Oakham SCHOOL

DIRECTOR OF

MARKETING, ADMISSIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

Candidate Information

RS ACADEMICS

A NEW ROLE FOR A NEW CHAPTER

Most candidate packs tell you what a role is; I'm more interested in what it could become.

One thing I can tell you is that Oakham School is entering a new chapter. We're shaping a new strategic direction. One that honours nearly 450 years of history while setting a bold vision for the future.

It's a time of exciting change.
And it's why this role matters so much.

We're looking for someone who sees marketing, admissions and development not as functions to be managed, but as catalysts for change. Someone who can connect people, ideas, stories and opportunities, who can help us sharpen who we are, challenge us to think differently about who we could be, and build the relationships, partnerships and philanthropic support that turn ambition into reality.

This is about leadership. About being part of an executive team that values pace, creativity and fresh thinking. It requires the confidence to question assumptions, the judgement to know which traditions to cherish and which habits to leave behind, and the energy to turn good ideas into meaningful action.

There is no ready-made template for what comes next. That's the point.

For the right person, this is one of those opportunities that doesn't come along very often. There, I've avoided saying "rare"!

If you'd rather write Oakham School's next chapter than simply read it, we'd love to hear from you.

Lucy Pearson
Head

OAKHAM SCHOOL

An Oakham education isn't something you complete. It's something you carry with you forever.

Oakham School is rooted in the principles of a liberal education, placing as much emphasis on breadth, curiosity, character and judgement as academic achievement. We're here to prepare students for a full and meaningful life, not just to pass exams.

Founded in 1584, the School is a vibrant and well-rounded community of over 800 students aged 11 to 18, with an equal balance of girls and boys and boarders and day students. Oakham prides itself on being forward-thinking whilst retaining its connection to its heritage and history.

The School offers the choice of A Levels, BTECs or the IB Diploma Programme for Upper School students and GCSEs and IGCSEs in the Middle School. This broad and rigorous academic programme challenges every student to achieve their personal best. We want our students to think critically, creatively and independently, developing the confidence to question, solve problems and navigate an increasingly complex world.

To achieve this, Oakhamians are supported without being carried and encouraged without being directed. As they move through the School, they take increasing ownership of their education, developing the confidence, independence and judgement to shape their own future.

At the heart of Oakham is our culture of care. Our unique House system provides the structural and emotional centre of the School; boarders and day students belong equally to their House whilst being part of one connected whole-school community.

Oakhamians are encouraged to make the most of the opportunities available to them – to get stuck in. Through sport, music, drama, art, service and the wider co-curricular programme, they build resilience, confidence and lifelong friendships. They learn the value of showing up, stepping forward and being ready to make a positive contribution. As a result, Oakhamians leave school with confidence and character, ready to make the most of every opportunity life places in front of them.

Oakham. Forever ready.

WHAT YOU'LL SHAPE

This is not simply a leadership role across marketing, admissions and development.

It's an opportunity to shape how Oakham is understood, experienced and championed by everyone who encounters it.

As Oakham enters a new strategic chapter, we are bringing together Marketing, Admissions and Development into a single External Relations function with a shared purpose: to build understanding, deepen engagement, strengthen enrolment and foster the relationships and philanthropic culture that will support the School's long-term ambitions.

Reporting directly to the Head, the Director will lead this work with imagination, clarity and ambition. They will be responsible for shaping how Oakham tells its story, attracts and retains families, inspires alumni and supporters to remain actively engaged with the School, and creates meaningful opportunities for philanthropy, partnership and long-term investment in Oakham's future.

This is a role for someone who sees marketing, admissions and development not as separate disciplines but as powerful and interconnected drivers of enrolment, engagement, philanthropy and long-term sustainability. Someone who can spot opportunities, connect dots, build trust and turn strategic intent into measurable impact.

The Director will inherit talented teams and the freedom to shape how they work together. Leading the Heads of Marketing, Admissions and Development, they will create a culture that combines high expectations with collaboration, creativity and curiosity. Success will be built not only on strong leadership and commercial acumen but on the ability to inspire people around a shared vision and a common goal.

Part strategist, part storyteller, part relationship-builder, this is a role with significant influence and visibility across the School. It offers the opportunity to help define Oakham's next chapter, ensuring that our ambition is understood, our values are felt and our future is actively shaped by the communities we serve.

FIVE CHALLENGES. ONE OPPORTUNITY

Three teams; one exceptional function.

Marketing, Admissions and Development each play a vital role in the life of Oakham. Your challenge is to bring them together around a shared vision, creating a collaborative, high-performing function that combines strategic clarity, creativity and operational excellence. Success will be measured not simply by what each team achieves individually, but by what they achieve together.

Impossible to misunderstand; difficult to forget.

Oakham has a powerful story to tell. Your role is to help define, sharpen and amplify it. From our website and digital presence to our campaigns, events and communications, you will ensure that everything we do reflects a clear, distinctive and authentic sense of who we are, what we value and where we are heading. You'll help ensure that Oakham is not simply seen but understood.

Build a connected, engaged and invested community.

This is about much more than recruitment. You will help prospective families see themselves at Oakham, create an exceptional admissions experience, nurture meaningful engagement with current parents and strengthen lifelong connections with alumni, supporters and friends of the School. You will help create a culture in which advocacy, engagement and philanthropy flourish, ensuring that people who care deeply about Oakham have meaningful opportunities to contribute to its future success.

Spot opportunities that others miss.

The educational landscape is evolving rapidly. You will use data, market intelligence and sound judgement to understand emerging trends, challenge assumptions and identify new opportunities for growth and engagement. We are looking for someone who is as comfortable asking "why?" as they are answering "what next?" Someone who can connect insight to action and strategic thinking to measurable impact.

Shape our next chapter.

As Oakham enters a new strategic period, this role offers the opportunity to influence far more than marketing, admissions and development. Working closely with the Head, senior leadership team and trustees, you will be a visible advocate for the School, building relationships, championing our vision and helping translate ambition into action. You'll combine imagination with disciplined execution, ensuring bold ideas are supported by clear plans, meaningful measures and thoughtful stewardship of resources.

THE PERSON

We're not looking for someone to maintain a function. We're looking for someone to build one.

We're looking for someone who understands that relationships are among the School's most valuable assets and that great schools are sustained not only by reputation and recruitment but also by loyalty, advocacy and philanthropy.

This role will suit an ambitious and commercially astute leader who enjoys bringing people together around a shared purpose, turning ideas into action and finding opportunities where others see complexity. You will be equally comfortable shaping long-term strategy and rolling up your sleeves to make things happen.

You may come from education. Equally, you may bring experience from another sector entirely. What matters most is your ability to lead people, build relationships, navigate change and deliver meaningful impact.

What You'll Bring

- **A track record of leading people and delivering results**

You've built, developed and inspired successful teams. You know how to create clarity, establish high expectations and empower others to do their best work. You've led strategic initiatives that have delivered measurable outcomes and lasting impact.

- **The ability to connect strategy with action**

You are a strategic thinker, but not a theoretical one. You can define a clear direction, bring people with you and translate ambition into practical plans that deliver results. You are comfortable working in complex environments and balancing competing priorities without losing sight of the bigger picture.

- **Commercial awareness and curiosity**

You understand markets, audiences and what drives decision-making. You use data, insight and evidence to inform your judgement, identify opportunities and challenge assumptions. You are naturally curious about trends, changing expectations and emerging opportunities.

- **A strong understanding of brand, engagement and growth**

You bring experience of strategic brand building, appreciating the need for clear differentiation in the marketplace and the advantages of audience segmentation. You understand how reputation, relationships and engagement contribute to long-term organisational success.

- **An instinct for philanthropy and partnership**

You understand how shared purpose inspires people to contribute their time, expertise, influence and resources. You recognise that successful philanthropy is not about asking; it is about building trust, creating belonging and helping people invest in something they value deeply.

- **Digital confidence and analytical rigour**

You understand the role that digital channels, websites, social media and technology play in shaping engagement, reputation and growth. You are comfortable working with data, interpreting performance information and using evidence to improve outcomes.

- **Outstanding relationship-building skills**

You enjoy working with people. You communicate with warmth, clarity and credibility, adapting your style to different audiences and situations. You can build trust quickly, influence thoughtfully and develop productive relationships with colleagues, families, partners, alumni, donors and other stakeholders.

- **The confidence to lead through change**

You are energised by opportunity and comfortable with ambiguity. You can challenge constructively, make sound decisions and lead others through periods of development and change with sensitivity, confidence and good judgement.

Knowledge & Experience

You should be able to demonstrate many of the following:

- Significant leadership experience, including developing and leading high-performing teams.
- A strategic approach to brand positioning and well-targeted marketing.
- Success in delivering against business and performance targets.
- Experience of shaping and delivering strategy in a complex organisation.
- Experience of using market insight, data and performance information to inform decision-making.
- Experience of representing an organisation externally and building strong stakeholder relationships.
- An understanding of how effective marketing, admissions and development activities contribute to growth, reputation and long-term sustainability.
- An understanding of the independent school sector and the factors influencing parental choice or the ability to develop this quickly.
- An appreciation of how fundraising, stakeholder engagement and the development of philanthropic cultures can support institutional ambition.
- A commitment to safeguarding.
- Values and promotes diversity, equality and inclusion.
- A degree or equivalent professional experience and credibility. Relevant professional qualifications are welcomed but not essential.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership and Planning

- Lead the development and delivery of a clear, ambitious and integrated External Relations strategy, aligned with Oakham's overall priorities and long-term direction.
- Provide strategic oversight across Admissions, Marketing and Communications, and Development and Engagement, ensuring joined-up planning, clear priorities and shared accountability.
- Use data, market insight and trend analysis to inform decision-making, identify opportunities and risks, and support effective strategic planning.
- Lead on the strategic direction of the School's website, ensuring it reflects the School's identity, supports recruitment, and delivers a coherent, dynamic and engaging user experience. Set content and governance standards, align messaging across functions and oversee the relationship with the website provider.
- Work with the Head and senior colleagues to strengthen the School's market position, profile and distinctiveness in an increasingly competitive environment.
- Ensure that external-facing activity reflects Oakham's identity, values and educational offer in a way that is coherent, attractive and authentic.
- Prepare reports, plans and updates for the Head, SLT and trustees as required.

Leadership of People and Teams

- Lead, support and develop the Heads of Admissions, Marketing, and Development, fostering a culture of collaboration, curiosity, accountability and continuous improvement.
- Build a high-performing, integrated External Relations function in which teams work effectively together and contribute to shared goals.
- Set clear objectives, measures and reporting arrangements across the External Relations function.
- Provide clear direction, support and challenge to senior team members, ensuring high standards of delivery, communication and leadership.
- Model calm, inclusive and professional leadership, particularly during periods of change, busy operational pressure or strategic development.
- Ensure that systems, processes and ways of working are effective, proportionate and capable of supporting high-quality delivery.
- Oversee budgets across the function and ensure resources are used effectively and strategically.

Marketing, Communications and Brand

- Provide strategic leadership for brand, communications, PR, digital presence and marketing activity, ensuring a well-differentiated, consistent and compelling representation of Oakham across all channels.
- Oversee the development of campaigns, content and communications that strengthen brand awareness, deepen engagement and support recruitment and reputation objectives.
- Ensure that the School's communications are clear, high quality, audience-focused and aligned with its values and positioning.
- Conduct market analysis and research to identify trends and opportunities.
- Lead the development of integrated marketing campaigns that combine digital, print, social media, PR and events to support student recruitment and brand awareness objectives.
- Track digital marketing analytics and campaign performance, using data to evaluate effectiveness and inform future strategy.
- Support effective collaboration between Marketing and Admissions so that messaging, pipeline activity and family experiences are joined up and mutually reinforcing.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Admissions and Student Recruitment

- Oversee the School's admissions and recruitment strategy across key entry points, ensuring strong enquiry generation, effective conversion and an outstanding experience for families.
- Ensure that Admissions activity is warm, well organised, data-informed and aligned to the School's strategic priorities, market needs and capacity requirements.
- Support the development of effective UK and international recruitment approaches, including market development, relationship-building and event strategy.
- Ensure that admissions processes, policies, communications and reporting are robust, clear and well managed.

Development and Engagement

- Provide strategic oversight of fundraising, alumni relations and wider development activity, ensuring that Oakham builds strong, long-term relationships with its alumni and supporters.
- Support the development of a thoughtful and sustainable engagement and fundraising strategy that reflects the School's ambitions and community.
- Ensure that donor, alumni and supporter communications are professionally managed and aligned with Oakham's broader identity and priorities.
- Oversee processes for stewardship, engagement and performance review within the Development function.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Act as a visible, positive and credible ambassador for Oakham with families, alumni, donors, feeder schools and other external audiences.
- Build strong and effective relationships across the school community and ensure that external engagement is thoughtful, relationship-led and consistent.
- Ensure the External Relations function is fully integrated with school life, collaborating with colleagues and students where appropriate and working to the demands and timetable of a boarding and day school.
- Work closely with senior colleagues to ensure that Oakham's outward-facing activity supports wider strategic, educational and community priorities.

WHAT WE OFFER

This is a significant leadership role at an exciting point in Oakham's journey.

The package reflects both the scale of the opportunity and the importance of the position. The salary is expected to be in the region of £90,000 – £100,000 per annum, dependent on experience and the expertise you bring to the role.

This is a full-time, year-round appointment. While flexibility is important, so too is balance, and we aim to create an environment in which talented people can thrive and do their best work.

Alongside salary, the benefits include:

- 25 days' annual leave, plus Bank Holidays.
- Staff fee remission.
- Support Staff Pension Scheme.
- Healthcare cash plan.
- Free lunch and parking during term time.
- Cycle to Work scheme.
- Complimentary use of the School's pool and gym facilities.

A Commitment to Safeguarding

Safeguarding is fundamental to everything we do.

Oakham School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment in line with Oakham's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, which can be found **here**.

The successful candidate will be required to undergo appropriate safeguarding screening, including an enhanced DBS check and satisfactory references.

A Commitment to Inclusion

We believe our community is strengthened by difference.

Oakham is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and seeks to attract, develop and retain talented people from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. We want our staff body to reflect the richness and diversity of the communities we serve.

Pre-Employment Checks

As with all appointments at Oakham School, this offer will be subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks, including verification of identity, right to work in the UK, qualifications, references, medical clearance and all safeguarding requirements.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested candidates are invited to contact RSAcademics in the first instance to arrange a confidential discussion with:

- Nina Lambert: **ninalambert@rsacademics.com**

Closing date: 10.00am on Tuesday 22 September 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:

- A completed application form (available to download at **www.rsacademics.com**).
- A covering letter addressed to the Head, Lucy Pearson. 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: **applications@rsacademics.com** / +44 (0)204 6269 793

The process is as follows:

- 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 our Head Office.
- Preliminary interviews will take place with RSAcademics via Microsoft Teams in the **w/c 28 September 2026**.
- Longlist interviews will take place at Oakham School on **Wednesday 7 October 2026**.
- Shortlist interviews will take place at Oakham School on **Thursday 15 October 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.

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Because the world needs schools to thrive