



ROLE SPECIFICATION

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Our school

Morrison's Academy is a friendly, family-oriented independent day school in the heart of Perthshire. Generations of Morrisonians have benefited from the school's rich blend of academic, artistic and sporting experiences, going on to make their mark on the world as Olympic athletes, ground-breaking scientists, award-winning actors, adventurers, politicians and professionals. Our long tradition of academic success in boys and girls from 2 to 18 continues today with a contemporary Scottish curriculum and a programme of independent, child-centred learning that builds emotional intelligence, creativity and life skills, encouraging every child to strive for the highest.



Our school roll of approximately 530 young people and 120 staff are all active members of the surrounding communities. We know and support one another, working together as a team to put pupils and parents first. We embody this culture in everything we do, delivering excellence in teaching and nurturing the individual to encourage every child to flourish.

Our families and team

Our young people are a delight and the staff and governors helpful and supportive. Crieff is a vibrant community in a beautiful part of the country, at the gateway to the Highlands and in easy reach of the Central Belt. The Morrison's Academy family is friendly and progressive; we have high expectations of one another and the confidence to encourage innovation.

We are committed to the career-long professional learning of all our staff. Our programme of Performance Reviews and generous CLPL budget promotes continuous improvement within and beyond the classroom, with plenty of scope for colleagues to pursue interests and specialisms.

Our Campus

The School's main campus is located in the centre of Crieff and comprises a mixture of historic (our magnificent original buildings dating from 1860) and modern buildings. During the recent years we have renovated our libraries, upgraded our science labs, installed modern floodlit hockey pitches, a strength and conditioning suite, created a new STEM workshop and opened an on-site café for pupils, staff and parents, setting a new standard for excellence. Morrison's Academy is committed to ongoing development and modernisation.



Role

The COO will lead all non-teaching operations of the School, including oversight of finance, legal compliance, and the day-to-day management of the School's physical estate. This role is accountable to the Board and reports directly to the Rector, working in close partnership to support and deliver the Rector's educational vision. A strong and collaborative relationship between the Rector, the Chair of the Board, and the COO is essential to the effective governance and success of the School.

Reports To

The Rector

Person Specification

Essential:

Qualified member of an accountancy body.
Previous experience in senior financial management and reporting.
Experience in leading teams.
Exceptional communications skills at all levels.

Desirable:

A commercially astute, technically strong leader able to operate at both strategic and operational levels.
Strong IT skills.
High integrity and openness combined with commitment to good governance.
Experience in estates, operational and project management skills.
Strong business acumen and commercial awareness

Hours of Work

The COO shall be required to work hours as are necessary to properly discharge the duties of the role as outlined in this specification, whether such hours are within or outside normal school hours.

Leave Entitlement

40 days which is inclusive of all public and statutory holidays.

Salary

Competitive salary commensurate with experience.

The principal tasks shall be:

Strategic Leadership

- Work in partnership with the Rector and Governors to shape and implement the School's strategic plan.
- Review, lead, and continuously improve the School's operational, financial, risk management and contingency strategies.
- Lead on the prioritisation, planning and delivery of long-term capital projects.

Finance

- Lead all financial operations, ensuring full compliance with statutory, regulatory, and charitable requirements.
- Serve on the Senior Leadership Team and contribute as relevant to the broader strategic objectives of the school.
- Prepare annual budgets, multi-year forecasts, and long term financial strategies, including scenario modelling based on pupil number projections.
- Manage investment management, cash flow, and financial risk mitigation.
- Manage the finalisation / submission of VAT return and tax compliance (e.g. Gift Aid).
- Oversee billing, collections, bursary assessments and payroll.
- Monitor income and expenditure in relation to budget and provide financial reporting to governors, auditors, and Key stakeholders, including monthly management account updates and annual statutory accounts.
- Support major capital projects and advise on VAT implications
- Lead procurement strategy and ensure cost-effective insurance coverage.
- Advise on the financial implications of the charitable status of the School.
- Develop commercial income streams and optimise revenue-generating opportunities
- Prepare annual statutory accounts

General Business Management and Administration

- Ensure that the School has adequate insurance cover.
- Ensure appropriate and effective administration is provided to enable the smooth day-to-day operation of the School.
- As the School's Data Compliance Lead, ensure the School complies with GDPR and develop a strong culture of good data practices.
- Oversee the schedule of review for the School's suite of policies.
- Oversee the School's external catering provision and GP margins.

Buildings and Estates

- Ensure maintenance of all School buildings.
- Ensure all buildings, equipment and elements of the estate are fully compliant with relevant legislation and Current regulations.
- Ensure the upkeep of sports pitches, grounds and all weather surfaces.
- Ensure the maintenance of boundaries, roads, and rights of way.
- Ensure the safety and security of the School buildings and School site.
- Draw up outline specifications for new buildings, obtaining tenders, planning permission, liaison with architects and contractors.
- Project manage all capital projects with the assistance of professional advisors.
- Ensure compliance with the regulations for the operation of the School's fleet of vehicles.

Information Technology and Digital Strategy

- Oversee and combine with the Director of Digital Strategy to lead the strategic development of IT systems, ensuring cyber security, data protection, and effective infrastructure.
- Oversee the implementation of MIS, finance, and admissions systems to enable data-led decision-making.
- Ensure effective security of the IT network is maintained.

Human Resources

- Oversee the HR functions through department lead.
- Ensure compliance with employment law and safer recruitment.
- Oversee HR policies and procedures in line with sector best practice.
- Oversee staff contracts, performance appraisals and pensions.
- Oversee the promotion of staff well-being in line with the schools strategy.

Compliance, Risk Management and Health & Safety

- Oversee the risk management process, policy implementation, managing risk registers, business continuity plans, and internal controls.
- Manage health and safety across the School as the Health & Safety Officer,
- Schedule the provision of Health and Safety training to all staff.
- Advise on and implement security measures within the School to ensure the safety of staff and pupils, and protection of buildings and equipment.

Commercial

- Oversee the programme of letting of School premises
- Manage the provision of the catering, ensuring the budgets and gross profit margins are achieved.

Comply with the individual responsibilities imposed by the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) and to cooperate with Management to promote a positive attitude towards Health and Safety at Work, taking all reasonably practicable steps to prevent personal injury or injury to others.

This role specification is intended to convey a broad outline of the position and responsibilities of the COO. It is not definitive and will be mutually reviewed where appropriate and on an annual basis as a normal aspect of the personal review and development process.



What is it like to work at Morrison's Academy?

Teacher of Modern Foreign Languages - Sam Thiel joined Morrison's Academy August 2022

"Ever since I first entered the beautiful school grounds on the morning of my interview, the stunning scenery and family feel at Morrison's Academy have never ceased to amaze me. Having worked with young people in different countries and a variety of educational settings I wanted to take the next step in my teaching career in an ambitious and innovative school. While I must admit that the thought of transitioning to the independent sector and joining a school with such a long tradition of academic success may have been daunting at first, I am grateful for all the amazing opportunities I have been given and for the fantastic pupils and colleagues I have been working with since I started teaching at Morrison's Academy in 2022.

The strong connections with my students and their curiosity as well as the inspiring commitment of my colleagues and how much they care about our pupils make a real difference in my work as a teacher. When you speak to our students and staff, you will sense that the school values at Morrison's are not just words on our walls but what we aim to be. Our pupils are always striving for the highest, and the small class sizes and excellent equipment in our school allow me to fully support them in achieving their potential and in developing as people. I can inspire their love for languages in my lessons, build meaningful relationships with them during Form Time, provide individual support as a mentor, and get involved in the wide range of co-curricular activities we offer to help pupils develop their interests and talents - all while continuing my own professional development and contributing to the development of our school, e.g. in the Pioneer Teachers and our Teaching & Learning Groups. By organising our exchange with a German school I can also show my pupils where I grew up and how languages help them experience different cultures and meet new people!

Having moved to nearby Stirlingshire and enjoying the scenic drive to Crieff every day, I can honestly say that Morrison's has become my new home away from home, and if you are also looking for a school which blends history with vision and tradition with innovation and where you can work with wonderful pupils and amazing colleagues, joining Morrison's Academy will certainly be the perfect opportunity for you to thrive inside and outside your classroom."

Alex Wylie, Head of Geography, Teaching and Learning Coordinator Joined Morrison's Academy August 2010

"I joined Morrison's back in 2010 after having spent my career working in urban schools in both London and Glasgow. It is fair to say that the location of this school makes it the polar opposite to the environments I was used to working in. The setting of this school is spectacular and is very much woven into the fabric of the life of this school. Our setting affords staff and students the opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities not available to those in urban settings and our clubs and social activities reflect this. I myself now run a range of academic focused field trips that make use of this setting but more than that I have the opportunity to take a running club out into the hills every week. The wider life of our school reflects this rural setting as all staff are afforded the freedom to pursue their personal interests through engaging in our co-curricular programme.

Another aspect of life at Morrison's that quickly struck me was the interconnections between our Primary and Secondary and within my first week, I was working with Primary classes and colleagues either in my role as a Geography teacher or as part of our Learning for Life Program. As a consequence of this, our younger students already know the senior school and its teachers before they even move up.

The final aspect that you quickly become aware of at Morrison's is the range of opportunities you get as a staff member to develop your practice, especially important for those interested in career development. Whole school policies are often directed by staff members and developments are widely consulted on with working groups meeting regularly to drive forward school initiatives. This gives staff the opportunity to engage in leadership as well as develop their own practise. This is supported by a thriving Teaching and Learning development group that helps steer pedagogy in our school as well as a Pioneer Teachers group that engages in reading around key themes in education. Where I work and the young people I get to work with everyday is why I am still here after 13 years."

Emma Hamilton, Teacher of Art, Joined Morrison's Academy August 2020

"I arrived to teach at Morrison's in perhaps the most challenging of times, literally thrown into online teaching as the pandemic hit. I immediately felt part of Morrison's "family" despite the difficult circumstances as in a tight knit small school, there is a great sense of community and collegiate support. Speaking from the experience of teaching in a number of state schools, the other difference which was marked for me was classroom behaviour and being able to share the enjoyment and knowledge I have of my subject with pupils who are keen and eager to learn."

Katy Grassick, Teacher Assistant Primary joined Morrison's Academy in February 2017

"Morrison's Academy has given me the opportunity to train and progress in my role, beyond what I had ever expected when I first accepted a job here. Our school instantly has the feel of a small community from the moment you first walk through the gates. Our families are keen to be active in their children's schooling and are delighted to be involved in any way that they can. I work within a kind, supportive team who are always willing to share their experience and knowledge. We all aspire to give these incredible children an excellent education in the classroom and prepare them for life beyond Morrison's Academy. Everyday I am inspired by my colleagues' teaching and everyday is full of variety and fresh challenges. Most of all, I am lucky to be involved in educating children who are filled with such wonder and joy at learning. The children are at the heart of everything we do at this school."

Catriona Elliott, Admissions Registrar joined Morrison's Academy in September 2010

I joined Morrison's Academy, initially working part-time in the Reception. This was my first time working in education and I enjoyed it so much that when the position in Admissions became available, I applied for it.

I really enjoy working here, with the pupils and my lovely colleagues. My role gives me the right balance of challenge and job satisfaction, while working on a beautiful campus in a wonderful part of the country. No two days are ever quite the same - one day I might be organising a school tour or taster days, the next I'm supporting a family through the application process or helping prepare for an Open Morning.

What I find most rewarding is meeting and supporting new pupils as they join the school. It's a privilege to see them settle in, flourish, and to stay connected with their families as part of the Morrison's Academy community. I also value the collaboration with staff across the school - everyone works together to make the admissions process as welcoming and smooth as possible.

Genuinely, Morrison's Academy provides that family feel that we all work collectively to build and maintain, and I feel very proud to play my part in that.