Application Pack

Ref: WA112

Headmaster’s Personal Assistant and Admissions Officer

Annual Salary: £35,000

Closing Date: 22 July 2021

Westminster Abbey Choir School
Contents

• About Westminster Abbey
• Abbey Values
• Job description and Person Specification
• Working for us
• Equality statement
• Safeguarding
• How to apply
About Westminster Abbey Choir School

Westminster Abbey Choir School is a remarkable school. It exists to educate and care for 30 boy choristers of Westminster Abbey. Unique amongst choir schools, Westminster Abbey Choir School admits only singing boys, who are boarders in the relative peace and calm of Dean’s Yard in the centre of London. It is thus a small, tightly knit community, with a strong sense of shared purpose both among pupils and between pupils and teachers. The school has a warm, cooperative atmosphere in which flexibility and teamwork are keys to the smooth running of the boys’ busy timetable.

Boys are selected by audition and academic test at the age of seven to start at the school in Year 4. At age 13, they normally move on to one of a wide range of leading independent schools, to which the great majority win music scholarships.

Although it provides one of the premier musical trainings available to singing boys, Westminster Abbey Choir School also maintains a full academic curriculum leading to the Common Entrance Examination at 13+, and in some cases to academic scholarships to senior schools. High standards are expected of both pupils and teachers. This inevitably makes for a busy weekly schedule in which academic and musical commitments have to be balanced.

The school is generously staffed with seven full time and four part time academic staff, eight domestic staff and a dozen or so peripatetic music staff. As a department of Westminster Abbey, the school forms part of the Abbey’s overall administrative structure drawing on its maintenance, finance and human resources departments.

In a school of this size, staff get to know each boy very well indeed and several of the staff live on the premises. Central to the school’s ethos is an informal, supportive atmosphere in which all of its members – pupils and staff – treat one another with consideration and respect. Indeed, this culture is common to the whole community of Westminster Abbey.

The intimate relationship with Westminster Abbey brings a special dimension to the school. The boys sing in the Abbey almost every day of the week and develop a special affinity and love for this church, which is both an ancient place of Christian worship and a high-profile national symbol. They are regularly called upon to sing at special occasions such as the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton and the visit of Pope Benedict XVI. They also give public concerts both here and abroad, and make recordings.

Outside the normal run of singing and academic lessons, there is a busy programme of extracurricular activities. In addition to the usual array of sports, boys may be found in a range of pastimes, from sailing and rock-climbing to origami and cooking. A special feature of the school year are the periods leading up to Christmas and Easter when the choristers are required to sing in Westminster Abbey. The boys eagerly look forward to these periods and the school continues with a programme of seasonal events.

The school is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Details of the safeguarding policy can be found on the Choir School website: www.abbeychoirschool.org, and a summary is provided in Appendix 1.
Job Description

JOB TITLE: Headmaster's Personal Assistant and Admissions Officer

ACCOUNTABLE TO: The Headmaster

KEY RELATIONSHIPS: The Headmaster, the School Bursar, Choir School staff, resident chef/manager, the organists, parents of current pupils, pupils, all relevant departments of Westminster Abbey.

JOB SUMMARY: To undertake a full range of secretarial and administrative duties to ensure efficient and effective support for Headmaster. The successful candidate will also be responsible for managing the school office admissions and chorister recruitment administration, maintaining school registers, diary management, operational liaison with the catering manager, correspondence, communication with parents.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Administrative support to the Headmaster and the School

- acting as first point of contact for the school and Headmaster including answering telephone calls, accepting deliveries and welcoming visitors,
- providing administrative support, where applicable, for the headmaster,
- in consultation with the Abbey music department, arranging the completion of licensing requirements for tours and concerts
- liaising with the catering staff over special catering arrangements
- drafting the weekly newsletter and other relevant communications
- providing administrative support as appropriate for the Bursar and members of the school staff

Diary management, office management and data management

- ensuring effective and accurate diary management of both the school and Headmaster’s diaries including communicating and co-ordinating as appropriate with relevant parties
- maintaining the office database including all relevant administrative lists such as registers, form lists, contact details etc. with especial care for data confidentiality, privacy and protection
- preparing the termly school calendar and catering schedule
- updating the school website
- placing orders for school resources
- ensuring the timely arrangements for school use of external facilities e.g. booking sports pitches and transport, and school concert venues etc. in consultation with relevant departments and external bodies
- providing administrative support for the bursar, and acting when necessary in her absence
• assisting the Bursar in the recruitment of staff arranging interviews and requesting references
• administering the office petty cash account
• ensuring all records whether paper or electronic are kept up to date, accurate and secure

Admissions Officer and Assisting Parents

• being responsible for the admissions procedure including processing applications, making appointments for formal and informal auditions, answering prospective parents’ enquiries
• maintaining the statutory Admissions Register
• corresponding and liaising with parents concerning weekend visiting arrangements and general queries
• ensuring the provision of the various Abbey passes to parents on an annual basis
• managing arrangements for various special events such as Open Days, Confirmation, Valediction, Christmas and Easter lunches and liaising accordingly with the catering staff and other Abbey departments
• in collaboration with the music department, events, protocol and vergers’ teams, arranging seating/tickets for parents at Abbey services and concerts

Other

• carrying out any other tasks commensurate with the position.

Safeguarding

Westminster Abbey is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. To prevent them from harm, we undertake appropriate checks on staff and volunteers and require them to complete relevant safeguarding training.

This Job Profile will be kept under review and may be amended by Westminster Abbey Choir School from time to time. Any proposed changes will be discussed with the postholder.
Person Specification

This section outlines the knowledge, skills and abilities the job holder needs in order to fulfil the requirements of the post. ‘Essential’ criteria are those that the job holder absolutely must have in order to do the job. ‘Desirable’ criteria are those qualities that would be either useful, or an advantage or those which the job holder can be trained to do.

Essential

Qualifications

Educated to degree level or have a demonstrable level of similar qualification or experience

Experience

- Experience of providing high level support in a busy sensitive environment
- To have sound judgement to determine what should be referred to the Headmaster for his approval, agreement or information and what can be dealt with independently
- Experience of working with young people in an education setting
- Experience of using a wide range of office equipment and ICT software, information systems, maintaining a data base in an administrative environment
- Experience of admissions

Knowledge

- Knowledge and commitment to school policies including Keeping children Safe in Education, Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities
- To have an excellent working knowledge of Microsoft Office, and database systems.

Skills

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including accuracy and attention to detail, to draft correspondence and produce well-written work under pressure.
- To have sound judgement to determine what should be referred to the Headmaster for his approval, agreement or information and what can be dealt with independently.
- Ability to work effectively with colleagues, pupils, parents, external contacts and the Abbey community
- A self-starter, with the ability to work on own initiative, demonstrate strong organisational skills, establish priorities and meet agreed targets and deadlines
- To be able to be a representative of the Headmaster and the school to pupils, staff, Abbey departments, parents, prospective parents and external contacts.
- To build effective working relationships with key members of staff and to liaise naturally with people from all backgrounds. In broad terms, to identify with the Abbey’s Mission and develop an affinity with the Dean and Chapter’s work.

Personal Attributes

- Well-developed interpersonal and communication skills using tact, discretion and diplomacy to promote good relationships within and outside the School.
- A flexible approach and to work occasionally at weekends or evenings to support Choir School events.
Working for Us

Salary

The annual salary is £35,000 and is paid on the last Friday of each month. Salary is reviewed annually in January.

Working Hours

These are 40 hours per week. The normal arrangement of working hours is 9am to 5pm, five days a week, however the postholder will be required to work the hours to suit the needs of the organisation.

Annual Holidays

The full time holiday entitlement is 31 days per annum including recognised public holidays, rising to 33 days per annum in the fifth year of service.

Training

On-site training will be provided in all aspects of the job. Any further training needs will be assessed through the probation period and in annual appraisals.

Pension Scheme and Life Assurance

All employees can join a Group Personal Pension plan, where the minimum employee contribution is 3% and the maximum employer contribution is 9% (as determined by the level of the employee contribution). You will be auto-enrolled into our qualifying workplace pension scheme after 3 months, if you meet the eligibility criteria.

All employees are covered by death-in-service life assurance, whether or not they choose to join the pension scheme.

Staff Discount

All employees receive a 20% discount on purchases from the Westminster Abbey shop and a 30% discount on purchases from the Benugo outlets, which serve refreshments.

Season Ticket Loan

A season ticket loan is offered after satisfactory completion of a probationary period, repayable over 10 months.

Medical Insurance

The Abbey will pay 50% of premiums to join a nominated medical insurance scheme after one year’s employment.
Equality Statement and How to Apply

Equality Statement
The Dean and Chapter aim at all times to recruit the person who is most suited to the job. Recruitment will be solely on the basis of the applicant’s abilities and individual merit as measured against the criteria for the job. Qualifications, skills and experience will be assessed at the level that is relevant to the job.

We will ensure that our shortlisting, interviewing and selection procedures avoid discrimination in any way, including on grounds of age, disability, gender, marital status or civil partnership, race, nationality or ethnic origins, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form with your application. This will help us monitor our recruitment practice. The form will not be seen by the people making the selection decision.

How to Apply
Read the Job Description and Person Specification carefully and think about how your experience, skills and abilities help you to meet the requirements listed in the Person Specification. Use the ‘Supporting Statement’ section of the TES form to tell us how you meet each of the requirements.

Application Materials
Your application should include:

1. The completed TES application form;
2. Please ensure that your Personal Statement section of your TES application form reflects how you meet the requirements listed in the Person Specification;
3. Also, in the Personal Statement section of your application, please explain your particular interest in this post.

As well as your previous work experience, tell us about other relevant experience such as community and voluntary experience. Clear information on how you meet all the requirements of the person specification, with relevant examples, will help us with shortlisting, and we may not be able to shortlist you for interview if you do not provide sufficient evidence.

To apply for the role, please download the recruitment pack from the Westminster Abbey website at: https://www.westminster-abbey.org/about-the-abbey/jobs-volunteering/employment-opportunities which provides further information about the role and details of how to submit your TES application form. CVs will not be accepted. You may also wish to review the Westminster Abbey Choir School website for information: www.abbeychoirschool.org. Please note that, unless we hear to the contrary, we may contact referees prior to shortlisting and we will certainly seek to contact referees prior to interview.

Completed applications must be received by 17:00 on Thursday 22 July 2021, and may be considered on receipt. Application forms can be sent to: applications@westminster-abbey.org. Interviews will be held week commencing Monday 26 July 2021.

Westminster Abbey is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. To prevent them from harm, we undertake appropriate checks on staff and volunteers and require them to complete relevant safeguarding training and enhanced criminal record check. Westminster Abbey is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

If you are invited for interview, you will be asked to produce evidence of your eligibility to work in the UK. Offers of employment are subject to satisfactory references, a medical and a Disclosure and Banning Service (DBS) check at enhanced level.