Wycombe Abbey

Appointment of Director of Recruitment
Salary in the region of £65,000
Wycombe Abbey was founded in 1896 by Dame Frances Dove as a boarding school for girls. Its beautiful 160-acre site is close to the centre of High Wycombe and includes woods, gardens and a lake. The school aims to: pursue the ideal of academic excellence; develop each pupil’s talents in creative, physical and social skills; encourage an understanding of the needs of others; and foster an awareness of God. The core values of mutual respect, encouragement and trust were identified by the girls and staff and our boarding ethos aims to provide the opportunity for pupils to maximise their potential in a myriad of ways.

Of the 590 pupils, ranging in age from 11 to 18, 175 are in the Sixth Form. Approximately half of our pupils live within 50 miles of the school; about 20% are from overseas. The pupils study a full range of academic subjects and achieve outstanding results in public examinations which are a reflection of the hard work of both girls and staff. In 2015 the girls achieved 98.6% A*-A at GCSE/IGCSE and 85.7% A*-A at A Level. All Upper VI pupils gain entry to high-ranking universities in the UK, the USA and elsewhere. The school has a great deal of success with entry to Oxford and Cambridge, with 30% to 40% gaining places in most years. In recent years a sizeable proportion of the year group has made applications to US universities and pupils have gained places at a variety of prestigious institutions, including Harvard, MIT, Princeton, Brown, Columbia, Stanford and UPenn.

Wycombe Abbey is a full boarding school. We do not offer weekly boarding or flexi-boarding, and day boarding places are limited to a total of 50 throughout the school. Boarding accommodation is organised into 11 houses. Approximately 76 pupils enter Upper III (Year 7) and join Junior House for their first year. The nine mixed-age senior houses, for pupils in Lower IV to Lower VI (Years 8 to 12), are geographically split into three areas around the school site. Up to 32 girls join in Upper IV (Year 9) and go straight into their senior house, as do the small number of girls joining in Lower VI. Clarence House provides a study-bedroom complex run on university hall of residence lines for all Upper VI pupils.

Wycombe offers a tremendous range of co-curricular and enrichment activities, which foster initiative and self-reliance, as well as developing interests which may last a lifetime. A strong Sports Department offers more than 30 sports, including lacrosse, netball, tennis, athletics, gymnastics and ballet. Our Music Department teaches more than 600 individual lessons per week and offers a wide variety of ensemble opportunities, from the prestigious Symphony Orchestra and Chapel Choir through to quartets and small groups. The Drama Department offers several production opportunities annually, in addition to a house play competition and LAMDA lessons. Beyond this, there are many active societies (e.g. Politics, Law, Amnesty International, Medical, Debating), numerous trips and lectures, and opportunities such as Model United Nations, Young Enterprise and Duke of Edinburgh Award, to name just a few.

Owing to its geographical position, the school is able to share a wide variety of activities with other schools, including Eton, Harrow and Radley – girls participate in joint choral events, debates, plays, university seminars and the like.
The Role

The Director of Recruitment is a new senior role at Wycombe Abbey and will take strategic responsibility for the recruitment of girls to this exceptional school. The postholder will take the lead in building relationships with feeder schools and with prospective families, from initial enquiry to enrolment, promoting the benefits of a modern, boarding education in an outstanding school.

Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate will be an accomplished leader in a comparable organisation, either in education or another service industry where exceptional customer relationship management is central to success. He/she will have experience of strategic marketing, communications, general management, customer care and people leadership. He/she will also have a keen understanding and empathy with independent education in general and the benefits of boarding in particular.

The successful candidate will be an impressive and articulate ambassador for the School, able to work effectively with different groups of people, bringing about change with vigour, good humour and tact.

Context

This is a pivotal senior leadership role with both strategic and operational responsibility. The post-holder will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team and will work alongside the Director of Communications and Development who is responsible for the school’s brand and reputation management and leads all communications, alumni relations and fundraising activity.

The Director of Recruitment will manage a team of three admissions staff and will motivate and guide everyone who contributes to the pupil recruitment function, ensuring training and mentoring is provided as necessary.

The post-holder will report to the Headmistress and will provide regular briefings to both the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Council.
Key Responsibilities

**Strategic Leadership of Admissions**
In close collaboration with the Headmistress, the post-holder will develop action plans for Admissions to underpin the School’s Strategic Development Plan and effective systems for monitoring and evaluating success.

**Market analysis and trends**
The Director of Recruitment will keep abreast of trends and developments in independent and boarding education both locally, nationally and internationally, monitoring competitor activity and leading the thinking which will inform Wycombe Abbey’s short-term and long-term strategy. He/she will also be responsible for regular reporting on the school’s admissions data, enabling accurate projection of future pupil numbers.

**Promotional and recruitment activity**
The post-holder will be expected to develop and implement an effective pupil recruitment strategy and a range of activities to differentiate Wycombe Abbey from competitors and promote the Wycombe Abbey brand to prospective families. This will include responsibility for all recruitment events including Open Days, Taster Events, Feeder School workshops and Prep Head lunches.

**Management of relationships with feeder schools**
Girls join Wycombe Abbey from a large, and growing, number of different feeder primary and prep schools, locally, nationally and internationally. The Director of Recruitment will act as the principal contact with these important stakeholders, designing and managing an appropriate strategy for building and strengthening relationships with the schools. This will include attending and speaking at the feeder schools’ own events, running appropriate events for feeder school staff and pupils at Wycombe Abbey and directing a comprehensive communications programme which keeps the schools informed of their former pupils’ success and the opportunities available to their current pupils.

**Strategic Management of the Admissions Process**
Wycombe Abbey is an extremely popular and highly selective school. It therefore receives a large volume of enquiries for the places available, sometimes many years in advance of the year of entry. The Director of Recruitment will have strategic responsibility for the effective, efficient and customer-focused management of all these enquiries from initial contact with the school, through visits to enrolment. He/she will direct the appropriate use of databases and other systems to ensure a consistent, personal and welcoming approach and a timely flow of accurate information to colleagues.
Assessment of prospective pupils
Working closely with the Academic Deputy Head, the post-holder will design appropriate and rigorous tests and procedures for the assessment of girls joining the school at 11+, 13+ and 16+. This will include the identification and assessment of scholarship candidates.

Promotion of bursaries
The Director of Recruitment will develop a strategy and tactics to promote the School’s bursary scheme in Primary Schools.

QUALITIES AND KEY SKILLS REQUIRED

Leadership
The vision, energy and ability to motivate and guide others.

Interpersonal skills
Demonstrable ability to build rapport and communicate persuasively with people of different backgrounds.

A customer-focused approach
A commitment to engaging with prospective families, understanding their needs and priorities.

Communication
The ability to write and speak messages that are clear, convincing and inspiring. An appreciation of how to use different media to best effect with different audiences. A persuasive and compelling public speaker.

Intelligence
The ability to take a strategic view. Fluency in presenting and defending a case, with clarity of analysis, expression and reasoned argument. The successful candidate is likely to have a good honours degree from a respected university.
Creativity
The ability to adapt to new situations and address problems from new perspectives.

Reliability and resilience
Attention to detail, deadlines and budgets; persistence in following through multiple projects over long periods and the willingness to persevere to achieve agreed goals.

Engagement
An understanding of and belief in, the aims and ethos of independent education in general, and single-sex and boarding schools in particular.

Digital literacy
Competence in standard office software (word-processing, presentation and spreadsheet packages). A proven understanding of, and ability to interpret, databases and their use in customer relationship management. Familiarity with social media platforms and their effective use in a communications strategy.

BENEFITS OF LIVING IN HIGH WYCOMBE
Wycombe Abbey is set in 170 acres of parkland. It is a beautiful countryside setting, within a 5-minute walk of the town of High Wycombe where there are many cultural amenities such as the Swan Theatre, with touring West End productions, a multiplex cinema, a range of restaurants and shops including a John Lewis and a House of Fraser. A Waitrose is about to open, and there is easy access to the Chiltern Hills and attractive towns such as Marlow, Beaconsfield and Henley-on-Thames nearby. There are many National Trust properties within five miles such as Hughenden Manor, Disraeli’s home for many years, West Wycombe Park and Cliveden.

There are outstanding Grammar Schools for boys and girls in High Wycombe itself and also in surrounding towns. London is within easy reach, with the fast train from High Wycombe to London Marylebone taking just 24 minutes. Oxford is within 30 miles, Wembley Stadium and Heathrow are just 20 miles away and there are good transport links to the other London airports.
REMUNERATION AND TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

The salary will be in the region of £65,000 per annum dependent upon candidate skills and experience, with 6 weeks holiday + Bank Holidays a year.

A formal contract of employment will be drawn up on appointment. The following notes provide guidance, without prejudice, on the main provisions of the agreement.

**Contract**
This is a permanent, full-time contract.

**Appointment date**
September 2016, or as soon as possible thereafter.

**Hours of work**
Normal office hours are 8.30 am to 5.30pm with one hour for lunch but this is a senior role, and as such, you will be expected to work such hours as may reasonably be required for the proper performance of your duties.

**Pension Scheme**
All eligible staff will be enrolled automatically within the School’s pension scheme.

**Death in Service Cover**
Members of the pension scheme have life cover at x 2 annual salary.

**Provision of meals**
Meals and refreshments are provided free of charge during the working day.

**Sports Centre**
The facilities in the Davies Sports Centre (swimming pool, squash courts, fitness suite, etc.) are available for staff use.
TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Fee remission
Fee remission is available for daughters attending the School, subject to the usual entry requirements and space being available.

Childcare Vouchers
All staff have access to childcare vouchers through a salary sacrifice scheme, subject to certain statutory requirements.

Parking
Free parking is provided.

Equal Opportunities
It is the policy of Wycombe Abbey to ensure equality of opportunity for all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching.

Safeguarding
All staff share responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the pupils and must adhere to, and comply with, the school’s Child Protection Policy at all times.

Pre-employment checks
The appointment is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring check. The notice period will be 6 months following an initial probationary period.
The Application Process

In order to apply, please submit the following:

- A completed application form
- A covering letter addressed to the Headmistress, Mrs Rhiannon Wilkinson of not more than two pages outlining your suitability for the position

Applications should be sent electronically to: recruitment@rsacademics.co.uk in PDF format.

To arrange a confidential discussion, please call Angela Short on 07786 134195

Closing date for applications: 10am: Monday 13th June
Preliminary telephone interviews: Wednesday 15th to Monday 20th June
First round interviews at Wycombe Abbey: Monday 27th June
Second round interviews at Wycombe Abbey: w.c. Monday 4th July

All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of submitting it, please contact RSAcademics by telephone 01858 467449.

Wycombe Abbey is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The post is subject to an enhanced DBS check and satisfactory references.

Founded in 2002 by Russell Speirs, RSAcademics specialises in schools, in the UK and internationally, advising on marketing strategy and research, leadership consultancy and the search and selection of Heads and senior staff. Comprising a team of the best schools’ marketing professionals and respected former school leaders, RSAcademics provides a high quality service to schools with rigour, experience and warmth. Please visit www.rsacademics.co.uk for more information.