Fearless

We act and speak with conviction and are not afraid to think differently.

Forward Thinking

We embrace change, are always pioneering and help women shape the future.

Family

We are collaborative and supportive. We share our learning and experiences, and open opportunities for our community.

Fulfilling

We invest in our staff so they can enjoy rewarding careers and purposeful lives.

Pioneering and shaping the future of girls' education

As a member of staff at a GDST school, you will join a thriving community of teachers and professional services staff across our independent schools and academies. Each school is proudly independent, but we are united in our mission to reach as many girls as possible.

Each school's leadership has autonomy in setting the curriculum and the shape and structure of the educational offer. The GDST Innovation and Learning team, led by GDST Director Dr Kevin Stannard, seeks to support each individual school to be excellent in its own right, and beyond that to help schools gain by virtue of being part of the network of excellent schools. For example, the educational offer available to our pupils, and indeed the professional opportunities available to our staff, have been enhanced through cross-Trust collaborations on the impact of AI and EdTech more broadly, and pupil programmes like LEAD and SpaceTech. The team is also focused on the crucial part that research in schools plays in underpinning our advocacy for equity in girls' education.

Research and advocacy

Part of our role is research into and advocacy of girls-only education. We do this through encouragement of research projects in GDST schools, producing our own research, and through our active membership of the International Coalition of Girls' Schools. We regularly update our research compendium of *Why and How Girls Thrive in Girls' Only School* which draws together a significant body of research of the benefits of our single-sex setting which allows teachers and schools to focus more effectively on the needs of individual girls. Our landmark *Girls' Futures* report in 2022 highlighted the aspirations of girls and the barriers to success that need to be addressed by the education system. In response, a forthcoming White Paper (2024), *Learning Without Limits*, will provide the expertise and practical steps to enable the education sector to transform its approach to teaching girls, particularly those in a co-educational environment.



DISCOVER THE GDST
DIFFERENCE

gdst.net/about-us/the-gdst-difference

A spotlight on GDST schools

“To be a GDST girl is a very great gift... we are encouraged to be exactly who we want to be.”

- Zelah, Oxford High School



WATCH ALL GDST
SPOTLIGHT VIDEOS

[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)



Staff training and professional development

Our *GDST Learn* programme provides bespoke training for all staff – those based in the classroom as well as those in professional service roles. The Innovation and Learning Team are keen to respond to demands for training in all areas of our practice and, as such, the content of the programme is subject to regular review and development.

GDST Learn is calibrated to the Trust's strategic priorities, and informed by each school's own requirements. The in-house training programme provides a range of courses, programmes, conferences, and forums run over the academic year; and many online courses and webinars, as well as opportunities to gain professional qualifications (professional development grants are available for the latter). The *GDST Learn* programme is designed to reflect and reinforce the commitment to the education of girls.

The GDST runs a range of programmes to support staff in their career progression. We are particularly committed to 'growing our own' cohort of leaders at every level.

We are always seeking to innovate in our offer to teachers. While face to face events are highly valued in building cohesion and a sense of common purpose, the growth of our programme has been possible through taking up online opportunities – two thirds of our programme is online, making possible more frequent, shorter and more focused opportunities for individual teachers.

Innovation is very evident – fittingly – in our EdTech offer, which includes *EdTech25*, a ground-breaking series of short sessions held in late afternoons, each focused on teachers' use of specific apps or tools. Our in-house EdTEch and Innovation coaching programme exists to develop a cohort of practitioners who are experts not just in particular aspects of tech, but skilled in passing it on and supporting colleagues.

Beyond the courses and formal programmes offered centrally, there are frequent opportunities for colleagues in similar roles to come together, both online and face to face, meeting as communities of practice – examples include Early Years leads; school nurses; educational visit coordinators; heads of sixth; heads of psychology, marketing directors, and science technicians.

Developing your career

Developing your teaching career at the GDST

Recognising and rewarding excellence in classroom teaching.

Many teachers aspire to excellence in teaching without wanting to move into school management roles. The GDST aims to provide a platform for such practitioners, for example in designating subject champions to coordinate the online subject collaboration areas; and inviting colleagues to help design and deliver professional development sessions across the Trust.

The GDST seeks to recognise and reward truly outstanding teaching, and to identify a cadre of 'consultant teachers' who operate across the Trust, sharing their expertise.

School Consultant Teachers are defined as those who use their knowledge, skills and dispositions to improve the practice of their colleagues and enhance learning across their school. Centrally provided training and collaborative digital learning platforms support this career pathway.

Trust Consultant Teachers have expert skills in their specialism, which they use to enhance provision for pupils across GDST schools. They do this through offering support to all GDST teachers. They fulfil this role one day a week while remaining in the classroom for the remaining time. Areas covered by current TCTs include: sixth form; careers; maths; STEM; SEND; pastoral; digital learning, and sport.



Cross Trust initiatives and student events

Student enrichment thrives across the GDST through events and programmes that bring them together and offer opportunities that transcend individual schools.

The **GDST Sports Scholars' Day** gathers over 300 students annually, celebrating athleticism and leadership; while **sports rallies** draw thousands, fostering resilience and teamwork. Role models, including Olympic champions, inspire girls to excel through dedication. In several sports, GDST Select teams represent the family at the highest level.

In STEM fields, the **GDST Junior Science** event at the Royal Institution challenges stereotypes. Led by female PhD mentors, it showcases girls' prowess in science. Initiatives like the **GDST Women in Engineering Competition** and cross-school **Robotics Tournaments** further defy gender norms, highlighting talents in traditionally male-dominated arenas.

The **GDST Junior Maths Event** at Oxford's Mathematical Institute, and **Pure Maths collaborative courses** across Senior Schools cultivate collaborative problem-solving that is crucial for STEM success.

The arts flourish at the GDST, supported by events like the **GDST Shakespeare at the Globe** event, and the **GDST Sing Juniors** and **Seniors Concerts** at the Royal Academy of Music, where students showcase their talents under professional guidance.

Cultural diversity is celebrated at the **GDST Languages Festival**, inspiring young linguists with global perspectives.

Supported by a collaborative network of educators, GDST students explore diverse career paths through initiatives like the **CareerStart** webinar series and **GDST Oxbridge Conference**.

These events are more than gatherings—they empower growth, forge bonds, and amplify voices, ensuring every GDST girl can learn and achieve without limits.

Sixth Formers across the Trust have access to two flagship diploma programmes: The Leadership and Enterprise Advanced Diploma (**LEAD**) is a GDST programme run in liaison with LSE, and involves students from each school working in teams to design, develop and deliver a sustainable social enterprise project. The **GDST SpaceTech** diploma programme has students working with NASA staff on coding challenges that help to unlock and interpret satellite data.



Developing your professional services career at the GDST

Working in education requires professional expertise across many areas to ensure the organisation thrives. As part of GDST professional service teams within our schools, you will have access to the GDST's leading training and development programme. You will also collaborate closely with other teams across GDST schools and GDST Trust Office. This includes activities such as attending conferences for peers within your network as an opportunity to share best practice, and to innovate and to collaborate around key opportunities and challenges. Your annual appraisal and updates in conversation with your manager will provide opportunities to discuss your contribution to the organisation, as well as career and personal development opportunities.



Founding members of the International Coalition of Girls' Schools

In 2021, the GDST became a founding member of the International Coalition of Girls' Schools (ICGS). ICGS is the leading advocate for girls' schools, connecting and collaborating globally with individuals, schools, and mission-aligned bodies dedicated to educating and empowering girls. Both the GDST and ICGS believe that gender equity and equality is an urgent, enduring, and global imperative, which demands that girls' schools continue to work together to forge educational spaces where girls' learning and healthy development are prioritised.

Membership Benefits include:

Introduction to Girls' Schools Course:

An online self-paced course designed for colleagues who are new to working with girls' schools.

The Headways Programme:

An online networking series that provides members with the chance to discuss opportunities and challenges facing all girls' schools. These sessions last one hour and take the form of a moderated conversation and pre-arranged visits.

Annual International Conference:

Each year ICGS hosts an international conference which offers over 600 delegates the chance to network, share best practices and interrogate the latest educational trends.

School Visits & Collaboration Programme:

Members have the chance to visit other member schools in various cities to discover the diverse and innovative ways that girls' schools operate. ICGS also connects member schools to advance the excellent work in the education and development of girls.

Educating Girls' Symposiums:

These one-day gatherings are hosted on the campus of an ICGS member school. ICGS offers several opportunities for girls' school educators to convene for an Educating Girls Symposium each year, with programmes taking place in various locations around the world. Wimbledon High School GDST is hosting the UK symposium this year on 8th November 2024.

Research Library:

ICGS has a deep and rich history embedded in research on girls' schools, and they continue to provide member schools access to a research database to support them in situating the value of girls' schools upon theoretical and pedagogical foundations.





Global Action Research Collective (GARC) Programme from the International Coalition of Girls' Schools

The Global Action Research Collaborative on Girls' Education is the world's first action research programme, created by ICGS, that engages girls' school educators from around the world in informed, collaborative, and disciplined action research. 38 colleagues from across the GDST have benefitted from the programme to date. The fellows are trained in action research methods and are supported throughout the process by a GARC Research Advisor. They then undertake a research project focused on a particular topic. There are regular catch ups with other fellows and regular staging posts throughout the programme. The application process is now open for the 2025/26 fellowship. The topic for this new cycle is: Navigating the AI Frontier in Girls' Schools. More information about the programme, including how to apply, can be found on the ICGS website.

Our golden threads

Undivided, our commitment to diversity and inclusion, and **One GDST**, our commitment to sustainability are two golden threads that weave through every aspect of school life and are principles that underpin everything we do.

Undivided - Commitment to diversity and inclusion

The GDST's celebration of diversity and its commitment to inclusion is embodied in our Undivided Charter. Social justice is a golden thread that runs through our work. GDST schools strive to provide every student with a sense of belonging, by ensuring they see themselves represented in the curriculum, are supported by inclusive policies and practices and that they are celebrated as individuals.

The GDST has a Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, a Trust Consultant Teacher, and each school has a Diversity and Inclusion lead. They work together to support you to collaborate on the important challenges of creating inclusive environments, to celebrate great work and share best practice.

Our Undivided strategy is supported by insights gathered annually from our staff and student body to understand feelings of belonging in the GDST. We also work with external experts and educators to continually grow in this area.



One GDST - Commitment to sustainability

Our students and staff are passionate about making a positive difference and dedicated to achieving a sustainable world. In 2022, as the GDST turned 150, we reaffirmed our commitment and harmonised our work on sustainability under the ethos – One World, One Future, One Chance. Under our One GDST strategy, we united the many campaigns started by our students as well as the work we lead on across the GDST, and set out our ambitious targets for the future at every level of the organisation.

This work extends across everything we do: providing a greener curriculum; a greener estate with inspiring and sustainable spaces. Students and staff are very much at the heart of, and are the drivers of this work.

School governance

GDST Council of Trustees

The GDST Council is legally responsible for the GDST's activities. They oversee the operations for the School Governing Boards, and are also responsible for the strategic direction and operational oversight of the organisation. This includes ensuring financial viability and controls, the safety and welfare of our students, and the realisation of their duties as employers of all GDST staff.

Ensuring school standards and support with inspections

One of the roles of the GDST Innovation and Learning Team is to harness the power and expertise of the network for the benefit of all schools. One of the ways it does this is by supporting schools to implement GDST policy and procedures such as those which sit around safeguarding, among others. The team also coordinates quality assurance through a programme of peer reviews and for provides data through the GDST Inform platform that schools can use as the foundations for their strategic development. The Innovation and Learning team also coordinates all aspects of inspection support with document preparation, in addition to fulfilling a governance function during the inspections themselves. Finally, the team facilitates communities of practice which promote cooperation, collaboration and collegiality around various subjects, roles and age-ranges.

School Governing Boards

Each of our schools has its own School Governing Board (SGB), made up of a group of volunteers with a passion and commitment to the GDST's mission. Our SGBs provide essential support and inspiration to the Head and their Senior Leadership Team, acting as a critical friend and sounding board, as well as monitoring school performance. Our SGBs act as vital links in an ambassadorial role between the schools and their local communities. Unlike standalone or state schools, the SGB is not the proprietor of the school, and as such does not have legal accountability – this falls to the GDST's Council.





GDST as your employer

At the GDST, we are devoted to the well-being, growth, and development of our employees.

The GDST Engage survey is an in-depth questionnaire which gives all employees an opportunity to share their opinions and feedback to help make the GDST a better place to work. The results are carefully analysed, with each school given support to create a school action plan based on feedback, with the same work also being undertaken by the GDST and implemented across the organisation.

We offer a comprehensive range of benefits designed to enhance both your professional and personal life. In addition to our leading training and development programme, this includes access to our Employee Assistance Programme, offering free and confidential counselling; training grants for obtaining further qualifications; interest free loans; a staff discount platform to retail offers and benefits and access to our financial wellbeing programme.

For more details, please visit www.gdst.net



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