

St Helen and St Katharine Prep FAQs



ST HELEN &
ST KATHARINE

On her terms



“For more than 30 years, our Junior Department has provided an exceptional start to a St Helen and St Katharine education for girls in Years 5 and 6. We are excited to build on this success by welcoming girls into our community from the age of seven. From the outset, they will benefit from the rich and distinctive St Helen’s experience, combining academic ambition, outstanding pastoral care, exceptional opportunities beyond the classroom, and a strong sense of belonging that inspires girls to thrive.”



Sarah Rollings

Sarah Rollings
Head

Q Why is St Helen and St Katharine expanding its provision to include Years 3 and 4?

A This development forms part of the School’s long-term commitment to extending the reach and impact of its mission. For more than 30 years, our Junior Department has provided an exceptional education for girls in Years 5 and 6, combining academic challenge with outstanding pastoral care, a rich co-curricular programme and a highly successful transition into the senior school.

By introducing Years 3 and 4, we will create a complete Key Stage 2 experience, enabling girls to benefit from a St Helen and St Katharine education from the age of seven, and providing families with a distinctive all-girls alternative to local co-educational prep schools. This will allow girls as young as seven to enjoy the advantages of a learning environment designed specifically around the way girls learn, grow and develop.



Q What is St Helen and St Katharine Prep and why are you changing the name?

A St Helen and St Katharine Prep (SHSK Prep) will be the new name for our expanded Junior Department and will comprise Years 3 to 6. It will combine the nurturing environment and expertise of a prep school with access to the outstanding facilities, opportunities and specialist teaching available across St Helen and St Katharine. The expansion provides an opportunity to create a clear identity for our Key Stage 2 experience and to reflect the broader age range of the section.

Q When will the first Year 3 and Year 4 classes open?

A The first Years 3 and 4 students will join the School in September 2027, to coincide with the opening of the new SHSK Prep building. Years 5 and 6 will move to the new building.

Q Where will SHSK Prep be located?

A SHSK Prep will be based in a dedicated new home created through the redevelopment of the former Sixth Form Centre, adjacent to the existing outdoor Junior play area. The building will be designed specifically for Key Stage 2 students, providing a bespoke environment with its own dedicated outdoor spaces, specialist facilities and a dedicated entrance from the Chapel car park.



Q Will SHSK Prep students have access to senior school facilities?

A Yes. One of the key advantages of SHSK Prep is that students benefit from being part of the wider St Helen and St Katharine community while enjoying a dedicated Key Stage 2 environment of their own. Students will have access to our exceptional facilities, including sports facilities, science labs, performance spaces, computing suites and our state-of-the-art library.

Q What impact will the development have on the day-to-day running of the School?

A We anticipate minimal disruption to the day-to-day life of the School during the redevelopment.

The location of the SHSK Prep building ensures that students and staff can continue to learn and work as normal. The development will not require any adaptations to the daily running of the School, or the facilities currently available to all our students. Years 5 and 6 will remain in their existing location until the SHSK Prep building is completed.

Q Will current Junior Department students be affected?

A Current students will continue to enjoy the same high-quality educational experience, pastoral care and opportunities that they do today. The expansion builds upon the strengths of our existing provision rather than changing its fundamental character.

Q Is this a financial decision?

A No. The addition of Years 3 and 4 is a future-focused strategic development designed to extend and strengthen the School's educational provision. The decision has been taken following careful consideration by governors and senior leaders over an extended period and reflects our commitment to ensuring that St Helen and St Katharine continues to move from strength to strength in the years ahead.

By expanding SHSK Prep, we will be able to extend the reach of our mission, provide greater educational choice for families and enable girls to benefit from a St Helen and St Katharine education from an earlier age.



Q What staffing will SHSK Prep have?

A SHSK Prep will continue to be led by specialist primary-trained staff, with the majority of lessons taught by Prep teachers who specialise in a range of different subjects. Each class will have a dedicated class teacher who will oversee both academic progress and pastoral development. Students will also benefit from teaching by senior school subject specialists in areas such as Modern Foreign Languages, PE and Sport, Music, Art, Design Technology, and Outdoor Learning.

Q What will class sizes be in SHSK Prep?

A SHSK Prep will have one class in each year group from Years 3 to 6. We expect class sizes to remain relatively small, allowing teachers to know every student well and provide a high level of individual support and challenge. Our current Year 5 cohort comprises around 16 students and Year 6 around 24 students. We envisage that the initial Years 3 and 4 cohorts will be slightly smaller.

Q What co-curricular opportunities will be available in SHSK Prep?

A Co-curricular opportunities are a central part of life at St Helen and St Katharine and were recognised as a significant strength in our most recent ISI inspection. Students in SHSK Prep will have access to Beyond, our extensive co-curricular programme, which encourages girls to discover new interests, develop existing talents and build confidence beyond the classroom.

Alongside our team sports programme, students will be able to choose from a wide range of activities including drama, art, gymnastics, music, creative writing, computer science and bug club. Flexibility is at the heart of the programme with the vast majority of activities being offered free of charge and with students able to join in without the need to sign up in advance. Many activities will take place during the extended lunch break, allowing students to participate in clubs while still having plenty of time to play, socialise and enjoy being part of the Prep community.

Outdoor Learning is a vibrant part of the co-curriculum for all our students. Students will enjoy activities such as campfires, bird watching, gardening, orienteering and sailing, allowing them to build self-belief and resilience.





Q What about wraparound care?

A SHSK Prep will offer extensive wraparound care to support busy families. Our supervision is part of our service from 7.30am to 5.15pm. Morning supervision from 7.30 to 8am needs to be booked ahead so that we know we have sufficient staffing in place. Standard drop-off time runs between 8 and 8.35am. At the end of the day, students can be collected, use the bus service, stay in the SHSK Prep building for supervised activities or go to a Beyond co-curricular club. Optional paid supervision is available from 5.15 to 6pm.

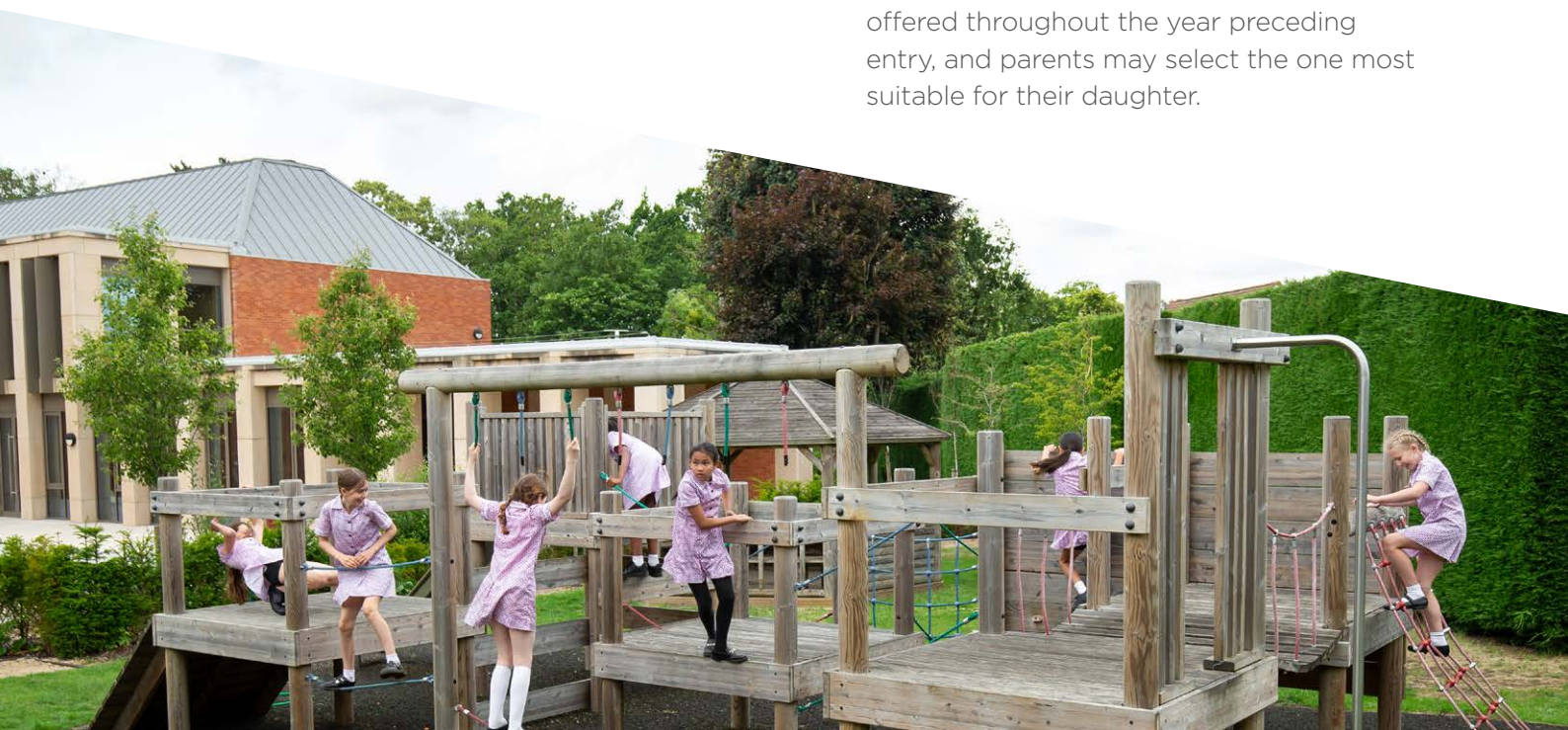


Q Will Years 3 and 4 be able to use the Joint Bus Service?

A Yes. The morning service is open to all students. In the evenings, the 4.20pm service will be open to all year groups. Years 3 and 4 students wishing to travel with older siblings on the 5.20pm service may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Q How will girls be assessed for entry into Years 3 and 4?

A We want to get to know each individual girl, understand her passions and strengths and see how she approaches learning. Each student will complete short tests in Mathematics and English alongside a practical task and an interview with one of our SHSK Prep teachers. A reference will also be requested from her current school. Various assessment session dates are offered throughout the year preceding entry, and parents may select the one most suitable for their daughter.





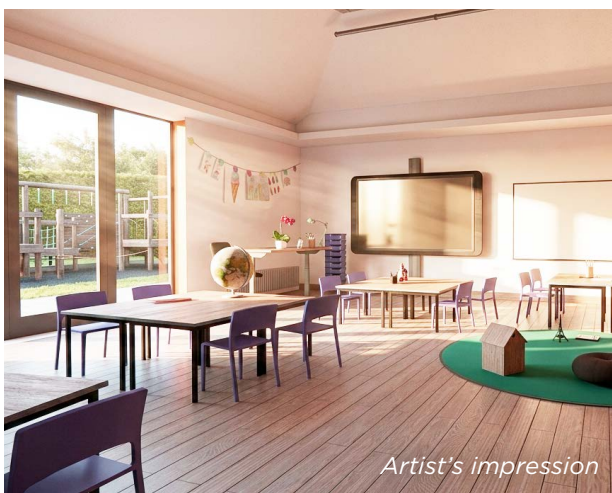
Q Will the addition of Year 3 and 4 impact academic standards?

A No. St Helen and St Katharine will remain an academically selective school, with entry assessments tailored to the age and stage of each applicant. Our aim is to identify girls who will thrive in our academically ambitious environment and benefit from all that the School has to offer.

The introduction of Years 3 and 4 does not change our academic expectations. Rather, it provides the opportunity to support and develop girls over a longer period of time, helping them build the confidence, knowledge and habits of scholarship that will enable them to thrive as they progress.

Q Will a girl joining SHSK Prep in Years 3 or 4 be required to sit the entrance tests for Year 7?

A When we offer a place at any stage in the School, it is with the expectation that we are entering a partnership with your daughter and with you as parents – we believe in your daughter's potential to thrive at St Helen's. Once students have gained their place in SHSK Prep they are guaranteed entry into Year 7; our Year 6 students sit the entrance papers for benchmarking and scholarships only. SHSK Prep is therefore uniquely positioned to help facilitate a smooth transition between the junior and senior stages of school life and remove the anxiety around senior school choice and exam preparation.



Artist's impression



Q How can I find out more?

A Throughout the coming year there will be opportunities to learn more about St Helen and St Katharine Prep at our range of open events. These include our whole-school Open Day as well as smaller, dedicated SHSK Prep events. You will hear from our Head, Sarah Rollings, and our Joint Heads of Section for SHSK Prep, meet students and staff, and enjoy a tour of the school campus and its facilities. Families are also welcome to contact the Admissions Office with any questions. Please visit: shsk.org.uk/visitus.

Current St Helen's parents who would like to know more are welcome to attend a Q&A session on Tuesday 30 June.

“Throughout its history, St Helen and St Katharine has evolved to meet the needs of successive generations of young women while remaining true to its founding purpose. At a time when girls’ education remains as important as ever, the creation of St Helen and St Katharine Prep represents the next step in that journey, reinforcing and extending the reach of our mission.”



Sara Benbow
Chair of Governors



Visit us

Register for an open event or book an individual visit: shsk.org.uk/visitus

Stay in touch

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in St Helen and St Katharine



ST HELEN &
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