



WOLVERHAMPTON
GRAMMAR SCHOOL



Appointment of a Chief Operating Officer

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Executive Summary

Founded in 1512, Wolverhampton Grammar School is one of the oldest schools in the country. As a selective, co-educational, and socially diverse independent school of 750+ students aged 4-18 years, it enjoys an outstanding reputation. Award-winning and judged "Excellent" by the Independent Schools Inspectorate, this is a fantastic opportunity to join a nationally recognised, forward-thinking school.

The School now seeks an exceptional and strategically minded Chief Operating Officer to join the Senior Management Team. This is a pivotal leadership role with responsibility for overseeing the School's operational functions and ensuring the continued delivery of an outstanding educational environment that supports both pupils and staff.

The successful candidate will lead and inspire a high-performing team of professional support staff, working closely with teaching colleagues to sustain a culture of excellence, innovation and personalised learning. In an increasingly dynamic educational market, where independent schools must adapt to shifting expectations, competitive pressures and evolving business models, the COO will play a transformational role in reshaping the School's operational resilience and long-term sustainability. The role requires a dynamic and commercially astute leader with significant senior management experience, outstanding organisational and relationship-building skills, and a proven ability to drive operational effectiveness, strategic development and sustainable growth.

The School welcomes applications from accomplished professionals with leadership experience gained within education, the commercial sector, or charitable organisations. While prior experience in an educational setting is not essential, candidates should demonstrate a strong affinity with the independent school sector, together with the strategic insight, operational expertise and collaborative leadership style needed to thrive in this complex and rewarding position.



An Introduction to Wolverhampton Grammar School

History

Founded in 1512, Wolverhampton Grammar School has a rich and varied history serving the young people of Wolverhampton and its surroundings. On the present site since 1875, WGS was a boys' Direct Grant grammar school through much of the twentieth century before returning to independence in 1980. Fully co-educational since the 1990s, WGS opened an on-campus Junior School in 2011 to start at Year 3. From September 2021, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children have also joined, making WGS an all-through school for the first time in its history.

Ethos & Values

Whilst remaining a selective school, WGS is proud to serve a broad range of student abilities, interests, and needs.

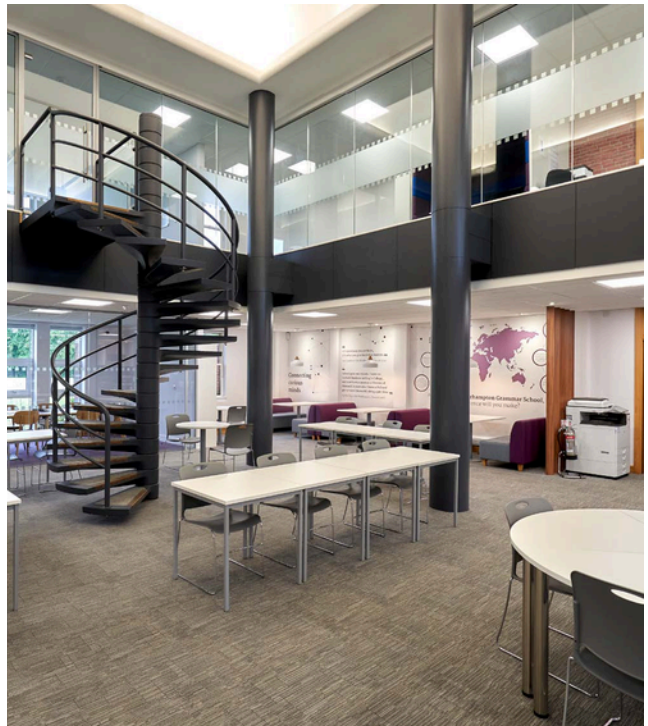
The mission statements "Education as individual as your child" and "To deliver education that transforms lives as well as minds" form the bedrock of the School's approach and are lived out every day by staff who work hard to bring out the best in each student across their academic, pastoral, and extra-curricular endeavours. WGS is unquestionably the highest performing and most vibrant independent school in the area. Conscious of its history as a city school, the provision of bursary places is vital to the ethos of WGS and represents an ongoing fundraising priority. The School is award-winning and rated "Excellent" by the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

An Introduction to Wolverhampton Grammar School

Community

Wolverhampton is a proud city, reflective of the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the urban West Midlands whilst also lying adjacent to open countryside, small towns and villages in Staffordshire and Shropshire. All local communities are represented in the student body, which is one of the most multicultural of any HMC day school. Parents and students express high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the School in regular surveys.

WGS is truly a family-feeling school, with multiple members and even generations of the same families attending and a dedicated, invested teaching and support staff body, many of whom have children at the school. WGS alumni are in touch, committed, and supportive, lending the school the benefits of their experience in all walks of life locally, nationally, and in over 30 countries across the globe.



An Introduction to Wolverhampton Grammar School

Academic Life

The journey starts with play-based learning in Reception, moving smartly through the most effective methods of child-centred teaching going up the Junior School, where all students show better-than-average progress, in most cases significantly so. In the Senior School, a broad experiential curriculum throughout Key Stage 3 evolves to a GCSE framework offering noticeably more optionality and flexibility for the individual than most schools can provide. At Sixth Form, over 20 A Level subjects, two Cambridge Technical courses, and the Extended Project Qualification are available alongside first-rate Higher Education guidance which supports students into the full range of Russell Group and other universities, specialist colleges, and apprenticeships. Public examination results at all levels are excellent relative to the students' ability bands. The school's special educational needs provision, known as OpAL (Opportunities through Assisted Learning), is highly effective and has a cherished local reputation.

Pastoral Care

The School's pastoral care at all ages is particularly well-regarded by parents and students alike. Teachers' pastoral capabilities are as important to the school as their academic strengths. Both Junior and Senior School's benefit from House systems although these operate in different ways as appropriate to the age-groups involved. Year 7 is treated separately in order to optimise integration between those who come up from the Junior School and those who join from a vast range of external feeder schools, most of which are state primaries. Sixth Formers benefit from a dedicated pastoral team and a School Counsellor is available for students at all stages. Student Parliament and Peer Support make important contributions too.



An Introduction to Wolverhampton Grammar School

How the School uses Technology

WGS invested heavily in its IT infrastructure some years ago, following a careful study of best practice in the education sector. All teachers have an iPad and students in all year groups either have their own device or have access to one at school, depending on whether they are Seniors or Juniors. Technology is used to support teaching and learning in a myriad of purposeful ways, such that WGS was shortlisted in 2019 for the Times Educational Supplement Award in Best Use of Technology. At the same time, the school's most important learning resource remains the relationship between the teacher and the students in the classroom: visitors note the discursive, interactive nature of WGS lessons and the effortless natural integration of technology within this approach.

Extra-curricular Life

With over 100 clubs, activities, and co-curricular opportunities each week, as well as an exciting UK and overseas trips calendar, WGS has the widest choice outside the classroom of any school in the area. All staff contribute and all students are involved, usually in multiple endeavours. The school's provision makes full use of its excellent facilities which are located on a 30-acre greenfield campus 10 minutes' walk from Wolverhampton City Centre. An attractive spread of Victorian, Edwardian and more modern buildings house multiple academic, creative and performing arts specialisms including theatre, recital hall, art gallery and dance studio. All the school's playing fields and other amenities such as the sports centre, netball and fives courts and AstroTurf are conveniently situated on the campus.





Governance and Leadership

Wolverhampton Grammar School is governed by a Board of Directors, who are supported by a Council and Board of Trustees.

The Directors come from a broad range of industries, sectors and backgrounds. They are a team of highly committed and experienced individuals whose determination to deliver outstanding educational opportunities to students is second to none.

The Chair is Shaun Aldis.

Reporting to the Head, the Chief Operating Officer is a member of the School's Senior Management Team which comprises of:

- Head – Nic Anderson
- Senior Deputy Head – Dan Peters
- Academic Deputy Head – Toby Hughes
- Assistant Head (Student Welfare & Safeguarding) – Claudine Jones
- Assistant Head (Operations) – Jon Wood
- Assistant Head (Academic) – Alex Yarnley
- Director of Marketing and Communications – Rachael Perks



Role Description

The role of the Chief Operating Officer is to act as a trusted strategic executive advisor, leading robust strategic finance, risk management, HR, Assets and commercial operational infrastructure. The successful candidate will drive the business function of the school by working with the Head, Directors and the Executive Team, shaping and implementing the next phase of its strategic development, ensuring its continued operational and financial success.

This is an exceptional opportunity for an inspiring and ambitious senior leader to drive the business function of Wolverhampton Grammar School, building upon what is already excellent at this thriving and highly successful school.

Working with the Head, Directors, and executive team, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) will act as the school's commercial adviser, shaping and implementing the next phase of its strategic development in ensuring its continued operational and financial success.

We are seeking a COO who will act as a trusted strategic executive advisor, leading robust strategic finance, risk management, HR, Assets and commercial operational infrastructure, while remaining hands on and pragmatic. This is a highly visible, onsite role requiring discretion, sound judgement and the confidence to challenge constructively, always placing the best interests of the students at the heart of decision making.

Prior experience within the education sector is not a prerequisite. Candidates will have a proven track record of executive leadership, commercial success and financial control balancing the needs and challenges of a complex environment.

Applications are encouraged from candidates with a diverse range of professional backgrounds who can demonstrate strong commercial and operational expertise and a successful record of leading teams through a collaborative and enabling approach. Candidates will show a genuine understanding of independent education, a willingness to embrace fully the distinctive opportunities of working at Wolverhampton Grammar School, and a clear resonance with the school's aims, values and ethos.

Role Description

Specific responsibilities

Main responsibilities

Strategy

- Develop, in association with the Head, SMT and Directors, the strategic plan for the next phase of the school's development.
- Work in close partnership with the Head to deliver the school's vision and strategic plan, particularly in respect of finance, infrastructure, commercial development, alternative revenue generation and operational delivery.
- Contribute beyond the core functions of the COO's finance and operational remit as a business planner and commercial thinker, ensuring that the school seizes opportunities presented by a rapidly evolving external landscape.
- Work in partnership with the HR Manager to support recruitment, staffing and workforce planning, ensuring the school attracts and retains high-quality staff aligned to its strategic priorities.
- Support the HR Manager in the development and implementation of HR policies and a coherent people strategy, ensuring compliance, best practice and alignment with the school's long-term vision.

Leadership and Management

- Lead and inspire the support staff and facilitate strong and effective working relationships between teaching and support staff.
- Line manage and performance manage relevant staff.
- Oversee the training and professional development of line-managed staff and the wider support staff.
- Promote modern business practices and drive initiatives to ensure operations are consistent with those of a leading independent school, while preserving important and valued traditions and operating in line with WGS's policies and procedures.
- Develop and nurture productive relationships with key external stakeholders and service providers, including insurers, legal advisers, the local community and WGS.



Role Description

Finance

- Manage the financial performance of the school, maintaining a sustainable and forward-looking strategic financial plan.
- Advise the Directors and Head on all matters relating to financial strategy, including the allocation of resources and the financial and commercial implications of key decisions.
- Ensure that robust systems of financial planning, control and reporting operate across the school, aligned to strategic priorities and the school's policies and procedures.
- Oversee the work of the Finance Manager and team, including budgets, forecasts, fee income, purchase ledger processes and supplier payments, and the completion of relevant accounts for internal and external publication.
- Provide clear, timely and insightful financial reporting to the Head, Directors and SMT.
- Work in partnership with the Finance Manager on debtor management, consulting the Head as appropriate, and contribute to decisions regarding bursary awards including interviewing parent applicants.
- Analyse school fees and cost drivers, including benchmarking, and work with the Directors and Head to propose fee levels and salary frameworks.
- Coordinate the preparation and presentation of business cases to the Directors.
- Ensure that the school secures best value from all contracts and procurement arrangements.
- Work with WGS Trustees in support of their investment decisions and support fundraising.

Estates and Health & Safety

- Develop and maintain a forward-looking estates master plan that supports the school's strategy and long-term vision.
- Set capital and infrastructure priorities and oversee delivery of agreed projects, working with the relevant staff and external agencies.
- Ensure the safe, effective and compliant management of the school estate, maintaining high standards of health and safety for all users.
- Provide strategic oversight of health and safety and risk management across the school, establishing clear accountability and reporting key risks and mitigations to SMT and the Directors.
- Ensure delivery of planned maintenance, sustainability initiatives and loss-prevention measures, meeting statutory requirements and supporting long-term value.
- Oversee transport, security, catering and cleaning services, ensuring efficient, safe and high-quality provision across the school.
- Lead and manage the school's arrangements for comprehensive security arrangements.

IT

- Oversee the development, procurement, delivery and management of cost-effective IT infrastructure, data and services to support high-quality teaching and learning, appropriate online safety solutions, communications and administration across all areas of the school's operations.
- Ensure the safety, security and integrity of the school's IT network and digital data.

HR

- Provide strategic oversight and guidance to the HR Manager.
- Line manage and work alongside the HR Manager to ensure that relevant HR policies are in place and adhered to.
- Manage the professional development, appraisal and training for the support staff.
- Provide leadership, guidance and advice on all HR matters, including employment law issues.



Role Description

Commercial Activities

- Oversee commercial operations, including sports facilities and lettings, to maximise income from school assets and identify new revenue-generating opportunities.
- Working in close partnership with the Head, the Deputy and Executive staff to optimise the profitability of the school and expand the network of contacts for the benefit of the school.
- Attend key marketing and open events for the school as required.

Governance, Compliance and Risk Management

- Oversee the preparation of agendas, papers and minutes for the Board, Finance and Estates Committee.
- Lead and oversee policy development and implementation within the COO's areas of responsibility.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, regulation, internal policies and procedures, championing best practice across the school.
- Oversee the School's data protection arrangements and oversee GDPR.
- Drive the identification, assessment and management of business risk, including maintenance of the Risk Register.
- Ensure appropriate insurance cover is in place for all key insurable risks.
- Lead business continuity planning to ensure the school is well prepared for emergencies.
- Promote a positive health and safety culture throughout the school and fulfil all responsibilities in line with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Community and External Relations

- Promote a culture of collaboration across WGS and the wider community, strengthening internal cohesion and external engagement.
- Along with SMT, build and sustain effective relationships with parents, partners and stakeholders, actively seeking feedback to inform continuous improvement and strategic decision-making.
- Develop and extend strategic links with state and independent schools locally, regionally and nationally, fostering positive, mutually beneficial partnerships that enhance the school's financial and operational effectiveness.

Other Duties

- Any other reasonable tasks commensurate with the role to include before, during and after school duties as a member of SMT to ensure the smooth running of the school.
- Individuals have a responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people they are responsible for or come into contact with.
- Undertake appropriate professional development, including adhering to the principle of performance management.
- Adhere to the ethos of the school, promote the agreed vision and aims of the school and set an example of personal integrity and professionalism.

Review

- This Job Description is subject to annual review to reflect the evolving needs of the school. You may also be required to undertake such other comparable duties as the Head requires from time to time.

The statements above are designed to give a flavour of the role; responsibilities and duties may vary from time to time as the position evolves and the postholder will be required to undertake such additional tasks as the Head may reasonably expect. A flexible approach is essential and the role will involve a manageable amount of evening and weekend working in order to attend meetings and events. On occasion, the postholder will be required to travel nationally and internationally. As a member of the Senior Management Team, the postholder is required to work independently and in accordance with School's policies, professional standards, and budgetary limits at all times.

The Head hopes to appoint someone who will wish to actively participate in the wider life of the School and perhaps contribute to the extra-curricular opportunities on offer to students.

Person Specification

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.

Qualifications	<p>The professional, technical or academic qualifications that the Applicant must have to undertake the role or the training that they must have received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · educated to degree level or equivalent professional experience 	Essential	<p>Production of the Applicant's certificates Discussion at interview Independent verification of qualifications</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · a professional accounting qualification e.g. ACCA or similar 	Desirable	
Experience	<p>The categories of work or organisations, types of achievements and activities that would be likely to predict success in the role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A strong and credible track record of successful executive leadership within a complex organisation, including experience of working closely with a Board of Trustees, Directors or an equivalent governance structure. · Direct executive level responsibility for both financial strategy and operational delivery. · A proven ability to contribute strategically to the wider development of an organisation, while retaining a firm grasp of operational detail and execution. · Experience of leading and managing change in complex organisational environments, with demonstrable success in building effective relationships with a wide range of stakeholders and balancing competing needs and priorities. · Experience of working within complex and multi-stranded budgetary frameworks. · Proven success in leading, motivating and developing high-performing, multidisciplinary teams. · Experience of operating confidently and effectively within a regulatory and compliance-driven environment. 	Essential	<p>Contents of the application form Interview Professional references</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · previous work within a school environment 	Desirable	

<p>Skills</p>	<p>The skills required by the Applicant to perform effectively in the role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Strong financial literacy, with analytical capability and the ability to interpret and manage company accounts, as well as develop and manage sustainable long-term financial plans. · Well-developed strategic and organisational skills, with the capacity to guide and support whole-organisation development. · Strong financial and commercial acumen, with the ability to assimilate, analyse, interpret and present complex information clearly, including the assessment and management of risk. · Experience of, or the ability to, generate approaches to diversify and realign budgets to adapt to changing financial landscapes. · A strong track record of managing a wide range of support and business services to a consistently high standard. · Strong project and operational management skills, including the ability to deliver complex initiatives to time and budget. 	<p>Essential</p>	<p>Contents of the application form Interview Professional references</p>
<p>Knowledge</p>	<p>The knowledge required by the Applicant to perform effectively in the role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · An understanding of the commercial, economic and financial imperatives relevant to the leadership and management of schools. · A clear understanding of safeguarding and child protection responsibilities and a strong commitment to best practice in safeguarding. · Demonstrable knowledge across estates and property management, HR, IT, health and safety, legal and regulatory compliance and related operational areas. 	<p>Essential</p>	<p>Contents of the application form Interview Professional references</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · school safer recruitment procedure · data protection · a good understanding of HR and recruitment practices 	<p>Desirable</p>		

<p>Personal competencies and qualities</p>	<p>The personal qualities that the Applicant requires to perform effectively in the role and to ensure that the Applicant safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Good leadership skills and the ability to inspire and challenge colleagues. · Strong persuasive, influencing and interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate clearly and confidently at all levels. · Strong decision-making skills with the ability to make decisions and recommendations based on the analysis of options. · A commitment to staff and own personal development. · Capacity to work under pressure to meet deadlines and organisational priorities. · A strong commitment to bursaries, partnerships and outreach, with a clear sense of social responsibility. · Full commitment to, and an active promoter of, diversity, equality and inclusion. 	<p>Essential</p>	<p>Contents of the application form Interview Professional references</p>
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Appointment Process and How to Apply

Closing date: Monday 1st June 2026 at 9am

We do reserve the right to close this advertisement early if we receive a high volume of suitable applications.

Shortlisting will take place week beginning 1st June 2026.

First round interviews will be held early in the week beginning 8th June 2026. Second round interviews for successful candidates will take place in the same week.

Salary: £80,000 - £90,000 per annum depending on experience

Start Date: As soon as possible

Contract: All year round, permanent

To apply for this role, please complete the Wolverhampton Grammar School application form along with a supporting statement and email this to: recruitment@wgs-sch.net

Candidates are encouraged to visit the school before applying. To arrange a visit, please contact Carrie Clines, HR Assistant on 01902 421326 or email on cec@wgs-sch.net

For a School visit the following dates and times are available:

Friday 15th May at 10.00am

Tuesday 19th May at 2.00pm

Friday 22nd May at 10.00am

Wolverhampton Grammar School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The successful candidate must be willing to undergo an enhanced disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service.

