

BRIEF FOR THE POSITION OF

SENIOR DEPUTY HEAD

WOLDINGHAM SCHOOL



DECEMBER 2025



Welcome from the Head



Woldingham School is a very special place indeed. Our vision as a school is to provide an outstanding education that empowers women to change the world. Our mission is for Woldingham to be a happy and successful school that develops confident, compassionate and courageous young women. We are distinct in that the strength of our values-led ethos creates a truly warm and caring community where girls flourish.

This pivotal new role reflects the strategic intents and ambition of our school. The Senior Deputy Head will

be a suitably experienced school leader who will take responsibility for the day-to-day running of our school, with a particular focus on academic oversight. This will allow me as Head to focus on the strategic vision for the school, lead our change programme and hone key relationships that relate directly to the future direction of Woldingham.

The Senior Deputy Head will work closely with myself, as well as with other senior leaders, to ensure the efficient and smooth running of our educational operation. Importantly,

they will deputise for me in my absence from school and, as such, it will be expected that they will command the respect of students, staff, parents and Governors.

This role represents a hugely exciting and potentially rewarding professional opportunity. I hope that you find the information in this candidate brief useful. Thank you for your interest in the role of Senior Deputy Head at Woldingham.

Sue Baillie
Head



The school

Set in hundreds of acres of beautiful Surrey countryside, just 30 minutes by train from central London, Woldingham is one of the UK's leading day and boarding schools for girls aged 11-18.

Woldingham is a Catholic school that warmly welcomes girls of all faiths and none. Founded by Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat in 1842 as the first Sacred Heart school in England, we are proud that Woldingham was a pioneer of women's education. As part of the Sacred Heart network which has schools in 40 countries around the world, our school is underpinned by a set of shared values, based on the Sacred Heart goals which emphasise faith, social awareness, community, intellectual values and personal growth. Our learning philosophy and strong ethos produces courageous, confident and compassionate young women.

Our students achieve outstanding GCSE and A Level results. Indeed, Woldingham is in the top 10% of schools in the country for added value. Most students leave Woldingham to take up university

places at prestigious institutions in the UK and overseas, with around 75% going to Oxbridge and other Russell Group universities. In recent years some of the most popular UK universities for students have included Bristol, Durham, Edinburgh and Exeter. Woldingham students have also recently taken up places at a range of universities overseas including Dartmouth, NYU and Cornell.

We place great emphasis on learning outside the classroom. Our exceptional extra-curricular programme of sport, clubs, performing arts and outreach into our local community enables our students to develop a wonderful range of skills, expertise and interests, alongside high-level academic achievement.

Every Woldingham girl is unique. Our aim is to understand them as individuals and ensure that they feel

known, nurtured and supported. The school's THRIVE programme promotes emotional wellbeing and enables every student to develop a growth mindset, resilience and self-worth to enjoy success as well as learn from setbacks.

We are a boarding and a day school. Around 50% of students board on a full, weekly or flexi basis. Roughly 35% of our students live locally, 40% come from London and 25% are from overseas. Indeed, our girls come from over 35 different countries dotted around the world; the school's internationalism and the diversity of our community is very important to us.

Given the above, it is perhaps unsurprising that Woldingham has become an increasingly popular choice for parents and students, with more than 530 students currently enrolled at the school.





The role

The Senior Deputy Head will be a key member of our Senior Leadership Team (SLT), as such they will provide visible leadership across the school community. They will take delegated responsibility for specific areas as well as lead initiatives that contribute to the school's vision and development. This role combines strategic responsibility with day-to-day operational leadership. Therefore, the Senior Deputy Head will serve as the line manager to various senior colleagues.

The Senior Deputy Head will be expected to lead by example in upholding the school's values. They will have significant safeguarding duties and will need to show a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. A focus on the wellbeing of students and staff is central to the role.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic leadership

- Deputise for the Head when required, including representing the school at key internal and external events.
- Attend full governor board meetings and governor committee meetings, as agreed by the Head and Chair of Governors.
- As directed by the Head, collaborate with senior staff on the delivery of the school's Strategic Development Plan.
- Assist the Head in communicating and delivering the vision and ethos of the school.

Educational leadership

- Lead the school's academic leadership team, including line managing the Assistant Heads: Curriculum; Learning; Student Progress; Co-Curricular; and Digital Innovation.
- Set targets for academic departments and lead department development planning through line management of the Assistant Head Curriculum.
- Ensure a clear educational vision, including the development of a curriculum that is, in part, informed by the school's digital strategy.

- Oversee the pastoral provision in the school through the line management of the Deputy Head Pastoral.
- Ensure high standards of student welfare, dress code, discipline and behaviour.
- Oversee safeguarding policies, provision and procedures including the management, maintenance and review of safeguarding policies, and the implementation and evaluation of all safeguarding measures.

Operational leadership

- Take responsibility for ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of the school.
- Act as a central communication point for staff, parents and students.
- Take overall responsibility for the school calendar arrangements, through line management of the Assistant Head Co-Curricular.
- Take overall responsibility for preparing Woldingham for ISI inspection and ensuring that the school meets the National Minimum Standards for boarding.
- Support the Head and DFO in ensuring that compliance and risk management policies and procedures are kept updated and are consistently implemented. Together with the Compliance Officer and DFO, lead on the management, maintenance and review of all other school policies.





- Contribute to the school's operational planning, taking delegated responsibility for specific areas to ensure delivery of strategic priorities.
- Ensure the implementation of data collection systems to enhance academic progress and the quality of pastoral care.
- Through leadership of the Deputy Head Pastoral, promote student voice.
- Through oversight of the academic leadership team, ensure there is an effective lesson observation programme in place.
- Ensure prudent financial management across all educational functions of the school.
- Oversee the annual updating of all staff and parent/student handbooks.
- Collaborate with the DFO regarding aspects of food provision for students and staff.
- Attend the Woldingham Staff and Parents' Association committee meetings, keeping the Head informed of any matter that may impact on parental or external relationships.

Staff management and professional development

- Take responsibility for the day to-day welfare of the teaching and boarding staff, including the authorisation and approval of leave of absences.
- Take responsibility for staff surveys, providing metrics and reporting for the SLT and governing body.
- Act as the Staff Wellbeing Champion, promoting wellbeing initiatives across the staff body.
- Champion professional development for all staff, working closely with the Assistant Head Learning to ensure the delivery of a well-planned CPD programme and that the appropriate programmes and channels are in place, regularly measuring their effectiveness.
- Build positive and collaborative working relations with staff and model high professional standards.
- Work closely with the Head and Director of HR to ensure that the relevant policies facilitate the successful employment and retention of staff.

- Draw up the agenda for staff conferences and staff meetings.
- Liaise regularly with the Assistant Head Learning regarding the effectiveness of the appraisal process and, where necessary, to make amendments to the process.
- Work with the Assistant Head Learning to facilitate the delivery of the initial teacher training and ECT induction programmes.
- Develop and promote an integrated coaching culture to shape staff self-improvement.
- Attend the Staff Consultative Committee meetings.

No job description can fully cover all aspects of such an appointment, and therefore, the successful person must be flexible and willing to take on other reasonable responsibilities and tasks in order to fulfil the role. The post holder will be expected to carry out such other duties as reasonably requested by the Head that are commensurate with its level of responsibility.



THE PERSON

The successful candidate will be an exceptional leader who will enjoy a high level of exposure to all elements of governance, leadership and management. They will most likely aspire to headship in due course. A university degree and teaching qualification are essential. Additional leadership or management qualifications are desirable.

The Senior Deputy Head will take an active role, with the Head, in developing the Christian, moral and ethical values of the school. Therefore it is desirable that the postholder is Roman Catholic or has, at the very least, a strong sympathy with the Catholic church and the Catholic social teaching vision. It is also desirable, but not essential, that the candidate has experience as a school inspector, e.g. as a Team Inspector or Reporting Inspector for ISI.

The Senior Deputy Head's personal qualities and experience will include:

Experience

- Significant and varied senior leadership experience, ideally with exposure to boarding.
- A proven track record of raising standards and securing strong outcomes for students.
- Experience of leading teams, managing change and delivering improvements across academic and/or pastoral areas.
- Evidence of contributing to the development, implementation and monitoring of school improvement plans.
- Experience of engaging and building relationships with staff, students, parents, governors and external stakeholders.

Knowledge, skills and abilities

- A strong moral compass, integrity and a sense of vocation.
- A capacity for hard work and a willingness to lead by example.
- Academic and intellectual ability as well as strong strategic thinking skills.
- Warmth, emotional intelligence, open-mindedness, diplomacy, and a calm and approachable manner blended with resilience, drive and energy.
- Outstanding interpersonal skills, including the ability to listen well, communicate clearly, and motivate others.
- A commitment to driving educational excellence, intellectual curiosity, reflection and debate.
- Interest in the spiritual development of students, as well as being supportive of the Catholic tradition and Sacred Heart values.
- Ability to anticipate and manage complex issues, seeking inclusive and collaborative solutions.
- Excellent decision-making and problem-solving skills, with the ability to prioritise effectively.
- Knowledge of the regulatory, safeguarding and legal requirements relevant to an independent school.
- A sense of humour.



APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested candidates are invited to contact RSAcademics to arrange a confidential discussion with one of the consultants handling this appointment:

Jenny Funnell

Search Consultant

jennyfunnell@rsacademics.com

Martin Collier

Senior Advisor

martincollier@rsacademics.com

The deadline for receipt of applications is 10.00am on 22 January 2026.

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. To submit your application, please upload your documents according to the instructions on the RSAcademics website.

You should submit the following (both in PDF format):

- a completed application form (available alongside this candidate information on the RSAcademics website)
- a covering letter addressed to Mrs Sue Baillie, Head. The letter should explain your reasons for applying.

If you have any questions about uploading your application documents, please contact:

Jonathan Barnes

Head of Operations

(Leadership Appointments)

applications@rsacademics.com

Jonathan can also be reached by calling our Head Office on +44 (0) 204 6269 791.

We understand the need for confidentiality and all discussions and interviews will be handled with very careful regard to this.

The process is as follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of sending it, please contact RSAcademics by telephone.
- Preliminary interviews will take place with RSAcademics via MS Teams on 28 & 29 January 2026.
- Long List interviews will take place at Woldingham School on 2 & 3 February 2026.
- Short List interviews will take place at Woldingham School on 10 February 2026.

N.B. Safer recruitment checks will be made at all stages in the recruitment process.

SAFEGUARDING

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check, and the receipt of two satisfactory references, including one from current employer.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The school is committed to the principles of equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion. It seeks to attract and retain the very best staff, ensuring that our staff body reflects the diversity of our students and the local community.



ABOUT RSACADEMICS

Founded in 2001 by Russell Speirs, RSAcademics has advised and supported over 700 schools and educational organisations in the UK and worldwide. Through our working partnerships with heads, leadership teams, boards, staff and parents, we specialise in supporting schools in five main areas: strategy, marketing and research; equality, diversity and inclusion; operational improvement; leadership and governance and philanthropy. We enable schools worldwide to thrive, by finding and developing senior leaders, guiding decision makers, making connections and shaping debate. RSAcademics is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in schools. Please visit www.rsacademics.com for more information.



Marden Park, Woldingham, Surrey, CR3 7YA
(for satellite navigation please use postcode CR3 7LR)
+44 (0)1883 654308 hr@woldinghamschool.co.uk
woldinghamschool.co.uk