

# Head of Modern Languages

September 2019

# Vacancy Information

Wycombe Abbey
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP11 1PE

Tel: 01494 520381



# WELCOME TO WYCOMBE ABBEY

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

Set in magnificent grounds spanning more than 170 acres, our school has 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. Its teaching facilities are excellent.

Of the 631 pupils, ranging from 11 to 18, 574 are full boarders and 189 are in the Sixth Form. The majority of our girls come from within a two-hour radius of London; other boarders travel from further afield nationally and internationally. 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 95 per cent of all GCSE entries being graded A*-A. At A level, 84 per cent were A*-A. Almost one third of last year's leavers went to Oxbridge and six went to US universities including Yale, Tufts, Johns Hopkins and UPenn.

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 9 mixed-age Senior Houses, and in the Upper Sixth girls move into Clarence House, a purpose-built study-bedroom complex which is akin to a university hall of residence.

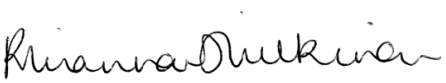
Very many co-curricular and enrichment opportunities are on offer for girls across the age range. Last year, the sports teams reached a significant number of national finals and the sports department offers more than 30 sports on a regular basis. Our Music department teaches more than 600 individual 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 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 and dances. We also enjoy close relationships with the two boys' grammar schools in High Wycombe, with our pupils and theirs co-operating in choirs, management and leadership conferences and other social and academic events throughout the year. MUN is thriving at Wycombe Abbey.

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 just opened a brand new café and two new state-of-the-art boarding houses. We are committed to refurbishing much of our boarding accommodation and we have plans to redevelop significant teaching and learning areas in the Abbey building.

We have introduced a new strategic plan to guide us through the next four years. We are committed to whole staff participation in the design and fulfilment of our strategic intents. A significant number of committees and working parties have been established to enable wider participation in leadership, management and development of our School. 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. We hope to open other Wycombe Abbey International Schools in Asia in the near future.

Exciting times are ahead!



Rhiannon J Wilkinson

Headmistress

# TEACHING AT WYCOMBE

The pupils at Wycombe are highly motivated with a strong work ethic. They are inquisitive, creative and eager to learn. Both pupils and teachers benefit from the small classes (typically no larger than 20 in Key Stages 3-4 and no larger than 12 in the Sixth Form), as well as well-resourced classrooms, libraries, laboratories and other facilities.

There is a wide range of ages and experience amongst the 115 teaching staff. Each year a number of newly qualified, and in some cases unqualified recent graduates, join the Staff Room. Wycombe offers statutory induction for Newly Qualified Teachers and also offers the Graduate Teacher Programme to those without a PGCE. There is proactive support for all new members of staff, who are guided through their first year at Wycombe by a variety of people, with the line manager and an individually-appointed mentor taking the lead.

The School prides itself on the many opportunities for continuing professional development. We organise regular whole staff in-service training and have a generous budget for training outside of school. In addition, academic departments commit to sharing good practice. There are opportunities to take part in peer observation, peer coaching, learning reviews and working parties.

A Wycombe teacher typically teaches 30 35-minute periods per week. In addition, he/she is attached to a boarding house and is responsible for a tutor group of around 10 pupils from the house. Teachers give freely of their time outside timetabled lessons with many committing to co-curricular and boarding activities and helping individual pupils with their academic progress. Teachers are also expected to commit a small number of hours per term to other (supervisory) duties, such as accompanying house outings.

As a boarding school, Wycombe has lessons on Saturday mornings. There is time off during the week in lieu of Saturday teaching. Teachers are expected to be in school by 8.15am on weekdays and 8.45am on a Saturday. The teaching day finishes at 5.15pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 4.15pm on Wednesday and 11.50am on Saturday. Co-curricular and enrichment activities typically extend beyond these hours.



# THE MODERN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

The Modern Languages Department at Wycombe Abbey comprises of 11 full time teachers and two part-time teachers. The department benefits from up-to-date resources including two language laboratories equipped with digital language laboratory software and a Sixth Form language library. French, Spanish, German and Chinese are taught as part of the core curriculum and a number of other languages, including Arabic, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Dutch, are also taught on a private basis.

Currently, girls are taught French and Spanish in Years 7 and 8. In Year 9 girls may choose to continue with both languages, or to take up the option of German or Chinese in place of one of these. In Years 10 and 11, girls must study at least one modern language at GCSE, but many girls take two, and the most able may continue with three. We follow the Edexcel IGCSE French, Spanish and German and the Edexcel GCSE in Chinese. In Spanish, Chinese and French girls are divisioned by ability where possible.

In the Sixth Form, girls are prepared for the AQA specifications in French and Spanish, the Edexcel specification in German and the CIE Pre-U specification in Chinese. Those who were in Division 1 for French have the option of taking Pre-U French instead of A Level. We also offer Pre-U Chinese as a curriculum subject. All girls taking public examinations benefit from conversation lessons in small groups with native speakers. Each year a number of girls successfully apply to Oxbridge and other leading universities to read Modern Languages.

We encourage and aim to provide opportunities for the girls to visit the country of the language they are studying. Biennial study holidays are organised at Easter for Hispanists to Seville and for French pupils to Montpellier. There has also been an annual trip for the Year 7 Germanists to Koblenz for the Christmas markets, as well as a biennial study holiday to Augsburg. Exciting plans for future years include a residential trip to China. All languages staff are expected to support these trips. We aim to develop an awareness of the wide range of higher education courses involving languages, and of careers where languages are useful or essential by arranging speaker events.

We try to provide opportunities for girls to appreciate the culture of the countries of their target language, organising theatre and cinema trips, dancing lessons (Salsa, Flamenco) and lectures by visiting speakers. Previous trips include seeing Haçienda Classical at the Royal Albert Hall and the Sixth Form Hispanists had salsa lessons and enjoyed tapas with boys from Eton. Other successful ventures have been a trip to the Christmas market in Lübeck, joint participation in a German play with Harrow, day trips to France, and visits to the Institut Français. Films in the target language are readily available, along with an impressive collection of reference and reading material, including newspapers and magazines.









## SPECIFIC AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HEAD OF MODERN LANGUAGES

- Leading, managing and co-ordinating the work of the Modern Languages Department. Responsible for the regular monitoring and review of the work of the department, and for promoting excellence in teaching and learning; chairing weekly department meetings
- Managing the full-time , part-time and visiting teachers, holding them to account and encouraging their professional development
- Stimulating and fostering enthusiasm for the subject within the school, more specifically promoting Modern Languages as a demanding, respected and relevant academic discipline, whilst encouraging all pupils to achieve their very best
- Monitoring, assessing, and reporting on pupils' progress, including the use of assessment for learning as a means of encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their learning
- Contributing to the School's academic strategy and strategic fulfilment of the development plan
- Organising and leading trips
- Planning and delivering high quality lessons across all key stages, which include stretch and challenge and take into account a broad range of learning styles
- Developing the Modern Languages curriculum and departmental resources
- Encouraging links with other subjects and languages across the curriculum; supporting and maintaining current opportunities and initiating new ideas
- Organising in-house Modern Languages debating competitions
- Supporting and maintaining current opportunities and initiating new ideas for girls of all ages to be involved in Modern Languages opportunities outside the classroom and beyond the syllabus

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

Wycombe Abbey provides a modern and innovative education within a traditional boarding setting, and we therefore seek to employ teachers and leaders who will bring outstanding talent, intellect, enthusiasm and innovation to our classrooms.

The successful applicant is likely to possess:

- A good degree in the relevant subject(s)
- Excellent subject knowledge and the ability to teach one or more languages to A level and Oxbridge entry
- A teaching qualification (e.g, PGCE) is desirable although we are happy to consider good graduates who are committed to teaching and boarding life
- The motivation to develop excellent teaching and learning by sharing good practice and participating actively in continuing professional development
- The ability to stimulate and foster enthusiasm for Modern Languages at a high level, whilst encouraging all pupils to achieve their very best
- An understanding of the importance of monitoring, assessing and reporting on pupil progress, encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their learning
- An interest in developing links with other subjects across the curriculum
- The highest level of communication skills for dealing with pupils, parents and staff
- A proven ability to build a positive and collaborative rapport with pupils and staff alike
- A willingness to be involved in the wider life of the school through commitment to the co-curricular programme and/or boarding
- An appreciation of the aims and ethos of Wycombe Abbey
- A desire to revitalise the Modern Languages curriculum and to think creatively about new approaches to the teaching of languages.







## THE 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 has opened nearby, 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 and Bicester Village are within 30 miles, with a new direct train link. Wembley Stadium and Heathrow are just 20 miles away and there are good transport links to the other London airports.

# TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

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 over 52 weeks.

## APPOINTMENT DATE

September 2019. This post is a full-time, non-residential teaching post (although rental accommodation may be available).

## SALARY

Wycombe Abbey has its own pay scale which compares favourably with other independent schools.

## PENSION SCHEME

The school offers membership of the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

## DEATH IN SERVICE COVER

Members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme have life cover at x 3 annual salary.

## TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

There is an extensive induction programme for new colleagues and ongoing professional development and training of all staff.

## 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.

## FEE REMISSION

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

## 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.

## APPLICATIONS

The closing date for applications is 12 noon on 1 October. Interviews will be held on 31 October.

Please submit a completed application form, which you will find on our website, as soon as possible, together with a covering letter addressed to the Headmistress, Mrs Rhiannon Wilkinson, outlining the experience and personal qualities which you believe qualify you for this position. The application form and letter should be emailed to Mrs J Wetenhall, HR Manager:
wetenhallj@wycombeabbey.com



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www.wycombeabbey.com