



CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

WALTHAMSTOW HALL
SEVENOAKS



“Thriving girls’ day school in Sevenoaks. Produces quietly confident young women with a ‘can do’ attitude and an adventurous spirit. The strong academic results are a ‘happy by-product’ of all this.”

The Good Schools Guide

Introduction

Walthamstow Hall is a thriving girls’ day school based in Sevenoaks, Kent.

From September 2025, it will accept girls aged 7 to 11 into Blackburn House and girls ages 11-18 into the Senior School.

One of the oldest girls’ schools in the country, and certainly the oldest in Kent, the School has a long track record of excellence. The School enjoys marked academic and sporting success, consistently placing it high within the UK’s top 100 schools. Walthamstow Hall carves out a unique space for every individual to aspire, flourish and set the world alight.

Walthamstow Hall offers a Dynamic Education. This is a fun, grounded school of boundless opportunity and passionate teachers.

Walthamstow Hall has a focus on students leading Purposeful Lives, committed to making a positive difference in the world.

Pupils are Empowered to Flourish in an inspiring environment that cares for the whole person.





History, Ethos & Values

Since our foundation in Walthamstow in 1838 as a school and home for daughters of missionaries, Walthamstow Hall has been sending accomplished, confident young women into the world to lead purposeful lives, making a real difference in their chosen fields. Our earliest pupils went to work in far-flung locations, often as medics and teachers. Today, with an ever-greater wealth of opportunity open to them, this confident spirit of adventure (represented by the School's emblem, the Ship) is more relevant than ever. The development of character, endeavour, resilience and flair within a Christian setting remain central to the School's aims, and at each stage, pupils are actively prepared for what lies beyond and provided with new challenges. Through both the curricular and co-curricular programmes, they are enabled to explore and test their talents and embrace opportunities to lead and serve

within a supportive community and beyond. Pupils and parents alike are appreciative of the rich education and opportunities the School has to offer.

In 1882, Walthamstow Hall moved out of London to its present site in Sevenoaks; since then, it has become a cherished and established part of the wider community. Development in the recent past included a period in which the School was the girls' grammar school in Sevenoaks under the Direct Grant System in the 1970s before becoming fully independent in 1976. The School built one of the first school theatres in 1989, and in 1992, the expanding Junior School moved to a separate, nearby site in Sevenoaks. Boarding ceased in 2001, with some limited staff accommodation retained, which has proved to be a well-utilised resource.

“Pupils' achievements are excellent, and their very high rates of progress throughout the Junior and Senior Schools ensure that they are highly successful in moving to the next stage of their education or the world beyond school.”

“Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and take full responsibility for their own conduct, with the result that exemplary behaviour is the norm within and beyond the classroom.”

“Pupils of all ages engage fully, and achieve outstanding success, in a very wide range of extension activities to support the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities.”

“Pupils' social development is excellent. They are confident in their dealings with adults and value one another's thoughts and opinions when supporting and collaborating with each other and their teachers.”

“The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent.”

“Pupils have excellent attitudes towards their learning.”

“Pupils are exceptionally positive in their commitment to improving the lives of others.”

Independent Schools Inspectorate, 2019

“No matter who you are, the Sixth Form at Wally encourages you to be the best you can, and not just in your studies. There are so many co-curricular opportunities that help to build confidence, self esteem and a sense of achievement.”

“When I talk to my friends from other schools it strikes me that that they aren't known properly by their teachers, but I am known as an individual here.”

“I found it very easy to settle in at Wally Hall because both my sisters went here and I knew everyone was very friendly and welcoming. At Wally, there is something for everyone to be a part of.”

Grace, Year 12

Isabella, Year 10

Valya, Year 8

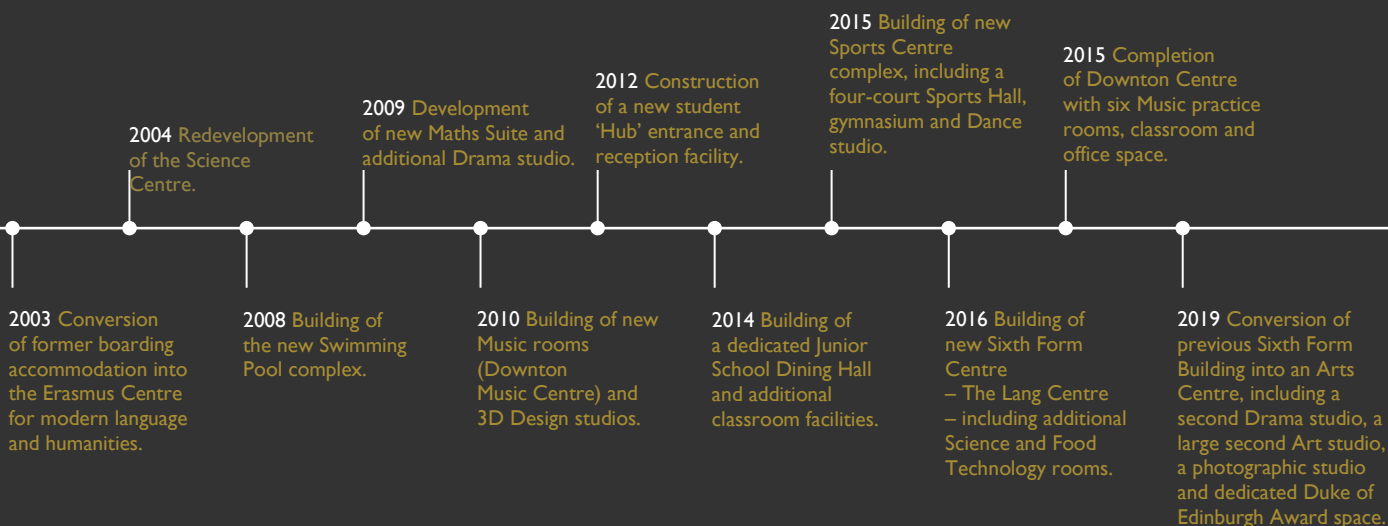


Location, Buildings, Development & Finance

The School enjoys views of Knole Park and the Downs whilst being close to the centre of Sevenoaks and to the station with its fast (22 minutes) and frequent links to London. Since moving to Sevenoaks in 1882, every Walthamstow Hall building, from its original Arts and Crafts heart to the new Sports Hall, Swimming Pool Complex and Sixth Form Centre, has been designed and purpose-built to meet the School's present and future needs as it has expanded and evolved.



The past 20 years have been a period of estate development.





Curriculum

The Junior, Senior and Sixth Form curriculums all reflect our belief in the importance of the individual: they are designed to offer unusual breadth, choice and flexibility, tailored to the needs of each pupil.

Across the School, lessons are taught by highly qualified, enthusiastic specialists with a love for their subjects and a real commitment to their pupils and the craft of teaching and learning.

From the beginning, teaching takes place in optimum sized groups in attractive, modern classrooms grouped in

dedicated department areas. Lessons are well equipped with IT, including interactive white boards, tablets, laptops, Firefly VLE and MS Teams, and teachers are supported by dedicated IT, Science and Art technicians.

The core academic curriculum is supported by extensive PSHEE, Careers and Personal Development Programmes throughout the School. The Sixth Form curriculum is supplemented by a dedicated Horizons programme, including external lectures, 'Future Ready' life skills and complementary mathematics for non-specialists.

RESULTS

Walthamstow Hall's record of academic excellence is long established and can be seen at every point of external assessment.

Junior School pupils consistently gain places and scholarships at highly regarded and competitive senior schools, including local grammar schools following Kent test success, Sevenoaks School, St Paul's Girls School and our own Senior School.

In the Senior School, pupils typically take an average of 9 1/2 subjects at GCSE (the half is RS) and 3 at A Level. The EPQ is a popular addition taken by Sixth Form students, and achievement is very high.

In 2023, 78% of A Levels were awarded at A*-B, with 55% at A*-A and 25% at A*. 31% of GCSEs in 2023 were awarded at 9, with 55% at 8-9; and 72.5% of all GCSEs taken achieved a 7, 8 or 9.

Value-added analysis is equally favourable: for Year 7 to I/GCSE in 2023, Walthamstow Hall is ranked in the top 10% out of 283 Independent Schools. At A Level, Walthamstow Hall's value-added results have put us in the top 25% of independent schools since 2018. Results for 2023 put us in the top 6% of independent schools.

LEAVER DESTINATIONS

The breadth and flexibility of the Walthamstow Hall curriculum, coupled with expert teaching, enables students to pursue the further education and career path that is absolutely right for them.

The majority of leavers go on to higher education, and typically over 80% go to Russell Group universities.

The most popular universities are Nottingham, Loughborough, York, Bath, Manchester, Bristol, Exeter and Durham. Over the last two years, we have had students go to Oxford and Cambridge for Music, History and Sanskrit.

The most popular university courses for leavers in the past three years have been:

- 29% Science-related, including Psychology, Maths, Veterinary Science and Medicine.
- 23% Business, Management and Marketing.
- 10% Classical Studies, Archaeology and Ancient History.
- 10% Architecture, Textiles and Art.
- Other popular courses are Geography, Law and English.

Students have also pursued alternatives to university, including Higher Apprenticeships in fields such as Accountancy, Logistics and Management Consulting. In 2023, leavers took up apprenticeships at Barclays, Laing O'Rourke and Unilever.



Co-curricular Enrichment

Co-curricular learning is key, with Music, Drama, Art, Sport and voluntary work all components of everyday life at Walthamstow Hall.

SPORT

The School 'punches above its weight' in the sporting arena with significant numbers of pupils competing and winning medals at the national level across a wide range of sports, including athletics, badminton, cross-country, lacrosse, show jumping, gymnastics, swimming and tennis. Sport is not just about the elite: 'Sport for all' is encouraged and celebrated at every stage with a diverse range of sport on offer from lacrosse and swimming to cheerleading and yoga. Pupils enjoy five lessons of sport in Year 7 and, counter to national trends, participation and enthusiasm continue right through to Year 13.

Indoor cricket nets were opened in 2024, thanks to a generous parental donation.

The opening of Blackburn House offers an expansion of the provision of sport for girls in Years 3 to 6.

“ Team, group or individual achievements in drama, music and sport are recognised at local, county and national level. ”

ISI Inspection

DUKE OF EDINBURGH, ENTERPRISE & VOLUNTEERING

The School has an impressive record in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme: it is an accredited Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme Centre, has had a highly experienced Duke of Edinburgh Manager in post since 2018, and has a dedicated Duke of Edinburgh area for meetings, expedition planning and preparation. Students go through to Gold Award every year. As they progress through the School, pupils are encouraged to participate in community service and a variety of volunteering activities. Walthamstow Hall has a strong link with a neighbouring primary school, St John's, a school which has a wide demographic with relatively high numbers of pupils receiving free school meals.

“ Numerous ensembles and choirs perform in concerts and recitals in school and as far afield as Tuscany. ”

ISI Inspection

MUSIC & DRAMA

Walthamstow Hall is renowned for the exceptional quality of Music and Drama on offer. Junior pupils are introduced to a variety of musical instruments and a third of pupils take weekly lessons in an instrument, and a third also take Trinity Drama lessons. Over 90% of Trinity Drama grades are passed at the highest level, Distinction. There are formal and informal concerts every term, involving the orchestra and a wide range of chamber groups and choirs. Singing in the Year 7 choir is compulsory for all Year 7 pupils.

Plays take place in The Ship Theatre every term. Junior School recent productions have included The Little Mermaid, Lion King, and The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. All backstage support is run by pupils who follow the same backstage protocols employed by The National Theatre.

“ Numerous ensembles and choirs perform in concerts and recitals in school and as far afield as Tuscany. ”

ISI Inspection 2019





Community

A strong sense of community, respect for self and others and the pride that comes from sharing a great tradition make Walthamstow Hall a school where every pupil can flourish, achieve and make lifelong friendships. It is a setting in which achievement can be celebrated and where effort is rewarded and recognised. The strong, positive and supportive relationships between staff, students and parents are a fundamental component of the School's success, and effective teamwork is prized at all levels. There is a palpable sense of community spirit, affection, fun and pride in what the School represents. This is all underpinned by skilled and highly committed governance by Governors who know the School well. The extremely active vertical House system enables pupils and students to mix across year groups and engage in friendly competition, and it complements the pastoral structure and increasing focus on Pupil Voice.

“ Parents ... showed their appreciation for the way that leadership and governance carefully monitor and develop arrangements for pupils. ”

ISI Inspection



Pastoral Care

Walthamstow Hall is a harmonious community in which all individuals are respected and feel able to contribute. Our success is built on the conviction that strong pastoral systems underpin academic progress and that emotional, personal and intellectual development go hand in hand. Great value is placed on every student's happiness and personal development, and they leave as accomplished, assured and happy young adults.

Pastoral Heads and Form Tutors provide guidance and monitor personal and academic well-being, working alongside their tutees, who are actively involved in reviewing their own progress and setting targets. There is plenty of praise and advice when needed.

Discipline in a school where pupils are known, valued and well-motivated is rarely a problem. There is a School Code, formulated in consultation with pupils, covering topics including standards of behaviour and relationships. The School has firm policies on behaviour, and minor transgressions are swiftly dealt with. Consideration for others, self-discipline and good behaviour are the norm, and rewards and sanctions are applied consistently and fairly. Pupils respect this, themselves and each other.

Pupils have a strong voice in school matters formally through the Student Council, Food Council and Eco Council and more informally in the friendly and respectful contact between staff and pupils.

Close and regular communication between the School and parents is encouraged, and the School takes pride in the productive partnership which exists between parents, staff and pupils.



Admissions

West Kent is privileged to benefit from a concentration of high-achieving junior and senior schools in both the maintained and independent sectors. This is particularly pronounced in the catchment areas of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells.

It is not uncommon for prospective families to consider a range of schools at key points of entry.

In the junior sector, Walthamstow Hall is often considered alongside high-performing state primary schools (Amherst, Lady Boswell's), larger co-ed prep schools (Sevenoaks Prep and St Michael's) and our immediate neighbour, The Granville, an all girls' prep.

At the senior level, the competitive pool covers a larger geographic area and includes Sevenoaks, Kent College Pembury and Caterham Schools in the independent sector and local grammars such as Tonbridge Grammar School. The Weald of Kent grammar school has an "annexe" at Sevenoaks alongside the co-ed Christian inter-faith school, Trinity School, and an annexe of Tunbridge Wells Boys Grammar, which accepts girls into Sixth Form.

From September 2025, Walthamstow Hall's main points of entry will be Years 3 and 7, although pupils are welcomed into all year groups where there is space including a significant number into Years 9 and 12. With its close links to London, Sevenoaks is ideally placed for the City, and many Walthamstow Hall parents are employed there.

Blackburn House will receive applications from families with girls aged 7 to 11.

Entry to Blackburn House will involve prospective pupils attending a taster session with their year group; these sessions include age-appropriate assessments which take the shape of more formal tests higher up the School.

The main entry points to the School are at Year 3 (20 places) and Year 7 (60 places). The School offers 'deferred entry' places from Year 7 to Year 9, a programme which is offered to local prep schools which go to 13+.

The Senior School is academically selective, and entry is based on success in three areas – performance in the ISEB Common Pre-Test, a report from the head of the pupil's current school and an interview with a senior member of Walthamstow Hall teaching staff. Over the past few years, the average number of applicants for the 60 Year 7 places has been around 120. Provision is made for any applicants who have learning support needs. Sixth Form applicants require a minimum of 7 GCSEs at grades 9-6 with a grade 8/9 preferred for subjects being taken at A Level.

Pupils from Blackburn House will go through the same entrance process for Year 7 as all other applicants, although Year 5 pupils making good progress may receive an early offer conditional on Year 6 assessments confirming their level of attainment.

Academic, Music, Drama, Art and Sports scholarships and exhibitions are offered at the Senior School and in Sixth Form, as are means-tested bursaries. Founder's bursaries, worth nearly the entire value of fees, are also offered at the Senior stage to those families meeting the criteria for support.





Senior Leadership Team



From September 2025, The Senior Leadership Team will comprise the Headmistress, Bursar, Deputy Head, Head of Blackburn House, Heads of Key Stages 3 and 4, Head of Sixth Form, the Director of Studies, the Director of Data and Operations, the Director of IT and Digital Innovation.

The Headmistress and Bursar attend all Governor committee meetings, with other members of the Senior Leadership Team attending those relevant for their role.

Good communication is prized, and the team operates particularly effectively together, as well as in individually delegated roles.

There are four pastoral sections at the School: Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6), Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9), Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) and Sixth Form/Key Stage 5 (Years 12 and 13).

Every member of staff has pastoral as well as academic responsibilities. There are also six Staff Heads of House who support the student House Captains in making the House system such a success within the School. The School is looking to incorporate Blackburn House pupils into the Senior School House system.

At Blackburn House, pastoral and academic roles will be similarly combined, with staff always taking an active interest in pupils' wider interests and personal development alongside their academic progress.

We are committed to:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
- Equal opportunities in respect of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief and age.
- Recruiting the staff who have the vision and competencies to lead the School into its next exciting phase



The Appointment

Walthamstow Hall is looking for a Chair of Governors to lead the Board in its responsibilities to ensure the highest possible standards of governance. The Chair also works closely with the Headmistress and Senior Leadership Team to achieve the long-term success of the School.

The School is structured as a company limited by guarantee and a charity registered with the Charity Commission. Governors therefore have duties as both company directors and as charity trustees. Governors' specific duties are described below and are more generally described in publications provided to all new Governors by the Clerk to the Governing Body on appointment. Governors and prospective Governors may seek further information from the Clerk or from the Chairman of the Governing Body.

It is important that Governors understand and respect the boundary that must exist between their primarily strategic role and that of the executive officers who have day-to-day responsibility for the operation and management of the School.

Governors are selected from a wide range of backgrounds with the aim of achieving a balanced board with a core of individuals with educational, legal, accountancy, finance, property management, business, marketing, pastoral and spiritual backgrounds. All are expected to share a genuine commitment to the future of Walthamstow Hall. In accordance with the Articles of Association, the maximum number of Governors is nineteen and the minimum is twelve. Pursuant to the Articles, Governors are described as "Trust Governors" (appointed by the Governing Body or by resolution at a general meeting) or as "Nominative Governors" (who may be appointed by external bodies listed in the Articles, with such appointments ratified at a general meeting). A maximum of 6 Nominative Governors may be appointed.

Role Summary

The Chair of Governors' role in school leadership is strategic and includes:

- Leading the Board in a proper manner, delegating roles and tasks efficiently, representing the School as required.
- Ensuring the Board's business is focussed on the key strategic priorities, that meetings run effectively and make best use of time available.
- Holding responsibility for Governor appointments and making sure they have the required skillset.
- Supporting the Headmistress and SLT on behalf of the Board with regular meetings.
- Ensuring the Board is involved at a strategic level in the School's self-evaluation process and that this feeds into the School's key priorities.
- Working collaboratively to ensure the Board focuses on its governance role and does not overreach into management.
- Ensure that complaints, grievances and disciplinary issues are dealt with in a timely and effective manner.





Main Responsibilities of Governors

Collectively with other members of the Governing Body, a Governor has the following responsibilities:

- Determine the overall direction and development of Walthamstow Hall through good governance and clear strategic planning.
- Ensure that the School and its representatives' function within the legal and regulatory framework of the sector and in line with the School's governing document (Walthamstow Hall Articles of Association), continually striving for best practice in governance.
- Uphold the fiduciary duty invested in the position, undertaking such duties in a way that adds to public confidence and trust in the School.

Main Duties of Governors

- Ensure Walthamstow Hall complies with legislative and regulatory requirements, and acts within the confines of the Walthamstow Hall Articles of Association.
- Act in the best interest of the School, beneficiaries and future beneficiaries at all times, pursuing only the delivery of the charitable objects.
- Promote and develop the School in order for it to grow and maintain its relevance in society.
- Maintain sound financial management of the School's resources, ensuring expenditure is in line with its objectives, and investment activities meet accepted standards and policies.
- Interview, appoint and oversee the work and activities of the senior staff, providing support and challenge as appropriate.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the School and its resources, striving for best practice in good governance.
- If required, act as a counter signatory where a cheque, application for funds, contract, agreement or other specified document is outside the powers delegated to senior staff.
- Maintain absolute confidentiality about all sensitive/confidential information received in the course of Governors' responsibilities to the School and ensuring compliance with the conflict of interest policy.
- Know and support the aims of the School and its mission statement and oversee their achievement.
- Know the overall tasks of the Governing Body and ensure that these are fully carried out.
- Contribute expertise to the discussions of the Governing Body and at least one committee.
- Respect the confidentiality of the Governing Body and all information about the School's staff, parents and pupils.



Commitment Expected

The degree of commitment required of a Governor to achieve the job description is to:

- Attend as many meetings and events as possible.
- Conduct one half-day visit approximately every 2 years.
- Attend training courses, especially training associated with a Governor's own Committee specialisation.

The additional time commitment required of the Chair typically amounts to 1 – 2 days per month.

Accountability

As the Governing Body is responsible and liable for the governance and functioning of the School, it is accountable in varying degrees to a variety of stakeholders, including: parents, pupils, the Charity Commission, Companies House, the Independent Schools Inspectorate and the Department for Education.

The role is voluntary, but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.





Person Specification

The Person

The successful candidate will be a dynamic and communicative leader, capable of winning trust, and will bring:

- A commitment to girls education, and in particular an ability to articulate the merit of independent schools generally; experience as a school Governor is highly desirable.
- A passion for and understanding of the Walthamstow Hall educational and pastoral philosophy and ethos.
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to foster a collaborative approach across a Governing Body of active and engaged Governors.
- Strong leadership and chairing experience, with some experience of chairing committees or a full board.
- An awareness of the political and economic pressures facing the education sector.
- A calm, balanced, fair-minded persona with excellent judgment and unquestionable integrity.

Candidates will be able to demonstrate:

- The ability to prioritise and sequence change over time while formulating and monitoring medium term strategic plans.
- Commercial acumen and experience.
- Experience of a range of management disciplines, which could include one or more of the following: strategic planning, legal and HR issues, marketing, coaching or mentoring, or financial planning.
- Attention to detail with excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to build relationships.
- The ability to evaluate risks with a balanced and informed approach.
- Knowledge of safeguarding and/or statutory compliance requirements.



Application Process

Closing date: Monday 6th January 2025.

You should submit:

- A completed application form
- A covering letter addressed to Mrs Jayne Adams, Chair of the Governing Body chairofgovernors@whall.school. The letter should explain your reasons for applying and outline your suitability for the role

Longlisted candidates will be invited to the School for first round interview during the week commencing Monday 13th January. Second round interviews will take place during the week commencing Monday 20th January.

Walthamstow Hall is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and Governors to share this commitment. The post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, sight of original qualification certificates, satisfactory references and a medical. The post is also subject to a negative response to an enquiry as to a prohibition order that has been made by the Secretary of State.

