VERULAM
SCHOOL

Meet the team.

verulamschool.co.uk

NAME:
Phyllis Avery

JOB TITLE:
Assistant Headteacher

Having previously worked in publishing, I began my teaching career later in life. I joined Verulam in 2012 as an NQT, however this was not my first introduction to the school. My son attended Verulam and during his time here I was Chair of the PTA. As a parent I was impressed with the caring and dedicated staff who supported my son and I was pleased that he was very happy at Verulam and now looks back on his time at this school with fondness.

Having joined the staff I found that staff were not only caring towards students, but also to new staff joining the school. I was made to feel very welcome and the support, encouragement and opportunities offered by Verulam have led to my progression from NQT to Key stage 3 Coordinator of English in my RQT year, followed by the roles of Second in English, Head of English and then on to my current role of Assistant Headteacher. Part of the reason I have stayed at the school for as long as I have is the opportunities offered. In addition to career progression, I have also been offered a range of CPD opportunities to develop in areas beyond my specific role, for example I have been involved in a number of residential trips from the Lake District trip with Year 7 to the Norway Geography trip with Year 13.

The key reason I enjoy working at Verulam is the people I get to work with every day, from the supportive, friendly and engaging staff to the students who are happy to be themselves and never fail to remind me that the future is safe in the hands of the next generation. Our students are confident and polite; they will chat to staff at lunchtime or break and are comfortable to be themselves and share their interests and ideas with friends and staff alike.

Phyllis Avery

NAME:
Ruhal Zaman

JOB TITLE:
Assistant Headteacher

Excellence. That was my initial impression of Verulam when I first joined in 2022. I was very impressed with the attitude of students at Verulam who were highly driven and motivated to strive to be the best. What was even more impressive was the equally inspiring drive from staff to offer the best education possible to Verulam students. I really felt at home with the humbling ethos of always looking to be even better. All in all, Verulam captures Dylan William's view of great teaching: Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better.

Throughout my time here, I've had a rich and varied experience. From a focus on excellent Teaching and Learning with continuous professional development, to creating a healthy merge between teaching and learning in person and virtually, with all the latest technology.

What's been the most refreshing is learning from the vast experience of all teachers who I've had the pleasure of collaborating with, to strengthen curriculum and assessment across the school. Not only have Verulam recruited such talented leaders, but there is an ongoing hunger to always innovate whilst always being grounded with scientifically proven pedagogy for offering the best to our students.

There is a growing sense of celebration of what teachers and students achieve, including the esteemed Blue Stag. Ask anyone about it and watch their eyes widen and sparkle! We really do value what we come to work for and always look for opportunities to recognise the everyday excellence of educators. Make sure you also sign up to the staff football, running club and the all too realistic whole school Cluedo! Feel free to visit and please come and say hello.

Ruhal Zaman

NAME:
Jack Pettitt

JOB TITLE:
Lead Practitioner T&L and Literacy

When I joined Verulam in 2017 as a Teacher of History, my first impression was not only the strong sense of community between staff and pupils, but also the shared articulateness and confidence in learning the boys had. I was Assistant Head of Year 8 in my second year at Verulam, before becoming the Curriculum Enrichment Day Co-ordinator in my third year. In my fifth year I became Literacy Lead before joining the Senior Leadership Team as Lead Practitioner T&L and Literacy from September 2022.

Career development and support at Verulam is second to none. Throughout my time here, I have always been supported, both personally and professionally. The boys (and girls in Sixth Form) are mature, caring, kind, thoughtful and always willing to learn. Teaching at Verulam is the best job in the world.

Jack Pettitt

NAME:

Bismark Sem-Brako

JOB TITLE:

2i/c Technology

I joined Verulam School as NQT 2021 and I was amazed by how fantastic and hard working the students, staff and support team are.

The staff at Verulam have a great sense of community which one has to experience in order to understand, and this comes across in their passion to nurture new teachers as well as students.

The level of support, mentoring and development opportunities at Verulam is outstanding. Having trained during Covid years I needed an environment that could provide great mentoring and excellent CPD sessions and my journey at Verulam thus far is a testament to this having been promoted as 2i/c for the Technology Department as an NQT.

The staff at Verulam are friendly and always willing to share good practice and work together to inspire and educate our excellent students.

One thing I like is that the school takes inclusion seriously. So regardless of religion, gender, nationality or culture, Verulam is a place everyone feels welcomed with the emphasis on training students to be better versions of themselves which will help them to succeed in a global community.

Working at Verulam in the Technology Department means working with amazing supportive colleagues and wonderful students with exceptionally curious minds, never a dull moment.

Bismark Sem Brako

NAME:

David Bint

JOB TITLE:

Professional Induction Tutor and Teacher of Mathematics

Following a successful 12-year career with global Audit firm KPMG, I decided to change career in 2011 and become a mathematics teacher. I wrote to all the secondary schools in St Albans, and visited all those who responded. Verulam was the school that made me feel the most welcome. I trained at Verulam under the Graduate Training Programme and I've been here ever since.

Given my management background, I became Key Stage 3 coordinator in 2014, and started mentoring mathematics NQTs in 2015. I really enjoyed seeing other teachers teach and helping to develop them. I stepped back from the KS3 coordinator role to mentor an NQT from another department, and this led me to become NQT Professional Tutor in 2019, and overall Professional Induction Tutor in 2021.

Developing new teachers during the pandemic was definitely a challenge but what I love about the role is that it helps you to reflect on your own teaching style as well as developing others.

My passion is teaching mathematics. I love the subject and how everybody needs at least something from it. I love seeing those moments where the pupils go from "I don't get it" to "Ah, that's how it works". Maths to me is less about numbers and more about the logic of algebra. At Verulam I have had the chance to work with some great A Level students, and I enjoyed leading on A Level Statistics. Having slightly smaller classes than some schools at A Level really gives the chance to get to know the pupils' way of working and to focus on the individuals needing extra support.

Over the years, I have come to learn that in most jobs, what is important is the people you work with above what you do. The staff here are brilliant colleagues and, in most cases, have been the most supportive team I have ever worked with.

David Bint

NAME:

Fatima Daya

JOB TITLE:

Head of Year 10

I joined Verulam in 2022 as the Head of Year 10 and teacher of Geography and Religious Education. Though I am still very new to the school, I feel like I have been here for quite some time. I have noticed that the staff have been very supportive. From my pastoral SLT link and both my heads of subject to the Site Team manager and everyone in between. The staff have played an integral role in ensuring that I am able to meet the challenges of being a teacher and a Head of Year. Whilst at Verulam I have taken part in many unique activities which make the school so special, one such example is the Abbey service, the chance to come together as part of a community within the community is a privilege that not many schools offer.

Verulam gives students the opportunity to take part in so many enriching experiences. From the visits to various museums to the annual Ski trip. Regular Curriculum Enrichment Days which are meticulously planned and executed have allowed me to see the students both in lessons and outside the classroom environment. All staff ensure that Verulam students are known as individuals rather than simply data.

Having never worked at a boys' school, I was apprehensive about the challenges that I might face. However, I had nothing to fear. The systems in place allow students to focus on their learning, keeping behaviour standards high. Students are offered and are keen to take part in a variety of different clubs which aid their school experience and enable them to find others who share the same passions and interests. The focus embedded within the ethos of the school, its staff and students is a vision of developing Character, building towards Excellence, whilst showing Respect.

Fatima Daya

NAME:
Lee Knowles

JOB TITLE:
Head of Year 7

I first visited Verulam on a tour of the school prior to my interview for Second in Charge of Science. Immediately, I was struck by the family feeling and I knew that this was the place I wanted to work. Seven years later I am still here but in a very different role as Head of Year 7.

When I started at Verulam I was apprehensive about working in an all-boys school however within a very short time these feelings were proven to be completely unfounded. The boys are brilliant, a little quirky at times, always full of personality and certainly competitive. I initially came to the school as Second in Charge of Science and I was given the opportunity to join the Pastoral team in September 2022 becoming the Head of Year 7 (which I am loving!) The variety in my job has enabled me to extend my experience and given me an ambition to use my curriculum and pastoral knowledge to go further in the future. The school recognised my strengths as a nurturer and this is what I like about Verulam.

The big thing about Verulam is that when you work here you quickly become immersed in the family feeling. Staff are really sociable both inside and out of school. There is always someone to lean on and ask advice and I have made some long-lasting friends from past and present staff. This feeling of belonging extends to the students too. If you have a passion for something then this can be shared easily at Verulam. I have become LGBT+ Lead in the last few years and this has enabled me to support students and educate students on the issues surrounding LGBT+ people. We pride ourselves in being an inclusive school and Verulam has allowed me to provide opportunities for young people that I didn't have when I was young.

I would say that I love working at Verulam. There are times when it gets difficult as in any job but there is always a great support network to help if you need it.

Lee Knowles

NAME:

Louise Nicholls

JOB TITLE:

Director of Social Sciences, Philosophy and Ethics

As an experienced teacher, joining Verulam School in September 2022 in a new post was nerve-wracking. My nerves quickly dissipated as I was warmly welcomed by the staff at Verulam School and instantly felt accepted as part of the whole school community. I feel as if I worked here for an age. There is a good energy in the school amongst staff and students; positive student-teacher relationships are actively encouraged to ensure the best possible outcomes for all students. Verulam students are known and loved.

I am the Director of Social Sciences, Philosophy and Ethics and a specialist RE teacher with two decades teaching experience. In my role, I oversee Psychology, Sociology, Citizenship and PSHE. I am passionate about curriculum and it is important to me to instil a love of learning in students of this faculty. My team are enthusiastic and eager teachers who work tirelessly to support and encourage students to be excellent, characterful and respectful, demonstrating the school's core values.

Verulam School offers an exciting blend of modernity and tradition. Annual events, such as the Abbey Service, keep the history of the school alive alongside newer initiatives and infrastructure such as the MUGA. There are numerous opportunities for CPD, teaching and learning briefings and a culture of collaboration amongst staff. 'Staff Stars' is a brilliant initiative to celebrate and acknowledge staff successes and thanks. Staff wellbeing is carefully considered and valued; there are lots of opportunities for staff socials and events both inside and outside of school.

Welcome to life at Verulam School!

Louise Nicholls

NAME:
Raj Nagi

JOB TITLE:
EAL Lead/LSA

I joined Verulam School in 2009 and believe me when I say 'it has been a brilliant roller coaster ride with many twists and turns'.

I have been working as a Learning Support Assistant and recently been given the opportunity to become Lead EAL as well. My new role has enabled me to support pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and help them develop their understanding of the English Language to facilitate their access to the curriculum. I have many fantastic students I work with, they are hardworking individuals, who enjoy being in the safe learning environment that the School and staff provide.

As a Learning Support Assistant (LSA), I have supported many pupils with different challenges. With guidance and support they have succeeded academically. We are fortunate at Verulam School to have some of the most dedicated and hard-working pupils. They amaze me everyday with the work they produce and with the adversities that they overcome.

In the whole time that I have been at Verulam School, I have loved the community spirit. To develop a cohesive well-being amongst staff, our Headteacher is very proactive in building an organised team. This encourages pupils to also appreciate and value the ethos of the school.

I love my work and feel content with the opportunities the Leadership team has given me. Working at Verulam School means working with amazing and inspiring colleagues. All of this is what ultimately makes Verulam School the best place to work.

Raj Nagi

NAME:

Ryan Lewis

JOB TITLE:

Head of Vocational Education

I joined Verulam back in September 2005. I can remember walking into the school for my interview and instantly being impressed by the sense of history and architecture which dates back to 1938, when the school was founded.

I have always appreciated the way Verulam respects its history at the same time as embracing the ever-changing development in modern education....its that combination which makes it such a unique and special place to work (blending the old with the new).

Throughout my time at Verulam, I have undertaken various roles and have been fully supported with my career progression and professional development. I mentioned previously the blending of the old and the new, Verulam not only boasts a wealth of experienced staff but also dynamic and enthusiastic staff who are just entering the profession. It's this collaboration between colleagues which culminates in so many fantastic and productive opportunities for our students.

I have been very fortunate to work with lots of outstanding colleagues and continue to do so. Staff and student well-being and workload is at the forefront of any new initiatives introduced and this contributes to the positive morale and enthusiasm from staff when delivering a curriculum purpose built to give our students the best possible start.

Fundamentally, the best thing about working at Verulam is the students. I know all Schools will claim the same but the 'Verulam student' is unique. Polite, hardworking and aspirational (whilst 'keeping you on your toes').

I strongly encourage you to come and see this for yourself.

Ryan Lewis

NAME:
Polly Hart

JOB TITLE:
SENDCo

I initially joined Verulam in the capacity of a 1-2-1 tutor to support KS3 pupils in 2010. I found staff to be incredibly welcoming and supportive as I got to know pupils and transitioned from teaching EYFS, KS1 and KS2 to teaching secondary age pupils.

When the opportunity came to join the Verulam team a few months later I was delighted to complete my Secondary Transition and have never looked back.

My Verulam journey has taken me from part time tutor to Teacher of Literacy and a member of the English department, through joining the SEND team as SEND Teacher and in 2012 proudly taking the role of full time SENDCo.

My first and lasting impression of Verulam boys is that they are open hearted, eager to learn and thrive upon strong relationships with their teachers.

For me Verulam is very much a family affair, my own sons have thrived under fantastic pastoral care and excellent teaching.

Verulam is a special place to work. The slightly smaller size of our setting enables a community feel and approach that I have come to love.

Polly Hart

NAME:
Wing Ho

JOB TITLE:
Finance Manager

I joined Verulam School as Finance Manager in Feb 2022. I have been working in Finance in the commercial sector for more than 20 years. My first day at school was a completely new experience for me. In spite of that, I found Verulam to be a dynamic and exciting place to work.

I have loved the community spirit. The staff and leadership are very supportive and approachable and really encourage the best out of you. Every single staff member is valued and recognised for doing a good job.

I am looking forward to continuing working at Verulam School.

Wing Ho

NAME:
Alex Jamali

JOB TITLE:
Director of Science

Having joined Verulam at the start of the year, I found the students and teachers warm and welcoming. This combination makes Verulam special to me because I felt comfortable and a valued member of the team.

As the Director of Science, I have relished the opportunity to develop teaching and learning in my team to maximise impact on the education of our student's. During my time here, I have been encouraged to be autonomous and ambitious with my team. We have rewritten our curriculum to suit our students and further develop a strong character. Combining this with our articulate students, who have shown to me a passion for learning Science, I know we will go on to succeed.

Working at Verulam will develop me as a teacher and leader in Education; having ambitious students who want to succeed and learn. These are the best reasons to work at Verulam.

Alex Jamali