



# Recruitment Pack



VANDYKE UPPER SCHOOL

*Responsible, Respectful, Resilient. World Ready.*

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# Welcome from the Headteacher

Welcome to Vandyke Upper School. We are very proud of our school and are delighted you are considering joining our community.

We are a vibrant, dynamic school committed to fostering academic excellence, personal growth, and social responsibility. Everything we do at Vandyke is underpinned by our values: Responsible, Respectful, Resilient. Through our broad and varied curriculum and excellent pastoral support, we ensure that every student is valued and respected as an individual so they gain a full and rounded education and are 'World Ready'.



Our experienced teaching and pastoral staff are dedicated to providing a supportive environment where every student can thrive academically and emotionally, so they can achieve every success. Our students achieve exceptional results at the end of Year 11 and 13. After their GCSEs, most students choose to continue their studies at our sixth form, which provides an ambitious curriculum in outstanding facilities.

Relationships across our school and wider community are incredibly strong and we value open and honest communication so that we can continue to deliver excellence both in the classroom and through many varied extra-curricular opportunities.

Every member of our staff team plays a crucial role in our success. We thrive because of our strong collaboration and commitment to staff development and wellbeing. We are very proud of our students'

achievements and the unique atmosphere here at Vandyke. This pack serves as an introduction to life at our school and we invite you to come and visit as part of your application to experience it for yourself. More information can also be found on [our website](#).



Leah Ferguson-Moore  
Headteacher

# Vision and Values

Above all, it is our intention to ensure that students leave Vandyke as young adults who are **Responsible, Respectful, Resilient, World Ready** citizens.



## Our Mission Statement

Young people leave Vandyke as confident and socially responsible, world-ready citizens with the skills, knowledge and courage to thrive.

We want our students to have a clear sense of the world around them and to appreciate their place within it. Being a part of our school community means actively participating in and contributing to the shared environment and goals of the school. It involves building positive relationships, supporting each others' learning and well-being, and working together to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone has every opportunity to achieve.

## Our School Charter

*Written in collaboration with staff, students and governors*

### We are responsible:

- We take ownership of our learning and behaviour
- We are socially responsible and use our voice to advocate for ourselves and others
- We engage positively with our wider community
- We understand the importance of attendance and punctuality
- We are curious, creative and committed to our learning

### We are respectful:

- We embrace and celebrate diversity in our school community
- We all contribute to a calm, safe and inclusive school
- We actively listen and show empathy
- We communicate with kindness and consideration of others
- We look after our learning environment

### We are resilient:

- We believe that abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work
- We welcome feedback, reflect on it and set goals for improvement
- We celebrate progress, not just success
- We are courageous in pursuit of our goals
- We learn from our mistakes

# About The School

“ Vandyke feels like a community and not just a school, where students are supported and encouraged to achieve their best. ”

**Year 11 Student**

Our students achieve very well, making strong progress in all year groups and achieving outstanding outcomes at GCSE and A Level from all starting points. Exam results have been consistently strong and many GCSE students progress to studying at A-Level or BTEC. For the majority of Year 13 students the next step is university, with students going on to a range of courses at many different universities including Russell Group organisations and Oxbridge.



Following our most recent OFSTED inspection in January 2024, the highly complimentary report stated that 'pupils at Vandyke are proud and articulate ambassadors for their school. They enjoy learning and achieve well. They thrive as a result of the school's ambition for all pupils to become "world ready citizens". Pupils are confident, courteous and aspirational. They behave well at all times.'

The ethos of Vandyke is based on strong, positive relationships between staff and students. We are: Responsible, Respectful, Resilient. We seek to establish and maintain an atmosphere that enables students' autonomy and independence. Students respond very well to this, creating a 'special' atmosphere around school often commented upon by visitors. Staff go out of their way to provide great teaching and support and additional learning opportunities for students. Parents and carers are supportive of the school and feedback from parents and carers is always that the school is welcoming, friendly and inclusive.



**VANDYKE UPPER SCHOOL**

# About The School



The atmosphere at Vandyke is of a 'college', whereby we seek to allow students autonomy and independence. We are the upper school of choice in the local community, and we are oversubscribed each year.

**“** The teachers at Vandyke not only truly care about the quality of education they provide, but also for the wellbeing of the students. **”**

**Year 12 Student**

We are pleased to hold the Sportmark award in recognition of our commitment to Sport and PE, complementing our outstanding programme of extra-curricular sport and performing arts. Over 350 students take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme each year.



Facilities at Vandyke are excellent and include a theatre, drama studio, dance studio, sports hall, sports activity area, specialist athletics jumping facility, floodlit netball centre, floodlit astro-turf pitch, music suite, café and extensive library and study facilities. A full sized 3G pitch is a new addition to our impressive facilities.

In September 2020, we opened a new teaching block comprising 12 new science labs, 10 new maths classrooms, Sixth Form centre including Sixth Form café and offices for staff. A further new Sixth Form centre is now open and provides a specialist, university-style learning space.



**VANDYKE UPPER SCHOOL**

# Key information

<b>Status</b>	Single Academy Trust
<b>Last Ofsted</b>	January 2024
<b>Ofsted Judgement</b>	Good
<b>Forms of Entry</b>	16
<b>Year Established</b>	1976
<b>Type of School</b>	Secondary Academy Convertor
<b>Age Range</b>	13 - 18
<b>Number of Students on Role</b>	1520
<b>Number of Students in Sixth Form</b>	408
<b>% of SEND Students</b>	12%
<b>% of EAL Students</b>	5%
<b>% FSM Students</b>	14%
<b>% Pupil Premium Students (Y9-11)</b>	17%
<b>School Website</b>	<a href="http://www.vandyke.cbeds.co.uk">www.vandyke.cbeds.co.uk</a>



# What our students say

“ Leaving Vandyke next year will be very hard for me, but I can leave confidently knowing I've got the best out of the school and they've got the best out of me. ”

Year 13 Student

“We are always encouraged to do our very best, you can tell everyone cares about you so much.”

Year 11 Student

“When I moved to Vandyke it felt like a big step for me, but it was a lot easier than I expected, mainly because of the staff and students around the school being so friendly.”

Year 10 Student

“Vandyke has helped me learn my passion for theatre and music. I love French as well. Every subject is great and the teachers are friendly.”

Year 9 Student

“Vandyke is an excellent school to be in. There are lots of friendly people here. I feel safe. ”

Year 9 Student

“I've had the opportunity to go on multiple school trips, such as a Languages visit to Germany, a ski trip to Italy, STEM trips, a Big Bang fair and a university residential. All the extra-curricular clubs are brilliant too.”

Year 11 Student

“ I love the independence you get here. ”

Year 9 Student

“The Sixth Form team celebrate my achievements and push and support me all the way.”

Year 13 Student



# What our staff say

"I thoroughly enjoy my role as Deputy Safeguarding Lead at Vandyke. Our work is rooted in compassion, integrity and putting our young people first and at the heart of all we do. Vandyke is a great place to work as these values are genuinely lived out every day, with staff working together respectfully and thoughtfully to ensure every young person feels safe, supported and able to thrive."

**DDSL**

"I love working at Vandyke as the whole ethos of the school is based on what is best for the students and what is best for the staff, which is exactly how it should be. There's a real community feel across the school and I felt welcomed and supported from the first day that I arrived."

**Teacher of English**



"The best thing about working at Vandyke is how supportive the whole team is; and it really is a team! Everyone is so approachable and willing to help which creates a cohesive and welcoming environment where you genuinely feel valued. Staff work well together, and everyone is focused on helping students succeed."

**SENDCo & Teacher  
of Life Skills**

**“** Being a Head of Year at Vandyke Upper School allows me to make a real difference to students' academic progress, wellbeing and personal development. I value the strong relationships I build with students, families, staff and outside agencies. I find it rewarding to support young people through challenges while celebrating their successes. Being part of a supportive school community and helping to create a positive, inclusive year group culture is what makes the role especially fulfilling for me. **”**

**Head of Year**



**VANDYKE UPPER SCHOOL**

# Why work for Vandyke?



## Pay

Vandyke salaries are aligned with STPCD and NJC pay scales, with annual increases to reflect the cost of living.



## Pension

All teaching staff at Vandyke are enrolled in the Teachers' Pension scheme. Our support staff are enrolled in the Local Government Pension Scheme.



## Excellent Induction, ECT and CPD

Personal growth is at the heart of Vandyke's ethos, for both students and staff. We support new staff with a thorough induction process, and provide exceptional ECT and CPD programmes.



## Wellbeing

All Vandyke staff have access to in-school support from HR and a trained mental health first aider. We also provide free access to an external Employee Support Provider. Vandyke policies (including flexi-working arrangements) are there to support a healthy work-life balance.



## Work-Life Balance

We know how important it is for staff to have a positive work-life balance. Our policies are designed and regularly reviewed to support staff to maintain this. We also provide extra leave entitlement so that you can attend those important events such as family weddings or your child's sports day.



## Physical Health

We offer a Cycle To Work scheme to support a healthy lifestyle, and staff are entitled to eye care vouchers.



## Paid meal for duty staff

Staff who are on lunchtime duty on site are entitled to a free meal from our excellent café.



## Staff praise

Processes are in place so that staff can nominate their colleagues for a praise mention, so that their hard work is recognised and celebrated.



## Staff fund

The fund ensures that staff receive cards, flowers or gifts when marking significant life events or leaving Vandyke, and supports our well attended social events such as the Christmas party and summer celebrations.



## EV charging points

There are ten electric vehicle charging points on the school site.



# Living and working in and around Leighton Buzzard



Bedfordshire features canals, rivers and forests, teeming with birdlife and flowers, wildlife parks, castle ruins and stately homes like Woburn and Whipsnade. The Forest of Marston Vale, Greensand Ridge, the Chiltern Hills and the Dunstable Downs offer wonderful open spaces. There are many interesting historic villages and visitor attractions and great places to eat, drink and shop.

Leighton Buzzard is a picturesque, vibrant market town with 52k inhabitants, close to many of Bedfordshire's facilities and attractions. It lies between the major hubs of Milton Keynes and Luton, with excellent road and rail links, making it a great location to live and work.

Leighton Buzzard has a range of cultural activities including heritage events, the Canal Festival, an annual Carnival and Mayday Fayre.

The Library Theatre hosts live events and film screenings throughout the year, in addition to regular children's events. There are a number of walking trails surrounding the town with routes through the Rushmere Country Park, Stockgrove and Tiddenfoot Waterside Park.

Also of interest are the narrow-gauge railway, All Saints Church, the Grand Union Canal and Ascott House.



Leighton Buzzard is convenient for both the M1 and the A5, giving easy access to places such as Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire. It is also on the West Coast Main Line, providing a speedy train service into London Euston, Milton Keynes and beyond.

# How To Apply

Thank you for your interest in our school. We look forward to receiving your application.

To apply, please complete the application form in full on [MyNewTerm](#). CV applications will not be accepted as the information provided on a CV may not be consistent with the information we require. Applications can be made through [MyNewTerm website](#). Your application should include comprehensive details of your education and employment history, please include any unpaid or voluntary work. If there are gaps in your employment history, we ask you to please explain the reasons.

The supporting information section is vital for evidencing your suitability for this position. Applicants are encouraged to consult the job description and person specification to ensure all essential and desirable criteria are addressed with specific examples. For teaching roles, please provide a detailed account of your pedagogical experience and outline how your expertise will enhance the educational standards of our school.

References will be taken up shortly after shortlisting and prior to interview using the contact details you supply on the application form.

Further information about Vandyke Upper School can be found on [the school's website](#). In addition, candidates are warmly encouraged to take an informal opportunity to visit the school prior to applying. Please contact Mrs Jo Sessions, PA to the Headteacher, on [recruitment@vandyke.cbeds.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@vandyke.cbeds.co.uk), or by telephone on 01525 636700 to arrange your visit.

Vandyke Upper School is committed to the advancement of equality and diversity across all areas of employment. We invite applications from a broad range of candidates and are dedicated to maintaining a transparent, inclusive recruitment process. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the school will implement reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable participation for all applicants. Should you require any such accommodations, please contact us at your earliest convenience.

Vandyke Upper School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. In accordance with the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', our recruitment process includes rigorous pre-employment checks designed to deter, identify, and reject individuals who may be



unsuitable for work with children. As part of this commitment, we require a minimum of two professional references, one of which must be from your current or most recent employer. For candidates currently or previously employed in a school setting, one reference must be provided and signed by the Headteacher.

Referees will be specifically asked to comment on your suitability to work with children and to disclose any substantiated safeguarding concerns or disciplinary sanctions related to child protection. All appointments are made subject to receipt of a completed application form, satisfactory references and an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS), as well as other pre-appointment checks outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025).

