



Head of Modern Languages

September 2021

# Welcome from the Headmistress

Wycombe Abbey is an exceptional place; it operates as a modern full boarding school for 650 girls and we are committed to the development of each one. Built on the firm foundation of more than 120 years of educating young women, our vision is to provide a world class education. We are excited about encouraging curiosity, bold ideas, innovation, leadership and delight in learning - inside and outside the classroom.

Superb academic outcomes are the hallmark of a Wycombe Abbey education and girls regularly secure places at the most prestigious universities globally. However, we understand the importance of looking beyond the narrow confines of excellent examination results to define success. Our rich co-curricular programme includes an array of activities and opportunities, ensuring that every girl develops her passions and explores new possibilities. These experiences, in turn, help to build the skills, discipline and character that will support her future life.

We were delighted with last year's A Level grades. The UVI girls achieved 48.9% at A\* and 90.2% A\*-A grades. Most importantly, the vast majority of the UVI secured places at top ranking universities to study a fantastic range of courses. Twenty three girls took up places at Oxford and Cambridge, and 22 girls secured their chosen places at US universities including Colombia, Stanford, Dartmouth, Pennsylvania and MIT. At GCSE, we achieved 90.3% at A\* and 98.7% A\*-A grades. The vast majority of last year's UV have continued into our Sixth Form.

Ultimately, schools are about people and at the heart of Wycombe Abbey's success is our total commitment to pastoral care through boarding. The values of mutual respect, encouragement and trust underpin everything we do; in this happy and close-knit community everyone is known as an individual, friendships flourish and girls enjoy each other's company, all within the wonderful surroundings of 170 acres of magnificent parkland.

We offer superb modern facilities, including a leading-edge sports centre with a heated indoor 25-metre pool, a performing arts centre with its own theatre and recital hall, excellent teaching facilities and our Courtyard Café. We are constantly improving and developing our top-class estate; we are committed to refurbishing much of our boarding accommodation and we are constantly upgrading and renewing our teaching and learning areas.

Our working environment is Covid-19 safe and a comprehensive risk assessment is in place for the whole School as well as specifically for the Mathematics department.

Wycombe Abbey's outstanding reputation for excellence is built very much on the dedication and skills of our staff. Every member of staff at Wycombe Abbey contributes towards the School's thriving community and works to continually strengthen our ambition for excellence. We seek to recruit well-qualified and enthusiastic staff who demonstrate knowledge of, and passion for their area of expertise and contribute to the wider life of the School. In return, the School provides staff with a variety of opportunities to develop professionally in a supportive team and wonderful working environment.



Thank you for your interest in joining the team here at Wycombe Abbey. We hope that you will find the information in this pack useful and we look forward to hearing from you if you feel that this post may suit your skills and experience.





# Teaching at Wycombe Abbey

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The pupils at Wycombe Abbey are highly motivated with a strong work ethic. They are inquisitive, creative and eager to learn. Both pupils and teachers benefit from the small classes (typically no larger than 20 in Key Stages 3-4 and no larger than 12 in the Sixth Form), as well as well-resourced classrooms, libraries, laboratories and other facilities.

There is a wide range of ages and experience amongst the 115 teaching staff. Each year a number of newly qualified, and in some cases unqualified recent graduates, join the staff body. Wycombe offers statutory induction for Newly Qualified Teachers and also offers the initial teacher training (ITT) programme to those without a PGCE. There is proactive support for all new members of staff, who are guided through their first year at School by a variety of colleagues, with the line manager and an individually-appointed mentor taking the lead.

The School prides itself on the many opportunities for continuing professional development. We organise regular whole staff in-service training and have a generous budget for training outside School. In addition, academic departments commit to sharing good practice. There are opportunities to take part in peer observation, peer coaching, learning reviews and working parties.

A Wycombe Abbey teacher typically teaches 30 35-minute periods per week. In addition, they are attached to a boarding House and are responsible for a tutor group of around 10 pupils from the House. Teachers give freely of their time outside timetabled lessons with many committing to co-curricular and boarding activities and helping individual pupils with their academic progress. Teachers are also expected to commit a number of hours per term to other (supervisory) duties, such as accompanying House outings.

As a boarding school, Wycombe Abbey has lessons on Saturday mornings. There is time off during the week in lieu of Saturday teaching. Teachers are expected to be in School by 08:15 on weekdays and 08:45 on a Saturday. The teaching day finishes at 17:15 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 16:15 on Wednesday and 11:50 on Saturday. Co-curricular and enrichment activities typically extend beyond these hours.



# The Modern Languages Department

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The Modern Languages Department at Wycombe Abbey comprises of 6 full time teachers, 4 part-time teachers and 12 visiting teachers. The department benefits from up-to-date resources including two language laboratories equipped with digital language laboratory software and a Sixth Form language library. French, Spanish, German, Chinese and Russian are taught as part of the core curriculum and a number of other languages, including Arabic, Italian, Japanese, and Portuguese are also taught on a private basis.

Currently, girls are taught two languages from French, Spanish and German in Years 7 and 8. In Year 9 girls may choose to continue with both languages, or to take up the option of German or Chinese. In Years 10 and 11, girls must study at least one modern language at GCSE, but many girls take two, and the most able may continue with three. We follow the AQA GCSE specification in Chinese, French, German and Spanish. Girls are divisioned by ability where possible.

In the Sixth Form, girls are currently prepared for the CIE Pre-U specifications in French, German and Chinese, the AQA specification in Spanish and French. From September 2021 the Pre-U in French will no longer be offered. All girls taking public examinations benefit from conversation lessons in small groups with native speakers. Each year a number of girls successfully apply to Oxbridge and other leading universities, including overseas, to read Modern Languages.

We provide opportunities for the pupils to visit the country of the language they are studying. Biennial study holidays are organised at Easter for Hispanists to Andalusia and French pupils take part in an exchange in the Champagne region. All languages staff are expected to support these trips. We aim to develop an awareness of the wide range of higher education courses involving languages, and of careers where languages are useful or essential by arranging speaker events.

We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate the culture of the countries of their target language, organising theatre, cinema trips and lectures by visiting speakers. Pupils also attend talks supported by the “Institut Français” and take part in debating competitions. Previous trips include a language immersion in Montpellier and a very successful on-going exchange with a boarding school in St Dizier. Pupils take part in various clubs, societies and events within School where they contribute using their language skills.





# Responsibilities for the Head of Modern Languages

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## Strategic planning

- Work with the Executive Leadership Team to ensure that the Modern Languages Department supports the aims of the School's strategic plan
- Contribute to our vision to be a leader in girls' boarding education and a world class school
- Formulate and develop an annual departmental plan in support of the School's strategic plan
- Implement strategies to ensure the efficient running of the Modern Languages Department

## Leadership

- Oversee the smooth and effective day to day running of the Modern Languages Department
- Lead and manage all Modern Languages subject leaders, teachers and visiting teachers
- Assist with recruitment and ensure effective induction of new staff in line with school procedures
- Lead and manage the work of any support staff attached to the department e.g. the Modern Languages Administration Assistant
- Take responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of staff and pupils in the department
- Appraise staff within the department and take responsibility for any performance management issues that may arise
- Ensure appropriate support, guidance and advice is provided for trainee teachers and NQTs within the department
- Prepare the department for ISI inspection.

## Teaching and Learning

- Monitor and evaluate standards and progress in teaching and learning within the department to promote excellence in teaching and learning
- Develop the Modern Languages curriculum and departmental resources
- Stimulate and foster enthusiasm for the subject, more specifically promoting Modern Languages as a demanding, respected and relevant academic discipline, whilst encouraging all pupils to achieve their very best
- Ensure that Modern Languages teachers are engaged in relevant and meaningful activities in support of their own teaching and the development of the department
- Ensure that lesson planning and delivery challenge the most able pupils, support pupils with special educational needs, encourage independent thinking, and make appropriate use of ICT
- Implement new technology for learning languages in a dynamic, forward-thinking manner
- Ensure that an exciting programme of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities and trips is organised and run by the department
- Monitor and support the overall progress of pupils in the department
- Ensure that individual pupils' progress is properly tracked within the department and that pupils are informed regularly of their progress
- Communicate with parents as necessary, in consultation with the Deputy Head (Academic)
- Plan and deliver lessons across all key stages which include stretch and challenge, taking into account a broad range of learning styles
- Take on the role of form tutor as required.



# Person Specification

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Wycombe Abbey provides a modern and innovative education within a traditional boarding setting, and we therefore seek to employ teachers who will bring outstanding talent, intellect, enthusiasm and innovation to our classrooms.

The successful applicant is likely to possess:

- A good degree in the relevant subject(s)
- Excellent subject knowledge and the ability to teach one or more languages to A level
- A teaching qualification (e.g. PGCE) is desirable although we are happy to consider good graduates who are committed to teaching and boarding life
- A proven ability to lead, motivate, monitor and develop a team
- The motivation to develop excellent teaching and learning by sharing good practice and participating actively in continuing professional development
- The ability to stimulate and foster enthusiasm for Modern Languages at a high level, whilst encouraging all pupils to achieve their very best
- An understanding of the importance of monitoring, assessing and reporting on pupil progress, encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their learning
- A willingness to contribute to the wider objectives of the department (e.g. through sharing resources, contributing to schemes of work and organise and attending department events)
- A willingness to lead an exciting array of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities including overseas trips
- A willingness to engage in ongoing CPD and to promote a culture of continuous learning within the department
- An interest in developing links with other subjects across the curriculum
- The highest level of communication skills for dealing with pupils, parents and staff
- A proven ability to build a positive and collaborative rapport with pupils and staff alike
- A willingness to be involved in the wider life of the school through commitment to the co-curricular programme and/or boarding
- An appreciation of the aims and ethos of Wycombe Abbey.





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## Belonging to the Wycombe Abbey Community

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Wycombe Abbey is a welcoming and vibrant community for all staff.

Our school is set in 170 acres of parkland. It is a beautiful countryside setting, within a five-minute walk of the town of High Wycombe where there are many cultural amenities such as the Swan Theatre, with touring West End productions, a multiplex cinema, a range of restaurants and shops including a John Lewis and a House of Fraser. There is easy access to the Chiltern Hills and attractive towns such as Marlow, Beaconsfield and Henley-on-Thames nearby. There are many National Trust properties within five miles such as Hughenden Manor, Disraeli's home for many years, West Wycombe Park and Cliveden.

There are outstanding Grammar Schools in High Wycombe itself and also in surrounding towns. London is within easy reach, with the fast train from High Wycombe to London Marylebone taking just 24 minutes. Oxford and Bicester Village are within 30 miles, with a new direct train link. Wembley Stadium and Heathrow are just 20 miles away and there are good transport links to the other London airports.

There is a range of committees that staff can join including Wellbeing, Diversity and Inclusion, Sustainability, Communications and others. The Wycombe Abbey Community Association works in partnership with the Wellbeing Committee to organise staff wellbeing and social events on a regular basis, which are well-attended.

Wycombe Abbey will celebrate its 125 anniversary next year and an exciting programme of celebratory events will be taking place to mark this momentous milestone.



# Terms of Appointment

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A formal contract of employment will be drawn up on appointment. The following notes provide guidance, without prejudice, on the main provisions of the agreement.

## Contract

This is a permanent full-time contract. The first six months will be a probationary period.

Rental accommodation may be available, if required.

## Appointment Date

September 2021.

## Salary

Wycombe Abbey has its own pay scale which compares favourably with other independent schools.

## Pension Scheme

The School currently offers membership of the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

## Death in Service Cover

Members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme have life cover at x 3 annual salary.

## Training and Development

There is an extensive induction programme for new colleagues and ongoing professional development and training of all staff.

## Provision of Meals

Meals and refreshments are provided free of charge during the working day.

## Sports Centre

The facilities in the Davies Sports Centre (swimming pool, squash courts, fitness suite, etc.) are available for staff use.

## Fee Remission

Fee remission is available for daughters attending the School, subject to the usual entry requirements and space being available.

## Parking

Free parking is provided.

## Equal Opportunities

It is the policy of Wycombe Abbey to ensure equality of opportunity for all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching.

## Safeguarding

All staff share responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the pupils and must adhere to, and comply with, the School's Child Protection Policy at all times.

## Pre-Employment Checks

The appointment is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring check.

## Applications

The closing date for applications is 9:00 on 2 March.

Interviews will be held on 11 March.

Please submit a completed application form, which you will find on our website, as soon as possible, together with a covering letter addressed to the Headmistress, Mrs Jo Duncan, outlining the experience and personal qualities which you believe qualify you for this position.

The application form and letter should be emailed to Mrs J Wetenhall, HR Manager:  
[wetenhallj@wycombeabbey.com](mailto:wetenhallj@wycombeabbey.com)



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