

Job Description

Job Title:	VMT and Chapel Organist
Department:	Music
Accountable to:	Director of Music
Number of direct reports:	0
Budgetary responsibility:	0
Location:	Music School
Purpose of the role:	To provide individual lessons to Organ students. To provide appropriate musical accompaniment for Chapel Services, Choir rehearsals and other occasions as required.

The Stowe Group

The Stowe Group of schools (Stowe, Swanbourne House and Winchester House) was created in January 2021 and is situated on three separate sites in Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire. Across the three schools, The Stowe Group offers education for boys and girls from 3-18 years. Within The Stowe Group there are more than 1,500 pupils and 850 colleagues. The Schools occupy sites of historical significance in Swanbourne, the market town of Brackley and the world-famous landscape gardens at Stowe, where we work with The National Trust to manage 880 acres and open the grounds to over 200,000 visitors a year. Stowe House is open to the public during the School holidays and for guided tours during term time. The Stowe Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. In 2021, The Stowe Group launched its transformational and substantive Change Makers vision and Change 100 programme.

Vision & Ethos

We are Change Makers

Stowe stands in the most sublime setting of any school in the world. Historic buildings, landscaped gardens and the very spirit of the Enlightenment sit at the heart of its founding. But, as this remarkable landmark enters its second century as a leading public school, we believe that beauty and tradition are not enough: our future vision for the School embraces change, uncertainty and the challenges that will face our pupils not just during their academic careers, but throughout the rest of their lives in a world which is increasingly complex and ambiguous. Within that volatile environment we see our pupils and staff as Change Makers. They will make a lasting impact not only while they are here at Stowe, but, perhaps more importantly, in the wider world. The history of this place, both as a stately home and as a pioneering school remains important to our mission of education, and at the heart of a Stowe education remains intellectual enquiry, academic curiosity and a love of learning. We strive for a balance of rights and responsibilities, equality and inclusion and to treat each pupil and member of staff as an individual. Our vision is inspired by a history of progressive thinking, and has been developed through collaboration with our pupils, parents, teachers, support staff, governors and alumni. Yes, we teach pupils how to excel in exams, but we also teach them how to collaborate, how to solve problems and how to think critically. Stowe is educating a generation of Change Makers ready to transform the world.

The Group's talented and committed workforce is one of our greatest strengths. We are committed to fostering team engagement, attracting, mentoring, developing and retaining our best teachers and support staff. We focus on employee wellbeing, provide opportunities for professional growth and we create a culture of community and partnership.

The Stowe Chapel Organ

The organ was built by the respected Liverpool firm of Rushworth & Draper to coincide with the Chapel's completion in 1928. It was a comprehensive 3 manual and pedal instrument, supplied with a small, detached choir division of two stops, situated further East in the second bay of the long Nave in order to assist with projection of foundational tone during congregational singing.

In 1961, the organ was enlarged to 4 manuals, and the Nave section grew considerably to form a useful small instrument in its own right for continuo work or for accompanying a choir in the Sanctuary. The Nave organ was also provided with an independent two manual and pedal console, though is also controlled via the 4 manual West console. Interestingly, both portions of the organ are fed by the same blower!

The 1980s & 2003 saw a time of some overhaul and electrification as well as cleaning of the pipework, latterly by Ian Carter of Cousans Organs, who himself was an ex-Rushworth tuning representative for the wider area. The organ is now in the care of Harrison & Harrison, Durham, and is one of the largest instruments in the area as well as the second largest in any school setting. It is used for concerts and recital work while its primary purpose remains in leading a 900 strong school congregation.

The organ numbers nearly 80 speaking stops though some extension work is particularly evident on the pedal organ. The Swell heavy pressure reeds are particularly fine in ensemble as is the 16' Trombone on the pedal division which underpins full organ to glorious effect. At the other end of the spectrum, the instrument boasts undulating strings on both the Swell and Choir divisions which make for delightful, ethereal, shimmering effects, particularly when used with their octave couplers.

A full specification and stop list may be found online on the National Pipe Organ Register.

In addition to the above, the Music Department has a 3-manual digital organ which is housed in the Uglund Auditorium, and this may be used for teaching and practice.

Key Tasks:

Responsible for providing one to one teaching to individual pupils and following the guidelines as set out in the Visiting Music Teacher's Handbook.

Key Tasks:

- To deliver organ lessons to pupils
- To support the Director of Music in the recruitment and training of pupil organists.
- To attend and to accompany all school services which take place three times a week.
- To play the organ or musically assist for all or part of each service.
- The VMT Organist will also be expected to take part in any choir tours, broadcasts, concerts, recordings, as well as other events falling outside the regular timetable by negotiation, including playing for some services when the choir is not present (for which extra fees will be paid), and liaising with visiting choirs.
- Share in the administrative workload of the Music Department, including assisting with the administration for school choirs and visiting choirs.

Person Specification: The selection of candidates for short-listing will be based on this specification and candidates should bear this in mind when preparing their application and completing the application form		
Attributes	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Organist of ARCO standard or equivalent experience. • A music degree or similar professional qualification/experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PGCE
Specialist Skills and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of accompanying choirs and capacity congregations to a high standard on a large instrument, in a large space. • An understanding of current issues and best practice relating to Safeguarding, and a willingness to undertake training as necessary. • A clean driving licence 	
Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A communicator who can inspire singers, and who can also relate well to non-musicians. • An individual who displays an enterprising and imaginative approach to personal musical development. • Is able to work calmly, particularly when performing at high profile, pressured occasions. • A maturity of character and a good sense of humour • Good organisational skills. 	

This job description and Person Specification reflects the present requirements of the post and as duties and responsibilities change/develop, the job description will be reviewed and be subject to amendment in consultation with the post holder

Date Agreed: September 2025

Our Values



Value scales:

This value is the least important to the role	This value has some significance to the role	This value is desirable to the role but not essential	This value is important to the role	This value is essential to the role
1	2	3	4	5

In the role of VMT – Organ we are looking for Change Makers who are (please highlight as appropriate):

Professional:	1	2	3	4	5
Creative Problem Solvers:	1	2	3	4	5
Kind:	1	2	3	4	5
Flexible:	1	2	3	4	5
Collaborative:	1	2	3	4	5
Communicator:	1	2	3	4	5