



Candidate Information Pack
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS



INTRODUCTION

The Queen's School is looking for an exceptional leader to work with the Board of Governors and Headmistress to lead the school on the next phase of its exciting development.

As one of Cheshire's leading independent schools, Queen's is justifiably proud of its excellent academic results, pastoral care and holistic approach with an abundance of extra-curricular activities to suit all pupils. The recent ISI inspection carried out in March 2022 awarded Queen's the top grade of 'excellent' in all areas.

Queen's is a day school for girls aged 4-18 which cares deeply for every girl and provides an ambitious, supportive learning environment with limitless opportunities for exploration and intellectual challenge. The excellent relationships between girls, staff and parents and between the girls themselves, are a hallmark of the school as is the passion for learning and the focus on the needs of the individual.

The Headmistress and Head of Lower School have both been in post since September 2018 and have worked with Governors and the school community to develop the School's exciting Strategic Plan 2022-29, aimed to empower the girls of today to make a difference as the women of tomorrow.

The Governors now seek to find a Director of Finance and Operations with the inspiration, vision and energy to work with the Headmistress in delivering the School's Strategic Plan.



“The school has enjoyed a **distinguished history of academic excellence**, affording opportunities for girls to develop a wealth of skills”



HISTORY

Founded in 1878 as *The Chester School for Girls*, the School changed its name four years later by royal decree from the School's first patron, Queen Victoria, to *'The Queen's School'*. The School has enjoyed a distinguished history of academic excellence, affording opportunities for girls to develop a wealth of skills for use in their own lives and in the communities that they serve. The Lower School moved to its current site in 1948 and is about a mile from the Senior School.

LOCATION

Chester is one of the best preserved walled cities and has the largest Roman Amphitheatre and the oldest racecourse in Britain. The most distinctive feature is *The Rows*, dating from the 14th century, which are double level walkways with balconies and shops with black and white facades. Modern Chester is a stylish, contemporary city with its own cultural facilities but within easy reach of Liverpool, Manchester and London as well as the beautiful countryside and coast of North Wales.

FINANCE

The School's finances are well managed and healthy with very little outstanding debt and an appropriate surplus achieved to support larger projects such as the astro development. The majority of the funding for the School is generated by the fees which are kept at a reasonable level. The School is committed to being as accessible to local families as possible and operates a bursary scheme for Senior School girls, which is also supported by some local charities and alumni. The School is a charity and unincorporated association governed by a Scheme dated 1912, as amended. It is currently in the latter stages of registering as a charitable company.



GOVERNANCE

The Governors are responsible for the general educational character and aims of the School and for creating and reviewing the *Governing Body's Strategic Plan*. They also set the fees, oversee the finances, disciplinary and ethical matters, make senior appointments and decisions on major building projects.

There is a supportive and committed Board of 19 Governors who come from a range of backgrounds including the Lord Bishop of Chester who is the ex-officio governor. The Full Board ordinarily meets four times a year and the Governors' committees are Audit and Risk Management; Chairs and Deputies Steering Group; Education Committee; Finance Committee; Estates Committee. There are link arrangements between governors and departments and most governors are assigned to between one and three departments. The Headmistress and Clerk to the Governors attend all Board and Committee meetings.

FACILITIES

The Senior School has exceptionally well-resourced academic departments including those such as Art, Science, DT, Music and Drama. The library is well used and supports study skills, academic purpose and a love of reading. The Careers department, within the library, has recently been awarded the highest possible standard nationally. The Main Hall, with its stage and flexible lighting, is used for productions and the School benefits from the close proximity to Chester's acclaimed theatre, *Storyhouse*. The Sport and Fitness Centre and Fitness Studio was renovated in 2015 and the new multi-sports astro pitch is due for completion within the next 12 months. Additionally, there are courts for tennis and netball. Sixth formers have their own common rooms with plasma TVs, a kitchen area and study spaces.

The Lower School also has enviable facilities. The indoor swimming pool is an excellent and well used resource and there is provision for athletics, tennis and netball. Outdoor learning is a particular strength and in addition to regular use of local coastal areas for Beach School, there are well equipped forest school areas and play spaces for Infants and Juniors. There is also a library, science laboratory, drama studio and art facilities.

The provision for computing is well developed and the IT department regularly assesses new technological developments for the benefit of the girls and staff. Across both sites there is excellent Wi-Fi and an infrastructure to support the use of iPads by all in the Senior School, class sets in the Lower School as well as the 200 other computers.

PASTORAL CARE

The wellbeing of the girls at Queen's is a central strength of the School and fundamental to their all-round development and success. Girls are confident that their voice will be always heard and that great interest is always being taken in their learning and their welfare. The recent parental survey carried out during the ISI inspection reinforced the confidence parents have in the School's pastoral care and highlighted the warm atmosphere created by the entire community. Strong communication between parents and school means concerns are addressed quickly and responded to with changes if required. In the Senior School there is a Head of Pastoral who leads a team consisting of Heads of Key Stage, Heads of Year, and Form Tutors. In the Lower School the Head of Lower School and Deputy Head of Lower School support the class teachers.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Maintaining educational excellence is a priority and the School is fortunate to attract teachers and support staff of high quality. Classes are kept to an appropriate size for the level of study and the progress of all girls is tracked and monitored with parents being informed of progress on a regular basis. Learning support and additional challenges are available when required and, in the Senior School, the subject teachers offer regular clinics for those requiring extra help. The Senior School works on a two week timetable.

Queen's is a selective school and the main points of entry are at age 4, 7, 11 or 16. All girls sit an entrance test for Year 7 but for internal candidates, coming from the Lower School, this is used as baseline assessment and for awarding scholarships, rather than selection.



ENRICHMENT

Queen's is a school which places great emphasis on the individual outside the classroom. Throughout the School a very wide range of clubs and societies is offered including team and individual competitive sports such as hockey, netball, tennis, lacrosse, rounders, football and athletics as well as active pursuits which include archery, badminton, dance, yoga or pilates. Music includes orchestras, choirs, jazz band and ensembles with opportunity for performance at concerts and the annual music festival. Drama groups also perform regularly and girls can take part in large or small school productions.

LEADERSHIP

The Headmistress leads the Senior Leadership Team: Director of Finance and Operations, Deputy Headmistress, Head of Lower School, Director of External Relations, Head of Pastoral, Head of Sixth Form, Head of Teaching and Learning. The Lower School has its own Senior Leadership team led by The Head of Lower School comprising the Deputy Head, Director of Studies and Head of Infants.

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

The Queen's School Parents' Association (QSPA) organises a range of social and fundraising events and parents automatically become members when their daughters join the School. Parents receive a weekly newsletter and regular information about events and both the Senior and Lower Schools hold regular information evenings or parents' evenings to discuss progress.

The Alumni department keeps old girls in touch with the School and with each other through reunions and events. Alumni connections are very strong and also helpful to the girls, regularly speaking to them about career opportunities or helping with interview practice.

The School is proud of its long association with the local community, Chester Cathedral and, more recently, the University of Chester. The sharing of local facilities is highly valued and the School is keen to maintain and strengthen links with local schools, businesses and charities and attaches great importance to delivering on its public benefit commitments.

"Queen's is a school which places **great emphasis on the individual** outside the classroom"



“The Director of Finance and Operations will be responsible for the **effective control** of financial affairs and operational business management”



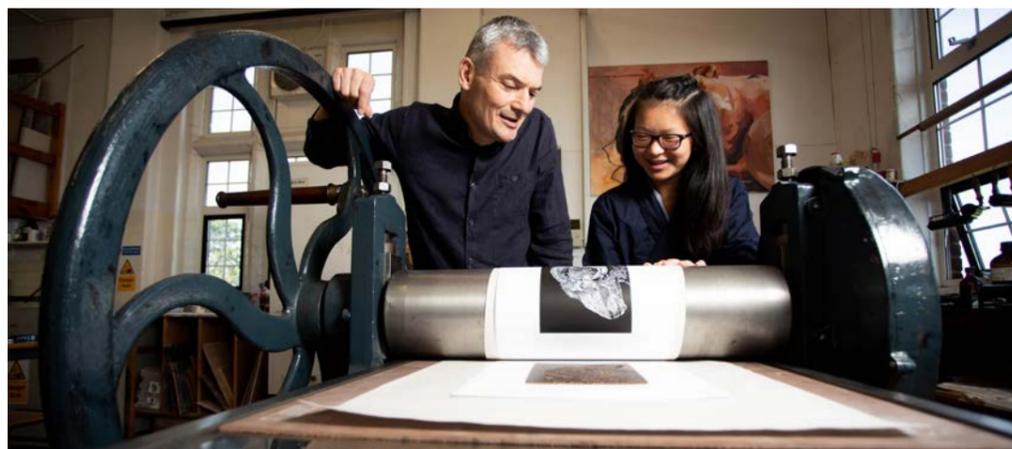
THE ROLE

The Director of Finance and Operations will be responsible for the effective control of financial affairs and operational business management including estates, facilities, maintenance, risk management, compliance and health and safety, GDPR, IT, catering and lead the School's operations staff.

As a member of the School's Senior Leadership Team, they will report to the Headmistress for the day to day running of the school and will contribute to the School's strategic development planning.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Work with the Board of Governors and the Headmistress on the development and delivery of the School's Strategic Plan, ensuring that it reflects and builds on the School's ethos and values.
- Manage major capital projects, to time and to budget, in conjunction with the Estates Manager and the School's external advisors, as appropriate.
- Prepare financial projections for a three year period, monitoring and modelling pupil number projections and calculating projected fee increases in consultation with the Headmistress, for presentation to the Governors.



FINANCE AND ACCOUNTANCY

- Responsibility, in collaboration with the Head, for all the School's finances, generating proposed budgets for the Head and Governors for approval and managing the overall financial planning process.
- Monitor income and expenditure in relation to budget and present regular management reports to the Governing Body.
- Monitor and manage cash reserves and maintain cash flow projections for the current and future years.
- Liaise with the School auditors to ensure a smooth completion of the annual external audit, submit financial statements to the Charity Commission and complete annual returns.
- Oversee the preparation of all invoicing, payroll and employee benefits including pensions.
- Oversee supplier contracts and the provision of major services to ensure best value, including periodic re-tendering and re-appointment.
- Advise on scholarship and bursary funds. Undertake assessments of parents' income and assets prior to making bursary awards and ensure appropriate correspondence with parents.
- Advise on all taxation matters and complete relevant returns.
- Use benchmarking data to assess and advise on cost efficiency and prepare financial analysis and reports to support the governors in their decision making.
- Oversee the management of the School's investment portfolio.

CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS

- Act as Clerk to the Governors and secretary to the Board's various committees and maintain records of Governors' training.
- Act as Company Secretary, ensuring the necessary records are kept and returns made to Companies House, the *Charity Commission* and other organisations as required.
- Be responsible for keeping the Governors updated on legislative changes and other relevant information.



IT

- Oversee the work of the Head of IT Network and Strategy and any Technicians to ensure that the School's IT system meets the School's educational and administrative needs in a high quality, reliable, secure, user friendly, cost effective and lawful manner.

ESTATES

- Work with the Estates Manager to ensure the high quality maintenance, refurbishment and development of existing buildings, grounds and facilities ensuring compliance with all statutory requirements.
- Oversee capital developments including master planning, and the design and specification for new buildings. Ensure the delivery of all capital projects to agreed time, cost and quality parameters.

RISK MANAGEMENT, COMPLIANCE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

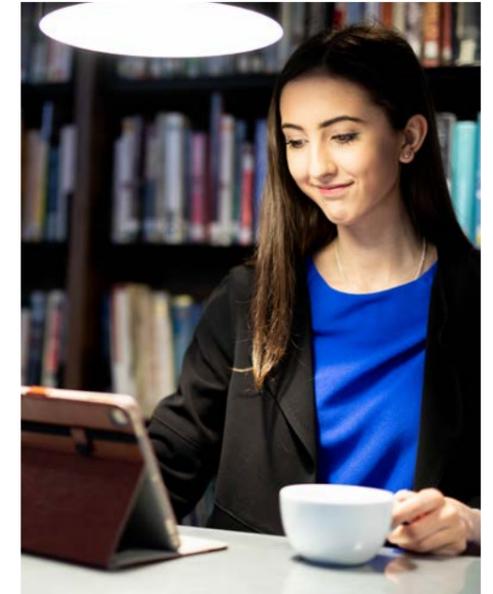
- Ensure compliance with legislation and guidance, including ISI regulations and GDPR.
- In conjunction with the Estates Manager, ensure compliance with all relevant aspects of Health and Safety including fire safety, site security, accident reporting, external review and risk assessment.
- Work with other senior staff to practice and enhance critical incident planning procedures.
- Maintain the School's Risk Register, ensuring risks and mitigation strategies are regularly reviewed and updated.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- Ensure that the School has adequate insurance cover at all times.
- Maintain contact with statutory authorities and other organisations including the DfE and ISC.
- Liaise with the School's legal and other external professional advisors as necessary.

OTHER

- To have a good working knowledge of education at primary, secondary and (ideally) higher levels, in order to understand the needs of the school and ensure that appropriate support is provided.
- To keep abreast of all developments relevant to the sector through networking, including through the Independent Schools Bursars Association and professional institutes.
- To undertake such training and professional development as may be required.
- Assist the HR Manager to ensure that all staff have appropriate contracts of employment and ensuring compliance with the Safer Recruitment Policies and SCR (Single Central Record).
- Be the SLT Lead on the recruitment, development, welfare, allocation and effective management of all staff within the line management structures above, undertaking appraisals as appropriate or ensuring relevant line managers are supported in appraisals and identifying appropriate training needs within the School's CPD processes.
- Work with the Headmistress and Senior Leadership Team in developing strategies to increase revenue streams and support fundraising for bursaries and capital projects.
- As for all employees at the school, to take an interest and be involved in the wider life of the school.



"It is a busy, demanding and interesting role"



THE PERSON SPECIFICATION

The successful candidate will be self-motivated and able to demonstrate a high level of both financial and operational leadership skills. They will have a proven and successful record in financial management, will be organised and a strong administrator, and have a proven track record of effective senior leadership and the control and management of projects.

It is a busy, demanding and interesting role, which requires the candidate to have excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

Amongst other qualities they will have the ability to work under pressure, meet deadlines, work on their own initiative as well as within a team; excellent ICT skills; ability to remain calm under pressure; handle sensitive issues constructively; demonstrate essential personal qualities which include absolute integrity, impartiality and discretion; have a strong empathy and interest in education.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The successful candidate is most likely to have:

- Either Professional Accountancy qualifications or Qualified by Experience

Along with

- Experience of working in a school setting or in a Charity/Not for Profit environment
- General Management and Operational/Strategic background
- Excellent financial acumen

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The salary offered will be attractive and will reflect the responsibilities of the post as well as the experience of the successful candidate. There is the possibility of temporary accommodation (two bedroom flat within the Senior School site) available to assist with relocation. The School offers 50% fee remission for daughters educated at The Queen's School. The Pension is a *Legal & General* scheme.

The Queen's School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. The post is subject to an enhanced *Disclosure and Barring Service* check, ID and *Right to Work* check, sight of original qualification certificates, satisfactory references, and a medical. The post is also subject to a negative response to an enquiry as to a prohibition order that has been made by the Secretary of State.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The School is being assisted in the recruitment of this key position by ISBA recruitment from whom an application pack can be obtained by sending an email to:

recruiting@theisba.org.uk - Alternatively if you have any queries, please contact Lucy Wyatt on **07817 038009** or John Murphie on **07801 545872**.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 22 August 2022

Long List interviews with the ISBA's recruiting team will take place virtually from this date with a view to shortlisted candidates being invited to tour the School week commencing 5 September 2022. The final interviews will take place at the School with the Board of Governors during week beginning 12 September 2022.