



Head of Communications and Engagement Candidate Information





Welcome from the Head

Dear Candidate,

I am very excited to be writing to you about this crucial role for Cranleigh School. This is a great time to be considering the opportunity to join us at Cranleigh, a prestigious independent day and boarding school set in the beautiful surroundings of the Surrey Hills, not far from Guildford. Our school motto is Ex Cultu Robur, which means 'From our culture comes strength'. It perfectly captures the sense of ambition within our close-knit school community.

The last couple of years have been busy for us, both strategically and day-to-day, resulting in a real sense of energy and momentum. We have launched an ambitious new strategy to reinforce our standing as one of the leading independent schools in the UK. We have introduced a whole-school strategy, invested in a new Sixth Form centre, launched a Pre-prep, announced our expansion into Vietnam and introduced a series of bold new initiatives, ranging from a pioneering AI strategy to a dedicated Performing Arts week in June.

To help us achieve our ambitions, we are looking for a dynamic and experienced Head of Communications and Engagement. Your job will be to raise the profile of Cranleigh in the national and local media, lead day-to-day communications and manage the production of a range of key publications. You will work closely with me to understand my voice, educational perspective and vision together with our marketing, admissions, events, and development teams to help us shape and share Cranleigh's story. You will also collaborate closely with colleagues across the whole school, including Will Newman, Head of the Prep School.

To succeed, you will be an excellent communicator with solid experience in media relations, reputation management, and internal communications. You will enjoy working in a busy, friendly, and supportive team and have experience of managing and growing talented people.

This is an important role for our future, and I hope it inspires you to apply. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sam Price

Head, Cranleigh School

Job Title:	Head of Communications and Engagement
Reports To:	Director of Strategic Marketing
Time:	Full-Time, Based in the School
Purpose:	To strengthen Cranleigh's communications capability at a time of ambition and growth. Playing a central role in shaping how Cranleigh is seen, heard and understood by its key audiences.



From our culture
comes strength

Our school motto 'Ex Cultu Robur'

A place that feels like home, where
everyone plays their part



The School

Cranleigh School is a leading co-educational boarding and day school set in 280 acres of spectacular Surrey countryside. Cranleigh Senior educates around 700 pupils aged 13 to 18, fostering a warm and energetic community. Working in tandem, Cranleigh Prep provides a nurturing foundation for 350 pupils aged 3 to 13 on its own 40-acre site just across the road, with over 90 per cent of pupils progressing naturally to Cranleigh Senior. Under the leadership of Head Samantha Price, the entire school is in a position of outstanding market strength, offering incoming leaders a secure yet highly ambitious platform from which to innovate.

Founded in 1865, Cranleigh's historic heart lies in its Victorian red-brick Quad, though its outlook remains entirely forward-looking. Our motto, Ex Cultu Robur ("From Culture comes Strength"), drives a supportive, values-based community where academic achievement and personal development go hand in hand. This ethos is built on three pillars:

- Aspire Boldly (being ambitious and striving for excellence in all things)
- Be Yourself (acting with authenticity, self-awareness and confidence)
- Care for Others (practising kindness, empathy and service)

Cranleigh International

Cranleigh International has built a strong global network of schools, based on close, trusted partnerships with like-minded organisations. The current portfolio includes three schools: Abu Dhabi, which opened in 2014 and now educates more than 2,400 pupils, and two schools in China established in 2023.

We are now entering a new phase of growth with a recently announced partnership in Vietnam. Working alongside the Sunshine Group, we will soon introduce Cranleigh's educational model to this new market with a state-of-the-art campus opening in Hanoi in September 2027.

The Opportunity

Cranleigh is at an important stage in its development. The School has a strong identity, a distinctive culture and a compelling story to tell across both the Senior School and the Prep School. It is now seeking to communicate that story with greater clarity, consistency and reach.

The Head of Communications and Engagement is a new role, created to strengthen Cranleigh's communications capability at a time of ambition and growth. Reporting to the Director of Strategic Marketing, the postholder will join the Marketing, Admissions, Communications and Events (MACE) Team and will play a central role in shaping how Cranleigh is seen, heard and understood by its key audiences.

This is a broad strategic communications role, with a particular emphasis on brand voice, external profile, media relations, thought leadership and executive communications. The successful candidate will help Cranleigh speak with greater confidence about its values, achievements and future direction. They will support the Head and the Prep Head in developing their public voice, identifying opportunities for meaningful coverage and commentary, and ensuring that the School's distinctive strengths are communicated in a way that feels clear, credible and authentic.

The role also carries an important internal dimension. Cranleigh is a complex, busy and highly relational community, and effective communication with staff, parents, pupils and governors is essential to trust, alignment and confidence. The postholder will therefore need to combine an external communications instinct with the judgement and sensitivity required to support strong internal engagement. This will include bringing greater structure and consistency to communications across the School, ensuring that staff, parents, pupils and governors receive clear, timely and well-judged information. In a busy school community, the role will require someone who understands that internal communications are not simply operational; they are central to confidence, alignment and trust.

There is a significant opportunity to shape the role. Working closely with the Director of Strategic Marketing, the Head of Communications and Engagement will help develop Cranleigh's strategic communications plan and consider how the skills, knowledge and resources across the wider team can best be used. They will line manage the Communications Manager, while also drawing on the expertise of colleagues across marketing, admissions, development, alumni, events and the wider School.

The postholder will also help Cranleigh think more deliberately about the channels through which its story is told, from media coverage and sector commentary to website news, publications, social media, film and other digital content. The emphasis will be on quality, consistency and reputational impact, rather than activity for its own sake.

This would suit either an experienced communications or PR professional looking to move into education, or someone already working in the sector who is ready for a broader and more influential role. In either case, the successful candidate will demonstrate a proven ability to raise the profile of a brand. They will also have the confidence to act as a trusted communications adviser to senior leaders.

“An all-rounder's paradise, yes, but the academic offering can stand up to almost any school in the land.” The Good Schools' Guide



Audiences

Internal

- Pupils, ranging from 3 to 18 years.
- Staff, both teaching and support staff across the Senior and Prep Schools.
- Current Parents, who need to be kept informed and are important ambassadors.
- Future Parents & pupils, with whom we need to raise our profile and manage our reputation.
- Governors, who play a vital role in supporting the Heads and managing strategic developments.
- Alumni, many of whom are highly engaged and passionate about the school, and part of The Old Cranleighan Society.
- Our wider group, including - on occasions - our international Schools, based in Abu Dhabi, Changsha, Wuhan and Hanoi (opening 2027).

External

- Media & Journalists, both national and local, though we would like to boost our national presence in key titles and platforms.
- Opinion Formers, such as key contacts at the ISC, ISBA and other industry bodies.
- Feeder Heads, who play a critical role in sending future pupils to us and are a key target audience for the marketing and admissions team.
- Local community and schools, who need to be kept informed and updated.



Role & Responsibilities

i) Strategic communications and planning

- Develop and deliver a strategic communications plan that supports Cranleigh's wider ambitions and aligns with the work of the MACE Team.
- Work closely with the Director of Strategic Marketing to shape communications priorities, assess existing resources and identify how the skills and expertise of the wider team can best support the School's communications objectives.
- Provide strategic communications support to the Head, Prep Head, Director of Strategic Marketing and senior colleagues, ensuring that messaging is clear, timely and aligned with Cranleigh's values and priorities.
- Develop and maintain the School's narrative, ensuring that Cranleigh's story is communicated consistently across internal and external audiences.
- Contribute to a more coordinated approach to communications across the Senior School, Prep School and wider Cranleigh community.

ii) Brand voice, narrative and editorial leadership

- Act as Cranleigh's tone of voice custodian, ensuring that the School's communications are confident, coherent and recognisably Cranleigh.
- Lead the development of narrative frameworks, key messages, house style and editorial guidance to support consistency across channels and audiences.
- Oversee the quality and consistency of written communications, including website content, news stories, publications, speeches, statements and newsletters.
- Ensure that Cranleigh's tone of voice reflects the School's ethos, ambition and character, avoiding generic or overly institutional language.
- Provide editorial oversight across key digital channels, including website news, newsletters, social media, film and multimedia content where these contribute to Cranleigh's reputation, profile and public voice.
- Support colleagues across the School to communicate clearly and effectively, particularly where messages need to reflect the School's values, priorities or position.
- Write copy for publications, and project manage the production of these publications.

iii) Media relations, press coverage and profile raising

- Develop and deliver a proactive media relations strategy that strengthens Cranleigh's profile in appropriate national, international, sector and regional publications.
- Identify and secure meaningful opportunities for press coverage, commentary and thought leadership, with a focus on quality, relevance and reputational value.
- Build and maintain relationships with journalists, editors and media contacts who can support Cranleigh's profile and reach.
- Draft and place press releases, statements, opinion pieces, features, interviews and media briefings.
- Develop a planned approach to raising the profile of the Head and Prep Head, identifying opportunities for them to speak with authority on issues relevant to Cranleigh and the wider education sector.
- Provide communications support to the Head, Prep Head and senior colleagues, including speeches, letters, briefing packs, articles, commentary and other high-profile communications.
- Ensure that senior leader communications feel authentic to the individual while remaining consistent with Cranleigh's institutional voice.
- Monitor media coverage and wider public discussion, providing insight and advice to senior leaders where appropriate.

ii) Issues Management

- Maintain awareness of reputational opportunities and risks, advising senior leaders on appropriate communication responses and forward planning.
- Lead communications planning and response for sensitive or complex issues, working closely with the Head, Prep Head, Director of Strategic Marketing and other senior colleagues. Establish yourself as the pivotal point – holding the pen – for confidential announcements and crisis communications.
- Prepare statements, holding lines, briefing notes and communication plans where required.
- Ensure that communications in sensitive situations are timely, accurate, proportionate and aligned with the School's values.
- Establish and maintain clear communications protocols, including approval routes, escalation processes and expectations for internal and external communications.

Role & Responsibilities

v) Publications

- Manage and, in some cases, write content for key publications that sit within the MACE team.
- Develop a publications production schedule that allows you to manage, create and update key publications for the school over the course of the school year.
- Manage requests and resources accordingly, prioritising what is important, managing expectations and politely declining requests which are not feasible.
- Support award submissions, external recognition opportunities and other profile-raising activities where these align with Cranleigh's strategic priorities.

vi) Internal, parent and community engagement

- Lead the development of clear, timely and effective internal communications across the School, ensuring that staff, parents, pupils and governors receive information that is well-structured, well-timed and consistent in tone.
- Support alignment between the Senior School and Prep School so that shared messages are communicated clearly and appropriately across both settings.
- Ensure that parent communications are clear, tailored and sensitive to the needs of families, while remaining part of the wider strategic communications remit rather than defining the role.

vii) Team leadership and engagement

- Line manage, support and develop the Communications Manager, providing clear priorities, regular feedback and opportunities for professional growth.
- Work with the Director of Strategic Marketing to consider the communications resources required to deliver the strategic plan, including use of agencies, freelancers and specialist support where appropriate.
- Manage relevant communications and PR budgets, ensuring that resources are used effectively and impact is evaluated.
- Foster a culture of high standards, creativity, responsiveness and good judgement within the communications function.
- Work as a senior member of the MACE Team, supporting a joined-up approach to reputation, recruitment, engagement and community communications.

viii) Insight, reporting and evaluation

- Monitor stakeholder sentiment, media coverage and wider reputational themes, identifying risks, opportunities and areas where communication could be strengthened.
- Provide regular communications and reputation reporting to senior leadership and, where appropriate, governors.
- Evaluate communications effectiveness using insight, feedback and engagement data, recommending improvements to channels, messaging, planning and delivery.
- Use insight from staff, parents, pupils, alumni and external audiences to inform communications planning and strengthen Cranleigh's reputation over time.

Safeguarding and Welfare of Children

Cranleigh prioritises the safeguarding and wellbeing of every single pupil and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The postholder must comply with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy at all times, which includes undertaking necessary training. The Policy can be found [here](#).

The Person

Cranleigh is seeking a motivated, confident and highly capable communications professional who can combine strategic judgement with strong editorial instinct. The successful candidate may come from a PR, corporate communications or media relations background, potentially gained in or alongside a media owner, PR agency or consultancy. In either case, they will bring a proven track record of raising organisational profile and supporting senior leaders to communicate with greater visibility, influence and clarity.

Prior experience in an independent school would be helpful, but it is not essential. More important will be the ability to understand the sector quickly, appreciate the expectations of a school community and communicate with empathy, intelligence and care.

Skills, experience & knowledge

- Significant experience in PR, corporate communications, or media relations.
- Strong understanding of how to identify opportunities, cultivate relationships, prepare materials and respond under pressure.
- A proven track record of securing meaningful coverage in high-quality national, international, or specialist publications.
- A proven track record of raising the profile of an organisation and its senior leaders through high-quality media coverage, thought leadership, external commentary and speaker opportunities.
- Experience of advising and supporting senior leaders with messaging, speeches, articles, commentary, media opportunities and profile raising.
- Strong editorial judgement, with the ability to write and edit with clarity, confidence and authority across different audiences and channels.
- Experience of developing and delivering communications plans that support wider organisational priorities.
- Sound judgement in relation to reputation, risk and sensitive communications.
- Experience of internal communications and stakeholder engagement, with an understanding of how communication supports trust, alignment and confidence.
- The ability to work effectively with – and build relationships with – senior leaders, professional services colleagues, teaching staff and external partners.
- Experience of managing at least one direct report and allowing talented people to shine.
- Strong organisational skills, with the ability to manage competing priorities and maintain high standards in a busy environment.
- An understanding of AI and how it can be used to enhance, rather than supplant your content and judgement.
- Experience of managing digital communications, including website content, newsletters, social media or multimedia content.
- Experience of developing communications protocols, approval processes or messaging guidance within a complex organisation.
- Willingness to roll your sleeves up and write or project manage assignments.
- A clear understanding of, and empathy with, education and the independent school sector, or the curiosity and judgement to develop this quickly.



Personal qualities

- A confident and credible communicator, able to advise and support senior leaders with clarity and tact.
- An excellent and compelling writer, with an ear for tone of voice.
- Calm, discreet and resilient, particularly in sensitive or reputationally complex situations.
- Strategic and practical, able to see the bigger picture while ensuring that work is delivered well.
- A self-starter – able to proactively get things moving.
- A team player - willing to collaborate and roll up their sleeves.
- Collaborative and relationship-focused, with the ability to build trust across a wide range of colleagues and stakeholders.
- Proactive in identifying opportunities to raise profile and improve communications.
- Comfortable working at pace, with the judgement to prioritise well.
- Ambitious for the School and for the contribution that effective communications can make to its future.
- Willing to be trained in safeguarding, data protection and communications practice in education.
- Committed to diversity, equality and inclusion.

Terms of Appointment

An attractive remuneration package is offered, reflecting the seniority and significance of the position. The eventual salary offered will depend on skills and experience; however, it is anticipated that it will be in the region of £65,000-£75,000 per annum.

This is a full-time 52-week post and some flexibility of working hours will be required in light of the role and responsibilities it entails.

The postholder will enjoy a wide range of benefits, including:

- Annual Leave entitlement of 25 days per year plus statutory bank holidays and Christmas shutdown (gifted days between Christmas and New Year).
- Aviva Pension with 8% employer and 4% employee contribution.
- Life assurance of 3 times annual base salary.
- Fee discount for eligible children.
- Membership and use of the school's sports facilities including gym, squash, tennis, swimming pool and 9-hole golf course.
- Free lunches during term time.
- Onsite parking.
- Cycle to work scheme.
- Employee assistance scheme.

Application Process

Interested candidates are invited to contact RSAcademics in the first instance, to arrange a confidential discussion with Hannah Freestone-Smith: hannahfreestone-smith@rsacademics.com.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 10.00am on Monday 24th August 2026.

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. To submit your application, please upload your documents according to the instructions on the RSAcademics [website](#).

You should submit the following (both in PDF format):

- A completed application form (available to download from the RSAcademics [website](#)).
- A covering letter addressed to the Head, Sam Price. The letter should be a maximum of two pages and should explain your reasons for applying and outline your suitability for the role.
- If you have any questions about uploading your application documents, please contact Jonathan Barnes, Head of Operations (Leadership Appointments) at: applications@rsacademics.com. Jonathan can also be reached by calling our Head Office on +44 (0) 204 6269 791.

Cranleigh School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all its staff and volunteers to share that commitment. Applicants will be required to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post. The appointment is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance, including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, satisfactory references, proof of identity and eligibility to work in the UK, a satisfactory medical report and proof of qualifications.

The School recognises the positive value of diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination. We welcome and encourage job applications from people of all backgrounds. It is the School's policy to employ the best qualified individuals and to provide equal opportunity for the advancement of our team including promotion and training and not to discriminate against any person because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, religion or religious belief, disability or age.

The Process is as Follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. If you have not received an acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of sending it, please contact our Head Office by telephone.
- Preliminary interviews will take place online with RSAcademics via Microsoft Teams from Wednesday 26th August 2026.
- Longlist interviews will take place at the School in the week commencing 7th September 2026.
- Shortlist interviews will take place at the School in the week commencing 14th September 2026.



RSAcademics is a global executive search and consultancy firm working exclusively with schools and school groups. For more than 20 years, we've supported governors and leaders at pivotal moments – whether they are appointing senior staff or making complex strategic decisions.

What makes us distinctive is the depth of first-hand experience in schools across our team – as heads, governors, bursars and senior professionals – combined with specialist expertise in areas such as strategy, research, marketing and finance. This blend is continually enriched by our ongoing consultancy and appointments work with schools worldwide, so our advice is always current, practical and evidence-led.

Please visit www.rsacademics.com for more information.



How to Find Cranleigh



