



CANDIDATE BRIEF BURSAR

AUGUST 2026

C O N T E N T S

About Gresham's School 3

The Opportunity 8

The Individual 11

How to Apply 13





ABOUT GRESHAM'S SCHOOL

Voted the UK's Best Public School at the Tatler Schools Awards 2026, Gresham's School is a leading co-educational boarding and day school, located in an area of outstanding natural beauty on the edge of the Georgian market town of Holt, only four miles from the North Norfolk coastline. Norwich is 25 miles away and offers good transport links to London, alongside the charm of a historic city that boasts a Norman castle and a stunning cathedral.

Gresham's was founded in 1555 by Sir John Gresham, who converted Holt's Manor House into a Free Grammar School to provide education for local children. Sir John went on to become Lord Mayor of London and forged close ties with the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers, leaving the School in their care upon his death. The School remained in the heart of Holt for 350 years, surviving the Great Fire of 1708 which destroyed most of the medieval town. The building was enlarged and refurbished in the Victorian era and still exists today, renamed 'Old School House' and currently serving as home to the Pre-Prep School.

The campus spans 370 acres and is spread across three sites, the largest of which at around 200 acres is the Senior School campus. Gresham's comprises a Pre-Prep School, including Nursery, Prep School and Senior School, educating approximately 900 pupils ranging from 2 to 18 across the three sites. With over 400 staff, the School aims to provide a caring, challenging and enlightened education which celebrates British values in a Christian setting, striving to achieve the highest standards of attainment informed by an ethos that values the whole person, including a child's spiritual and emotional well-being. Gresham's guiding principles are the 'Three Cs': Character, Curiosity and Critical Thinking, which are central to every aspect of school life and are the pillars of a Gresham's education. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions, think critically and explore problems creatively, equipping them with the skills they need to develop into well-rounded adults, capable of meeting the demands of modern life.

Academic

In the earlier years, at Pre-Prep and Prep, the aim is for children to love learning and engage positively, with a focus on each pupil feeling valued, supported and encouraged to embrace their unique potential through a broad spectrum of academic and other activities. Senior School builds on this strong foundation and, in public examination years, pupils can take up to ten IGCSE and GCSE subjects, with a broad offering at Sixth Form, where pupils can choose to follow the IB Diploma Programme, a portfolio of three or four A level subjects, or to replace one or two A levels with BTEC diplomas. All the routes provide a rigorous academic background, which opens a wide range of university options and career pathways. The theme of 'happy learners' continues, helping pupils develop a lifelong love of learning. Results have improved in recent years, with the best GCSE, IB and BTEC results ever in 2025 and second-best A-level results.

Alumni

The School's strong alumni foundation has helped pupils develop in many different fields. Boasting a remarkable legacy across generations, OGs represent a diverse and inspirational cohort of alumni. Notable alumni include composer Benjamin Britten, poet W.H. Auden, and Dyson founder Sir James Dyson. More recently, the school has

produced Academy Award-winning actor Olivia Colman, alongside international rugby stars Tom and Ben Youngs, with the latter now leading the School's Talented Athlete Development programme as Head of Performance Sport.

Co-curricular and Sport

Throughout their time at Gresham's, pupils explore a wealth of opportunities beyond the classroom through a vibrant co-curricular programme designed to foster resilience, self-confidence, and vital personal skills. Supported by a dedicated and active staff, pupils can choose from a diverse array of pathways. These include core sports such as rugby, football, cricket, hockey, netball, tennis, shooting, athletics, and swimming, alongside creative outlets in music, dance, and the performing arts. Pupils can also develop leadership skills and a spirit of service through a thriving Combined Cadet Force, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, impactful community outreach and charity projects, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics), and stimulating clubs like competitive debating.





Pastoral and Boarding

Gresham's is deeply dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils, ensuring they reach their full potential within a safe, caring environment. Boarding begins at the Prep School in the homely, co-educational wings of Kenwyn House. This expands into a larger provision at the Senior School, which features seven boarding houses, four for boys and three for girls, accommodating a 55% boarding and 45% day pupil split. There is also a co-educational day house for Sixth Form pupils. The House system is the backbone of day-to-day life within the School, encompassing tutoring and welfare, as well as providing a sense of belonging for pupils and acting as a source of friendly inter-house competition. The Chapel serves as a vital focal point for the entire community. Pupil well-being is further supported by a fully staffed, on-site health centre and the School's outsourced catering partner, Holroyd Howe, who provide nutritious, balanced meals alongside catering for numerous community events.

Facilities

The School has invested heavily in its estate over the past ten years and continues to do so. An exciting new £40m project is underway to move the Prep School to a new site, away from the space it currently shares with the Pre-Prep School. It will move to new facilities on the Dyson Campus adjacent to the Senior School in 2027. This extraordinary opportunity is possible because of a generous donation from Sir James Dyson.

The new facilities will deliver a new Prep School that combines the charm of Gresham's historic buildings with modern architecture and the latest innovations in education on an 86-acre campus. This development will further enhance pupils' experiences and open new doors for their growth and exploration.

Sir James Dyson's support also enabled the School to proceed with the most notable of its development projects of the past ten years. The Dyson Building, a new £18.5m STEAM teaching facility, opened in 2021 on the Senior School site. Developments over the past ten years also include the complete redevelopment of a girl's boarding house, Oakeley; the building of a new state-of-the-art music and Sixth Form study centre and café, the Britten Building; a £4.5m refurbishment of the former Senior School science classrooms at the heart of the School, which includes the new exam centre; and a £1.5m refurbishment of the Pre-Prep. Through a large in-house estates team, great effort goes into routine maintenance of grounds and buildings, to keep them safe and fit for purpose, including a rolling programme of refurbishments of boarding houses.

Facilities include a memorial chapel, an outdoor performance space (the Theatre-in-the-Woods), the 300-seat Auden Theatre, a 25m indoor pool, an indoor shooting range, a woodland outdoor activity centre, a performance gym, two Astroturf pitches, a sports hall, a cross-county course and numerous grass pitches and hard courts.

Finances

The School is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It has worked hard to navigate the challenges of recent years, which has enabled it to maintain a strong financial position with no borrowings. With an annual turnover of around £25m, the School has consistently achieved healthy operating surpluses, with the aim to deliver surpluses of 10% to allow continued, meaningful investment in the School's estate. The School has two wholly owned subsidiaries, Gresham's School Enterprises Ltd (GSEL) and Gresham's School International Ltd (GSIL), which operate as a commercial arm and special purpose vehicle for overseas operations respectively. It also has an associated charity, the Gresham's Foundation, which delivers the School's charitable purposes and advances their bursary, grants, and scholarships provision.

The Worshipful Company of Fishmongers supports the School through grants made through the Gresham's Foundation. The School has two investment portfolios, one which is overseen by the School and one which is overseen by the Gresham's Foundation Trustees, each portfolio being managed by different fund managers.

Governance

There are currently 20 members of the Board of Governors who give their time freely and are deeply committed to the success of the School. The Board of Governors meets at least four times a year with one meeting a year held at Fishmongers' Hall, London. The Audit and Risk Committee, Finance and General Purposes Committee, Estates Committee and Education Committee meet prior to Board of Governors' Meetings. The Health and Safety Committee and Safeguarding Steering Group report to the Board of Governors through the Audit and Risk Committee. The Articles of Association stipulate that the Board of Governors shall be composed of one ex-officio Governor, up to 10 nominated Governors and up to 17 co-opted Governors.

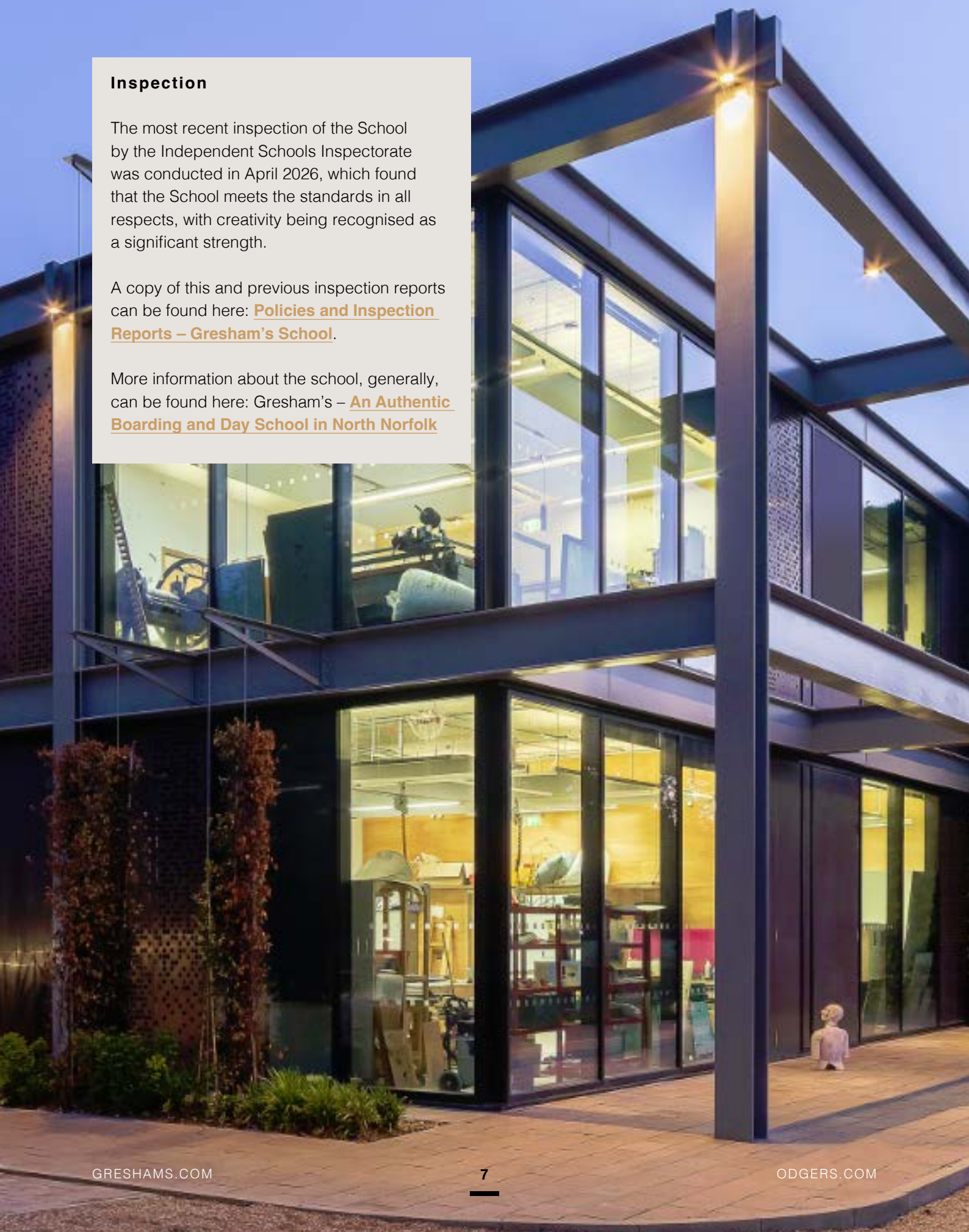


Inspection

The most recent inspection of the School by the Independent Schools Inspectorate was conducted in April 2026, which found that the School meets the standards in all respects, with creativity being recognised as a significant strength.

A copy of this and previous inspection reports can be found here: [Policies and Inspection Reports – Gresham's School](#).

More information about the school, generally, can be found here: Gresham's – [An Authentic Boarding and Day School in North Norfolk](#)





THE OPPORTUNITY

Reporting to the Headmaster, and accountable to the Board of Governors through the Chair of Governors, the Bursar is the most senior leader beneath the Headmaster. Alongside the Senior Leadership Team and the School's three Heads, the Bursar is responsible for the strategic leadership of the School and, personally, for the operational leadership and management of many of the support functions of the School. The Bursar's broad remit is to ensure that the School's financial strength, operational effectiveness and efficiency, infrastructure and environment, and commercial activities are compliant and align with the School's strategic and educational ambitions, including its long-term sustainability and success.

The Bursar is not Clerk to the Board of Governors but is a key advisor on matters of policy and compliance. Results are driven through effective leadership of and executive

delegation to a varied team of direct reports and their staff, and through collaborative working with SLT colleagues, the wider School staff, third-party partners and parents. The Bursar is a Director of GSEL and GSIL, the two wholly owned subsidiaries of the School.

The Bursar's department comprises those direct reports listed below and their teams (around 100 staff in total):

- Head of Finance
- Head of Human Resources
- Head of Estates (under whom sits the Health and Safety Officer)
- Head of Information Technology Services
- Commercial Director

The Catering Manager (Holroyd Howe) also reports to the Bursar as the School's Client Representative for management and operation of the School's catering contract, which employs around 45 staff across the School.

Key Responsibilities

Strategy

- Work with the Heads, Senior Leaders and Governors to set and deliver the School's Strategic Plan, balancing aspiration with operational capability and affordability.
- Spot potential business threats and opportunities and advise on how to counter the former and take advantage of the latter.
- Maintain strategic oversight of the Bursar's department, ensuring long-term capability and succession planning to manage the School operations in line with strategic intent effectively and in the most efficient way.

Financial Reporting and Performance

- Ensure the School remains financially resilient in the face of sector pressures.
- Present annual and 5-year financial plans to Governors for approval, including the agreement of fee increases and pay awards, then monitor and report on progress and oversee the timely delegation of departmental budgets through the Head of Finance.
- Ensure, through the Head of Finance, that the School is well prepared for the annual audit and preparation of the Directors' Annual Report, and is compliant in respect of relevant Company and Charity Law in respect of reporting and filing requirements.
- Oversee fee debt management, taking appropriate actions to limit exposure to bad debt and recover overdue payments.
- Act as lead signatory for School contracts, including legal review as required, and ensure best value for money for procurement activities.
- Manage Finance Team operations, through Head of Finance, to ensure effective delivery of services.
- Oversee the Commercial Director's activities to ensure that opportunities are taken to optimise non-fee income from non-School use of assets and infrastructure and to help develop new revenue-generating opportunities.

Estate and Site Operations

- In consultation with the Heads, develop strategic priorities for development of the estate and facilities, incorporate into the rolling 5-year Estate Development Plan for approval by Governors and, through the Head of Estates, ensure timely delivery within allocated budgets and in line with any legal and sector mandated requirements.
- Seek out opportunities for more cost-effective, sustainable ways to operate, incorporating such opportunities into the Estate Development Plan.
- Ensure, through the Head of Estates, that the site and infrastructure are maintained in a safe, clean, presentable state, and remain fit for purpose.
- Chair the Health and Safety Committee and ensure, through the Head of Estates and Health and Safety Officer, that the site is secure and safe, and that practices and procedures across the School are safe and compliant with legislation and sector-mandated requirements.
- Oversee, through the Head of Estates, the operations of maintenance, grounds, gardening, caretaking, laundry and security staff, ensuring that they support the School effectively and efficiently.
- Ensure, through Head of IT Services, the provision of reliable IT support services to the School, including the development and maintenance of the IT network, hardware and software, and that cyber security measures and digital resilience are fit for purpose.
- Act as the main Client point of contact for the Catering service provider, ensuring that the service provided is compliant with legislation and is of excellent quality.

Team Management and Human Resources

- Lead a multi-disciplinary team of around 140 support staff (including contract catering staff) effectively to deliver outstanding support to the School's activities, commensurate with operational requirements and the School's Strategic aims.
- Manage the performance and development of direct reports and ensure that the needs of the School are met in terms of succession planning and recruitment of staff into these key posts.
- Maintain oversight, through the Head of HR, of the HR and Payroll team to ensure compliance with legal and sector-mandated requirements and effective delivery of staff recruitment, retention, performance management and payroll processes, and staff welfare, supported by appropriate and current contractual and non-contractual policies.
- Contribute, in conjunction with the Headmaster, to strategic workforce planning and the creation of a positive, inclusive culture across teaching and support staff.

Compliance and Risk Management

- Work with SLT colleagues to ensure the identification and management of risk, maintain the School's risk register and present updates to Governors.
- Advise on policy development and updates relevant to the Bursar's remit, and provide guidance as required on legal and regulatory requirements, acting as the main point of liaison with the School's legal advisors.
- Ensure that the School holds up-to-date and comprehensive insurance cover for insurable risks.
- Hold lead responsibility for business continuity and crisis management planning.
- As the School's Data Protection Lead, oversee the School's legal obligations in respect of data protection.





THE INDIVIDUAL

The role of Bursar is multi-faceted, and candidates will need to demonstrate strategic capability, sound business acumen, operational effectiveness and a talent for communicating and collaborating with a wide range of people to be successful. Whilst it is expected that individuals will have extensive leadership experience in keeping with the brief, the stand-out candidates will be those who have strong personal qualities. Gresham's will be looking for those who exhibit a deep understanding of, and affinity with, the School and its needs, and can lead with nuance, motivate others, navigate complexity, understand priorities and apply judgement in a dynamic environment.

In other words, how they lead is every bit as important as what they know and what they can do, if not more so. In this respect, experience of working in a traditional boarding school environment, with relevant skills and knowledge gained as a result, would be a distinct advantage, but those whose personal style fits well with the School's requirements, who can evidence appropriate skills and knowledge gained in a different environment, will be equally welcome to apply.

The criteria set out below are essential, after which some additional qualities are listed which are deemed desirable.

Leadership and Personal Qualities

- Visible, confident but self-aware and modest, adaptable and able to demonstrate credibility across a broad portfolio.
- Discreet and diplomatic, with a high level of integrity, displaying sensitivity and sound judgement to inspire trust.
- Resilient, with drive and energy to apply rigour and be able to focus on operational as well as strategic detail.
- Patient, calm, good-humoured and emotionally intelligent, able to work collaboratively and positively with others to motivate, build confidence and encourage teamwork.

Qualifications and Experience

- Educated to degree level or equivalent.
- Experience of leading multi-disciplinary teams in a high-tempo environment.
- Track record of working at executive leader level, interacting with and reporting to a Board of Directors/Trustees and influencing outcomes positively.
- Senior-level responsibility and accountability for management of large budgets.
- Well-acquainted with the management of strategic and operational requirements and competing priorities whilst balancing the needs and expectations of multiple different parties.
- Familiarity with relevant legal requirements and processes, policymaking and review and risk management, in a complex and highly regulated sector.
- Exposure to conflict management.

Skills and Knowledge

- Excellent financial literacy and commercial acumen.
- Superb strategic foresight.
- Outstanding analytical capability with a propensity for pro-active problem-solving.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Exceptional planning and organisational capabilities.
- Competent in the use of IT systems and their practical application, with AI, in the modern workplace.
- Accomplished at project management, including change management.
- Possessing a working understanding of estate management and catering practices, and Employment Law, Health and Safety Regulations, General Data Protection Regulations, Company Law, Charity Law and Contract Law.

Additional Qualities (Desirable)

- Experience of working within the independent education sector.
- Experience of working within a charity.
- Possess a finance or business professional qualification.
- Have building project management experience.
- Previous oversight of investment portfolio management.

The Bursar will also need to understand and be committed to acting in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection, Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies.



HOW TO APPLY

Gresham's have engaged the services of Odgers to assist with the recruitment of the next Bursar of Gresham's School.

The closing date for applications is 9.00am on Monday 12 October.

Shortlist interviews and site visit/ briefings will take place on **Tuesday 10 and Wednesday 11 November**. Final interviews will take place on **Thursday 26 November**.

In order to apply, please submit a 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 current salary details and the names and addresses of three referees. Please submit a completed Gresham's application form which is available for download.

The preferred method of application is online at: www.odgers.com/96514

All applications will receive an automated response.

For an initial discussion, please contact:

Constance Moss:
constance.moss@odgers.com

Alice Ryb: alice.ryb@odgers.com

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.



GRESHAMS.COM



ODGERS 

ODGERS.COM