

**NAME:** Nikki Bhatt  
**SCHOOL:** Carshalton Highschool for Girls  
**ROLE:** Head of English  
**STARTED:** September 2008



### WHAT LED YOU TO CARSHALTON?

“I joined Carshalton High School for Girls in 2008 as a part time Teacher of English. From the start, the school struck me as being an ambitious organisation, wanting success for its students and staff. Additionally, the English team were clearly consummate professionals: I knew I would learn and grow as a teacher as well as be seen as someone with a valuable contribution to make.

It was a few years later that I was encouraged to become KS3 English Lead, then shortly after to combine the role with Lead Practitioner as a whole school TLR. Several years later, the KS3 Lead role progressed into Deputy Director of English (still with the LP whole school role) and now I have been Director of English for the last seven years. In between that time, both I and another colleague were put forward by CHSG to train and qualify as SLE (Specialist Leader of Education). In the last two years, the role of whole school Strategic Lead for Literacy has replaced the LP role.

I can honestly say that these career progressions have been due to the encouragement of leaders in the school, seeking out new opportunities and championing us as teachers and educational pioneers. Every time I have dreamt up a new project or come across a chance to collaborate with others in the Education sector, there was an openness and a willingness to support from CHSG.”

### WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR ROLE?

“Almost fifteen years is a long time to be at CHSG, but this, in itself, is testament to the mutual commitment and professional reciprocity that a good school fosters. The school has, in this time, seen its strong educational foundations and vision develop. Students are enjoying more and more success: there is, year on year, greater belief in their ability to become well educated citizens and scholars in their chosen fields. Teachers from the eager ECT to the seasoned Middle Leader to the innovative member of SLT have all found their work here to be appreciated and validated by colleagues and students alike.

The CPD has gone from strength to strength with its latest incarnation combining all the powerful mechanisms of professional development into a coherent programme to benefit teachers at every stage of their careers. It is an atmosphere of excellence that sustains us all.

Lastly, but actually most importantly for me, the reason that I chose to teach - to improve students' life chances, influence their growth as individuals, foster a lifelong love of learning - has remained at the forefront of my work at CHSG. However, that has only been possible because the essence of that motivation has not been diluted, deviated or drained by the organisation I have worked for.

Sadly, this is an all too common experience for some in education but we are fortunate to work in a school that keep its focus trained on its students. Our students have a singular way of making a teacher know that they have made a difference to them: a combination of hearty endeavour, spirit, sense of fun and purpose. It is an unwritten ethos at CHSG but it is manifest everywhere. You only have to walk into the place to feel it."