**BRIEFING FOR APPLICANTS**

Assistant Headteacher

From September 2023

Leadership Pay Spine L12-L16

**An introduction to our school**

Our school is an 11-16 mixed, community, comprehensive school of around 960 students. We are lucky to be based in a relatively new building, with great facilities, on a beautiful site at the edge of the Peak District market town of Chapel-en-le-Frith. The Peak District National Park is quite literally on the school’s doorstep provides endless opportunities for walkers, cyclists, mountain bikers, climbers, cavers and other outdoor enthusiasts.

The nearest big towns to the school are Buxton and Stockport but good transport links mean that the school’s staff travel from a wide area with many commuting from Manchester, Sheffield, Chesterfield and the towns of East Cheshire. A sizable contingent of staff live in the villages of the Peak District. For anyone considering relocating it is a wonderful area in which to live, with a good mix of housing, decent schools, easy commutes and a good quality of life.

We believe that our school is unusual in many ways. Perhaps the most obvious of these, which may even make us unique, is structural. The current school was formed by merging, in a new building, the local area special school with the existing high school. The special school became the current 36 place enhanced resourced SEND provision, always referred to simply as “Learning Support” in school. To meet the moderate to severe special educational needs of its cohort, Learning Support operates as a ‘school within a school’. It runs a full independent curriculum and has significant dedicated SEND trained staffing. Whilst Learning Support can provide an independent, tailored, learning experience for students, in every other way this cohort is fully integrated into the life of the school. This arrangement makes for a wonderfully inclusive school with young people who are very accepting of difference. Our inclusive approach spreads more widely too and we often buck local and national trends by willingly accepting students who have difficult and complex backgrounds or those who have struggled in other schools. Overall, the school has around three times the national average level of students with SEND.

This inclusivity does make the school’s published data rather tricky to interpret; the DfE data effectively merges the results of an average sized and very inclusive comprehensive school, with that of a special school. In short, we are sometimes rather better than the league tables make us look. Some years ago, the school set itself a challenge “*to* *deliver an education ranking alongside the best schools nationally; whilst remaining a highly inclusive, friendly, community school”.* We haven’t achieved this yet, but it is a mantra that has guided us since. Undoubtedly, the balance between inclusivity and excellence is a difficult one, but both governors and staff are fully committed to making it work, despite its undoubted challenges in the current educational environment.

We think that we are different in other ways too. Our governors value the arts and creative subjects and we retain high uptake in these areas. We aren’t a top down organisation; we are a team and we work together to do the best we can for the young people in our care. Perhaps most importantly, we recognise that happy, committed staff make for a successful school. We work really hard to look after and develop our staff.

Visitors to our school notice these differences. People frequently comment on the sense of community, the calm atmosphere, and the fact that our staff smile, joke and enjoy what they do. At the start of our most recent Ofsted inspection the lead inspector commented, after meeting the staff in briefing, that he had never met such a welcoming, smiley and relaxed staff team at the start of an inspection. The report from that inspection, in May 2019, gives a very good picture of the organisation that we are.

Like most schools, we have our strengths and weaknesses. We are proud of the work we have done recently on curriculum development, and on classroom practice. We’re still grappling with the long tail of the pandemic, with attendance, mental health challenges and changes in the way that students and parents behave. We also face the challenges of many rural schools; getting our results to be clearly above average requires that we better engage disadvantaged students and that we raise the aspirations of some boys in particular.

We are in the minority of secondary schools that remain local authority run. This has been by choice after careful research and consideration. A priority for the future is to work out how we fit into an academy MAT based system. We are not however an isolated school. We are a member of the Peak Edge Group of Schools (PEGS) a group of local primary and secondary schools, and we have very good links with employers, local FE and sixth form providers and universities.

**The Senior Leadership Group**

The school benefits from a stable staff team, largely because people very much enjoy working here. Our leadership team has changed incrementally over the years, but continuity has been one of its strengths. Our current team consists of:

**Headteacher**

**Deputy Headteacher**

**3 x Assistant Headteacher**

**School Business Manager**

This is a very small leadership team, especially for an unusually complex school with a large SEN provision, however in these times of budgetary constraint, this has allowed us to protect our ‘front line’ staff. We are proud that we have always run balanced budgets and never had to make staff redundant.

We are in a position to start to strengthen the leadership team by appointing a fourth assistant headteacher.

We have the flexibility within our leadership team to rearrange some existing responsibilities. We will therefore negotiate the exact whole school responsibilities of the new assistant headteacher after appointment. The most important thing to us is that we get the right person. We do know however the broad areas in which we would like to strengthen our team.

We are looking for someone who can contribute to **some** of the areas below:

Curriculum development.

The development of effective classroom practice.

The leadership of effective interventions and alternative provision.

The development of highly effective assessment practices.

The personal development of our students.

Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged students to make good progress.

The school’s pastoral systems are vertical, with vertical (mixed age) tutor groups in four houses. The successful candidate will take responsibility for one house, a sort of school within a school. This is very much an oversight role. Non-teaching pastoral leaders lead the houses. The pastoral leaders are extremely experienced and effective. As an assistant head, you provide support and oversight to them. You will not have to do much day-to-day pastoral work.

Each member of leadership group line manages a group of subjects through the heads of department. These line management clusters aren’t set in stone and can be changed to suit your experience and skills.

All of our assistant headteachers teach, we aim for a teaching load of 10 to 12 periods per 50 period fortnight. The subject specialism of applicants is not important to us, we’ll find some teaching that suits you.

**Leading at Chapel-en-le-Frith High School.**

We are proud that our most recent Ofsted report opens by describing the “clear moral purpose” of leadership here. We have always tried to do what is right for our students, and right for our staff, even when occasionally this causes us problems with some of the accountability measures currently applied to schools. The fact that we are comfortable with high levels of SEND is the most obvious example of this, but there are others.

Our governors are absolutely committed to the approaches that the school takes and to protect our values they have agreed the following principles by which we operate:

* *We will operate according to the principles of the ASCL Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education.*
* *We will remain a highly inclusive school that works to meet the needs of all students eligible for admission.*
* *We will base our work on research findings and give our staff opportunities to engage with research.*
* *We will be an employer that treats employees well, develops people and attracts high quality staff.*
* *We will ensure that the school remains outward looking, both contributing to the development of other organisations and benefiting from their help.*

Should you choose to join us in a senior leadership team role, you are signing up to these values. They are not negotiable here.

In practice, we operate a very flat leadership structure; we see our role as supporting our brilliant staff and allowing them to do their job well. We give our staff a lot of freedom to experiment, we encourage engagement with research and with new ideas. We rarely tell people what to do, in truth we rarely have to, because we are lucky to work with a great staff team who work incredibly hard and who give a lot. All of our leaders operate an open door policy to staff, parents and students. We expect all of our staff to have a high profile around school and to act as good role models for our students.

There are some advantages of being a leader in this school:

* We are lucky to work with a skilled, professional and supportive governing body. The governors are very clear in their role, that of oversight and accountability and they delegate responsibility to the maximum degree allowed by regulation, to the leadership group. However, they hold leaders highly accountable for delivering for our young people and for staff. Many governors have a strong business background and a good understanding of corporate governance and accountability.
* Partly as a result of strong governance, and partly because we have a skilled business manager, we have always run a balanced budget. It will not surprise you to know that finances are tight but we have never been in deficit and budgets are managed without drama or fuss. We are proud that throughout the recent years of austerity in education, we have not had to make staff redundant and that we remain fully staffed.
* A strong admin and data team supports our work; this team includes a dedicated PA to the leadership group.
* Finally, we take our role in developing people very seriously. If you join us, you will receive considerable support, both formal and informal, to settle in and to get to know the school. Whatever your aspirations, whether you want to be the best assistant headteacher you can be, or whether you aspire to headship, we are happy to ensure that you gain the training and experience that you need. Our deputy headteacher has recently completed NPQH and all three of our assistant heads are currently working towards NPQH.

Does all of the above make this an easy place to work? Well no, it doesn’t always. Running a highly inclusive school puts us at the forefront of the current national issues around SEND funding and provision. Rural schools also come with their own challenges, a lack of local alternative provision, well-hidden rural poverty, a surprisingly high safeguarding workload, bus timetables of immense complexity and occasionally deep snow! Finally, running the school the way we choose to run it, collaboratively, is probably not the most straightforward way to lead.

This is however an amazing place to be a school leader, you will be part of a supportive and effective team and have the chance to really make a difference to young peoples’ lives and to the career development of our staff.

**Safer recruitment and our values**

The school uses robust safer recruitment procedures that meet the requirements of [Keeping children safe in education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2) . These processes are designed to deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment or volunteering opportunities in the school.

Our safer recruitment processes form a vital part of our whole school approach to safeguarding and are an essential part of creating a safe environment for our learners. Further details on the safer recruitment of staff in school can be found in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy which is linked [here](http://www.chapelhigh.org.uk/internet_assets/documents/parents/policies/2022/Chapel%20High%20Safeguarding%20and%20Child%20Protection%20Policy.pdf).

When you apply for a job in our school you will be asked to disclose any previous criminal convictions. You will be asked to provide a full employment history and the names of two referees. One of these referees must be your most recent employer and, if the employer is a school, must be the headteacher. We will follow up on any issues raised by your references at interview and we may contact your referees to verify their identity or for further information.

Everyone who works in the school, including volunteers will have appropriate Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks. For teachers, qualified teacher status will be checked. Appointment to a post will be subject to satisfactory references, satisfactory DBS checks, the checking of qualified teacher status (for teachers), checking of the right to work in the UK, and health clearance.

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School is committed to creating an inclusive workplace which promotes and values diversity in age, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability and ethnicity. We expect our staff and volunteers to share these values.

**Chapel-en-le-Frith High School**

**Job Description**

Assistant Headteacher

**Reporting to: Headteacher.**

**Main responsibilities**

Work with the headteacher and governors to set the strategic direction of the school.

Work with the headteacher, members of SLG and other staff to develop policy and practice to meet the school’s aims.

Contribute to the self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the school’s work.

To assume a number of whole school responsibilities as delegated by the headteacher.

To provide credible and visible leadership to staff and students across the school.

To line manage a number of heads of department.

To work with one of the school’s pastoral leaders to support good progress and behaviour in one of the school’s four houses.

The Assistant Headteacher will have a teaching commitment and the duties detailed here are in addition to those in the job description of a teacher.

**Strategic Leadership**

Maintain clear values and moral purpose in helping to set the strategic direction of the school and in developing policy to deliver the school’s aims.

Contribute to strategic discussion with staff, governors and other stakeholders to develop policy and practice to meet the school’s aims.

Rigorously monitor and evaluate practice and progress in relation to targets and use these to inform future planning and to support the school’s self-evaluation.

Demonstrate professional personal behaviour, positive relationships and attitudes towards students, staff, parents, governors and members of the local community, and as a senior leader model these expectations to other staff.

Use leadership responsibilities and relevant whole school policies, to ensure leaders, teachers and staff are effectively supported and challenged to achieve their full potential and held to account for their practice.

Work with governors, as required, to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities. This will include providing verbal and written reports to governors’ meetings as required and supporting governors in formulating policy and making strategic decisions.

Access relevant professional development opportunities in order to ensure up-to-date knowledge and understanding is maintained. Support the school’s focus on research-based practice by remaining abreast of current relevant educational research, evaluating its usefulness in school and disseminating relevant information to staff and governors.

Actively work to develop the school’s network of external partner organisations. Work with these organisations positively for mutual benefit.

**Job Description (continued)**

**Operational Leadership and Management**

Take line management responsibility for a group of subjects.

Take line management responsibility for one of the school’s four houses.

Attend planning meetings and play an active role in managing the day-to-day life of the school.

Meet with students, parents, staff and governors as required.

Work with the headteacher and leadership group to maintain up to date self-evaluation documentation.

Support the professional development of staff by contributing to the provision of training.

Other operational leadership duties to be agreed by negotiation.

**Other duties**

Deputising for other members of SLG as required.

Supervision of students before and after school and at lunchtimes as required.

SLG duty team leader one day per week.

Support for after school events, performances and meetings as required.

Planning and delivering assemblies.

Meeting with parents.

Attendance at governors’ meetings as required.

Attendance at external meetings as required.

This job description is not exhaustive and you will be expected to take on any reasonable work appropriate to the position as may be delegated by the headteacher.

**Person Specification: Assistant Headteacher**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Essential** |  | **Desirable** |
| **Qualifications** |  |  |
| Qualified teacher status (QTS or QTLS). |  | A leadership qualification e.g. NPML, NPSL, SLE or a relevant further degree. |
| **Personal qualities** |  |  |
| Brilliant people skills. Able to build positive relationships with students, parents and staff quickly.  An ability to inspire and to motivate others.  An absolute commitment to inclusive education.  Good organisational skills.  An ability to quickly understand problems and suggest solutions.  High expectations of self and others, a good role model for students and staff.  The ability to remain calm in a crisis and to make good decisions under pressure.  The ability to communicate effectively to a wide variety of audiences.  Resilience.  A sense of humour and an ability to keep things in perspective. |  |  |
| **Experience** |  |  |
| An excellent classroom teacher with a record of good to outstanding outcomes.  A successful middle leader who has had an impact on standards.  Line managing staff.  School self-evaluation.  Challenging underperformance.  Dealing with parents in a variety of contexts.  Appraisal of staff.  Working with other organisations to form partnerships, for example other schools, universities, maths hubs etc. |  | Leading significant change in a secondary school that has had a positive impact on outcomes  Working with students with moderate to severe SEND.  Organising and delivering training.  Safeguarding work.  Using strategies to improve the progress of disadvantaged students.  Financial management in schools.  Using school data systems to analyse progress and identify underachievement. |
|  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Essential** |  | **Desirable** |
| **Knowledge and skills**  A good understanding of the current educational landscape, its statutory framework and regulatory regime.  An understanding of current best practice in teaching and learning.  A high level of written English, the ability to write accurately and concisely. |  | A good knowledge of school MIS systems.  An understanding of how to use data effectively to support improvements in progress.  Excellent ICT and data analysis skills.  An understanding of ways to benchmark progress against national norms.  A basic understanding of the statutory framework for SEND education.  A good understanding of the current Ofsted framework and its application in schools. |

**Person Specification (continued).**

**Notes on Applying**

Applying for any job is time consuming, these notes aim to make it easier.

**We do not use either the Derbyshire County Council or the TES online application process. You need to complete an application and post it or e-mail it to us. The application should consist of a completed application form and a letter of application.**

**The Application Form**

Please complete the application form neatly, fully and accurately, including exact dates. The form may be typed or handwritten, but if you do write it by hand please use black ink. Indicate clearly on the front page the post you are applying for. **We do not use Job Reference numbers, simply leave this box blank.**

Safeguarding guidance requires us to ensure that there are no unaccounted for gaps in your employment or educational history. Please explain any gaps that do appear; notes like “gap year” or “bringing up children” are very helpful.

The Derbyshire application form includes a large box headed “supporting statement”, since we have asked you to submit a separate letter you can leave this box blank. There is little point in repeating information.

**Referees**

Please use referees who have direct, recent experience of your work and who are in responsible positions. We may need to contact them at short notice so please be specific over addresses and contact details, we will normally contact them by e-mail. One referee must be your current or most recent employer; if you are working in a school it should normally be your headteacher. References will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends.

**Letter of Application**

The letter of application is probably the most important part of your application. You should make statements which demonstrate how your qualifications, personal qualities and experience match the post. Please focus on the impact of any work you have done. You should take particular care to demonstrate how you meet the person specification included with this pack.

**CVs**

In line with current safeguarding guidance we do not accept CVs.

**Arrangements for Interview**

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted as soon as possible after the closing date. For teaching posts referees are contacted **prior** to the interview stage. If you are shortlisted, any relevant issues arising from your references will be taken up at interview.

**Appointments**

Appointments are made conditional upon the successful candidate meeting requirements for satisfactory references; satisfactory DBS checks; qualification checks and (for teachers) checking of Qualified Teacher Status. We are also required to check that you have the right to work in the UK.

**Submitting your Application**

When you have completed your application, the completed form and covering letter should be e-mailed to Diane Hibbert, Personnel Administrator ([dhibbert@chapelhigh.org.uk](mailto:dhibbert@chapelhigh.org.uk)), or applications can be posted to the school, addressed to the headteacher, to arrive before the closing date.