



# THE ORATORY



**BRIEF FOR THE POST OF  
HEAD OF ENGLISH  
SEPTEMBER 2026 START**

# THE SCHOOL

**The Oratory is an HMC independent school for students aged 11 to 18, providing an all-round education of quality and purpose.**

We offer small class sizes and outstanding facilities on a wonderful South Oxfordshire country estate and yet we are within easy travelling distance of London, major motorways, railways and airports.

The Oratory School has high academic standards; however, we believe that an education is about more than statistics. We have a clear vision to ensure that each student flourishes and fulfils their maximum potential both in and far beyond the classroom. To this end, a wide variety of co-curricular activities enrich the students' learning and all students get the opportunity to develop their specific talents to the full.

The Oratory is not a large school, and this enables each and every student to be known, valued and stretched as an individual within our nurturing community.

Founded in 1859 by Saint John Henry Newman - we are a Catholic school which welcomes students of all faiths or none. Visitors often comment on the inclusive community atmosphere of our school, which we believe nurtures confidence, self-expression and a desire to learn and grow.



# THE DEPARTMENT

**The English Department is staffed by a committed team of specialist teachers and is housed across four dedicated classrooms, with an office for the Head of Department.**

For GCSE, the Department follows the Edexcel IGCSE specifications in English and English Literature, and, at A Level, both Edexcel English Literature and English Language A Levels are offered. The department is in a modern set of classrooms which offer an inspirational setting for study. The team all have a genuine enthusiasm for literature and language and are committed to fostering high academic standards across a broad ability range, stretching our most able pupils while providing thoughtful support to those who need it. We teach across the full age range, from Year 7 through to GCSE and A Level.

## HEAD OF DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Heads of Department (HoDs) are key academic leaders within the School. They are responsible for the quality of teaching and learning within their subject area, the academic progress of pupils, and the leadership and development of departmental staff.

Teaching is a dynamic and evolving profession requiring continual reflection and improvement. HoDs play a central role in fostering a culture of high expectations, professional growth and academic ambition. In all aspects of their work, HoDs are expected to act in the best interests of pupils and to uphold and promote the ethos and values of the School.

HoDs are accountable for ensuring that departmental practice aligns with whole-school priorities, regulatory requirements and inspection frameworks.

## ACCOUNTABLE TO

Assistant Head (Director of Studies) or nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team.



# THE ROLE

**We are looking to appoint a talented and ambitious Head of English to lead and develop our English provision. In this role, you will nurture a culture of intellectual curiosity, inspiring pupils to develop a genuine love of literature, language and critical thinking within a diverse learning environment.**

The ability to teach Creative Media BTEC would be an advantage. The School is introducing this qualification as part of its expanding creative curriculum offer. The successful candidate will ideally have the confidence and experience to deliver and assess the Creative Media BTEC in line with the Edexcel BTEC in Creative Digital Media Production specification, ensuring high standards of coursework moderation, internal verification, and pupil outcomes. Experience of leading coursework-based qualifications and quality assurance processes would be particularly beneficial.

The Head of English has responsibility for the successful planning, development, delivery and administration of the academic English curriculum and evaluating pupil performance. In addition, the Head of English will have strong leadership skills and take responsibility for supervising a team of English Teachers.

The ability to develop a strong rapport with pupils that promotes high academic standards and intellectual curiosity is paramount, together with the enthusiasm to encourage pupils to pursue the subject further at Sixth Form and beyond. You will also be expected to contribute actively to and represent the department at key school events, including Parents' Evenings, Open Mornings, Year Assessment Days, Careers Evenings, and the Sixth Form Choices Evening, thereby supporting pupil recruitment and progression.



## THE ROLE continued..

In this role, you will have the opportunity to create a supportive and engaging learning environment for pupils of all abilities. You will also be expected to participate in school-wide initiatives and help promote the importance of English education to parents and the wider community.

Microsoft Teams is used to support teaching and learning, including the sharing of resources, revision materials and the setting of homework. The Department also enriches the curriculum through regular theatre visits, author events and other co-curricular opportunities that bring the subject to life.

In any school, and particularly in a boarding school, the emphasis is on total education, and we provide a wealth of opportunities for our pupils. The School is therefore keen to appoint teachers who would wish to play an active role in the co-curricular programme. An interest in supporting activities such as sport, the arts, academic enrichment or the Combined Cadet Force would be an advantage.



# KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

## 1. Teaching and Learning

Heads of Department are responsible for securing and sustaining high-quality teaching and strong pupil outcomes within their subject area. They will:

- Model excellent classroom practice.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching through lesson observations, work scrutiny, pupil voice and learning walks.
- Analyse pupil progress data and examination outcomes to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Set clear departmental targets and implement strategies to raise standards.
- Ensure consistent assessment practices, effective feedback and accurate tracking of pupil progress.
- Oversee internal examinations, examination entries and results analysis.
- Select and implement appropriate examination specifications in consultation with senior leaders.
- Ensure effective transition between key stages and liaise with relevant feeder or partner schools where appropriate.
- Promote the effective use of digital tools and innovation in teaching and learning.
- Ensure departmental schemes of work reflect curriculum intent, progression and high academic expectations.

## 2. Leadership and Curriculum Development

HoDs will contribute to the School's academic development by:

- Developing and maintaining a clear departmental vision aligned with whole-school priorities.
- Producing and reviewing a Department Development Plan.
- Ensuring departmental documentation (handbooks, schemes of work, policies) is current and compliant.
- Engaging in and promoting professional development to remain informed about developments in pedagogy, curriculum and assessment.
- Preparing for inspection by ensuring evidence of impact and compliance is maintained.

# Key Responsibilities Contin....

## 3. Leadership and Management of Staff

HoDs are responsible for leading and managing their departmental team.

This includes:

- Supporting recruitment, induction and mentoring of new staff.
- Conducting appraisal and supporting professional development.
- Creating a collaborative, high-performing departmental culture.
- Managing timetabling and staffing requirements in consultation with senior leaders.
- Ensuring appropriate cover work is set when staff are absent.
- Addressing performance concerns promptly and constructively.
- Leading regular departmental meetings and maintaining clear communication within the team.
- Overseeing the work of technicians or support staff within the department.

## 4. Resources, Budget and Compliance

HoDs will:

- Manage the departmental budget responsibly and in accordance with School financial procedures.
- Ensure resources are used efficiently, safely and effectively.
- Oversee Health & Safety compliance within the department and ensure appropriate risk assessments are completed and maintained.
- Maintain stimulating and well-presented departmental learning environments.
- Ensure compliance with ISI and regulatory expectations.



# Key Responsibilities Contin....

## 5. Pupil Progress and Pastoral Contribution

While academic leadership is central to the role, HoDs also contribute to the pastoral life of the School by:

- Monitoring the progress and wellbeing of pupils within their subject.
- Working collaboratively with Form Tutors, Heads of School and the Inclusive Learning team.
- Attending parents' meetings and supporting communication with families.
- Supporting behaviour expectations in line with School policy.
- Acting as a Form Tutor where required.

## 6. Wider Contribution to School Life

HoDs are expected to:

- Contribute actively to co-curricular and enrichment opportunities.
- Participate in whole-school events such as Open Days and Options Evenings.
- Support subject-related trips and educational visits.
- Undertake supervisory duties in accordance with duty rotas.
- Attend leadership and HoD meetings as required.

## General

This job description outlines the main responsibilities of the role. It is not exhaustive. The postholder may be required to undertake other reasonable duties commensurate with the seniority of the role and the needs of the School.



<b>PERSONAL SPECIFICATION</b>	
<b>Qualifications and Academic Profile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong academic background, with a good honours degree in English or a closely related subject.</li> <li>• The ability to teach English to GCSE and A Level.</li> <li>• Secure and up-to-date subject knowledge across the 11–18 age range, with an understanding of current curriculum and examination developments.</li> <li>• Intellectual curiosity and academic credibility appropriate to a high-performing independent school environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching and Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear passion for the teaching of English and for inspiring a love of literature and language.</li> <li>• The ability to motivate pupils of all abilities to achieve their best.</li> <li>• The capacity to reflect critically on practice and respond constructively to feedback from departmental and senior leaders.</li> <li>• A willingness to engage with pedagogical development and apply new strategies to improve pupil outcomes.</li> <li>• High expectations of pupil engagement, behaviour and academic standards.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Skills and Attributes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong organisational and time-management skills, with the ability to prioritise and meet deadlines.</li> <li>• Excellent written and verbal communication skills.</li> <li>• Effective collaborative skills, able to build positive working relationships with colleagues, pupils and parents.</li> <li>• Competency in the use of ICT for teaching, administration and digital learning.</li> <li>• Sound professional judgement and attention to detail.</li> <li>• Reliability and personal accountability.</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Qualities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptability, resilience, energy and perseverance.</li> <li>• Self-confidence combined with professional humility.</li> <li>• Emotional intelligence and sensitivity in dealing with pupils, colleagues and families.</li> <li>• An ease with, and genuine interest in, young people.</li> <li>• Enthusiasm and presence that inspires confidence in pupils and parents.</li> <li>• A professional manner and presentation appropriate to a boarding school setting.</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership and Wider Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An understanding of, or experience in, leadership and management within a subject area (desirable for those seeking additional responsibility).</li> <li>• Commitment to the co-curricular life of the School.</li> <li>• An understanding of the ethos, expectations and demands of a full boarding school.</li> <li>• Flexibility and willingness to contribute to the wider life of the School, including events and activities beyond the classroom.</li> </ul>
<b>Desirable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualified teacher status.</li> <li>• Experience in leading an academic department</li> <li>• Experience of undertaking Form Tutor role.</li> </ul>

# SALARY

Dependent on qualifications and experience. The school has its own attractive salary scale.

# BENEFITS

- Sports Centre membership with free access to the gym; squash courts, lane swimming and golf course.
- A meal while on duty during term time.
- Contributory pension scheme.
- Free parking.

# SAFEGUARDING AND COMPLIANCE

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Heads of Department must:

- Uphold and implement the School's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Promote a culture of vigilance and pupil welfare within their department.
- Ensure all departmental staff are familiar with safeguarding, safer recruitment, behaviour and health and safety policies.
- Report any safeguarding concerns promptly in line with School procedures.



# HOW TO APPLY

Applicants should complete the school's application form and send together with a covering letter in PDF format to [recruitment@oratory.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@oratory.co.uk)

The closing date for applications is **16 March 2026** with Interviews taking place soon thereafter.

Early applications are encouraged. We reserve the right to close this advertisement early if we receive a high volume of suitable applications or if we find a suitable candidate from early applications.

## The interview process will include:

- Interview with the Head, Bursar and HR.
- Tour of the school.
- A practical exercise designed to assess key skills such as organisation, communication, and attention to detail.

## Please send postal applications together with a covering letter to:

Director of People, The Oratory School, Woodcote, Oxfordshire, RG8 0PJ

For any queries, please email [recruitment@oratory.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@oratory.co.uk).

*The Oratory Schools Association Registered Charity No 309112 is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo checks with past employers, online and the Disclosure and Barring Service. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exception Order 1975, 213, 2020.*





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