

HEADINGTON RYE OXFORD

Appointment of

Head

An independent day and boarding school in Oxford
for girls and boys aged 3–11 and girls aged 11–18

www.headingtonrye.org





Welcome from the Chair of Governors

Dear Candidate

I am delighted to invite applications for the role of Head of Headington Rye Oxford following the retirement of our current Head. This is a tremendous opportunity for a dynamic and strategic leader to head one of the country's premier independent day and boarding schools and help shape the next phase in the School's exciting future.

The School has a rich history dating back to 1915. Its 47 acre estate in the beautiful City of Oxford comprises 4 sites following the successful merger of Headington School and its neighbour Rye St Antony in 2024 and is now a single vibrant and cosmopolitan community of over 1,000 pupils.

With an excellent academic reputation both locally and nationally, the School also has exceptional co-curricular, creative arts and sporting opportunities utilising its extensive facilities. The recent glowing ISI inspection report confirmed this, recognising the School's outstanding results and value-added progress underpinned by strong pastoral care and noted our impressive co-curricular provision as a significant strength.

We are seeking an inspiring Head with vision, energy and warmth to build on the School's strong foundation. The successful candidate will demonstrate highly effective communication skills, commercial awareness and the ability to navigate the School confidently through ever-changing times whilst upholding the School's culture and values.

Our community is diverse and lively, characterised by academically curious, confident and compassionate pupils, inspiring staff and a highly engaged, proactive governing board. This makes the School a treasured institution for pupils and parents and a rewarding place to work.

With very best wishes

Carol Oster Warriner
Chair of Governors.



The School, its Aims and Ethos

Headington Rye Oxford comprises a Senior School for girls with day pupils and boarders, and a mixed pre-Prep and Prep School for day pupils only.

It has a Christian foundation and ethos, and welcomes children from all backgrounds, cultures and countries. Over 45 nationalities are represented in the pupil body, reflecting Oxford's diverse and international character.

The School is committed to enabling every pupil to flourish, whatever his or her background, and students are supported to grow as individuals, achieving beyond their expectations.

At its heart is a deep commitment to future readiness, motivating young people to leave accomplished and to lead confidently in a rapidly changing world with courage, curiosity and creativity, yet always collaboratively and compassionately reflecting the 6Cs embedded in all the School embraces.

We aim to be the School of choice for local families seeking excellence, character formation and opportunity.

Oxford itself is an extraordinary setting: a world-class university city with unrivalled cultural, intellectual and sporting opportunities, and excellent transport links to London, the Midlands and beyond.

Headington Rye Oxford is itself highly respected and influential in the wider world of education through its memberships of and leadership in the Girls' Schools Association (GSA), and ISC associations including AGBIS, ISBA and IAPS.





Our Outstanding Facilities

Headington Rye benefits from outstanding facilities across 3 sites, having invested in significant capital investments to support its wide ranging academic and co-curricular activities.

It benefits from a large indoor swimming pool, tennis courts, extensive playing fields on two sites, a floodlit all-weather playing pitch and a new Dance and Fitness Centre.

The Senior School campus houses a Music School hosting over 300 lessons a week and its own 260 seat professional theatre where internal and external productions are performed.

More recent developments include the Creativity and Innovation Centre (The Hive, 2021), The Prue Leith Food and Nutrition Centre (2022) and a new world class boathouse for the School on the banks of the Thames (2024).

These fabulous amenities are not only widely used by our pupils but also by the local community enabling us to benefit and support local state schools and clubs.

The recent merger has freed up our London Road site to allow various short term lettings and use as an additional venue for events, raising income and providing a wide range of choice for longer term opportunities.

Boarding

There are five boarding houses at Headington Rye Oxford, providing accommodation for more than 200 girls aged from 11-18. Around one in four Senior School girls board including girls from Oxford and the surrounding areas, further afield in the UK and all over the world.

We offer a full range of boarding options including full, weekly, half-weekly and occasional boarding though full boarding continues to be the most popular option.

It is a fantastic way to take advantage of everything the School has to offer from evening sports activities to special-themed house dinners and trips.

The comprehensive network of support, including from the Head, ensures every girl feels looked after and relaxed when boarding here.

Boarders develop global awareness and lifelong friendships within a close-knit, diverse community enriched by Oxford's international character.





Academics in the Senior School

Headington Rye Oxford is academically selective and one of the highest-achieving independent schools in Oxfordshire, with results that consistently place it among the top schools in the UK at both GCSE and A Level. Pupils are intellectually curious, emotionally confident and highly motivated.

The School offers exceptional academic breadth, with 30 subjects at A Level and 27 at GCSE. Teaching adds significant value: typically, girls achieve at least one grade higher at GCSE and one and a half grades higher at A Level compared with their assessed potential on entry. Students can undertake the BTEC Diploma in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, a mini MBA Course, EPQ or other skills electives as excellent preparation for future studies.

The School also offers a variety of pathways in KS4 including its pioneering innovative alternative 'Plus One' courses which are accredited by Edqual. Alongside GCSEs pupils can choose to combine rigorous academic qualifications with future ready courses including Financial Literacy, AI and the Higher Project Qualification.

The Sixth Form offers strong leadership opportunities alongside rigorous academic preparation. Most leavers secure places at Russell Group, Oxbridge and US universities taking a huge range of courses from medicine to graphic design. Apprenticeship opportunities are increasingly popular as well as places at leading dance and music conservatoires.

The School is recognised as a bastion of intelligent future-readiness, preparing and empowering young women to be confident leaders in a rapidly evolving world.

Co-Curricular and Enrichment Activities

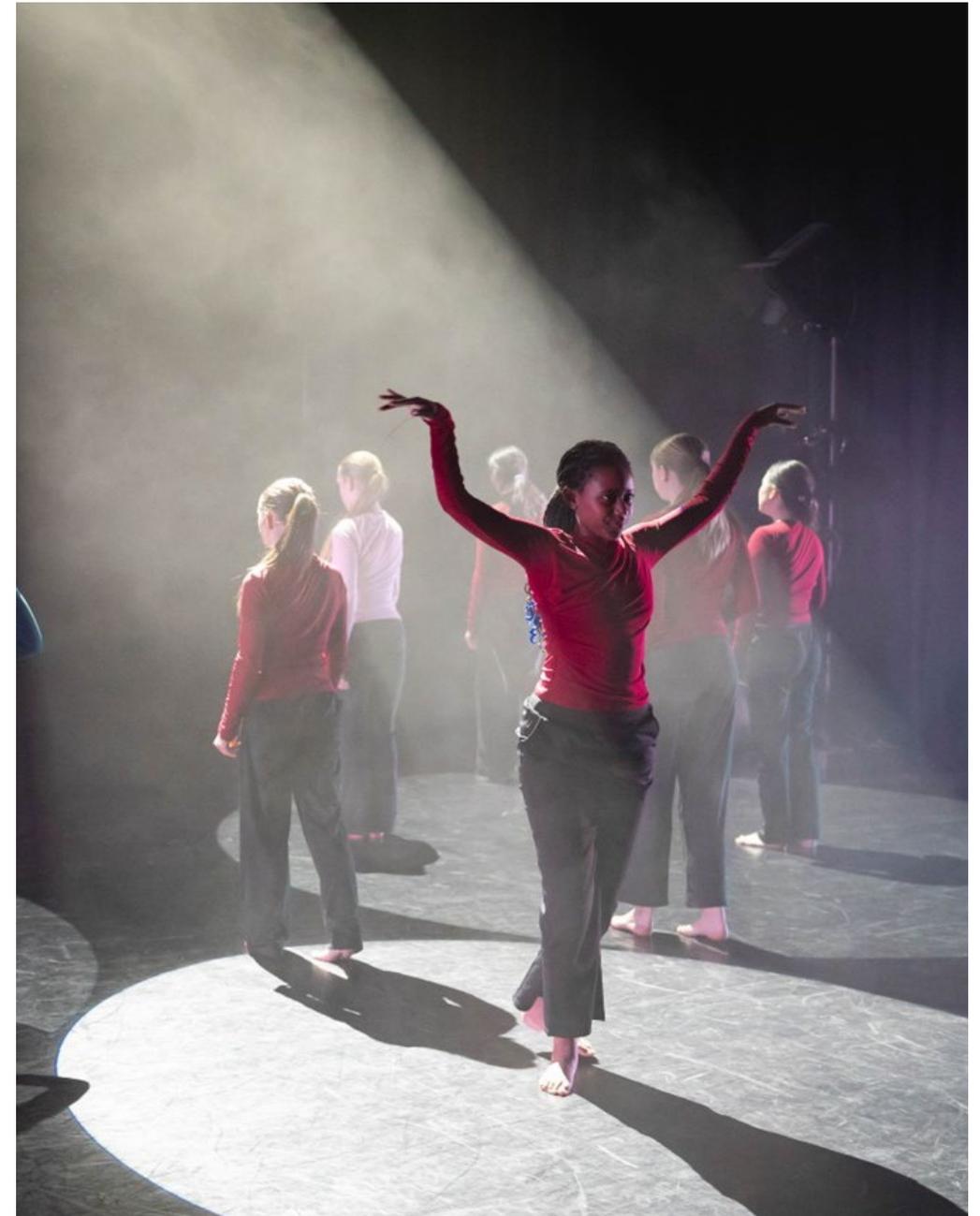
The breadth of co-curricular life at Headington Rye Oxford is exceptional. Pupils choose from more than 120 clubs and societies, ranging from Model United Nations and Debating to Duke of Edinburgh, Robotics and community service. The Combined Cadet Force is one of only four all-girls contingents in the country.

Sport plays a central role ranging from elite-level athletics, hockey and netball to recreational activities such as cheerleading and swimming. The School aims to help every pupil find a sport they love.

The School is one of the UK's top rowing schools, consistently triumphing at the National Schools' Regatta and at Henley. Over 120 rowers and an average of three athletes per year have gone on to represent Team GB worldwide, with Olympians from the School competing in the last four Olympics.

Music is a particular strength with 33 ensembles and 22 instruments on offer. Drama and Dance is of a very high professional quality with incredible major productions, dance performances, house plays and Trinity Speech and Drama coaching throughout the year.

The School's wide ranging co-curricular and enrichment programme with specialised clubs, societies and lectures was recognised by ISI Inspectors as 'high-quality, broad and flexible' enabling pupils' to develop an extensive range of skills and knowledge which enhances physical, mental and emotional health and is a significant strength of the School'.





Pastoral and Wellbeing

The quality of pastoral care is a hallmark of the School. It recognises that pupils achieve their best when they are happy and feel supported and valued.

Mental and physical health and wellbeing is taken very seriously and there is a comprehensive pastoral structure in place throughout the School. Every pupil is known, valued and supported through a strong tutor system, dedicated Heads of Year and Heads of Section.

There is a dedicated non-teaching Director of Safeguarding as well as a Deputy Head Pastoral, both of whom report to the Head. They are supported by an experienced wellbeing team including counsellors, chaplains and a 24/7 Health Centre. There is a separate wellbeing hub where pupils can go when they need some space or someone to talk to.

All staff operate an open door policy and pupils can raise issues in confidence. Peer mentoring is also encouraged for those who would prefer to talk to one of their peers including the Wellbeing Prefect or one of the Head Girl Trio (Head Girl, Head of Boarding and Head of Day).

'Wellbeing Wednesdays' provide an opportunity for tutor groups in Lower and Upper Sixth to foster relationships across year groups and develop emotional resilience.

The Prep School

Headington Rye Oxford Prep School is a mixed day school for 3–11 year olds, set in a 12-acre green site adjacent to the Senior School. Led by the Head of Prep, who reports to the Head, it is home to more than 250 pupils comprising over 30 nationalities, reflecting multicultural Oxford.

The curriculum expands on the National Curriculum offering a forward thinking and contemporary education with specialist teaching in Sport, Music, Languages and Computing from an early age. By Year 5, subject specialists teach pupils and their mastery of their subjects means there is no limit to outcomes.

The Stretch and Challenge programme provides rigorous provision for the most able, with 25% of Year 6 pupils achieving academic, art, dance, drama, music or sport scholarships to the Senior School and other leading schools. Last year it was awarded the NACE Challenge Award, the only independent school in the county to achieve this.

The School's excellent facilities include dedicated Science Labs, a Theatre, Music School, ICT suites, Art Room, outdoor play areas and substantial woodlands for Forest School. Pupils also benefit from using the Senior School's Swimming Pool, Creativity and Innovation Centre and other amenities.

Pastoral care is fundamental to the School's ethos. A committed wellbeing team ensures every child is known and supported, while extra-curricular activities include over 80 clubs and 12 sports alongside theatre and music productions throughout the School. It holds Artsmark Gold status in recognition of its outstanding creative arts provision.

At the end of Year 6, girls usually progress seamlessly into Headington Rye Oxford Senior School without any entrance exam, while boys move to other top local independent schools.





Governance and Leadership

Governing Body

The Governing Body is a forward thinking and supportive Board of both the Senior and Prep Schools which meets regularly throughout the year, providing strategic challenge and support to the Head, Senior Leadership Team, staff and wider community.

Governors are highly skilled, and chosen for their expertise which includes education, law, finance, planning, fundraising and risk. They are prepared to be agile and act strategically in collaboration with the Head and SLT to protect the long-term future of the School. The Chair meets with the Head fortnightly to provide support and be a 'critical friend' on issues that arise between meetings.

The Executive and Senior Leadership Team

The Head leads Headington Rye Oxford across all sites with the Head of Prep, Bursar and First Deputy (the Executive) and the wider Senior Leadership Team reporting directly to the Head. They are responsible for the Prep School, Finance, Operations and support staff, academic strategy, pastoral care, admissions and marketing. Over 380 staff work across the Senior and Prep School.

Prep Leadership Team

The Prep School has its own dedicated leadership team, led by and reporting to the Head of Prep. The Head attends the Prep School regularly to provide support and challenge.

Pastoral Leadership

Both Schools have a dedicated pastoral structure. The Director of Safeguarding is the DSL for both the Senior School and the Prep but each has separate pastoral support.

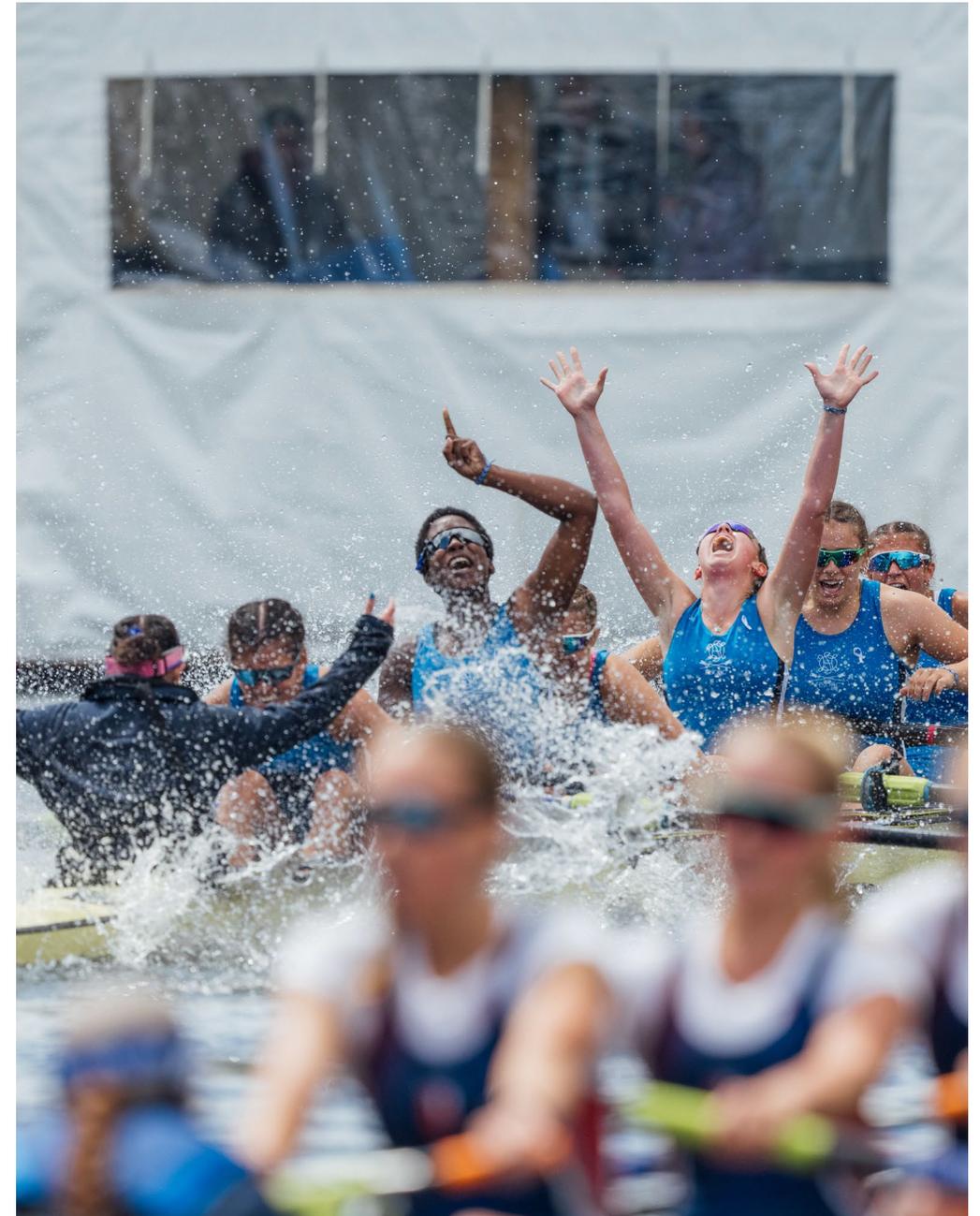
The Opportunity

This is a rare and exciting opportunity to lead one of the UK's most distinguished independent schools at a pivotal moment in its history. With the 2024 merger now successfully embedded and the School's current 5 year plan expiring in 2026, the next Head will have the privilege of shaping the unified School's identity, culture and strategic direction for the years ahead.

The new Head will inherit a School in excellent health: outstanding academic results, superb facilities, a thriving boarding community, a talented staff body and a strong reputation both domestically and internationally. The School's financial position is sound. However, in the rapidly changing educational landscape, with falling birthrates and ever-increasing costs it will be important to be adaptable to safeguard and enhance the School's future.

The Governors' strategic priorities for the next Head include:

- Supporting and implementing the agreed strategy plan for the future direction of the School
- Strengthening the School's market position in an increasingly competitive landscape for independent education
- Sustaining and enhancing academic excellence, ensuring the School remains among the highest performing in the country
- Leading and inspiring a large, committed staff body through the next phase of the School's development
- Ensuring the School's estate and facilities continue to support a world-class education whilst supporting opportunities to maximise the income from all sites
- Growing and maintaining the School's reputation for domestic and international boarding





Role Specification

The Head of Headington Rye Oxford will be responsible for:

- Providing inspirational, visible, credible and accessible leadership to the whole School community
- Acting as the public face and ambassador for Headington Rye Oxford at local, national and international level
- Working in partnership with the Governing Body to set, articulate and implement a compelling, clear strategic vision
- Overseeing the financial management and operational efficiency of the School, ensuring long-term sustainability
- Ensuring the highest standards of academic achievement, teaching and learning across both the Senior and Prep Schools
- Championing outstanding pastoral care and safeguarding across all sections of the School
- Recruiting, retaining and developing outstanding staff, fostering a culture of professional growth and high expectation
- Maintaining and developing the boarding provision, ensuring it remains a vibrant and integral part of the School
- Building and strengthening relationships with parents, alumnae, partner schools, Oxford's universities and the wider community
- Leading the School's marketing, admissions and international recruitment strategy

Person Specification

The Governors are seeking a leader of exceptional calibre who will bring:

- Strategic vision and intellectual credibility, with a deep understanding of the independent school landscape and a clear sense of direction for the future
- A proven track record as a successful Head or senior leader in a high-performing school, ideally with experience of both day and boarding provision
- Outstanding interpersonal skills — a natural communicator who builds trust and rapport with pupils, staff, parents, governors and external partners alike
- A passionate commitment to the education of girls and young women, and to the value of co-education in the preparatory years and be active and influential in the world of education more widely
- The ability to inspire, lead and develop a large and talented staff body, with a genuine commitment to staff wellbeing and professional development
- Financial and commercial acumen, with the confidence to manage a complex budget and to think entrepreneurially about income generation
- An appreciation of the School's Christian foundation and its commitment to welcoming families of all faiths and none
- Resilience, energy and personal presence — someone who leads by example and thrives in a busy, outward-facing role
- An international outlook and an understanding of the global market for boarding education as well as the domestic boarding market





Terms of Appointment

The successful candidate will be expected to take up the post in September 2027.

An excellent remuneration package will be offered commensurate with the importance of the role and the experience of the candidate.

The Head is required to live on site and accommodation is provided. The role comes with a number of further benefits including pension contributions, private health care and fee discounts for children at the School.

Headington Rye Oxford is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Applicants must be able to provide evidence of having the right to live and work in the UK and must undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and DBS and barred lists checks.

Headington Rye Oxford is an equal opportunities employer.

How to Apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Headington Rye Oxford on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at roles.saxbam.com using code **LAIDB**

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is **midday on Thursday 23rd April 2026**

Key Dates

- First round panel will be held on **Tuesday 2nd June 2026**
- School visits and activities for shortlisted candidates during **w/c 8th June 2026**
- Final round panel will be held on **Tuesday 16th June 2026**

**The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application.*

An application form will be required for all shortlisted candidates.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.





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OXFORD

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Headington Rye Oxford is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Registered Charity No. 309678