

Saxton Bampfylde



Appointment Brief
Appointment of Chair of
Governors

Sutton Valence School

July 2020

Reference: GAKAYA

About the School

Pupils have been inspired by the beautiful surroundings of Sutton Valence School since its founding in 1576. Sutton Valence is an all-through non-selective co-educational independent school educating over 800 students from ages 2-18. It offers day and boarding provision, and the school occupies over 100 acres of pristine countryside, looking across the Weald of Kent. The school has a strong academic offering and a wide range of co-curricular activities and is particularly known for its sporting prowess. Sutton Valence is one of five schools within the United Westminster & Grey Coat Foundation, a Christian education charity that owns the land and buildings of the School.

History

The school was founded in 1576 as the Free Grammar School of William Lambe in Sutton Valence, by William Lambe, Master of the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers and a member of the Chapel Royal of Henry VIII. It remained under the control of the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers until 1910 when it was taken under the control of United Westminster Schools, a charitable trust which also incorporates Emanuel School and Westminster City School in London. In 1983, the school became co-educational and in 1995 it incorporated Underhill Preparatory School. It is now a co-educational day and boarding school catering for pupils from 2 - 18 years of age. It has local and overseas pupils. In 2019 the United Westminster Foundation merged with the Grey Coat Foundation (Queen Anne's, Caversham and Grey Coat School) to become the United Westminster and Grey Coat Foundation.

Sutton Valence Pupils' Journeys

Each pupil will have taken a slightly different academic journey by the time they finish their education, but SVS's ultimate destinations for all are clear from the outset: that they will fulfil their true potential and add value to their lives.

Having developed a love of learning and the self-discipline required to achieve, SVS students will have mastered essential skills that ensure their continued success at university, in employment and in the wider community. They will have been guided throughout this journey by expert tutors and teachers, offering excellent bespoke support and advice, delivered in ways that allow all to achieve. SVS believes that we are not all created equal, but with hard work and tailored guidance, all can improve themselves.

You can find out more about the school here: <https://www.svs.org.uk/>



Enrichment

Somewhere in a pupil's education they need to learn focus, commitment, effort and self-discipline if they are to achieve and frequently this happens beyond the classroom.

Outside of the classroom, SVS's enrichment journey allows pupils to learn these skills and strengthen their educational experience. It is a journey with an outstanding range of sporting, artistic, cultural and social activities and opportunities that produce happy, well-rounded and engaged young adults. This is where self-esteem and confidence can be fostered. By exploring a range of challenges, pupils' strengths are furthered and recognised, enabling everyone to try different things and discover their niche in a highly supportive environment.

Sport is at the very heart of the enrichment journey. The minimum expectation is of healthy exercise every week; the maximum could be much more, leading to selection for SVS's many teams across the whole range of sports and from there to regional, national and international recognition. But whether your aim is to win Olympic Gold, to enjoy and learn the value of being part of a team, or simply to try something new, Sutton Valence offers excellent coaching and facilities, inspirational role models within both the School and the wider Old Suttonian community, and some of the most beautiful countryside in England in which to play. Sutton Valence is the only Saracens partner school in Kent.

The Arts are a major part of school life, socially and spiritually. Termly music performances of orchestras, bands and choirs showcase the high standard achieved by SVS's talented students. There are myriad opportunities for participation in Music with over twenty ensemble groups across both sites. SVS Drama has an excellent reputation with many productions every year, providing plenty of opportunities for pupils to perform, dance, design and direct. From as young as Year 2 in the Prep School, LAMDA examinations build confidence and develop the skill of public speaking.

The activities programme presents a range of clubs and pursuits to cater for all tastes and interests and students commit to their preferred option on a termly basis, allowing pupils to find their niche and pursue diverse interests.



CCF and DofE

The Combined Cadet Force, seeks to develop a pupil's personal confidence, motivation, teamwork and leadership skills, with opportunities for adventurous training at home and abroad. The Prep School children also benefit from the CCF, using the resources of the Senior School's CCF for leadership and teamwork challenges.

For those not in the CCF, Community Service with placements in the locality, the Young Enterprise Scheme and Kit Car Club form SVS's Wednesday afternoon programme for the older pupils.

The School adopts a structured approach to the understanding of nature and outdoor life starts in the Pre-Prep department. SVS is part of the UK Forest School Initiative and outdoor days and the shared use of the resources of the Senior School help develop an awareness of our environment, build skills and personal responsibility in all its forms.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme starts in the Third Form with all completing their Bronze Award. Silver and Gold level awards require a more pro-active approach from the individual and an increased commitment to realise the goals, but SVS encourages and supports all to continue and are proud of how many go on to achieve these top accolades.





“All of us in the SV community have strengths and weaknesses, but it is our unique qualities that add to the overall strength of the whole and in recognising this we uphold our ethos: a community where each cares for all and individuality is cherished.”

– Bruce Grindlay, Headmaster



The Role

Leading the Board in its strategic thinking requires, in addition the ability to chair meetings effectively, having a good sense of the current educational landscape and a clear commitment to proper governance structures (without being overly “tick box”!). It is essential for the Chair to communicate effectively and to be able to represent SVS, both locally and in the wider national educational context.

Key Responsibilities and Duties

The Foundation

The school is a member, with two other independent schools and two maintained schools, of the United Westminster Grey Coat Foundation which supports all five schools to increase educational public benefit. The Chair is, ex officio, a Trustee of the Foundation, and would be required to attend the termly Trustee Board meetings as well as those of the SVS Governing Body.

Governance and Strategy

The Chair leads the Governors (currently 11 in number but SVS is seeking a further two, and could have up to 15 in total) in developing, with the Headmaster and his Senior Leadership Team, the Strategic Plan for the school and maintaining its financial stability, its curricular offering and appropriate governance arrangements. This is overseen at termly board meetings and through the Committees of the Board which look in detail at particular areas and report and recommend to the board accordingly.

The main Committees are Strategy (and Remuneration); Finance and Buildings; Education; and Personnel. All meet termly. There are also the Bursaries, Safeguarding, and Nominations Committees, which meet as required. In addition to chairing the Board, the current Chair of Governors chairs the Strategy Committee, and is in attendance at some other major Committees but this would be negotiable for a future Chair.

International Interests

The school has set up, with its Chinese partner, a Preparatory School in Tianjin (HIKSVS). This is now well-established, and it is intended to launch a Senior School in the same area in 2022/23. The Chair is a member of the Advisory Council of HIKSVS and travels to China at least once a year in this capacity.

Safeguarding

This is at the heart of everything SVS does, and the Governors are responsible for maintaining a robust system of safeguarding and well-being throughout the school. They are in constant contact with the Safeguarding team on the Senior Management Team through a designated Governor who reports regularly to the Board.



Person Specification

The Chair should have direct or indirect experience of education and its changing landscape, in particular within the independent sector. It is an advantage to have an understanding of budgets and accounts, including cash flows, of health and safety concerns, of safeguarding and of general pastoral issues.

It is essential that the Chair shares the vision and strategy of the Headmaster and must subscribe to the ethos of the school and demonstrate a commitment to charity.

The Chair must show interest in the whole school community and be able to communicate successfully with all the school's many stakeholders and, although the Headmaster is the major external face of SVS, the Chair has to be able to engage with parents, staff, pupils and alumni, as well as with the Foundation and amongst the governors themselves. It would be preferable, but not essential, if the Chair lived locally.

Candidates will ideally bring all or most of the following:

- Leadership experience at Board level which may have been gained as a school Governor;
- Knowledge of Charity Law and good governance;
- Experience of financial management and organisational budgets;
- A clear communication style and ability to work effectively with others;
- Extensive networks and the willingness to put them to use to recruit or source help for the school;
- Experience of holding senior leaders to account and supporting performance management processes;
- Ability to prioritise and sequence change over time while formulating and monitoring medium term strategic plans; and
- Knowledge of safeguarding and/or statutory compliance requirements.

This person does not need to be a practising Christian but will need to demonstrate a commitment to promoting a Christian ethos at the school.

Diversity

Sutton Valence School values the input of people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives and wishes to continue to diversify its governing body in ways that reflect the diversity of the school and its work programmes and encourage applications from those of a BAME background.

Although we have not been formally certified under the employer scheme, we support the aims of the Disability Confident initiative and will guarantee any disabled applicant who meets its minimum eligibility criteria the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities at an interview.



Terms of Appointment

This is a volunteer position and the role of the Chair of Governors is unpaid.

The Chair of Governors serves a term of five years, which can be renewed for a further term of five years.

Time Commitment:

The time commitment for this role will be somewhere between 2-4 days per month.

This is a non-executive role and the very professional Senior Leadership Team is led by the Headmaster who ensures that the Governor's strategic plans are effectively put into practice. The Chair is also supported in the administrative and policy advice by a professional Clerk, provided by the Foundation. However, as can be seen from the outline of the role, there is still a considerable workload for the Chair, requiring some dedication of time to preparation for and attendance at meetings of the Governing Body, its Committees and the Foundation (in London); time with the Headmaster and staff in the Prep and Senior Schools; and wider social events and occasional travel commitments.

The current Chair speaks with the Headmaster at least weekly, face-to-face or by phone, and meets with parents and other supporters at formal occasions like Speech Day and at the many receptions, matches, concerts and other productions taking place throughout the year.

Safeguarding

The school takes its safeguarding responsibilities seriously, and has a range of policies to support effective training and reporting to protect people, particularly children, at-risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance. A DBS check and other safeguarding compliance vetting will be required prior to full appointment.

HOW TO APPLY

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Sutton Valence School on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **GAKAYA**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter, and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on **Monday, 17 August 2020**.

** The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.*



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