



Candidate Information:  
**PRINCIPAL**  
**Valence School**  
Westerham, Kent TN16 1QN  
*"Enabling Independence"*

# Valence School



## Introduction

Valence School is a well-established centre of excellence offering high quality learning opportunities and excellent social and health care to children and young people who have physical disabilities and complex medical needs. The school has 120 places for both day and residential (54 places) students. It also has many outstanding specialist facilities.

The school is an exciting, innovative and dynamic place – we are proud of our specialist work in which students' achievements, progress, and development is at the heart of everything we do.

School leaders and the staff team are dedicated and highly skilled and are actively supported by a proactive and effective Governing Body. The school works hard to have close and productive relationships with parents and carers and we are grateful for the support that they provide.

Our 'can do' approach aims to give our children and young people the skills and understanding, together with the confidence and independence necessary for them to participate in and contribute to society in the way each chooses.



## The Role

Valence School is seeking to appoint an inspirational and ambitious leader to the position of Principal who has the vision, drive, resilience, experience and personality to oversee the continuing development of the school and build on the strong foundations, laid by our existing Principal who is retiring, to take our school to the next phase.

This is an exciting time in the school's development and we are looking for an outstanding leader who will play an instrumental part in our journey towards 'outstanding' in all aspects. You will need to be outward-facing and able to communicate well to establish strong relationships and be able to challenge positively and lead change effectively.

The successful candidate will join and lead an experienced group of senior leaders and applications are welcome from colleagues with experience of specialist provision or from those working in a mainstream provision wishing to take on a new challenge.

If you can bring the best of your leadership and experience to drive consistent excellent education, wellbeing and safeguarding of students with physical disabilities and complex medical needs, you may well be the future Principal we are looking for.

Please come and see our fantastic school before applications close on 7 January 2024.

**Brian Davies**  
Chair of Governors



## Valence School

### Who we are:

Our school is unique within the maintained sector in the whole of southern England and we are proud of the excellent work we do with children and young people who have physical disabilities and complex medical needs. We cater for students aged 4 to 19 and have both day and boarding places. We have a large 16 acre campus site with high quality teaching, social care and health care facilities and a staff team of over 200 people providing specialist teaching, social care, therapies and nursing care to an exceptionally high standard.

Our overall aim is to enable every child and young person to achieve meaningful independence. Students flourish in a supportive but challenging environment, making good educational progress and achieving a range of accreditation as they get older. There is excellent support to enable students to achieve functional communication, mobility and skills for daily living.

We are a Foundation Special School and are part of the [Kent SEN Trust](#), a cooperative trust of 26 schools working together to improve outcomes for all the children and young people attending the schools. The School works proactively with parents and external professionals to provide holistic support for every child and young person.

The School always places children and young people at the centre of all decisions it takes and it has a relentless focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for every student.

You can find out more through [our website](#) but would warmly welcome you to visit to see the School first hand!

### What people say about Valence School

The School Ofsted inspection in 2019 rated us 'Good' saying:

*"This is a friendly, welcoming school. Smiles and positive attitudes can be seen everywhere at Valence. Staff know pupils incredibly well. Pupils are safe, very well cared for and treated with the utmost respect. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and bullying extremely rare. Pupils get precisely the right support to develop their communication and independence. As a result, pupils of all ages are extremely confident. A pupil expressed the views of many, explaining: 'This school is amazing!' "*

The Social Care Ofsted inspection in 2023 rated us 'Outstanding' saying:

*"Students make exceptional and sustained progress from their starting points, because of the excellent-quality support that they receive from the residential staff. The highly ambitious, committed and creative staff team understands the students' individual needs and enables this progress. The students' quality of life and future opportunities are enhanced as a direct result of their stays at this exceptionally nurturing, stimulating and learning-orientated residential provision."*

A parent of a Year 14 student said:

*"Valence is a special place...You nurture them, you teach them, you challenge them, you guide them and you turn them into young people who are equipped with so many skills to help them cope with whatever life throws at them."*

## Rationale

We believe that achievements and outcomes for our students are not related to their age but should be set against their needs and their individual aspirations and goals.

This means that our students require a curriculum that is broad and is delivered using approaches that address students as individuals.

We are aspirational so our curriculum offer is flexible and close monitoring ensures that students are well matched to their pathway.

Resilience and independence are key features of learning and we ensure that all pathways offer suitable challenges and opportunities for students to take charge of their own learning. We believe that learning should be stimulating and interesting and strive to ensure that all pathways offer rich learning and strong, relevant experiences.

## Curriculum Structure

In order to provide students across Valence School with experiences that are relevant, interesting and challenging, and to identify opportunities for progression, we have adopted a curriculum approach and structure with three broad levels: pre-formal, semi-formal and formal.

These levels are not defined by age but by need and achievement; students may therefore move from one level to the next at any point in their school career.





## The Valence Vision

To provide all students that attend Valence School with a curriculum pathway that meets their intellectual, physical, social and emotional needs. Working together with families and a wide range of support agencies, we ensure that students within each curriculum pathway are valued, supported and challenged to do their very best in preparation for the next stage of their learning and life.

To do this, we work as a whole school team striving to create a distinct identity for each curriculum pathway. Central to everything we do and key to the success of each curriculum pathway is our:

### Learning Ethos

- **Respectful learners** - Valence students are taught to respect the rights, needs and views of others. To create an environment where support for each other is commonplace and everyone feels that they belong.
- **Resilient learners** – Valence students are encouraged to take risks and view failure as a good thing. To not to give up easily and always try their best.
- **Independent learners** – Valence students are given guidance to oversee their own learning. They are provided with a wide range of support to enable independence in all aspects of school life.
- **Positive learners** - Valence students are challenged to focus on what they 'can do' to develop as an individual, and not what they 'cannot do' because of their disability.
- **Passionate learners** - Valence students are encouraged to find and develop their own range of interests and to express themselves as they wish in support of their learning.





# Learning Pathways

## Pre-formal approach (EYFS & Keller Classes)

Students at very early levels of development access a curriculum that enables them to develop a sense of security in the school environment, to establish positive relationships with familiar adults, to explore the world around them using their sensory and physical capabilities to the full and to establish behaviours through which they can communicate with other people.

## Semi-formal approach (Simmonds Classes)

Students following our semi-formal curriculum learn best when learning is related to their own experience. Some may learn through structured exploration; others will learn more effectively through functional activities, and yet others will respond to a topic-based approach. The curriculum content broadly corresponds to the ground covered within the National Curriculum, but the teaching approach will reflect the age and learning needs of the students.

Older students working at the semi-formal level may be entered for Entry Level exams or for ASDAN qualifications.

## Formal approach (Hawking Classes)

Students following our formal curriculum access the range of National Curriculum subjects for their Key Stage, modified considering their special educational needs. As the term 'formal' implies there is a high level of structure. However, we avoid making this curriculum too abstract; teachers ensure that learning is linked to practical activities and consolidated and applied in practical sessions.

Older students working at the formal level will be entered for Entry Level, GCSE's and A'level examinations following the appropriate syllabus.





## Residential

Complementing the daily life of the school, our residential offering enables students to develop independence in preparation for their future.

We offer flexible boarding packages, a 'home from home' living experience and our bungalows are fully adapted to meet our students' needs.

Each boarder has a dedicated keyworker assigned to them, with the skills and knowledge to cater for their healthcare needs. Keyworkers provide emotional support and work closely with colleagues and parents to ensure a consistent approach to their student's support.



## Outreach

### Community Charity Shop

We have recently opened a shop in the heart of Westerham with the aim of bringing the school into the heart of the community. Our students will be heavily involved in the shop, making products at school to sell, including it in their curriculum and carrying out work and life experience within the shop. There will be workshops held in the shop to make it a real part of the community. All the proceeds from the shop will go back directly to the school to benefit our students.

## Key Priorities

The governors have identified the following short to medium priorities for the new Principal:

### School Development Plan

Build upon current achievements including working towards the school being 'Outstanding' in all areas.

### Strategy

Following the outcome of KCC Special Schools Review to work with KCC in developing resources to meet strategic priorities.

### Business Management

Implement and develop the function to support the efficient and cost effective governance and administration of the school.

### Communications

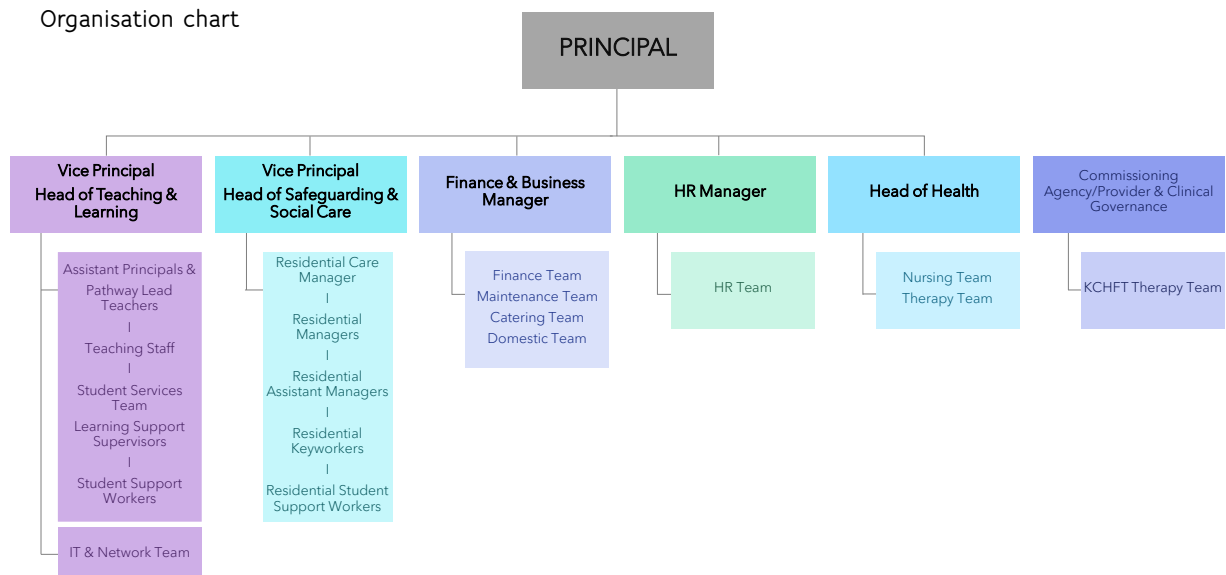
Build upon the current work to improve the school's processes, procedures and media with parents, carers and stakeholders.

## School Development Plan

1. Effectively communicate the strengths of the school to secure interest, investment and new staff.
2. Develop the curriculum so that meaningful qualifications and experiences are provided to all students.
3. Establish a Health Team structure that supports academic attainment.
4. Provide an IT Infrastructure that supports high quality learning for all.
5. Create new opportunities for increased Community Engagement.
6. Develop self sufficiency and energy saving practices to reduce costs.

## Valence School

Organisation chart





# PRINCIPAL

Leadership Range (Fringe): £81,561 to £102,376 gross p.a.  
plus non-residential allowance (£13,102 gross p.a.)

Responsible to: Chair of Governors

## Job Description



### Main Purpose

Secure excellent outcomes for children and young people and champion inclusion and diversity.

Provide overall strategic leadership and management to develop and support the strategic direction and priorities of the School. Develop an outstanding, inclusive teaching and residential learning provision that will transform the educational and future life opportunities of our students.

Develop, implement and evaluate the School's policies, practices and procedures whilst ensuring the school is organised and managed effectively to provide good value for money.

### Strategic Leadership

- create and articulate in partnership with the Governing Body a shared strategic vision and plan that encompasses core educational values and is inclusive of all stakeholders;
- develop and implement an integrated curriculum and financial plan (ICFP) to support strategy implementation and help plan and implement the best curriculum and support for students with the funding available to the school;
- demonstrate expertise in change management;
- develop and implement a risk management system to help ensure strategic priorities and improvement plans are delivered successfully.

### Organisational Effectiveness

#### Management

- ensure the protection and safety of students and staff through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of the duty of care and fulfil a designated safeguarding role in the school contributing to the overall safeguarding policies, practices and management;
- prioritise and allocate financial resources appropriately ensuring efficiency, effectiveness, value for money and probity in the use of public funds across the school;
- ensure staff are deployed and managed well with due attention paid to workload;
- establish and oversee systems, processes and policies that enable the school to operate effectively and efficiently to enhance learning, social care and independence opportunities for students, their standards of achievement and personal development;
- ensure rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk.

#### Governance and Accountability

- understand and welcome the role of effective governance, upholding their obligation to give account and accept responsibility;
- establish and sustain a professional and constructive working relationship with the school's Governing Body;
- ensure that staff know and understand their professional responsibilities and are held to account;
- ensure the school effectively and efficiently operates within the required regulatory frameworks and meets all statutory duties.

#### Admissions

- manage the process of referrals, assessment and admissions to the school, working collaboratively with local authority SEN departments, assessment officers, parents and carers;
- manage all activities related to SEN Tribunal appeals, including co-ordinating the school's response and representing the school at hearings or deciding who should represent the school.

# Job Description



## Continuous School Improvement

- make use of effective and proportional processes of evaluation to identify and analyse complex or persistent problems and barriers which limit school effectiveness, and identify priority areas for improvement;
- develop appropriate evidence-informed strategies for improvement as part of well-targeted plans which are realistic, timely, appropriately sequenced and suited to the school's context;
- ensure careful and effective management, implementation and communication of improvement strategies and other initiatives involving change, which lead to sustained school improvement over time.

## Working in Partnership

- negotiate and manage the Service Level Agreements with the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) for the Sevenoaks District, ensuring that the needs of students are met and the provision provides good value for money and provides an outstanding service to local schools.
- forge constructive and mutually beneficial relationships with Kent Special Educational Needs Trust (KsENT) partners, relationships beyond the school, working in partnership with parents, carers and the local community;
- commit the school to work successfully with other schools and organisations in a climate of mutual challenge and support;
- establish and maintain working relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues across other public services to improve educational outcomes for all students;
- articulate the vision and values of the school through excellent communication to students, parents, staff, stakeholders, employers and the community, collaborating in and leading on initiatives that secure the commitment of the wider community to the school;
- responsible for, in conjunction with the Friends of Valence charity, the Community School Charity Shop and work with the charity to provide meaningful work and life skills experiences for Valence students.

## Ethics and Professional Conduct

- demonstrate consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct and be responsible for providing the conditions in which teachers can fulfil their professional standards;
- uphold public trust in school leadership and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, both within and outside school;
- build relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observe proper boundaries appropriate to the professional position;
- show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others, recognising differences and respecting cultural diversity within contemporary Britain;
- uphold fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit their position, students' vulnerability or might lead students to break the law;
- serve in the best interests of the school's students;
- conduct themselves in a manner compatible with their influential position in society by behaving ethically, fulfilling their professional responsibilities and modelling the behaviour of a good citizen;
- uphold their obligation to give account and accept responsibility;
- know, understand, and act within the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities;
- take responsibility for their own continued professional development (CPD), engaging critically with educational research;
- make a positive contribution to the wider education system.

## Quality of Education

### Teaching and Learning

- establish and sustain high-quality, expert teaching across all subjects and phases, built on an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how students learn, particularly those with a range of learning difficulties;
- ensure teaching is underpinned by high levels of subject expertise and approaches which respect the distinct nature of subject disciplines or specialist domains;
- ensure effective use is made of formative assessment.
- establish effective curricular leadership, developing subject leaders with high levels of relevant expertise with access to professional networks and communities;

# Job Description



## Curriculum and Assessment

- ensure a broad, structured and coherent curriculum entitlement which sets out the knowledge, skills and values that will be taught;
- establish effective curricular leadership, developing subject leaders with high levels of relevant expertise with access to professional networks and communities;
- ensure that all students are taught to read through the provision of evidence-informed approaches to reading, particularly the use of systematic synthetic phonics in schools that teach early reading;
- ensure valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing students' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.

## Special Educational Needs

- ensure the school holds ambitious expectations for all students no matter the demands made by their particular special educational needs and disabilities;
- establish and sustain culture and practices that enable students to access the curriculum and learn effectively;
- establish and sustain a culture whereby students feel safe and can build relationships with adults and peers based on trust and mutual respect;
- ensure the school works effectively in partnership with parents, carers and professionals, to identify the special educational needs and disabilities of students, providing support and adaptation where appropriate;
- ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties with regard to the SEND Code of Practice and that requirements established in EHCPs are met.

## Culture and Ethos

### School Culture

- establish and sustain the school's ethos and strategic direction in partnership with the Governing Body and through consultation with the school community;
- have a deep understanding of the difficulties faced by students with physical disabilities, complex medical needs and associated learning and communication difficulties;
- create a culture where students experience a positive and enriching school life;
- uphold ambitious educational standards which prepare students from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life;
- promote positive and respectful relationships across the school community and a safe, orderly and inclusive environment;
- ensure a culture of high staff professionalism.

### Behaviours

- establish and sustain high expectations of behaviour for all students, built upon relationships, rules and routines, which are understood clearly by all staff here and students;
- ensure high standards of student behaviour and courteous conduct in accordance with the school's behaviour policy;
- implement consistent, fair and respectful approaches to managing behaviour;
- ensure that adults operate within the school model and teach the behaviour of a good citizen.

### Professional Development

- ensure staff have access to high-quality, sustained professional development opportunities, aligned to balance the priorities of whole-school improvement, team and individual needs;
- prioritise the professional development of staff, ensuring effective planning, delivery and evaluation which is consistent with the approaches laid out in the standard for teachers' professional development;
- ensure that professional development opportunities draw on expert provision from beyond the school, as well as within it, including nationally recognised career and professional frameworks and programmes to build capacity and support succession planning.

This post is subject to the professional duties and conditions of the service set out in the current [DfE Headteachers Standards](#). Please note that this is illustrative of the general nature and level of responsibility of the work to be undertaken, commensurate with the grade. It is not a comprehensive list of all tasks that the postholder will carry out. This job description may be amended at any time in consultation with the postholder.

*This role involves contact with and responsibility for children and young people and will be engaged in regulated activity. The law requires this position to have an enhanced criminal background check. This is to protect children and vulnerable adults and to safeguard positions of trust. The position is therefore exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. You will be asked to declare details of any criminal record, even convictions that are 'spent' according to the act and this information will be checked against the Disclosure and Barring Service.*

# Person Specification



CRITERIA	Requirement	Essential/ Desirable
Qualifications	Degree Equivalent Evidence of further Professional Development for leadership Educational or equivalent Management qualification	E E D
Experience	Evidence of successful leadership experience in a high performing or transformational education establishment and can demonstrate impact of inspirational leadership at a senior level Experience of financial management and budgeting Experience of line management and appraisal Expertise in curriculum planning, teaching, learning and assessment, and school improvement Experience of School improvement planning and self evaluation Proven track record of leading and managing change Experience of working with various stakeholders	E  E E E  E E E
Knowledge and skills	Strong leadership capabilities with excellent planning and organisational skills setting clearly defined objectives Financially astute in managing budgets and resources Outstanding high level communication skills through persuading, convincing and negotiating to gain clear agreement and commitment from others Conversant with latest research in education, social and health care with the ability to identify and lead the introduction of best practice Knowledge of special educational needs, disabilities, physical, health and social/emotional needs Appropriate training and experience of Safeguarding/Child Protection with a deep and accurate working knowledge of relevant policies, procedures and practices Awareness of Health & Safety legislation	E  E  D E  E E



# Person Specification



Competencies (or personal characteristics)	A strategic, resilient thinker with an entrepreneurial mindset able to develop and articulate the vision, aims and ethos of the school	E
	Consultative yet decisive approach	E
	Charismatic and enthusiastic with the ability to lead, motivate and inspire whilst empathetic to the needs of others	E
	Ability to build positive relationships and manage conflict and demonstrate interpersonal flexibility	E
	Strong advocacy skills to promote the school externally, gaining support from a wide range of stakeholders.	E
	Desire to make a difference to the life chances of students and sets ambitious standards for students with SEND	E
	Collaborative approach in working with other schools and organisations in a climate of mutual challenge, to champion best practice and secure the best outcomes for all students	E
	Able to strategically and analytically use quantitative and qualitative data	E
	Ability to manage, motivate and develop staff	E
	Ability to cope and adapt to pressure	E
	Can demonstrate clear values and moral purpose	E
	Possessing integrity, warmth and a good sense of humour	E



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[www.valenceschool.com](http://www.valenceschool.com)