

Dear prospective candidate,

Thank you for looking to apply for curriculum leader of science at Frederick Gough School. I joined as Headteacher in September 2005 and am still here because I think the school community is a special one. One that I feel obligated toward as each year group passes, that has a great mix of traditional and modern and one that I am extremely proud to serve.

The vacancy has arisen because the current curriculum leader has gained a promotion to assistant headship. We will miss her greatly but wish her well and are pleased her experiences at Fred Gough have enabled her to get the position.

Frederick Gough is a different place to work. Perhaps, ironically, because in many ways it has remained the same for the past 20 years. It is a maintained community school that strongly believes in serving its community as part of the local authority. It has resisted curricular changes over the past 20 years; be it diplomas, a three year KS4 or the removal of at the time non-vogue subjects such as Design Technology, Drama, music etc..

Frederick Gough also believes in treating people as people. 'Zero tolerance' is another fad that we have resisted for both staff and pupils. Support, support, support is our mantra and whilst that doesn't work all of the time we know that we can hold our head up high knowing we have tried our best for the best reasons.

Our staff turnover is very small which I hope is a representation of the happiness and wellbeing they feel, something that is represented in the TES pulse surveys we conduct every month.

Whilst the largest school in the authority, we are also the most oversubscribed school and have been for many years despite increasing our PAN from 244 to 269 nine years ago.

Our standing in the community is as an inclusive school (I can't believe I'm writing this but please read the OFSTED report!). In the current educational climate, inclusivity is presenting us with significant challenges but we have a heart and want to do what we can do. We can sleep at night knowing we are doing the best we can whilst upholding our informal motto "Try your best, be nice and you will do well"

Please don't think our inclusive ideology makes us soft... we have high expectations of our pupils, knowing there are reasons but never excuses. Our expected standards for staff are just as high and whilst we are 'support, support, support' with staff we do expect engagement and effort with that support should it be required.

Our middle leadership team are empowered, accountable and trusted to lead change and raise standards. A good example of this is each department's marking policy which has been designed by the Curriculum Leader to be rigorous but realistic in terms of workload and impact.

There is an SLT link to each department whose role is also to support and challenge. Middle leaders have genuine autonomy and we delight in embracing different ideas. We have also bought into PiXL for approximately 10 years and have always worked with the local authority peer leader programme to ensure that we are outward facing and not isolated as a standalone comprehensive school.

We have created a culture where we have continuous peer observations for lessons based on Rosenshine principles, peer led CPD and an understanding that SLT will walk the school for support not for judgement. Rosenshine is our mantra... why? Because it is common sense teaching that just needs constant sharing and reflection to keep us on top of our game.

Our current quality of teaching and learning is the best it has ever been in my time at the school and has been created through collegiate and collaborative practices.

We have never aspired to be 'Ofsted outstanding'. No child remembers whether their school was outstanding; they remember whether we did our best to support them, that we provided them with a well-rounded curriculum and that we gave them opportunities and experiences that help them enjoy and navigate their adult life with confidence and success. We delight in the employment rates of our students along with the huge variety of employment areas that our students end up working in.

Aside from the skills required to perform the job we need a curriculum leader who is a genuine team player, someone who understands the strengths and equalities of all members of our organisation and someone who likes children.

We are most definitely not perfect, we don't show off (in fact I think we're pretty bad at promoting what we're good at) and we don't put a spin on anything that we do or don't do.

If you decide to apply and are successful I can promise you that it will be hard work, very testing at times, tiring, stressful, exhilarating, extremely rewarding and fun on occasions!!

If you'd like to join a team that values each other's contributions and can share a commitment & openness to do the best that it can for our pupils I look forward to reading your application.

Ben

