



DANES HILL SCHOOL

Brief for the appointment of
Chief Financial Officer

September 2025

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Background

Danes Hill School is widely recognised as one of the leading co-educational day preparatory schools in the country. Situated in 55 acres of landscaped grounds in the village of Oxshott, Surrey, Danes Hill provides boys and girls aged 3 to 13 with a dynamic and exciting education. The school is a contemporary prep school for modern families, delivering a forward thinking education with a broad and balanced curriculum, which blends rigorous academics with innovative learning, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence in a supportive, inclusive environment.

School Values

At Danes Hill, the school culture is one that fosters personal growth, inspires passion, empowers courage and nurtures respect. The school values of Growth, Passion, Courage and Respect are at the heart of everything the community does. Introduced in 2023, these values reflect the qualities the school seeks to instil in every child.

Pupils are encouraged to embrace Growth by working hard, striving to improve, investing in development, and supporting the development of others. Passion is nurtured through curiosity, ambition, striving to succeed, dedication in all

things, not giving up, and a love of learning. Courage is celebrated in those who have the confidence to take risks, speak up, are not afraid to fail, and who try new things. Respect underpins all relationships at the school, with pupils learning to treat others with kindness, empathy and dignity.

These values are embedded across school life, from assemblies and classroom discussions to house points and pupil awards and play a central role in shaping confident, compassionate and resilient young people.



Pre-Prep School

A child's journey at Danes Hill begins in the Pre-prep. The Pre-prep provides a secure, friendly, exciting environment in which children in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 are given the opportunity to flourish.

Language development and numeracy are important components of the school day, with Science, French, Spanish, Music, Drama, Art and a wide range of physical activities playing their part in the broad and balanced curriculum. A favourable pupil-teacher ratio, with a fulltime assistant assigned to each class, enables the individual learning needs of every child to be met.

The Pre-prep is located on a separate site on Steels Lane in Oxshott and has its own Head, who reports to the Head of Danes Hill, and is responsible for the day to day running of all aspects of the Pre-prep. The Head of Pre-prep liaises closely with the overall Head to ensure a smooth transition from the Pre-prep to the Prep School site.

The Pre-prep site offers excellent facilities including its own swimming pool which is in use throughout the year, as well as a library, dedicated music room and IT suite.

Prep School

The Prep School is divided into the Junior School (Years 2 to 5), and Upper School (Years 6 to 8), each

with its own Head of Section, its own assemblies and traditions, and very much its own ethos. Children are encouraged to feel allegiance to their own particular section of the school, and this sectional subdivision ensures that the school never feels overwhelmingly big.

Junior School

The Junior School represents the children's exciting transition from Pre-prep to Upper School, focusing on increasing their independence and self-confidence. Located in the main building, in the heart of the school, the Junior School offers pupils a secure area where they feel safe and can thrive.

As children transition to the Junior School, most of their classes continue to be taught by their form teacher. As pupils move through the section, an increasing amount of their timetable is taught by subject specialists and the children are able to enjoy all of the facilities that a large and dynamic prep school offers, including science labs, art rooms, design and technology workshops and the performing arts studios.

The focus is to foster a stimulating and creative learning environment where children are encouraged to be intellectually curious, well-motivated and responsible. As such, the Junior School aims to instil a passion for learning which pupils will take with them as they journey into the Upper School.





Upper School

The Upper School is made up of three year groups – Years 6, 7 and 8. Children are encouraged to establish, strengthen and value friendships and to support and encourage each other in their endeavours.

A focus on an all-round education remains at the heart of the curriculum, with a careful balance between academic study and immersion in creative subjects and a broad co-curricular programme.

The majority of pupils leave Danes Hill at the end of Year 8 via scholarship or Common Entrance examinations. The school has an outstanding record in external exams, and regularly achieves fifty or more academic and all-rounder scholarships each year. Pupils move on from Danes Hill to a wide range of senior schools, including local co-ed and single sex, day and boarding independent schools, as well as major independent schools further afield.

Leavers go to destination schools including Ardingly College, Bedales, Bede's, Brighton College, Charterhouse School, Cheltenham Ladies' College, City of London Freeman's School, Cranleigh School, Epsom College, Eton College, Guildford High School, Hampton School, Reigate Grammar School, St George's Weybridge, Tonbridge School, Wellington College, Winchester College and Wycombe Abbey.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care at Danes Hill takes a whole-school view to pupils' experience of education, and fosters an atmosphere that is conducive for learning and promotes tolerance, resilience, fairness and equal opportunities for all. Believing in the importance of kindness and mutual respect, Danes Hill places great importance on creating an inclusive and welcoming ethos, treating everyone as an individual with the aim of developing the whole person so that pupils are well equipped to take their place in the world. The pastoral approach is integral to all aspects of school life and works to create an ethos that encourages engagement and academic achievement of all pupils.

The three distinct sections of the school allow for a greater focus on individual pupils and their needs. The pastoral approach creates clear aims for supporting the academic progress and personal development of all pupils in all sections of the school. Additionally, it prepares pupils to become valued members of the community developing the social skills and personal qualities to prepare them for their future lives.



Beyond the Classroom

Music and Performing Arts

Music, Drama and Dance are given an exceptionally high profile at all levels of the school, and there are abundant opportunities for children to develop their performing talents. Every year group has its own major annual production in which all the children are involved, and Drama and Music lessons are popular with all pupils. The school's three choirs, 50-strong orchestra, jazz band and range of musical ensembles, in addition to over 300 pupils receiving instrumental tuition, mean that the standard of performance in a myriad of school events and competitions is incredibly high.

Sport

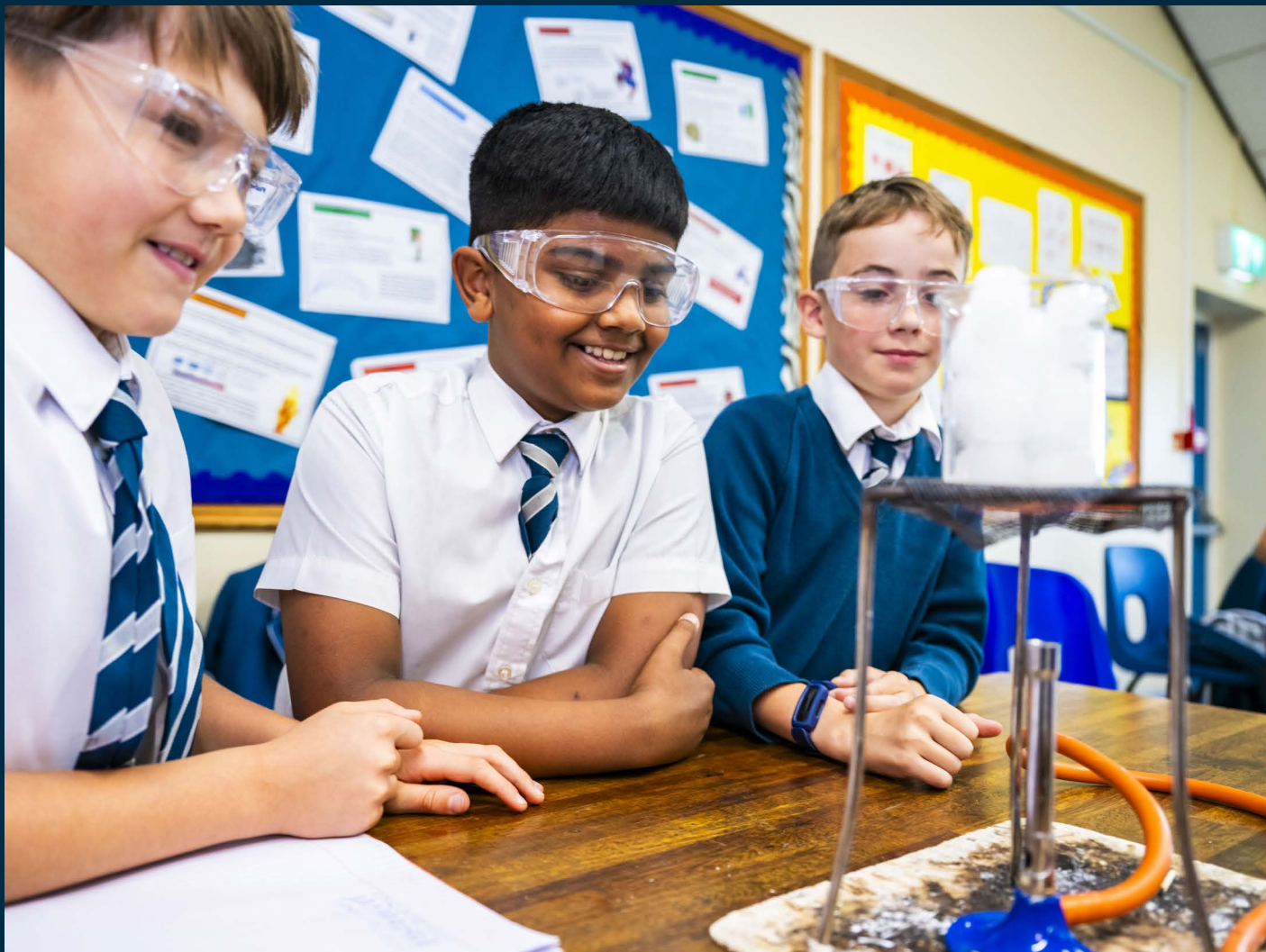
Danes Hill aspires to be the epitome of sporting excellence in prep schools. The school is committed to cultivating a culture of passion, determination and achievement, and believes in the potential of every pupil to excel in sport.

Every pupil has the opportunity to participate in a range of sports and develop their technique as well as teamwork, resilience, and leadership skills.

The school strives for excellence in all aspects of its sporting programme, from training sessions through to national competitions. A dedicated team of over a dozen specialist games teachers provides expert coaching in a wide variety of team and individual sports, and the greatest possible opportunity is given for children to represent the school in competitive fixtures. All the main team games are featured, with rugby, football and cricket for boys, and hockey, netball and rounders for girls. Many other sports are given considerable prominence, including athletics, tennis, swimming, sailing, cross-country, karate, judo, golf, climbing, rowing and gymnastics. Danes Hill pupils regularly achieve county and national success, and the school's reputation for sport continues to grow.

Facilities include a floodlit all-weather astroturf, a 10 metre high climbing wall, two swimming pools and seven rugby and football fields on both the Pre-prep and Prep School sites. Most recently the school has invested in a state-of-the-art indoor sports centre which caters for an array of physical education activities such as gymnastics, badminton, basketball, netball and volleyball.





Digital

Danes Hill is committed to preparing pupils for the future by embedding digital learning into everyday school life. The school's 1:1 Device Programme, introduced in 2023 for pupils in Years 5 and 7, ensures that every child has access to their own laptop, supporting a blended approach to teaching and learning.

Technology is used to enhance the curriculum, encourage independent learning, and develop digital fluency. Pupils are taught to use a range of tools for research, collaboration, and creativity, and staff receive ongoing training to ensure digital resources are used effectively and confidently across subjects. The initiative has had a transformative impact on pupil engagement, organisation, and the quality of feedback and assessment.

The school's digital strategy is ambitious and evolving, with a clear focus on equipping pupils with the skills they need to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

Governance

Danes Hill has an active and committed Board of Governors, led by the Chair, Cedric Ntumba. The Vernon Educational Trust, a registered company, is the legal owner of the school, with the Board of Governors serving as trustees. The Board benefits from the experience of leading educationalist Governors, as well as those who bring significant skills and expertise from the commercial and public sectors. The full Governing Board – known as Council – meets once a term to discuss and endorse major issues. In addition there are regular meetings of the Finance & Operations, People, Governance and Risk, Safeguarding and Welfare and Education Committees.

Further information on Danes Hill can be found via the school's website: www.daneshillschool.co.uk



The Role

Job title:	Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
Reporting to:	Head
Hours:	Full time
Location:	Danes Hill School, Leatherhead Road, Oxshott KT22 0JG
Salary:	Competitive salary, depending on skills and experience
Benefits:	Generous pension scheme. Free lunch on site during term time. Annual flu vaccinations, online EAP service and counselling. Discounts in local shops, restaurants, and businesses. Salary sacrifice for electric vehicles and pension contributions. Training and development support.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER (CFO)



Role Overview

This is an exciting opportunity for a finance leader to take on a pivotal senior leadership role in a close knit school community. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) will be a key member of the Senior Leadership Team, responsible for leading the financial strategy and financial operations of Danes Hill School. This role combines financial leadership, strategic planning and commercial development to ensure the long-term sustainability and continued success of this leading independent prep school. The CFO will also make a leading and important contribution to the School's strategic direction and will fulfil the role of Clerk to the Governors. The primary reporting line for the CFO is to the Head but the CFO is also responsible to the Chair of Governors for the discharge of his/her duties as Clerk to the Governors, including financial reporting and the provision of strategic management information.

Key Responsibilities

Financial Leadership & Management

- Lead the Finance Department, ensuring robust financial management, accurate reporting, and full compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Develop and manage budgets, forecasts, and financial plans aligned with the School's strategic direction.
- Ensure regular, timely and accurate financial information reports and accounts for reporting to, and advising, the Senior Leadership Team, Finance & Operations Committee and Board.
- Deliver insightful financial analysis to the Head, Senior Leadership Team, and Board of Governors to support effective strategic decision making at Board level.
- Prepare financial modelling and long-term assessments of the future financial performance of the School, including cash flow projections.
- Lead a proactive enabling finance function to support the operational management of the school and any major projects.
- Provide financial analysis and reporting for capital and maintenance projects in collaboration with the Operations Director.
- Oversee treasury management, cashflow, and investment strategies.
- Ensure financial procedures and controls are reliable, robust and fit for purpose.
- Manage bursary applications and maintain clear communication with parents on all financial matters.
- Timely preparation of annual statutory accounts and management of the audit process.
- Supervise termly fee processing, including invoicing and collection of extras.
- Oversee payroll and statutory submissions with the HR Director and outsourced payroll provider.





Strategic & Commercial Development

- As a pivotal member of the Senior Leadership Team, contribute to decisions on growth, innovation, and sustainability.
- Work in partnership with the Head and Governors to shape and implement the School's short, medium and long-term strategy.
- Ensure financial and commercial strategies are aligned with the School's educational mission.
- Identify and develop new commercial opportunities with the Operations Director, including partnerships and ancillary services.
- Support capital projects, estate development, and long-term infrastructure planning in liaison with the Operations Director.

Governance & Risk Management

- Serve as the principal financial adviser to the full Board of Governors and Finance & Operations Committee.
- Lead on financial risk management, ensuring the school is protected against financial, operational, and regulatory risks.
- Promote best practices in governance, compliance, and reporting.

Leadership & Culture

- Contribute to the overall leadership of the school as a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Inspire and develop the Finance Department, fostering a culture of professionalism, accountability, collaboration and service.
- Build strong relationships across academic and operational teams to promote financial awareness and discipline.

Clerk to the Governors

- Ensure that governance is carried out in accordance with the Memorandum of Association in addition to matters of statutory compliance; confirm compliance with instructions of the Charity Commission & Companies House.
- Ensure that governance is carried out effectively, providing timely meeting schedules and supporting the Board and committee meetings with papers and minutes.
- Support the appointment, induction and ongoing training of Governors, ensuring compliance with statutory and ISI regulation and guidance.
- Maintain accurate records of all governance activity.



The Person

Danes Hill School is seeking to appoint a Chief Finance Officer with strong leadership and management skills, vision, empathy and exceptional financial and business acumen. He/ she will have excellent people skills and be capable of building close working relationships with all members of the school community.

Person Specification

Experience

- Qualified accountant (ACA, ACCA, CIMA or equivalent), or similar financial experience and training.
- Board level financial leadership experience with proven track record of leading a high quality finance function, ideally within the education sector.
- Business acumen to be able to assist the Governors and Head to develop and implement a vision for the School's future.
- Strong planning and organisational skills, with the ability to contribute effectively to the strategic development of the School whilst maintaining a strong grasp of operational detail.
- Ability to build strong relationships quickly with a track record of working successfully with a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Proven people management skills.
- Strong IT analysis skills.
- Ability to write and present clear and concise reports to financial and non-financial recipients.
- Strong strategic and analytical skills.

Personal Attributes

- Team player with leadership and motivational skills, who leads by example and brings a collegiate and collaborative approach.
- Completer-finisher with the ability to follow through with tasks effectively, ensuring that projects are brought to fruition with attention to detail and quality.
- Willingness to go the extra mile and show initiative.
- Receptive to change and capable of delivering change.
- Commercially aware, with a willingness to identify appropriate revenue generating opportunities.

- High level of integrity, honesty and dedication, with a commitment to the school's values.
- Proactive and enthusiastic, with a good sense of humour.

Desirable:

- Experience in independent schools or similar educational environments.
- Familiarity with charity finance, governance, and compliance frameworks.
- Experience of land sales/commercial negotiations.

Other

- Supportive of Danes Hill School's ethos and strategic objectives.
- As with all staff, responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of all children within the School.



How to Apply

Danes Hill School has engaged the services of Odgers to assist with the recruitment of the next Chief Financial Officer of the School.

The closing date for applications is **9.00am BST Monday 13 October**.

Longlist interviews with Odgers will take place between **Wednesday 15 October – Monday 20 October**, shortlist interviews with the Selection Committee will take place on **Tuesday 28 October**. Candidates invited to the final stage will be invited to have a full briefing visit to the school on **Monday 3 and Tuesday 4 November** and final interviews will take place on **Friday 7 November**.

In order to apply, please submit a 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/94528

All applications will receive an automated response.

For an initial discussion, please contact:

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isabel.howard@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. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

Danes Hill School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and applicants must be willing to undergo screening appropriate to the post, including checks with current and past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.





DANES HILL SCHOOL

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