



Teacher of Biology (Maternity Cover)



ST HELEN &
ST KATHARINE

Welcome from the Headmistress

Hello and thank you for showing an interest in working at St Helen and St Katharine. I am enormously proud of this great girls' school, and I know that this sentiment is shared by colleagues across the staff body.

The students are at the heart of this energy and positive ethos. They are wonderful to work with; enthusiastic, clever, funny, kind, silly, earnest and possessed of an unselfconscious enjoyment of learning and the pleasure of finding out more. They are excited by subjects and delight in their teachers demonstrating their ongoing love of a specialist discipline. They, and their parents, also look to us to work in support of personal development and we continue to evolve our pastoral systems to meet the challenges that the students will encounter in school, in Higher Education and in the world of work and adult life.

Our extra- and supra- curricular programmes are busy and exciting. There is an expectation that students will be busy and that opportunities will be created to harness their enthusiasm. Opportunities to learn beyond the classroom are vital and staff involvement in trips and expeditions is expected.

We have a fantastic support team in these endeavours, and all staff members are valued in whatever role they play in keeping things on track, happy and purposeful. Each staff team reflects the pride we feel collectively in our school.

Our work takes place on a beautifully developed and maintained campus and we are fortunate in the working environment we occupy. The stunning Benedict Building, which houses our sixth form, has further enhanced the site and provides space for even more opportunities for both students and staff, as we develop these for ourselves and in partnership with local schools.

We are fortunate to be over-subscribed and, therefore, selective at each student entry point, but we are not a place that likes to rest on laurels and our departments continually reflect on how they can develop things further. The staff community is very supportive.

We enjoy a very positive relationship with our parent body and don't take for granted their advocacy for St Helen's as a school of choice for a daughter. We have a broad catchment area for a day school with a transport network that spans six counties.

Our Board of Governors is very supportive and interested in the work that we do. They ask challenging questions and delight in our many successes. They have overseen a significant development of the estate and provision in recent years and want to ensure that momentum continues. To that end, we welcome ambitious and energetic applicants who share in the excitement of our mission and who want to develop their careers, working with outstanding students and colleagues.

I do hope that you will apply. St Helen's is a school which both builds on the finest elements of great girls' education and challenges itself to deliver an education that allows our students to encounter their 'now' with confidence and pleasure.

It is a great place to work.



Mrs Rebecca Dougall
Headmistress





The School

As one of the leading independent schools in the country, St Helen and St Katharine is an exciting place to work and appointing the very best staff is integral to our success.

St Helen's School was founded in 1903 and was then joined in 1938 by St Katharine's in Wantage. The School is located on a single campus-style site of beautiful Edwardian and modern buildings set in 22 acres of grounds, on the outskirts of Abingdon, some six miles from Oxford. An extensive school bus network facilitates a large student catchment area that includes Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire.

St Helen's is a school where success is celebrated but not revered. Our students achieve excellent academic results, and our goal is to ensure that every girl achieves success as she defines it, so that she can believe in herself, her talents and abilities, and so that she will feel prepared and equipped for life beyond school.

The School is a thriving community of girls and young women aged 9 to 18 years including a small Junior Department comprising one Year 5 and one Year 6 class. St Helen's offers students an outstanding academic education and a rich and varied life beyond the classroom including excellence in sport, the creative and performing arts and a superb range of extracurricular clubs and societies.

We enjoy collaboration with a range of local partner schools, including Radley College, Abingdon, Larkmead, John Mason and Fitzharrys, providing opportunities to enrich the developmental journeys of our students and build positive connections across genders and experiences.

In 2023, we opened the doors to our new sixth form centre, the Benedict Building. The Benedict Building is a physical articulation of the School's vision for Sixth Form – to create an environment for our students that will spark their intellectual spirit and imagination – and provides students with the space and opportunity to grow their academic and extracurricular interests in readiness for the future.

The staff

St Helen and St Katharine is a very special place to work.

Our students are at the heart of everything we do, we celebrate our powerful sense of community, and we take pride in our very high standards and the strength of our performance. We enjoy a working environment and a culture within the School which focuses on development, inclusion and the pleasure of working all together.

We are always looking at ways to develop our people – students and staff. We look to be progressive, imaginative and respectful; we combine the best of long tradition with a commitment to readying our people for the challenges of the 21st Century. We also firmly believe that a diverse workforce is a better workforce which will help us develop ideas, solve problems and ultimately grow St Helen and St Katharine. Our campus is beautiful and an inspiring place to work. The young people we work with are remarkable and the staff community is welcoming, committed and compassionate.

Every day is different at St Helen and St Katharine. It's fast-paced but never loses sight of the value of individualised conversations and the need for support. We take our commitment to the well-being of staff very seriously and we offer the resources and training to allow people to flourish professionally.

The contribution of every member of the staff team is valued at St Helen and St Katharine, and teaching and support staff work closely together, appreciative of the positive difference everyone can make in their varied roles.





The role

We are seeking to appoint an enthusiastic and talented teacher to join a thriving Biology Department on a 12-month fixed-term contract, commencing April 2025 to cover a period of maternity leave until Easter 2026. This cover position is fixed-term and part-time, with a starting timetable in the region of 12 periods per week for the remainder of the current academic year (out of a possible 30 periods for a full-time member of staff). The timetable is expected to increase in September 2025 to be in the region of 18 periods per week.

The successful applicant will be able to demonstrate extensive subject knowledge and a real enthusiasm for science and biology in particular, alongside a meticulous and professional approach to their teaching. A commitment to involvement in extracurricular activities and curriculum enrichment, is essential.

All teaching staff are expected to contribute to the pastoral and enrichment programmes of the School. In addition to teaching, the post holder will also have pastoral responsibilities within their allocated year group. All staff share the responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the students, in accordance with the School's safeguarding policies.

The department and facilities

There are currently seventeen teachers working across the three Departments (Biology, Physics and Chemistry) that make up the Science Department. The Biology Department comprises the Head of Department, two full-time teachers and two part-time teachers. There is a mixture of experience and subject strengths which complement each other well. The members of the Biology Department work extremely well as a team and share expertise, resources and skills to support each other in achieving common goals. All of the department give willingly of their time to see students on an individual basis.

Facilities

The School has outstanding science facilities in the form of a Science Centre which provides twelve state-of-the-art laboratories, break out spaces and a three-storey glass atrium. In this building, biology occupies the ground floor with four large dedicated teaching laboratories, as well as a prep room, staff work room and break out areas for student use in and between lessons. There is a thirteenth laboratory across a link corridor, used for junior department science and some senior teaching.

All laboratories are equipped with interactive whiteboards or projectors, data projectors and computer facilities with network and wireless connectivity. A class set of laptop computers and a range of data logging equipment is also available. We have a well-qualified, full-time technician for biology. There is a dedicated biology office/work room for teaching staff and each teacher has their own desk, bookshelves and laptop computer. There is a thriving outdoor pond adjacent to the Science Centre and this and the extensive School grounds are used for ecological studies and development of field work techniques.

Subject details/curriculum

Biology is a very successful and popular subject at St Helen's, with good numbers regularly moving on to study scientific subjects at university. We currently have seven A level teaching groups across the two Sixth Form years.

In the Lower School (Years 7 and 8), all students have four periods of science a week, taught in two double periods. In Year 7 the students are taught by one science teacher in class groups.

They spend approximately a third of the School year on biology, a third on physics and a third on chemistry, with an examination at the end of the year. In Year 8 the students are taught in six smaller groups on a carousel, so that each student spends approximately one third of the School year with a specialist biologist, chemist or physicist with an examination at the end of the year. The courses have been written by the individual departments to provide a challenging and interesting start to Senior School science.

In Year 9, the students have one double lesson in each science, taught in six groups by a subject specialist every week. Currently, Year 9 students are studying the Edexcel GCSE specification.

In Years 10 and 11, the students opt either for separate science, taught on twelve periods a week (two doubles in each subject) or combined science, taught on nine periods a week (three periods in each subject, one double and one single). Students have a free choice between the two GCSE options and the exact split varies from year to year. Currently we have two combined science sets and four separate science sets in Year 10 and four separate science and one combined science set in Year 11.

Students are entered for Edexcel GCSE examinations. There is no practical coursework component, and all the theory papers can test knowledge of practical science. This gives us the opportunity for a wide range of varied practical activities throughout the course.

Our Sixth Form students study the OCR Biology A level course, and we currently have approximately 80 students studying A level. The A level is taught as a linear 2-year course with examinations at the end of Upper Sixth.

Enrichment

Education beyond the timetable and the classroom is a key part of our offering. Currently, Year 7 students enjoy a visit by Animazing and Year 8 students take part in a science day trip to the Bristol Science Centre. Year 10 students take part in the Society of Biology Challenge and our strongest 6th Form students participate in the Olympiad competition. Lower Sixth biologists all take part in a day trip to a local arboretum to practise their fieldwork skills.





Role details

St Helen and St Katharine values the highest level of professionalism in its teachers. It is expected that all teachers will display a high level of knowledge and understanding of their subject area and communicate this enthusiastically to students. Teachers should have high expectations of their students and be able to display evidence of planning, preparation and monitoring of progress. It is the responsibility of all teachers to create a stimulating and positive learning environment, and to employ a range of teaching strategies, thus enabling all students to fulfil their academic potential. They should inspire trust and confidence.

Specific responsibilities include:

Curriculum delivery

- Planning, preparing and teaching the classes assigned to him/her, using a range of strategies for teaching and classroom management to ensure that individual learning needs are met.
- Ensuring that marking of students' work is both regular and thorough and that full records are kept.
- To regularly monitor the progress of all students in their teaching groups, taking account of individual learning needs to have a positive impact on student progress.
- Liaising with the Learning Support Co-ordinator on strategies to support the progress of students on the Learning Support register.
- Keeping abreast of current thinking and development in the subject area(s).
- Assisting the Head of Department with the development of appropriate syllabuses, schemes of work and teaching styles.
- Sharing resources and training materials with colleagues.
- Contributing to departmental activities, e.g. enrichment work, clubs, societies and trips.
- Taking responsibility for professional development and using the outcomes to improve teaching and learning.
- Attending whole school INSET sessions.

Physical resources and safety

- Meeting the health and safety requirements of the School.
- Working with the other members of the department to ensure that all resources are well looked after and that departmental areas provide a stimulating environment for teaching.

Communication

- Providing or contributing to oral and written assessments, reports and references relating to individual students.
- Attending Parents' Meetings.
- Attending regular departmental meetings and full staff meetings.
- Attending Open Day.

Pastoral and whole school support

- Being a form tutor if required.
- Contributing to the pastoral care and personal development of students.
- Carrying out a share of supervisory duties in accordance with published schedules.
- Ensuring that a register of attendance in lessons is kept and taking appropriate action in cases of student absence.
- Supporting the ethos of the School through maintaining the highest standards of professionalism.
- Attending assembly or chapel and whole school services.
- Contributing to whole school activities, e.g. clubs and expeditions.



The person

Skills/abilities

- A passion for biology, alongside excellent subject knowledge.
- The capacity to inspire students of all abilities and enhance student learning.
- Inspirational, excellent teaching and classroom management skills.
- Proven organisational, communication and interpersonal skills.
- High level of literacy, attention to detail and ability to use own initiative.
- High order administrative skills, effectively manages commitments and deadlines.
- ICT competence and willingness to learn new technologies.
- Ability to teach A level biology and to build students' confidence in the subject.

Knowledge

- Excellent subject and curriculum knowledge up to and including A level.
- A full awareness of the current issues relating to the developments of teaching biology in schools.

Qualifications and experience

- High class honours degree in biology or a related discipline.
- Qualified teaching status is preferred.

Personal attributes

- High levels of personal and professional integrity.
- Motivation to work with children and young people.
- High degrees of self-confidence, dynamism and personal warmth, so able to develop good rapport with students, colleagues and parents.
- High expectations for student attainment, personal development and conduct.
- Commitment to involvement in extracurricular activities and curriculum enrichment, including the U6 residential trip.
- Ability and willingness to work in a supportive and collaborative manner as part of the departmental team, taking an appropriate share of departmental responsibilities.
- A reflective practitioner; ability to self-appraise and manage continuous professional self-development.
- A commitment to safeguarding our students in line with the School's safeguarding policies.

Salary and benefits

- This is a part-time, fixed-term position for 12-months to cover maternity leave to start in April 2025 until Easter 2026.
- Teachers are paid a salary that reflects their knowledge and experience. St Helen's offers competitive salary levels and has its own salary scale which offers scope for pay progression.
- Employees may join a staff Pension Scheme.
- Teachers are entitled to take the normal School holidays.
- The School currently operates a cycle to work scheme.
- Employees are entitled to free lunches when the kitchens are operating.
- There is free car parking on site.
- Employees may use the fully equipped gymnasium/sports facility on site.

St Helen and St Katharine is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers, the Disclosure and Barring Service and overseas Police checks, if applicable. Employment is subject to these checks



The process

These job details should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding policies, available within the Working at St Helen's section of our website.

Please then complete an application form (available within the Working at St Helen's section of our website). The completed and signed application form, along with a brief supporting letter addressed to **Mrs Rebecca Dougall, Headmistress**, should be submitted via email (recruitment@shsk.org.uk) in the first instance and then sent to:

Human Resources Department
St Helen and St Katharine
Faringdon Road
Abingdon
Oxfordshire
OX14 1BE

Please note that any application form submitted electronically must be completed in the existing application form format, within Adobe.

The closing date for this post is **Thursday 27 February 2025 at 09.00am**.
Interviews will take place on **Friday 7 March 2025**.

Please note that due to the volume of applications we receive, we are unable to provide individual feedback except to those candidates who attend an interview.

We look forward to receiving your completed application.



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ST HELEN &
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Independent day school for girls aged 9–18
Faringdon Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 1BE