



Teacher of English (Mat 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 a passionate and talented teacher to join our thriving English Department.

The post is available from September 2025 on a fixed-term part-time basis to cover maternity leave until the end of January 2026 with a timetable in the region of 20 periods out of a possible 30 per week (for a full-time member of staff).

The successful applicant will be able to demonstrate extensive subject knowledge and have the ability to inspire and motivate students to work independently. A genuine passion for teaching English and a commitment to a full and inclusive extracurricular programme are essential.

The post involves teaching across the age and ability range of our students. In addition to teaching, the post-holder will also have pastoral responsibilities within their allocated year group.

All teaching staff are expected to contribute to the pastoral and enrichment programmes of the School. All staff share the responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the students, in accordance with the School's safeguarding policies.

The department

In addition to the Head of Department, there are currently six other teachers in the department, with varying numbers of teaching groups. The Head of Department is supported by a Second in Department. Collaboration and sharing of expertise is a staple of department conversation.

We have well-resourced and established schemes of work. We also develop schemes annually and enjoy the freedom to design our own curriculum for Year 7 to Year 9, this year expanding our diversity through text choices and critical approaches. We embrace discussion around pedagogical research, with most recent focuses being on feedback and strategic writing skills. Within this cohesive framework, individual teachers are encouraged to exercise personal creativity and flexibility in responding to the talents and interests of the School's remarkably engaged and capable students, and the department is always open to new expertise and ideas. This is a strong, enthusiastic, highly committed, and welcoming team.

Facilities

The English Department is located in the Jean Duffield Building, one of the newer wings of the School. The department office provides individual working space for teachers, while a flexible breakout area offers additional study and meeting space, for staff and for conversations with students. Most English teaching takes place in this building in spacious classrooms equipped with Promethean Active Panels. We have access to several IT rooms, a variety of performance spaces, and a spectacular library, where the younger years enjoy reading lessons on beanbags and older students take advantage of a very well stocked literature section and a range of excellent online resources to pursue independent research.

Subject details/curriculum

In Years 7, 8 and 9, English is taught in form groups. Modules include Different Cultures, Debating, Speeches and Speechwriting, and How to Write a Story, alongside sustained study of literature from Philip Reeve and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, to Charlotte Brontë and Shakespeare.

At GCSE, students are taught in mixed ability (within St Helen's context) classes of around 20 students. We follow the Eduqas syllabus for English Literature and Edexcel IGCSE for English Language, and all students follow both courses. For the past two years, we have studied Macbeth, Pride and Prejudice, An Inspector Calls, and Romantic and modern poetry.

At A-level, we offer OCR English Literature, usually with two groups of around 8 to 12 students each, depending on option choices. Groups are shared between two teachers. Recent texts studied include The Handmaid's Tale, Americanah, Twelfth Night, The Merchant's Tale, A Doll's House, Translations, The World's Wife, and Waiting for Godot. It is reflective of both the department's subject expertise and the students' ability that we often teach only one text for the comparative NEA, aiming to broaden their literary experience by suggesting suitable comparative authors for them to read and research on their own.

Curriculum English is enriched by a range of super-curricular activities, including creative writing, debating, competitive public speaking, and two lively and well-attended Literary Societies, one for GCSE students, and one for Sixth Form. We also run annual overnight Literary Retreats to Bath and to London.

We award a creative writing cup annually for the strongest portfolio from students in Year 10 and above, and we regularly arrange theatre visits, lecture days and academic speakers, taking full advantage of our proximity to Oxford and its abundant offering of literary talks and festivals. One talented creative writer each year is awarded the post of St Helen's Laureate, writing and performing literary works to mark key events in the School and global calendar.

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 and performance potential. They should inspire trust, confidence and creativity.

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. extra-curricular productions, clubs, trips and enrichment work.
- 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

- 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.

Safeguarding

- Promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons for who you are responsible and with whom you come into contact.



The person

Skills/abilities

- Excellent teaching and classroom management skills.
- Ability to encourage and inspire students across the age and ability range.
- Ability to build confidence in students so they are able to be creative and take risks in their work.
- Ability to challenge students to reach their full potential.
- Ability to balance preparation and forward planning with flexibility in the classroom.
- Ability to take initiative and enjoy independence in developing schemes of work and approaches.
- Ability to work also in a supportive and collaborative manner as part of a departmental team.
- Ability to contribute to the development and implementation of departmental policies and goals.
- Effective oral and written communication skills.
- Effective IT skills

Knowledge

- Strong subject and curriculum knowledge.
- An awareness and understanding of the issues and current developments in teaching English in schools.

Qualifications and experience

- A good honours or higher degree in a relevant discipline.
- Qualified teacher status is desirable.
- Proven teaching experience at secondary level is desirable.
- Working with others as part of a team

Personal attributes

- Enthusiasm and passion for the subject.
- A commitment to building positive relationships with students and colleagues.
- A reflective practitioner; ability to self-appraise and manage continuous professional development.
- A willingness to take an appropriate share of departmental responsibilities and take part in trips, theatre visits etc.
- A willingness to contribute as appropriate to the school's varied extracurricular programme.
- A commitment to safeguarding our students in line with the School's safeguarding policies.

Salary and benefits

- This is a fixed-term part-time maternity cover position to commence in September 2025 until the end of January 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 group personal 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 **Tuesday 22 April 2025 at 12 noon**.
Interviews will take place on **Wednesday 30 April 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.



www.shsk.org.uk

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