



ST MARY'S SCHOOL ASCOT

APPOINTMENT OF A VAT COMPLIANCE AND STRATEGY SPECIALIST

WELCOME TO ST MARY'S SCHOOL ASCOT



Thank you for taking an interest in joining us at St Mary's School Ascot. Ours is a warm and caring community where we are passionate about bringing out the full potential of each of our 390 pupils. We are proud of the strength of our academic achievements and work tirelessly to build on our tradition of excellence both in and out of the classroom. As a full boarding school, we offer a wealth of co-curricular opportunities, meaning that life at St Mary's is vibrant, exciting and always good fun.

St Mary's offers a stimulating and fulfilling working environment. Our staff are talented, friendly, and absolutely dedicated to the work they do. They enjoy supporting each other, and take pride in helping us to provide the very best all-round education for the pupils in our care.

We know that the successful candidate will love working here. We look forward to hearing from you.

Mrs Danuta Staunton
Headmistress



THE VISION AND ETHOS OF OUR SCHOOL

The school's Vision is to provide a modern and holistic Catholic education of outstanding quality for young women to inspire and empower them to play their full part in the global community.

The school's Ethos to realise this Vision is:

- **Nurturing** in each pupil a sense of their own worth and talents by fostering their intellectual, spiritual and personal development.
- **Developing** in each pupil a love of learning and independent thought through a rigorous academic education.
- **Promoting** a strong sense of personal responsibility, kindness, cooperation and social justice founded in respect for the diverse needs of others in a global community.
- **Encouraging** each pupil to enjoy the full sacramental life and spiritual richness of the Catholic Church.
- **Fostering** a partnership between parents, school and the wider community.
- **Inspiring** in each pupil the confidence to collaborate and to lead through an enriching and fulfilling boarding experience.
- **Following** in the spirit of Mary Ward who cherished 'freedom of spirit, sincerity, and a cheerful disposition'.



OUR KEY FEATURES

The Board of Governors defines the school through five features:

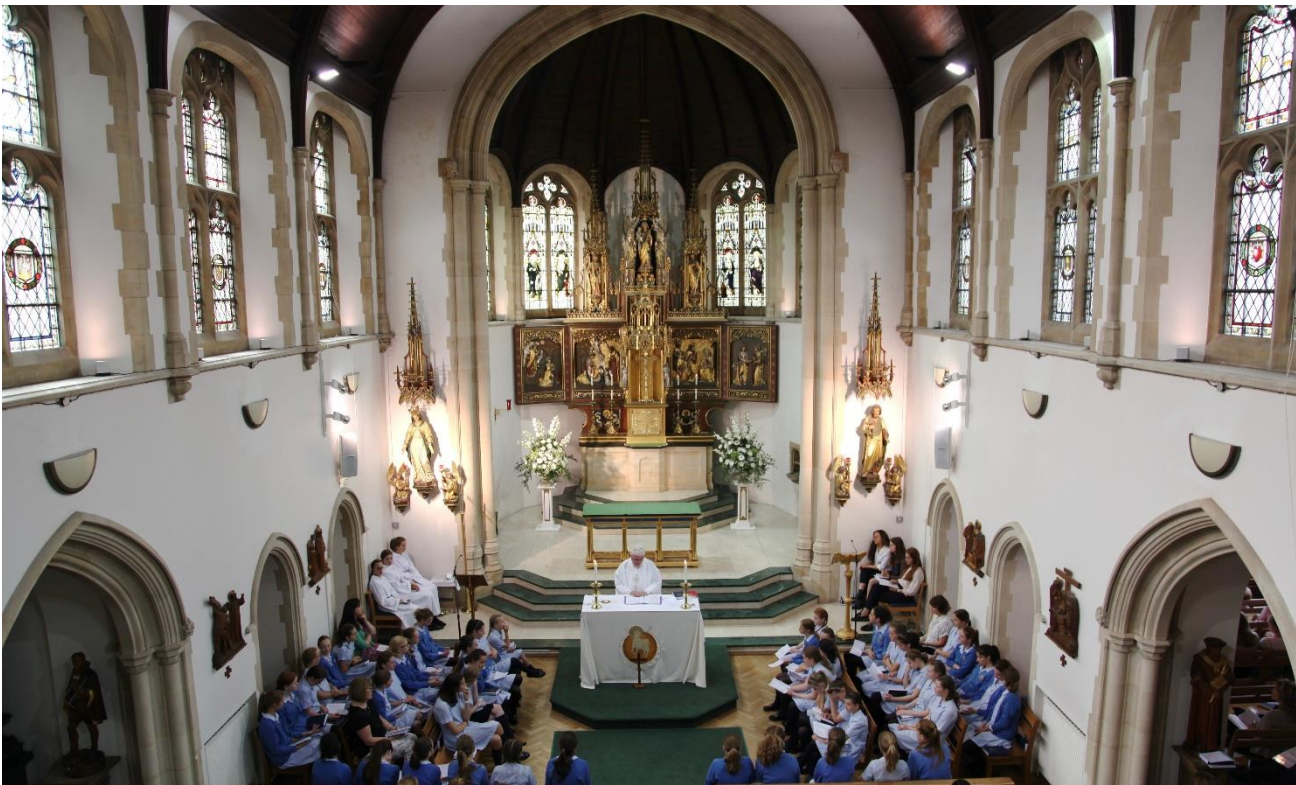
A Roman Catholic school. Over 97% of pupils and over 50% of staff are Roman Catholic. We have a full-time resident Catholic chaplain.

A girls' school. St Mary's puts the interest of girls first, allowing them to reach their full potential in all that they choose to do.

A full boarding school. Over 95% of our pupils are full termly boarders and the rest are day boarders. All staff contribute to the boarding life of the school.

A relatively small school. We are proud to be a small school which enables us to provide first class individual education and pastoral care to all our pupils.

An academic school. St Mary's has a strong record of academic excellence. There are over 120 pupils in the Sixth Form all following A Level courses, and all are supported in their journeys into higher education, including Oxbridge.



ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is a leading Roman Catholic girls' boarding school set in 55 acres of beautiful grounds in the Berkshire countryside, a 45 minute journey from London, and a 20 minute walk from Ascot train station. The school was founded in 1885 by the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, drawing on the inspiration of the Institute's foundress, Mary Ward, who dedicated her life to promoting girls' education across Europe in the 17th century. Mary Ward's belief, that 'women in time will come to do much', infuses the very fabric of St Mary's to this day.

St Mary's is a boarding school, with only a handful of day pupils who live nearby. The majority of our intake is at Years 7 and 9. Very few girls leave at the end of Year 11. The girls follow a full and challenging academic curriculum throughout the school day. In the afternoons and evenings and on weekends, they take advantage of a vast range of activities, including visiting speakers, academic support sessions, clubs and societies, sport and trips.

The school continues to invest in the development of first class facilities. These include a state-of-the-art performing arts centre, a purpose-built sports complex and all-weather athletics track, two libraries, a new pupil refectory, and most recently a sixth form boarding complex.

The Headmistress is a member of HMC (Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference), the GSA (Girls Schools Association), CISC (Catholic Independent Schools Conference) and the BSA (Boarding Schools Association).

For more information about the school, please visit our website: www.st-marys-ascot.co.uk



ABOUT THE ROLE

St Mary's is seeking to appoint a part-time VAT Compliance and Strategy Specialist from November 2024 on a one year fixed term contract which may be extended up to 18 months.

This role of the VAT Compliance and Strategy Specialist is in response to the evolving landscape affecting independent schools and will have a significant impact on our operational dynamics. The individual will play a vital role in ensuring St Mary's VAT systems are compliant with current regulations across systems and processes and are well prepared for the anticipated changes to VAT legislation. In addition to this, they will also be responsible in establishing reporting processes to ensure detailed VAT returns and all records are appropriately maintained.

The line manager for the VAT Compliance and Strategy Specialist will be the Finance Bursar.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The successful candidate will be a proactive and detail-oriented professional with a strong background in VAT compliance and strategy, ideally within the education or not-for-profit sectors, who is looking to apply their expertise in a dynamic and forward-thinking environment. We are seeking an individual with a thorough understanding of UK VAT laws.

Essential requirements:

- Extensive knowledge of UK VAT legislation.
- Proven experience in VAT compliance, including preparation and submission of VAT returns.
- Strategic mindset with the ability to anticipate and prepare for regulatory changes.
- Excellent organisational skills and attention to detail.
- Strong analytical skills and the ability to interpret and apply VAT legislation to specific scenarios.
- Ability to exercise critical thinking to solve complex VAT issues and advise practical solutions.
- Experience in defining and documenting business policies and processes pertaining to VAT compliance.
- High levels of personal integrity and confidentiality.
- Ability to communicate complex VAT information to non-specialists.
- Strong judgement and decision making skills withing a tax context.
- Methodical and proactive approach to risk management.
- Ability to communicate effectively.
- Committed to working collaboratively and supportively within a team.

Desirable Qualifications and Qualities:

- Professional qualifications in accounting or tax (e.g. ATT, CTA, ACA, ACCA).
- Previous experience working within the independent school sector or other charitable organisations.
- Knowledge of the anticipated VAT changes affecting independent schools.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Core Responsibilities:

VAT Compliance:

- Ensure the school's VAT practices comply with current legislation, including preparation and submission of VAT returns, maintaining accurate VAT records, and managing VAT audits.



Strategy Development:

- Proactively assess the impact of anticipated changes to VAT regulations on independent schools and develop strategies to mitigate risks and maximize opportunities.

Advisory role:

- Provide expert advice to senior management and the Board of Governors on VAT related matters, including the financial implications of changes in legislation.

Training and Development:

- Develop and deliver training sessions to finance and administrative staff to ensure understanding and compliance with VAT processes and policies. This will include production of a comprehensive VAT procedure manual for all aspects of accounting for VAT.

Liaison with External Bodies:

- Act as the primary point of contact with HMRC and external VAT advisors, ensuring all communications are managed effectively and in the school's best interests.

Documentation and Reporting:

- Prepare comprehensive reports on VAT compliance and strategy, presenting findings and recommendations to senior management.

Collaboration:

- Work closely with the Finance Bursar and other departments to integrate VAT considerations into broader financial and operational planning.

Project Management:

- Lead and manage VAT related projects, ensuring timely completion and alignment with the school's strategic goals.

Project Improvement:

- Identify and implement improvements to the school's VAT processes, ensuring efficiency and accuracy.

Other duties:

This job description sets out the main duties of the VAT Compliance and Strategy Specialist. No job description can be fully comprehensive and the VAT Compliance and Strategy Specialist will be required to support the Bursar in any work reasonably required to support the operation of the school.



WORKING AT ST MARY'S

A Catholic school. Nearly all pupils and about 50% of the staff are Roman Catholic. It is not a requirement of this post that applicants should be Catholic but all staff at the school are expected to be sympathetic to the religious and boarding character of the school.

Full-Time/Part-Time This position is offered as a part-time role on a one year fixed term contract basis initially but subject to extension to up to 18 months dependent upon the demands of the role.

Salary. Competitive - dependent on experience.

Accommodation. The post holder is not required to be resident on site and accommodation is not offered with this role.

Working Days and Hours. Core working hours are between 8.30am to 5pm with 30 minutes (unpaid) for lunch. Typically, the role will be office based, three days per week with flexibility (subject to meeting the demands of the role) for one day to be home based. We are open to discussing and establishing a working pattern that supports both the school's operational needs and the candidate's circumstances. The incumbent will be expected to manage their hours in line with the needs of the school.

Additional Days. The post holder is required to attend six full days of INSET per year which are currently scheduled in the week before the start of each term.

Holiday The VAT Compliance and Strategy Specialist will be entitled to 28 days holiday (inclusive of bank holidays). Holiday entitlement is pro rata for part-time staff.

Probationary Period. The first three months of employment is a probationary period and during the probationary period the notice period by both the post holder and the school is two weeks.

Notice Period. On successful completion of the probationary period, the notice period for both the job holder and the school will be one month.

Pension. The post holder will be automatically enrolled into the school's workplace pension scheme provided by The People's Pension.

Meals. Staff are currently able to enjoy lunch in the staff refectory. This privilege is currently provided free of charge, but this is kept under review and the school reserves the right to change the arrangement.



HOW TO APPLY

A short letter of application addressed to the Bursar, Mr. Giles Brand, a completed application form and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of three referees (including the current or latest employer) should be sent to recruitment@st-marys-ascot.co.uk

Applications will be considered upon receipt.





ST MARY'S SCHOOL ASCOT

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