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Appointment of a Head of Science

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 Head of Science

In the Science Department twelve teachers and three technicians work under the guidance of the three Heads of Department (Biology, Chemistry and Physics). For some years the current Head of Biology has additionally served as Head of Science, but now wishes to relinquish this particular role. Therefore from September 2010 we seek to appoint the Head of Science who will be responsible to the Director of Studies, and have duties as shown on the job description below. The normal teaching timetable for such a role would be 27 periods of Physics / Science out of a 40 period week. The successful applicant would also typically have Form Tutor responsibilities.

The Science Department

The team of committed and able of teachers ensure that Sciences are popular and well-respected subjects 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 and 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 and 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 A level Sciences are high.

Job Description for the Head of Science

➤ Curriculum

1. Determine the overarching aims and objectives of the Science Department, ensuring compatibility with those of the school.
2. Promote the profile of Science within the school.
3. Produce, in consultation with the Heads of Department, a Science Department development plan to target the aims and objectives. This plan should be annually updated.
4. Collate schemes of work and curriculum documents supplied by the Heads of Department.
5. Monitor the teaching within the department via the Heads of Department
6. Monitor the work and assessment of pupils via the Heads of Department.
7. Maintain awareness of Science-wide curriculum developments.
8. Maintain an overview of Science throughout the school. This involves regular communication with the Prep School Curriculum Advisor, especially about the transition from P4 to S1.
9. Contribute to the overall curriculum planning of the school.
10. Provide advice to parents and pupils relating to Science curriculum options.

11. Provide opportunities for pupils to broaden their interest in and knowledge of Science, foster cross-curricular links where appropriate and contribute to the coverage of the ICT syllabus.
12. Coordinate the wall displays within the Science Department and responsibility for maintenance of appropriate notice boards.
13. Encourage the participation of pupils in trips, lectures and competitions.

➤ **Staff Manager**

1. Provide direction for the department and give support to Heads of Department as required.
2. Oversee the induction of new staff with reference to the relevant Head of Department.
3. Contribute to the training of NQTs and student teachers.
4. Interview candidates for Science teaching/support posts and advise the Head Master on appointments. Ensure that all new colleagues are provided with relevant documentation before arrival.
5. Encourage teamwork within the Science Department.
6. Direct INSED within the Science department in consultation with the Heads of Department, the Director of Studies/Deputy Head - development of talents relevant to the needs of the department, and of members of staff.
7. Appraise Heads of Science Departments.

➤ **Organisation of the Department**

1. Create an organisational structure for the Science Department which encourages the generation of ideas and the allocation of responsibilities.
2. Deploy staff, in consultation with the Heads of Department, to cover the teaching needs of the department, to make best use of their strengths and to provide development opportunities.
3. Allocate pupils to teaching groups and teaching groups to rooms in consultation with the Heads of Department.
4. Collate data from common testing in Middle School.
5. Adopt safety policies, in consultation with the Science Department Safety Officer (currently the Head of Chemistry) appropriate to the needs of the department.
6. Chair regular, minuted Science Departmental meetings.
7. Chair regular, minuted Heads of Science meetings.

➤ **Communication**

1. Represent the views of the Science Department within the school and at Heads of Department meetings and report to the department on school issues.
2. Discuss plans with the Director of Studies and Head Master as appropriate.
3. Communicate with parents; inform/consult teacher, form tutor, Head of Section, Director of Studies and/or Head Master as appropriate.
4. Liaise with Exam Boards; inform/consult Examinations Officers, Director of Studies and/or Head Master for GCSE Double Award Science entries.
5. Liaise with Science Department staff to ensure that GCSE coursework marks are entered, collated and submitted to the exam board.
6. Create and foster links with other schools, universities, industry/commerce and the community.

➤ **Finance and Resource Control**

1. Oversee the production of four separate budgets (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Science) for submission to the Head Master.
2. Operate within the agreed budget, keeping appropriate records.
3. Maintain records of books and equipment assigned to the department, having due regard to security.
4. Ensure that copyright and licensing regulations pertaining to printed materials, recordings and software are not breached.
5. Report requirements for maintenance and decoration of rooms within the department to the Bursar.
6. Have responsibility for the appearance of the department.

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 in the week commencing 22 March 2010, with the expected date being Monday 22 March 2010.*

March 2010