

## People Strategy 2023-2026

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### People Strategy Statement

The People Strategy, the first of its kind for Thomas's London Day Schools, has been designed to promote a culture that reflects Thomas's values, to develop a stimulating and motivational working environment for staff and to support the achievement of the Group's aims and vision.

The People Strategy is central to our strategic and operational planning and is fundamental in developing an employment framework and organisational environment in which the Group's strategic aims and objectives are achieved.

The Strategy recognises that the independent schools' sector is entering a challenging period that will be characterised by a significant level of change. It aims to ensure that the Group is an employer of choice with a culture, policies and procedures that set high expectations, whilst providing a rewarding and supportive environment for its people.

### Key People Strategic Aims

This strategy focuses on the main areas of People Practice and, to create a relevant framework, this has been translated into key pillars covering the employee lifecycle. The pillars are as below and have been converted into specific objectives to focus activity during the period 2023 - 2026.

- Recruitment
- Retention & Reward
- Employee Engagement
- Professional Development (including talent management)
- Employee Wellbeing
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

## 1. Recruitment

### Recruitment

Develop a robust recruitment process that aligns with our goals and values, attracts diverse candidates and follows Equity and Diversity guidelines.

### Strategic workforce planning

Align and adapt to the evolving needs of the Group and identify skill gaps and areas of succession risk.

### Future staffing requirements

Identify future staffing requirements taking into account the planned growth of Thomas's College.

## 2. Retention & Reward

### Retention

Develop a retention strategy that recognises and retains top talent by fostering a positive work environment, providing growth opportunities and work-life balance.

### Reward

Reward people fairly within transparent and appropriate remuneration frameworks; remaining competitive and allowing for changing external pressures.

## 3. Employee Engagement

### Workplace culture

Foster an inclusive culture that aligns with our values and promotes teamwork and employee wellbeing to enhance employee engagement.

### Open communication

Encourage open communication and feedback between managers and review how we can promote good relations between staff and senior leadership and the Board.

## 4. Professional Development

### Training & CPD

Provide ongoing opportunities for employees to learn new skills and knowledge, enhance their career development and support our aims and strategy.

### Feedback & Coaching

Provide our employees with regular constructive feedback and coaching where needed.

### Performance & Appraisal

Set clear expectations and objectives, monitor performance and provide regular feedback.

## 5. Employee Wellbeing

### Wellbeing

Focus on valuing, promoting and supporting employee wellbeing.

### Positive work environment

Nurture employee wellbeing, productivity and engagement with a positive work environment that prioritises supportive leadership, work-life balance and safety.

## 6. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

### Recruit Diverse Talent

Create inclusive recruitment strategies by targeting underrepresented groups, exploring new recruitment channels, and providing clear advancement opportunities.

### Inclusive Policies

Implement policies that are inclusive to create a welcoming and safe work environment where everyone can feel that they belong. Encourage active listening and open communication.

### Training Programmes

Provide ongoing training for employees and managers on EDI topics such as unconscious bias and effective communication.

## Specific Objectives 2023-2026

Specific objectives have been developed to focus activity to meet our strategic goals within the 6 key pillars.

### Objective 1

Attract and recruit the best people through a modern, open approach to recruitment. This will include improved recruitment materials, wider use of social media and other platforms. Selection processes will be flexible to suit departmental needs, but built on a clear Safer Recruitment Policy that incorporates good practice supported by training for those involved in selection decisions.

### Objective 2

Explore the sustainability of current pay structures, terms and conditions. Develop alternatives or additional elements to maintain a competitive edge both in recruiting and retaining staff. Review pension and wider benefit provisions, particularly in the face of pension scheme changes and changing tax regimes, to provide benefits that are truly valued by people. Maintain up to date benchmarking data drawn from within the sector and from other sectors both nationally and internationally to inform remuneration decisions.

### Objective 3

Structured induction of staff at all levels to ensure they receive the information, guidance and support they need to perform their role and operate within Thomas's values and to understand lines of communication within and across Schools. Effective management of probation periods to ensure that expectations are clear and development needs are identified and met.

### Objective 4

Provision of development opportunities for people at all levels both for role-related skills and for personal development. These include leadership and management programmes and career pathways for teachers and professional careers. Career pathways will be supported by effective role design, promotion processes and mentoring. Joining up career pathway planning with recruitment, succession planning and redeployment will bring improved workforce planning and a sustainable resourcing model.

### Objective 5

Provide a healthy, happy and purposeful environment for all staff that promotes their wellbeing and enables them to achieve their personal goals. The physical environment, local management of people in the Schools and departments (particularly in managing change), and provision of innovative wellbeing initiatives all contribute to a positive, productive and rewarding environment which is at the heart of the Strategy.

### Objective 6

To continue to address areas of inequality. Embed behaviours and processes that promote a culture of inclusivity and equality of opportunity, taking account of all protected characteristics.

## **Delivering the People Strategy**

The HR department, Heads and the senior leadership teams across all our schools play a key role in the delivery of the People Strategy.

A detailed implementation plan covering the period September 2023 to August 2026 has been developed to identify how we will work towards these specific objectives, including activity and success measures. These have been approved by our Board and will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to reflect the impact of initiatives and the changing requirements for the Group.

In some areas work to achieve these objectives will involve reviewing existing policies, many of which are outdated and cumbersome. In other areas it will involve developing new policy and practice. Increased use of benchmarking activity within the sector and beyond will be important and much of this work will be data driven.

The implementation of a new HR management information system (roll out commencing in Autumn 2023) will be key to improving service delivery, the efficiency of administrative processes and reporting capability.

## **Supporting Strategies and Policies**

Under the umbrella of the People Strategy, a Professional Development strategy will be developed to articulate the aims for staff development. The aims of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be adopted to ensure inclusivity and delivery of fair and accessible workplaces and practices and objectives will be in accordance with our Environmental, Social & Governance policy. A reward strategy will be developed to address the approach to remuneration and benefits.

The People Strategy is also supported by the Estates Strategy, which is predicated on the need to attract pupils and the very best staff, and to provide them with a safe environment with appropriate facilities in which to work and study.

**Sophie Rees**  
**Chief People Officer**  
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