



HEAD OF THE PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT

Permanent Full-Time

1 INFORMATION ABOUT THE POST

The successful applicant will be **expected to take up the post as soon as possible after January 2026** (subject to satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks).

A detailed specification for the post is included in section 3; however, it is important to stress that this is regarded as a key appointment. The person appointed will lead and manage the Preparatory Department in all of its activities.

The Head of the Preparatory Department is responsible in the first instance to the Principal of the school as a whole and, thereby, to the Board of Governors, which has established a committee through which the activities of the Preparatory Department are reported and discussed on a termly basis. The Head of the Preparatory Department attends this Committee of the Board and brings all matters affecting the Preparatory Department to its attention.

The Board of Governors wishes to appoint to this very important post someone who is not only capable of discharging the duties and responsibilities involved but who also has the combination of personal qualities, imagination, vision and skill to take forward what is already a strong, successful and thriving Department. The Board will be looking for someone who will have a clear vision for the Preparatory Department, energy and enthusiasm for the task, a genuine love of teaching and working with primary-aged pupils, the ability to work well with and to secure the best from others and who can lead the staff and pupils with determination and expertise.

The terms and conditions of service of the appointment are as set down in the amended 1987 Terms and Conditions of Service Agreement.

Salary

Salary will be based on Leadership Pay Scale L11-L15, depending on experience.

2 INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sullivan Upper School was founded in 1877 by the trustees of Robert Sullivan “to bestow the blessings of education on all succeeding generations in his native place”. Today it is a large co-educational and interdenominational voluntary grammar school situated in 25 acres of its own grounds on the edge of Holywood, overlooking Belfast Lough. The school has had a Preparatory Department for almost a century and it is an integral part of the school. There are at present 1,238 pupils in the school, some 159 of them in the Preparatory Department. The school has approximately 150 members of teaching and non-teaching staff.

Sullivan Upper School is owned and managed in all its affairs by the Board of Governors which is drawn from the local community and reflects all the main religious denominations of Holywood. The school receives funding from the Department of Education for Northern Ireland in addition to the fees payable by parents.

It is the school's aim to help each pupil to achieve the best that he or she is capable of both academically and in all the other aspects of education that the school provides. The Board of Governors is committed to ensuring that the Preparatory Department continues to thrive and develop as a centre of excellence in primary education. However, the primary source of funding for the

Preparatory department is through tuition fees paid by parents. The annual fee is currently £6,000 +VAT.

The Preparatory Department is located in its own grounds in Alexandra Park (off My Lady's Mile), adjacent to and linked to the Upper School. It has a single class entry throughout, with an intake of 26 children in Prep 1 and Prep 2 and 28 children in Prep 3 to Prep 7. Children in Prep 1 to Prep 3 are accommodated in a large, detached house called Dromkeen House. Children in Prep 4-Prep 7 are situated in a separate building called Loughhead House, also on the Dromkeen site. They enjoy use of many parts of the main school campus including the Silver Robin Cafeteria, the School Hall and Pavilion for PE, the Drama Theatre for school productions along with the numerous playing fields/grounds/tennis courts for Games periods and breaks.

There are 6 full-time and 2 part-time teachers in Prep 1-Prep 7 and 3 part-time specialist teachers (Music, PE and Learning Support). The Head of Preparatory Department is based in Dromkeen House. Currently, Foundation Stage has two part-time Classroom Assistants; Key Stage 1 has one full-time Classroom Assistant; and Key Stage 2 has two part-time Classroom Assistants. Seven additional Classroom Assistants assist children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The Prep Secretary is also based in Dromkeen House. Further music specialist teachers and a Speech and Drama teacher are also available for private arrangements.

The Preparatory Department also has a popular After School Club which is registered with Social Services for 30 children. This operates during school term from 2.00 pm to 5.30 pm and is managed on a daily basis by the After School Club Supervisor, Deputy Supervisor, Co-ordinator for Additional Needs and After School Club Assistant.

3 SPECIFICATION OF THE POST

The Head of the Preparatory Department is responsible for the overall efficient and effective leadership and management of the school, providing leadership for pupils, staff, parents and the community. Specific responsibilities include:

- formulating the overall aims and objectives of the school and policies for their implementation;
- drawing up, implementing and monitoring the School Development Plan, including regular and significant self-evaluation;
- contributing to the whole school Senior Management Team and attending meetings of this team periodically;
- oversight, co-ordination and review of the Curriculum at Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (in keeping with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum), including the areas of literacy, numeracy and ICT;
- development and review of all school policies and procedures, including those for assessment and reporting to parents and safeguarding;
- participating in the selection and appointment of staff;
- deploying and managing all teaching and non-teaching staff of the school and allocating particular duties, including cover for absent colleagues;
- co-ordinating the work of staff through regular meetings, including with Key Stage staff and subject co-ordinators;
- evaluating the standards of teaching and learning in the Preparatory Department, including the monitoring, review and dissemination of good practice, and the operation of PRSD/Annual Review;
- encouraging and facilitating staff development, including CPD, Induction/EPD;
- ensuring good communication and a co-operative team approach within the Preparatory Department;
- ensuring good communication and good relationships with parents, through regular contact, including with the Parents Association and the Parent Forum;
- implementation, development and review of the Admissions policy and procedures;
- effective Transfer procedures;
- a part-time teaching commitment to contribute to teaching where required across the curriculum;

- the Pastoral Care of all pupils, including ensuring policies are in place (eg promoting good behaviour);
- act as the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and be a member of the school's Safeguarding Team;
- overseeing the policy and procedures for pupils with Special Educational Needs. Providing strong leadership in this area to ensure that the Prep remains an SEN friendly environment;
- allocating and controlling the financial and material resources of the school, in conjunction with the Bursar;
- the Health and Safety and premises management of the Preparatory Department, in conjunction with the Facilities Manager, the Bursar and the School Nurse; attending meetings of the school's Health and Safety Committee; having oversight of risk assessments as required;
- the promotion and ongoing marketing of the Preparatory Department within the wider community;
- liaising with external agencies;
- networking and development of professional relationships eg with the North Down Primary Principals' group;
- oversight of the After School Club;
- any other relevant duties as assigned by the Principal.

The person appointed will work closely with the Principal, the Bursar, and members of the school's administrative staff in discharging these responsibilities and will attend meetings of the Preparatory Department Committee of the Board of Governors.

Other Benefits

The school participates in the Cycle to Work Scheme and employees are also eligible to join Benenden Healthcare as corporate members. Free parking is available on the school site

4 PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

Please ensure that you provide evidence to address the criteria on the personnel specification. Evidence will be gathered from the application form, at interview (if shortlisted) and through references and certificates.

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
QUALIFICATIONS	The criteria that will be applied at shortlisting is as follows • hold a recognised teaching qualification which has prepared him/her to teach in a primary school, have a personal teacher reference number issued by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland and be registered with the GTCNI (at the date of commencement);	Preference may be given to those applicants who: • have successfully completed (or are working towards) an additional post-graduate (or equivalent or higher) qualification in education;	Shortlisting
EXPERIENCE	The criteria that will be applied at shortlisting is as follows:	Preference may be given to those applicants who have:	Shortlisting and Interview

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
	• have at least 7 years' teaching experience in a primary school or a preparatory department within the last 10 years; • have at least 3 years' experience within the last 6 years in a leadership position or in a position involving responsibility for leading and directing the work of other teachers in a primary school or a preparatory department (for example, as a key stage or subject co-ordinator);	▪ have evidence of leading or making a significant contribution to a whole-school improvement initiative; ▪ have experience (within the last 3 years) of involvement in school/curricular development and the use of self-evaluation; ▪ have experience of leadership in the area of SEN; • have experience of teaching P6/P7; ▪ can demonstrate evidence of having led staff development; ▪ have experience of the preparation and management of a budget; • have relevant additional experience or CPD.	
KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES	The person appointed will be expected to demonstrate the following: a. proven leadership, managerial and organisational ability, including the ability to articulate a vision for the future of the school; b. the ability to promote and ongoing market the school and have innovative ideas about how to do so; c. a sound knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum		Interview

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
	and current policies and procedures; d. extensive knowledge of current educational developments and the ability to evaluate and respond to new educational challenges and manage change effectively; e. highly effective classroom pedagogy and knowledge of how to ensure high standards of teaching, learning and achievement; f. the ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing to a range of audiences; g. the ability to gain the confidence of pupils, parents and colleagues and to engage with a variety of audiences; h. good analytical skills and the ability to think strategically; i. effective data management and competence in the use of ICT; j. the ability to work productively and harmoniously in a team and to build an effective team; k. excellent attendance record and the ability to cope effectively with the demands of this post; l. ability to motivate, develop, empower and lead pupils and staff; m. enthusiasm, commitment, integrity and a willingness to work hard.		

The school reserves the right to enhance the criteria if necessary for the purposes of producing a manageable shortlist.

When applying for the post, applicants should show clearly how they meet the essential and/or desirable criteria for the post.

It is essential that you fully describe in the application form how you meet each of the criteria sought. Please provide detailed information against each requirement, providing dates and ensuring that where requirements are time-bound (eg 1 year within the last 5 years) you provide detail and dates that fully satisfy the requirement. It is not appropriate to simply list the various posts that you have held. Assumptions will not be made from the title of your post. Failure to do so may result in an applicant not being shortlisted since selection Panels cannot make assumptions in the absence of essential information.

5 PROCEDURES FOR APPLICATION

- (a) Applicants for this post are asked to complete an application form which is a fillable PDF. **It is preferred that application forms are emailed** to the Principal's Personal Assistant, Mrs Amanda Graham at agraham813@c2ken.net. An acknowledgement will be sent by return of email. The format of the application form should not be altered in any way. Applicants should note that Apple Pages or Mac versions of the application form should not be emailed.

Application forms are available on the school's website (www.sullivanupper.co.uk) or by e-mail agraham813@c2ken.net from Mrs Amanda Graham, Principal's PA.

If you do not have access to email, you may hand-deliver or post the application to the Principal's PA, Sullivan Upper School, Belfast Road, Holywood, BT18 9EP.

The closing date for the receipt of applications is **Tuesday 25 November 2025 at 12.00 noon** and applications received after 12.00 noon on that date will **not** be accepted.

- (a) A shortlist of applicants to be interviewed will be drawn up. Shortlisted applicants will be given the opportunity to visit the school.
- (b) Interviews will take place with **Monday 8 December 2025** currently the proposed date. The proposed date for a second round interview, if required, is **Friday 12 December 2025**. **All correspondence in relation to interviews, etc will be via email, if an email address has been provided.**
- (c) Applicants who have not been shortlisted will be notified once the interviews have taken place.
- (d) The person to whom the post is to be offered will be informed and when the offer of the post has been formally accepted, all other shortlisted applicants will be informed of the outcome.
- (e) A reserve list for future, similar vacancies will be maintained which will normally be kept open for no longer than twelve months unless there are cogent reasons for extending the period. The Board of Governors reserves the right to appoint an alternate applicant from the reserve list, without re-advertisement, for such future vacancies or if any change in circumstances should mean the successful applicant is unable to take up the post.
- (f) Applicants are referred to the Privacy Policy for Applicants which is available on the school's website at www.sullivanupper.co.uk.
- (g) It is the policy of the Board of Governors that all those eligible for employment will have equal opportunity for employment and promotion in the school, irrespective of gender, including gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, having or not having dependants, religious belief or political opinion, race, disability, sexual orientation or age. Selection for employment and promotion will be on the basis of ability, qualifications and aptitude to carry out the duties of the post.
- (h) Interviewees will be required to bring photographic proof of identity ie a passport, driving licence or electoral identity card and an original birth certificate and/or marriage certificate (as appropriate). These should be presented to the designated member of staff immediately prior to interview. **Interviewees should therefore ensure that they arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled interview time.** Applicants are assured that the recruitment panel is not involved in these identity checks.

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- (i) Canvassing of any kind will disqualify.

6 CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

- [a] Sullivan Upper School is fully committed to the implementation of Child Protection procedures as outlined in Department of Education Circulars. Therefore, all applicants should be aware of the following:

Posts involving work in educational institutions are subject to the provisions of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012).

As part of the recruitment process, a criminal record check is required to be completed by the successful applicant. In Northern Ireland this check is undertaken by AccessNI, upon receipt of a valid application. A disclosure certificate will be issued at the end of the process, including criminal record and other relevant information. Applicants will be asked if there is any reason why they cannot work in Regulated Activity prior to them commencing an application for an Enhanced check with a Barred List check.

This check currently costs **£33** and the successful applicant will be required to pay the school for this service. The appointment will be confirmed upon receipt of a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure Certificate from AccessNI. You can find out more about AccessNI on the nidirect website, or at the following link:- [AccessNI webpage](#)

AccessNI has published a Privacy Notice on the Department of Justice website. This can be found at <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/ani-privacy>. All signatories are urged to read this and understand the contents, and to note the mailbox for data protection queries.

The school's **Policy on The Recruitment Of Ex-Offenders** and the **AccessNI Disclosure: Applicant Information Leaflet** are available on the school website:
<https://www.sullivanupper.co.uk/job-vacancies>

- [b] As an employer, Sullivan Upper School has a legal responsibility to prevent illegal migrants working in the UK. The applicant's right to work in the UK will be checked before confirmation of appointment.
- [c] Proof of qualifications will be requested before confirmation of appointment.
- [d] Two written, satisfactory references will be sought before confirmation of appointment, one of which must be from the most recent employer.
- [e] Receipt of satisfactory health clearance – upon receipt of the completed Health Declaration Form, the school's Occupational Health Advisor will assess the form, which may require the successful applicant to attend a medical examination.

**THE SCHOOL IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER AND
WELCOMES APPLICATIONS FROM ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY**

C J D Mairs
Principal

November 2025