

Brief for the position of
Bursar
Wycombe Abbey

November 2019



WYCOMBE
ABBEY



■ ODGERS BERNDTSON



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Welcome



Thank you for your interest in the post of Bursar at Wycombe Abbey. I hope that this pack gives you a sense of both the School and what we are looking for as we appoint to this important role.

Wycombe Abbey is a world-class school. Founded in 1896 by the pioneering Headmistress, Dame Frances Dove, the School has been at the forefront of women's education for over 120 years. I took up post in September 2019 and remain committed to providing girls with the knowledge, skills and confidence to excel and lead in the ever-expanding global workplace.

Set in magnificent grounds spanning more than 170 acres, our school has a range of superb modern facilities, including a Sports Centre with a 25-metre indoor heated swimming pool, a dance studio, a fitness studio, a Courtyard Café and a Performing Arts Centre with a theatre and recital hall.

Of the 636 pupils, ranging from 11 to 18, 571 are full boarders and 198 are in the Sixth Form. The majority of our girls come from within a one-hour radius of London; other boarders travel from further afield. More than 35 nationalities are represented within the School's full boarding community.

This year's GCSE and A level results were, as usual, outstanding, with 98 % of all GCSE entries being graded A*-A. At A level, 81 % were A*-A.

Very many co-curricular and enrichment opportunities are on offer to girls across the age range. Last year, the sports teams reached a significant number of national finals and the sports department offers more than 30 sports on a regular basis. Our Music department teaches more than 600 individual lessons a week and nearly every pupil plays an instrument, if not two. The Drama provision is equally impressive with numerous productions happening annually and many opportunities for all to take part.

The School is ideally located to be able to enjoy a wide variety of activities with other independent schools including Eton, Harrow, Radley and Winchester. The boys join the girls for dinners, dances and society lectures. We also enjoy close relationships with the two boys' grammar schools in High Wycombe, with our pupils and theirs co-operating in concerts, an annual Management Conference and other social and academic events throughout the year.

No institution can afford to stand still if it wishes to remain at the top of its field and Wycombe Abbey is no exception. We keep all aspects of our work – academic, pastoral and co-curricular – under review and it is our intention to strengthen further our position as one of the world's leading boarding schools. In terms of site development, we have recently opened two new state-of-the-art boarding houses. We are committed to refurbishing much of our teaching and boarding accommodation including the Abbey building.

We are working on a new strategic plan to guide us through the next five years. Our first sister school opened in Changzhou in 2016 and we are working hard to foster excellence there, not only in academic terms, but also in the soft skills of creativity, emotional intelligence and leadership. There are a number of opportunities for staff to be involved in 'DNA transfer' discussions in our International 'Think Tank' group. Wycombe Abbey School Hong Kong, a co-educational primary school, opened in September 2019 and plans are at an advanced stage for the opening of two new co-educational schools in China in the near future.

Wycombe Abbey is an exciting and dynamic place to work and I look forward to receiving your application if you think that your skills and experience fit the job description.

Jo Duncan, MA (St Andrews), PGCE (Cantab)
Headmistress



Background

Wycombe Abbey was inspected by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) in 2014. It was graded excellent in all categories and exceptional for the quality of its pupils' achievements and learning. A Regulatory Compliance inspection was carried out in April 2018 and the School was compliant in all areas.

Academic

Wycombe Abbey has a long tradition of academic success. The learning environment is supportive, yet challenging, and our teaching specialists communicate a genuine love of their subject, encouraging all our pupils to pursue an intellectual curiosity beyond the curriculum. Wycombe Abbey's curriculum is distinctive in a number of respects. It is sufficiently broad and rich to ensure that each pupil has the opportunity to identify her own interests and strengths to keep her options open for as long as possible. Pupils study GCSE/IGCSE and A level courses. Sixth Formers have 25 subject options from which to choose and many girls take the Extended Project Qualification as well. We also have our own Sixth Form Award – the Carrington Project.

Wycombe Abbey has plans to redevelop significant teaching and boarding areas throughout the School including in the Abbey building which is an exciting opportunity for the new Bursar.

Pastoral and Boarding

There is, at the heart of our success, a real commitment to the development of good, caring human beings through our proactive, individualised pastoral care. Total commitment to pastoral care has to be at the heart of any boarding school. All the girls at Wycombe Abbey are part of a happy and close community. No one ever gets lost in a crowd – everyone is known, and valued, as an individual. Consequently, every girl's potential – whatever it might be – is discovered and fulfilled.

Wycombe Abbey is committed to maintaining full boarding for the needs of modern families. Girls who enter the school at 11+ have their own Junior Boarding House. From the age of 12 to 17, pupils live in nine mixed-age Senior Houses, and in the Upper Sixth girls move into Clarence House, a purpose-built study-bedroom complex.

Chapel and Community Service

Wycombe Abbey was founded as a Church of England School. Our Chapel aims to provide a holistic experience and integrate the value of charity and service to others into the heart of the School. The whole community regularly comes together in Chapel for a time of reflection, creating an opportunity for girls to deepen their own faith, whatever background they may come from.

The strong message of giving back to others is embedded within our community, and the appetite for outreach is evidence of a genuine desire to make a positive difference to the wider world. Wycombe Abbey girls give support to both local and global causes, for example, through sponsoring the education of children in Melanesia, visiting local primary schools to assist with science classes, raising money for a local mental health charity, or helping with swimming lessons for the disabled on the School site.





Wycombe Abbey in Greater China

In 2016, Wycombe Abbey formed a partnership with BE Education, a leading education entrepreneur in China, to establish Wycombe Abbey International Schools (WAIS).

Our first sister school in Changzhou opened in September 2016 and a primary school in Hong Kong opened in September 2019. Plans are at an advanced stage for the opening in September 2021 of a purpose-built campus for pupils from kindergarten through to 18 years old in Hangzhou. This will be a co-educational school offering a hybrid of Chinese and UK national curricula aimed at local girls and boys.

The expansion of Wycombe Abbey's global footprint is an exciting strategic development. The Bursar will liaise with and provide financial oversight to the Board of Wycombe Abbey International.

Governance

Wycombe Abbey is the trading name of a limited company, The Girls' Education Company Limited, and it is also a Charity.

The Directors of the Company constitute the Governing Council of Wycombe Abbey and are the Trustees of the Charity. The Council is accountable to the wider school community. It is responsible for the governance of the School and ensuring that it functions outstandingly. It oversees the School's strategic direction and puts into effect the School's vision by maintaining and keeping its infrastructure up to date. It also ensures that the financial strength of the School is maintained.

The Council and the Headmistress work in partnership to achieve the purpose and mission of the School.

Since 2009, the Council has been chaired by Mr Patrick Sherrington LLB LLM FCI Arb. Mr Sherrington has recently retired from his post as Regional Managing Partner Asia-Pacific with Hogan Lovells International LLP.





The Role

This role, which is the most senior non-academic position in the School, is regarded by Council as being an important strategic appointment, and the Bursar will be closely involved in the School's strategic planning.

As a member of the School's executive, the overall responsibility of the Bursar is to lead and manage the major non-academic functions which include finance, estates, HR, catering, and other support functions. The Bursar reports to the Head on operational matters and to Council on matters of Governance, and is responsible for supporting the educational aims of the School through the effective management of the School's resources and facilities.

Wycombe's annual revenue exceeds £25million and generates consistent surpluses. These are retained to

enhance the educational experience offered to girls and to supplement funds raised by the Development Department to pursue an ambitious site development plan.

Key responsibilities and accountabilities

Key responsibilities as Bursar

The Bursar is responsible for finance and administration; commercial aspects of the school; most non-teaching operations and non-teaching staff.

Areas of responsibility include:

- financial management of the School, the Girls' Education Company, the Wycombe Abbey School Foundation, and Wycombe Abbey Services;

- the School buildings and grounds, including all development projects and facilities management;
- Human Resources management and pensions;
- security, catering, domestic and other support functions;
- commercial opportunities;
- health and safety, compliance, risk management and insurance;
- membership of the Executive;
- compliance with a demanding regulatory framework.





The Bursary

The School has 232 non-teaching staff including part-time and casual staff. Reporting to the Bursar are the Director of Finance, the Estates Director, the Human Resources Manager, the ICT Systems Manager, the Catering Manager, the Compliance Manager, and the Commercial Manager. The Bursar also has a Personal Assistant.

Finance

The Director of Finance leads the accounts team and is responsible for the production of management accounts, cash flow forecasts and statutory financial statements, in discussion with the Bursar. She oversees the School shop. The Bursar reviews and authorises all major expenditure in conjunction with the Head.

Grounds & Estates

The magnificent grounds and buildings at Wycombe are maintained to the highest of standards by the Estates Director's team. A substantial rolling maintenance programme ensures that the buildings are kept in good condition and the Grounds and Gardens team ensures that all pitches, parkland and gardens are maintained to an excellent standard. The Estates Director is responsible for the delivery of major capital projects to plan and budget, site security, site development, facilities management and domestic services.

Human Resources

The HR Manager is responsible for day-to-day human resources management and provides advice and guidance to senior leaders and department heads throughout the School on employment law. Recruitment for all job roles is coordinated by the HR Department as well as maintenance of the Single Central Register of Appointments.

ICT

The ICT Systems Manager has oversight of all information management resources and systems and ensures that systems for risk mitigation and disaster recovery are effective. He is responsible for the provision of day to day technical support for all staff and pupils in respect of the computer network, phones and mobile devices and keeps abreast of all relevant technical developments.

Catering

Catering services are outsourced to an external provider. The Bursar is responsible for oversight of the catering provision and meets regularly with the Catering Services Manager.

Compliance Manager

The Compliance Manager advises on all aspects of regulatory compliance, both statutory and required by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate, ensures that all School policies, procedures and practices are regularly updated to maintain compliance.

Health and Safety

The Bursar chairs the School's Health and Safety Committee, which has responsibility for compliance with health and safety legislation throughout the School. The Health and Safety Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that our health and safety policies are adhered to on a daily basis and assists and advises line managers on risk assessments and other related compliance activities.

Commercial

The Commercial Manager manages lettings of the School's facilities and ensures they are used effectively, maximising revenue, when not required by the School.

International

The expanding international business is managed financially by the Bursar, working under the strategic direction of Council.

Foundation

Bursaries and Outreach activities are partially funded by the Foundation Trust. Trustees meet twice a year.

Pensions

There is a Wycombe Abbey Pension Scheme which is managed by the Bursar. It is closed to new members. The Directors meet annually.



The Person

The successful candidate is likely to possess all or most of the following:

Experience

- Proven track record of leadership and senior management in a complex professional structure.
- Experience of financial management and budgeting.
- Experience of implementing strategic change.
- Experience of management of major building and/or land development projects.
- Business acumen to be able to assist Governing Council and the Head to develop a vision for the School's future.
- Track record of working successfully with a diverse range of stakeholders.
- General management experience as well as specialist experience in at least one function.
- Computer literate and a confident user of IT for communications and management purposes.

Personal attributes

- Leads by example and commands the respect of staff and parents.
- Committed team player with a collegiate and collaborative approach together with an ability and willingness to create a working environment in which staff are empowered to take decisions.
- Good sense of humour and the ability to create a working environment in which people work hard and enjoy being part of the team.
- Develops and maintains strong and positive relationships with Governors, the Head, staff and parents.
- Demonstrates personal strength of character through transparency, integrity and fairness. Has a strong sense of personal accountability.
- Strong listening and communication skills, both written and oral.
- Evidence of the ability to produce accurate and succinct minutes of meetings.
- Demonstrates personal dynamism, energy and enthusiasm, with a positive outlook.
- Demonstrates a commitment to sound principles of management, through the establishment of clear standards and expectations, effective performance management, effective delegation and time management.
- Demonstrates sound judgement in the appointment, development, support and encouragement of non-teaching staff.
- Demonstrates good judgement, and a fair and calm approach.
- Strong attention to detail, efficient, and works effectively to deadlines.
- Conveys the School's vision to the team in a clear, compelling and inspiring way for the betterment of the School overall.
- Is comfortable in a role supporting the overall leadership of another, whilst being able to act as confidante by offering constructive advice and guidance.





Strategy

- Can contribute to the development of strategy and is able to think beyond the current timeframes or business plan to influence the long-term strategic direction of the School.
- Balances a range of influences and demands to help to develop comprehensive plans and has proven ability to put processes and systems in place to deliver those plans.

Commitment to Independent Boarding School Education

- Comfortable with championing the philosophy of independent, single-sex, boarding education, with an interest in the changing educational landscape.
- Appreciates the particular demands of working in a boarding school environment.
- Enjoys being part of, and contributing to, a diverse community of pupils, teachers, non-academic staff and parents.
- Understands that the ultimate aim of Wycombe Abbey is to deliver outstanding education to its pupils.

Delivering Results

- Has a proven ability to translate strategic objectives into clear priorities for the team.
- Has managed complex projects and led multi-disciplinary teams to successful outcomes on time and to budget.
- Is focussed on solutions and is commercially-aware.





Remuneration

Salary will be negotiable, subject to experience, recognising the degree of responsibility associated with the post.

- The School will pay for membership of the School's private medical scheme.
- The School will make a contribution to a Personal Pension Plan of the Bursar's choice.
- Family accommodation is available on site.
- Any daughter of the Bursar who, having satisfied the entry requirements, is admitted as a pupil to the School will receive the benefit of the staff discount on the school fees.
- Six weeks' annual leave is available to be taken in the school holidays or such other times agreed with the Head and the Governors as are convenient to the School.
- An offer of employment will be subject to a probationary period of six months. During the probationary period, employment will be subject to termination one month's notice on either side. Thereafter, six months' notice on either side is required.
- A relocation payment will be available subject to negotiation.
- Payment during a period of sickness will be no less favourable than that applied to teaching staff.
- Meals in School will be provided free of charge in term time.
- A formal written offer of employment from Wycombe Abbey School is conditional on DBS clearance at enhanced level, references which are satisfactory to the School and the successful candidate providing original documentary proof of qualifications stated on the application form. Candidates invited for interview will be requested to bring proof of identity and qualifications on the day of interview.





How to Apply

Wycombe Abbey has engaged the services of Odgers Berndtson to assist with the recruitment of the next Bursar.

The closing date for applications: **Monday 2 December.**

Initial interviews with Odgers Berndtson will take place during weeks commencing **6 & 13 January**. Shortlist interviews with the Selection Panel will take place on **27 January**. Candidates invited to the final stage will be invited to have a full briefing visit to the School week commencing **3 February** and final interviews will take place on **12 February**.

In order to apply, please submit an application form and a comprehensive CV along with a covering letter which sets out your interest in the role and encapsulates the aspects of your experience relevant to the required criteria. Please include current salary details and the names and addresses of three referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.

The preferred method of application is online at:
www.odgers.com/74499

If you are unable to apply online please email:
74499@odgersberndtson.com

All applications will receive an automated response.

Any postal applications should be sent direct to:

Freddie Dennis, Odgers Berndtson
20 Cannon Street, London EC4M 6XD

For an initial discussion, please contact:

Freddie Dennis: +44 (0) 207 529 6366
freddie.dennis@odgersberndtson.com

Constance Moss: +44 (0) 207 529 1109
constance.moss@odgersberndtson.com

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

Wycombe Abbey are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).



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