



The Blue Coat School

Founded by the Church of England in 1722

Information for candidates applying for the post
of Chief Operating Officer
at The Blue Coat School, Birmingham

The Blue Coat School Birmingham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this.

The School is an equal opportunities employer.

The Role

The School is seeking to recruit a first class Chief Operating Officer for September 2018, or earlier by arrangement. This is a new appointment and the title gives an indication of the all-embracing nature of the role. Working closely with the Headmaster, Noel Neeson, and the Chair of the Governors, Bernard Singleton, the COO will play a vital role in shaping the future development of this outstanding school.

The successful candidate will be creative and innovative, seeking solutions to the complex organisational demands of this evolving independent school, and will have excellent interpersonal and organisational skills. The successful applicant will also lead the bursary department in the financial management of the school and ancillary activities.

The current Headmaster, Noel Neeson, who joined The Blue Coat School in September 2016, has since led the School through a management restructure, setting up a new Executive Management Team. The COO will be a key member of the Executive Management Team, which also includes the Chair of Governors, the Headmaster, the Head of Pre-Prep and the Director of External Relations.

The COO will provide operational management in order that the Headmaster, through the teaching staff, can deliver the curriculum together with a wide range of activities to the highest possible standards. There are a number of potential new opportunities for the School and the COO will play an important role in shaping any future developments. The COO reports to the Headmaster but has regular access to the Governors.

The COO will be directly responsible and accountable to the Headmaster and, through him, to the Governing Body for the overall administration and financial affairs of the School and BCS Enterprises Ltd, and will be present at all meetings of the Governing Body who, between them, have delegated responsibility for various aspects of the bursarial function. The COO is also responsible for human resource management and oversight of the IT infrastructure team and contract caterers.

The salary awarded for the post will be competitive and will be dependent upon qualifications and experience. Discounts are available to assist with fees at The Blue Coat School for any children of the COO who are admitted to the school.

About the School

The Blue Coat School, Birmingham, is an independent IAPS co-educational Preparatory School for day pupils aged 2 to 11. The School was founded in 1722 as a Christian Charity School, providing education and compassion to the very poorest of children. It moved from the centre of Birmingham to its current 15-acre site in Edgbaston in 1930, becoming fully independent in 1966, and extending its age range to accommodate two and three-year-olds in the year 2000.

Most of the pupils live within a three-mile radius of the School, but parents bring their children from as far afield as Sutton Coldfield, Barnt Green and Redditch. The School is three-form entry in Pre-Prep, growing to four-form entry in Prep. There are currently 596 pupils on roll and the School is currently full in most year groups with extensive waiting lists.

The Blue Coat School, which is situated just over 2 miles from the city centre, benefits from superb facilities including an indoor swimming pool and a brand new AstroTurf pitch. At the heart of the School lies the Chapel, whose profound influence is nurtured by the Chaplain and colleagues throughout the School. The importance of Chapel life and a strong House structure give this School its unique character and contribute fundamentally to pupils' personal development. Children in Prep gather in the mornings in their Houses, returning there at the end of each day. The close ties formed between pupils and the House staff are an important pastoral element of the School, and this holistic approach is perfectly captured in the school motto: "Grow in Grace".

The Vision Statement reflects the School's ambitious nature whilst embracing its traditions:



“Providing outstanding educational opportunities for every child to thrive; developing confidence, ability and intellect within a caring Christian environment.”

The core values are clearly understood by the pupils, who aim to:

**Be truthful, patient and kind
Cheerfully Try Hard and
Show Respect**

Although this is an academic school, with pupils assessed for entry from the age of 7, Blue Coat's hallmark is its inclusiveness: Every child and every teacher feels that his or her views matter and that he or she is valued. This is, above all, a happy school – one that enables children to flourish and seeks to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. The recent ISI Report makes it clear that the School is performing to the highest standards. There is a constant desire to continue to improve its offering: this has, for example, led to plans for a new Blue Coat Diploma, which will inspire pupils by setting before them exciting educational and pastoral challenges across a whole range of disciplines.

There is a very strong state Grammar School tradition in Birmingham. A number of pupils will therefore transfer into the maintained sector at the end of Year 6 and gain places at such schools as Bishop Vesey's Grammar, Handsworth Grammar, Queen Mary's Grammar, Sutton Coldfield Grammar or one of the King Edward VI Grammar Schools at Aston, Camp Hill, Handsworth or Five Ways. Entry to these schools is highly selective, but pupils at Blue Coat are well prepared for entry, and gain very pleasing results in these exams.

Most pupils, however, also seek places at local independent senior schools – and over the years they have been very successful in gaining scholarships on entry. A number of these establishments are highly academic, and it is clear that many parents place their children at Blue Coat with the ambition of gaining access to these prestigious schools. Favoured Senior Schools include King Edward's School, King Edward VI High School for Girls, Edgbaston High School for Girls, Solihull School, Bromsgrove School, Priory School and Saint Martin's School. This year, pupils also gained places at Millfield School, Papplewick School, Nottingham High School, as well as a 13+ conditional offer to Eton College.

Governance and Leadership



The School has an exceptionally strong Governing Body. Indeed, the ISI Inspection Report (May 2017) noted that, "The excellent achievement of pupils at all ages is supported by committed governance, effective leadership and generous investment in resources and staff."

There is a Full Governors' Meeting each term, with an additional meeting in Trinity Term. For each meeting the Head produces a detailed report with an analysis of the School's performance. A comprehensive overview is also provided through the committee structure which includes members of staff. The current committees include Teaching Learning and Curriculum, Estates & Major Projects, Human Resources, Safeguarding and Health and Safety, Awards, Finance and Operations and Governance.

There is a small, highly effective academic Senior Leadership Team, ably led by the Head. The team currently includes the Head of Pre-Prep and four Deputy Heads. There is an ambitious five-year Development Plan that seeks to improve every facet of school life. The four heads of the Prep School Houses underpin the very strong pastoral system. Supporting the leadership and management teams are the Faculty Heads, the Subject Co-ordinators (Pre-Prep) and the Year Group Co-ordinators. Playing a vital role, supporting the staff and bringing the worship of the Chapel out into the world of the School, is the Lay Chaplain.

Estates' Projects

Over the last academic year, the School has been working on a rolling programme of refurbishment and this has included the following:

The Prep main corridor has been carpeted and the walls and woodwork painted to create a warmer, welcoming environment for the children. The dining room has also been given a 'face-lift' and is now a more inviting area for parents to use after-school and for the children to dine in. The Early Years' playground has been redesigned and AstroTurf elements added; this has been further enhanced with outdoor toys, some of which have been kindly donated by The Friends. St. George's House has received an update and the other Houses will receive attention in due course. Upgrades have been made to the alarm system and roofing. The Sports Centre foyer was redecorated and at half-term we were able to begin playing on the new multi-purpose AstroTurf pitch. The cricket nets and warm-up area are also ready for use.

During the coming academic year, we have plans as follows:

To continue the refurbishment of the Sports Centre with new dry and wet changing rooms, the refurbishment of House 3 and, with the generous support of The Friends, the installation of a new swim timing system in the pool area. Work will continue with a transformation of the Gallery area into studio facilities.



Main Responsibilities

Professional

- Exercise loyalty to the Headmaster and to the School.
- Support and assist the Headmaster in providing a happy, secure, safe and stimulating environment in which children can develop to their full potential.
- Support the Headmaster in fostering parental involvement and in keeping parents informed of school policy and other matters of importance.
- Set and maintain high standards of work, as well as of personal and professional conduct.
- Assist the Headmaster in ensuring full compliance with all regulatory requirements including those of the Early Years Foundation Stage, ISI and the Health and Safety Executive.
- Comply fully with the requirements as set out in the DfE document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and any relevant supplementary guidance.
- Comply fully with the requirements as set out in the HM Government document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and any relevant supplementary guidance.
- Abide by the School's current systems and structures as outlined in policy documents including the Health, Health and Safety, and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies, and take appropriate action in accordance with all such documents as and when necessary.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with colleagues and parents.
- Participate as required in meetings with colleagues, parents and other professionals in respect of the duties and responsibilities of the post.
- Take responsibility for one's own professional development, attending INSET courses and other relevant courses whenever possible.
- Engage with the Christian foundation of the School.
- Be punctual and adaptable, and dress in a smart but practical manner.

Finance and Accountancy

- Advise on general financial policy and fee levels within the School.
- Oversee the preparation of termly/monthly accounts.
- Prepare annual estimate of income and expenditure to include the preparation of departmental budgets within the School, the latter in consultation with the



Headmaster or senior academic staff.

- Monitor income and expenditure in relation to budget and present regular management reports to the Governing Body, usually via the Finance and Operations sub-committee.
- Keep the accounts of the School and prepare Statements of Financial Activity (SOFA) and balance sheets in accordance with the charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).
- Ensure compliance with statutory filing requirements.
- Liaise with external auditors.
- Maintain cash flow projections for the current and future years.
- Advise on investments in consultation with the School's brokers or investment managers.
- Approve the purchase of capital items and other expenditure in accordance with authority delegated by the Governors.
- Oversee the preparation of pupils' bills and collection of all fees and extras.
- Ensure payment of all salaries and wages, including PAYE, Superannuation and National Insurance Contributions and ensure compliance with regulations for benefits in kind.
- Oversee the pension schemes for teaching and support staff.
- Scrutinise and pass for payment all invoices received in the School.
- Organise special appeals for capital projects or endowment funds in conjunction

Responsibilities continued...

with the Director of External Relations.

- Keep analyses of costs and other statistical records.
- Prepare forecasts for the future financial performance of the School, usually over a period of five years.
- Prepare financial appraisals of particular projects.
- Advise on taxation matters generally, including Gift Aid from subsidiary companies to the parent charity and where appropriate, ensure compliance with VAT regulations.
- Advise on the financial implications of the charitable status of the School.
- Deal with the School's income tax and rating assessments.
- Supervise the operation of an Advanced (Composition) Fees Scheme.
- Advise on scholarship and bursary funds. Ensure assessments of parents' income and assets are undertaken prior to making bursary awards.
- Liaise with the Director of External Relations regarding the marketing and development of the School.

General Management and Administration

- Act as Clerk to the Governors and secretary to various committees. Certain clerical tasks may be delegated as agreed with the Headmaster and/or the Chair of Governors.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant aspects of employment law, including employment protection, equal pay, minimum wage, Working Time Directive and the Equal Opportunities Act. Act as the Headmaster's adviser on employment matters including disciplinary Procedures. Ensure that the school has appropriate disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- Ensure that all relevant staff have contracts of employment, and keep the school's standard contracts up to date as new legislation takes effect.
- Oversee the employment, terms and conditions of service, supervision and welfare of all non-teaching staff.
- Advise the Board of Governors on constitutional and procedural matters, duties and powers.
- Formulate, monitor and implement the School's policy to comply with the requirements of health and safety legislation. Ensure risk assessments are carried out where appropriate and monitor these, taking professional advice as required.

- Ensure compliance with all other matters of statutory/regulatory requirement.
- Ensure that the School has adequate insurance cover at all times to include employer's liability, buildings and equipment cover, personal accident, travel insurance and other relevant cover. Professional advice should invariably be sought.
- Assist in the selection of professional advisers, including accountants, lawyers, bankers and investment advisers.
- Oversee the purchase of all goods and services for the School.
- Arrange for on-site staff accommodation and deal with the letting of property to School employees and third parties, ensuring that the appropriate leases and licenses to occupy are signed by the tenants.
- Oversee the letting of School premises to outside organisations ensuring that full Service Level Agreements are in place for all such lettings.
- Act as correspondent with the DfE, the Charity Commission and Companies House, and be responsible for the records and returns required.
- Advise on, and take, the appropriate security measure within the School, both physical and for staff and pupils.
- Maintain contact with the statutory authorities and other organisations.
- Oversee the catering provision, which is contracted out to Holroyd Howe.
- Oversee the work of the School's Housekeeping team including the cleaning staff in conjunction with the Estate Manager.
- Ensure that the swimming pool and its plant operate effectively, ensuring that proper safety procedures are enforced particularly out of school hours and during the holidays.



- Oversee the work of the Sports Centre Manager and the Sports Centre facilities.
- Ensure compliance with the regulations for the operation of minibuses, licenses; driver training and assessments; servicing and Vehicle Inspectorate Tests.
- Liaise with the Friends of The Blue Coat School to support them.

School Buildings and Grounds

- Maintenance of school buildings: Ensure that maintenance schedules are prepared and relevant records kept.
- Ensure that the installation and maintenance of equipment for the detection, warning, protection and escape from fire is carried out to the required specifications. Ensure the necessary fire risk assessments are carried out.
- Ensure the maintenance and efficiency of the installations and plant for electric and gas supply, heating, domestic hot water, water softening, etc. Ensure the letting of energy supply contracts at competitive rates.
- Ensure that catering areas meet the requirements for hygiene and food safety.
- Ensure the maintenance of the lighting and ventilation in all school buildings.
- Draw up outline specifications for new buildings, obtaining tenders, planning permission, and ensuring liaison with School architects and builders.
- Ensure that provision is made for the upkeep of playing fields, gardens, all weather surfaces, running tracks and tennis courts to the required standard.
- Ensure that land drainage is maintained.
- Ensure that boundaries, roads and rights of way are maintained.



The COO's tasks are wide-ranging and varied. To cope satisfactorily in this appointment, candidates will need a sound knowledge of financial management, a thorough understanding of budgeting, forecasting and strategic business planning, and extensive general management experience. In consultation with the Estate Manager, the COO must also be able to manage complex projects within strict budgets and demanding timetables. A detailed knowledge and experience of construction projects would therefore be an advantage, as would a clear grasp of the practicalities and potential of IT in the business environment.

Specifically, the COO requires mature personal qualities to enable him/her to work successfully and in harmony with the numerous people to whom s/he has responsibility, namely: the Governors, the Headmaster, the Teaching Staff and the Support Staff. Candidates must have first-class communications, presentation and people management skills. A major asset of a successful COO is his or her ability to create an atmosphere of trust and accord between the various functions of the School.

The COO will be an experienced senior manager, ideally with a professional qualification and be able to demonstrate a proven track record of successful management in a complex people-oriented organisation. Candidates must have commercial acumen coupled with analytical skills and the ability to think strategically. The COO must be able to translate strategy into practical reality, be empathetic towards the ethos and principles of the School and understand the needs and challenges facing independent education.

It is particularly important that the COO possesses tact, discretion, a firm yet flexible approach, good humour, patience and a capacity for hard work and sustained effort.

Ultimately, it will be of utmost importance that character and personal chemistry fit with the Headmaster and other key figures. The ability to form strong working relationships with all staff and members of the wider community, based on mutual respect, is also important.

Original certificates will be required as proof of qualification. All other attributes will be assessed using the contents of the application form, at interview and with professional references.

Recruitment Process

Applications must be made on The Blue Coat School Application Form and must include details of two referees, one of which should be a current or most recent employer. The post is subject to an enhanced DBS check and satisfactory references. Application forms can be obtained from the [Academicis](#) website. Applicants will also be expected to complete a DBS Form if invited for interview.

Application forms, together with a supporting letter, should be returned by 10.00am on Monday, 15th January 2018 to kwright@academicis.co.uk Short-listed applicants will be invited to a formal interview during the week beginning Monday 22nd January 2018. There will be an opportunity to tour the school and there will be various other tasks involved in the interview process.

At interview, applicants must provide original documents to confirm their identity and right to work in the UK. They must also bring proof of qualifications where relevant for the post. The documentation required by applicants is listed in the Recruitment Policy which is available on the school website and from the school. The successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced DBS check (including a Barred List check) and will be required to complete a medical fitness declaration.

Further details about the school are available on the school website: thebluecoatschool.com.



How to find us



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Governing Body

President - Rt. Revd David Urquhart, Lord Bishop of Birmingham

Chair - Mr B H Singleton LLB

Vice Chair - Mr M H Dyke BA

Mr M Abraham, BEd

Mrs E J Cook BA

Mr M J Cotter FRICS

Dr L M Evans MBChB RCGP

Mrs K Gilmore

Mr W G S Hordern MBE MA

Mrs A K Poole, BA

Ms M C Kitto BEd Hon Fellow NSEAD

Mr S M Raine FCA BSocSci

Dr E N Rees MBChB FRCPath

Mrs Persis Thomas BA

The Very Revd M Thompson MA MPhil

Revd N Tucker BSc MTh

Rector of St. Martin in the Bullring



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