



GIGGLESWICK
SCHOOL

**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
(COO)**

Closing Date: Thursday 2 April 2026

Word from the Headmaster



I am delighted that you are considering joining Giggleswick School in the role of Chief Operating Officer. It is an exciting opportunity for the right candidate to join me and a strong and experienced Governing Body to drive the School forward and build on our existing national and international reputation.

Giggleswick is a wonderful School, with significant further potential, and the Chief Operating Officer will be responsible for delivery of the Resources Strategy for the School which includes a masterplan for the campus, development of sustainable environmental responses, finance and IT.

Within the School, there is a focus on developing each individual; all pupils are celebrated for their contribution to School life. The programme is wide and varied and requires careful management to resource and sustain it. Essentially, we are a School with great ambition.

This role presents an outstanding opportunity for a dynamic person to work with me at an exciting and challenging time for Giggleswick School. Our preferred candidate will have high energy and clarity, with the ability to execute some of the key initiatives that will drive the school's success, along with first class leadership skills to lead a large team of people. This role requires a strong skill set in finance, strategic planning & execution, treasury and development fund management, commercial, property portfolio management, human resources, and the operational platform of the School, including technology.

This role is a significant leadership position within the executive team and the individual should be a team player who has the ability to offer insight and challenge on the key priorities for the school's development. In addition, the successful candidate will lead a team of subject matter experts, with a total department of around 64 people.

We are a vibrant North of England boarding school and are seeking to further grow and enhance our reputation as an outstanding choice of school for parents, a place which nurtures and develops young people to move into a challenging modern world. We aim to create an environment where pupils can throw themselves in and enjoy growing up.

There is much work to be done, and I am looking to find an energetic and resourceful individual to report to our excellent Board of Governors in driving change, thus ensuring that the school will endure for another 500 years. I hope that the information provided will spark your interest and give you a strong sense of the importance that we place on finding the right candidate for the School.

We would welcome applications from candidates with experience from all sectors including but not limited to The Military, Logistics, Corporate or Commercial, Finance, Estates, Facilities or hospitality as well as Independent or State Educational sector.

I hope that you enjoy the recruitment process and I wish you the very best of luck.

Sam Hart

Headmaster and Chief Executive Officer



The School

Giggleswick School is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils aged 2-18, superbly situated in the stunning rural location of the Yorkshire Dales, within walking distance of the popular market town of Settle, and just over an hour from both Leeds and Manchester.

The School demonstrates all the characteristics of an excellent independent boarding school and is exceptionally good at discovering and nurturing individuals' strengths. Giggleswick is a friendly and supportive community that provides excellent pastoral care, along with a breadth of educational opportunities, subjects, and co-curricular activities.

The School's idyllic setting gives life at Giggleswick a real sense of adventure and discovery, where pupils have the space and freedom to grow as individuals and develop a lifelong love of learning. Participation is key to life at Giggleswick with pupils and staff being encouraged to take advantage of the breadth of opportunities that the School provides. The enthusiasm with which they all participate creates a warm respect between pupils across all year groups and between staff and pupils.

Senior School

With 290 pupils aged 11 to 18, the Senior School is large enough to offer a wide variety of teaching and learning, but small enough to offer close tutorial support, small classes, and opportunities for everyone to get into teams or take part in music, art, drama, outdoor pursuits and all the activities that are offered. The broad curriculum is delivered over a six-day teaching week. There is also a full programme of activities for Boarders on Sunday, including regular trips and visits. Most pupils take 9 GCSE courses. In the Sixth Form there is provision for A levels, an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and BTECs. Results are very good: in 2025 63% of A Level grades were A*- B and 56% of pupils received offers from Russell Group universities.

Around two-thirds of pupils are boarders, rising to 80% in the Sixth Form. There are six boarding houses – three boys' and two girls', and a mixed house for Years 7 and 8. Each house has a Housemaster or Housemistress, a Resident Tutor, Matron, and a full team of

teacher-tutors. Day pupils are fully integrated into the House. Since 2018, the School has been investing in a gradual but comprehensive refurbishment of its boarding facilities.

The School offers a rich co-curricular programme provided via its Creative, Active, Service Enrichment (CASE) Programme, ranging from Languages Film Night and Young Enterprise through climbing and Fives to the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, the CCF and Bee Keeping.



The School

Preparatory School

Giggleswick Prep School was established in 2007 as the successor to Catteral House Prep School. It consists of a Prep and Pre-prep. It is a co-educational day and boarding school for around 90 children aged 2 to 11 years and is a key feeder for Giggleswick School.

Location and Facilities

Giggleswick is perfectly located in an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It is well-connected by local and main roads as well as by rail, with nearby railway stations at Giggleswick and Settle. The cities and attractions of Manchester, Leeds and York are all just over an hour away, with popular towns of Ilkley, Skipton, Kirkby Lonsdale, Clitheroe and Kendal all within the School's day and flexi-boarding catchment area. With spectacular limestone valleys, picture postcard villages and historic castles, it is a place that stirs the emotions and stimulates the senses.

Founded in 1512, the School has been on its present site since 1869. The extensive campus and facilities provide an impressive modern learning environment with Preparatory and Senior School sharing the 240 acre site. In recent decades, development has included a state-of-the-art multi-activity sports hall, floodlit multi-purpose pitches, the Sharpe Library, a new dining hall, new science laboratories, and The Glover Art Studio. Opened in 2010, the Richard Whiteley Theatre provides a high-quality performance venue for the School's very successful Drama department and hosts a full programme of live productions, music and dance as well as being used for co-curricular clubs and societies. Most recently, a new Fitness Centre has been opened and the extensive refurbishment of Nowell Boarding House was shortlisted for the Boarding School Association Awards.

Other on-site facilities include the Grade II listed Chapel, an observatory, swimming pool and a mountain bike trail. There are also tennis, squash and fives courts, cricket, rugby and football pitches and a golf course.



The School

Governance

The School's Governors have a wide range of experience and skills, along with an excellent understanding of the day-to-day operation of the School. They act as the Trustees and Directors of the School, determining its strategy and policies. There are a minimum of fourteen and a maximum of twenty-one Governors, including representative governors appointed on behalf of The Queen's College Oxford, St John's College Cambridge and Christ's College Cambridge. The Governors serve across a range of sub-committees that oversee the key elements of the School's activities, including Finance & Strategy, Academic & Co-Curricular, Boarding & Wellbeing, and Investment. The Chief Operating Officer is the Clerk to the Governors so services the Board, its sub-committees and members, as well as ensuring compliance with business and charity regulations

Giggleswick School is a Charitable Company limited by Guarantee. The company registration number is 5447105 and registered charity number is 1109826.

The School is regularly inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate, and its various inspection reports (last undertaken in 2022) can be viewed [here](#).

"A holistic school with the pupil firmly placed at the centre of everything it does, Giggleswick gets its results through an adherence to strong values. The 'throw yourself in' attitude helps children find their passions and grow in confidence, with exemplary pastoral care making that journey safe and supported."

TALK EDUCATION
2022

The School

Finance

Despite significant sectoral wide challenges, the School remains in a financially resilient position. Having taken the bold and relatively unique strategic decision to internally absorb the totality of the impact of introduction of VAT to independent school fees, the School restructured in 2024, and ahead of the last general election, to deliver the efficiencies required to meet this commitment. As a result, the School was able to develop and offer a more competitive boarding fee structure than its peer competitors; a strategic decision designed to grow its market share against the backdrop of a shrinking sectoral market.

The School also benefits from a modest, but growing, investment portfolio as well as some longer term capital opportunities which, when matured, will significantly contribute to the value and benefit of the investment portfolio to the delivery of the School's educational programme; both of which the Chief Operations Officer is responsible for the management and oversight of.

A wide range of scholarships are available to talented pupils. Whilst scholarships may have minimal financial value, Giggleswick provides means-tested bursaries, mainly intended for lower income families, available to pupils whose parents would not normally be able to afford the full fees. The provision of bursaries also helps to diversify the backgrounds of the School's student body. Children whose parents are in the Armed Forces also benefit from subsidised fees.

With the outstanding facilities available at the School the School has a mature commercial programme but with the opportunity for further growth as a result of the evolution of the School's educational programme.



School community

The Giggleswick School Parents Association (GSPA) and network of Old Giggleswickians (OGs) are active and well-organised and work together to organise a range of events throughout the year in the UK and internationally.

The Role

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is a key member of the Senior Executive Team, working closely with the Headmaster (CEO) and Governors to deliver and shape the School's strategic vision.

A Strategic and Influential Leader

The COO plays a central role in the School's development, offering insight, challenge, and leadership across all operational priorities. The post-holder leads around 64 support staff through an experienced team of line managers. Direct reports include Finance Bursar, Estates Bursar, Head of Human Resources, Marketing and Admissions Manager, IT & Data Manager, Commercial Manager, Health and Safety, and Transport.

What We're Looking For

We seek an energetic, forward-thinking senior leader who can inspire teams, manage resources effectively, and deliver results. Essential strengths include:

- Finance and strategic planning
- Property and estate management
- HR oversight
- IT and operational oversight
- Strong commercial awareness and entrepreneurial drive
- Clear communication, sound judgement, and the ability to motivate others are vital.

Personal Qualities

While previous experience as a COO is not a prerequisite, the role requires rigour, energy and resilience as well as empathy. Candidates must demonstrate:

- A genuine commitment to the values of a boarding and day independent school
- A strong moral compass and interest in education
- A belief in the importance of diversity, inclusion, and equality

The Scope of the Role

The COO is responsible for the effective leadership of all non-educational functions, including:

- Finance and HR
- Estates and Operations
- Compliance and Health & Safety
- Marketing and Admissions
- Commercial Activities

The Role

Job description

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) reports directly to the Headmaster for the effective management of the School's support operations and to the Board of Governors for strategic financial leadership and the delivery of the School's operational strategy.

This is a broad and influential role encompassing:

Strategic Leadership

Working closely with the Headmaster and the Board of Governors, the COO plays a central role in shaping and guiding the long-term strategic direction of the School.

Financial Stewardship

The COO holds responsibility to the Board for the School's overall financial performance, sustainability, and governance.

Operational Oversight

The COO leads all non-academic operations, including Finance, Human Resources, Estates and Facilities (covering grounds, maintenance, and housekeeping), Marketing and Admissions, IT systems, the Commercial Programme, Catering, Health & Safety, and regulatory compliance, including Data Protection.

Governance Support

As Clerk to the Governors, the COO services the Board, its committees, and its members, ensuring robust governance and full compliance with company and charity legislation.

More specifically, the main duties and responsibilities of the Chief Operating officer can be described as follows:

Finance Management

Lead the finance function, delivering financial results as agreed by the Board and ensuring effective finance and resource management across the School.

In conjunction with the Finance Bursar, the Chief Operating Officer is responsible for managing the financial performance of the School.

- Direct and oversee all functional aspects of the Finance team, including the fees ledger, purchase ledger and payroll and the production of management accounts.
- Provide the Board with regular, accurate and timely information about the School's finances, including Management Accounts and cash flow forecasts, budget and variance reports.
- Work with the School's auditors to complete the annual audit and draft the statutory accounts.
- Ensure that a robust system of internal controls is in place and operates effectively.
- Analyse school fees and costs, including benchmarking.

The Role

Job description

Finance Management

- Oversee the maintenance of the Asset Register.
- Ensure fair but robust debtor management, including meeting with parents when necessary.
- Oversee bursary applications, ensuring robust processes are in place for the financial assessment of parental contributions towards fees.
- Advise on remuneration and reward strategies.
- Advise the Board on borrowing requirements and ensure compliance with any covenants.
- Manage relationships with key external services, including the bank, auditors, and insurers.
- Manage effective purchasing arrangements and review and negotiate tenders and contracts.

Estates and Capital Projects

- Ensure the efficient and effective running of all the School's support operations, including estates/facilities, catering, security, transport, staff housing, administration, and commercial.
- Maintain and develop an effective master plan for the School's campus. Plan and deliver any future capital projects, including overseeing the work of external contractors.
- Through the Estates Bursar direct the work of the maintenance team to ensure that the facilities are always well presented, serviceable, safe and compliant with regulations, including health and safety, fire and the Independent Schools Standards, liaising with expert external consultants as appropriate. Oversee and direct the programme of refurbishment and enhancement of existing facilities. Direct the work of the grounds team to ensure that the grounds are always well presented and that outdoor sports facilities are fit for purpose.
- Oversee all aspects of site security, including fire prevention. Direct the work of the facilities and cleaning team.
- Negotiate and manage the catering contract to ensure high-quality provision of catering services and value for money.
- Through the Transport Officer, manage the minibuses fleet.
- Negotiate and manage energy and utility contracts.
- Advise on and lead efforts to minimise the environmental impact of the School.
- Through the Data and IT Manager ensure the provision of ICT infrastructure and services to support high-quality teaching and learning (and administration).
- Direct the work of the Commercial Programme Manager to maximise income from commercial activities, building on existing arrangements and exploiting new opportunities where possible.
- Work with the School's professional advisors to oversee significant property transactions.

The Role

Job description

Human Resources

Lead the Human Resources function, advising the Governors and Headmaster on policy, and strategy. In conjunction with the Head of HR, the Chief Operating Officer is responsible for ensuring:

- Compliance with all aspects of employment law.
- Compliance with the relevant sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Independent Schools Standards Regulations.
- Supporting the safeguarding culture of the School both personally and as the leader of the support staff.

Risk management, Compliance and Health & Safety

- Ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including health and safety and fire, disability law, and the relevant sections of the Independent Schools Standards.
- As the School's Data Protection Coordinator, ensure the effective and compliant management of data including the maintenance of Data Protection Impact Assessments. Lead the response to Data Breaches and Subject Access Requests.
- Drive the identification, assessment and management of business risk, including oversight of the risk assessment process and Risk Register.
- Lead critical incident and business continuity planning to ensure that the School is well prepared for any crisis.
- Advise the Governors, Headmaster and staff on health and safety and ensure compliance with the relevant regulations. Chair the Health and Safety Committee. Liaise with expert external consultants as necessary.
- Ensure compliance with the UK Visa & Immigration License, overseeing the processes for overseas pupils and workers.

Marketing and Admissions

- Lead the Marketing and Admission function, including strategic advice to the Governors and Headmaster on strategy and technical aspects of marketing.
- In conjunction with the Marketing and Admissions Team lead on the development of the marketing and admissions strategy.
- Maintain overall responsibility for oversight of the operational delivery of the marketing and admissions functions and support and management of the marketing and admissions team.

The Role

Job description

Governance

- As Clerk to the Governors, manage the business, agenda, meetings and minutes of the Board of Governors and its Committees.
- Ensure compliance with Charity Commission and Companies House requirements.
- Manage and advise on internal governance policies.
- Actively manage the Risk Register.

Safeguarding

As this post is in a school the successful person will engage in regulated activity relevant to children. Giggleswick School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The school has a range of policies and procedures for child protection and security. All staff are expected to familiarise themselves with and follow all these policies and procedures as part of their professional responsibilities. This includes participating in training and other activities that ensure the School stays compliant with relevant legislation, regulations, and good practice.

The School's Safeguarding Policy can be found [here](#). Please read this information as part of your application to the role.

"Pupils attribute the calm atmosphere here to being immersed in the rugged Yorkshire Dales, but it could also be something to do with the small class sizes. This is an unpretentious, roll-up-your-sleeves type of place."

TATLER
2023

Terms of Appointment

A highly attractive remuneration package is offered, reflecting the seniority and significance of the position. The salary offered will depend on qualifications and experience but is anticipated to be in the region of £80,000 to £95,000.

The main provisions are likely to include:

- For the better performance of the Chief Operating Officer's duties, a family house will be provided rent free
- Membership of the school's Defined Contribution Pension Scheme with The Pensions Trust. The Employer Contribution will be 10% of salary
- 25 days annual holiday, plus Bank Holidays
- Staff children who attend Giggleswick School and Giggleswick Prep School are entitled to school fees remission of 52% (Senior School) and 60% (Prep School). The remission in fees excludes nursery aged children
- Private Health Insurance and, after one-years' service, enrolment in the School's Health cash benefits plan
- School lunch is provided free of charge during term time
- Free use of sports facilities at specified times

Child Protection & Safeguarding

Giggleswick School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment by complying with the School's Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct at all times.

This appointment is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance, including an enhanced DBS check, satisfactory references, proof of identity and qualifications and a satisfactory medical report.

If in the course of carrying out your duties you become aware of any actual or potential risks to the safety or welfare of children in the school, you must report any concerns to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (Assistant Head of Pastoral), or to the Headmaster.

Equal Opportunities

Giggleswick School is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our Employees. We aim to provide quality and fairness for all job applicants and employees and not to discriminate, or to receive less favourable treatment, on grounds of age, disability, race, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, skills, experience, and abilities.

How to apply

For further information and an application pack, please visit our website www.giggleswick.org.uk or contact:

HR Department on 01729 893096, or by email hr@giggleswick.org.uk.

All applications will be acknowledged by email.

If you have not received acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of sending it, please contact Head of HR jlcole@giggleswick.org.uk or direct dial by telephone 01729 893016.

If you would like to apply for this post, please complete and send the following information to hr@giggleswick.org.uk

- A completed application form (no CVs please).
- A covering letter addressed to the Headmaster, Mr Sam Hart. The letter should explain your reasons for applying and outline your suitability for the role.

Early applications are encouraged as we may conduct some early preliminary interviews. NB: The School reserves the right to appoint in advance of the published closing date should an exceptional candidate emerge.

Unless the process is fast-tracked as a result of early applications from exceptional candidates:

- The deadline for receipt of applications is 5.00pm 2 April 2026.
- Successful candidates shortlisted for interview no later than 15 April 2026.
- Long list interview 24 April 2026
- Short list interview 1 May 2026





How to find us

Giggleswick School is perfectly located between the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Lake District, with the cities of Leeds, Manchester and York just over an hour away.



GIGGLESWICK
SCHOOL

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Giggleswick is a registered charity no 1109826