



MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT DAY SCHOOL
BOYS 7-18 & SIXTH FORM GIRLS



Brief for the appointment of

Master

ODGERS 





Contents

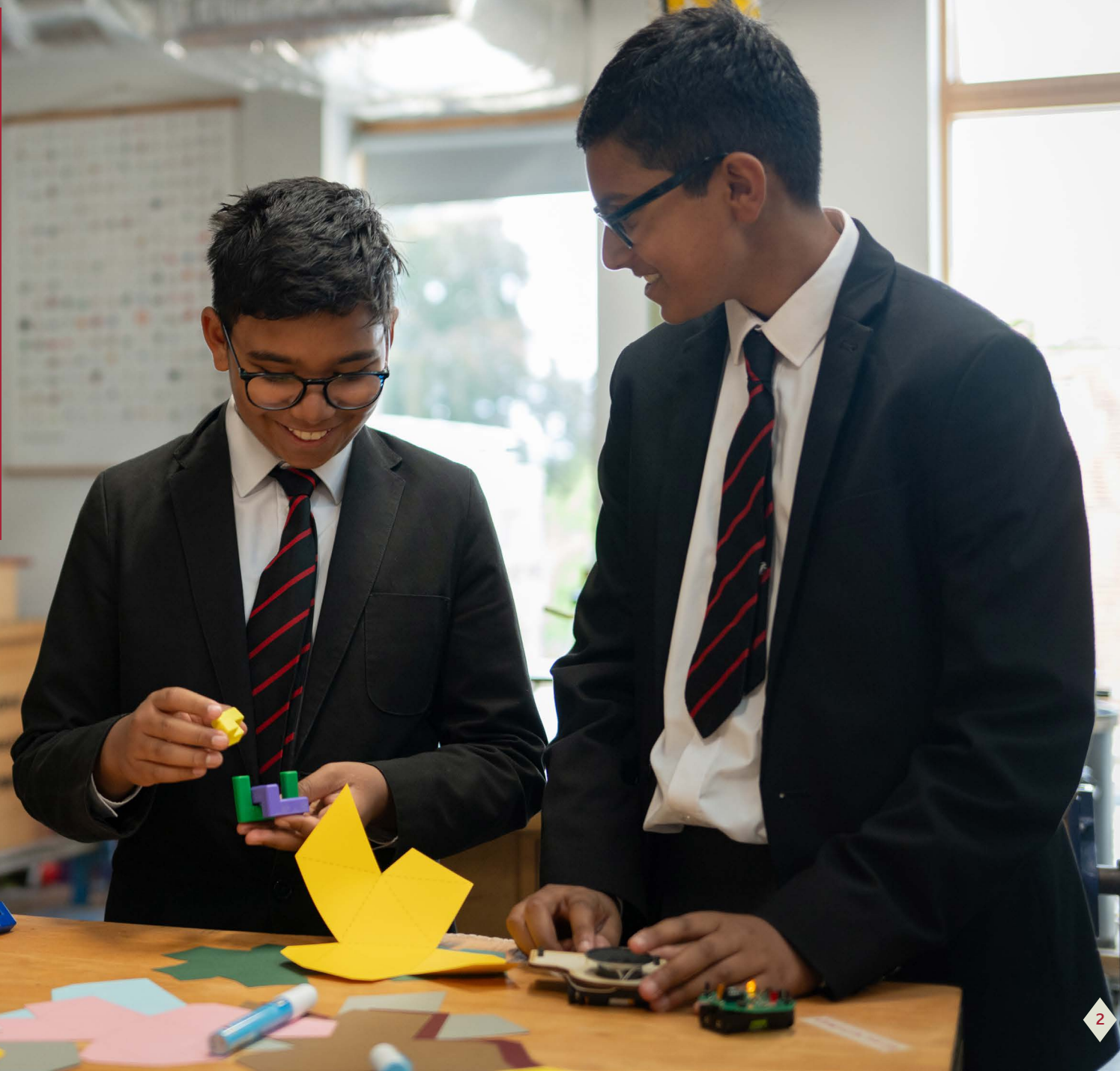
The School **3**

The Role **8**

The Person **10**

Life in Oxford **11**

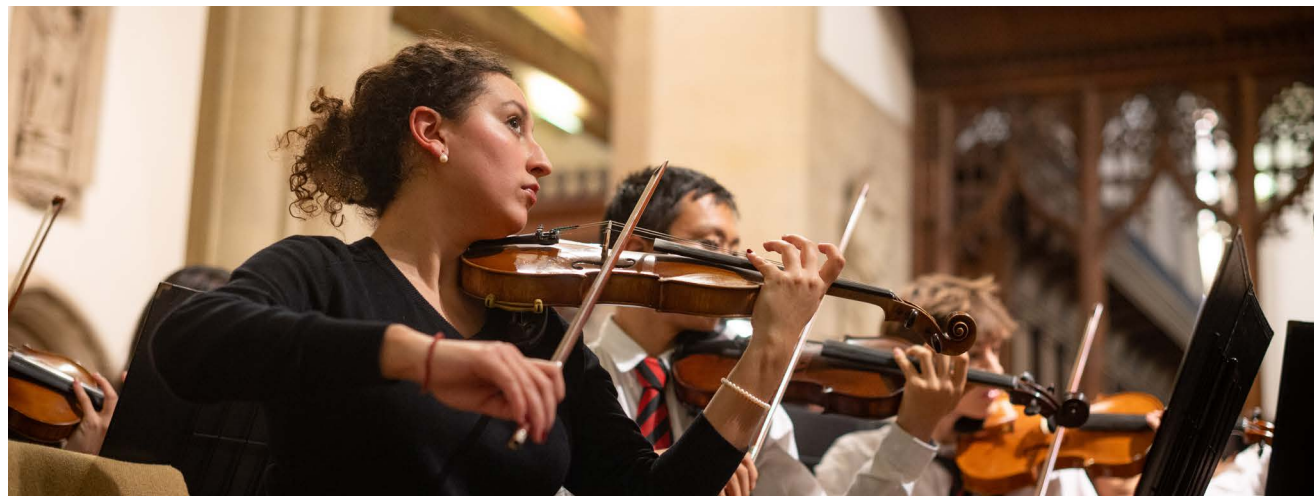
How to Apply **12**





The School

Magdalen College School (MCS) is one of the country's leading independent day schools, located in the heart of Oxford, just beyond Magdalen Bridge. Founded in 1480 by William Waynflete, schoolmaster, Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor of England, the school has provided continuous education for over five centuries and remains closely connected to Magdalen College and to the city in which it sits.



Background

Originally established to educate the sixteen boy choristers of Magdalen College, MCS has evolved into a large and academically ambitious school, while retaining its original ethos of intellectual rigour combined with breadth of opportunity. It now educates boys from age 7 to 18, with girls admitted into the Sixth Form, and is in the process of becoming fully coeducational starting in September 2027. MCS currently educates around 950 pupils across its Junior School, Senior School and Sixth Form.

Academically, MCS is grounded in intellectual rigour and curiosity, with outcomes that reflect depth of learning and nurturing intellectual curiosity. Examination outcomes at both GCSE and A level are consistently excellent, and

almost all pupils progress to highly selective universities in the UK and overseas, with a notable proportion securing places at Oxford, Cambridge, Ivy League universities and other leading global institutions each year.

Beyond the classroom, MCS places significant emphasis on music, sport, drama and co-curricular life. Its historic role as a choir school continues, with the choristers of Magdalen College educated at the school. As part of the move to full co-education, the world famous Magdalen College choir will welcome girl choristers for the first time in its history.

Steeped in history yet forward-looking in outlook, MCS combines academic ambition with a reputation for being unpretentious, outward-facing and deeply embedded in the Oxford community.



Aims and Ethos

Shaped by its Christian Collegiate foundation and its place within the city of Oxford, MCS seeks to inspire in all its pupils a desire to learn, flourish and serve.

The school's aims are:

- ◆ To facilitate a full and rich intellectual and moral education in a liberal community, fostering a joy in learning which enables each pupil to develop an independent and searching mind.
- ◆ To nurture confidence and a willingness to embrace a challenge, developing each individual's participation in and enjoyment of a broad range of pursuits, both within and beyond the classroom.
- ◆ To provide a safe, friendly and supportive environment in which individuality is valued through mutual support, respect and toleration.
- ◆ To equip pupils to make a positive and lasting contribution to their communities, both now and in the future.

Academic

The pupils at MCS are a pleasure to teach: academically able, intellectually curious and talented across a wide range of pursuits beyond the classroom. They tend to wear

their abilities lightly, showing a strong sense of belonging to the school and a culture characterised by kindness, independence of thought and genuine engagement with learning.

Academic expectations are high, but achievement is rooted in depth of understanding rather than simply exam preparation. Public examination outcomes are consistently outstanding and reflect this approach. In the most recent published results (2025), 93% of A Level grades were awarded at A*-B, with 81% at A*-A and 43% at A*. At (I)GCSE, 61% of all grades were awarded at grade 9, 83% grades 9-8 and 94% grades 9-7.

Leavers progress to a wide range of highly selective universities in the UK and internationally, with around a quarter securing places at Oxford, Cambridge or Ivy League institutions each year. This year, 43 pupils were offered places at Oxford or Cambridge universities, including ten to study Medicine. This represents around a quarter of the cohort and one of the school's strongest Oxbridge outcomes in recent years.

Co-curricular

Co-curricular activities play a central role in life at MCS. Provision across sport, music and drama is both broad and deeply embedded, complemented by a wide range of clubs and societies that reflect pupils' varied interests.

Music is a particular strength, rooted in the school's choral tradition and sustained by a large and active musical community. There are around 40 ensembles, with pupils performing regularly both in school and at venues across Oxford, including the Sheldonian Theatre. The annual programme includes over 70 concerts, ranging from large-scale formal performances to smaller, pupil-led events.

Drama is similarly prominent, with approximately 10-14 productions each year spanning classical and contemporary work, musicals and studio productions. Performances take place both at MCS and in professional Oxford venues, supported by strong technical provision and a Technical Theatre Academy.

Sport is hugely popular, with a strong emphasis on both participation and performance. The vast majority of pupils represent the school in competitive fixtures during their time at MCS, and recent years have seen national success in sports including hockey, sailing and tennis, alongside odgers.com

consistent achievement at local and regional level. A significant number of pupils are also supported along recognised talent pathways across a range of sports.

Pastoral

Pastoral care at MCS places great value on the individual and is widely regarded as a key strength of the school. Every pupil is known well, with tutors playing a central role in day-to-day pastoral and academic oversight, working closely with Heads of Year and Heads of Section to ensure continuity and support at each stage.

The house system underpins pastoral life, providing pupils with a clear sense of belonging, identity and community across year groups. Houses offer a framework for tutor groups and create regular opportunities for shared activity and healthy competition, ranging from academic and cultural events to sport, music and debating.

Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are characterised by warmth, mutual respect and trust. The school places strong emphasis on wellbeing, kindness and personal responsibility, fostering an environment in which pupils feel supported, confident and able to flourish both academically and personally.



Co-education

In February 2026, MCS announced its move towards full co-education, offering places to high achieving boys and girls as the school prepares to celebrate its 550th anniversary. This decision is a natural next step, building on more than fifteen successful years of co-education in the Sixth Form, and will strengthen the school's long-standing commitment to breadth, inclusion and individual flourishing.

The transition to full co-education will be gradual, with girls joining in Years 3 and 4 in 2027, and Year 7 in 2030, with all year groups co-educational across the school from September 2034.

This comes at an exciting time for MCS, with planning permission in place for a new Science, Library and Partnerships Building, and the first target of its bursary endowment fund in reach. Framed not as a departure from tradition but as a natural evolution, the move to full co-education combines continuity of all that makes the school distinctive with a forward-looking confidence about MCS's role in contemporary education.

Partnerships

Partnership and community engagement are long-standing and integral features of life at MCS. For over five centuries, the school has understood itself as being deeply rooted in its local environment, with a clear commitment to collaboration, service

and shared benefit. Today, this ethos is expressed through sustained partnerships with local schools, charities and community organisations across Oxford and the surrounding area.

Educational partnerships sit at the heart of this work. MCS works closely with local primary and secondary schools to deliver subject based enrichment, academic extension and guidance on future study, from early years through to university preparation. Flagship initiatives such as The Bridge provide long-term academic enrichment for high-achieving pupils from Oxford primary schools, while a wide programme of workshops, events and shared teaching supports aspiration, confidence and access.





International

In recent years the MCS family of schools has been growing, with new partnerships forged with organisations which share the school's ethos and values. Key partnerships include a collaboration with the Sunway Education Group, supporting the development of high quality teaching and learning in an international setting in Kuala Lumpur; engagement with the Canadian International Education Organisation (CIEO) to establish Magdalen College School International Bangkok, due to open in 2028; and a long-standing partnership with Mustardseed Junior School in Uganda, reflecting MCS's commitment to education as a driver of access, social mobility and community development.

Philanthropy

Philanthropy plays a vital role in sustaining MCS's commitment to access and social mobility. Central to this is the Bursary Endowment Fund, established to secure bursary provision in perpetuity and ensure that an MCS education remains open to pupils of ability regardless of financial circumstance. Launched with a target of £15 million by 2030, the school's 550th anniversary, the endowment reflects both MCS's founding ethos and a clear long-term

strategy for widening access. Supported by the generosity of alumni, parents and friends of the school, the fund underwrites a growing number of bursary places each year and helps preserve the diversity of background, experience and perspective that is central to the ethos of the school.

Further information on Magdalen College School can be found via the school's [website](#).





The Role

The successful candidate will lead one of the UK's most highly regarded independent day schools. They will inherit a high-performing school with considerable strengths, at a significant and exciting stage in its history and that of the independent education sector more broadly.

The priorities of the next Master of MCS are clear: to build on the school's many existing strengths and to articulate a continuing and compelling vision for excellence. Working with an ambitious and supportive Board of Governors, they will guide key strategic discussions to ensure that MCS continues to provide a first-class education and outstanding pastoral care.



More specifically, the key responsibilities of the Master of MCS are outlined as follows:

Educational Vision and Leadership

- ◆ To develop an innovative and ambitious vision for the pursuit of educational excellence and the development of young people who are equipped to thrive in, and contribute to, a rapidly changing world.
- ◆ To work closely with the Board of Governors and senior staff in leading MCS through an exciting and important set of strategic decisions and developments, ensuring that the school is well placed to seize future opportunities and meet emerging challenges.

- ◆ To appoint and develop excellent staff at all levels, continuing to strengthen MCS's reputation as a school that nurtures the educational leaders of the future.

School Culture

- ◆ To uphold MCS as a centre of education for life which is rich, busy, purposeful and happy.
- ◆ To ensure that the opportunities, needs and care of each child are at the heart of all decision-making within the school.
- ◆ To lead by example in championing excellent pastoral care, ensuring that MCS is a school in which the wide interests of individual pupils are encouraged and nurtured.



Organisational and Commercial Leadership

- ◆ To lead and inspire an experienced, high-performing group of senior staff, delegating effectively and empowering colleagues to achieve their potential.
- ◆ To provide clear, confident organisational leadership, recognising that the role of Master combines educational vision with responsibility for the effective stewardship of a complex institution.
- ◆ To work in close partnership with the Bursar and senior staff to ensure the school is financially sustainable, operationally resilient and strategically well positioned over the long term.
- ◆ To exercise oversight of the school's commercial, operational and regulatory responsibilities, including staffing, estates, compliance, risk management and resource allocation.
- ◆ To ensure that major initiatives – including capital projects, growth plans and organisational change – are well-managed, carefully phased and aligned with the school's core educational purpose.
- ◆ To support the Board of Governors with clear, well-judged advice, enabling effective decision making on matters of strategy, investment and long-term sustainability.

External Engagement

- ◆ To be a compelling ambassador for MCS on the local, regional, national and international stage.
- ◆ To build strong relationships with both current and prospective parents.
- ◆ To sustain and develop a strong relationship with Magdalen College, foster good links across the University, and fully embrace life in collegiate Oxford.
- ◆ To take a proactive role in development and fundraising activity, working closely with the Waynflete Office.





The Person

The next Master of MCS will be first and foremost an outstanding educationalist. The successful candidate should be able to offer the following experience, skills, knowledge and personal attributes.



Experience

- ◆ A substantial track record of successful senior leadership within a high performing school environment.
- ◆ Strong academic and intellectual credentials sufficient to command the respect of staff, pupils, parents and the wider Oxford educational community.
- ◆ Proven experience of leading, developing and motivating high-performing teams, with a clear commitment to the continuing professional development of colleagues.

Skills and Knowledge

- ◆ A genuine interest in education in the broadest sense, together with a clear sighted understanding of key trends and developments both nationally and internationally.
- ◆ A good level of financial literacy, with a sound understanding of the strategic and operational business aspects of school leadership.
- ◆ A confident, clear and compelling public speaker, able to convey MCS's aims, ethos and ambitions to a wide range of audiences.
- ◆ Well-developed pastoral instincts, with the ability to understand and respond sensitively to the pastoral needs of MCS pupils.
- ◆ Empathy with, and high expectations of, all key areas of the co-curriculum.



Leadership Style and Personal Attributes

- ◆ An intelligent, thoughtful and empathetic leadership style, underpinned by high levels of emotional intelligence and a deep concern for the individual.
- ◆ A highly visible Master, who leads by example and engages directly with the daily life of the school.
- ◆ An intellectually curious, well-rounded individual with a wide range of passions and interests beyond the classroom.
- ◆ A genuine resonance with, and commitment to, MCS's aims and ethos.



Life in Oxford

Located at Magdalen Bridge, with views toward both the city centre and East Oxford, MCS is close to a wealth of cultural, entertainment, and educational venues.

The City

Oxford, renowned as one of the world's most prestigious university cities, has a rich history dating back over a thousand years. Established in the early medieval period, the city grew around its strategic location on the River Thames, which facilitated trade and transportation. By the 12th century, it became an educational hub with the founding of the University of Oxford, the oldest university in the English-speaking world.

With its blend of ancient and modern, there is an abundance of activities to enjoy. Whether visiting one of the many historic buildings, colleges, or museums, dining in a restaurant, attending a theatre, music or opera performance, or enjoying the wide range of talks and public events which take place in the city and university, Oxford offers a diverse range of experiences which cater for all interests.

The University

MCS shares many links with the University. Staff enjoy free entry to the Oxford Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum, they can attend choral evensong, sung by our choristers in Magdalen College Chapel, and use the University sports facilities on Iffley Road.

During the university's full term, Oxford buzzes with activity, hosting numerous talks, performances, exhibitions, fixtures, events, and celebrations throughout the academic year.

The Arts

Oxford is celebrated not only for its academic heritage but also for its vibrant cultural scene. The Ashmolean Museum, the oldest public museum in the UK, showcases art and archaeology from around the globe. The city's theatres, such as the Oxford Playhouse and the Old Fire Station, offer a range of performances, while the annual Oxford Literary Festival attracts renowned authors and literary enthusiasts alike.





How to Apply

Magdalen College School has engaged the services of Odgers to assist with the recruitment of the Master.

The closing date for applications is **09.00 BST on Friday 15 May 2026**.

Initial interviews with Odgers will take place during **weeks commencing 25 May & 1 June**. Shortlist interviews with the Selection Committee will take place on **Tuesday 16 June**. Candidates invited to the final stage will be invited to have a full briefing visit to the school during **week commencing 22 June** and final interviews will take place on **26 June**.

In order to apply, please submit a CV, along with a covering letter which sets out your interest in the role and encapsulates the aspects of your experience relevant to the required criteria. Please include current salary details and the names and addresses of three referees.

Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.

The preferred method of application is online at: www.odgers.com/95402.

All applications will receive an automated response.

For an initial discussion, please contact:

Freddie Dennis:
freddie.dennis@odgers.com

Ruth Lewis:
ruth.lewis@odgers.com

Lottie Willis:
lottie.willis@odgers.com

Personal Data

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your expressed consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

Magdalen College School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and applicants must be willing to undergo screening appropriate to the post, including checks with current and past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.



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