



Head of Prep

FROM JANUARY OR APRIL 2026

Ryde School seeks to appoint a Head of Prep. The post holder will oversee the day-to-day running of the Prep section of the School (ages 2-11) and be part of the wider School's Senior Leadership Group. The successful candidate will be able to take up the post in January 2026, April 2026 or sooner.



RYDE SCHOOL
WITH UPPER CHINE

An island school with a global outlook



RYDE SCHOOL WITH UPPER CHINE

Ryde School, situated on the Isle of Wight, minutes from the mainland and international links yet also a short walk from the beach, is a wonderful and rewarding place to work. The School is set in grounds of over 17 acres in the town of Ryde with beautiful views across the Solent. It is within easy walking distance of the terminals which link Ryde to Portsmouth by hovercraft (10 minutes) or catamaran (22 minutes). London Waterloo is only two hours away by train from Ryde.

Ryde School was founded on 25 April 1921 and so celebrated its centenary very recently. Having merged with Upper Chine Girls' School in 1995 and acquired the buildings of Bembridge School in 1996, the School now has just over 730 pupils between 2 and 18 years of age and is fully co-educational. There are approximately 70 boarders in the School who form a diverse community of UK, British overseas and international students who live on site in one of the two boarding houses opened in the last two years – Millfield for years 6-10 in a converted Victorian villa and Centenary for Years 11 to Upper Sixth in a contemporary new building overlooking the Solent. The remainder are day pupils from the Island with a small number commuting on a daily basis from the Portsmouth and Gosport area. Prep shares part of the same site and all key facilities whilst the Pre-Prep lies just across the road accommodating pupils from Reception to Year 2 (from September 2026 these year groups will move to the main site to be housed in a newly converted building). The Nursery has its own building on the main site, having moved to its current location in September 2023. There are 183 pupils in the Prep School from ages 2-11.

We have four core values: Ambition, Responsibility, Courage and Respect which underpin the day-to-day life of the whole School. Our motto - Ut Prosim (That I may be of service) - is also a fundamental part of the School's ethos with pupils encouraged to think and help others through actions and service. We aim to serve the local community as a whole which makes for a rich variety of skills and abilities amongst its pupils; in the last five years, we have had pupils secure offers at Cambridge and Oxford and many go on to study Medicine and Engineering but other children will have over-achieved if they gain five GCSEs at 9 to 4. Pupils enjoy not only academic success but success across many areas and there is a steady stream of pupils who go on to Art, Music and Drama careers. In recent years we have had pupils selected for national sailing squads, elite sports teams, the Royal College and Trinity for example and enjoyed national success in Maths, Debating, MUN, Poetry, Sailing and Engineering competitions. Unsurprisingly for such a setting, the School enjoys particular success in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme with around fifteen pupils securing their Gold Award each year before leaving the School. The Head Master is a member of HMC and the Head of Prep is a member of IAPS. Ryde is a Christian faith school whose Visitor is the Bishop of Portsmouth and has close and growing links to our local parish church, All Saints. Pupils, parents and staff often comment on the supportive, friendly and positive atmosphere in the School and we have a strong reputation on the Island for high academic standards.

Whilst serving a traditional community on the Island, the School's strategic planning, encouraged and supported by an ambitious governing body, is creative and global in its thinking. In 2015 we became the first UK independent school to run the IBCP alongside A Levels and the IBDP at Sixth Form. We have created a rich and challenging enrichment programme and teach seven languages at various ages across the School. Reception to Year 9 follow a progressive skills-based curriculum before they progress into GCSEs and then the three Sixth Form routes. We have developed nationally recognised programmes of pastoral care based on coaching and have recently invested in a number of new buildings including a new Performing Arts Centre which opened in June 2022. This is a good time for creative and innovative teachers with a commitment to education in the round to join the School.



THE PREP SCHOOL

The Prep School is housed in three distinct parts of the School:

Prep: Years 3-6 are located opposite All Saints' Church, on the south-facing corner of the main school site. The buildings are a mixture of cleverly-adapted Victorian villas with contemporary modern venues, incorporating the Prep School Hall, Music Centre, Science Laboratory, the Hive (our STEM centre) and the classrooms. Outside, a large playground, found adjacent to the School's central lawned quadrangle, provides a safe and secure space for break times.

Pre-Prep: Reception and Years 1 & 2 are located in our Fiveways building which is across the road from Years 3-6. This facility has spacious classrooms, its own dining room, a library, an IT room, a hall and a good-sized playground behind it. From 2026, the Pre-Prep will be relocated to the main school site in our Oxford Lodge building next to our Westhill Nursery. The building (currently our music school) will be converted to accommodate these age groups. The new Head of Prep will therefore play a key role in the establishment of this new facility.

Westhill Nursery: The new building was opened in September 2023. Formerly the Head Master's house, the building was converted into a bespoke Nursery facility with its own dining room, garden and outside play area.

There are currently 183 pupils on roll from age 2-11. Typically, almost all children move from our Upper Nursery age group into Reception. For September 2025, cohorts are single-form until Year 5 when they become two-form. Almost all pupils in the Prep School then progress into the Senior School for Year 7.

Pastoral Care

Ryde prides itself on creating a nurturing and supportive environment which allows all pupils to thrive. In the first instance, pastoral care in the Prep School is overseen by form tutors and the Heads of House, who meet on a regular basis to ensure all pupils are happy, supported and are able to reach their potential. This team is supported by the Pastoral Assistant (Prep), the Assistant Head (Prep), the Assistant Head (Pre-Prep and Nursery) and the Head of Prep with wider support from the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who is the DSL and oversees the pastoral care and safeguarding in all sections of the School. Our strong SEND department supports the pastoral team further, communicating effectively with teachers and staff. We have positive relationships with parents and encourage community events to further develop an excellent network of support around each child.



THE PREP SCHOOL

Curriculum

We want our children to have the depth of knowledge, relevant skills and character strengths to lead a purposeful and virtuous life in their modern world. Nursery years follow a typical early-years curriculum while also making the most of getting outdoors and exploring the 17 acres of the school site. Reception to Year 6 benefit from an enhanced curriculum, designed with research-informed pedagogic tools at its core:

Enquiry-led learning
Habits of Mind
Digital Wisdom

These pedagogic tools are applied across the curriculum to ensure that academic achievement is underpinned by a commitment to values and emotional well-being. The introduction of an overarching 'Big Idea' each term provides the focus and inspiration for children's learning, enabling different themes to be explored in imaginative and creative ways, allowing children to deepen their understanding in ways that best suit them. The organisation of knowledge into five spheres of learning (Language, Literacy & Drama, STEM, Arts & Culture, Discovery and Well-Being) provides coherence between academic subjects that ensures rigour and the development of interdisciplinary habits of mind. Throughout the year, 'curriculum spotlights' will focus on subjects to provide even greater academic rigour and depth of knowledge. Pupils bring their own Chromebook to school once they begin Year 3. Teachers are experienced in using them effectively in their teaching and learning, while also developing digital literacy skills in the pupils.

Co-curricular

We encourage all our pupils to fully participate in activities beyond the classroom. Regardless of ability, all children aim to reach their potential and benefit hugely from the team spirit and a sense of achievement that our opportunities offer. Prep School pupils benefit from having access to all of the Senior School facilities as well as those within the Prep School. All pupils play sport twice a week having regular fixtures against other schools.

The purpose-built sports hall, the all-weather surface for tennis and netball, the outdoor pitches for hockey, rugby and football means that all these sports can take place throughout their season. A beautifully-kept cricket square takes centre stage in the summer months. There is another cricket ground a short distance out of the town and Smallbrook Sports stadium, which is also nearby, provides a large astroturf surface and is used extensively for hockey. Basketball, badminton and horse riding are also offered as activities. Music and drama play a big role in the School with concerts and productions a regular feature in the calendar. A large number of pupils take instrumental or LAMDA lessons with many achieving graded certificates throughout the year. There are also numerous other activities ranging from Lego Engineers to Baking Club and Digital Animation to Clay Club.



THE ROLE AND THE PERSON

With the current Head of Pre-Prep and Nursery, and Head of Prep (Years 3-6) moving onto Headships elsewhere, the School has taken the opportunity to create a new role overseeing all of the Prep School. The new Head of Prep has overall responsibility for the day-to-day running of the entire Prep School (Prep, Pre-Prep and Nursery). This is done through working closely with the Prep School Staff, the Assistant Head (Prep), the Assistant Head (Pre-Prep and Nursery) and the Nursery Manager. The post holder will also collaborate regularly with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Deputy Head (Academic) who oversee the school-wide provision that aligns with their job titles. The Head of Prep is a member of the School's Senior Leadership Group and oversees all staffing in the Prep School. As a senior member of staff at Ryde School the Head of Prep acts as a role model for both colleagues and pupils and should display a high level of professionalism, ambition and commitment to the School and its aims. The post holder is expected to set an example to other staff in their teaching, extra-curricular work and in supporting School events such as sports fixtures, concerts and plays.

The successful candidate will have the following professional and personal attributes:

Professional experiences and attributes

- Experience of strong and successful leadership and management across this age range as Head, Deputy Head or equivalent (preferably with experience of the independent-schools sector).
- Outstanding communication and presentation skills.
- Forward thinking and innovative approach to the evolving nature of education.
- Experience of managing school development and improvement.
- A high level of Digital Literacy and appreciation of the role of AI in education.
- An outstanding classroom practitioner.
- An understanding of and commitment to the strategic direction of a school.
- A desire to work within a through-school.
- Relevant educational qualifications.
- Detailed appreciation of Teachers' Standards, the latest ISI inspection criteria and priorities, and EYFS requirements.
- Evidence of ongoing professional development.
- Awareness of safeguarding issues, including legislation and good practice.
- Experience of managing budgets.
- Understand the importance of maintaining appropriate documentation.
- Ability to work collaboratively.
- Understanding of current educational issues within the sector.

Personal attributes

- Outstanding leadership skills and ability to motivate and manage others.
- A love of learning and a spirit of enquiry.
- A commitment to the education of young people.
- Reflective, empathetic and a good listener.
- Good sense of humour.
- Strong interpersonal and diplomatic skills.
- High personal and professional standards.
- Ability to work effectively as part of a team.
- Outstanding organisational skills - ability to prioritise, plan, monitor and evaluate.
- Readiness to get stuck in.
- Ability to connect with parents, pupils and staff.
- Commitment to being involved in the life of a busy school.
- An ambassador for the values and aims of the School.

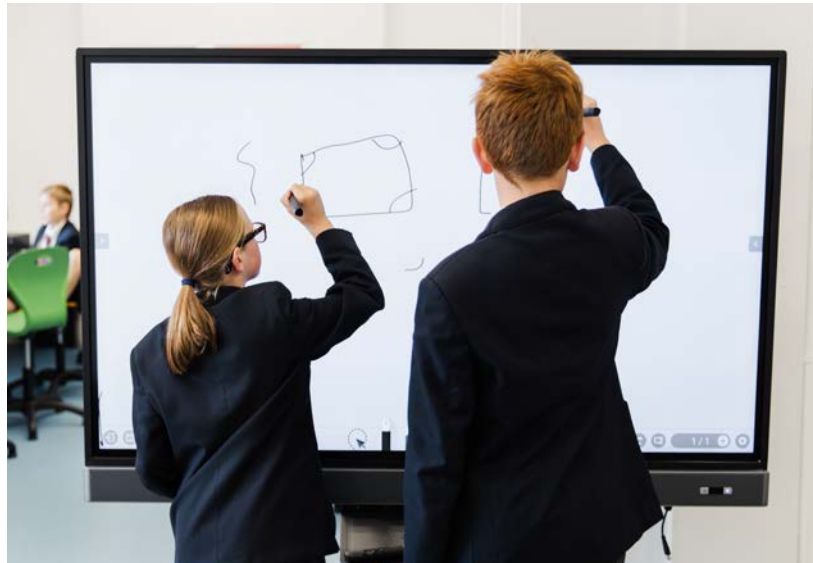


BENEFITS OF WORKING AT RYDE

The benefits of working at Ryde School are many. The School occupies a 17-acre site overlooking the Solent with a range of traditional and listed buildings alongside award-winning contemporary architecture.

Competitive salaries, private pension arrangements, salary sacrifice, access to electric car and health scheme memberships and to sailing, golfing and gym facilities. A daily lunch is prepared in house. These are some of the benefits enjoyed by staff, whilst working in a happy, rewarding and innovative environment focused on our motivated pupils and their achievements.

All staff at Ryde School are motivated individuals who are integral to the organisation. In the role of supporting the business of the School all staff are expected to act as role models to pupils and act as part of a professional and supportive team. We encourage support staff to continue their professional development and will support where possible staff wishing to develop their experience and qualifications. All staff have a collective responsibility to ensure the values and ethos of Ryde School are upheld.





MOVING TO THE ISLAND

Recent years have seen a growing number of families move to the Island from the mainland or elsewhere, as a result of parents deciding to take advantage of Island life, a trend that has grown further since the Pandemic. The benefits of moving to the Island are clear – clean, open beaches, sailing and outdoor adventure, competitive house prices and a real feeling of a safe, family environment in which to raise children, yet only minutes from the mainland where many parents choose to work either in London or other southern cities. London Waterloo is two hours from Ryde. As a member of staff, you will also be able to enjoy all the Island has to offer.

The uniqueness of the Island is the diversity of landscapes within it. Bustling towns, hills and farmland combine with open beaches and sailing locations such as Cowes, the international home of Sailing. Known as the UK's Holiday Isle, the UK's Dinosaur Isle (due to the large number of dinosaur fossils found here on a regular basis) and an idyllic place to bring up children, the Island has a huge amount to offer our pupils and staff both in and outside the school day and there has been a notable increase in high quality, innovative dining options in recent years.

Ryde is one of the principal towns on the Isle of Wight and sits on the shores of the Solent roughly opposite the city of Portsmouth. Its development owes much to the move in the 19th Century of Queen Victoria to nearby Osborne House and has some impressive Victorian architecture. Island life combines a fascinating history and architecture with a modern vibrancy rich in bars, restaurants and culture. The Island is rich with sites of interest to the historian with strong links not just to the Victorian period but also the Civil War, Tudor England and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

There are many farms and restaurants offering fresh food in contemporary settings. The Island is famous for its festivals; not just Cowes Week, the Isle of Wight Festival and Round the Island Race but also the Garlic Festival, Sweetcorn Festival and the many town carnivals each August.

Whilst the Island enjoys a distinct identity, it is easily connected with the south east of England and many residents commute daily to Portsmouth, London and the South East. Hover travel from the mainland is at most 10 minutes to Ryde and train links from Portsmouth and Southampton take around 90 minutes to London. Gatwick and Heathrow are around 90 minutes by car and there is a direct train link from Portsmouth to Gatwick Airport. Southampton Airport also has a good number of international destinations.

Pupils and staff travel daily from towns and villages across the Island and some each day from Portsmouth. There is a wide range of accommodation available on the Island and often offering considerable value compared to housing on the other side of the Solent.

Through our boarding facilities there is the opportunity for some staff, who wish to be involved in boarding life, to be accommodated on site.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Ryde School is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. Offers of appointment are subject to satisfactory references, confirmation of qualifications and DBS clearance.

Applications, which should include a short letter of suitability (no longer than one side of A4), should be addressed to Mr W Turner, Head Master, by post or emailed to tdg@rydeschool.net

Candidates must fully complete a Ryde School Application Form (available on the website). Please also include the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two referees including a current employer.

If you have any further questions or require further information about this post please contact our HR Manager, Mrs Tracy Green on 01983 617922 or tdg@rydeschool.net

The closing date for applications is midday on Tuesday 6 May. Interviews will take place at the School shortly after.

