



THE ORATORY



BRIEF FOR THE POST OF COORDINATOR OF SPIRITUAL LIFE SEPTEMBER 2021



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THE SCHOOL



The Oratory is an HMC Catholic co-educational independent school for pupils aged 11 to 18, providing an all-round education of quality and purpose. We welcomed our first girls to the school in September 2020 – with intakes in all year groups except Year 11 and Year 13 – and currently have 50 girls at the school.

We offer small class sizes and outstanding facilities on a wonderful South Oxfordshire country estate and yet we are within easy travelling distance of London, major motorways, railways and airports.

The Oratory School has high academic standards; however, we believe that an education is about more than statistics. We have a clear vision to ensure that each pupil flourishes and fulfils their maximum potential both in and far beyond the classroom. To this end, a wide variety of co-curricular activities enrich the pupils' learning and all pupils get the opportunity to develop their specific talents to the full. The Oratory is not a large school, and this enables each and every pupil to be known, valued and stretched as an individual within our nurturing community.

The Oratory School was founded in 1859 by Father – now Saint - John Henry Newman Cong. Orat. for the education of young men “not destined for the ecclesiastical state.” Newman was inspired in this venture, as in all his work as an Oratorian, by the example of St Philip Neri - “Apostle of Joy” and “Gentle Guide of Youth” – placing enormous emphasis on the “sympathetic influence” of adults as guides of young people in their journey toward Heaven.

For all its changes – of location and structure – in the last 162 years, these principles are as true now as they ever were, and continue to inspire those who work at the school and Oratory pupils to discover the “definite service” which they are being called to do for God.



A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD MASTER, JOE SMITH

Thank you for your interest in potentially joining us as a colleague at The Oratory School. I'm delighted that you are considering applying for this post and hope very much that, once you have read through the application pack, you will decide to do so.

We are acutely conscious that for busy professionals it takes a considerable commitment to apply for a new role. In return you can expect us to expend a similar amount of time and energy in considering your application and over the selection process.

We are very proud of our school's history. The Oratory School was founded by Saint John Henry Newman – one of the greatest figures of the 19th Century - in Edgbaston, Birmingham in 1859 as a response to numerous requests to start a school for the education of the sons of Catholic gentlemen. Having spent time at Caversham on the outskirts of Reading (now the BBC monitoring centre) the school moved to its present site, Woodcote House in 1942.

Currently approximately one third of pupils are Catholic - and a similar proportion of teaching staff – but the Catholic vision of an all-round, holistic education pervades all we do. All staff, Catholic or not, are expected to uphold and support the school's Catholicism, and all teaching staff are expected to attend Mass and other services with the pupils.

I urge you to spend some time looking at our website, which I hope will give you a flavour of our school. The school is in very good heart and we are improving our provision all the time. We currently have approximately 360 pupils at the school.

Class sizes are small and facilities impressive: we are in the process of creating an ambitious plan for the next stage of the school's development. As an avowedly all-round school our aim is that everything we do – be it teaching, sport, music, drama, art, boarding or pastoral care – is done to the very highest standard. As a result of our success in this endeavour the current reputation of the OS is high, although we are anything but complacent about maintaining this popularity, hence the importance of attracting and retaining high quality staff, both in the classroom and beyond it.

If offered a place at the school, the children of staff enjoy a very generous fee remission at The Oratory. Our salary scale is competitive and for senior staff the school has its own Leadership Scale. The school owns a significant amount of staff accommodation, both on site and in the village of Woodcote, for which benefit resident staff undertake duties in a boarding house.

The Common Room are a wonderful, supportive, professional and good humoured team, and the atmosphere of the school as a whole is often described as warm and positive, as well as purposeful.

The Oratory has a fine reputation and tradition as an independent school, in the local area, nationally and abroad. Many members of staff have moved on from



the OS to senior roles at other prestigious schools: the school's relative smallness means that staff can achieve significant levels of responsibility relatively quickly and feel that they are making a genuine difference to the school's development.

I do hope that you will apply and I hope to meet you in due course and discuss the possibility of your coming to join us at The Oratory.

With best wishes

Joe Smith BA MEd PGCE
Head Master





THE ROLE

"I want a laity, not arrogant, not rash in speech, not disputatious, but men [and women] who know their religion, who enter into it, who know just where they stand, who know what they hold and what they do not, who know their creed so well that they can give an account of it, who know so much of history that they can defend it. I want an intelligent, well-instructed laity – I wish [them] to enlarge [their] knowledge, to cultivate [their] reason, to get an insight into the relation of truth to truth, to learn to view things as they are, to understand how faith and reason stand to each other, what are the bases and principles of Catholicism."

John Henry Newman: Sermon 9, Duties of Catholics towards the Protestant View, 1851

The Oratory School is seeking to appoint for September 2021 a lay man or woman who is in full communion with the Catholic Church and fully in sympathy with our Oratorian ethos to the exciting new post of Coordinator of Spiritual Life.

This is a full time role. Accommodation may be available for the right candidate.

The Chaplaincy team will be made up of the following:

Head Master

The Head Master has overall responsibility for the spiritual life of the school, and leads the school in this as in all aspects of its life.

Chaplain

A Catholic priest who will visit the school regularly to say Mass, hear confessions and lead the sacramental life of the school, as well as advising and working with the Chaplaincy team on all aspects of spiritual life at The Oratory.

Coordinator of Spiritual Life

A lay Catholic man or woman who has a full-time post at the school to lead its spiritual life.

Deputy Head Pastoral

Matthew Fogg is a former Head of Theology at a Catholic independent school, and has been the Person in Charge of Catholic Life at The Oratory in recent years.

Staff Chaplaincy Team

A group of lay staff who are willing to help with chaplaincy events and initiatives.



Governor for Catholic Life

We are blessed in having Fr Daniel Seward Cong. Orat. of the York Oratory as our Governor with responsibility for Catholic Life, to support the school and its staff and offer advice and practical help. Bishop Robert Byrne Cong. Orat. is a great friend of the school as a former governor and current Vice-President of the school, who visits each year for the sacrament of Confirmation.

Other School Governors

The Governors' Newman Committee oversees pastoral, safeguarding, spiritual and co-curricular matters and as such will be a source of support for the Coordinator of Spiritual Life, who will ask him or her to attend meetings from time to time to discuss the spiritual life of the school.

Head of Theology

The Coordinator of Spiritual Life will work closely with the Head of Theology, Fr David Elliott, who was Acting Chaplain for the academic year 2020-21, as well as all the members of the school's RS Department.

Senior Pupils

We would like to appoint a small of team of 6th Formers as "Chapel Prefects" to help with this area of school life.

KEY TASKS & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Praying daily for the needs of the School community and the wider world.
2. Maintaining a high profile presence around the school and at school events.
3. Preparing school liturgies (including school and house liturgies, Marian and Lenten devotions, prayer groups and novenas, Reconciliation services, the Confirmation Service, the Christmas Carol Service, Prizegiving service etc.) – this includes coordinating the preparation of readers and others involved in the liturgy, and liaising with the Director of Music when necessary.
4. Arranging retreats for governors from time to time, as well as a staff, parents and governors prayer group to pray for the needs of the school.
5. Assisting the Senior Chaplain with catechetical instruction, especially in the preparation of pupils for the sacraments.
6. Developing opportunities for prayer within the school.
7. Encouraging the leadership of the pupils – Catholic and non-Catholic - in their own spiritual life.
8. Promoting staff faith development (including induction of new staff).



KEY TASKS & RESPONSIBILITIES

9. Assisting Housemasters/ Mistresses (HsMs) in the preparation of materials for morning and evening prayers.
10. Establishing and maintaining a presence within the school boarding community and at school events (including evening events).
11. Devising and running a Retreat programme with day or overnight retreats for year groups.
12. Co-ordinating and running an annual staff Retreat.
13. Promoting an active Christianity outside the curriculum, encouraging pupils to take part in such things as the CAFOD Family Fast Days, the Order of Malta Volunteers Pilgrimage to Lourdes, Soup Runs, foodbanks and other Community Service projects.
14. Working closely with the school's Charities Coordinator, the Charity Committee and the Eco Committee on charity initiatives, such as those in the spirit of *Laudato Si*.
15. Working within the RS Department to teach the RS curriculum and support the work of the department generally.
16. Offering support and counselling as needed by individual pupils, staff and parents (especially in times of personal and family crisis such as bereavement).
17. Liaising with the Parish of Goring and Woodcote and with the Archdiocese of Birmingham.
18. Managing any volunteers and staff, who may, from time to time, be assigned to the chaplaincy.
19. Teaching curriculum Religious Studies (a compulsory subject at The Oratory up to GCSE), our newly renamed weekly 6th Form "In Veritatem"* non-examined faith exploration sessions, and PSHE lessons.
20. Acting as the school's Person in Charge of Catholic Life for the purposes of Section 48 inspections from the Archdiocese of Birmingham Education Service.
21. Organising materials and preparing the chapels for services; making sure the chapels are in good order and materials are prepared and ready for the Chaplain.
22. Maintain and enhance the Oratory Chaplaincy Twitter account and ensure a high social media profile for the spiritual and charitable life of the school.

*"into the Truth": from Newman's epitaph: "*Ex Umbris et Imaginibus in Veritatem*": "*From Shadows and Images into the Truth*"

Line Management

The Coordinator of Spiritual Life will be line-managed by the Deputy Head Pastoral but ultimately, like all members of staff, will be responsible to the Head Master.



PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & DEVELOPMENT

1. To be a role-model to pupils through personal presentation and professional conduct.
2. To cooperate with the employer on all matters concerning Health and Safety and specifically to take reasonable care of their own Health and Safety and that of any other person who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
3. To be familiar with the School and Department handbooks and support all the School's policies.
4. To establish effective working relationships with professional colleagues and associate staff.
5. To strive for personal and professional development through active involvement in the School's induction programme, staff development, and performance management procedures.
6. To seek continually an improvement in professional practice, to include attendance at departmental meetings, and participating in appropriate INSET, whether organized in school or externally.
7. To liaise effectively with parents/guardians.
8. To undertake any reasonable task as directed by the Head of Department.
9. To train in basic first aid.
10. To consider the needs of all pupils within lessons (and to implement specialist advice) especially those who: Have SEN; are gifted and talented; are not yet fluent in English.
11. To uphold the ethos of the school, including its emphasis on pastoral care for individual pupils.



THE PERSON

Essential Characteristics:

- You will be a baptised and practising Roman Catholic lay man or woman, passionately committed to the spiritual and personal development of young people of school age.
- Above all you will enjoy the company and challenge of young people in their teenage years, and have a relaxed and unstuffy manner which combines openness and engagement with challenge and formality when necessary.
- You will ideally be a graduate, of any subject, not necessarily theology, or have other experience or qualification that suits you to a chaplaincy role in the Roman Catholic Church.
- You should be able to demonstrate a wide knowledge of the Catholic faith and be able to engage with spiritual, moral and theological matters in an intelligent and sensitive manner.
- You will also have a good understanding of the Oratorian charism, in particular its application to education.
- You will be committed to fostering the spiritual life of pupils and staff and passionate about teaching in a coeducational context, as well as sympathetic to the benefits and challenges that this presents to young people. The school went coeducational in September 2020.
- You will have good social skills, both with young people and also with adults (parents and staff), showing flexibility where needed but also the accountability and a high degree of reliability and formal organisation required in a school context.
- You will have a good sense of the Church's liturgy and be able to recruit and enthuse large numbers of pupils to take part in school worship.
- You will be confident in leading large and small, formal and informal, groups of pupils and adults.
- You will be an articulate speaker with presence and the ability to present, credibly and enthusiastically, the challenges of the Gospel.
- You will have good administrative and organisational skills, including scheduling events, keeping accurate sacramental records of pupils, making bookings, arranging itineraries and timetables, obtaining and conserving resources, delegating responsibilities and providing clear briefings and instructions.
- You will understand and be willing to enter into the lifestyle of a 7 day a week boarding school, which often includes working in the evenings and weekends, sometimes at short notice when challenges emerge.

- You will be expected to have a clear Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced check and for there to be no concerns with regard to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. You will understand the importance of Safeguarding in schools and work proactively to support the highest standards in this area.





SALARY

Dependent on qualifications and experience. The school has its own attractive salary scale.

BENEFITS

- Sports Centre membership with free access to the gym; squash courts, lane swimming and golf course.
- A meal while on duty during term time.
- Contributory pension scheme.
- Free parking.

SAFEGUARDING

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The following duties will be deemed to be included in the duties which you may be required to perform:

- child protection, discipline, health and safety.
- promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons for whom you are responsible.





HOW TO APPLY

Applicants should complete the school's application form and send together with a covering letter in PDF format to recruitment@oratory.co.uk

The closing date for applications is:

9.00am on Friday 28 May 2021. Interviews will take place in the w/c 7 June 2021.

The interview process will include:

- Interviews with the Head Master, Deputy Head Pastoral and a Governor
- Informal conversations with other relevant members of staff, including the Head of Theology
- Tour of the school with the Deputy Head Pastoral

The first Interview will be remote, the second interview will take place at school. We will ask shortlisted candidates to take a lateral flow test on arrival.

Please send postal applications together with a covering letter to:

Human Resources Department
The Oratory School
Woodcote
Reading
RG8 0PJ

For any queries please phone 01491 683506.

The Oratory Schools Association Registered Charity No 309112 is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service. April 2021.





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