



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (COO)

MORE HOUSE SCHOOL, FRENSHAM



More House School
Rated Outstanding by Ofsted (2023)



Overview

The Governors and Headmaster of More House School, Frensham seek to appoint a highly skilled senior leader, expert in strategic planning and operational oversight, for the new post of Chief Operating Officer (COO).

An internationally recognised specialist independent school and UK-registered charity (Gard'ner Memorial Ltd), More House School is the largest and leading school for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. With an 85-year history, the School has seen rapid growth in pupil numbers over the last thirty years, from 65 to 500, and has repeatedly been graded Outstanding in five successive Ofsted inspections over the past decade. Located on a 30-acre estate in Frensham, on the edge of the Surrey Hills AONB, the School provides residential boarding and day places to a mix of privately-funded and local authority-funded pupils from across the South-East and beyond, and delivers a programme of outreach support and training to schools and educational trusts in both the independent and state-maintained sectors.

This is an exciting time; the School is planning its next phase of its Frensham campus development, ensuring the quality of facilities and pupil experience for the future, and is exploring potential opportunity for significant expansion, so that many more children and young people can access our unique model of education, especially girls.

The new role of Chief Operating Officer (COO) will support the Headmaster in implementing the new strategy ensuring strong financial planning and continuous development of the School's supporting operations in a cost-effective manner. Responsible to the Headmaster and Board of Governors, and reporting directly to the Headmaster on a day-to-day basis, the COO will bring proven experience of strategic and financial planning as well as the successful management of people.

Our School Vision is:

To lead in transforming the futures of intelligent children who experience Specific Learning Difficulties, Developmental Language disorder and associated conditions, by empowering them.

Our School Values are:

Kindness - Spirit - Responsibility

The School

A nationally celebrated charity, More House School provides an exceptional, mainstream education for boys with Specific Learning Difficulties and Developmental Language Disorders. Providing a transformative education repeatedly recognised as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted over more than a decade, we offer a specialised learning environment for 500 day and boarding boys from Year 4 to Year 13 (aged 8 to 18). Our pupils are taught to recognise their strengths and develop their self-belief so that they achieve independence and extraordinary results at GCSE, BTEC and A Level, above the national averages.

Delivering a mainstream independent school experience, both academically and socially, the very broad curriculum affords all pupils the opportunity to discover their strengths, challenging them to fulfil their academic and extra-curricular potential. Judged 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in its last five School inspections, our most recent inspection (March 2023) graded More House School 'Outstanding' overall, and 'Outstanding' in each of the six sub-sections of the report. The School's provision for residential boarders was most-recently inspected in November 2023 and likewise graded Outstanding in every respect. More House is CReSTeD approved, listed in their Specialist Schools category, and is a member of the Independent Schools Association and the Boarding Schools' Association.

Approximately 60% of pupils have their places at the School funded by a local authority, and are the subject of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Currently, more than thirty different local authorities have funded pupil places in the School. The remainder (40%) of pupils' places are funded privately by parents and extended families.

The School is set on a wooded hillside in nearly thirty acres on the Hampshire/Surrey border and within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Attractive modern facilities lie above the playing fields. London Waterloo is one hour away by train from close-by Farnham railway station, and there is easy access to the M25, M3 and A3 major routes. Guildford is twenty minutes' drive away, Basingstoke twenty-five, and Southampton an hour.

In the past ten years, the School has refurbished and extended its boarding facilities, refurbished its eight Science laboratories, built its School of Engineering and CAD facilities, and opened a new Humanities block and School Chapel. Autumn 2017 witnessed the completion of our brand-new library and Media Studies centre, and growth in learning support facilities. 2018 saw the expansion of the campus and the conversion of a large domestic building into our new Sixth Form centre, which was opened in January 2019, improving further the facilities for both teaching, and independent study. In December 2022, we installed a new Strength and Conditioning fitness gym for students and employees. Future plans include an ambitious building project improving further our Science laboratory facilities, extending the School's medical surgery and improving facilities for therapeutic counselling. We are also seeking planning permission for another project which will realise increased resources for Sports.

The School's governors are also trustees of the Charity (The Gard'ner Memorial Ltd, Registered charity number: 311872) and non-executive directors of the not-for-profit limited company, limited by guarantee (Registered company number 523768). Teaching and support-services staff join the School from a variety of backgrounds and are united by a shared commitment to the School's vision and its values of Kindness, Spirit and Responsibility.

The School is characterised by a continuous pursuit of excellence and improvement in all aspects of its provision, in order to realise the best possible experiences and outcomes for all pupils.



The role of Chief Operating Officer (COO)

This is a new post, designed in response to the current spectrum of opportunities facing the School. It will be the most senior non-teaching position in the School's leadership team and will be expected to contribute across all areas of the School's strategic planning and project management.

Responsible to the Headmaster and to the Board of Governors, the COO will report directly to, and work closely with, the Headmaster, reporting directly to him. The COO will be a member of the Core Leadership Group (CLG) and the wider Senior Management Team (SMT). Chaired by the Headmaster, the CLG is the most senior decision-making body within the executive and comprises the Chief Operating Officer, the Deputy Head, Curriculum (Penni Kerr), the Deputy Head, Residential (Alexandra Rositano), the Deputy Head, Pastoral (Lewis Clarkson) and the Director of Assessment and Therapy (Meriel Davenport).

In particular, the COO role will have specific responsibilities to provide leadership and oversight of all the school's core support functions and teams including Finance, Human Resources, Estates & Facilities, IT Services, Administration, Catering and Clerk to the Governors.

The successful applicant will be an ambassador and role model for the School's values of Kindness, Spirit and Responsibility. As COO s/he will support the Headmaster and Governors in ensuring the future financial sustainability and efficiency of the school and will be central to the development of strategic planning both at More House, Frensham and more widely. S/he will be adept at change management, organisational planning, and delivering strategic objectives, communicating effectively to secure widespread commitment and engagement.

The COO also fulfils the role of Clerk to the Governors, supported by an Assistant Clerk. S/he will attend meetings of the Full Governing Board, the Finance and General Purposes Committee, and other governors' meetings, as required.

Specific Responsibilities

To advise the Headmaster and Governors and assume responsibility for providing strategic leadership for all aspects of the following areas of the School's activities, ensuring continuous evaluation of School practice, development planning, implementation of planning and compliance with regulation in each area.

Strategy

- Support the Headmaster to devise and implement the agreed strategy, project managing and demonstrating leadership in respect of the School's support operations.
- Support the Headmaster and Governors to identify risk and opportunity, and to design highly effective and ambitious strategic plans and objectives, ensuring the financial and operational sustainability of the School and Charity, and the delivery of its vision and mission.
- Ensure awareness of risks and opportunities within the sector.
- Support the development of non-fee income streams including trading and fundraising.
- Accept specific responsibility for the implementation and delivery of strategic projects, as directed by the Headmaster.

Finance

- Provide strategic oversight and management of the Finance Manager and oversee the School's financial operations, budgeting, financial reporting, and financial planning and analysis. This will include financial modelling and analysis, strategic planning and implementation, forecasting and budgeting, accounting, monitoring and risk-management.
- Ensure all financial regulations (including the Charities SORP), schemes of delegation and financial procedures are fully adhered to, reviewed and updated as required by the Charity Commission, HMRC and other regulators.
- Ensure the effective operation of appropriate audit and control measures, and develop effective professional relationships with auditors, bankers and all other key stakeholders.
- Manage the coordination of external audits and preparation of the statutory accounts.
- Ensure all necessary and appropriate insurances are properly maintained.
- Maintain a comprehensive and effective risk register, advising both the CLG and Governors of matters affecting both business continuity and disaster recovery plans.
- Ensure the best use of resources for the delivery of the School's mission and agreed strategic objectives.

Human Resources

- In consultation with CLG oversee the development and implementation of a People Strategy.
- Provide strategic oversight and management of the School's Head of Human Resources and oversee the H.R. department.
- Ensure H.R. policies and practice are fit for purpose, compliant with the demands of sector regulation, and implemented comprehensively.
- Promote positive and effective relationships between the School (as an employer) and its employees, and employee representatives.
- Use data to identify trends and opportunities for improvement, devising a strategic approach to promote the most effective impact of employees and volunteers on the delivery of the School mission and agreed strategy.

Facilities

- Ensure a strategic approach to managing the School's physical estate, facilities and vehicle fleet, including development of the campus and ensuring comprehensive compliance with the demands of sector regulation.
- Provide strategic oversight and management of the School's Estates Manager and oversee the Estates department, comprising the Caretaking and Cleaning team, the Grounds team, the Maintenance team, the Laundry function and the Transport function to deliver the School's mission and agreed strategic objectives, and to manage risk.
- Promote the income stream from the letting of facilities to external parties.
- Provide project-management oversight of all facilities projects, including Capital Expenditure projects.
- Assume overall responsibility, under the Governors, for the health and safety of all adults and children, taking a strategic, comprehensive and evidenced approach to assessing and mitigating risk, implementing best-practice and using data to monitor trends and identify opportunities for improvement.

I.T. Services

- Provide strategic oversight and management of the School's Head of I.T. Services and oversee the I.T. Services department to deliver the School's mission and agreed strategic objectives, and to manage risk.
- Ensure I.T. policies and practice are fit for purpose, compliant legally and with the demands of sector regulation, and implemented comprehensively.
- Oversee GDPR within the school and ensure compliance.
- Promote highly effective collaboration and working-relationships between the department and other key School functions, such as Safeguarding.
- Use data to identify trends and opportunities for improvement, devising a strategic approach to promote the most effective impact of I.T. resources on the delivery of the School mission and agreed strategy.

Administration

- Provide strategic oversight of the School's Administration function, and ensure support is efficient and cost effective.

Catering

- Provide strategic oversight and management of the Catering Manager and the Holroyd Howe catering contract, ensuring compliance with all law and sector regulation, quality of service and value for money.
- Ensure appropriate pupil and staff feedback on the catering provision.
- Develop appropriate plans for maintaining and improving catering facilities and equipment.

Clerk to the Governors

- Fulfil the legal duties of Company Secretary and Clerk to the Governors, including filing returns for Companies House and the Charity Commission.
- Work with the Headmaster, Chair of Governors and Assistant Clerk to provide comprehensive administrative and otherwise support to the Board of Governors, and all committees, to enable the most effective governance and oversight of the School, Charity and all operations.
- Supporting the Governors in preparing the annual Directors' Report.
- Ensure the timely and comprehensive provision of such information, data and recommendations as may be requested by the Governors, or may be identified by the executive as useful for Governors.

Line Management

- Finance Manager
- Head of Human Resources
- Head of I.T. Services
- Headmaster's Office Manager
- Estates Manager
- Catering Manager
- Assistant Clerk

Reporting to Governors

- Liaison with the governors' Finance and General Purposes Committee on all aspects of the above.
- Submitting regular reports to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on all aspects of the above.
- Providing such reports, verbal and written, as may be required.

The above list of responsibilities is not exhaustive but provides an indication of the main areas of responsibility of the role. The post-holder may be asked to fulfil any other additional duties as deemed appropriate by the Headmaster. This role-description is subject to periodic review by the Headmaster.

Hours:

Working on-campus at More House School, Frensham, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday plus such additional hours that are necessary for the proper performance of the duties of the role, but flexibility in respect of working patterns as the role evolves is welcomed.

Attendance at School events outside these hours from time to time, including annual Founder's Day (the final Saturday of the academic year (Saturday 13th July 2024).

Attendance at meetings of the Governing Body and Governors' sub-committees, as required. There are usually four full-board meetings a year, typically in the evening, and at least six meetings per annum of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Some flexibility, and the ability to respond to situations in the moment, is required.

Remuneration and support:

- Extremely competitive annual salary, recognising the seniority and skillset of the role, calculated pro-rata, paid in monthly instalments;
- Five weeks' paid annual-holiday entitlement in addition to public holidays.
- Defined Contribution Pension with employer's contribution of 6%;
- Sick-pay;
- Employee Assistance Programme;
- Free on-site parking within the School's beautiful grounds;
- Excellent meals, at no cost, in the School's refectory;
- Free use of the School's recently-refurbished fitness and gym facilities.

Safeguarding:

This role is deemed to be one of working in regulated activity, meaning that the post-holder may expect to come into unsupervised contact with children and young people frequently in the discharge of their duties on campus. As such, the expectations of conduct, required of all adults working at More House School, apply to this position, as does a full Safer-Recruitment vetting process of any appointee. A key responsibility of all adults working within the School is that of ensuring the effective safeguarding of all children and young people, through adherence to the School's policies; full training is given.



TO APPLY

Potentially interested applicants are encouraged in the first instance to contact our recruitment advisor for this role:

David Stephens:



07739 457000



david@davidconsulting.co.uk

This will allow for an informal and confidential discussion about the role and their suitability for it. Suitable candidates will be invited for an informal visit to the School.

Candidates wishing to be considered for this role are then requested to submit a completed More House School application form and a covering letter expressing their motivations and suitability for this role at the earliest opportunity and no later than the deadline of 12 noon, on Tuesday 23rd April. Please note that Safer Recruitment requirements mean the School is unable to accept CVs in place of the school's own application form:



[Application Form](#)



Closing date for applications: Tuesday, 23rd April 2024 (at noon)

Expected dates for interviews: During the weeks of Monday 29th April and Tuesday 6th May 2024.

Should suitable applications be received in advance of the closing date, the School reserves the right to short-list, conduct interviews and make an appointment earlier than the above closing date. Those interested in applying for the post are urged to submit their applications early.

This post is subject to an Enhanced DBS clearance and the receipt of satisfactory references before a formal job offer is confirmed.

More House School is firmly committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.