



Graduate Assistant - Drama Director in Residence



ST HELEN &
ST KATHARINE

Welcome to St Helen and St Katharine

St Helen and St Katharine is one of the UK's leading independent girls' schools – a place where students thrive, and our brilliant staff use their expertise and enthusiasm to go above and beyond.

Our students achieve significant academic success each year, much of which is due to our teachers' ambition and passion, but the students and their parents are very aware that it is the whole staff group that makes St Helen's 'tick', and all staff are valued for their contribution to the school community.

When people start working at St Helen's, they are joining a vibrant community of 700 students and 225 members of staff. Whether as one of those expert teachers or as one of our skilled support staff, there are many opportunities to become fully immersed in life at St Helen's – from coming along to watch one of the outstanding school productions to taking part in the range of activities we have to support staff well-being and our sense of community.

We are fortunate to be able to offer a range of training and professional development opportunities to support staff growth; our staff training budget is generous and allows for both departmental initiatives and individual development. We look to get outstanding speakers to address both the whole staff and specific groups; we have been delighted to welcome Tom Sherrington, David Didau and David Weston to talk to our teaching staff in recent years and all staff have benefitted from the work we have done with Executive Coach, Simon Scott, as we look to keep life and work and wellness in balance. There is an active Joint Staff Consultative Committee and a regular staff e-zine that shares ideas for things to do in the local area.

St Helen's is an outstanding place to start your teaching career, and we provide comprehensive support for teacher induction. We encourage talented graduates interested in teaching to join us directly and have plenty of experience of guiding them to gain their qualified teacher status through the school-based PGCE from the University of Buckingham.

We are also an excellent school for newly qualified teachers to complete their 2-year Early Careers induction, guided by experienced subject mentors and our Initial Teacher Training Coordinator.

We look to connect both trainee and early career teachers with their peers in our immediate network of both independent and maintained sector schools in Abingdon.





The School

Recently named Independent Girls' School of the Year, ranked the top 5 girls' school in the Southeast (*The Times Parent Power 2026*) and among the top 20 schools for sport in the UK (*School Sport Magazine*), St Helen and St Katharine is one of the leading independent schools in the country. It is an exciting place to work, and appointing the very best staff is integral to our success.

St Helen's School was founded in 1903 and was then joined in 1938 by St Katharine's in Wantage. The School is located on a single campus-style site of beautiful Edwardian and modern buildings set in 22 acres of grounds, on the outskirts of Abingdon, some six miles from Oxford. An extensive school bus network facilitates a large student catchment area that includes Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Hampshire Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.

Unapologetically focused on girls – their needs, their ambitions and their voices – St Helen's is where futures are shaped *on her terms*. Our students achieve excellent academic results, and our goal is to ensure that every girl achieves success as she defines it, so that she can believe in herself, her talents and abilities, and so that she will feel prepared and equipped for life beyond school.

The School is a thriving community of girls and young women aged 9 to 18, from our Junior Department (Year 5–6) through to Sixth Form. St Helen's offers students an outstanding academic education and a rich and varied life beyond the classroom including excellence in sport, the creative and performing arts and a superb range of co-curricular clubs and societies.

We enjoy collaboration with a range of local partner schools, including Radley College, Abingdon, Larkmead, John Mason and Fitzharrys, providing opportunities to enrich the developmental journeys of our students and build positive connections across genders and experiences.

In 2023, we opened the doors to our new Sixth Form centre, the Benedict Building. The Benedict Building is a physical articulation of the School's vision for Sixth Form – to create an environment for our students that will spark their intellectual spirit and imagination – and provides students with the space and opportunity to grow their academic and co-curricular interests in readiness for the future.

The staff

St Helen and St Katharine is a very special place to work.

Our students are at the heart of everything we do, we celebrate our powerful sense of community, and we take pride in our very high standards and the strength of our performance. We enjoy a working environment and a culture within the School which focuses on development, inclusion and the pleasure of working all together.

We are always looking at ways to develop our people – students and staff. We look to be progressive, imaginative and respectful; we combine the best of long tradition with a commitment to readying our people for the challenges of the 21st Century. We also firmly believe that a diverse workforce is a better workforce which will help us develop ideas, solve problems and ultimately grow St Helen's. Our campus is beautiful and an inspiring place to work. The young people we work with are remarkable and the staff community is welcoming, committed and compassionate.

Every day is different at St Helen's. It's fast-paced but never loses sight of the value of individualised conversations and the need for support. We take our commitment to the well-being of staff very seriously and we offer the resources and training to allow people to flourish professionally.

The contribution of every member of the staff team is valued at St Helen's, and teaching and support staff work closely together, appreciative of the positive difference everyone can make in their varied roles.





The role

An opportunity has arisen for a full-time Graduate Assistant – Drama Director in Residence to join the Drama Department starting in September 2026. We are looking for a graduate who is keen to develop skills in directing and teaching Drama within our high achieving and vibrant department. The successful applicant will have the ability to inspire and motivate students to develop their performance and theatre making skills to a high level. A genuine passion for drama and commitment to a full and inclusive extracurricular programme are essential.

This post will be a fixed term role for one academic year. It will be full-time, working Monday to Friday during School hours (8.30am to 5.00pm). In addition, the post holder will be required to work during regular evenings and weekends throughout the year, in particular during the weeks leading up to large productions. Flexibility and the ability to work long hours are required. This role will be focused on working during term time, however, there may be some requirement to work occasionally in the holidays for extra-curricular Drama events as needed.

The department

The Drama department is a high-profile hub of activity and the standard of productions and academic results is impressive.

The Drama department currently comprises two full-time teachers and is situated in the Performing Arts Centre. The department is supported by a full-time Performing Arts Technician, who specialises in lighting and sound, and a full-time Drama Assistant who manages the department's administration as well as offering teaching support at KS3 and KS4. Together, they support all productions, both extracurricular and examination-based, through their design and technical expertise.

Facilities

The Performing Arts Centre contains the professional grade Studio Theatre which houses an audience of up to 120 on stalls and gallery levels. Designed three-quarters-in-the-round, there are two rows of fixed seating downstairs, which allows for the space to be used in an exciting variety of permutations. There is also a small performance balcony.

The Studio Theatre is a vibrant, busy space where students take opportunities to direct small-scale productions and devise new plays for performance. In addition, the YPH theatre provides a fully equipped venue for large scale productions, concerts and events in an end-on 300 seat performance space. Practical Drama lessons are taught in the Studio Theatre and the YPH, along with a dedicated Performing Arts Studio.

Extracurricular

The Drama department offers a diverse range of theatrical opportunities and creates dynamic, high quality productions in which students are proud to take part. Students produce excellent performance work and specialist staff support students to perform and to assist with all areas of technical theatre - lighting, sound, set design, prop making, costume, hair and make-up. We have a dedicated student stage management team who work collaboratively to support productions.

In addition to regular clubs, there are three large scale productions each year and a number of smaller scale initiatives directed by both staff and students. Recent Lower School productions have included *Matilda the Musical*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Alice in Wonderland*. Middle school productions have included *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Little Women* and *Blue Stockings*. The annual senior production takes place with students from SHSK and visiting students from local schools who are invited to audition. Recent senior productions include *Legally Blonde*, *Made in Dagenham*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *The Visit*. Our annual playwriting competition offers students an opportunity to write an original script which is then developed into a full production with the support of a staff mentor. This year's original production was entitled *Cirque de la Vie* written and assistant directed by two students in Year 8.

Key responsibilities

The post-holder will take responsibility for directing and producing a large scale production and contribute to a wide range of additional extra-curricular performances, projects, trips and events. In addition they will be required to teach in the region of 6 periods of Year 7-9 Drama per week. The post holder will work closely with the Head of Drama to ensure delivery of a range of high-quality performance projects and skill-based workshops for students. In addition to the duties above, the post holder will support a range of wider school productions, Drama events and trips. They will work closely with the Drama Technician and Drama Assistant to source costumes, props and set for productions, organise and lead rehearsals and take responsibility for managing an allocated budget. We are seeking a candidate with initiative and creativity, who will be able to enthuse the students and contribute to the high calibre output of the department.

This new and exciting role would suit an applicant with a background in theatre and performing arts who is interested in developing their directing and teaching skills, and who would like to gain experience of working with young people, as part of a collaborative team in a fast paced, creative environment.

All staff share the responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the students, in accordance with the School's safeguarding policies.

Duties will include:

Teaching

- Planning, preparing and teaching lessons following the curriculum provided by the Drama Department
- Ensuring full records of attendance are kept
- Assisting the Head of Department as required with the development of appropriate syllabus content and schemes of work
- Providing reports relating to individual students





- Attending Parents' Meetings for taught year groups
- Attending regular departmental meetings, full staff meetings and annual Open Day
- Providing departmental teaching cover where required

Extra-Curricular

- Directing and producing one large-scale school production and further ambitious performance projects as required throughout the academic year
- Assisting with other large scale Drama productions as necessary
- Supporting departmental workshops, rehearsals, competitions and trips
- Running weekly lunchtime Theatre Clubs
- Contributing to Drama outreach work
- Supporting student led performance initiatives
- Preparing and publishing weekly rehearsal schedules
- Running auditions and rehearsals
- Managing a production budget

The person

Qualifications and experience

- A good honours or higher degree in a relevant discipline
- Experience of/ability to direct an extracurricular production to a high standard

Skills/abilities

- A high level of expertise in the subject and the ability to share this with students
- Ability to relate well to young people
- A willingness to support all aspects of the department and a commitment to supporting the extra-curricular Drama provision
- Excellent communication skills – oral and written
- A high level of administrative efficiency and IT skills
- Previous directing experience is desirable
- Previous experience of working with young people would be advantageous

Personal attributes

- A positive and collaborative team player
- Personable – able to build effective working relationships with staff and students.
- High expectations for production values and student attainment
- Excellent time management
- A high level of organisational skills, able to prioritise and take initiative
- A genuine passion for theatre making and the performing arts
- Ability and willingness to work long and flexible hours

Physical resources and safety

- Meeting the health and safety requirements of the School
- Following departmental protocols when running rehearsals during evenings and weekends
- Working with the other members of the department to ensure that all resources are well looked after and that departmental areas provide a stimulating environment for teaching

Salary and benefits

- This is a full-time, fixed-term position for one academic year, starting in September 2026, working 37.5 hours per week during term time plus 4 weeks during the school holidays (approximately 38.6 weeks in total in line with the published School term dates). In addition, at the discretion of the School, this role attracts a 20% reduction in working hours during school holiday periods with no impact on pay.
- Standard hours of work are 37.5 hours per week, Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5.00pm with a one hour unpaid lunch break. However, the role will involve regular after school and weekend rehearsals, performances and trips throughout the year.
- The salary band for this post is between £26,901 (min) to £29,299 (max) FTE, pro-rated to £23,313 to £25,392 for full-time, term-time plus hours including holiday pay. The starting salary will be dependent upon experience.
- Paid pro-rata holiday entitlement of 6.6 weeks (this is based on a full-time equivalent amount of 7.6 weeks per year inclusive of public holidays), to be taken during the School Holidays.
- St Helen's will be introducing fee remission of up to 50% on tuition fees for children of staff members at the School from September 2026 (pro-rated for part-time staff).
- Employees may join a staff Pension Scheme. The School currently double matches employee contributions with a minimum employee contribution of 3% (6% employer contribution) up to a maximum employer contribution of 10% of gross salary. Salary sacrifice is also available for pension contributions where qualifying conditions are met.
- All staff are covered by a life assurance scheme, paying out three times annual salary in the event of their death whilst employed by the School.
- A diverse training and professional development programme.
- A range of other staff benefits are available via external providers such as an Employee Assistance Programme, access to GP and dental advice lines amongst other services.
- The School currently operates a cycle to work scheme.
- Employees are entitled to free lunches when the kitchens are operating, plus refreshments in the staff room during the day and after school.
- There is free car parking on site.
- Employees may use the fully equipped Sports Centre facilities including a fitness suite, ergo suite and group cycle studio.
- Free eye tests and annual flu vaccination.
- Access to a well-stocked school library.

St Helen and St Katharine is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers, the Disclosure and Barring Service and overseas Police checks, if applicable. Employment is subject to these checks.



The process

These job details should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding policies, available within the vacancies section of our website.

Please then complete an application form (available within the vacancies section of our website). The completed and signed application form, along with a brief supporting letter addressed to **Mrs Sarah Rollings, Head**, should be submitted via email (recruitment@shsk.org.uk) in the first instance and then sent to:

Human Resources Department
St Helen and St Katharine
Faringdon Road
Abingdon
Oxfordshire
OX14 1BE

Please note that any application form submitted electronically must be completed in the existing application form format, within Adobe.

The closing date for this post is **Tuesday 5 May 2026 at 9.00am**.
Interviews will take place on **Wednesday 13 May and Thursday 14 May 2026**.

Please note that due to the volume of applications we receive, we are unable to provide individual feedback.

We look forward to receiving your completed application.



www.shsk.org.uk

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Independent day school for girls aged 9–18
Faringdon Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 1BE

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