



GATEWAY SCHOOL
GREAT MISSENDEN



Introducing Natasha Harrison, joining as our new Deputy Head

What attracted you to Gateway School?

“ Gateway School’s vision - empowering every pupil to excel in their educational journeys today, tomorrow and for the rest of their lives – whole heartedly reflects my own core values and beliefs. I am passionate about nurturing children’s individual gifts and talents, both academically and creatively and it was wonderful to witness this echoed at Gateway when I visited. After speaking to Cath Bufton-Green and meeting some of the staff and pupils, I immediately felt that this was a school I wanted to work in.

Drawing on the support, development opportunities and collaboration that being part of the larger Bellevue Education Group brings also appealed greatly to me. I am thrilled to be joining Gateway School and am very much looking forward to becoming part of the School community. ”

What skills and experience do you bring with you to the role of Deputy Head?

“ Throughout my sixteen years of teaching experience, I have been part of a Senior Leadership Team for fourteen years in two schools. My roles have varied from Assistant Head of KS1 and KS2; Assistant Head for Inclusion and for the last seven years, I have been a Deputy Head.

More recently, I have worked with Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire Maths Hub as a ‘Mathematics Specialist and Professional Development Lead’. This role involved providing a network of schools with tailored support to improve their teaching and learning and pupils’ engagement in mathematics.

Throughout my varied roles, I have developed many skills and successfully introduced and led initiatives that have impacted on pupil outcomes; raised attainment and developed the ‘whole’ child. My belief that every child can reach their full potential remains the foundation to any new initiative that I have implemented. ”

What are you most looking forward to about the role?

“ I am really excited about becoming part of the Gateway School community and meeting the parents and staff, but most of all, I look forward to greeting all of the pupils; to get to know them individually and find out about their skills, talents and interests and nurturing them to reach their full potential.

Another aspect of the role that I am looking forward to is mentoring staff. I thoroughly enjoy working with other teachers to support them in their journey of professional development to become an inspiring educator for the pupils they teach. I am looking forward to collaborating with staff at Gateway School and continuing to build on the strengths and developments of the school with an amazing team. ”

What has been your proudest moment in teaching?

“ There have been so many proud moments that I have had throughout my teaching career it's difficult to identify just one. Working with pupils to achieve their goal is always a proud moment. This could be helping a pupil solve a difficult maths question, achieve a certain score in a test or being brave enough to tackle a climbing wall on a residential trip.

I particularly love teaching maths and have had many occasions where I have taught pupils who believed they 'weren't good' at maths but then realising they loved the subject and wanting more and more challenges – these are moments that make teaching the most rewarding career.

Additionally, helping foster pupils' love for learning; develop a 'can do' attitude and apply a resilient mind-set is what I am most proud of. There have been many occasions where I have challenged pupils with a goal that initially seems impossible. Working together and taking one small step at a time towards achieving that goal are the moments that make me proud as a teacher and leader. Every journey starts with one small step. ”

What are your memories of school as a child?

“ I loved school as a child! I remember I always looked up to my teachers and knew that I wanted to be one when I grew up. I lived in Covent Garden when I was growing up so I was lucky enough to attend school in central London. It was an absolute privilege to spend my childhood living so close to landmarks such as Big Ben, St. Paul's Cathedral and the numerous art galleries. Theatre visits and trips to London parks were a regular occurrence at weekends and still remain a favourite hobby of mine today.

I remember two teachers, my Year 6 and Chemistry teacher, in particular, who taught me the value of hard work and sticking to something until you complete it to the best of your ability. That's not always easy, but this lesson in perseverance helped ready me for secondary school through to being a leader in school today. ”

What do you enjoy doing outside of school?

“ My perfect day out is a long walk or bike ride in the Chiltern hills with my husband, two daughters and two dogs. I love to keep active and am a keen runner, having completed many 10k, half marathons and marathons. I often like to sign up for events and challenge myself and have completed a 20mile obstacle course and 22mile trail run. More recently, I have begun open water swimming, which I have fallen in love with. I am passionate about all types of exercise and after qualifying as a fitness instructor in 2019, I have lead sessions at my local gym and for parents at my daughter's school to help and support others to become fitter and stronger.

Another keen interest is travelling. During the summer holidays over the last few years we have enjoyed touring and camping around France and Italy in our trusty VW campervan. We have had many happy memories as a family, visiting new places and enjoying the freedom to explore different countries.

To develop myself and remain up to date of how education continues to evolve, I thoroughly enjoy reading about new educational research, which has led to many initiatives which have had a positive impact on pupil outcomes. ”