



Head of Senior School

CANDIDATE INFORMATION



SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL



Welcome

Dear prospective candidate,

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet about the new post of Head of Senior School here at Sutton Valence School.

The School finds itself at a fascinating point in its history. We are about to celebrate our 450th anniversary and have just launched an exciting, ambitious and pragmatic Strategic Plan called 'To 450 and Beyond'. In order to facilitate this there will be a restructure of the leadership of the School, hence this opportunity has arisen.

It is a wonderful place to work, I can assure you. We have a hugely talented staff, inspirational young people, highly supportive parents and interested and involved alumni. We really are a strong community and the opportunity to have such an important leadership role within it will, I trust, excite you.

You will no doubt be able to find out much about us online via our website and social media channels and I look forward in due course to talking with you should you be selected to take part in the process.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark blue background, reading "James Anthony Thomas".

James Anthony Thomas MA (Cantab) MA (London) NPQH
Headmaster



Introduction

The Headmaster and Governors of Sutton Valence School are seeking to appoint a dynamic and forward-looking person to the new position of Head of Senior School to start in September 2025. This is an exciting opportunity for an ambitious and passionate educationalist to lead this section of the School into its next chapter.

Next academic year, Sutton Valence School will celebrate its 450th Anniversary and there is a new strategic plan called 'To 450 and Beyond' to enable the School to continue its drive forwards. The restructuring of the leadership of the School is an integral part of this, hence the appointment of this new post. The headlines of the 'To 450 and Beyond' plan can be found in the accompanying booklet.



The Senior School and the Sutton Valence School Family

Sutton Valence School is a Co-Educational Day and Boarding School for ages two to 18 and a member of various organisations such as HMC, BSA, IAPS and ISBA. It is a School with a great heart that values individuality and ensures that every pupil enjoys their own, unique journey through formative years of their education.

The **Senior School** is located in the beautiful traditional village of Sutton Valence in Kent. It currently has 575 pupils (11–18), with around 20% boarding either part or full time.

The **Prep School** – just 800 yards away, either a walk down a lovely track or a couple of minutes' drive – has around 300 students aged 2-11 between its three phases – Nursery, Pre-Prep and Prep.

The School is part of the **United Westminster and Grey Coat Foundation**. This enables the School to work collaboratively with other member schools of the Foundation and also provides invaluable professional support, guidance and development. More information about the Foundation can be found here: <http://westminstergreycoat.org>.

The **HIKSVS International School in Tianjin, China**, is the most recent addition to the Sutton Valence School family having opened in August 2017, offering a British style education in a very different cultural setting. The School has been very successful since its opening and it works closely with the Governors and Leadership of Sutton Valence School. More information about HIKSVS can be found here: <http://www.hiksvs.com>.



HIKSVS
International School
in Tianjin, China



Vision, Mission and Ethos of Sutton Valence School

The vision, mission and ethos of the School was recalibrated in line with the 'To 450 and Beyond' strategic plan which was launched in September 2024. It now reads:

Our Vision

Through our community values, broad curriculum, and extensive enrichment opportunities, we believe that all young people at Sutton Valence School will be inspired and supported to fulfil and exceed their potential.

Our Mission

Our mission is to have a School where one will find:

Care

A caring, safe, supportive and kind community for the education of children aged 2 to 18, in a day and boarding environment

Challenge

A challenging, relevant and broad curriculum encouraging curiosity, delivered in ways that allow all to achieve

Choice

An outstanding range of creative, cultural, social and physical activities so that all can develop skills such as self-discipline, commitment, leadership and teamwork

Culture

A culture of curiosity and celebration of diversity which promotes excellence, independence and high standards, whilst providing support to all who need it

Community

A grounding in moral and spiritual understanding which promotes respect for others, along with self-respect, enabling all to contribute positively to their School community and the world beyond it





Our Ethos

A community where each cares for all and individuality is cherished.

Our community structures are designed to create a caring environment that allows students to be fulfilled and challenged, but at the same time feel safe, supported and valued. This provides a platform from which students have the confidence to push themselves, to be curious and above all else to improve themselves as individuals whilst contributing to and benefitting the whole community.

Each student is valued as an individual with their own distinct sense of worth and potential. We strive to provide the foundations to allow each student's unique talents to grow, develop and ultimately flourish. Whether these abilities lie inside or outside the classrooms or indeed in an area connected to Sutton Valence School life, the community takes collective pride in recognising and celebrating them.

Our community systems emphasise the importance of responsibility, leadership, kindness and friendship amongst our students. It is founded on the principles of trust, reflection and openness. As such, we expect all our students to treat each other with respect, humanity and care. We all need to recognise that we are unique individuals and it is our differences that make us collectively stronger.

Great emphasis is therefore placed on the need to appreciate and celebrate the diversity of backgrounds, world views and attitudes expressed by those in our community.

At times, young people make mistakes and it is important they learn from them in a reflective manner so they can again contribute positively to the community.

Above all, our ethos should enable young people to grow into becoming responsible citizens with a genuine care for others and the world.

Curriculum

As a School, we pride ourselves on the self-improvement of our students. Through academic development and character-building enrichment programmes, we prepare and nurture all of our students to ensure that they leave Sutton Valence School as well-rounded, educated and compassionate individuals.

Starting in our Little Lambs Nursery, our children are given the best introduction to their individual journeys into education. With the use of educational toys, our youngest children learn through play. Dance, French, PE, Music and Yoga are taught by specialist teachers.

As our children move into the Pre-Prep and Prep stages of their education, the opportunities they are presented with increase. As well as a wide variety of enrichment choices, our academic provision is designed to challenge, intrigue and stretch our children as they become more curious and receptive to the new things they learn. The Prep School has various bespoke programmes that are followed in order to get the most out of our children in ways that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Our Senior School continues with a strong focus on both academic improvement and the many enrichment offerings available. The balance between the two is designed to ensure that all of our students are given the best start to their adult lives – whether they decide to go to university or onto a direct career path, we ensure they are the best possible versions of themselves when they leave.

The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 (known as First and Second Form – The Juniors) is bespoke before students go on to take an impressive range of (I)GCSEs, B-Tech, C-Tech and A Level courses. Further information about the curriculum and options booklets can be found here: <http://www.svs.org.uk/senior/academic/>



Co-curriculum



Performing and Creative Arts

Art and Design Technology

The Art and Design Technology departments are housed in two charming refurbished buildings in the village a couple of minutes' walk from the main School site. They are both centres of excellence and the warm, supportive atmosphere enables students to thrive.

The quality of work (and the processes embraced to produce it) is staggering as evidenced in the annual exhibitions, examination results and participation in lessons and clubs.

Drama

The Baughan Theatre, at the heart of the School, is home to our vibrant and successful Drama Department. With regular Junior and Senior productions, our students have the opportunity to showcase their talents both on and off stage. Recent productions have included Little Shop of Horrors, The Winter's Tale, The Wardrobe, The Silver Sword and Sleepy Hollow to name a few.

The ability to speak in public with confidence is an important life skill and we are growing our LAMDA provision, including taking part in training and examinations. Students also have opportunities to experience professional theatre productions through our programme of trips and visits.

We have a strong Drama Scholarship programme in School and many of our students are involved in dramatic productions outside of School as well.

Performing and Creative Arts

Music

The Senior School offers a wealth of opportunities beyond the classroom for children to develop and extend themselves musically. The team of highly skilled and experienced visiting music teachers offer individual tuition for a wide range of instruments and voice.

Informal soloists' concerts take place regularly, so students gain experience and confidence as regular performers. There are a number of opportunities for participation in ensembles, such as our string and wind groups and the Orchestra. Our Chapel Choir sings regularly in services, of which the Carol Service is a highlight, and there is an annual visit to sing at a ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres. There is also an annual performance for the Clothworkers' Company in London.



Sport, Outdoors and Activities

Sport

The School has excellent facilities both indoors and outdoors; a full-size AstroTurf, tennis and netball courts, extensive sports fields, a superb indoor swimming pool, a sports hall, permanent cricket nets and an athletics track.

To enhance our Physical Education programme, we operate as many School teams as possible across a wide variety of sports. Competitive fixtures offer pupils the opportunity to represent their School in matches against other local schools, and help to promote excellence for county, regional or even national honours later in their lives. With various after-School clubs and teams to join, our children have ample opportunities to participate in sport, both recreationally and competitively. We achieve laudable results in competitions and have been national Champions in Girls' Hockey in 2023 and 2024 and finalists in the Daily Mail Rugby Vase, playing at Twickenham in 2022.

Combined Cadet Force (CCF)

The Combined Cadet Force is a great strength of the Senior School. Numbers are very healthy and students gain a great deal being part of the Corps. We offer membership to Army, Navy and RAF and the NCO (student leaders) positions give members of the community superb opportunities to lead. Twice in recent years we have had Lord Lieutenant Awards for our cadets. Our Shooting team has had success at Bisley Imperial meetings and was this year's regional champions in CADSAM. A particular highlight was the trek to Nepal last year, owing to our deep connections with the Gurkha community.



Sport, Outdoors and Activities

Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme

Our involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme is significant and every year there are significant participation levels at Bronze, Silver and Gold. Preparation for the Award is underpinned by our Junior Leadership programme for those who are at the School in Years 7 and 8.

Charity and Service

The School's Charity Committee organises an impressive range of events each year. In the 2023-24 academic year over £20,000 was raised for a wide range of causes including Cardiac Risk in the Young, Dandelion Time and others.

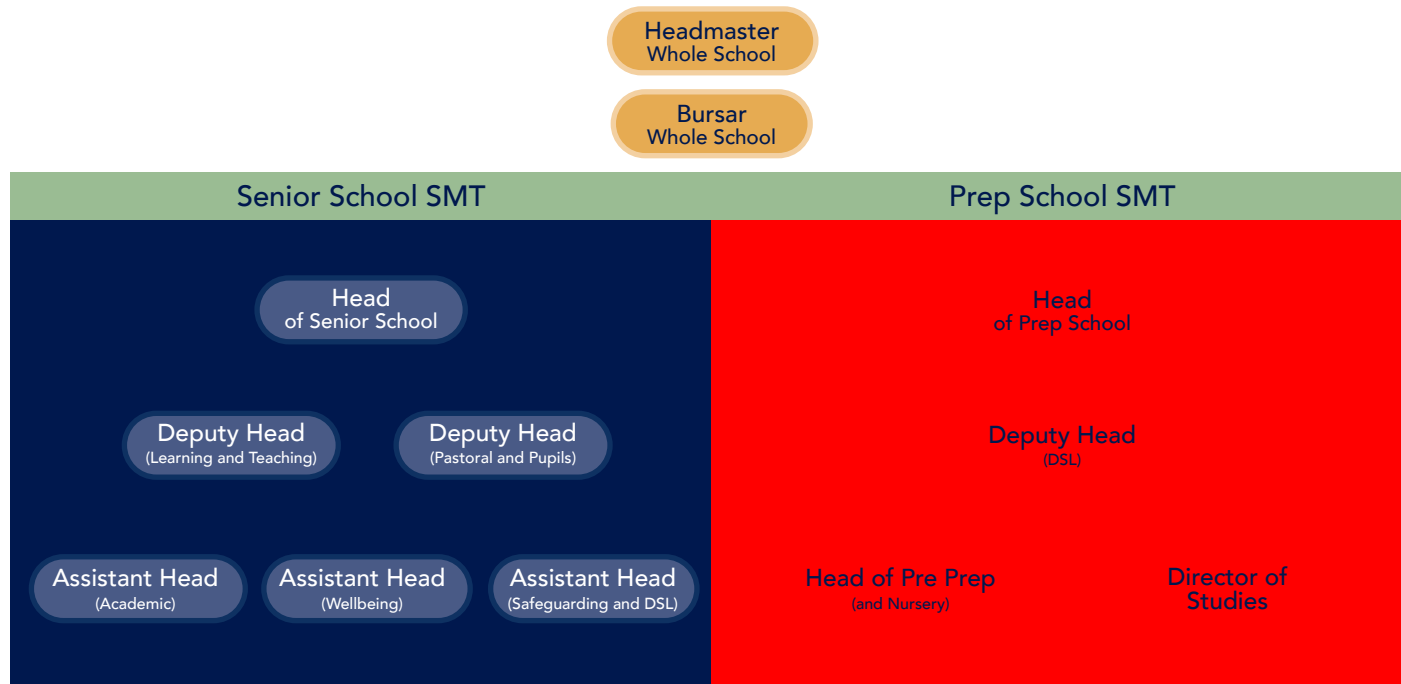
Service in the community has grown to become one of our most valued activities and we frequently have students visiting care homes, foodbanks, the local primary schools and volunteering in the local village and community.



Leadership framework from September 2025

The Head of Senior School will report directly to the Headmaster and will work closely alongside him in the fulfilment of duties. The role, however, carries autonomy with it – the new Head of Senior School will be the figure head and leader of the Senior Phase of the School, leading its SMT in all senses.

From September 2025, the leadership across the whole organisation will thus look:



Whole School Strategic Steering Group

There is also a Whole School Strategic Steering Group (WSSSG), of which the Head of Senior School will be a key part.

- Headmaster
- Bursar
- Head of Senior School
- Head of Prep School
- Head of Pre-Prep
- Assistant Bursar
- Director of Admissions
- Marketing and Communications Manager

Governance

There is a strong and highly experienced Governing Body. Each of the Governors has been selected for their expertise and love of education. Collectively, they possess a wide range of experience in education and have held senior roles in business and other sectors. Responsibility for the various areas of School life, such as Finance, Buildings, Education and HR and Compliance, are each devolved to a sub-committee structure, which reports back to the full Governing Body at least three times a year. Many Governors are given specific oversight of areas of School life, including Safeguarding, Health and Safety, the Prep and Pre-Prep phases and Boarding. The Head of Senior School will attend all sub-committees and the full Governing Body meetings.

School Finances

The School is in a strong financial position, with significant interest from prospective families and an impressive roll. There has been significant investment in the site in recent years including a new Nursery, refurbishment of boarding houses and a new teaching block. The School's finances can be viewed as part of the United Westminster and Grey Coat Report and Financial Statement via the Charity Commission website.



The Role



The Head of Senior School will be appointed by the Headmaster of Sutton Valence School and will be responsible to him. The post would suit either an existing Head of Senior School or someone seeking their first headship from a Senior Leadership post. The Headmaster and Governors are very open minded about the background of the candidates.

Overall purpose of the job

To lead, motivate and develop the School so that it fulfils the academic, pastoral and social needs of pupils, meets the expectations and requirements of parents and staff, and provides an exciting adventure in all-round education, in line with the School's ethos.

Leadership and management

- Drive forward the strategic direction of the School and be responsible for implementing the development plan
- Be responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the pupils at the School with Safeguarding at the heart of approach
- Lead and manage all academic and administrative staff in the Senior School to include appointments, appraisals, training and development and make reports to the Governors and when necessary, instigate the implementation of disciplinary procedures
- Manage the budgets for the School and contribute to the Governors' Finance Committee
- Implement the School's policies on behaviour, discipline and bullying
- Develop and implement the marketing and admissions strategy
- Be responsible for the delivery of health and safety policies
- Foster warm and positive relationships between the School, parents and the local community
- Support the charitable objectives and Christian traditions of the School and its Foundation

Teaching and Learning

- Develop and implement the strategy for the curriculum for the Senior School
- Monitor the teaching and learning throughout the School
- Set targets for student attainment levels so that they are appropriately challenged
- Develop and implement systems and policies for academic stretch and Learning Support
- Be the JCQ Examinations Head of Centre and oversee the senior colleagues who line manage the Examinations office
- Encourage the further development of a wide ranging co-curricular activities programme

Pastoral Care and Personal Development

- Continue the development of a caring culture where kindness is at its core
- Emphasise and support the importance of Wellbeing for all in the community
- Develop and monitor systems for the pastoral support of students
- Ensure that students are appropriately prepared for the transition to the wider world post School
- Embrace Safeguarding as the highest priority for all

Specific duties and responsibilities

The Head of Senior School will be able to demonstrate natural authority, leading by example, and commanding the respect of pupils, staff and parents. In addition, he or she will:

Candidate profile

- Have a passionate commitment to the academic, personal and social development of the pupils, understand the needs and concerns of their age group and have a natural empathy with them
- Have a clear vision and the courage to take a lead in delivering it
- Understand the merits and benefits of working in an 'all-through' School
- Display energy and imagination, have a vision for what the School should achieve in the future, with the courage to innovate, and an unwavering commitment to the continued development of the School
- Have an open, participative, collegiate style, with an inclusive and empowering approach to management, and an ability to build trust and foster team spirit
- Be a team player, able to work effectively and harmoniously in the dynamic of an 'all-through' School
- Be able to relate to, value, nurture and communicate well with all members of the School community
- Value and promote inclusion and have the skills to run an inclusive and diverse School community
- Demonstrate personal strength of character through transparency, integrity and fairness
- Be a confident, effective communicator in a variety of situations and audiences, from the sensitive and private conversation with a parent in distress, to the speech to a large audience of children and adults
- Possess a sense of humour

Qualifications

- Educated to degree level with any postgraduate or leadership qualification an advantage
- Teaching qualifications (QTS)
- Evidence of continuing professional development

Employment terms and conditions

The Headmaster is offering an attractive and competitive salary to secure the best candidate. Accommodation can be available if desired. Other benefits including medical insurance and fee remission for children in the School will be made available in accordance with Governors' policy for staff. The School has a flexible pay and pension package with membership of either the TPS or AVIVA APTIS available with different contribution levels as desired by the candidate up to a maximum level as agreed with the School. There are also other benefits such as an optional e-vehicle leasing scheme, a subscription to Press Reader, meals in term time and access to the outstanding fitness facilities and pool.

We are very proud of the positive and supportive community we have and staff often comment on this being one of the best aspects of working at Sutton Valence School. This, coupled with a beautiful physical environment both at School and in the immediate vicinity, make it a highly desirable place to work.

The Process

Advertising period - 14th October – 6th November

Deadline for Applications – 9am 7th November

Longlist interviews via Teams – week commencing 11th November

Shortlist interviews and School familiarisation visits – week commencing 25th November

Do not meet every single requirement? Studies have shown that women and people of colour are less likely to apply to jobs unless they meet every single qualification. At Sutton Valence School we are dedicated to building a diverse and inclusive workplace, so if you are excited about this role but your past experience does not align perfectly with every qualification or experience in the information provided, we encourage you to apply anyway. You may be just the right candidate for this or other roles.

Further information about Sutton Valence School can be found on our website www.svs.org.uk.

To apply, please complete the application and monitoring form (a separate CV is optional) and email it with a covering letter, addressed to the Headmaster, to the Headmaster's PA, Sari Bishop, at bishops@svs.org.uk.

Applicants will be required to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), and a declaration of medical fitness. It is an offence to apply for this role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children. The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. A copy of the School's Child Protection policy may be found on the School's website, which all applicants are expected to read prior to interview.

Further Information

Please approach Mrs Sari Bishop, PA to the Headmaster
with any questions about the post or appointment process at
bishops@svs.org.uk



SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL