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Appointment of a Teacher of Physics

What sort of a school is Birkdale?

Birkdale is an independent day school for boys aged from 4 to 18, with a coeducational sixth form, amounting altogether to 800 pupils. The School has a strong Christian ethos. Birkdale is located on three sites in south-west Sheffield, the 11-18 (Y7 to Y13) Senior School, the 4-11 (Reception to Y6) Preparatory School and the playing field. Birkdale is the only HMC (Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference) school in South Yorkshire. The Head of the Preparatory School is a member of IAPS (the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools).

How has Birkdale developed over time?

Having been founded in 1904, Birkdale had by the 1950s become one of the largest boys' prep schools in the North of England. The age group was expanded to 4-16 in 1978, and the sixth form was launched in 1988. The original target figure of 180 sixth formers has now been attained, including about 50 girls. This rapid evolution of the school has been supported by an ambitious programme of physical development, including the acquisition both of the prep school site and of the playing fields, the addition of two large properties to the senior school site, the building of a sports hall and most recently the construction of a £2m sports pavilion.

Why teach in Sheffield?

Your image of Sheffield might be a grim, northern industrial city with poor air quality and no culture. If so, you could not be more wrong! Visitors to Sheffield frequently comment on its greenness: there are in fact more trees per person in Sheffield than in any other English city. Birkdale is to be found in an inner suburb close to the Universities, 1½ miles from the city centre and 4 miles from the Peak District National Park. Indoor and outdoor leisure facilities of all kinds - from theatres and restaurants to sailing and hill walking - could hardly be closer at hand, making the quality of life very good indeed.

Why teach in an independent school?

There are undoubtedly particular advantages enjoyed by independent schools and their staff. A recent survey of newly qualified teachers revealed five main attractive features of teaching in an independent school. The survey found these factors to be the more disciplined environment, the opportunity to express their passion for their subjects, good resources, smaller class sizes and greater professional freedom. In common with most independent schools, Birkdale offers a fully accredited statutory NQT induction programme.

What are Birkdale's academic standards?

The expectation is that nearly all pupils, having entered the school at various ages, will progress through to A level. Prep school boys are very successful at Key Stages 1 and 2: a minimum level 4 is normally achieved at KS2, with a high or very high percentage of boys achieving level 5. The GCSE pass (A*-C) rate is consistently around 99%, with the proportion of A* or A grades around 60%. Most pupils take four AS levels in the lower sixth and three A levels in the upper sixth, in addition to General Studies. Twenty-nine A level subjects are offered. The A level pass rate has been 99% in recent years, with around 70% or more entries resulting in A or B grades. Setting is extensively employed at both prep and senior schools.

What happens outside the classroom?

The school's academic emphasis, although important, is not exclusive. The extracurricular activities programme caters for most interests; sports, music, drama and outdoor pursuits flourish. All members of the teaching staff are expected to contribute to the wider life of the school beyond their academic commitment.

Does Birkdale offer the opportunity for teachers to develop professionally?

Most departments are now housed in newly converted or extended facilities. Budgets for departmental resources are generous. The school libraries are recent conversions, well stocked and well used by pupils. A coherently constructed appraisal scheme exists partly to enable teachers to think about and develop their careers. As teachers develop, so does the school. Hence there is a generous annual budget for staff training and development.

What makes Birkdale special?

The Christian ethos of the school manifests itself in the particularly friendly and supportive atmosphere. A good proportion of the staff are committed Christians, although as a community Birkdale is open to all, whatever they believe. We are therefore strongly committed to the care of our pupils and of our staff.

Appointment of a Teacher of Physics

A vacancy exists from 1 September 2010 for a Teacher of Physics. The ideal candidate would be well qualified and enthusiastic, able to teach Physics to A level and Science in Y7/Y8. Applications would be welcomed from newly qualified or more experienced teachers.

In the Science Department twelve teachers and three technicians work under the guidance of the three Heads of Department. A team of committed and able of teachers ensure that Physics is a popular and well-respected subject throughout the school. Excellent GCSE and A level results bear witness to the quality of teaching and facilities in the department.

Virtually all science lessons are taught in the eight laboratories. Pupils are taught in small sets [(Y7-Y11) average 18; AS/A2 level: 15 max)]. Sets up to GCSE are grouped by ability.

An in-house Science course is followed by all pupils in the Lower School (Y7-Y8) on a six period allocation with one teacher for each set. In the Middle School (Y9-Y11), Science is taught by subject specialists in one double period per week for each discipline in Y9 and three periods per week (one double, one single) in Y10 & Y11, leading to either two (AQA Core and Additional Science) or three (AQA Biology, Physics and Chemistry) GCSEs. This provides an effective base for AS/A2, where AQA specifications are also followed. Numbers opting for Sciences at this level are high with Physics having two sets in each of Lower and Upper Sixth.

The normal timetable for a full-time member of staff is 32 periods out of a 40 period week. The successful candidate would additionally be expected to take a full role in the promotion of Physics and Science in the school, sharing in departmental responsibilities and extra-curricular activities.

Other Information and Application Procedure

Salary is on the Birkdale salary scale. A generous remission of fees scheme is available for children of staff. The school is a member of the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

Applicants should provide **all** of the following:

1. A handwritten letter of application
2. A completed summary application form (either enclosed with this job description or available from our website www.birkdaleschool.org.uk/vacancies).
3. A full curriculum vitae
4. The name, address, telephone numbers (and e-mail if possible) of two referees

Current legislation applying to this post includes the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 and the Asylum & Immigration Act 1996. Therefore, shortlisted candidates will be required to prove their eligibility to work in the UK and the chosen candidate will be required to undergo a criminal record check. Details of the documentation needed in connection with these requirements will be sent to shortlisted candidates when they are invited to interview. Prior to appointment, we would then request a declaration about medical fitness.

Applications should be sent to the Head Master, Birkdale School, Oakholme Road, Sheffield S10 3DH by the *closing date of 16 March 2010*. It is not possible to write to every applicant with the result of the appointment. However, applications will be acknowledged if a stamped addressed envelope is included with the application form. *Interviews will be held during the week commencing 22 March 2010, with the expected interview day being Wednesday 24 March 2010.*

March 2010.