

# Director of Finance & Operations

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

# Welcome

Dear Candidate,

If you are looking for a role that is so much more than 'just a job', then this could be your chance to become part of something really special. Bute House is forward-thinking, dynamic, fast-paced and a tremendously fun place to be for our girls, their families and the staff. But make no mistake, this is a place that demands a commitment to hard work and absolute professionalism. Understanding the significance of our work in educating the women of the future, who will be leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs and change-makers, is important, and so is recognising your own contribution to this.

Set in Hammersmith, West London, we are very much a community at Bute House, with parents who are aspirational for their children with high expectations. There is a constant buzz of excitement from the girls the minute they step through the doors in the morning, which is often very early if they are attending sports squads or the breakfast club! Whilst Bute has an exceptional reputation for academic results, our approach is holistic, and sports, the creative arts, performing arts and wellbeing are very important elements of what the school offers. Our non-competitive academic ethos is central to our approach, and we encourage each girl to "run her own best race". This means that we don't compare the girls to each other and actively discourage parents from doing this too. Our shared values, taught through the 'Learning Powers', allow the girls to develop resilience, empathy and emotional intelligence, preparing them to cope with the challenges that life throws their way and also to learn and grow from these experiences.

We are looking for the right person to join our school, to lead an intelligent and hardworking team of support staff, and to play a significant role in the strategic direction of the school alongside a highly capable, passionate senior leadership team who have great synergy. Establishing a culture of positivity, tolerance, empathy and kindness where everybody feels valued and empowered is a priority, and you will share these core values and demonstrate them through your leadership.

Although you will not be a member of the teaching team, you will be a role model for the girls and the rest of the school community. I hope that you will be just as comfortable attending our weekly whole-school assembly or even taking part in one yourself as you will be preparing annual budgets and presenting to Governors. Your role here would be multifaceted, demanding at times and highly rewarding. Having previous experience in a school is essential, along with sharing our values and being adaptable and creative. You will have great attention to detail and a willingness to throw yourself into the life of the school.

I welcome your application and look forward to meeting you.

*Sian Bradshaw*

Head









# The School

Bute House is a thriving independent preparatory school for some 325 girls aged 4 to 11. Located in Hammersmith, West London, the school opened in 1958 in a brand-new building which replaced an older house that had originally belonged to the Marquis of Bute. The school site is self-contained, with an extensive play and sports area, and is adjacent to St Paul's Girls' School, which provides access to additional sports facilities, including a swimming pool.

Bearing its proud motto, "Every girl runs her own best race", Bute House seeks to inspire each girl to reach her personal best in a non-competitive environment whilst providing a broad, rich curriculum which fosters a love of learning that goes beyond what is taught. The school provides a happy, positive environment where self-discipline, respect, consideration for others and a sense of community are encouraged. Girls flourish and thrive within Bute House's strong pastoral setting. The girls achieve excellent results and high academic standards without unnecessary competition and pressure.

The Governors recognise that crucial to the school's philosophy is the appointment, investment in and development of high-quality staff. Under the inspirational stewardship of the Head, Sian Bradshaw, a vibrant and ambitious community of staff,

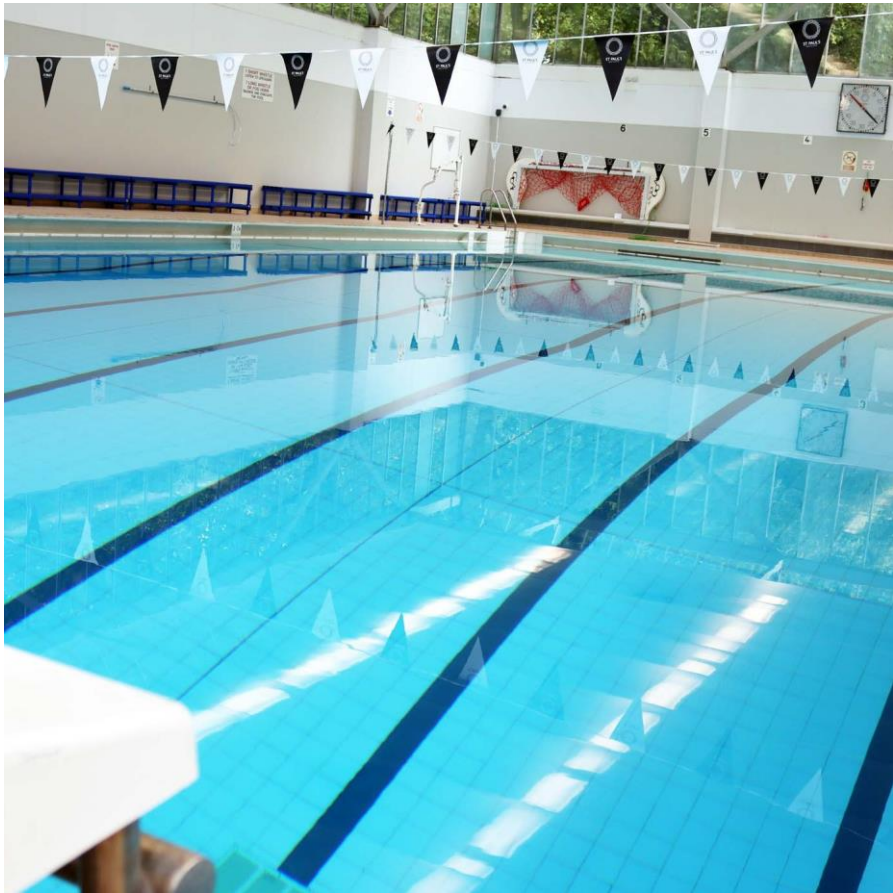
both teaching and support, is clearly evident. This is based upon a philosophy and culture of coaching and mentoring, providing a sense of value, empowerment and a voice for every staff member. The impact of this philosophy is evidenced by the clear sense of positivity and enthusiasm in the classroom and all support areas.

Facilities are excellent, and considerable investment in the estate, IT and other support services ensures that all stakeholders enjoy a first-class experience.

Bute House is an Associated School of the Mercers' Company, a livery company "focused on being a philanthropic force for good". The freehold land on which the school stands is owned by the Mercers' Company, which granted the school a 125-year lease from 1998. This relationship also carries significant benefits to the school, including grants in support of public benefit initiatives.











## Financial Position

Fees are competitive, and pupil numbers are robust. The school roll of some 325 is consistently healthy and projected to continue to grow towards a planning target of 330.

Bute House has an annual income of some £5.5 million and aims to achieve healthy annual surpluses. School finances have been very carefully managed, particularly during the recent pandemic, and Bute House retains a healthy balance sheet and cash flow. Careful management of fees charged to parents and the quality of education delivered during the period, together with strong marketing and tight cost control, has ensured the school's underlying financial position remains robust, and, indeed, pupil numbers continued to increase.

## Strategy

Having completed her four years as Head, Sian Bradshaw is passionate about her vision for Bute House:

to maintain its status as one of the best prep schools in the country and its unique non-academic ethos, underpinned by the innovative buzz of the school community. Developing a sustainability policy and strategy for the school that is underpinned by a sound financial strategy features as an important target.







# Governance & Management

The Head is supported by a Board of Governors who take a proactive interest in the school. The Governors are also trustees and directors of the overarching charity which is incorporated as Bute House Preparatory School for Girls, charity registration number 312739, company registration number 00571803.

There are currently sixteen Governors who have a wide range of experience and skills, along with an excellent understanding of and engagement with the day-to-day operations of the school. One school Governor is currently appointed by the Mercers' Company. There are sub-committees for Finance, Operations & Risk (FO&R), Bursary, Nominations & Governance, and Education. The Board and all main sub-committees meet at

least once per term (except the Bursary Committee, which meets twice a year). The DFO routinely attends and has an active role in all full Board and FO&R and Bursary Committee meetings. The DFO is not the Clerk to the Governors and Company Secretary. This is a separate role reporting directly to the Governors and is responsible for routine governance of the Governing Body and all sub-committees.

The Governors delegate the day-to-day running of the school to the Head, who works with the DFO in the preparation and presentation of school policies and strategic plans for consideration and adoption by the Board. Operational leadership of the school is conducted via the Senior Leadership Team, which is chaired by the Head and attended by the DFO.









# The Role

This is an exciting opportunity to become not just the Director of Finance & Operations (DFO) of an established and highly successful independent prep school but also to form a dynamic partnership with an ambitious Head. The DFO reports directly to the Head and is a key member of the school's Senior Leadership Team. The post holder will also be expected to forge highly effective working relationships with the neighbouring St Paul's Girls' School and with the Bute House Family Partnership.

The DFO will support the Head by aligning the school's support functions with its educational priorities so that Bute House can continue to deliver the very best in modern, independent education. A strong and close working relationship with the Head is essential in providing a robust strategic and operational foundation for the school, nurturing the development of an empowered, innovative and committed culture within the school alongside the management of every aspect of business risk. The responsibilities outlined below are not exhaustive but are indicative of the responsibilities of this significant and wide-ranging role.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate intellectual strength, strong commercial acumen and outstanding team leadership skills. They will have an excellent track record of senior leadership experience, including strong financial management skills. Whilst a formal accountancy qualification is not essential, the successful candidate will be highly numerate with an ability to provide highly reliable financial leadership with confidence. A strategist, they will also possess strong people management skills (with an understanding of how to delegate effectively and to develop a coaching culture within the team) and an ability to efficiently lead the day-to-day non-educational operations of

the school.

## TEAM

The Senior Leadership team consists of The Head, DFO, Director of People and Development, Senior Deputy, Deputy Head Academic and Assistant Head Pastoral. All members of the SLT report directly to the Head. The DFO will work closely with the Director of People and Development on some functions of the Administrative Team.

The DFO has overall responsibility for a diverse team of operational managers and staff. This team includes:

- The Finance Manager, supported by a Finance Assistant and Purchase Ledger Administrator, who looks after all day-to-day financial processes
- The Facilities Manager, supported by a small team responsible for caretaking, maintenance, health and safety and site security
- The IT and Data Management Team
- A team of Lunchtime Supervisors
- The DFO is also responsible for the provision of catering and cleaning services, both of which are provided through third-party contracts.

## CORE PURPOSE

The DFO will provide confident and forward-looking leadership and management of all the support areas of the school. This extends to responsibility for finances, the estate, operations, statutory and regulatory compliance and commercial activities. The ultimate aim is to ensure the smooth running of the school to support the Head and Governors in delivering the best possible educational experience to pupils.



## ■ Premises Management

Assisted by the Facilities Manager, the DFO will:

- Maintain an effective understanding of all aspects of the school's estate in support of operational efficiency and effectiveness, including periodic space utilisation surveys
- Effectively plan for and ensure delivery of the rolling programme of refurbishment and enhancement of existing facilities
- Ensure the school's estate and buildings are kept in excellent order through the management of regular maintenance, caretaking, site security and grounds services
- Oversee the work of outside contractors (including catering and cleaning) who provide services to the school and ensure that they operate to the standards specified in their contract
- Conduct a review of the options for future delivery of contracted services when existing contracts approach their expiry date. These options should assess the respective benefits of the delivery of services in-house or outsourced and market testing of outsourced services where appropriate
- Where required, liaise with specialist project management consultants to ensure effective planning for and delivery of major capital projects identified in the future strategic direction of the school
- Maintain all equipment and procedures to ensure compliance with fire regulations.

## • ■ Information Technology

Assisted by the IT Manager and Data Manager, the DFO will be responsible for:

- Effective acquisition planning in terms of hardware and software
- Successful interaction between educational priority and operational efficiency
- Innovative approaches to the provision and use of technology in all aspects of school life
- Overseeing the effective operation of the cloud-based management information system (currently SIMS) to access, analyse and manage data to provide a dynamic interface with existing and prospective parents, teachers and pupils, report writing, registrations and admissions.





### ■ *Risk Management, Compliance, and Health & Safety*

Assisted by the Facilities Manager for Health & Safety Matters, the DFO will:

- Review and regularly update the school risk register and ensure its presentation and adoption by the Governing Body every year
- Oversee risk management and assessment procedures in all aspects of school operational activities.
- Oversee policies and procedures for compliance in health and safety
- Plan for critical incident and business continuity planning
- Advise on charity legislative and regulatory requirements
- Advise on relevant ISI Inspection protocols.
- Ensure data protection compliance with the requirements of GDPR, including being the GDPR lead for the school.

### ■ *Commercial Activities*

The DFO will:

- Develop and implement a long-term strategy for the commercial aspects of the school and identify opportunities for new revenue streams as appropriate
- Manage all day-to-day operational aspects of income generation from school lettings and similar activities.

### ■ *Safeguarding*

It is the post holder's responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young persons and to adhere to and ensure compliance with the school's Safeguarding Policy at all times. If in the course of carrying out their duties, the post holder becomes aware of any actual or potential risks to the safety or welfare of children in the school, they must report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy can be found [here](#). Please read this information as part of your application for the role.







# Person Specification

The Head and Governors are seeking to appoint a Director of Finance and Operations with strong leadership and management skills, strategic vision and the highest standards of personal integrity.

He or she will have excellent people skills and be capable of building highly effective working relationships with all members of the school community.

Prior bursarial experience is essential and candidates must be able to demonstrate empathy with and commitment to the ethos of a thriving independent prep school and a willingness to be involved with the day-to-day activities of the school.

## QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

- Degree level or equivalent
- Professional qualification in a relevant field is preferred
- Current experience as a bursar
- Leadership and management of a multi-disciplinary team
- Strategic thinker, able to formulate and present ideas effectively and take a long-term view
- Experience of effective financial management, budgeting and year-end accounts and auditor liaison
- Experience of managing major projects
- Business acumen to assist the Governing Body and the Head in developing and implementing a business vision and strategy for the school's future.

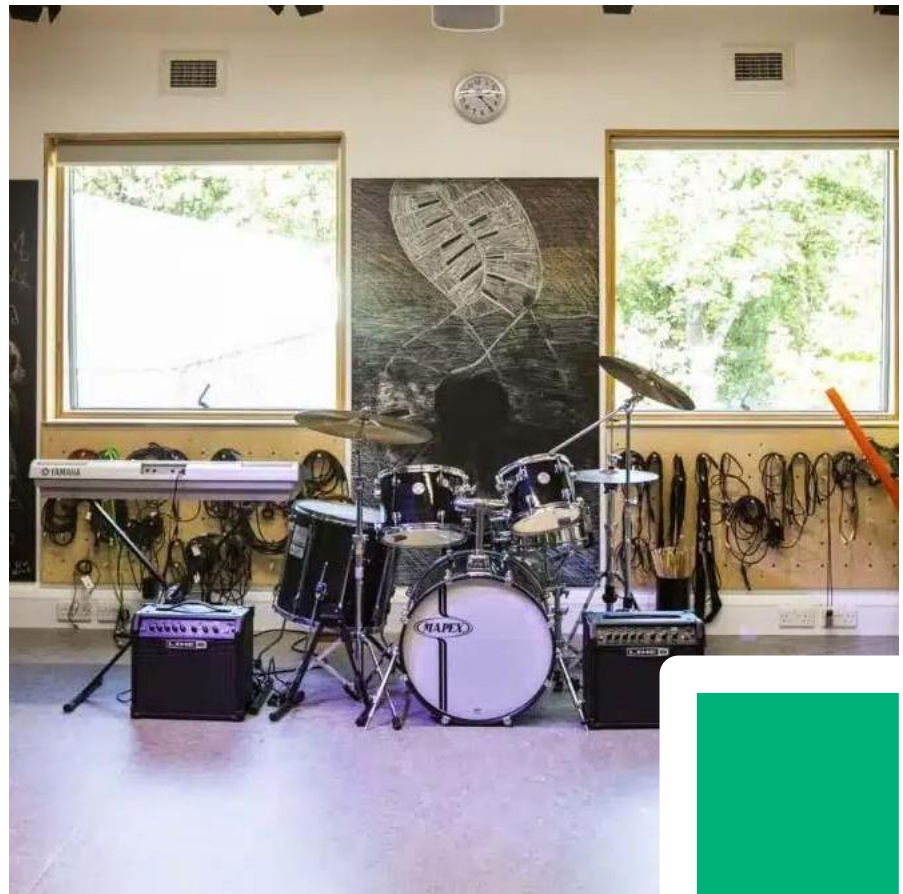
## SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Able to contribute effectively to the strategic development of the school whilst maintaining direct operational responsibilities
- Financial literacy (budgeting, cost management, financial planning, and reporting) with strong analytical skills and the ability to present financial information clearly and concisely
- Working knowledge of law and practice relating to corporation tax, income tax, PAYE, VAT, etc.
- Technical and IT literacy and aptitude and an understanding of IT infrastructure and its impact on education and business
- Working knowledge of health and safety legislation and regulations and the law relating to contracting, leasing of school properties, employment issues, and commercial law (including data protection and contracts)
- Delegation skills and the ability to manage a range of tasks and competing priorities whilst working to tight deadlines
- Strong interpersonal skills with a track record of working successfully with a diverse range of stakeholders
- Able to formulate ideas and solutions and present them effectively to the Head and Governing Body
- An understanding of the DFO's responsibilities in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection issues and a clear commitment to delivering best practice in safeguarding.



## PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Commitment to high professional and personal standards, including maintenance of strict confidentiality.
- Commitment to continuous professional development
- Displays the highest levels of integrity and the ability to maintain strict confidentiality
- Leads by example, is transparent and commands the respect of staff and parents
- Committed team player with a collegiate and collaborative approach
- Possesses superlative communication skills, with an instinctive ability to listen to others, to underpin dynamic and collaborative relationship-building with Governors, the Head, staff, and parents
- Demonstrates good judgement and a fair and calm approach
- Displays agility and flexibility in thinking, planning and contributing to all aspects of school life
- Proactive, energetic and enthusiastic, with appropriate gravitas, a positive outlook and a good sense of humour.
- Able to persuade, negotiate and influence others
- Able to motivate and engage others
- Comfortable working at both a strategic and operational level
- Comfortable working in a regulated environment and committed to ensuring that the school is compliant.
- Personal integrity, honesty, and dedication
- Values and promotes diversity and inclusion and has the skills to support an inclusive and diverse school community.







# Terms & Conditions

A highly attractive remuneration package commensurate with the seniority of the post and the experience of the successful candidate will be offered.

The main provisions are likely to include:

- Salary dependent on skills and experience
- Membership of the school's Defined Contribution Pension Scheme with Legal & General. During any probation period, the school pays a 5% contribution and the employee pays 5%. Thereafter, the employee can opt to increase his/her contribution to 6% (or more), in which case, the school increases its contribution to 9%
- Annual holiday entitlement of 25 days plus statutory bank holidays
- Fee remission is available for children of the successful candidate

Bute House Preparatory School for Girls is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The appointment is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance, including an enhanced DBS check, satisfactory references, proof of identity and qualifications and a satisfactory medical report.





# Application Process

Interested candidates should complete an application form. Early applications are encouraged. A January 2026 start or earlier is desirable.

The deadline for receipt of applications is **10.00 am on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025**.

You should submit:

- A completed application form
- A brief covering letter addressed to the Head, Ms Sian Bradshaw. The letter should explain your reasons for applying and outline your suitability for the role.

Applications should be made electronically to Janette Patterson (HR Manager) [janettep@butehouse.co.uk](mailto:janettep@butehouse.co.uk)

The process is as follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by email.
- Interviews will take place on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July.