



Downe House



HARROW  
SCHOOL



OUR NEW PARTNERSHIP: YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



“This is an important and forward-looking step, and we are confident the partnership will deliver lasting benefit for both schools and their communities.”

SALLY McNAIR SCOTT,  
CHAIR OF THE DOWNE HOUSE  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS



### **Why have Downe House and Harrow School decided to form a partnership?**

The Board of Downe House and the Board of John Lyon’s Foundation, which governs Harrow School, have taken the decision to form a structural partnership which will bring significant benefits to our pupils and wider school communities. We firmly believe that this collaboration will deepen academic purpose, create new opportunities, advance innovation and support growth at both schools.

### **Why is this partnership being formed now?**

Having worked together closely for many years, we recognise the strong alignment of our cultures and ambitions, and our shared belief in the value of single-sex boarding education. This partnership is both a natural and strategic step, representing a timely opportunity to strengthen both schools for the long term amid the ongoing changes facing the independent education sector. By combining our considerable expertise, experience and resources, we will enhance educational excellence and our capacity for financial growth, ensuring that we are well positioned to meet future challenges with confidence. The interests of our pupils will remain at the heart of every decision.



EMMA McKENDRICK, HEADMISTRESS OF DOWNE HOUSE AND ALASTAIR LAND, HEAD MASTER OF HARROW SCHOOL

“Our aim is uncompromising: we want every single girl and boy to leave Downe House and Harrow with the skills, confidence and humility to play their part in shaping and making our world one of which they can be proud.”

EMMA McKENDRICK  
HEADMISTRESS OF DOWNE HOUSE



“In a changing environment for independent schools, we are excited by the opportunities of working with Downe House and supporting our distinctive single-sex education offers with closer collaboration between our schools.”

DAVID EYTON,  
CHAIR OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS,  
JOHN LYON'S FOUNDATION



ESTABLISHED IN 1907, DOWNE HOUSE IS A TRADITIONAL SCHOOL WITH A MODERN TWIST

### Is there a financial rationale for this decision?

This partnership is a proactive strategic decision, not a response to financial difficulty. Downe House and John Lyon's Foundation are financially robust, with healthy surpluses, strong admissions pipelines, and secure long-term futures. The partnership is about building on these strengths to create greater resilience and opportunity in an increasingly competitive educational landscape. By working together, the schools will be able to share expertise, enhance opportunities for pupils and staff, and strengthen their position for the next decade and beyond. This is a partnership between two successful schools that recognise they will be stronger together than apart.

### When is this happening?

The partnership will officially start in September 2026.

### Are the schools becoming co-educational?

No. Single-sex education is fundamental to the identities of both Downe House and Harrow School, and our commitment to this principle is strong and enduring. The partnership strengthens our collective voice in championing high-quality single-sex boarding education within the independent school sector.

### How will the schools change?

Whilst we share an ethos and have characteristics in common, we value the differences between our schools, and our traditions and distinct identities will not change. Downe House and Harrow will continue to operate as they do today, remaining on their respective sites and retaining their current branding and school uniforms. What can be expected are new opportunities through collaboration, enriching the experiences of our pupil, staff, parent and alumni communities.

### How will this benefit pupils?

All pupils will benefit directly from a rich and purposeful programme of joint academic, co-curricular, and social activities. While both schools will continue to deliver their existing curricula, this partnership opens opportunities for joint initiatives such as conferences, lectures, collaborative projects, extra-curricular activities including sport, music and drama, and social events, with an exciting programme for 2026-27 already taking shape.

### How will this benefit families?

We plan to extend our programmes of shared experiences to parents at both schools. An alignment of our school calendars planned for 2028 onwards will offer added convenience to the families with children at both schools.



HARROW WAS FOUNDED IN 1572 UNDER A ROYAL CHARTER FROM QUEEN ELIZABETH I BY LOCAL LANDOWNING FARMER, JOHN LYON



DOWNE HOUSE NURTURES CONFIDENT, CARING TRAILBLAZERS WITH A GLOBAL OUTLOOK.

### **Will staff at either school be affected?**

The partnership creates opportunities for teaching, pastoral and operational staff to share knowledge, ideas and experiences in ways which will encourage the development of best practice and support professional development. Making resources and technology available across our schools will strengthen the breadth and quality of educational provision. Both schools enjoy reputations which allow them to attract and retain staff of outstanding calibre, and we expect the partnership to make working at Downe House or Harrow even more attractive.

### **Will this benefit alumni / alumnae?**

This partnership will bring significant opportunities for collaboration, networking and professional support across our alumni and alumnae bodies, which will help our former pupils to thrive in an increasingly competitive global environment.

### **Will collaboration with other schools stop or decrease because of this partnership?**

Pupils and staff at both schools will continue to benefit from academic, co-curricular and social collaboration with a wide range of schools. Both schools are deeply proud of their contribution to the wider educational community, including shared activities, access initiatives and collaborative projects, which will continue to grow alongside this partnership.

### **Will there be any changes to the admissions policies for either school?**

Both schools will maintain their current admission policies, which reflect their academic rigour as well as a commitment to the value of co-curricular contributions. There is no intention to dilute standards or alter the core character of either institution. Both schools remain committed to working closely with all preparatory schools whose pupils progress onto Downe House and Harrow School.

### **Will there be any changes to fees?**

There will be no change. Fees will continue to be set on the same budgetary principles that currently apply to both schools.

### **Will there be a change to the leadership team of Downe House or Harrow School?**

There will be no change to the leadership team at either school. Our schools will have much to learn from each other, and we look forward to deepening our understanding of each other as the partnership develops and we work closely together to shape a shared vision for the future of our schools.



**What will the governance structure be, and how will each school's interests be represented?**

Our schools will remain within their separate charities, and our respective Boards will continue to provide strategic oversight on how our schools are run, with responsibility for curriculum delivery, safeguarding, financial and health and safety obligations. Structurally, Downe House School will join Harrow School within John Lyon's Foundation. To reflect this new alignment, two members of the Downe House Board, Sally McNair Scott, Chair of Governors, and Tim Boucher, Chair of the Finance Committee, will remain in their roles but will also join the Board of Foundation Governors, which oversees Harrow School and John Lyon's Foundation. In turn, two John Lyon's Foundation Governors will join the Downe House Board. This cross-representation across our Boards will enable an exchange of

expertise, strengthen governance and support the continued development of our schools.

**We have donated to Downe House / Harrow School and its vision; how can we be reassured that our money will be used for its intended purpose?**

Both Downe House and Harrow School are committed to their stated strategic plans for developing their facilities, conserving their heritage and increasing their bursary provision. Donors can be assured that any gifts given will be used for their intended purpose.

**Are donations to both schools still needed?**

Yes. The individual needs of our schools and ambitions for pupils remain as important as ever, as does our desire to broaden access to our schools through our bursary funds, to enhance our facilities and support future generations.



“This partnership is founded on mutual respect, collaboration, and a belief that we are stronger together.”

ALASTAIR LAND  
HEAD MASTER OF HARROW SCHOOL

