



RGS

Brief for the position of
**Director of Finance
and Operations**
The Royal Grammar School
Newcastle



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Background

Although the exact date is a matter of argument, tradition has it that the Royal Grammar School was founded in 1525. The RGS continues to flourish today as the premier independent school in the North-East of England and as one of the country's leading schools.

THE SCHOOL

Over the centuries the school has moved five times but has occupied its present site in Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, since 1906.

The RGS has grown substantially in recent years. There are now some 1330 students, 269 of whom are in the Junior School. The Sixth Form of 332 is one of the largest in the independent sector. The school has a strong tradition of welcoming students from all backgrounds; the school used to have over 300 students on Assisted Places and has introduced a bursary scheme to replace them in some measure. The efforts of the bursary campaign and the support from its benefactors has made it possible to provide financial assistance for some 90 students, the great majority of whom receive support at a level of 90% or above.



In September 2001, the school welcomed its first group of girls into the sixth form and girls have been represented in all year groups since 2008; overall, they now comprise 44% of the school.

The school's philosophy is centred on its dedication to high-quality education. Boys and girls flourish in an atmosphere of academic endeavour and success. Staff and students alike share high expectations and teachers are dedicated to helping and encouraging their students to succeed. As a result, the RGS has an academic record consistently high in the national league tables.

Half of our Year 7 cohort comes up every year from our own Junior School. They certainly gain excellent learning habits there: the Junior School's record in Key Stage 2 tests is both excellent and consistent. Over the last decade the aggregate score for SATS performance has put the Junior School routinely in the top ten nationally in the Sunday Times Parent Power league tables for Independent Preparatory and Junior Schools.

Extra-curricular involvement and excellence feature prominently at the RGS. There are constant examples of outstanding performance in such disparate areas as chess and rugby, gymnastics and music, football and drama, hockey and debating.





FACILITIES

The RGS's excellent facilities are based around a fine 1906 building. The last two decades have seen a vigorous programme of building and development, creating a new Science and Technology Centre, sports hall, dining hall, Junior School (on-site) and Performing Arts Centre (with spectacular 300-seat theatre) as well as numerous refurbishments of older buildings.

On site the school has an excellent all-weather hockey (multi-use) pitch, netball courts and one rugby pitch. Within walking distance it has other grass pitches and, for cricket, it holds the historic Jesmond (Northumberland County) Cricket.

Ground on a long lease. Other facilities are hired in at need, but it is remarkable that a city centre school has such facilities immediately available without having to bus students out to them.

We recently completed our multi-million building and development programme, Project XL, which will take the school forward to the year 2040 with outstanding facilities matched by few independent day schools. In 2015, we completed

a major new sports facility fitting between the school's existing sports hall and all-weather pitch: this comprises a new six-lane 25-metre swimming pool; a second sports hall above it;

new fitness, weights and aerobic dance facilities; and changing rooms to accommodate all the school's foreseeable sporting needs.

In September 2019, phase 3 of Project XL opened. The building is home to a new state-of-the-art library, art studios, maths classrooms, a pastoral suite and an assembly space. January 2020 saw the opening of our new Sixth Form centre – the combination of the old sixth form and old library into a modern, and much larger area. The open-plan style centre comprises individual study pods, a Sixth Form only bank of computers, a space for collaborative working, printing and photocopying facilities and a new coffee bar, serving hot and cold barista style drinks and snacks.

The school has ambitious future plans for its estate, in which the new Director of Finance and Operations will play a key role.

LOCATION AND DIRECTIONS

The RGS is in Jesmond, close to Newcastle city centre and Newcastle and Northumbria Universities. It is 70 yards from Jesmond Metro station, three stops from Central Station and eight from the airport. There is parking for staff, though it is limited: train/metro is easier.



LIVING IN THE NORTH EAST

Whilst the North East is beloved and popular with so many, we know that not everyone will have had first-hand experience of it, so this is a short introduction to a city and region which we love, and believe you will too. Newcastle is a medium sized city with an historic centre and a vibrant life of its own. There's culture and arts in the form of the award-winning BALTIC Art Gallery, and The Sage, alongside several theatres that attract national touring productions. There's music from classical to club and we are home to the Royal Northern Sinfonia. There's also a growing food culture with some fantastic restaurants.

If you like sport, then there's certainly no shortage of top class entertainment: from Premier League football being played at St James' Park and EFL at the Stadium of Light to first class cricket at

Durham (a mere half hour away), and great rugby at the Falcons, not to mention basketball and even ice hockey, and then there is the annual Great North Run. The North East has also produced some of the country's finest athletes in track and field and there are clubs aplenty to get involved with, most famously in Gateshead.

The coast and the hills are minutes away from the city centre. By car you can be in the middle of nowhere in 45 minutes, the Scottish Borders is only an hour away and the Lake District an hour and a half. The coast is served by the Metro (our version of the Tube), but some of the country's best beaches are up the road in Northumberland, less than 40 minutes by car. There's mountain biking, road cycling, climbing, and endless hill walks in stunning countryside. There are green spaces all over the city too, with plenty of parks for children and dogs alike to run around.

There are three local teaching hospitals, two universities in the city with another three close by. Some pioneering medical work goes on at the RVI, Great North Children's Hospital and the Freeman Hospital.

History abounds with more castles than you could count and sites of interest for almost every period of English (and border) history. Add that to a proud, independently minded and very friendly local population and we have most things you could want.

There are some really excellent primary schools in the region and city as well as some good secondary schools too, but staff do get a discount at the RGS. There are also a number of good competitor independent schools as well.

The RGS is on the edge of the city centre, a ten minute walk from the main shopping areas.

The leafy, affluent suburbs of Jesmond and Gosforth are close by with housing ranging from purpose-built flats in terraced streets and conversions of bigger houses to terraced houses, post-war semis and large, family-sized detached houses with big gardens. All of this is within walking distance of the school so no commute is needed. Properties are very affordable both within the city and the surrounding area. If you want to travel to work then you could wake up with a sea view, hop on the Metro and be at school just half an hour later. The region wins tourism and lifestyle awards for very good reasons.

More information on RGS Newcastle can be found via the school's website: www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk



The Role

The Director of Finance and Operations (DFO) is accountable for the strategic financial management of the school and leadership of the internal operational services. The role of DFO will be responsible to the Head, working closely with both the Head and the Deputy Head to set the overall direction of the school.

They are also a member of the wider Senior Leadership Team (SLT), which includes the Head, Deputy Head, Deputy Head Academic, Deputy Head Pastoral, Deputy Head Co-Curricular, Director of External Affairs, Director of Partnerships, Head of Sixth Form and Junior School Head.

During the school holidays the DFO is frequently the only member of SLT in school and has to act as first response for matters normally covered by SLT colleagues.

The role will require a good understanding of, or the willingness to learn about, the educational priorities and operation of a school in its entirety and a good knowledge of the responsibilities of the charitable sector. The DFO will also work in close cooperation with the Board ensuring effective administration of all board and subcommittee meetings.

The DFO's principal responsibilities can be divided into six broad areas as follows:

FINANCE

Supported by a professional accountant as Head of Finance, conducting the day-to-day financial management of the school, the DFO's responsibilities include:

- Budget setting, financial forecasts and cost control across the whole school.
- Advising Governors on setting fees and charges.
- Advising on the setting of salaries and reviews etc.
- Preparing regular management accounts.
- Planning, procurement and project management of capital projects.
- Agreeing an annual programme for capital expenditure and ensuring that long-term funding is available for rolling replacements (e.g. IT equipment).
- Collection of fees and charges, including dealing with fee debtors.
- Ensuring that the terms and conditions in the parents' contract are appropriate, up-to-date and compliant.
- Keeping the school's financial procedures up to date and compliant.
- Payment of salaries, pension contributions, PAYE and NIC payments, expenses, invoices etc.
- Certifying payments and transfers.
- Assessment, allocation and management of bursaries (there are currently 90 bursary holders).
- Working with the Director of External Affairs and supporting the RGS Bursary / Educational Trust.
- Working with the Partnership Director in supporting the aim of the school to have impact in raising aspirations, attainment and opportunity across the North East.
- Handling VAT and other tax issues.
- Day-to-day banking requirements and leading the relationship with the school's bank, including ensuring that banking covenants and bank reporting requirements are met.
- All insurance matters.
- Liaison with the school's investment managers for the school's and Educational Trust's funds.
- Day-to-day oversight of the Pension arrangements.
- Oversight of lettings through External Events Manager and Sports Centre Manager.



HUMAN RESOURCES

Alongside the Deputy Head, the DFO line manages the Head of HR, has overall HR responsibilities for the operational staff and, along with the Deputy Head, supports the management of teaching staff. Responsibilities include:

- Overall responsibility for preparation of all contracts and associated documents including Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures for all staff (over 250 on payroll) assisted by the Head of HR.
- Working with the Head of HR to ensure policies and other HR documentation are updated to take account of new regulations and legislation.
- Recruitment and management of all support staff (around 50% of the staff body), though many of these report directly to Heads of Departments in various parts of the school as their line managers.
- Providing direction for members of the operational staff across the school, ensuring their integration with the teaching staff and understanding of the school's educational requirements.
- Training and professional development for operational staff.
- Dealing with Safer Recruitment issues for all staff and safeguarding issues relating to operational staff.
- With the Head of HR, assisting senior colleagues with disciplinary and grievance matters for all staff.
- Carrying out support staff appraisals and salary reviews.

FACILITIES

The DFO is responsible for:

- The school's estate, consisting of:
 - the main site, which has 21,780 sq m of space on a 4.5 ha site;
 - the Jesmond Cricket Ground, held on a 50-year full repairing lease, with an agreement for Newcastle Cricket Club to use the pavilion as their base and clubhouse;
 - three rugby pitches on Mooracres and one football pitch on the Intakes (held on a 21-year lease from the City Freeman); and
 - Sutherland Park, which is the school's former sports ground and pavilion, now held on a 25-year lease by Novocastrians RFC.
- The maintenance and improvement of all the above facilities (except Sutherland Park), to ensure that they provide a safe and secure working environment for teaching, learning and a wide range of other activities.
- The maintenance and management of specialist facilities, including the swimming pool and Performing Arts Centre.
- All caretaking, maintenance, domestic and grounds maintenance services (via the Head of Facilities and Estates).
- Procurement of vehicles, furniture and equipment.
- Management of the school's vehicles (minibuses and grounds maintenance vehicles).



SERVICES

- Provision of first-class IT infrastructure and support (through the Head of Digital Strategy and the third party shared service provider) in conjunction with the needs of the school.
- Provision of all catering services, including the tuck shops and licensed bars for events (via the Head of Catering Services).
- Responsibility for the school's administrative staff in conjunction with the Deputy Head.
- External hire of school facilities, including the associated licences.

GOVERNANCE

The DFO line manages and will work with the Clerk to the Governors to ensure that all information is provided to the Governors in a timely fashion.

The DFO will be responsible for:

- Maintaining all Risk Registers in the school, including for the school charitable company and its subsidiary trading company (RGS Trading Ltd) and the RGS Educational Trust (which manages funds for bursaries).
- Traditionally, acting as one of the school's two nominated Trustees for the St Mary the Virgin Hospital Estate Management Trust, which makes grants to the school used for funding bursaries.

COMPLIANCE

This is an important area of responsibility and includes:

- Overseeing and ensuring that the school is keeping up-to-date with changes in employment law and other legal requirements, and that these are reflected in the HR and wider policies and practices for the school and meet current compliance and good practice standards that are relevant to the school's activities, including:
 - charity law
 - company law
 - employment law
 - equality legislation
 - property law (for leases, etc)
 - building regulations and related legislation
 - health and safety law and regulations
 - fire regulations
 - data protection law
- Ensuring the school has effective risk assessment and risk management processes, including a risk register, emergency evacuation procedures and a crisis management plan, in place at all times.
- Maintaining the school's emergency plan and procedures.
- Responsibility for the school's Compliance Committee. This is chaired by the Head and meets termly.
- Ensuring compliance with the Independent Schools Inspectorate Regulations (ISSRs), in particular with regard to safety and welfare, premises and safe recruitment.
- Writing and implementing a wide range of school policies.

- Responsibility for the school's Health and Safety Committee, which is chaired by the Head and meets termly, and effectively being the school's Responsible Person for Health and Safety.
- Acting as the school's Data Protection Officer.
- Ensuring compliance with pension regulations for the Teachers' Pension Scheme and the AXA Aptis Scheme.
- Ensuring that the licensed areas of the school comply with regulations and are used accordingly).
- Acting as authorising officer for Tier 4 visa sponsorship.
- Liaising with the City Council and various statutory authorities on a range of issues (planning, traffic, drainage, etc).

OTHER INVOLVEMENT

In addition to the above responsibilities, the DFO is expected:

- 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.
- As for all RGS employees, to take an interest and be involved in the wider life of the school



The Person

The Board of Governors of the RGS warmly welcome applicants from a wide range of backgrounds and with varying experience.

The successful applicant will be a strategic thinker and strong communicator with a proven record of successful strategic financial and operational management.

Applications are particularly encouraged from candidates with strong financial literacy and experience in the preparation and implementation of budgets and financial information, as well as understanding of employment issues and IT expertise.

Candidates should have a good understanding of, or willingness to learn about, the educational priorities of a school in its entirety and the responsibilities of the charitable sector.

Whilst many of the skills required by a successful candidate will be the product of a varied career working in a professional environment, there are certain key criteria that the Governors would ideally like to see in candidates.



KEY CRITERIA

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| Qualifications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strong educational results including an undergraduate degree, or equivalent, with strong intellect. ■ An accountancy qualification may be an advantage. |
| Finance experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A proven track record of successful strategic financial management. ■ Experience of working at or near board level as a member of the senior leadership team, offering sound commercial and strategic advice and challenge. ■ A proven ability to manage complex models and implement financial strategy. ■ Ability to use analysis and data to manage risk, reveal insights and drive continuous improvement. ■ Commercially astute, technically strong with the ability to be effective at both strategic and operational levels. |
| Broader experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrable experience and success in delivering excellence in operational services (beyond the parameters of a purely financial role). ■ Experience of successful project management. ■ Some knowledge of the fields of education (including the independent sector) or charity. |
| Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vision, energy and the ability to motivate and develop the skills and experience of others. ■ Experience of managing and motivating a large team of diverse individuals. |
| Personal qualities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Excellent interpersonal and influencing skills with the ability to communicate effectively with people at all levels. ■ Empathy to be able to communicate with parents and work with the pastoral team in supporting students' welfare. ■ Resourceful with strong negotiating skills. ■ The drive and ability to meet challenging goals. ■ Well organised, able to prioritise and multi-task, working efficiently to manage a complex workload. |



SAFEGUARDING AND SAFER RECRUITMENT

RGS is committed to the safeguarding of children and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and those working in school to share this commitment. The school applies the Government's Keeping Children Safe in Education Safer Recruitment procedures to all candidates including appropriate pre-interview checks on shortlisted candidates and pre-employment checks pending any offer. More information regarding the checks is available from the HR Department.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We look to appoint staff from a wide variety of backgrounds. Not just because it is the right thing to do but because we recognise that those different experiences provide fresh perspectives, opportunities to challenge existing beliefs and provide opportunities to act as excellent role models for our diverse student body.

We are committed to creating an inclusive and diverse school culture and our staff are at the heart of this. We are proud to be an equal opportunities employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment regardless of neurodivergence, age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships.

We strive to achieve a diverse workforce, fully representative of our pluralistic society and the ethnic make-up of the student population in the UK. People of colour are under-represented on our staff team. We are keen to attract applicants from a diverse pool of candidates and determined to be a fully inclusive employer, and a great workplace for people of Black, Asian, and ethnic minority heritage as well as White heritage.

We encourage all candidates to complete an 'equal opportunities' form with their application. This will be sent directly to the HR team for monitoring purposes.

Terms and Conditions

The successful candidate should be in place by April 2025 to enable an effective handover with the current post holder.

The annual salary is commensurate with such a senior role in a school of this size.

The successful candidate will be entitled to 31 days annual leave and 8 statutory public holidays.

During term-time, staff are provided with a free lunch, if on site.

For non-teaching staff we offer a support staff pension scheme, The Aviva Pension Trust for Independent Schools (APTIS) On receipt of a 6% employee contribution the school makes an employer contribution of 10%. There is also the option of a 3% employee and 5% employer contribution if preferred. This scheme is administered via Salary Exchange (also known as Salary Sacrifice) for those who are eligible. You can opt out of the Salary Exchange arrangement whilst remaining in the pension scheme. Further details of the scheme and salary exchange will be provided on appointment.

Membership to life assurance scheme through Aviva which pays out 5x annual salary in the event of death in service.

The employee will become eligible for sick pay under the RGS Support Staff Sick Pay Scheme after a qualifying period. Details of the scheme will be provided on appointment.

The school offers an optional healthcare plan for all staff which includes optical, dental and physio cover, access to telephone GP consultations and a host of other benefits (terms and conditions apply). Further information will be available to the employee once in post.

As with all RGS employees, the employee will be encouraged to become involved in the wider life of the RGS community.

It is the school's policy is to allow all eligible members of staff to educate their children at the school at concessionary rates, subject to their children meeting the academic entry requirements and subject to a place being available.

Ongoing educational support and development of all staff with the provision of external and internal training courses, and our middle leaders training programme for existing and aspiring managers.

We offer an interest free travel loan for a corporate Metro travel pass after a qualifying period. Further information will be available upon starting in post.

We offer a Bike to Work scheme for qualifying members of staff. Terms and conditions apply. Details will be shared upon starting.

Opportunity to see free school productions in the Miller Theatre located in our Performing Arts Centre. Access to our onsite confidential counselling service.

We offer access to the school medical team (1 doctor and 2 nurses) for triage medical advice and free flu vaccinations.

Free use of a well-equipped gym, fitness suite and swimming pool at permitted times.

Supportive and friendly community.

Invitation to join staff clubs and wellbeing activities during term-time.

Staff social events throughout the year.



How to Apply

The search for a new Director of Finance and Operations at The Royal Grammar School, Newcastle is being led by Odgers Berndtson.

The closing date for applications is **09:00 GMT on Friday 8 November**.

Initial interviews with Odgers Berndtson will take place **w/c 11 and 18 November**. Shortlist interviews with the Selection Panel will take place on **Wednesday 27 or Thursday 28 November**. Candidates invited to the final stage will be invited to have briefing visits to the school **w/c 2 December** ahead of a final interview which will take place on **Monday 9 December**.

In order to apply, please submit a completed application form, comprehensive CV and a covering letter which sets out your interest in the role and encapsulates the aspects of your experience relevant to the required criteria. Please include the names and addresses of three referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.

The preferred method of application is online at: www.odgers.com/92446

All applications will receive an automated response.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which will be found at the end of the application process. This will assist The Royal Grammar School in monitoring selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved.

Any information collated from the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

For a conversation in confidence, please contact:

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PERSONAL DATA

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

RGS is committed to the safeguarding of children and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and those working in school to share this commitment. The school applies the Government's Keeping Children Safe in Education Safer Recruitment procedures to all candidates including appropriate pre-interview checks on shortlisted candidates and pre-employment checks pending any offer. More information regarding the checks can be found in our Information for Applicants [here](#), and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2024).



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