



Head of Strings

(Full or part time considered)

January or April 2020

Vacancy Information

Wycombe Abbey
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP11 1PE

Tel: 01494 520381



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 this year's A level results. The UVI girls achieved 48.9% at A* and 90.2% A*-A grades. Most importantly, the vast majority of the UVI have secured places at top ranking universities to study a fantastic range of courses. Twenty three girls are heading off to Oxford and Cambridge, and twenty two 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. There were some superb individual performances. The vast majority of last year's UV are continuing 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 Music.

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.



Mrs Jo Duncan

Headmistress

TEACHING AT WYCOMBE

The pupils at Wycombe 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 Wycombe 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 Teacher of Music typically teaches 36 35-minute periods per week. In addition, she/he is attached to a boarding house and is 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 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 8.15am on weekdays and 8.45am on a Saturday. The teaching day finishes at 5.15pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 4.15pm on Wednesday and 11.50am on Saturday. Co-curricular and enrichment activities typically extend beyond these hours.



MUSIC AT WYCOMBE

Music has the power to enrich all our lives and it is the aim of the Music Department to provide opportunities for pupils to be involved in music-making at every stage of their education. We foster in them an appreciation and love of music, and help them to build upon the skills they have when they arrive at the School. The Music Department is a busy, lively department with a friendly and supportive atmosphere, in which pupils can be found working with energy, focus, curiosity and passion, embracing the opportunities to be creatively expressive, develop independence and revel in collaboration.

The Music department is staffed by five full-time teachers (including an Assistant Director of Music, a Head of Strings and a Head of Woodwind and Brass), a full-time Music Administrator and a team of 35 visiting staff, all of whom contribute to a full, varied and exciting extra-curricular programme. Nearly 600 individual music lessons take place each week and many pupils study two or even three instruments/voice. The calibre of both pupils and staff is incredibly high. Music scholarships and exhibitions are awarded to external applicants at 11+, and both external and internal applicants at 13+ and 16+, and the School currently has over 30 Music Scholars/Exhibitioners across all years, including several exceptionally talented individuals.

Academic Music is a curriculum subject in Years 7 to 9, with a strong emphasis on singing in Year 7 and a varied programme in the next two, including the development of Listening skills as well as the study of important movements/periods in music history, theory (including use of Musition software), individual and group practical work, and composing (using Sibelius software).

Music is offered as an option at GCSE (CIE IGCSE) and A Level (Edexcel). There are currently 24 girls studying GCSE Music and 2 studying A-level. Results are consistently excellent and a number of students have gone on to read Music at top universities, including Oxbridge, or to study at conservatoires in the UK and further afield. A growing number of girls apply for and receive university Choral Awards each year. Teaching is shared between staff at all levels, giving variety and specialist skills to each age group. Girls preparing for Grade 5 Theory are taught in small groups and extra aural support is given to girls taking higher grade exams.

Music facilities and resources are modern and spacious. The department is housed in a beautiful building (pictured below), which includes the Archer Recital Hall (200 seats), well-equipped teaching rooms, a dedicated music technology room with 20 networked computers running Sibelius and Musition software, a library with CD collection, numerous practice rooms, offices for staff, and a staff room. The building is well-stocked with good quality (largely Yamaha) pianos and there is a Giori harpsichord as well as Yamaha and Bösendorfer grand pianos in the Recital Hall. The main Abbey building has its own Steinway grand piano and flexible seating for up to 80 for more intimate performances. There are practice facilities in every House and a three manual Copeman Hart Organ in Chapel. An instrumental hire scheme is available to pupils.



The Performing Arts Centre (PAC)

comprises of:

The Lancaster Arts Centre (LAC)

Theatre and Drama

Archer Recital Hall

and Goodland Music School



Extra-curricular Music is very strong and there are opportunities for girls to be involved at every stage of their education, whatever their level and area of interest. These include taking part in orchestras, choirs and chamber groups, rock bands, learning recording skills and developing popular song-writing skills. There is an annual House Music Competition, major concerts in all three terms, rock concerts, informal lunchtime concerts, Music Scholar and Exhibitioner concerts, as well as engagements in local venues. Large numbers of entries for ARRSM practical examinations take place at school in all three terms. A number of girls play with the National Youth and Children's Orchestras and sing in the National Youth and Children's Choirs.

The school has three orchestras (Sinfonia, the training orchestra, Symphony Orchestra, and a string Chamber Orchestra), in which nearly 100 girls participate, performing regularly, including at external venues such as the Royal College of Music and St. John's Smith Square in London. Recent highlights include the Arensky *Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky* and Prokofiev's '*Classical*' Symphony. There are many opportunities for choral singing, including a Chapel Choir providing music for Sunday Chapel and other key services, Chancel Choir, a Chamber Choir, a joint Choral Society with Eton College, as well as pupil-led ensembles. There is a popular Stage Band, a Concert Band and Saxophone Ensemble. Chamber music is a strong feature of the department. with many groups receive weekly coaching. Selected chamber groups compete in the South East Schools' Chamber Music Festival, founded jointly by staff from Wycombe Abbey, Harrow and North London Collegiate School and many have progressed to the Finals and performed at St John's Smith Square in London.

Chapel Choir, Chamber Orchestra, Symphony Orchestra and, latterly, the Stage Band, undertake extremely popular biennial international concert tours. Recent destinations include Spain, Rome and Germany. Outreach is a key element of Music here. We believe in using musical gifts and our wonderful resources to make a positive contribution to the wider world. Our concerts in the local area are a great opportunity for our pupils to share their talents and help churches to raise much-needed funds such as recent concerts in Marlow and High Wycombe.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION

Wycombe Abbey seeks a positive and enthusiastic Head of Strings to lead our flourishing strings programme. The successful candidate will be an outstanding violinist or viola player with extensive performing and teaching experience who possesses the vision and drive to develop and enhance string playing at Wycombe Abbey

The successful applicant is likely to possess:

- A good degree in Music. A teaching qualification is desirable
- The ability to teach violin (and viola) from beginner to post-diploma level
- Experience of organising events and opportunities to stretch the most able musicians (e.g. masterclasses)
- Proven ability of leading, monitoring, motivating and developing a team
- The ability to lead and oversee ensembles as appropriate and to ensure that a variety of opportunities exists for pupils of all abilities
- Wide experience of organising and coaching a range of string chamber ensembles
- Experience of overseeing the delivery and organisation of instrumental lessons
- The ability to make instrumental lessons attractive to pupils of all abilities and to provide a wide range of exciting opportunities
- A proven ability to plan, organise and budget for music events and tours
- The motivation to develop excellent teaching and learning at Wycombe Abbey by sharing good practice and participating actively in continuing professional development
- A clear and innovative vision to bring the subject alive both in and outside the classroom
- A willingness to contribute to the wider objectives of the department (e.g. through the sharing of teaching materials and organising and attending departmental enrichment events)
- The highest level of communication skills for dealing with pupils, parents and staff
- An appreciation of the aims and ethos of Wycombe Abbey.





THE BENEFITS OF LIVING IN HIGH WYCOMBE

Wycombe Abbey 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. A Waitrose has opened nearby, and 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 for girls and boys 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.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

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, contract. Full or part time will be considered.

There is a probationary period of six months which may be extended by a further three months.

Rental accommodation may be available.

APPOINTMENT DATE

As soon as possible.

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 & 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 Safeguarding and 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 12 noon on 12 November. Interviews will take place on 25 November.

Please submit a completed application form, which you will find on our website under 'Vacancies', 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



www.wycombeabbey.com