

Brief for the appointment of

Chief Operating Officer

North London
Collegiate School
Founded 1850

making
waves
since 1850

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ABOUT North London Collegiate School

Founded in 1850, North London Collegiate School (NLCS) is one of the UK's oldest day schools for girls, educating more than 1,150 pupils aged 4 to 18. Today, its mission remains unchanged: to provide an ambitious and pioneering education that equips every student to flourish in school and beyond. While proud of its rich heritage, NLCS has embraced innovation and international growth, earning a global reputation for academic excellence, outstanding pastoral care, and exceptional co-curricular achievement.



Guided by the same progressive spirit on which it was founded, NLCS inspires girls to be curious, confident and compassionate, preparing them with the skills, character and self-belief to pursue their goals and make a positive contribution to the world around them.

NLCS is home to a diverse and international community, with 830 pupils in the Senior School and 320 in the Junior School, including a thriving Early Years provision. Students travel from across London and the surrounding counties and represent a wide range of social, cultural and professional backgrounds. Renowned for its academic excellence, and currently the Sunday Times Independent School of the Year, the School is recognised for its expertise in educating able girls and delivers consistently enviable outcomes.

Beyond the classroom, a rich programme of opportunities in the arts, music, drama, dance, sport, community service and more than 50 clubs and societies create a vibrant and enriching educational experience.

Through the NLCS family of international schools, UK-based staff have opportunities to be involved in monitoring visits to overseas schools, and to support the recruitment and training of their staff. Middle and Senior Leaders have opportunities for professional development through the NLCS family. Through this international network, students benefit from milestone trips and enrichment experiences, and it creates an important connection with the ever-growing economies in the Far East and United Arab Emirates.

Income generated through the School's overseas partnerships supports bursary provision, helping to ensure that girls of ability can be admitted regardless of background or financial means, while also funding, where possible, capital expenditure and other projects that help manage fee increases for the UK School.

More recently, the NLCS family in the UK has expanded as we have welcomed The Cavendish School in Camden to the family. The Cavendish School is a 3-11 girls' prep school. The next COO will play a key role in continuing the successful integration of the school into the NLCS family, as well as supporting future projects.

History

The School owes its history and legacy to suffragist Frances Mary Buss, who founded the school in her Camden Town family home. All of her family

worked in the school including her brother Septimus and her father, R.W. Buss, who illustrated Dickens' novels and whose paintings now hang in the Buss Room. As it grew bigger, the School moved to Camden Road and then to Sandall Road. The site at Canons in Edgware was bought in 1929 but the school did not move there formally until May 1940, where it has remained.

Miss Buss was Headmistress for 44 years and was a notable figure in the struggle for the education of girls in the second half of the nineteenth century. She also founded Camden School for Girls in 1871, for those families unable to pay the higher fees of NLCS. She was succeeded by Dr Sophie Bryant, the first woman to be awarded a DSc by London University. NLCS is proud of its past and its traditions, celebrated by the annual Founder's Day, but maintains a firm forward-looking approach.

Aims and Ethos

At the heart of NLCS is a commitment to nurturing the whole individual. The School seeks to instil a lifelong love of learning, helping each girl discover and develop her passion and interests, while building the confidence and ambition to succeed. Supported by exceptional teaching, outstanding facilities and a strong pastoral culture, pupils are encouraged and supported in their NLCS journey.

Beyond the classroom, NLCS inspires girls to engage fully with the opportunities around them and to develop as thoughtful, compassionate and socially minded young women. Through an extensive co-curricular programme, student leadership opportunities and meaningful service to others, pupils are encouraged to embrace responsibility and make a positive contribution to society. Grounded in its pioneering heritage yet firmly focused on the future, the School prepares girls with the character, confidence and skills to make an impact in their chosen field.

Location and Facilities

Set in 30 acres of beautiful grounds, unique in a London city school, the site and facilities at NLCS are remarkable. Although situated in a rural setting, the School is easily accessible to a large catchment area across the whole of London and beyond, with excellent rail and road transport links.

NLCS girls enjoy extensive playing fields and an array of sports facilities. There are beautiful tennis courts set in historic gardens, games pitches and a track bordered by an ancient Lime Avenue, as well as an all-weather pitch for netball, lacrosse and football. The Canons Sports Centre is located on site and includes a fully air-

conditioned fitness studio, a multi-purpose sports hall, dance studios and a 25m swimming pool. At the heart of drama and music at NLCS is the Performing Arts Centre, a 350-seat theatre with the latest technology, a flexible orchestra pit, sprung floor and excellent acoustics. The Performing Arts Centre also contains two galleries offering exhibition space for girls' artwork and an annual exhibition from the Hayward Gallery. The Ideas Hub, opened in 2025, is a centre of excellence for Engineering, Design, Robotics, Art and Innovation. The Ideas Hub is not just a building; it is also the name of our innovation centre which has recently spearheaded projects such as our Surge start-up academy and our approach to AI.

2030 Strategy

Complementing this investment in the School's physical site is the recently launched NLCS 2030 Strategy. Built around four pillars, Intellectual Tradition, Investment in the Individual, Intrepid Innovation, and Impact and Influence, the strategy sets out an ambitious vision for how the School will continue to evolve while remaining true to its founding values. Together, the masterplan for the estate and the 2030 Strategy will ensure that NLCS continues to equip young women with the knowledge, resilience, imagination and sense of purpose to flourish both at school and beyond.





Junior School

The NLCS educational journey starts in the vibrant Junior School, sub-divided into First School and Lower School. In a dedicated building with superb facilities, the Junior School is a safe and nurturing environment and yet its position on the main site means its girls share all the facilities that Canons has to offer. The girls can also use the extensive North London coach system with the confidence that Senior girls will act as chaperones to the youngest North Londoners.

First School (Reception to Year 2)

In the First School there are two classes in each of the three years and in each class the 20 girls are taught by a class teacher supported by a full-time teaching assistant. This enables learning to take place both inside and outside the classroom.

Lower School (Years 3 to 6)

When girls move up to Year 3 there are two classes in each year with about 24 girls in each class. Each class is made up of girls who have come up from the First School and new girls who join at 7+. In the Lower School, teaching is more subject based, although they are still mainly taught by their Form Teacher who combines close pastoral care with academic support.

Senior School

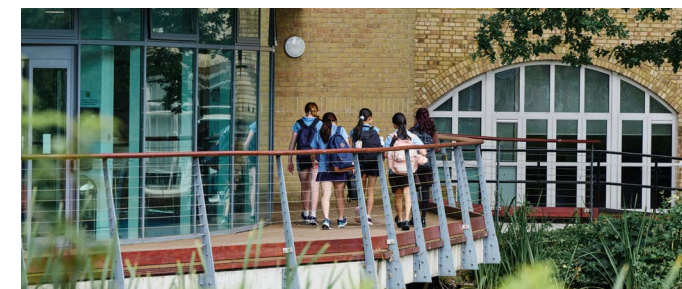
The Senior School is home to approximately 830 students aged 11 to 18, divided into Middle School, Upper School and Sixth Form.

Middle School (Years 7 to 9)

Whether girls join the school in Year 7 or move up from the Junior School, the beginning of Middle School is a time of developing new friendships and trying out new things in a nurturing environment. In the Middle School all pupils follow a broad and balanced programme designed to provide them with strong foundations for further study, to foster a sense of enjoyment in their work and to give every girl a chance to discover and develop her own passions and interests.

Upper School (Years 10 and 11)

When the girls enter the Upper School at the start of Year 10, they have already chosen four or five option subjects to sit alongside the core elements which form the backbone of the academic curriculum. All students follow courses in Mathematics, English Language and Literature, and at least two Sciences. In addition, they can opt to take one or more humanities, choosing from Geography, History and Religious Studies; pursue a modern or classical language which they have already studied, including Latin, French, Spanish, Mandarin or German; or take up a new language such as Classical Greek, Italian or Russian. Many students pursue creative subjects and can choose from Art and Design, Drama, Engineering & DT, Music and Computer Science.



Sixth Form

The sixth form is a fun and vibrant community. Every Sixth Form student takes responsibility for running a range of societies and activities, including many sporting and musical events. They are led by the Senior Committee (the “Big Six”), which comprises six students who are elected by staff and pupil votes and by interview. There is a strong tradition in taking an active part in service to the community and fund-raising for charity. Academically, there is a choice between the A level programme and the IB Diploma, and a huge range of lectures and subject-specific societies to attend. The School has been an International Baccalaureate World School since 2004. In 2026 the school scored the highest IB outcomes in the World and in 2025 we were named Sunday Times IB School of the Year and ranked 2nd in the world.



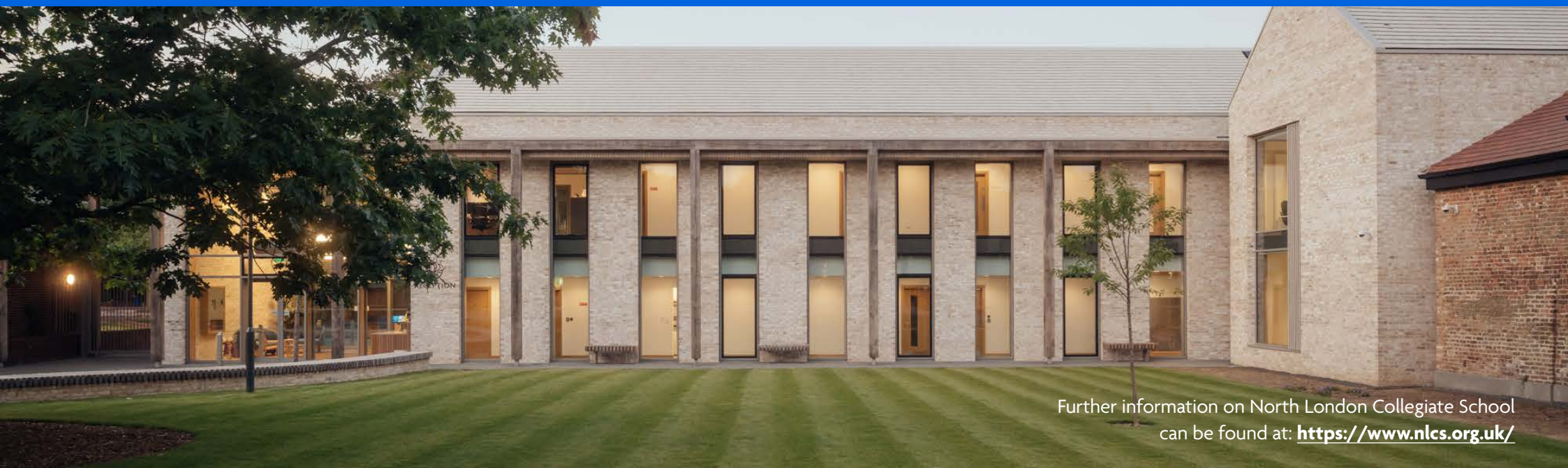
Academic Outcomes and Leaver Destinations

Examination results are outstanding, regularly placing the School in the top ten in The Times League tables. In 2026, pupils achieved exceptional GCSE and IGCSE results, with 81.2% of grades awarded at Grade 9 and 95.0% at Grades 9-8. In the Sixth Form, students can choose between A Levels and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, both of which deliver excellent outcomes.

In 2026, A Level students achieved 51.5% A* grades and 83.6% A*-A, while IB students attained an average Diploma score of 43.22 points, with three students achieving the maximum score of 45. Leavers progress to an impressive range of university destinations, including Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale and Princeton, alongside many other leading institutions in the UK and internationally. Around 45% of leavers each year progress to global Top 10 universities, especially to Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial and UCL.

NLCS girls follow in the footsteps of a distinguished community of alumnae whose achievements span the arts, sciences, law, politics, sport and business. They leave the School as confident and capable young women, supported by a strong school community as they embark on the next stage of their lives.





Further information on North London Collegiate School can be found at: <https://www.nlcs.org.uk/>

Governance

The School is vested in a Company limited by guarantee which is also a Registered Charity, known as the North London Collegiate School Foundation of Frances Mary Buss. The Governors of the School are also the Directors of the Company. Governors are drawn from a range of professional backgrounds including finance, construction, law, universities and broadcasting, and include a number of parents of current and former pupils. The full Board of Governors meets termly to consider reports from the Head and COO covering all school matters, including education, staff and children, finance, health and safety, buildings and capital projects.

The Board contributes to the oversight and monitoring of the School by means of the following committees: Education; Finance and General Purpose; Pastoral, Safeguarding, Compliance; and Governance, Nominations

& Risk. There is a separate International Board, which reports to the main Governing Body. Philanthropy is covered by the Philanthropy Board, which sits outside the Governance structure.

The Board appoints the Head but retains ultimate responsibility for the approval of all policies and developments. It also reviews regularly their impact on the school's finances and operations. All operational matters are delegated to the Head and COO, as appropriate, who are responsible for fulfilling the School's aims and the successful implementation of the School's strategic development plan. A list of current Governors with brief biographies can be found on the School's website. The COO is expected to attend meetings of the Finance & General Purpose Committee (and the Investments Sub-Committee); the Governance, Nominations & Risk Committee; and the main Governing Body meetings.

Fee Assistance and Bursaries

Since its foundation in 1850, NLCS has been committed to widening access to an exceptional education, ensuring that ability and potential, rather than financial circumstances, determine opportunity. Today, the School offers a substantial bursary programme for pupils joining at 11+ and 16+, with awards of up to 100% of fees available alongside additional support for associated school costs. At present, 78 pupils benefit from financial assistance through the programme.

Bursaries are awarded on a means-tested basis and are assessed independently of the admissions process, ensuring that financial need has no bearing on admissions decisions. Through its continued investment in bursary support, NLCS remains true to the vision of its founder, Frances Mary Buss, enabling talented and ambitious young people from a wide range of backgrounds to benefit from an NLCS education.

THE Opportunity

Sitting on the School's Senior Leadership Team, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) is accountable for the commercial, financial and operational management of the UK School, including strategic planning and input into other key areas determined by the Headmistress.

The role offers considerable scope for the successful candidate to create a strategic role in one of Britain's leading independent schools and to make a strong contribution to the implementation of further change in all aspects of the UK School.

The COO has oversight of most of the School's key support functions, including Finance, HR, IT, Estates, Events and Commercial Enterprises, the School Office, Transport, Catering, Health and Safety, Risk Assurance, and the Canon's Sports Centre. This role will also support the integration of any new schools into the UK charity. The COO is responsible for the line

management and appraisal of the directors or managers of the teams mentioned above. In addition, the COO line manages the Clerk to the Governing Body and will support the Governing Body themselves with complex legal case work.

The Chief Operating Officer will report to the Headmistress as Chief Executive of the School and, through her, to the Governors for the effective administration of the UK School.



Key Responsibilities and Accountabilities

- To lead the development of strategy on matters relating to finance, commercial activity and operations, for approval by the Headmistress and then by the Governors, and, as a member of the School's Senior Team.
- To ensure effective delivery of the operational, financial, legal, human resource and commercial aspects of the School's strategic development plan.
- To support the Headmistress and Board of Governors in all aspects of the School's management and governance, ensuring legal compliance.
- To provide leadership for the support staff of the School.
- To lead the School's commercial activities, ensuring they are developed and managed effectively, including but not limited to providing oversight of the capital development plan and major building projects, and developing and maintaining an overall financial strategy for the School, ensuring sound planning, management and control.
- The COO will play a key role in embedding the recent merger, supporting the effective integration of operations, systems and culture across the expanded NLCS group.
- The COO will support the School's future growth strategy, helping to integrate and oversee any new schools or sites that join the UK charitable group.
- Together with the Headmistress, the Finance Director and the Senior Team, to have responsibility for the preparation of budgets and control of expenditure.
- To work with the Headmistress and the Senior Team to develop to best in class standards for the following support functions: Human Resources, procurement, information services/communications, maintenance, facilities, grounds, catering, cleaning and coaches.
- To oversee the provision of the major services and suppliers, including periodic re-tendering and reappointment. Notably, to ensure the development of and effective running of the School's extensive transport operation.
- To work closely with the Assistant Head (Compliance) to ensure the School is compliant with all Independent Schools regulatory requirements, including chairing the Health and Safety Committee and acting as the School's Data Protection Lead under GDPR.
- To ensure that the School has appropriate risk assessment and management processes in place at all times.
- In conjunction with the Estates Manager, to ensure that the School and the Governors have adequate insurance cover at all times, including employer's liability, buildings and equipment cover, personal accident, travel insurance and other relevant cover.
- The COO will work closely with the Governing Body and its committees, providing strategic advice, reporting on operational matters, and supporting effective governance and decision-making.
- To liaise with the Clerk to the Governors in relation to matters falling within the COO's remit that may give rise to legal claims by or against the School or any of its subsidiaries.
- To ensure the School meets its sustainability goals.
- To ensure the effective development of the commercial strategy for the NLCS estate to raise additional funds.
- To foster positive relations with the School's neighbours in regards to transport, traffic and planning.

Group Memberships

The COO will be a member of the Senior Team. This is the whole-school management and leadership team.

The COO will act as a Director of Canons Enterprises and Canons Transport Limited.



THE Individual



The successful candidate will possess the following key skills and attributes:

- Educated to the relevant professional/degree level or equivalent (essential).
- Demonstrable senior leadership experience, including leadership, recruitment and performance management of diverse teams.
- A proven capacity to contribute strategically to the wider development of an organisation.
- Strong financial experience (relevant accounting qualifications desirable but not necessary).
- Wide experience of working in commercial organisations with exposure to operational and other support services.
- Strong attention to operational, financial and legal detail.
- High levels of tact and diplomacy combined with absolute integrity.
- Demonstrable experience of managing risk, security and compliance within a complex organisation.
- Experience of working effectively with external legal advisers and insurers.
- Strong understanding of financial and commercial strategy.
- An understanding of how to design systems and processes to ensure smooth running of the school.
- A strong sympathy with the School as both an academic environment and as a business, and a genuine identification with the NLCS ethos.

Knowledge, Skills and Personal Attributes

- Strong financial literacy with first class analytical skills and ability to develop long-term financial plans.
- The ability to lead within a complex, multi-stakeholder environment.
- The ability to lead by example, empower others and command respect both within the immediate school community and the wider professional arena.
- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills, with an ability to relate and communicate to people from all backgrounds and at all organisational levels.
- The ability to work both independently and as a key team member with a purposeful and collegiate leadership style.



HOW to Apply

North London Collegiate School have engaged the services of Odgers to assist with the recruitment of the next COO of North London Collegiate School.

The closing date for applications is **Friday 13 November 09.00 (GMT)**.

Shortlist interviews with the Selection Committee will take place on **Wednesday 25 November, 08:30-16:00 (GMT)**. Candidates invited to the final round will have detailed briefings during **week commencing 30 November**, following shortlist interviews, and final interviews will take place on **Tuesday 8 December 10:15-16:00 (GMT)**.

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.

The preferred method of application is online at: **www.odgers.com/96893**

All applications will receive an automated response.

North London Collegiate School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Applicants will be required to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

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.

