



DUKE *of* KENT
SCHOOL

Candidate Brief: Head



From the Chair of Governors



It is a great pleasure to welcome you to Duke of Kent School and to invite you to consider the opportunity to become our next Head.

Sue Knox has led Duke of Kent School with exceptional commitment, energy and care for eight years. During her tenure, the School has continued to develop academically and strategically, while retaining the qualities that make it such a distinctive and special community. She leaves Duke of Kent School in a strong position, with a clear sense of direction for the future. We are now looking for the person who will lead Duke of Kent School into its next chapter.

This is an exciting opportunity to inherit a school with a strong educational ethos, dedicated staff, supportive parents and Governors and pupils who are at the heart of everything we do. We are not looking for someone simply to maintain the status quo. We want an ambitious and inspirational educational leader who will understand and protect what makes Duke of Kent School distinctive, while bringing the vision, energy and confidence to develop the School further.

Above all, we are looking for someone who shares our belief that every child should be known, valued and encouraged to discover their own potential.

I hope that, as you read this brochure, you will be inspired by what you see and will come to experience Duke of Kent School for yourself, meet our pupils, talk to our staff and see the School in action.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Richard Brocksom, Chair of Governors

“The school’s ethos is one that encourages pupils to work hard and to enjoy school life. Teaching & Learning are combined with effective pastoral care which supports pupils to make good progress.”

ISI INSPECTION REPORT, 2024



Welcome to Duke of Kent School

Thank you for considering the opportunity to become the next Head of Duke of Kent School.

Duke of Kent School is a distinctive, thriving and ambitious independent school for children from Nursery to Year 11, set in beautiful surroundings in Ewhurst, Surrey.

We are a deliberately small school, and our size is one of our greatest strengths. **Every child is known. Every child matters. Every child has the opportunity to discover what they can do and who they can become.**

We combine high academic expectations with exceptional breadth of opportunity and a strong commitment to pastoral care. We want our pupils to achieve highly, but we also want them to be kind, confident, resilient, curious and independent.

We believe that children flourish when they are both challenged and nurtured. We encourage them to take risks, learn from mistakes, discover their strengths and develop the confidence to become increasingly self-directed learners.

Our ambition is for every pupil to leave Duke of Kent School believing that they can make a difference.

“The school’s values such as kindness and respect are front and centre and permeate all aspects of school life.”

ISI INSPECTION REPORT, 2024



Our School

Duke of Kent School is a place with a strong sense of identity and community.

Our pupils are individuals rather than numbers. Teachers know their pupils well, understand their strengths and needs and take genuine pleasure in seeing them develop. Our pupils know one another across the age range and there is a strong sense of belonging.

This is a school where an older pupil might help a younger child with reading, where a Nursery child can become part of a whole-school musical experience, where pupils can take leadership responsibilities and where staff know not just what a child has achieved, but what makes them tick.

We value **kindness, effort, respect, responsibility and honesty**. These values are evident in the way we expect members of our community to treat one another and in the young people we hope our pupils become. Our small size also enables us to be responsive. We can know our children well, adapt to their needs and provide opportunities for them to develop their individual talents.

That combination of **personal attention and high aspiration** is at the heart of Duke of Kent School.

An education for the whole child

We are academically ambitious. We want every pupil to make excellent progress from their individual starting point and to leave us with strong academic foundations, a love of learning and the confidence to embrace the next stage of their education. But we do not define success solely through examination results. For us, education is about developing the whole child: intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally.

A Duke of Kent School education is deliberately broad. Alongside a strong academic curriculum, pupils have extensive opportunities to take part in sport, music, drama, art, design technology, outdoor learning, leadership and service. They can take part in Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, choir and ski trips, performances, competitions and a wide range of activities beyond the classroom. We want every pupil to have the opportunity to try something new, to discover what they enjoy and to challenge themselves in ways they may not have expected.

We believe these experiences matter. They help children develop confidence, resilience, creativity, teamwork, communication and independence. They teach pupils how to

collaborate with others, how to persevere when something is difficult and how to respond positively when things do not go according to plan. They also provide opportunities for pupils to contribute to the wider community and to understand the importance of kindness, responsibility and service.

Our approach is rooted in the belief that every child is different. Pupils arrive with different strengths, interests, experiences and aspirations, and we want each of them to be known, valued and encouraged to flourish. We do not expect every child to excel in the same way. Instead, we provide the breadth of opportunity and the individual encouragement that enables pupils to discover where their strengths lie.

Our curriculum is therefore about both **achievement and discovery**. We want pupils to find the things that make them feel excited, challenged and motivated – their individual spark – and to develop the confidence to pursue them. Whether that spark is found in the classroom, on the sports field, on a stage, in the art studio, outdoors, in the kitchen or through helping others, we want our pupils to leave Duke of Kent School knowing themselves, recognising their strengths and believing in what they can achieve.



Sport

Pupils' physical development at Duke of Kent School is excellent. With a focus on personal targets and fulfilling one's potential embedded in the school's aims and ethos, pupils of all ages participate successfully in a wide range of sporting and outdoor activities. Our Sports programme is designed to enable pupils to lead a healthy, active lifestyle – and to understand why this matters. The benefits are physical, social and intellectual, and we see this aspect of our programme as central to our pupils' well-being. Through participation in sport, pupils learn what it means to test themselves, manage success and failure, and work in and lead teams. Sport facilities include a swimming pool, tennis courts, extensive grounds and pitches, and an all-weather pitch, with sport available at all levels and the focus on improving personal best.

“Teachers ensure pupils feel well supported and balance this with making sure they are challenged appropriately”

ISI INSPECTION REPORT, 2024

Art, Design and Food Technology

Creativity is a real strength at Duke of Kent School. Well-resourced with a fully equipped Art Studio, Design Technology Workshop and our **brand-new Teaching Kitchen**, we pride ourselves on the breadth of opportunities we provide. Our focus is on generating individual responses right from the start: no child in Duke of Kent School will ever look at a display of work and ask, ‘Which one is mine?’ Design Technology brings together up-to-date technologies, used to solve contemporary design problems, with traditional processes, techniques and materials.

Our new Teaching Kitchen adds an exciting further dimension to this creative provision. Food Technology will form part of the curriculum, giving pupils the opportunity to develop practical cooking skills alongside an understanding of nutrition, ingredients and healthy eating. The kitchen will also be used for a programme of after-school clubs, providing pupils with further opportunities to cook, experiment and develop their confidence in the kitchen. We look forward to making the Teaching Kitchen a vibrant part of school life, where pupils can learn practical skills, work creatively and enjoy making and sharing food together.

Performing Arts

Music and Drama are integral areas of our School life and areas of significant strength. We see confidence as the key to success and every pupil at Duke of Kent School is given the opportunity to take part in Performing Arts. Opportunities to play or sing – individually, or as part of an ensemble – and to act or get involved behind the scenes, are available throughout the School. 80% of the School are involved in the music programme with 60% taking instrumental music and LAMDA lessons with our highly experienced team of peripatetic music teachers. At lunchtime in our Music Department you can always find a group of pupils practising, improvising or simply playing together for fun. An exciting calendar of plays, concerts, visiting performers and workshops ensures that talent is developed. Singing is particularly strong and a choir trip takes place every other year. Pupils have sung in places all around the UK and in Europe including the Cavern in Liverpool where the Beatles famously performed.

Learning Development

Supporting our learners is an expert Learning Development Team. They develop teaching styles and respond to the needs of individual children by promoting an enthusiastic, confidence boosting and active approach to learning. In the Pre-prep and Prep School, the emphasis is on literacy and numeracy support. In the Senior School, study skills, revision techniques and independent learning strategies also play a larger part within the Department's teaching. The team works closely with teachers and families to ensure that every pupil can overcome barriers, develop confidence and achieve their potential.

Learning Beyond the Classroom

Trips and Speakers

We run a dynamic and diverse programme of trips and visiting speakers. Speakers from all walks of life are chosen to inspire our pupils, in addition to an exciting programme of artists in residence and visiting authors. In any given week, there are also trips off-site for all sections of the School. These range from trips designed to complement the curriculum, such as a GCSE Music Theatre Trip, a trip to see the Science Museum or the Battle of Britain Bunker Museum, to the more unusual, such as a recent trip to SES Water Treatment Centre. Whether on a Geography field trip, exploring Borough Market, or orienteering in our own forest, our pupils have rich learning experiences on and off site.



“Pupils are courteous and confident because leaders establish a climate of trust and support.”

ISI INSPECTION REPORT, 2024

Service and Participation

Independence and confidence, gained through service and participation, are central to our pupils' experience. From the earliest years of Pre-prep, Forest School builds a 'can-do' spirit, and teaches responsibility. Forest School gives the opportunity not only to learn about the woodland itself, but also to develop self-awareness, self-regulation, independence, resilience, greater communication skills and a positive attitude to learning. Our weekly Endeavour lessons throughout the Prep School provide excellent opportunities for children to work in teams, develop cross curricular skills, show initiative, take risks and build awareness of the wider communities beyond the School. Outdoor learning is also a particular feature of our curriculum in our bespoke Outdoor Learning Classroom.

Leadership

In Prep and Senior School, there are opportunities to take up roles of responsibility as House Captains and Prefects, and many volunteer to work with younger pupils, developing crucial leadership skills. An elected School Council ensures that pupils play their part in decision making, while the Sustainability Committee gives pupils the opportunity to contribute to discussions and initiatives that shape the School's approach to environmental responsibility. We work actively against a sense of entitlement, encouraging pupils to make things happen – organising charitable events, for example – rather than wait for others to hand them opportunities. We provide significant opportunities for pupils to serve the community through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and our annual Community Week programme.

Activities

Our Activities Programme provides a wide and diverse range of exciting extra-curricular activities. Activities give the chance to explore interests further and develop new hobbies: recent offerings include: Cooking in our new teaching kitchen, Mountain biking, Art Club, Photography, Computer Coding, Camera-Trapping, Hill Running, Creative Writing, Football, Further Mathematics, Dance, Music, Drama and Origami.

Our Approach to Pastoral Care

We believe that good pastoral care is of prime importance. For every child to fulfil their potential, both academically and socially, they need to feel happy, secure and engaged in school, while also understanding the importance of good manners, self-discipline and respect for others.

Our small size is one of our greatest strengths. Every individual is known, understood and appreciated; our pupils are never treated as statistics. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are excellent. We aim to provide a relaxed and informal atmosphere, underpinned by clear expectations and a healthy respect for authority. A strong

sense of wellbeing and belonging provides the foundation for progress, and we devote considerable time and attention to helping pupils develop the confidence, resilience and sense of self-worth they need to flourish.

We benefit from a dedicated Wellbeing Manager who oversees our whole-school wellbeing programme and leads initiatives throughout the year, including Hello Yellow. We also have trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), alongside staff with specialist mental health training, ensuring that pupils have access to the right support when they need it.



A community that cares

The strength of Duke of Kent School lies in its people.

Relationships between pupils and staff are warm, respectful and genuine. Staff are highly committed to the School and to the children they teach. Parents are important partners in their children's education. We value open, honest communication and recognise the importance of working together when a child needs support, encouragement or challenge.

Our Parents' Association (PADoK) plays an important role in bringing families together and strengthening our sense of community. It organises a wide range of social and fundraising events throughout the year, providing opportunities for parents to get to know one another while also making a valuable contribution to the School. Last year, as part of our

50th anniversary celebrations, PADoK organised a wonderful 50th Anniversary Ball and donated significant funds towards our new teaching kitchen, a generous contribution that will benefit pupils for many years to come.

Our Senior Leadership Team comprises highly experienced, committed and talented leaders who know the School exceptionally well and are united in their commitment to its continued success. They will provide the new Head with outstanding support, bringing a wealth of expertise, energy and perspective while also giving the new Head the space and confidence to lead the School in their own way.

There is a strong sense that we are all part of the same School.

The Opportunity

The next Head will lead Duke of Kent School into an exciting new chapter.

The School has a strong foundation, a committed staff body, supportive Governors and a loyal parent community. It has a clear identity and a distinctive educational philosophy. The opportunity is therefore not to reinvent Duke of Kent School. It is to understand what makes it special, protect those qualities and have the vision and energy to take the School forward. The next Head will need to build on our strengths while ensuring that Duke of Kent School continues to respond positively to a rapidly changing independent school market.

The Head will be the educational and cultural leader of Duke of Kent School. We are looking for someone who will lead from the front, but never from a distance.

The successful candidate will be visible around the School and actively involved in its life. They will know the pupils, enjoy

talking to them and take an interest in their achievements, their challenges and their interests. They will build strong relationships with staff and understand that the quality of a school depends upon the quality and commitment of its people.

They will be accessible to parents, able to communicate with warmth and clarity, and confident in building strong relationships with Governors and the wider community. The Head will also need the strategic and commercial ability to lead an independent school successfully in a challenging environment.

We are looking for a leader who is ambitious but approachable; strategic but highly connected to daily school life.



Job Description: Key Responsibilities

The Head has responsibility for the overall leadership, management and development of Duke of Kent School. The Head works closely with the Board of Governors, staff and parents to ensure that the School fulfils its aims and distinctive ethos and provides an excellent education and experience for every pupil.

Core Purpose

The Head will:

- Provide inspiring and strategic leadership, setting a clear vision and direction for the School.
- Develop, implement and review the School's Strategic Development Plan.
- Lead the educational, pastoral and co-curricular life of the School, ensuring high standards of teaching, learning, pupil wellbeing and outcomes.
- Protect and develop the School's distinctive culture, ethos and identity while ensuring it evolves appropriately.
- Ensure that the School consistently complies with all statutory, regulatory and professional requirements.
- Be a visible, present and engaged leader of the School community, building strong relationships with pupils, parents, staff, governors, alumni and the wider community.
- Be accountable to the Board of Governors for the School's overall performance, including its financial sustainability and long-term development.
- Lead the School's safeguarding culture and ensure the highest standards of practice.



Teaching, Learning and Pupil Development

The Head will:

- Ensure that excellent teaching and learning are at the heart of the School's provision and that pupils are supported and challenged to achieve their potential.
- Oversee an ambitious academic, pastoral, moral and spiritual curriculum.
- Ensure that pupil progress and attainment are effectively assessed, monitored, reported and supported.
- Ensure that pupils with SEND are well supported and that the School's provision reflects strong professional knowledge and understanding of their individual needs.
- Ensure that the co-curricular programme makes a significant contribution to pupils' wider development.
- Maintain a rigorous and effective framework for staff professional development and continuous improvement.

People and Culture

The Head will:

- Foster a positive, supportive and forward-looking professional environment in which staff feel valued and empowered.
- Build a strong sense of community and ensure that the School's values are reflected throughout its life.
- Champion high professional standards, effective performance management, collaboration and accountability.
- Recruit, retain and develop outstanding staff and strengthen leadership capacity throughout the School.
- Ensure that pastoral provision is of the highest quality, with the wellbeing, safety, inclusion and individual needs of every pupil at its heart.



School Development, Community and Communications

The Head will:

- Lead the School's development, marketing and communications strategy, ensuring its strengths and achievements are effectively promoted.
- Build strong, trusting relationships with parents and ensure excellent communication with the parent body.
- Develop the School's profile and reputation within the local and wider educational community.
- Maintain and strengthen relationships with alumni and other key stakeholders.
- Lead fundraising and development activity in support of the School's strategic priorities.

Governance and Accountability

The Head will:

- Maintain a strong and effective relationship with the Chair and Board of Governors, ensuring governors are fully informed about the School's performance, opportunities, risks and strategic priorities.
- Work collaboratively with governors to ensure appropriate oversight of educational performance, financial sustainability, strategic development and regulatory compliance.

The Person

Essential

- Senior leadership experience in an independent school, with a track record of successful educational, pastoral and organisational leadership.
- A strong academic background, a sound understanding of current educational thinking and pedagogy.
- An understanding of SEND education, with knowledge and experience to ensure that pupils with additional needs are effectively supported and enabled to achieve their potential.
- Proven ability to lead and inspire staff, build effective teams, develop individuals, manage performance and foster a positive professional culture.
- Excellent understanding of safeguarding, pastoral care and the wellbeing and development of young people.
- Strong financial literacy and commercial awareness, with an understanding of the financial and operational challenges facing independent schools.
- Outstanding communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage confidently, warmly and persuasively with pupils, parents, staff, Governors and external stakeholders.
- A commitment to the values and ethos of Duke of Kent School and to providing an education that develops the whole child.



Desirable

- Strong digital awareness and an understanding of both the opportunities and challenges presented by artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.
- Experience of independent school inspection and regulatory frameworks, including ISI and/or Ofsted.
- Active engagement with a relevant professional or Heads' association.
- Evidence of continued professional learning and development.
- Experience of strategic planning, fundraising, marketing or school development.

Personal Qualities

- Strategic and purposeful, with the vision to lead the School forward while maintaining its distinctive character.
- Warm, approachable and empathetic, with a genuine interest in young people and their development.
- An excellent communicator and relationship-builder, able to inspire confidence.
- Resilient, energetic and adaptable, with the personal stamina and emotional intelligence required for Headship.
- Collaborative and humble, recognising the contribution of others and creating a culture in which people can thrive.
- Decisive and accountable, with the confidence to make difficult decisions when necessary.

Terms & Conditions

A competitive remuneration package will be offered, reflecting the scope of the role, including a pension provision through the School's Aviva scheme and fee remission for children (subject to policy). A comprehensive programme of continuing professional development and relocation support where appropriate.

The appointment will be subject to the usual pre-employment checks, including an enhanced DBS check.



How to Apply

Application is by School Application Form only. Forms can be downloaded from the School website (under School Community - Vacancies) and should be submitted electronically by email to recruitment@dokschoool.org, for the attention of Richard Brocksom, Chair of Governors.

All candidates are asked to submit an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form; also to be downloaded from the School website under the Application Form. Any information submitted on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

Please also email a covering letter outlining how your experience and qualifications make you suitable for this role, making specific reference to the job description and person specification, and explaining what attracts you to the post.

All applications will receive acknowledgment of receipt.

Closing date for applications: Friday 9th October at noon.

Longlist interviews with the Governors' selection panel will take place at the School on **Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th November 2026.**

Final interviews with the Governors' selection panel will take place at the School on **Thursday 19th November 2026.**

The contact person for this recruitment process is our HR Manager, Rachel Harris, who can be contacted on 01483 608367 or recruitment@dokschoool.org.

