Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your interest in our vacancy for Assistant Headteacher I hope that this brief letter gives you a better understanding of the enormously exciting adventure we have embarked upon at The Grange School (TGS).

TGS is a small school (capacity 650) proudly serving its local community. The community we largely serve is one of the most deprived wards in Dorset, although increasingly, as our reputation grows, we are seeing young people join us from further afield. Notwithstanding this, our demographic is what may be called a challenging one, with close to 50% of our students eligible for the Pupil Premium grant and 35% on the SEND register.

This does not mean we have anything other than the highest of expectations of our students and families: expectations we will support them to meet but never lower. We expect them to work hard, to behave well and to be fully involved in all aspects of school life, and in return we will provide them with a brilliant education, fantastic opportunities for personal development and everything else they need to leave us and go on to have great lives.

We are on an improvement journey that every member of staff plays an important part in and represents a fantastic opportunity to be part of something really special. We are not the ‘finished product’. We get better every day – exemplified by 2021’s ‘good’ Ofsted judgement, improving GCSE outcomes and higher numbers on roll – but we need people who want to contribute towards positive change and continuous improvement and help us reach our lofty ambitions for our school and our students.

We are formally ‘federated’ with Twynham School, which means we are two schools working together for the good of all of our students. Each school has its own leadership team and Associate Headteacher but also an Executive team working across both schools and a number of middle leaders who lead across both sites. Indeed, some teachers and support staff work across the two sites, welcoming the experience this brings of working with two quite different demographics and schools united by a common vision but operating slightly differently based on their unique contexts. Although this post is based solely at TGS, you should be committed to the project and welcome the chance for cross-campus working at some point during your career with us; indeed, as Assistant Headteacher you will be part of the leadership team across both schools and may well have responsibility for an area across both sites. In the 2021 Ofsted inspection the impact of our federation was seen as a real strength our two schools.

The Assistant Headteacher role is a vitally important one, and as a small school with a very small senior leadership team based solely at TGS, involves playing a huge part in the day-to-day operational and strategic leadership of all aspects of the school, regardless of what your ‘specific’ portfolio might be. We have deliberately not advertised this role with a specific leadership ‘area’ such as T&L or behaviour or raising standards. We want strong candidates from all backgrounds and leadership experiences to apply and the role will then be shaped around the best person’s experience and interests whilst obviously also taking into account what the school needs. TGS is going from a model of no Assistant Heads based solely here to two, so the emergent TGS-specific SLT can be totally refreshed and reconfigured in terms of structure and roles. It would suit someone who has enjoyed a period of sustained success in a middle leader role and now feels ready for senior leadership. You will be well-supported and trained enabling you to be really successful and well-prepared for the next step of your career journey, having been involved in leading ‘proper’ school improvement. You should be prepared to review your portfolio of responsibility annually and we would expect the successful candidate to lead in either setting in the future should this be required.

We believe that the best thing we can do for students is to set them up with the gateway qualifications that will allow them to access whatever path they choose to when they leave us. Of equal importance is instilling in them a belief that they can have – and deserve – great lives, and giving them the social and emotional tools they need in addition to their examination results to achieve this. If this chimes with you then we would welcome your application.

The only way to get a feel for what we believe in and how we do things is to spend some time with us and meet the people that make our schools such a special place. As such then we will do our very best to accommodate informal visits prior to any further application.

Best wishes,



Mrs Deborah Hawkins

Associate Headteacher - TGS