



ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL
— TWICKENHAM —



Head
Full time
To start January/April 2026

Welcome from the Chair of Governors

The Chair and Governors of St Catherine's invite applications for the role of Head to succeed Johneen McPherson after seven and a half years of exceptional leadership.

All schools speak of their high standards for pastoral care, teaching and learning, and co-curricular provision and we are very proud of our record of excellence in these areas. However, what sets St Catherine's apart is our school culture. The inclusive and caring Catholic Christian ethos welcomes girls of all faiths and none, and our vibrant community celebrates friendship and belonging, and ensures each person feels supported and valued.

This is an exciting opportunity for an outstanding, ambitious and energetic leader who will embrace the values and faith life of the School, and lead St Catherine's with confidence into this next period. The next Head will be someone enthusiastic about leading a strong and ambitious curriculum that prepares girls well for the future, while also ensuring pastoral care and co-curricular provision promote pupils' confidence, integrity and resilience.

At a time of considerable challenge for the independent sector, the successful candidate needs to have the vision, creativity and ambition to take the School forward into the next stage of its development. With a genuine passion for girls' education, the successful candidate will have the ability to foster effective, collaborative relationships, within the school community and beyond.

Governors look forward to meeting applicants with proven management experience in schools, and those with the appetite for the challenge, responsibility and privilege of school leadership. The successful candidate will work with a very experienced, personable and innovative senior leadership team and a committed and supportive Governing Board; further training and mentoring will also be available to assist the new Head.

If you have the professional and personal skills needed to become the next Head of St Catherine's, we will be delighted to consider your application.

With kind regards



Sylvia Hamilton
Chair of Governors



Faith and Ethos

School Mission

We are inspired by St Catherine of Siena, who said 'Be who God wants you to be, and you will set the world on fire', to form young women of confidence and compassion, ready for service and leadership in the world. We fulfil our mission through these values:

Community: a place of cheerfulness, dignity and tolerance, where all are welcome

Faith: a Christ-centred school with time for reflection; a culture of gratitude and friendship

Courage: with self-knowledge, resilience and integrity, and a readiness for challenge

Scholarship: where gifts are developed through curiosity, imagination and ambition

Service: commitment to others, to stewardship, and to justice and hope for all

We are proud, at St Catherine's, to have a mission statement that fully reflects the daily life of the School. It captures the special position of our patron saint, the fourteenth-century St Catherine of Siena: her courage, leadership and humility are values that girls of all faiths can still admire today. Her feast day is a time for special celebration each year – and includes a chocolate treat for all pupils.

The values here demonstrate both our strengths and our goals. Visitors often comment on the friendly atmosphere at St Catherine's, and this is informed by the values of community and faith. They define our welcoming Catholic ethos, as a place where each girl knows she belongs, and where she can develop great friendships and self-confidence.

Courage and scholarship combine to show our emphasis on ambition and innovation. St Catherine's girls are able to take risks, to rise to challenges and to aim high, and there is a team of dedicated staff to help them, and to celebrate their achievements.

Lastly, our focus on service is about being outward-looking. We encourage pupils to have a heart for social justice, an appreciation of what it means to serve others, and a commitment to developing well-informed and active engagement with the world around them – to be young women of deeds, not words.



An Outstanding School

St Catherine's School is a Catholic independent Girls' Day School, which draws pupils from a wide catchment area. The site of St. Catherine's has been famous since the poet, Alexander Pope, came to Twickenham in 1719. He developed extensive gardens behind his riverside villa and the School is now situated in this garden. In 1992 the School became fully independent and now operates as a charitable trust.

The School enjoys an enviable position next to the River Thames and is only a short distance from the centre of Twickenham. Strawberry Hill Station is a 10 minute walk from the School and Twickenham Railway Station, 12 minutes. Both have regular services to London (Waterloo), Surrey, Berkshire and Middlesex.

St Catherine's warmly welcomes girls from all faiths and none who are in sympathy with the values of the School, and approximately 40% of pupils are Catholic. The School's Catholic Christian ethos is offered in an inclusive and open manner, which allows us to help all girls to explore deeper values. This also underpins our excellent pastoral care system and all staff are committed to caring for the girls.

The School helps every girl achieve her personal best by providing a broad and balanced education within a stimulating, secure and supportive environment. Success is achieved through personal responsibility, high expectations and a close partnership between parents and school. Emphasis is placed on ambition, creativity and resilience, and on the importance of pupil voice, kindness, and service. The staff know the pupils as individuals and this creates a strong and happy community.



The School is organised into the Preparatory School, Senior School and Sixth Form all of which are located on the same site. On leaving the Preparatory School, most pupils enter the Senior School and most Year 11 pupils join the Sixth Form.

The admissions process includes tests and interviews. Academic Scholarships and bursaries are available and the School is pleased to support families seeking a St Catherine's education and to promote excellence.

Academic results are consistently strong. At GCSE level 63% of grades achieved in 2024 were between 7 and 9. A Level results were also impressive with 45% of grades A/ A*. Over 90% of 2024 leavers received offers from Russell Group Universities, and 10% went on to courses in the arts and music.

Great importance is attached to a well-rounded education and co-curricular activities play a significant role in the life of the School. Competitive events are held throughout the year and there is a healthy rivalry between the four houses (Bronte, Cavell, Nightingale and Pankhurst). The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is a popular option. Sport, Music and Drama also play an important part in the life of the School and all pupils are encouraged to participate in fixtures, productions, and concerts.

Facilities are good and include an indoor swimming pool, multi-purpose hall, playing field, newly renovated ICT suites, and netball/tennis courts. Over the past ten years the School has invested in new facilities, including a Sixth Form Centre, Drama Studio, dining facilities and other teaching areas, as well as upgrading the Science Block and playing field, and opening a new Creative Hub which houses performing and creative arts.

Further details may be found on our website: www.stcatherineschool.co.uk



Scholarships

Academic Scholarships are awarded for Year 7 and for the Sixth Form to pupils of academic promise who will benefit from the opportunities that St Catherine's provides and who will contribute strongly to the life of the school. Music, Art, Drama and Sports Awards are also available, and the all-rounder Siena Scholarship is awarded for the last four years of St Catherine's schooling.

The Curriculum

The Prep curriculum promotes creativity and curiosity and establishes firm foundations for all pupils; specialist teaching enriches the programme and includes French, Spanish, Drama, Food and Nutrition, Music and PE.

Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a rich and exciting curriculum and pupils generally study ten subjects to GCSE level and three or four subjects to A Level. Sixth Form pupils can choose from a wide selection of subjects and they also have the opportunity to complete an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).



Governance, Leadership and Finance

St Catherine's School is a registered charitable Trust. The governance of St Catherine's is in the hands of a governing body consisting of a Chair and at present eight fellow governors. Governors serve as Trustees of the charity and Directors of the company.

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the school. The Governors have a wide range of experience and skills, and exercise highly effective oversight; they have an excellent understanding of the day-to-day working of the school.

The full Governing Body meets three times a year. A number of sub-committees provide regular reports to the Governing Body; Finance Premises & General Purposes, Safeguarding, Education and Health & Safety.

The day to day running of the School is delegated to the employees who are considered to be key management personnel, namely the Head and the Bursar and Clerk to the Governors, supported by other members of the Senior Management Team (SMT), which comprises the Senior Deputy Head, Deputy Head Academic, Deputy Head Pastoral, Head of Sixth Form and Head of Prep.

This cohesive and high-performing team currently meets twice weekly and provides strategic leadership across all aspects of school life. Each member has specific areas of responsibility and holds regular line management meetings to ensure the effective running of their areas and the delivery of excellence across the School.

Members of the SMT are deeply committed to the wellbeing and development of every pupil. They are also active participants in the wider life of the School, regularly supporting events, championing the co-curricular programme, and supporting the values, faith life and ethos of St Catherine's.

This strong, supportive team culture provides a dynamic and fulfilling environment for leaders who are passionate about education and collaborative in approach.

St Catherine's financial objective is to generate a surplus to provide the highest quality education to the girls. This sits alongside the aim to maintain and enhance excellent facilities, and provide wider access to its education through bursary.

Fees are derived mainly from school fees, with contributions from external lettings, Friends of St Catherine's (FOSC) and other initiatives. St Catherine's is asset rich and has healthy liquid reserves. Despite the challenges currently impacting all independent schools, St Catherine's continues to invest strategically, and in 2024 increased its footprint with the acquisition of the Creative Hub facility from the Diocese of Westminster.

With VAT now imposed on independent school fees, and the removal of charitable business rates relief, the Charity has been developing plans to mitigate the adverse financial impact to come.



Job Information

The Head will be an inspiring, dynamic, and reflective leader with experience of leadership in schools. He/she will bring interpersonal, strategic and operational skills, coupled with a clear commitment to academic excellence, pupil wellbeing, and staff development. The successful candidate will also demonstrate the financial and contextual knowledge needed to lead this inclusive and thriving Catholic Christian school in a competitive educational environment.

The Head would take the lead and/or appropriately delegate the duties listed below:

Strategic leadership:

- Lead the development and delivery of the School's strategic plan in line with its ethos and mission;
- Work closely with the Chair of Governors and Bursar to ensure effective evaluation of performance against the strategic objectives in the school development plan;
- Stay abreast of developments in education and respond proactively to changes;
- Manage and promote whole school - Prep and Senior - initiatives and culture.

School culture:

- Champion and sustain a safe, inclusive, and supportive community that nurtures personal growth, wellbeing, and mutual respect;
- Lead and foster the Catholic life of the School, which welcomes girls of all faiths and none, uniting this with care for pupils and the strengthening of community values;
- Lead and develop school events, thereby strengthening community ties and experiences;
- Promote a warm, welcoming atmosphere where all pupils feel confident to be themselves;
- Support pupil behaviour, discipline and wellbeing through appropriate policies and training.

Educational excellence:

- Ensure the delivery of a dynamic, contemporary, forward-thinking curriculum that fosters academic excellence, intellectual curiosity, values, and a lifelong love of learning;
- Promote an environment of academic challenge and excellence across all age groups and one which prepares pupils for the life beyond school;
- Inspire innovative teaching practices that respond to the needs of individual learners and nurture empathy, resilience and thinking skills;
- Ensure excellent provision and relevant, appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and those who are able, gifted and talented.



Job Information

Operational and financial oversight:

- In partnership with the Bursar, SMT and Governors, ensure the effective operation of the School, including daily operations, strategic management and long-term planning;
- Manage the school budget with the Bursar, ensuring financial stability and transparency;
- Support the development agenda of the School, identifying funding opportunities and leading capital development initiatives;
- Establish local partnerships and foster relationships with the School's local neighbours, informing them about the School and building rapport.

Staff development:

- Recruit, support, and develop an outstanding team committed to the School's mission;
- Lead and support teacher career progression and continual professional development, pedagogy, mentorship, and reflective practice;
- Lead a robust system of staff appraisal, ensuring it supports staff development, recognises achievement, and aligns with the school's goals and mission;
- Encourage open communication and staff engagement;
- Plan for long-term succession and leadership development;
- Lead by example in actively engaging with principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion and ensure full adherence to codes of conduct.

Inspection readiness and policy management:

- Ensure the School adheres to all regulatory requirements and that there is a robust and confident understanding of inspections process for the Independent Schools Inspectorate and the Catholic Schools Inspectorate;
- Ensure all appropriate inspection training and processes are in place and used effectively;
- Ensure the effectiveness of policies and procedures in accordance with best practice, statutory requirements and the aims and values of the school and its mission.

Admissions and external relations:

- Be a confident and personable ambassador for the School, maintaining and building strong relationships with pupils, parents, alumnae and the wider community;
- Ensure recruitment and admissions processes are effective, maintaining levels of pupil recruitment in a changing marketplace;
- Lead school and community events;
- Identify and develop new markets to attract pupils, including strong relationships with feeder schools and other local recruitment sources.

Safeguarding and compliance:

- Ensure full compliance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and all relevant statutory requirements;
- Maintain a culture of vigilance through regular training and evaluation of safeguarding procedures, and safer recruitment;
- Work jointly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Bursar to review safeguarding and health and safety procedures.



Job Information

Personal Qualities

Qualifications and experience:

- Degree educated with a postgraduate qualification or other relevant knowledge and experience in education or leadership;
- Strong experience of middle or senior leadership in schools;
- Experience of successfully forming and leading high-performing teams;
- Be an outstanding educational practitioner, combining breadth with intellectual rigour;

Skills and knowledge:

- Be a strategic thinker with vision and pragmatism, and able to deal with the complexities of the current political, social and economic environment;
- Highly developed leadership and interpersonal skills, along with emotional literacy, a good sense of humour, optimism, personal confidence and imagination;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills and the confidence to make effective presentations to a variety of audiences, including pupils, parents, staff and governors;
- Be financially and commercially astute with the ability to analyse data, develop strategic plans, set targets and monitor and evaluate progress.

Leadership style and personal attributes:

- An energetic and inspiring leadership style with a lightness of touch, when appropriate, and the flexibility, innovation and resilience to lead an inclusive vibrant, forward-looking school;
- Confident in leading through others, especially the SMT, supporting them and holding them individually and collectively to account for delivery;
- Personal integrity to win confidence and trust from all stakeholders, a strong work ethic, loyalty, humility, and an openness to feedback;
- Passion for the holistic development of young people, including intellectual, personal, spiritual, and co-curricular growth;
- Ability to lead the faith life of the School, and also to present a visible, approachable and compassionate presence within the School and wider community;
- Politically astute and able to manage complex situations with sensitivity and diplomacy;
- Personal love of learning and academic passion and the desire and commitment to developing personally and professionally.



St Catherine's School Benefits

Working at St Catherine's School Twickenham offers a unique and fulfilling experience due to the School's strong commitment to academic excellence, pupil wellbeing, and a happy and supportive community life. The school prides itself on providing a nurturing environment that fosters both personal and professional growth.

Staff benefit from a collaborative and inclusive culture, where innovative teaching methods and ongoing professional development are encouraged. The beautiful, historic campus provides a tranquil setting conducive to creative and effective teaching. Additionally, St Catherine's School's dedication to developing well-rounded students ensures that educators have the opportunity to make a meaningful impact in a setting that values and supports their contributions.

Additional Benefits include:

- Competitive salary
- Private health insurance
- Pension scheme, including salary exchange
- Employee Assistance Programme for staff and their family
- Complimentary lunch and refreshments
- Cycle to work scheme
- On site parking
- Fee reduction
- Staff wellbeing activities, including swimming, yoga/pilates, static rowing, and prayer group
- A comprehensive training and development programme



Application

The search for a new Head at St Catherine's is being led by RSAcademics and the new postholder will be selected by a panel chaired by Sylvia Hamilton, Chair of Governors.

Interested candidates are invited to contact RSAcademics to arrange a confidential discussion with one of the consultants handling this appointment:

Camilla Oulton, Search Consultant:
camillaoulton@rsacademics.com

Sarah Glencross, Head of UK Senior School Appointments:
sarahglencross@rsacademics.com

Sarah Evans, Senior Advisor:
sarahevans@rsacademics.com

The deadline for receipt of applications is Wednesday 18 June 2025 at 10.00am (UK).

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. To submit your application, please upload your documents according to the instructions on the [RSAcademics website](#) via the **Apply Now** link accompanying the announcement of the position. You will be taken to an online portal where you will be able to download an application form. Please follow the instructions provided to complete and submit your application.

You should submit the following (both in PDF format):

- a completed application form (available alongside this candidate information on the RSAcademics website)
- a covering letter addressed to Sylvia Hamilton, Chair of Governors. The letter should explain your reasons for applying.

If you have any questions about uploading your application documents, please contact Alison Hooper, Project Coordinator (Leadership Appointments) at applications@rsacademics.com. Alison can also be reached by calling our Head Office on +44 (0) 204 6269 791.

The process is as follows:

- When you submit your application, you will receive an automated email from RSAcademics confirming that we have received it. If you have not received acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of sending it, please email us at applications@rsacademics.com or contact us by telephone at +44 (0) 204 6269 791
- First round interviews will take place in person at the School. The provisional dates are either Wednesday 25 or Thursday 26 June.
- Final interviews will take place at the School. The provisional dates are Monday 30 June and Tuesday 1 July.

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be subject to a number of safer recruitment checks including Enhanced DBS, Barred List and online/social media checks as part of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and once in post, receive further training and updates.