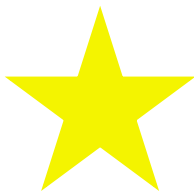


Valley Road School

Headteacher Candidate Pack



“A place to BELONG, a chance to SHINE, the confidence to ACHIEVE and SUCCEED”



“Family is what springs to mind when observing how adults and pupils are together. Caring relationships lie at the heart of Valley Road.” – Ofsted 2022

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Letter from Chair of Governors

Dear Applicant

On behalf of the Governing Body of Valley Road Primary School, I am delighted that you are considering applying for the role of Headteacher at our school. Valley Road is a special place where every child is valued as an individual, encouraged to thrive academically, socially and emotionally, and inspired to develop a love of learning that will stay with them for life.

We are a community school in the heart of Henley-on-Thames, with strong relationships between pupils, staff, parents and the wider local community. Our children benefit from a nurturing, supportive environment where high academic expectations are balanced with well-being, creativity, and personal development. We are proud of the consistently outstanding progress our pupils make, from exceptional Year 1 phonics outcomes to excellent Key Stage 2 SATs results that far exceed national averages.

This is an exciting time for Valley Road, as our current Headteacher steps down after 18 years of dedicated leadership. We are looking for a Headteacher who can join us to make a real and lasting impact on the future of the school, building on our strong foundations in line with our vision and values. The successful candidate will work with supportive governors, a talented senior leadership team full of creative ideas and enthusiasm, and a highly engaged parent community, to guide the school confidently into this next chapter.

We seek a leader who is passionate about nurturing every child, empowering staff, and ensuring that Valley Road Primary School continues to be a vibrant, thriving school at the heart of the community for the next 50 years and beyond. Inspirational, visible leadership combined with strategic insight – including financial stewardship – will be key to shaping the school's future while upholding the values that make it special.

This is a rare and exciting opportunity for a visionary leader to shape the future of a school with a dedicated team, supportive parents, and children who are eager to learn and thrive. We hope, as you read this pack, that you will gain a sense of the warmth and energy, and potential that makes Valley Road a truly exceptional place.

Thank you for your interest in our school.

Yours sincerely,

Zahra Bardai

Chair of Governors
Valley Road Primary School

Welcome and School Information

Valley Road School is a hidden gem, nestled on the rural outskirts of the thriving riverside town of Henley-on-Thames.

Opened in April 1970, we are a local authority maintained primary school that proudly serves our local community. Many of our children walk to school each day, helping to foster a strong village feel, with the school forming the beating heart of this part of the town.

In September 2026, we look forward to welcoming up to thirty bright and curious young minds into our Reception class. This will bring our school community to approximately 165 pupils, aged 4 to 11 all nurtured, supported and encouraged as they grow and learn together.

We are a one-form entry primary school, with class sizes that vary across the school in line with the wider decline in birth rates across Oxfordshire.

Current class sizes:

Reception	23
Year 1	29
Year 2	21
Year 3	18
Year 4	30
Year 5	14
Year 6	30

We provide a rich and broad curriculum designed to engage all children and inspire a lifelong love of learning. We firmly believe that happy children learn best, and Valley Road School is a happy, nurturing place where children feel safe, valued and confident to thrive.

Valley Road Primary School shares its site with Cygnets Nursery, which, whilst not part of the school, provides valuable childcare for families with children at different stages of their early years and primary education, all within the same familiar setting. This close proximity supports smooth transitions and offers practical reassurance for families. In addition, the school runs its own breakfast club and hosts an after-school club on the school grounds, ensuring high-quality consistent wraparound care for pupils. The school is also closely located to Gillotts secondary school, an Ofsted Outstanding school, and is one of its feeder primary schools. We work closely with Gillotts to support pupils and families and to ensure a smooth and confident transition from primary to secondary education.



“The core subjects are of high quality... Leaders are crystal clear about what teachers need to do. They have trained all staff to deliver the curriculum extremely well.”– Ofsted 2022

We are fortunate to benefit from extensive school grounds that play an important role in school life. These include a recently installed play area funded by our active PTA, an Astro-turfed area, and a large, grassed sports field. Our outdoor spaces are used purposefully to enrich learning and wellbeing. Children take part in activities such as planting and outdoor

classroom sessions, which encourage curiosity, teamwork and a strong connection with the natural environment. Team Green is another new student-led initiative focused on promoting sustainability and raising awareness of environmental issues within our school community.

We believe that children should be active and enjoy being physically engaged, and we offer a wide range of opportunities to support this. Our Running Club starts the day with energy and fun, while after-school sports clubs allow children to develop skills and enjoy teamwork. There are also sewing, art and choir clubs, plus music lessons in our PTA funded music pod. We also enter teams into local sporting competitions, giving pupils the chance to challenge themselves and celebrate their achievements. At Valley Road School, we are proud to foster a 'sport for all' ethos, ensuring every child has the opportunity to participate, grow in confidence, and enjoy being part of a team.

At our school, every child is celebrated and supported to thrive in their own unique way. We are proud of our strong connections with local charities—most recently, the Henley Municipal Charity helped fund a sensory room that is already making a real difference for many of our pupils. It is just one example of how we prioritise wellbeing and ensure every child feels valued.

We also believe that children should have a voice in their school. To support this, we have a pupil-elected School Council, giving our pupils the opportunity to share their ideas, contribute to school decisions, and take an active role in shaping their learning environment.



About Henley on Thames

Henley on Thames is a well-established market town with a population of just over 12,000. Henley is shaped equally by its natural setting and its historic built environment. Its position along a tranquil stretch of the River Thames and its proximity to the wooded landscapes of the Chiltern Hills give the town a strong connection to the outdoors, providing residents with easy access to riverside paths, green spaces, and scenic views. At the same time, Henley's medieval church, Georgian buildings, and its well-known 18th-century stone bridge remain defining landmarks that reflect the town's long-standing heritage and contribute to its distinctive character.



The town is located between Reading, Oxford and Maidenhead with excellent links to all via train, road and bus as well as into London.

Henley's cultural assets and festivals - such as the Kenton Theatre, one of the UK's oldest working theatres, and the family friendly Henley Festival, Henley Arts Trail, Thames Traditional Boat Festival – giving the town a cultural profile far beyond what is typical for its size. This sits alongside independent shops, riverside parks, and family-friendly cafés. The town has been repeatedly highlighted by national publications as one of the best places to live in the English countryside, celebrated for its beauty and community feel.

As a school we are privileged that our wider community offers our children many opportunities to engage with culture outside the classroom. The Henley Literary Festival, one of the UK's major literary events, includes a Schools' Programme that gives local pupils access to live author sessions, both in person and online which we regularly attend.

Similarly, the Henley Youth Festival provides creative experiences each March, including school workshops and performances. We are very proud that our pupils are incredibly active participants in this event.

For many of our children and families, sport plays an equally important role in community life. With Henley's riverside location, rowing is a natural highlight—supported by the town's global reputation through the Henley Royal Regatta, a world-famous rowing event established in 1839.

For our children many are active participants at the town's football, rugby, netball, cricket, hockey, and swimming clubs, and more, giving our children plenty of opportunities to develop skills, confidence, and friendships in supportive local settings. These sports are complemented by the area's accessible green spaces and riverside paths.

For a headteacher, Henley-on-Thames offers the rare chance to lead within a genuinely supportive community- one that values education, nurtures creativity and the outdoors, and places children right at the heart of local life. Valley Road School benefits from this environment every day, making Henley a fulfilling and inspiring place to make a lasting difference.



Our Vision and Values

Our Vision

“A place to BELONG, a chance to SHINE, the confidence to ACHIEVE and SUCCEED”

At Valley Road Primary School, the individual child is at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to providing a balanced education that promotes strong academic achievement alongside a nurturing, supportive environment where every child feels safe, valued, and confident.

As a community school in Henley, we place great importance on positive relationships between pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community. Our dedicated teachers are genuinely committed to ensuring that every child thrives – academically, socially, and emotionally - and is supported to reach their full potential.



“Leaders make sure that pupils’ individual personalities are brought to the fore. Pupils are eloquent and zestful. They eagerly welcome visitors and can talk at length about how they enjoy learning.”– Ofsted 2022

We encourage curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning, helping children to develop confidence, resilience, and independence as they prepare for the next stage of their education and for life beyond the classroom. Through active participation in local events and strong community links, we foster a strong sense of belonging and shared pride.

Above all, we want our children to enjoy being at school, to feel valued for who they are, and to leave Valley Road Primary School as happy, confident, and curious learners who are open to opportunity and excited about the world around them.



Our Values

- Every Child Matters

We recognise and celebrate each child as a unique individual. We value diversity, promote self-belief, and ensure all children feel seen, respected, and valued.

- High Expectations with Balance

We strive for excellence in learning while recognising the importance of wellbeing, creativity, and personal development. We know that these play a key part in strong academic outcomes and help every child to flourish at all stages of their education and beyond.

- Care, Kindness, and Belonging

We create a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment where children feel happy, secure, and confident to take risks in their learning.

- Community and Partnership

We value strong relationships with parents, carers, and the wider Henley community. Working together enriches learning and strengthens our sense of belonging.

- Dedication and Professionalism

Our staff are committed, passionate, and reflective, always striving to provide the best possible education and support for every child.

- Curiosity and Opportunity

We encourage children to be curious about the world, open-minded, and willing to embrace new experiences and opportunities.

- Enjoyment of School

When children feel happy, they flourish. At Valley Road learning, laughter, enthusiasm, and strong relationships fill our classrooms each day, creating a caring community where confidence grows and each child is inspired to achieve their very best.



What our community says

Parents

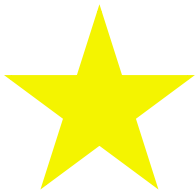
"It feels like a big family with a great emphasis on happiness and nurture."

"...genuine care and dedication shown by the teachers. They teach with real commitment and always have the children's best interests at heart."

"A nurturing school that has the balance right between pastoral care and academic achievement."

"...the school supports individualism."

"...children grow in self-esteem and achieve their full potential — my son really enjoys going to school..."



"Leaders do not use a label as a reason for lowering ambition... Adults use consistent strategies and approaches to enable pupils with SEND to learn the curriculum well."– Ofsted 2022

Staff

"...kind, supportive available to listen and passionate about supporting pupils' emotional wellbeing"

"Ability to build positive relationships throughout the school community....."

"Child-centred"

"Respectful of staff expertise"

What parents would like from our next Headteacher

- To continue with the nurturing and happiness ethos
- To build strong relations with staff, parents and children
- Ensure behaviour is addressed consistently and a zero-tolerance approach to bullying
- Greater communication between the school and parents
- Bring fresh ideas to financially support the school
- Be approachable and present - have your ears to the ground

What pupils would like from our next Headteacher

“kind with a sense of humour”

“Join assembly and have chats with the children”

“Fair to everyone”

“Listen to the children”

“Teach the children good behaviour through assemblies”



Qualities we seek in a Headteacher

We are seeking an inspirational and outward-facing Headteacher for our school who places the individual child at the heart of their leadership and is deeply committed to nurturing every pupil to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We are looking for an existing or aspiring Headteacher who is a highly skilled practitioner and who wants to make a real difference to children's lives.

The successful candidate will demonstrate a clear commitment to high-quality teaching and learning, maintaining high academic expectations while ensuring a balanced, inclusive, and supportive environment where wellbeing and enjoyment of learning are prioritised. We are looking for a teaching head with approximately 1 day (to be discussed at the time of interview) of their time allocated to a specific class.

They will be a visible, approachable, and engaged presence within the school and the wider Henley community, understanding the importance of promoting the school positively and building strong relationships with pupils, staff, parents, and local partners. Active participation in community life and a commitment to strengthening the school's profile will be central to their leadership.

The Headteacher will be a strategic and forward-thinking leader, capable of ensuring the long-term financial stability of the school through careful planning, effective use of resources, and transparent decision-making. They will embrace opportunity to further develop the school and its offer in line with its values and community context. They will work closely with governors to secure sustainability while ensuring that financial decisions always support the best outcomes for children. We are looking for a leader who is willing to guide, encourage and motivate success, but who is prepared to take tough decisions when needed.

They will lead with integrity, warmth, and clarity, valuing every member of the school community and empowering staff through trust, professional development, and shared purpose. They will inspire curiosity, confidence, and resilience in children, preparing them not only for the next stage of education but for life beyond the classroom.

Above all, they will be a passionate advocate for children and the community, committed to ensuring that Valley Road Primary School remains a place where children feel valued, supported, challenged, and happy to come to school each day.

How to apply

Salary: Leadership scale L9-L15 £63,070 to £73,105

Start date: 01 September 2026

Application closing date: 9 March 2026 at 23:59

Shortlisting: 12 March 2026

Interviews: 18 March 2026

Please read this application pack carefully.

Complete the application form in full.

Visits to the school are warmly encouraged. To arrange a visit or for an application pack, please contact office.2512@valley-road.oxon.sch.uk or 01491 573784.

References will be sought for shortlisted candidates prior to the interview date. Valley Road School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment. The offer made to the successful candidate will be subject to checks outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education, including a minimum of two references, one of which should be from the applicant's most recent employer. We will require an overseas check and self-declaration prior to interview if applicable.

Job Description

This job description should be read in conjunction with the current conditions for headteachers contained in the current National School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and the Headteachers' Standards (2020). If successful, you may be required to undertake such additional duties as may be reasonably determined by the Governing Body from time to time. The job description is subject to annual review.

Purpose of the Post

Provide outstanding professional leadership and management of Valley Road School. As the lead professional in the school, the Headteacher will:

1. Work with the Governing Board to develop and deliver an agreed strategic plan to deliver the Vision, continuing the school's journey towards becoming Ofsted "Exceptional".
2. Build on the secure foundation to achieve higher standards in all areas of the school's activities, ensuring each individual child is inspired to be a life-long learner with the confidence to achieve their full potential.

Specific Responsibilities

Leadership & Management

- Embrace the values as set out by the Governors and ensure that these underpin all activities and inform all relationships
- Implement the school's vision and strategy so that it is understood, agreed and acted upon across the school community including staff, parents and pupils.
- Lead the strategic development of the school with vision and creativity, identifying opportunities to enhance the curriculum, enrichment and wider school offer ensuring continuous improvement and long-term sustainability.
- Identify priorities and targets for ensuring that pupils achieve high standards and make good progress and secure continuous school improvement.
- Demonstrate the commitment to inspire, model and motivate the whole school community to meet strong behaviour standards that support staff and children's health, safety and well-being
- Implement and sustain effective strategies and processes for the performance management of staff, including the appraisal process, ensuring it is balanced and robust and take appropriate action when performance is unsatisfactory.
- Support subject leaders and the senior leadership team in the development of core and non-core subjects
- Plan, allocate, support and evaluate the work undertaken by staff, ensuring clear and appropriate delegation of tasks and devolution of responsibilities.
- Work closely with administrative staff to ensure the smooth running of the school.
- Ensure that staff have access to appropriate, high-standard professional development opportunities and that newly qualified teachers are appropriately trained, monitored, supported and assessed in relation to all relevant standards.
- Monitor and propose a balanced budget aligned to the School Improvement Plan

Safeguarding

- Promote and uphold a strong safeguarding culture across the school community
- Ensure safer recruitment, accurate SCR, compliant training, and that safeguarding policies are implemented and followed by all staff
- Enable staff, pupils and parents to raise concerns which are addressed sensitively and promptly in line with policy

Teaching and Learning/Curriculum

- Demonstrate the ability to develop a progressive, ambitious and inclusive curriculum which responds to the needs of different cohorts and that actively engages children in the love of learning and to have pride in their work.
- Operate systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' achievement, using data and setting targets for achievement of pupils
- Demonstrate the vision and desire to improve attainment and progression for all children with additional focus for PPG and SEND children, identify gaps, implementing interventions and monitoring their effectiveness.
- Promote excellence in teaching and learning, using the latest evidence base, ensuring a continuous focus on pupils' achievement and development of the whole child.
- Ensure learning is enjoyable as well as challenging.
- Ensure that a varied and rich educational experience is available for all pupils, including a variety of extra-curricular opportunities.
- Through measurement and analysis, identify and act on areas of development in relation to all aspects of school improvement.
- Teach a dedicated class one day a week.

Relationships

- Demonstrate inclusiveness and respect in dealings with pupils, staff and others within the school community.
- Promote personal responsibility, reward excellence and deal appropriately with underperformance.
- Ensure a high standard of professional development for all staff.
- Develop effective and empowered management and teaching teams.
- Create conditions for pupils, staff and the school community to speak up and be heard if they have concerns or ideas for improvement.
- Demonstrate relevant consultation and co-operation around change affecting the school or groups or individuals within it.

Community

- Drive community engagement including pupils, staff, parents/carers, local residents, local schools, local employers, and wider community stakeholders.
- Create and maintain an effective partnership with parents/carers using a range of approaches and media.
- Promote an honest and positive image of the school , supporting parent choice and providing information through the school's website as well as developing our social media presence.

- Establish, develop and maintain constructive partnerships with other local schools. Our partnerships with primary schools will support the exchange of ideas and best practice in order to improve student outcomes. Our partnerships with nursery and secondary schools will support the smooth transitions of pupils to and from our school.
- Develop the school as an integral part of the local community by engaging in community celebrations and other events as appropriate.

Managing the School

- Work with the school leadership team and the Board of Governors to set an annual budget consistent with the school priorities.
- Use and integrate a range of technologies effectively and efficiently to manage the school.
- Recruit, develop, retain and deploy staff effectively in order to maintain the highest quality of education and to achieve the vision and goals of the school.
- Develop and present a coherent, understandable and accurate account of the school's performance to a range of audiences including governors and parents/carers to ensure that they are well informed about the curriculum, attainment and progress and about the contribution that they can make to achieving the school's targets.
- Strategically monitor and manages school budgets to secure the long-term future of the school.
- Report openly and honestly to the Board of Governors on the performance of the school and challenges
- Work in partnership with the local education authority, local schools and other agencies.
- Uphold the school's obligations for safeguarding and working with pupils.
- Ensure the school operates best value principles in purchasing goods and services and the allocation of school capital expenditure.

Person Specification

The following criteria will be used for the selection process.

These criteria will be assessed through the application form (A), tasks during the interview day (T) and at interview (I).

	Essential/ Desirable	How Assessed
Qualifications		
Degree and Qualified Teacher Status	E	A
Evidence of further study	D	A
Award of the National Professional Qualification for Headship	E	A
Professional Experience		
Evidence of commitment to own professional development and its corresponding impact	E	A
Highly successful and varied teaching experience demonstrating a positive impact on all pupils	E	A/I
Evidence of successful leadership in a core area of the school	E	
Senior Leadership experience in a primary school	D	
Experience and understanding of performance data to raise standards and achievement for all pupils	E	T/I
Evidence of effective school improvement planning impacting on pupil outcomes	E	A/I
Evidence of liaising collaboratively with colleagues and driving change in a positive way	E	A/I
A strong understanding and commitment to promoting an effective safeguarding culture	E	A/I/T
Experience of creating excellent stakeholder engagement	E	I
Experience of effective working with governors to create and articulate a clear vision for the future of the school and delivery against this vision	E	I
Experience of leading CPD and of monitoring its impact	E	A
Committed to equality and inclusion and values of diversity	E	A
Experience with financial and resource management of a school	D	T
Experience of recruitment, selection, appointment, development and performance management of staff	D	A/I
Personal Attributes and Competencies		
Outstanding teacher with a love of education, a passion for the whole curriculum and up to date knowledge of best practice	E	A/I
Visionary and creative leader with the ability to think strategically and identify opportunities for development.	E	A/I
A passion and desire to get to know all the pupils in the school, be fun and happy to join in.	E	T
Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to establish good relationships with adults and children	E	I
Able to communicate clearly and effectively verbally and in writing to a range of individuals, groups and large audiences.	E	A/T

Effective team player, able to lead and listen, collaborate and motivate with energy and passion	E	I
Able to innovate, manage change and share knowledge.	E	A
Able to create, inspire and promote a culture of high achievement for all	E	A/T/I
Desire to foster strong community links using valuable resources we have in our surroundings.	E	I
Lead by example in all areas, including teaching, with consistency and clarity	E	A/T/I
Ability to instil a strong sense of respect and responsibilities from the pupils, and effectively manage instances of behaviour that fall below that expected from our pupils	E	I
Prepared to ask for help and support where necessary	E	I
Approachable, flexible, resilient and optimistic with a good sense of perspective and humour	E	I
Strong time management, with the ability to remain calm under pressure and meet deadlines	E	T