



LORD
WANDSWORTH
COLLEGE

· HAMPSHIRE ·

Brief for the appointment of

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (COO)



ODGERS BERNDTSON

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1200 acres of
learning

Executive Summary

Situated on a magnificent 1,200-acre campus of rolling countryside, woodland and a working arable farm, Lord Wandsworth College (LWC) provides an inspiring education to approximately 700 boarding and day pupils aged 11-18. Twenty minutes to the North is St Neot's Prep School, a day school that caters to children aged 18 months to 13 years, with a roll of 350. Together, these two schools employ 335 staff and generate a collective turnover of £29 million.

LWC is thriving under the leadership of Adam Williams, who became Headmaster in 2015. Its increasing popularity has been reflected in rising pupil numbers, and a transformational vision for modern and compelling education has led to major investment in the campus. The latest, and most significant, of these capital projects, is a £9 million state-of-the-art Science Centre, which opened in 2022. A further £4m has recently been committed to building a cardiovascular suite, cricket bubble and driving range and conducting a major refurbishment of the Junior Boarding House.

Under the leadership of the Head, Jonathan Slot, St Neot's has been recently transformed into one of

the fastest-growing prep schools in the UK. This is a dynamic and highly successful group on a clear upward trajectory, and the new Chief Operating Officer will play a critical role in positioning it for even greater success.

The successful candidate will bring substantial generalist leadership and management experience with a track record of success in managing complex, multi-disciplinary and sizeable support functions.

An accomplished strategic leader, the new COO will combine the entrepreneurial flair to drive the commercial development of LWC, with the interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence to contribute as an integral part of the Senior Leadership Team. A strong personal ethos of service, and a collaborative, team-orientated leadership style are essential.

Existing Bursar experience is not a pre-requisite. Applications are encouraged from candidates with commercial, charitable, private-sector and public-sector backgrounds.

1200 acres of character





Lord Wandsworth College

HISTORY

Lord Wandsworth College (LWC) is named after Baron Sydney Stern, a Liberal MP and the second son of a City banker. Granted a peerage less than four years after winning the seat of Stowmarket in 1891, Stern took the title of Lord Wandsworth in reflection of his many links with the area.

When Lord Wandsworth died in 1912, he left a generous bequest to educate the children of agricultural workers – children who had lost one or both parents and needed the support of a boarding environment.

Lord Wandsworth's Trustees purchased the site on which the College now stands and the first Foundationers arrived in 1922, followed by fee-paying pupils in 1945.

St Neot's School has a rich history dating back to 1869. However, the significant milestone occurred in 1888 when St Neot's relocated from Berkshire, to Eversley. It became a co-educational school in 1988.

THE FOUNDATION

Committed to upholding the wishes of Lord Wandsworth, the Lord Wandsworth Foundation offers approximately 50 assisted Foundation places. 2,500 Foundationers have passed through the College since its inception.

The Foundation exists to help children who have lost the support of one or both parents through death, divorce or separation and require a caring and supportive boarding environment in which to thrive.

It is led by a team of Trustees, all of whom are governors of LWC. The day-to-day running of the Foundation, including the selection of Foundationers, is handled by the Admissions team who work alongside the Development Director to promote the work of the Foundation.



1200 acres of discovery

THE 5 PILLARS

The 5 Pillars define a Lord Wandsworth education. They are:

+1 Do One More Thing

These are the small acts of kindness which all members of the LWC community strive to make part of their daily lives. The emphasis is on the one thing that each person can do to make a conversation or interaction with another person that little bit better.

+2 Be Two Years Ahead

+2 is a phrase that is well-used at LWC. It is an aspiration and a mindset which encourages pupils to stretch themselves two years beyond their current academic level. It's about inspirational teaching and learning, making connections, sharing knowledge, and thinking differently.

+3 Wellbeing and Happiness

LWC aspires to be the most incredible place to live and work for both pupils and staff alike. The College believes happy children are successful children and there is a strong focus on welfare, wellbeing, and good mental health: the triumvirate of the +3 philosophy.

4 Pupil Voice

Schools flourish when pupils have a meaningful, positive input and impact within their environment, and LWC aspires to be the leading school in the UK in terms of pupil voice. Pupils are involved in campus master-planning, exterior and interior building design, staff appraisal, academic feedback, and further enriching the College's dynamic culture.

5 Character Education

Cognitive ability is not the only thing that determines a child's life chances. Character can shape one's destiny. Character is not inherent; it is born of positive experiences, and it can be taught. Character attributes of Fairness, Generosity, Empathy, Loyalty, Gratitude, Courage, Engagement, Creativity, Perseverance, Optimism, Self-control, and Curiosity are taught intentionally at LWC, and a commitment to character education runs throughout the educational experience.

STRATEGY 2030

LWC's strategic vision, known as Strategy 2030, runs to 2032 and plans for an increase in capacity to 840 students at LWC and in excess of 350 at St Neot's, which has almost been achieved, six years ahead of schedule.

The College is committed to remaining a medium-sized boarding and day school, where pupils are well-known, and the family atmosphere continues. The ethos of the two schools is very similar, and while values may be expressed differently, they are fundamentally aligned at both institutions.

In order to maintain the strong brand and superb output, the group is looking to invest up to £50m in new boarding houses and a Tech Centre, as well as a major refurbishment of most of the two sites. The developments will help to position LWC as one of the forerunners in independent education in the UK.

Aligned to Strategy 2030 is an ambitious and innovative vision for LWC's educational offering. Teaching and learning including digitisation and the use of the outdoors (known as 'The 1200' due to the 1,200 acre site) is at the heart of this vision. The group continues to invest substantially in new appointments to support growing pupil numbers, and in high quality continuing professional development for existing staff. This is ongoing and further details are provided on page 8.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Governance

LWC is governed by 17 committed Governors chaired by Robert Hannington. The Chief Operating Officer will also act as Clerk to the Governors. St Neot's currently has an independent board, following the planned merger, a unitary board is proposed with relevant sub-committees.

Leadership and Management

The Chief Operating Officer reports directly to the Headmaster and is a key member of the Senior Leadership Team of both St Neot's and LWC.

The College's SLT is composed of:

- Adam Williams, Headmaster
- Tom Hicks, Senior Deputy Head
- Angela Watson, Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning)
- Colette McDonald, Director Compliance, Co-curricular and Projects
- Ali Cocksworth, Deputy Head (Pastoral)
- Thomas Rimmer, Head of Sixth Form
- Pete German, Director of Admissions and Marketing
- Samantha Corfield, Director of Philanthropy
- Dawn Wilde, Director of People
- Louise Sinclair, Director of Finance

The Chief Operating Officer has direct and indirect responsibility for a team of over 170 staff and leads the Business Leadership Group.

His/her direct reports are:

- Vacant, Operations Manager (LWC)
- Harriet Cairns, Operations Manager (St Neot's)
- Lidia Pocock, Director of Estates
- Louise Sinclair, Director of Finance
- Dawn Wilde, Director of People
- Chris Andrews, Director of Digitisation and IT
- Chris Lane, LWCE (Enterprises)
- Cheryl Baker, Personal Assistant



CAMPUS

Situated on a magnificent 1,200-acre campus, LWC offers a wonderfully safe, secure and inspiring learning environment. Stern Farm, a 900-acre working arable farm owned by the College, also sits within the grounds.

In recent years, the College has embarked on a programme of transformational development in the campus and facilities.

Much has already been delivered; new Humanities, English and Art classrooms, complete refurbishment of the Gavin Hall (Performing Arts), a new and expanded Health Centre, more girls' boarding

accommodation, pedestrianisation of the central campus, enhancement of sports facilities, a new dining hall, state of the art Science Centre, a new Sixth Form Centre and additional parking.

In the short term, the new Chief Operating Officer will oversee the development of the existing gym, a major refurbishment of the Junior Boarding House and a nascent golf range.

He or she will play an important role in managing future capital projects looking out towards 2030-2032. These may include a technology-led Creativity and Innovation Centre, additional sports facilities, classroom refurbishments and continued

enhancements and increases to boarding houses as well as a sector-leading outdoor education space.

St Neot's is located on a wonderful 70 acre woodland estate, with a stimulating and enriching outdoor classroom. The Nursery & Pre-Prep children are housed on the outskirts of the woodland, supporting free flowing classrooms and outdoor based activities. Pre-Prep and Prep each have a fantastic adventure playground for use during break times. The sports hall includes a full size tennis court, five badminton courts, five mini tennis courts, netball and basketball courts, four indoor cricket nets and a heated 25m swimming pool.

For more information about Lord Wandsworth College, please visit:
www.lordwandsworth.org

The Role

CONTEXT FOR THIS APPOINTMENT

LWC is a thriving group on an exciting upward trajectory. The last ten years have been a period of considerable success and the group now looks to the future with confidence and ambition.

The new COO has an exciting opportunity to play a pivotal role in the continued success of these leading independent schools, contributing to their strategic development as a key member of the Senior Leadership Teams, and in turn leading a high-performing Business Leadership Group (BLG).

The new COO will join LWC at a time of both opportunity and challenge. The independent sector in the UK must now adapt to a variety of macro challenges which will require agility, determination and careful planning.

In this evolving context, the successful candidate will ensure that LWC continues to have robust finances, outstanding business services and the dexterity to respond effectively to the needs of the future.

This role presents an exciting opportunity to navigate these challenges and drive the group towards even greater achievements.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership

- To work in close partnership with the Headmaster and the Governing Body to shape and implement the current strategic plan.
- To formally merge St Neot's into LWC after a period of successful collaboration since 2021.
- To play a lead role in future proofing the LWC Group, ensuring that the College is able to continue on an ambitious upward trajectory, responding to the challenges and seizing the opportunities which will define the independent sector in this next unpredictable period.
- To evaluate, as an important member of the Senior Leadership Teams, opportunities to develop and potentially expand the footprint of the group further.

- To review, lead and continuously improve the group's financial, operational and risk management strategy. This must include the increase in alternative income streams.
- To contribute as a key member of the Senior Leadership Team, working in a way which is collaborative and informed by a strong sense of service and collective endeavour.



Financial and Commercial Leadership

- To oversee the work of the Director of Finance and the finance team, ensuring the Headmaster and Governing Body have timely and accurate financial information to support decision-making.
- To ensure, as a Director of LWC Enterprises, that the College's commercial activities continue to achieve the most profitable use of the group's facilities, whilst achieving the best possible balance with the interests of the pupils, staff and broader strategic aims.
- To identify and pursue commercial strategies for the development of new income streams, preserving and strengthening the group's financial position.
- To positively lead and embed a culture of greater financial and commercial awareness among all LWC and St Neot's staff, recognising that cost control and the delivery of demonstrable value for money for parents will be critical in this next period.

Capital Projects and Estates Management

- To work with the Director of Estates to oversee the successful delivery of Strategy 2030 across both sites, and future investments in the campus and facilities.
- To support and lead a process of creative thinking around the use of the estate and the farm in ways which will enhance the educational experience of students and potentially offer opportunities for income generation.

Team Leadership and Development

- To provide outstanding leadership to the Business Leadership Group, motivating and supporting them to deliver their remits to the highest standards. More widely, provide leadership and mentoring across the school, including the development of the leadership and management course.
- To manage the recruitment, performance management and career development of the wider business staff.

Risk Management and Compliance

- To ensure the highest standards of risk management across the LWC Group.
- To ensure that the group is at all times fully compliant with relevant financial, health and safety, employment and other legislation and regulations.

Clerk to the Governors

- To act as Clerk to the Governing Body, supporting the work of its committees and providing general support and advice including the preparation of papers.
- To oversee the Charity Commission and Companies House requirements, as well as internal governance, and compliance policies and regulations.
- The Chief Operating Officer will attend all meetings of the Governing Body (only excepting private sessions), Governors' Finance and General Purposes Committee, Estates and Infrastructure Committee, Nominations Committee and other committees and working parties as requested and required.



1200 acres of
ambition

The Person

The successful candidate will be a highly skilled generalist with a proven track record of success in managing finance, people and resources in a large, complex setting. A collaborative team player, the new Chief Operating Officer will develop the ongoing change through outstanding leadership and engagement of others, playing a key role in positioning LWC to thrive for generations to come.

The Group seeks an individual with most or all of the following qualifications, experience, skills, knowledge and personal attributes.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Educated to degree level.
- A proven capacity to contribute strategically to the wider development of an organisation while retaining a strong grasp of operational detail.
- A strong track record of managing a range of support services to a high standard.
- Extensive people leadership experience, including the recruitment and development of multi-disciplinary teams.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Strong financial literacy with excellent analytical skills and the ability to develop long-term financial plans.

- A naturally relational style with well-developed interpersonal skills and high levels of emotional intelligence.
- Highly developed commercial skills with strong entrepreneurial instincts and the energy and drive to pursue new opportunities.
- An understanding of the Chief Operating Officer role as a strategic partner to the Heads and Governors.
- Strong project and operational management skills.

LEADERSHIP STYLE AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- A strong team player with a deep sense of service and naturally collegial leadership style.
- An accomplished communicator at all levels, able to balance robustness with discussion and diplomacy, and able to manage sometimes conflicting priorities.
- A clear resonance with the LWC Group as an educational environment, a charity and a business and a genuine identification with the ethos of the group.
- A personal values set deeply aligned to the 5 Pillars of LWC.
- An optimistic outlook with a positive, 'can-do' attitude.
- A natural inclination to be kind and care for the team and others across the LWC community.
- A joyful and characterful personality with the ability to think expansively and with ambition.

1200 acres of dedication





Terms of Appointment

A competitive salary commensurate with the seniority of the post will be offered. An excellent family home is available on campus should the successful candidate decide to live on site. Fee remission for children is also part of the package at 50% of the day fee.

LWC is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The successful candidate will be required to undergo the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced clearance process. The post is also subject to satisfactory references.

How to Apply

LWC has engaged the services of Odgers Berndtson to assist with the recruitment of the Chief Operating Officer.

The closing date for applications is **09.00 BST on Friday 6 September**.

Following a longlist meeting of the Selection Committee, successful candidates will be invited to an initial interview with Odgers Berndtson on the **week commencing Monday 16 September**. If successful, candidates will then be invited to a shortlist interview with the Selection Committee on **Friday 4 October**. Briefing visits to the school will take place during **week commencing 7 October** and final interviews will take place on **Monday 14 October**.

To apply, please submit a comprehensive CV along with 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 current salary details and 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/91979

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. This can be found at the end of the application process. 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 an initial discussion, 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 expressed 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.

LWC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).



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