

Milton Abbey School

Applicant Pack for the role of Head



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Introduction from the Chair of Governors

Thank you for your interest in the Headship of Milton Abbey School, a truly unique school, offering transformational education in a glorious setting in the heart of Dorset.

Our current Head, Judith Fremont-Barnes, is leaving Milton Abbey at the end of the Summer Term 2023, after five years of exceptional service, when she takes up the post of Head at St Paul's Cathedral School. We are therefore seeking a Head, of energy and vision, to take Milton Abbey School on the next stage of its development.

The new Head will be supported by a dynamic leadership team, an excellent wider staff body and a board of Governors committed to ensuring that Milton Abbey achieves its goal of becoming the first choice for parents seeking an independent boarding school for children who learn differently.

For the better fulfilment of duties, this role attracts suitable accommodation (with the benefit of running costs included), the commitment of training investment and assurance of attractive pension membership.

With just over 200 pupils, we know each as an individual and focus on enabling every student to achieve 'personal bests', in and beyond the classroom.

Our educational philosophy is that all children 'learn differently' and it is our mission to help them to understand how they learn, whatever their starting point. We are a mainstream school with a high percentage of students (85%) identified with learning differences. Others simply welcome our nurturing yet stimulating environment. There are no spectators here: all our students are expected to participate, contribute, and give of their best in all that they do.

Outcomes for our students are remarkable, with many stories every year of extraordinary journeys to excellence, thanks to the careful balance of support and challenge provided by our academic team and the strong focus on both pastoral care and our rich co-curricular programme. Music, sport, the visual and performing arts are all important elements of school life. Student voice is active, with committees in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Digital Leaders, as well as a Round Table in which all students can express their views and contribute to school improvement.

We believe that we provide the broadest academic programme within the independent sector, with 15 BTEC qualifications running alongside traditional A Levels, and unparalleled opportunities to create the right academic pathways to achieve success. Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, Fashion, Music Tech, Film and TV Production, Countryside Management, Hospitality and Sport options. We were honoured to receive the Pearson BTEC International School of the Year in 2019 in recognition of our work and this year we are shortlisted for TES Boarding School of the Year.

We are seeking a Head who will lead our welcoming and inclusive community with enthusiasm, vision, compassion and insight. The Head will lead Milton Abbey into the next exciting stage of its development, implementing the school's key development aims. With a fundraising campaign underway and ambitious plans in place to improve our site and grow our pupil numbers, this role offers scope to achieve significant and satisfying change.

If this opportunity appeals to you, and you feel your experience has prepared you for the role, we will be delighted to receive your application. For initial discussion about the school and the role, please contact Head of Operations, Tracey Edwards on tracey.edwards@miltonabbey.co.uk

With best wishes,



Ian Bromilow | Chair of Governors



Background information

Milton Abbey is a small co-educational boarding and day school for pupils aged 13-18 set in the beautiful Dorset countryside.

We offer an outstanding range of traditional and vocational qualifications, chosen to inspire students and prepare them for adult life. Our focus is not only on what a student needs to learn, but on developing the attitudes and habits for lifelong success.

We are proud of our track record of enabling young people to gain the self-belief necessary to achieve whatever their starting point. Known and appreciated as individuals, they make the most of our glorious setting, build lasting friendships and enjoy a full programme of evening and weekend activities.

Our exceptional pastoral care and partnership with parents mean that we quickly gain exceptional knowledge of our students, working with each to set ambitious targets.

Throughout their time here, our students benefit from the support, inspiration, challenge and encouragement of an extraordinary team of teaching, boarding and support staff, dedicated to enabling each pupil to achieve 'personal bests', in and beyond the classroom.

Our history

Although Milton Abbey as a seat of learning spans over a thousand years of monastic tradition, dating back to its founding as a collegiate church in c934 AD by Athelstan, King of Wessex, the current school was founded just 69 years ago.

In 1954, with only 24 boys, in a draughty mansion with an overgrown farmyard, a group of teachers, supported by the Hambro family and various forward-thinking businesses, set about forming an exciting alternative to the traditional, conventional public schools.

One of the founding ideals of the school was that it would prepare pupils not just for university but for careers in commerce. Fully co-educational since 2014, Milton Abbey education has been holistic and inclusive since its inception, with a firm focus on wellbeing, before other schools knew the meaning of the word.

The school today

We are proud to be beneficiaries of this tradition. Milton Abbey School in 2023 is a transformational learning environment in which every child is known, noticed and nurtured.

As a co-educational senior boarding school, we are small by choice, to enable extraordinary focus on the holistic development of each individual. We are committed to removing barriers to learning and equipping students with the strategies they need to succeed in 21st century life. Our committed staff work in partnership with parents at this critical period in the development of each young person.

Milton Abbey has always been a community of individuals who dare to be different and celebrate their uniqueness. Wellbeing is at our heart and we rejoice in our extraordinary environment.

Landscaped by Capability Brown, with our stunning Abbey at its heart, Milton Abbey's grounds provide what are generally recognised as among the most beautiful school settings in the country.

In our high challenge, moderate pressure environment, 'personal best' is the target in every aspect of performance. We offer the broadest possible choice of courses of study and aim to develop a lifelong love of learning. We build character and confidence in our young people, by providing extraordinary opportunities for all, in and beyond the classroom. We embed pupil voice at the heart of our decision-making.

Today, as we look towards the 75th anniversary of the school in 2029, Milton Abbey is nationally recognised as a leader in vocational study and continues to provide a genuine alternative from 'one-size-fits-all' education.

Our approach works: of our 2022 leavers, 100% of our university applicants secured a place at a chosen university. More than that, they leave us having discovered who they are and how they can contribute. We are proud to send out into the world young people who are interesting and interested: irresistibly employable.

Our key development aims

Our chief ambition as a school is to be the first-choice independent boarding school for young people who will benefit from learning differently.

To achieve this in the next seven years, as we approach the school's 75th anniversary in 2029, we will focus on four key development aims:

A | To establish Milton Abbey as the premier, world-class centre for teenage learning development

B | To place the unique learning needs of our pupils at the heart of school life

C | To deepen our community commitments to equality, diversity, inclusion, sustainability and wellbeing for all

D | To maintain financial stability and growth, to support our school's ambitious aims for development

Looking to the future

In recent years the school has undertaken a thorough process of strategic planning, details of which can be read in our School Strategy: Looking Towards 2029 (July 2022). This document sets out our Vision, Ethos and the four key development aims (outlined above), encompassing the philosophical, educational, ethical and operational matters which form our focus for the decade ahead.

The school is in a buoyant position, with healthy pupil numbers, a financial surplus in each of the last six years and the ability to support a large number of current families with a bursary or scholarship. Governors are committed to the investment needed to maintain and develop our facilities and we aspire to fund pupils of all backgrounds to access a transformative Milton Abbey education.

To enable development for current and future generations, we will:

- Continue to raise our national and international profile, ensuring that all those who stand to benefit from our unique offer are aware of Milton Abbey
- Increase the school size, with planned growth to 250 boarders by 2027

We are seeking a Head with energy and vision, a strong commitment to the school's holistic and inclusive focus, and the capacity to further to develop our reputation as a market-leader in the education of young people who learn differently.

The 75th Fund

The School Strategy runs in parallel with a major fundraising campaign, the twin aims of which are to invest in the physical fabric of the school and to support bursaries.

The Fund enables parents, pupils and alumni to play a part in shaping the direction of development through consultation and capital investment.

By 2033 we will have completed a decade-long site upgrade of the school buildings including classrooms, boarding houses, sport facilities and the restoration of our Grade 1 mansion.

Works planned for the first stage of development include:

- Upgrading the Boat House Gym
- Refurbishing boarding dormitories and bathrooms in our older boarding houses
- Relaying the astro-turf outdoor pitch
- Completing the equestrian facilities with a manège
- Redecorating and upgrading the main school classroom blocks

Over the next decade we will focus intently on building our Learning Development facilities into a world-leading centre of excellence. We already have a team of leading teachers in the field. To support their cutting-edge Learning Development work, we will:

- Develop a state of the art Learning Development Centre
- Develop our team to include in-house professionals in all therapeutic disciplines
- Hold in-person and remote training for parents and professionals including an annual Learn Differently Conference
- Work closely in conjunction with university research departments to share best practice

Our setting and facilities

Set in a secluded wooded valley, in Capability Brown-landscaped grounds, halfway between the towns of Blandford Forum and Dorchester, Milton Abbey occupies the site of a former Benedictine monastery, founded over 1,000 years ago.

The two remaining monastery buildings are used daily by the school: the Abbey for regular services and musical performances, and the Abbot's Hall as our dining hall.

Our expansive natural surroundings mean the school boasts a large farm and stables used for vocational learning, a nine-hole golf course designed by the late Peter Alliss, impressive grass pitches for a variety of sports, and plenty of inspiring outdoor space to run lessons, be active, or to relax.

The school has a range of facilities to support the wide variety of subjects on offer at the school. They include classrooms, laboratories, and workshops to teach a full spectrum of academic and vocational subjects, a library in a converted ballroom, specialist rooms for teaching Creative Media, TV & Film, Art, Fashion Design and Music courses, a Hospitality Kitchen, and a 370-seat theatre. Indoor sports facilities include a 25-metre swimming pool, golf simulator, gymnasium, and sports hall.



Our school aims and expectations

Milton Abbey works to be a community in which each individual is known, understood and respected and in which:

- kindness is central
- diversity and difference are celebrated
- all stand up for what they know to be right

We work to make school a healthy, safe and positive experience for all, prioritising:

- wellbeing
- joy in learning
- success, in and beyond the classroom

We remove barriers to learning:

- our focus is always on 'personal best'
- challenge is high and pressure is moderate
- we build self-belief and ambition

We develop confidence by providing you with:

- the broadest possible choice of courses of study
- opportunities and experiences designed to build competence and confidence
- mentoring including personalized targets and goals

Our teachers and house team will provide the ideal balance of support and challenge; they will:

- know and care for you as an individual
- understand and respond to your learning needs
- expect, encourage and celebrate effort

We will teach you how to how to take control of your life and learning, ensuring you:

- understand and meet community expectations
- have the tools and strategies you need to regulate yourself and to access any help you need
- find enthusiasm, direction and purpose

Working in partnership with you and your family,

Milton Abbey aims to send you into the world ready and able to make a difference:

- knowing and understanding yourself
- able to connect with others and make a positive contribution
- irresistibly employable and a pleasure to know

We will respect you. We expect you to respect yourself and others and to:

- make kindness your cornerstone
- contribute, participate, challenge yourself
- give of your best in all that you do

The role

The Head reports to the Chair of Governors and is responsible for leading, managing and developing our School to achieve our aspiration of being a transformational, leading establishment for students who have learning differences.

The Head is responsible to the Governors for all aspects of day-to-day management, performance, operation and leadership of Milton Abbey School, supported by the Senior Deputy Head and Deputies Team (Academic, Co-curricular, Boarding/PSHE, Wellbeing/Lay Chaplain), Head of Operations and Director of Finance.

All Milton Abbey employees are expected to make the safeguarding and welfare of students a central priority, whatever their role. The Head, supported by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, takes lead responsibility for setting and maintaining a culture in which the safeguarding of our young people is the central priority in all areas of school life.

The school celebrates diversity and is committed to achieving equality for all. Those of all faiths and none are equally welcome in our community. The Abbey is central to our school life. Community worship is in the tradition of the Church of England and all staff are expected to work in sympathy with the Christian values of the school.

Duties and responsibilities will include but not be limited to:

Strategic direction

- Work with the Governing Body to implement the Milton Abbey School Strategy (strategic plan) for the school
- Keep the School Strategy under constant review, translating it into clear and measurable targets for implementation and monitoring by the Governing Body
- Ensure that the school's key stakeholders, including staff, parents, alumni, and the wider community, understand and are encouraged to support the strategic vision and overall direction of the school
- Ensure that the ethos, aims and expectations of the school are sustained
- Ensure that excellent relationships between staff, pupils, and parents (both current and prospective) continue to be a priority
- Constantly seek ways to improve and develop the school
- Actively support the Governors to understand their role and work effectively, in particular, working together on strategic matters, encouraging and holding the leadership team to account for standards, and agreed performance measures
- Be aware of, and respond to, the context of the school and sector, locally, nationally and internationally, adapting plans and strategies in response to changes as necessary

Leadership and management

- Lead by example with integrity, clarity, purpose and optimism, promoting kindness, fairness, equity and inclusion
- Provide strong, visible, and accessible leadership to the whole school community
- Lead on pupil admissions, ensuring a full roll and delivering sustainable growth in pupil numbers, in line with the Milton Abbey School Strategy
- Ensure that community expectations are understood and met by pupils and that the school is run in a safe, orderly and efficient manner, in line with its Ethos, Aims and Expectations
- Ensure that staff understand and adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct

- Oversee the operation and continuous development of a strong, cohesive, and proactive Senior Leadership Team, ensuring that roles and responsibilities are clear and that the highest standards of performance are set and maintained
- Provide overall leadership to all staff, developing amongst them:
 - a culture of excellence across all areas of school life
 - a deep commitment to the school's Aims and Expectations
 - a sense of involvement in Milton Abbey's important education work, whatever their role
 - a thorough understanding of the school's vision, strategic direction and business needs
- Ensure excellent communication across the staff body
- Ensure that rigorous performance management is in place for the whole staff
- Oversee the implementation, review and development of school policies, systems and procedures
- Ensure that the school meets or exceeds all statutory and legal requirements
- Maintain inspection-readiness at all times
- Ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to recruit, develop, appraise, manage, reward, and retain the best and most committed teaching and support staff, to ensure the school effectively meets its aims
- Supported by the Head of Operations, take lead responsibility for Health & Safety, ensuring that appropriate policies, procedures, systems and arrangements are in place and are kept under review
- Engage with support mechanisms and processes provided for your own welfare by the Governor responsible for Head's Wellbeing
- Participate in appraisal and such continuous professional development as is deemed necessary by the Chairman of Governors, in order to ensure knowledge appropriate to the role and to enable you as Head to fulfil responsibilities effectively, so that the Independent School Standards and National Minimum Standards are met consistently, and that the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted
- Oversee all aspects of the pupil experience and offer, including behaviour, student voice, discipline, attendance and registration
- Oversee all aspects of parent experience, including responsibility for the complaints process and for issues connected with the Terms and Conditions

Pastoral care

- Take overall responsibility for the delivery of excellent pastoral care for our pupils, including safeguarding, wellbeing and discipline
- Work with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSL Team to oversee all aspects of monitoring and safeguarding
- Provide the highest level of care for the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our pupils
- Supported by the Head of Boarding, oversee all aspects of our full boarding programme, ensuring that National Minimum Standards for Boarding are met or exceeded
- Lead on partnership working with external agencies
- Work in sympathy with the Christian foundation and values of the school, overseeing the work of the chaplaincy

Teaching and learning

- Oversee continuous development of a broad, accessible, and challenging curriculum, informed by high academic standards relative to ability
- Foster an environment of continuous evaluation and innovation, including the use of relevant technology to support learning and teaching

- Supported by the Deputy Head (Academic), oversee the academic programme, including curriculum design and development, assessment, reporting on pupil performance and progress and academic intervention
- Ensure that lessons and activities delivered by staff across the school provide educational challenge and set high expectations for all learners, appropriate to their starting points, with an emphasis on achieving 'personal best'
- Ensure that teachers consistently meet or exceed the requirements of the Teachers' Standards, taking action on any underperformance according to school policies and procedures
- Oversee the broad and deep programme of extra-curricular activities

Business management

- Oversee and take an active role in the strategic financial planning of the school, supported by the Director of Finance
- Ensure appropriate deployment and overall management of all resources (financial, human, and physical) in support of the overall mission, aims and strategic plan, ensuring value for money and the maintenance of an attractive, appropriate educational offer
- Supported by the Director of Finance and Head of Operations, ensure that the school's trading arm, Milton Abbey School Services Ltd (MASS), maximises contribution to school revenues within the agreed scope of its operations
- Oversee and develop a positive and proactive marketing and public relations programme, supported by the Head of Communications, Marketing & Events
- Innovate and develop revenue streams to maximise income generation opportunities in line with the School Strategy
- Oversee the financial support (including bursary and scholarship) processes operated by the Director of Finance and Head of Admissions, seeking to widen access where possible
- Monitor and report to Governors any threats, actual or potential, to the school's safe and successful operation
- Lead on all legal matters, supported by the Director of Finance and Head of Operations

External Engagement

- Play an active and visible role in the local community, maintaining and strengthening relationships with key stakeholders
- Engage actively with the school's associations (Boarding Schools Association, Society of Heads) to promote the interests of the school
- Actively promote the school's work and build its reputation, nationally and internationally
- Foster and proactively develop links with a range of independent and state-maintained 'feeder' schools
- Foster and proactively develop links with universities and employers
- Work closely with the Head of Admissions to ensure that creative marketing strategies are in place, taking all appropriate opportunities to publicise the school
- Promote and maintain positive relationships with all current, confirmed and prospective parents
- Seek to develop links and build long-term relationships with alumni and friends of the School through the Milton Abbey Association, supported by the MAA Manager
- Liaise with the representatives of the Diocese of Salisbury (owners of the Abbey) in all matters connected with the use and maintenance of the Abbey, serving on the committee of the Milton Abbey Heritage Trust

The person

The successful candidate will display the following key skills, experience, and attributes:

Qualifications and experience

- A degree is essential, whilst an additional post-graduate leadership and/or management qualification is an advantage
- A relevant teaching qualification is essential.
- A proven track record of success in academic within a boarding environment is essential.
- A proven track record of success in developing relationships with a broad range of stakeholders.
- Significant experience of building, developing and leading teams.
- Significant experience in managing human, financial and physical resources.
- Experience of prioritising and delegating effectively in a busy and demanding environment.
- Significant safeguarding experience, including experience as a Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL.

Knowledge, skills, and ability

- Outstanding communicator (both written and verbal).
- Ability to inspire, motivate, innovate, and develop a clear vision.
- Commitment to a broad-ranging curriculum which provides opportunities for each individual to realise their full academic potential.
- Commitment to the delivery of a broad extra-curricular programme which provides a wealth of sporting, artistic and cultural opportunities.
- Strong commercial and business acumen.
- Understanding of the importance of fundraising, PR, and marketing.
- Excellent knowledge of and ability to manage financial matters, risk, regulatory and legal issues.
- Excellent decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- IT literate with a clear understanding of the role of technology in the curriculum.

Personal characteristics

- Committed to the ethos, values, and objectives of Milton Abbey School.
- Committed to the happiness and well-being of its pupils.
- Excellent judgement and integrity.
- Charismatic, confident, assured communicator.
- Strategic and forward-looking.
- Adaptable and decisive.
- Inspires trust and confidence in all stakeholders: parents, governors, staff, and pupils.
- Robust and enthusiastic.
- Warm, caring, and empathetic.
- Visible and approachable with excellent interpersonal skills.

How to apply

Application forms and covering letters should be submitted by email to hr@miltonabbey.co.uk.

For an initial discussion, please contact Tracey Edwards, Head of Operations, on 01258 882182.

Milton Abbey School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The appointment will therefore be the subject to satisfactory completion of all the necessary safeguarding checks.

Additionally, please be aware that Milton Abbey School will conduct online searches of shortlisted candidates. This check will be part of a safeguarding check, and the search will purely be based on whether an individual is suitable to work with children.

To avoid unconscious bias and any risk of discrimination, a person who will not be on the appointment panel will conduct the online search and will only share information with the panel if and when search findings are of concern and are relevant to the recruitment process.





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