



# Our *Strategic Direction*





*In Fide Vade*

**Wycombe Abbey**

A world leader in girls' boarding education  
and a place where academic excellence,  
empathy and integrity thrive.







# Welcome from the *Headmistress*

Making decisions about the strategic direction of an organisation is both a privilege and a responsibility and the School has engaged in an examination of its strengths and weaknesses, exploring fundamental questions about how we can and should seek to achieve our vision.

No school can afford to stand still and in the pages that follow we have outlined the roadmap for the next five years under six strategic pillars. Our plans are ambitious and wide ranging and will enable Wycombe Abbey to continue to flourish, building on its long and illustrious history.

We want to marry time-tested models of achieving academic excellence with mould-breaking innovation. The world is changing fast and it is our responsibility to nurture and equip young women to face the challenges of the future. We are deeply committed to instilling values alongside intellectual passions. As we look to the future, we know that a global perspective is needed. Digital fluency is essential and adaptability, creative thinking and self-reflection are key. Wycombe Abbey is well-placed to provide a truly outstanding education within a full boarding context and one of our key objectives is to widen this to as many pupils as possible.

This plan is important because it provides the opportunity for all within the school community to embrace the vision and work together to achieve it and serves as a clear statement of intent of the future direction of the School for the School's leadership team, members of Governing Council and the wider school community.

Jo Duncan  
Headmistress



# Our *History*

We are proud of our history and our ability to balance tradition with innovation.

When the pioneering founder of Wycombe Abbey, Dame Frances Dove, asked if she could go to school, she was told that there was 'not a school fit to send a girl to'. In response, she resolved to make a difference to this situation and our remarkable founder was instrumental in the establishment of St Leonards in St Andrews and then Wycombe Abbey, 19 years later.

In the 21st century we tend to take equal opportunities for granted. And, yet, it was only 150 years ago that the vast majority of girls did not go to school, were unable to attend university or have a career. We are proud that Wycombe Abbey has played such a pivotal role in the advancement of women's education in this country.



# Our *Present*

Wycombe Abbey is an exceptional place; it operates as a modern full boarding school for 650 pupils, including 60 day boarders, and we are committed to the development of each one. Built on the firm foundation of more than 120 years of educating young women, our vision is to provide a world class education. We are committed to encouraging curiosity, bold ideas, innovation, leadership and delight in learning – inside and outside the classroom.

We are the leading girls' boarding school in the UK, enabling our pupils to achieve an exceptional level of academic achievement, excellent public examination results and impressive progression to top universities in the UK and overseas. We are international in outlook, reflecting our global community and we actively encourage understanding and respect through appreciation of different cultures.

Pupils are housed in 11 boarding Houses, two horizontal Houses (UIII and UVI) and nine senior mixed age Houses for pupils aged 12-17. Academic excellence is set against a backdrop of strong pastoral care, pupil engagement and a broad co-curricular programme.

We hope pupils will leave School as confident, articulate, independent young women who are able to navigate a competitive, global, technology-driven world successfully but who also have the qualities to make a positive difference through the lives they live.





WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

# Our *Vision*

To be at the forefront of girls' boarding education and recognised globally as a world class school.

## Mission

To inspire every pupil to strive for ambitious goals and to recognise that they can make a positive difference in the world, now and in the future.

## Aims

- The pursuit of academic excellence.
- The development of each individual's talents in creative, physical and social skills.
- The encouragement of faith in God and service to other people all in a happy, fulfilling and caring community.

## Values

- Trust – We foster strong relationships built on trust through good communication, willingness to listen and honesty.
- Encouragement – We promote a positive atmosphere where all members of the community are supported to develop and fulfil their potential.
- Mutual Respect – We seek to understand and embrace differences in people, ideas and experiences with tolerance and understanding.
- Excellence – We believe in the importance of striving to be exceptional in whatever we do through the setting of ambitious goals and taking ownership of our decisions and actions.
- Balance – We understand the importance of supporting staff and pupils to thrive by maintaining a healthy mind and body.
- Dynamism – We are a forward-thinking school that nurtures the leaders of tomorrow for a global workplace.
- Innovation – We are excited about creating the future through being open-minded, curious and embracing change.
- Service – We recognise the great rewards that individuals reap in helping, supporting and giving to others both within the School community and beyond it.



# Our *Strategy*

To achieve our vision and mission, we will focus on six strategic pillars.

## 1 Academic Excellence

Pursuing academic excellence through scholarship, intellectual challenge and the development of a genuine love of learning.

## 2 Pastoral Care and Wellbeing

Providing outstanding pastoral care which supports individuals, promotes mental health and wellbeing and enables each pupil to flourish and fulfil their potential.

## 3 Leadership and Growth

Developing an impressive, diverse, high-performing staff body with strong leadership at all levels which is built on the values of trust, respect and encouragement.

## 4 Engagement and Connectivity

Building strong and supportive relationships in every area which is manifested in practical engagement with the School's strategic objectives.

## 5 Global Awareness and Future-Focus

Offering an exciting, future-focused curricular and co-curricular offer which broadens horizons and successfully prepares pupils for life beyond School.

## 6 Transformational Change

Stewarding resources responsibly to preserve the School's legacy and build for the future, creating a world class campus and enabling as many pupils as possible to experience a Wycombe Abbey education.



Strategic Pillar 1

Academic *Excellence*

Pursuing academic excellence through scholarship, intellectual challenge and a genuine love of learning.

What does success look like?

A 21st century skills-based curriculum underpinned by academically rigorous teaching which offers a broad range of opportunities for pupils to engage with complex ideas and real-world problems which will prepare them exceptionally well for Higher Education and their careers beyond.

Priorities

- Maintain an emphasis on academic excellence and embedding the five academic qualities.
- Extend inter-departmental teaching and learning initiatives.
- Ensure a first-class Higher Education offer.

We will achieve this by:

- Developing a future-focused, pupil-centred Key Stage 3 curriculum which promotes creative and critical thinking, informed by evidence-based research.
- Increasing opportunities for academic enrichment, stretch and challenge in all subject areas.
- Sharing ideas across the curriculum with a focus on good practice within and across departments, encouraging pupils to make connections between disciplines and skills.
- Embedding the unique Carrington Award for Sixth Form pupils to complement their A level study and the development of a series of ‘electives’ based on staff specialisms and pupil interests.
- Establishing a reading culture across the School, which is supported by all staff and seen in practice.
- Continuing to achieve excellent academic results in public examinations which consistently places us in the top 10 schools nationally in the UK.
- Ensuring an outstanding Higher Education/Oxbridge preparation programme and work to enable pupils to be successful from interview to offer across a wide range of disciplines with clear, individualised support for each pupil.
- Developing an ambitious US Universities and Colleges preparation programme which dovetails with other aspects of School life including sport (scholarships) and extensive parental education.

Strategic Pillar 2

Pastoral Care **and** *Wellbeing*

Providing outstanding pastoral care, through boarding, which supports individuals, promotes mental health and wellbeing and enables each pupil to flourish and fulfil her potential.

What does success look like?

A happy, supportive environment where every pupil is known and valued as an individual and where friendships are maintained within and across year groups and beyond School.

Priorities

- Promote the sense of connection and community within and across School.
- Build on existing pastoral programmes and give pupils further opportunity to express their views and ideas.
- Prioritise a robust safeguarding culture which all staff understand and proactively engage in.

We will achieve this by:

- Holding Chapel services during the week and on Sundays with a wide range of speakers including staff; all to be encouraged to take time to be still and reflect on a daily basis.
- Connecting every member of staff (teaching and support) to a House.
- Seeking accreditation by the Wellbeing Award for Schools.
- Engaging with pupils’ views, particularly in relation to mental health and wellbeing to ensure our offering is relevant and effective.
- Continuing to develop our counselling provision alongside the work of the Health Centre and the wider pastoral team.
- Celebrating the House ‘family’ and promote this internally and externally.
- Further developing the tutor system under Heads of Year which is specifically designed to support each pupil to develop as an individual, achieve balance and understand what is meant by personal success.
- Building on the existing Flourishing@Wycombe, Listening@Wycombe, School Council and peer mentoring programmes.
- Developing a range of opportunities for pupils to be involved in community service across the School.
- Encouraging strong relationships between departments and link Governors.

Strategic Pillar 3

Leadership and Growth

Developing an impressive, diverse, high-performing staff body with strong leadership at all levels which is built on the values of trust, respect and encouragement.

What does success look like?

Staff continually striving to improve and develop themselves in a culture where everyone is valued and has the opportunity to thrive.

Priorities

- Attract, appoint and retain an outstanding, and increasingly diverse, teaching and support staff.
- Create a broad and exciting range of opportunities for ongoing staff development.
- Review support services across the School in line with strategic priorities.

We will achieve this by:

- Reviewing the salary structure, benefits package and appraisal system for all staff.
- Reviewing our recruitment processes and ensure we are reaching a diverse range of potential applicants in all areas.
- Developing a broad ‘CPD from Within’ programme including group workshops led by staff or by engaging external speakers.
- Further empowering staff voice, participation and leadership through a range of standing committees and working parties.
- Introducing a staff wellbeing survey which allows for a deeper understanding of professional life at Wycombe Abbey and better data-driven tools for making improvements.
- Implementing the new HR database (WycombeHR) and centralising the HR function.

Strategic Pillar 4

Engagement and Connectivity

Dynamic engagement with parents, alumnae, feeder schools and partners (local and international).

What does success look like?

Strong and supportive relationships evident in every area which are manifested in practical engagement with the School’s strategic objectives.

Priorities

- Enhance internal and external communications.
- Connect Seniors more closely with one another and with pupils.
- Review admissions process.

We will achieve this by:

- Drawing up a new marketing and communications strategy and improving internal communication with a focus on being consistent and effective.
- Creating an annual programme of alumnae events locally, nationally and internationally with opportunities to connect virtually and in person.
- Further developing the partnership with Cressex Community School with a focus on sharing good practice, meaningful dialogue and support in action.
- Expanding overseas campuses and establishing an International Committee at Wycombe Abbey UK primarily focused on teaching, learning, sharing ideas and working collaboratively.
- Developing the ‘Parenting the Teenager’ series with a planned programme of events published widely and with a broad range of relevant topics and speakers.
- Undertaking a review led by an external consultant to provide clear evidence on how we are viewed by parents, prospective parents and prep schools.
- Collaborating with a wide range of primary and prep schools through visits, involvement in networking events and activities for prospective pupils and parents.
- Reviewing our admissions process to support our desire to select pupils for Wycombe Abbey who genuinely enjoy academic challenge and stretch, will embrace the boarding environment and will flourish here.



Strategic Pillar 5

Global Awareness and Future-Focus

Offering a dynamic, future-focused curricular and co-curricular offer which broadens horizons and successfully prepares pupils for life beyond School.

What does success look like?

An holistic education which clearly supports the development of 21st century skills grounded in the boarding experience.

Priorities

- Establish a digital strategy which is agile and responsive to new technologies.
- Embed an outstanding co-curricular programme which is challenging, adventurous and accessible including opportunities for pupils to participate in a broad range of activities.
- Equip pupils with practical skills and financial acumen to prepare them for later life with a focus on STEAM including robotics, engineering and computing.

We will achieve this by:

- Developing a dynamic co-curricular programme which includes a broad range of social and academic events for all ages.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to study and exercise entrepreneurial leadership.
- Providing access to, and support in applying for, opportunities in the commercial world and professions.
- Creating a network of exceptional female mentors and role models.
- Incorporating appropriate technology into pupils' learning, in light of the digital strategy, highlighting its benefits and developing greater flexibility in teaching and learning, collaboration, and independence.
- Expanding real-world opportunities for pupils through work placements, travel, business competitions, and other experiential learning opportunities.
- Improving and extending the infrastructure for digital teaching, learning and connecting.

Strategic Pillar 6

Transformational Change

Stewarding resources responsibly to preserve the School's legacy and build for the future, creating a world class campus and enabling as many pupils as possible to experience a Wycombe Abbey education.

What does success look like?

Sound financial management, a meaningful, embedded partnership and bursary programme, an established culture of philanthropy and a campus which is planned and developed strategically and is informed by leading schools around the world.

Priorities

- Create a campus masterplan.
- Develop an ambitious fundraising campaign to support development priorities.
- Establish long-term partnerships and bursaries programme.

We will achieve this by:

- Planning state-of-the-art teaching, learning and living spaces in line with the best schools in the world.
- Delivering a strong financial performance to support the realisation of the vision.
- Developing a deeply embedded culture of philanthropy and fundraising to support capital projects and bursaries, with appropriate donor recognition.
- Establishing a Partnerships and Bursaries committee, led by ELT and reporting to Council, which includes a long-term plan for funding bursaries.
- Focusing on sustainability across the School campus with a view to becoming a paperless, carbon neutral school within a decade.
- Developing the School's archive material and celebration of the School's history and heritage with a particular focus on the 125th Anniversary.





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