

Head of Finance



St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Start date August 2025

St Mary's School
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Welcome from the Head

Thank you for showing interest in this role at St Mary's School, Cambridge.

We are an independent day and boarding school for girls aged 3 to 18. We have a school roll of around 600 students. Approximately 15% of the students are boarders. Reflecting the cosmopolitan community of Cambridge, on average 25% of students originate from overseas, from around 30 countries.

The School offers a secure and welcoming learning environment for girls: we are delightfully situated in the heart of the academically renowned and culturally vibrant city of Cambridge. The Junior School is adjacent to the famous backdrop of Coe Fen, and the Senior School and Boarding House overlook the University of Cambridge Botanic Gardens.

Cambridge is an outstanding place to live and work. As a university city, Cambridge has the cultural advantages of a much larger settlement but with a population of approximately 145,000, it is a safe, clean and attractive location. The city has an international reputation owing to its world ranking university and the school benefits from its proximity to the digital and enterprise communities in the various high-tech science parks and enterprise hubs. We are within easy travelling distance of London, less than an hour by train and a short hop from London Stansted Airport.

There has been major investment in new facilities at the School over the past decade: a new Junior School; a new Sixth Form Centre; new provision of Art & Photography; the creation of our Science Hub; and our new boarding facility, Mary Ward House. We have developed our sporting facilities through an ambitious collaboration with Homerton College, University of Cambridge and have invested in a new boat house in a joint partnership with City of Cambridge Rowing Club and Homerton College. We are proud to have opened our Mary Ward Educational Suite in January 2024 which provides new state of the art teaching spaces.

High quality facilities are only as good as the people who work in them, so we invest heavily in our staff, who we know are our greatest asset. We encourage staff to develop themselves through training and facilitate bespoke CPD opportunities for all.

St Mary's School promotes equal opportunity for all staff and pupils and is committed to its culture of diversity and inclusion. We encourage applications from candidates from a wide range of backgrounds.

Above all, St Mary's School, Cambridge is a very happy place. We have an excellent local reputation for being very friendly and nurturing, and yet ambitious, for the young women in our care, enabling strong progress to next steps at university, the world of work or a gap year. Our girls are genuinely delightful, the teachers and support staff are exceptionally dedicated; we are a very close-knit, loving, joyful and purposeful community.

St Mary's really is a warm and welcoming environment for all staff, whatever their role, and we look forward to receiving your application.

Hannah Helliar

The St Mary's Approach

We are proud to be a Christian school in the Catholic tradition and founded on the principles of our 17th century foundress, Mary Ward, our vision is that 'By God's grace, women in time will do much' (Mary Ward 1585-1645). The challenge for women is not over, and whilst there are now more opportunities for 'women to do much' there are still considerable barriers and so our work continues via our mission to develop curious, creative and compassionate young women with the aspiration, confidence and integrity to shape a better world for the common good. Our approach is based on the core values of Freedom, Joy, Justice, Love and Truth and we live these values in school through our HEART habits of

H – Hard work	We show perseverance and sustain focus.
E – Empathy	We are kind, joyful, generous, value friendship and celebrate diversity.
A – Adaptability	We adjust to difficult situations, are open minded, discerning and take calculated risks.
R – Responsibility	We act justly and strive to uphold truth and lead by example.
T – Thoughtfulness	We are creative, reflective, attentive, show gratitude, hear others and disagree well.

Our unique approach to education fosters a love of life and of learning, while growing the academic curiosity and spiritual wellbeing of each individual girl so that they can look beyond themselves and enter adulthood aspiring to be more and to give more, not just to have more. We warmly welcome girls, and staff, of all Christian denominations and other faith and secular backgrounds to join our thriving community.

Last year the school celebrated its 125th anniversary. Building on our 400-year tradition, St Mary's School, Cambridge belongs to an international network of approximately two hundred Mary Ward schools.

Innovative Learning at St Mary's

We empower all our students to aim high. As an accredited High Performance Learning World Class School there has never been a more exciting time to join our team.

High Performance Learning (HPL) is a research-based, pedagogy-led philosophy that responds to our growing understanding of human capability. It sees all students as potential high performers who are not limited by 'ability'. HPL makes the goal of high performance the expectation for all students and uses a unique teaching and learning framework to systematically grow minds and develop the cognitive skills, values, attitudes and attributes needed to reach success.

Here at St Mary's, we are proud to be developing our own approach to HPL and welcome applications from like-minded colleagues who are ambitious for their students and committed to research-based approaches to teaching and learning.

For further information please visit <https://www.highperformancelearning.co.uk/>

Digital St Mary's

St Mary's is a digital school. The goals of the School are supported through

- developing a community of staff and students which learns in, responds to and engages with an ever-changing digital world;
- preparing students for their future by giving them the confidence to work in a digital environment;
- establishing creative teaching and learning environments;
- employing teaching staff who are trained and supported to be technologically and digitally skilled.

All members of St Mary's work digitally using Microsoft 365 as a platform. All students in the Senior School and Sixth Form have access to an individual device (Microsoft Surface Pro) which is used extensively in lessons and for home learning.

Job Description: Head of Finance

Reporting to: Bursar
Hours of work: Full Time, All year-round, Total hours per week - 40
Contract: Permanent
Salary: £52k - £60K per annum FTE
Direct reports: 3 x Finance Officers
Place of work: Bateman Street, Cambridge.

Introduction

St Mary's School is seeking a Head of Finance from August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter, to succeed the current post-holder who is retiring.

The successful candidate will possess excellent numeracy and organisational skills, strengths in working in a small team, a methodical approach and a proactive nature. Specific experience in finance and accounting is essential and candidates will be expected to demonstrate a high level of IT competence, the ability to manage their own workload, and a commitment to ongoing professional development.

Proficiency in monthly management accounting, asset management, budgeting, forecasting and cash flow monitoring will be essential. Beyond technical skills, we're looking for someone who excels at stakeholder liaison. Thriving in a fast-paced environment demands strong multi-tasking abilities, and composure under pressure. The Head of Finance's positive, flexible approach, commitment to quality, and unwavering attention to detail will have a large impact on the educational outcomes of our students.

Job Purpose

This is a varied role encompassing many tasks within the accounting function of the School Bursary, with the aim of developing and implementing financial policies and procedures, preparing financial reports, and overseeing the school's financial planning and analysis.

Job Description

Line management

The Head of Finance will be directly responsible to the Bursar.

The Head of Finance is aided by the Accounts department, which comprises 3 Finance Officers.

Responsibilities and Duties

The Head of Finance (aided by the Finance Officers) is also responsible for:

- Preparation of the annual statutory accounts, liaising with the appointed auditors as required.
- Preparation of termly management accounts and fulfilling all financial management information and reporting requirements of the Head, Bursar and Full Governing Body.
- Maintaining all accounting records on an accurate and timely basis:

- Billing Ledger - invoicing School Fees on a termly basis and maintaining pupil financial records using WCBS PASS accounting software ;
- Raising ad hoc sales invoices outside of the school Fee Billing Ledger;
- Purchase Ledger – processing and ensuring timely payment of suppliers using WCBS PASS;
- Nominal Ledger – preparation and posting of all necessary journals;
- Cash and Banking to include Bank Reconciliation for the School’s bank accounts, including those of its subsidiaries;
- School Payroll – currently outsourced using self-input. Ensure accurate and timely input of monthly information to iTrent software. Work with Payroll Company to ensure payroll is accurately calculated, and all relevant regulations are complied with;
- Reporting and payment of all pension schemes operated by the School;
- Maintaining the Fixed Asset register, including calculation of depreciation;
- Prepare periodic schedules of Accruals and Prepayments and apply to termly and annual accounts ready for audit;
- Quarterly VAT returns and year-end adjustments including the CGS claims;
- Regular claims to HMRC for Gift Aid;
- Ensure compliance with all HMRC requirements concerning taxes including PAYE;
- Contributions to and submission of Statistical returns, including Statutory returns;
- Primary point of contact for day-to-day finance enquiries from internal and external stakeholders.
- Liaise with the Schools insurers to ensure any permanent or temporary changes are conveyed, and reporting and dealing with all matters concerning claims.
- To ensure that the School’s legal and financial obligations are met at all times, and the School’s financial position is clearly ascertainable on a timely basis and that an adequate and transparent audit trail exists.

The Head of Finance’s other functions include, but are not limited to:

- Advising on all financial policy within the School.
- Calculating all staff salaries, in line with teachers’ pay scale and term time only calculation method.
- Monitoring and management of debtors and debt collection in a timely fashion.
- Liaison and correspondence with parents over queries concerning fees and charges.
- Coordinating the budget and forecasting processes; preparation, approval, execution and evaluation, and within this process be responsible for estimating the costs not allocated to individual budget holders, e.g. staff and utility costs.
- Assisting the Bursaries Committee in evaluating student applications for financial assistance (bursaries and hardship funds) as required.
- Attendance at meetings of relevant Governor sub-committee meetings and Leadership Meetings as required.
- Liaison and correspondence with staff in connection with salaries, income tax, deductions, fee concessions etc.
- Involvement in the preparation of papers for the School’s annual review of fees.
- Prepare and submit P11Ds for relevant staff, calculate, report and pay Class 1A NICs annually.
- Reviewing and improving current financial processes.
- Such other duties as might arise from time to time in connection with the maintenance of sound financial, information technology and administrative procedures and records.

The successful candidate should be able to demonstrate competence and experience as follows:

Essential

- Professional accountancy qualification: ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA or equivalent.
- Desirable minimum of 5 years of experience in financial management.
- Strong leadership and management skills.
- An understanding of accounting practice within an educational environment is desirable.
- Experience of Charity/Not for Profit accounting and statutory reporting would be an advantage.
- Previous accounting experience to include budgeting, financial forecasting, financial audits and compliance.
- Strong knowledge of financial regulations and accounting principles.
- Good working knowledge of VAT.
- Knowledge of payroll processing and tax regulations.
- Substantial proficiency in the use of IT applications, in particular accounting systems and MS Excel.
- Accuracy, attention to detail and a commitment to delivering high quality results.
- Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills.
- The ability to work to deadlines and predict potential delays.
- Highly organised, with the ability to plan and prioritise workload and delegate tasks.
- Clear and effective communicator, who is professional, polite and discreet.
- An understanding of the responsibilities involved in handling sensitive and/or confidential information.
- A willingness to learn new skills.
- A commitment to safeguarding children.

The above list is not an exhaustive list of duties, and you may be expected to perform different tasks as necessitated by your line manager and your changing role within the School and overall business objectives of the School.

Person Specification

SPECIFICATION	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A good standard of education including Maths and English GCSEs Grade A*-C (or equivalent) or Level 2 Literacy and Numeracy is essential. 	
Qualities and Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friendly, approachable manner and able to work as part of a team; Discreet, tactful, diplomatic and the ability to maintain confidentiality; Resourceful, proactive, self-motivated and resilient ; Diligent and conscientious; Ability to work with people at all levels always maintaining a high degree of professionalism; Customer focussed; Calm under pressure. 	
Experience, Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good written and verbal communication skills; Proficient in the use of MS Office including Outlook, Word and Excel; The ability to handle confidential and sensitive information with tact and discretion; The ability to establish good working relationship; Proven organisational skills, capable of multitasking, prioritising and working to deadlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience working in a school environment; Knowledge and understanding of how independent boarding and day schools operate.
Personal Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to the ethos of the school; High expectations for attainment and conduct; Commitment to own personal development; Commitment to a culture of continuous improvement; Readiness to contribute to the whole school when required. 	

Child Welfare and Child Protection Issues

The interview for this post will include exploring issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including:

- motivation to work with children and young people;
- ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships with children and young people;
- emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours;
- attitudes to the use of authority and maintaining discipline.

Any relevant issues arising from the take up of references will be discussed at interview. The school is an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful applicants are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check.

Benefits

At St Mary's you will enjoy an exceptional career and comprehensive benefits including a contributory pension scheme, 33% discount (pro rata for part-time staff) on school fees, BUPA cash plan, an occupational sickness scheme, free lunches and refreshments, a season ticket discount and much more.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

St Mary's School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities in all aspects of employment and selects staff on merit irrespective of race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, sex, sexuality/gender preference, disability or age. You are not obliged to complete the Equal Opportunities Form, but any information given will help us monitor the effectiveness of our policies and procedures.

If you have a disability, you are invited to request any special arrangements that you may require for interview or any adjustments that you would consider necessary to your working arrangements by contacting our Human Resources department (hr@stmaryscambridge.co.uk, 01223 353253).

Process

Application is welcomed by completing the Application Form and Equal Opportunities Form which can be found on the Vacancies page of our website. This may be accompanied by a covering letter and a curriculum vitae. We are unable to accept applications supported by a CV alone.

Interviews will be conducted in person, and they will explore candidates' suitability to work with children. Candidates are required to bring with them the necessary ID documentation and any relevant qualification certificate(s), all of which must be originals. Further information of the interview format will be provided if you are shortlisted for interview.

If you have any question, please contact the HR Team by email: hr@stmaryscambridge.co.uk or call: 01223 353253.

Closing date: 9am Wednesday 16 April 2025

Interview date: week commencing Monday 28 April 2025

We will review applications on receipt. Suitable candidates may be interviewed before the closing date, and we reserve the right to withdraw the position if an early appointment is made.

The school is an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful applicants are subject to an enhanced DBS check.



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