



Head of Pre-Prep

Candidate
Information





Dear Candidates,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Head of Pre-Prep at Sutton Valence School. I have been blown away in my first few months here with the strength of community, feeling of joy and excellent balance of working and playing hard! This is a very special place.

It would not take you long at all to feel the same were you to visit here. It is a fabulous place to work and a genuine privilege to lead. You will find a highly motivated and committed staff, wonderfully enthusiastic children and delightful parents.

This great base enables me to be very optimistic about the next few years, and I look forward to working with a positive, dynamic and forward-thinking Head of Pre-Prep so that we can continue to provide a wonderful educational environment, equipping our students for their future.

Colleagues at RSAcademics will guide you through our thorough recruitment process, and I look forward to meeting a number of you in the final stages.

Best wishes,

James Thomas
Headmaster



Introduction

The Head of Sutton Valence Preparatory School (SVPS) is seeking to appoint an inspirational, highly motivated and caring Head of Pre-Prep. The Head of Pre-Prep is a member of the SVPS SMT along with the Deputy Head and the Academic Deputy Head and will be responsible for the Nursery through to Year 2.





The Preparatory School and the Sutton Valence Family

Sutton Valence Preparatory School (SVPS) is an independent, IAPS 2-11 years, co-educational day school situated in the glorious Kent countryside. There are currently 265 pupils on roll. It is a happy and caring school where the children are supported to reach their potential, and they achieve impressively in both academic and co-curricular activities. You can see glimpses of the daily life of SVPS on Twitter [here](#).

The Senior School, Sutton Valence School, is located in the village of Sutton Valence, less than a mile down a country lane from SVPS. It currently has 560 pupils (11-18), 113 of whom are boarders. It is a school with a great heart that values individuality and ensures that every pupil enjoys their own unique journey through the formative years of their education.

The School is part of the United Westminster and Grey Coat Foundation. This enables the SVS Schools to work collaboratively with other members of the Foundation and also provides invaluable professional support, guidance and development. More information can be found about the Foundation [here](#).

The HIK SVS International School in Tianjin, China, is the most recent addition to the SVS 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 both SVPS and SVS. This provides a fascinating professional opportunity for the new Head of SVPS to develop the relationship even further in the coming years. More information can be found about HIK SVS [here](#).

Vision, Mission and Ethos

Vision

Through our community values, academic focus and extensive enrichment opportunities, we believe that all young people at Sutton Valence School will be enabled to fulfil their true potential. We want our students to be confident, tolerant and open-minded individuals who possess a love of learning and a strong set of values, reflecting our principles as a Christian Foundation.

Our Mission is to provide:

- A caring, supportive and inclusive community for the education of children aged 2-18, day and boarding;
- A challenging, relevant and broad curriculum delivered in ways that allow all to achieve;
- An outstanding range of sporting, artistic, cultural and social activities so that children can develop skills such as self-discipline, commitment, leadership and teamwork;
- A safe, secure and stimulating environment that promotes excellence, independence and high standards whilst providing support to all who need it;
- A grounding in moral and spiritual understanding that will promote respect for others, along with self-respect.

Ethos

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

Community Values

SVPS takes responsibility to prepare our pupils to become happy, fulfilled young people who have the confidence and skills to lead others. We do this in an atmosphere of mutual respect, warmth and care that extends to the whole family. We encourage everyone to lead by example, to show that we are a community that cherishes and supports each other, whether it is success that needs to be celebrated or care given when things aren't quite going as planned. We are very proud of the confident, compassionate pupils we have and of the unique community which lives out our ethos of 'each cares for all' on a daily basis.



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 SVS 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 huge 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. SVPS 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, which includes a vibrant boarding community, 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.

Individuality, confidence without arrogance and the strength of character to meet the complexities of modern living with composure are the hallmarks of a Sutton Valence student, and we hope that by the time they leave us, they have improved their outcomes and outstripped all expectations and preconceptions of their ability.



Our Learning Experience

Pre-Prep is where we begin to put the foundations in place for children to succeed in their future education and develop confidence and values that will serve them well in life. Young children's education is tailored around the individual and engages naturally with their enthusiasm and interests. We make activities fun and allow the children to change and adapt what they are doing to reflect their natural style of investigation.

With a dedicated form teacher from Reception, the pupils flourish as we tailor their educational journey to suit the individual. Within the happy Pre-Prep atmosphere, children enjoy playing, learning and developing skills in a safe environment and without fear of failure.

Our Nursery children are taught through the medium of play. In Reception a more formal approach is introduced alongside play and, over the next three years, a more structured approach to teaching and learning is introduced.

We encourage parents to be involved in all aspects of their child's life, be it through workshops, parent evenings, our Parents' Association and, of course, we have an open door to parents.

A Broad Journey of Discovery

Our mission is to turn those unsteady Nursery footsteps into purposeful strides and allow our children the opportunities and experiences that will shape their futures. We provide a healthy balance where real importance is attached to time spent both inside and outside the classroom.

Children are inspired to learn as our enthusiastic staff share their passion for their specialisms, which are woven into the weekly routine.

Music, Drama and Sport all play an integral part in the development of each child and, in addition to being enjoyable, they play a vital role in developing self-esteem and building social skills. Music and Drama work hand-in-hand to develop children's confidence, concentration and creativity.

Sport is an important part of education, and our emphasis is always on having fun, behaving properly and working together as a team. French, Music, Dance, Yoga and PE are taught by specialists from Nursery upwards.

Leadership, Confidence and Consideration

At Sutton Valence we help our children to develop the skills and confidence to succeed at School and in later life. Leadership has many attributes. As well as self-esteem and motivation it also requires patience, listening skills, empathy for the views of others and the ability to make properly considered decisions.

Through play, activities and lessons our pupils learn how to become considerate and attentive to the feelings of others as well as being confident in themselves. From an early age, children are given responsibilities that help the teachers and their fellow classmates. These range from simply handing out books or looking after a new child in the School to running their own charitable activities or being part of the School Council.

As children progress up to the Prep School, they become more independent and increasingly competent in organising and leading events and people. By the time children are ready to move on from Pre-Prep they have learned how to build positive relationships with others and have a sense of citizenship, understanding their responsibilities within our community and the wider world.



Outdoors and Activities

Forest School

Nestled within our own beautiful grounds is in our secure forest area. With woodland stools and logs to sit on, a fire pit and a canopy of trees overhead, the Forest School provides a wonderful place to learn all about the outdoors. Discussing their natural surroundings, cooking on the fire and using all five senses to explore everything from bugs to trees mean that visits to Forest School are always popular.

Clubs

SVPS offer a host of after-School clubs - there is always a buzz of excitement around the School as the children rush off to their afternoon activity. Here is an extensive variety of activities provided by our staff and excellent external providers.

Quality Marks

In 2019, SVPS was awarded a Quality Mark for our EYFS provision, and we built on this in 2021 when we received a quality mark for our English and Maths provision throughout the School. Only a handful of schools in Kent have been awarded these accreditations, and we believe SVPS to be the first independent school in the county to be recognised in this way.

The assessors made a number of overwhelmingly positive comments about the quality of our provision. These include the following:

“Sutton Valence Preparatory School has many strengths, including a dedicated staff, thorough planning, robust assessment and monitoring procedures, plentiful learning resources, a stimulating learning environment and very supportive parents.”

“The School successfully addresses the needs of all pupils, including the higher attainers in English and Mathematics.”

“Teachers use a balance of whole-class, focus group and individual approaches to teaching. They adjust their daily lesson plans according to their ongoing assessment. Staff devise and deliver tasks which stretch and challenge pupils.”

“During the lockdown, the use of Microsoft Teams enabled parents to see every piece of work their children have undertaken, along with the teacher’s feedback. This, together with regular communication from staff, has further strengthened relationships with parents, who really appreciated the high-quality lessons provided for their children during the extended period of home-schooling.”

The Role





The Head of Pre-Prep will be appointed by the Head of SVPS and will be responsible to her. The role will encompass the management of the Nursery through Year 2.

Overall Role Purpose

Leadership Priorities

- Lead the Pre-Prep including the Nursery and support the Head as a member of the Senior Management Team in the overall organisation and development of the whole school;
- Ensure the Pre-Prep is a distinctive and successful part of the School;
- Advise the Head on policy-making and development-planning;
- Assist the Head, as part of the Senior Management Team, in planning and implementing both Nursery, Pre-Prep and, where relevant, whole-school policies and undertake any other duties that the Head may from time to time require;
- Take an active participatory role, and leading role where appropriate, in all whole-school teacher learning opportunities and training;
- Take a leading role in identifying opportunities for the development of the Pre-Prep facilities and resources;
- Pioneer initiatives and innovative pedagogy in the Pre-Prep, leading the development of outstanding, inventive learning and teaching, to maintain and further raise academic standards;
- Further the awareness and implementation of new learning and teaching methodologies across the Pre-Prep and ensure that creative use is made of resources, including new technologies;
- Communicate the vision for learning and teaching at SVPS in a clear and coherent way to a variety of audiences;

- Review and develop the Pre-Prep curriculum in the context of whole-school priorities and initiatives, liaising with prep school staff to ensure consistency of curriculum delivery across the whole school;
- Ensure high levels of pupil welfare, pastoral care and behaviour are in place in the Pre-Prep;
- Assist the Head in the regular monitoring and review of all the School's policies with particular attention given to those specific to the Pre-Prep;
- Ensure that the Pre-Prep satisfies all regulatory/ mandatory requirements issued by the DfE and relevant to ISI inspection, including EYFS elements; this involves both updating of school policies and the oversight of daily practice;
- Ensure the School's policies are adhered to including any issues regarding Health and Safety;
- Assist or Be the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the Pre-Prep and contribute to the development of safeguarding procedures across the School.

Management Priorities

- Ensure the smooth running of the Pre-Prep on a day-to-day basis and have oversight of special occasions and events;
- Work closely with the Head of Learning Support to provide the best possible provision for pupils with a specific learning difficulty or additional learning requirements;
- Work closely with the Year 3 staff to ensure the smooth transition of pupils between the Pre-Prep and the Prep School;
- Oversee the academic tracking and monitoring of pupils within the Pre-Prep;



- Oversee the Pre-Prep assessment and reporting framework alongside the organisation of parents' evenings;
- Have oversight of the various channels of communication to Pre-Prep parents;
- Take a leading role in the recruitment of new staff in the Pre-Prep;
- Have an oversight of, contribute to and carryout the appraisal programme including the development of CPD opportunities for Pre-Prep staff;
- Lead and organise Pre-Prep;
- Take a key role in the promotion of the School in terms of meeting prospective parents and speaking at a variety of events including Open Days;
- Foster and further develop links with the local community including those with key external stakeholders including other education providers and local businesses;
- Take responsibility for the organisation of entry assessments;
- Take an after-school club at least once a week;
- Take responsibility for the Breakfast Club;
- Be responsible for rotas to include breaktime duties, clubs and absence cover;
- Participate in the SMT on call rota during school holidays.



Person Specification

Qualifications/Professional Development

- QTS or equivalent.
- Graduate of a recognised British University or international equivalent.
- Evidence of continuing professional development.
- A middle or senior management qualification would be desirable.

Experience and Skills

- Outstanding classroom practitioner with proven experience of working successfully as a teacher in the EYFS or Key Stage 1.
- Have the ability to establish clear standards, evaluate performance, delegate effectively and manage time effectively.
- 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 large audience of children and adults.
- Have proven administrative skills, be computer literate, and a confident user of ICT for teaching, communication and management purposes.
- Demonstrate the ability to plan and think strategically.

Knowledge

- Thorough knowledge of the curriculum and national expectations for the EYFS and Key Stage 1.
- Have an up-to-date and appropriate level of knowledge of matters relating to inspection and legal compliance, child protection and health and safety regulations.

Personal Attributes

- Infectious enthusiasm and passion for teaching.
- A professional manner and appearance.
- Friendly, warm personality with excellent inter-personal skills.
- Have an open, participative, collegiate style, with an inclusive and empowering approach to management, and an ability to build trust and foster team spirit.
- Ability to work independently and as a member of a team.
- Self-motivated with a positive, professional attitude.
- Support the charitable objectives and Christian traditions of the School and its Foundation.
- Wholehearted commitment to the life of a vibrant school.
- Values and promotes inclusion and has the skills to run an inclusive and diverse school community.
- Has a strong understanding of the Head's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and a clear commitment to delivering best practice in safeguarding.

Terms and Conditions

The Head is offering an attractive and competitive salary to secure the best candidate. Benefits include fee remission for children in the School will be made available in accordance with Governor's policy for staff.

Sutton Valence School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.



Application Process

The deadline for receipt of applications is 10am on 24th November 2021.

Interested candidates are invited to contact RSAcademics by email or telephone, to arrange a confidential discussion with Louisa Barham, the Search Consultant handling this appointment, or Angela Short, Head of Prep School Search.

Louisa Barham, Search Consultant
louisabarham@rsacademics.com

Angela Short, Head of Prep School Search
angelashort@rsacademics.com

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. To submit your application, please upload your documents according to the instructions on the RSAcademics [website](#).

If you have any questions about uploading your application documents, please contact Julia Coffey, Project Coordinator at applications@rsacademics.com. Julia can also be reached by calling our Head Office on 01858 383163.

The process is as follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of sending it, please contact our Head Office.
- Selected candidates will be invited for a preliminary interview online with Diana Watkins (Senior Advisor) and Louisa Barham in the week commencing 29th November 2021.
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited to visit the School in the week commencing 6th December 2021.
- Final round interviews will take place at the School on 9th and 10th December 2021.

Note: the arrangements for final interviews may be subject to change in the light of prevailing public health restrictions.
RSAcademics is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in schools.

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