

March 2024

Dear Applicant

Deputy Headteacher (behaviour and inclusion), L20-24 from September 2024

Thank you very much for your interest in the post of Deputy Headteacher (behaviour and inclusion) at Sir Bernard Lovell Academy (SBL). I hope this letter will help to inform your application.

School context

We are proud of our heritage and association with Sir Bernard Lovell who was born in 1913, just a stone's throw from the school entrance. He is well known for designing and constructing the world's largest telescope which enabled many discoveries to be made about our solar system. In 1972, Sir Bernard Lovell returned to his childhood community to open our school which was named in his honour. The inspirational life of Sir Bernard Lovell demonstrates many of the qualities we want to instil in our students including ambition, determination, curiosity and humility.

SBL has been on a journey of rapid improvement over the last 5 years and is now a very different school to what it was back in 2018 when Ofsted judged the school as requiring improvement. Thanks to the excellent work of my predecessor and the dedication and loyalty of our staff, SBL is now a very good school with a strong reputation in the local community. This was confirmed when Ofsted returned in 2021 and judged the school to be good in every area. Our record number of over 270 students starting Year 7 in September 2024, as well as our growing sixth form, is evidence that SBL has a strong reputation and is the school of choice for the local community.

The school has very effective systems, processes and structures and therefore doesn't need radical wholesale change. However, now is a moment in time when we are looking to the future with even greater ambition to provide a truly exceptional education which inspires, challenges and supports all of our students so that they lead happy, fulfilled and successful lives at school and beyond. The preconditions for this next phase are in place; expert and dedicated staff, well behaved and hardworking students, supportive parents and effective governors. We are excited by our current 2030 vision project which will develop a collaborative vision for what an exceptional education will be like at SBL and a long term strategic plan to achieve this.

Another factor which puts SBL in a strong position to achieve our ambitious vision is being part of the Futura Learning Partnership. Futura is a family of 27 primary, secondary and special schools in the Bristol, Bath and Somerset area who all benefit from close collaboration and shared values, while retaining their individual ethos and identity. The four values of the Futura partnership which underpin everything we do at SBL are respect, opportunity, collaboration and aspiration. This year at SBL we are having a particular focus on collaboration. To quote the philosopher Aristotle, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. At SBL, we call this 'the power of the collective'.

One of the great strengths of SBL is the quality of our teaching and support staff. Despite the national picture, we are fully staffed with subject specialists who are not only passionate about their subjects but also about educating young people. Our staff carefully craft their lessons to provide engaging, challenging and enjoyable lessons with activities and support that is matched to the needs of individual and groups of students. We place a particular importance on literacy, with a focus this year on developing the oracy skills of our young people.

Of equal value to teaching and learning is the building of young people's self-esteem and wellbeing through first class pastoral care and personal development which celebrates diversity and instils respect and care for one another. We work hard to create a school environment and culture where all young people have such a strong sense of belonging that SBL is a special place that they love to be. Our house and tutoring system is central to this. All students belong to a tutor group of 25-30 students from the same year who see their tutor for 20 minutes at the start of every day. Two to three tutor groups from each year make up our four houses of Callisto, Europa, Titan and Atlas (named after moons in our solar system). Put simply, we want our students to be happy so that they enjoy school and learn most effectively.

As part of the package of support we put in place to enable our students to thrive, we treasure the three-way partnership between school, parents and carers and the individual child. We invest heavily in parental engagement through clear communication, phone calls home, meetings and community events so we build positive and constructive relationships that optimise the support for the child.

Hopefully the advert for this job made it clear that we have high expectations of all of our students at SBL in terms of attendance, effort and behaviour. Our ready to learn system for behaviour is now firmly established in the school and means that there is consistency, fairness and absolute clarity about our expectations. As a result, our students feel safe around the school. Their learning is not disrupted by the low level poor behaviour that is common place in many schools and so students enjoy lessons and make great progress. As part of our approach, we have a praise system which celebrates and rewards the positive behaviours that we want to see. While we have a dedicated and specialist behaviour team, there is a shared understanding that behaviour is everyone's responsibility. Staff are committed to doing the small things which together have a large collective impact. As a result, our classrooms and corridors are calm, purposeful and safe. We are very proud that in the last two years we are the only school in South Gloucestershire which has not permanently excluded a student.

We are not an exams factory at SBL but recognise the importance of doing all we can to enable our students to achieve the best possible qualifications and grades to help them achieve their future ambitions. Thanks to the design of our curriculum, our inspirational teaching and learning and the first-class pastoral support, it is no accident that our students achieve great results. Our data for the last two years shows that SBL students have made significantly more progress than the national average, especially last summer when our progress 8 figure was +0.37. In fact, a recent contextual analysis by FFT shows that SBL has the highest progress 8 in the country for 2023 when compared to the 10 schools with a socio-economic and prior attainment profile most similar to SBL. I encourage you to look at our data on the DfE's school performance tables website and compare us to other schools you are familiar with.

The role of Deputy Headteacher (behaviour and inclusion) and the Senior Leadership Team

The post is suited to a current senior leader who is an aspiring or existing Deputy Headteacher looking to have a core strategic leadership position. The role will appeal to someone who shares our vision of an exceptional education for all and our commitment to high standards. It is essential that your leadership is underpinned by our school values and that you lead by example.

While the focus of the role is leading on behaviour and inclusion, there is a degree of flexibility in the other responsibilities that the appointed candidate will have depending on their skills, experience and expertise. You will have a small teaching load of no more than 0.2 FTE.

The Senior Leadership Team currently consists of the Headteacher, two Deputy Headteachers, three Assistant Headteachers, three Associate Assistant Headteachers (who have been seconded to the SLT for this year) and the Headteacher's PA. There is a strong work and team ethic. We endeavour to strike a healthy balance between encouraging each other and professional challenge. Our meetings are short and business focussed but we like to enjoy lighter moments with a shared sense of humour.

Application and interview process

To apply for this post, please read the job description carefully and complete the application form with a supporting statement (within the form) of no more than 2000 words. You should explain how your experience, personal qualities and leadership impact make you a strong candidate for this post at SBL.

We welcome visits to the school to help inform your application. If you wish to visit, please e-mail Liz Vaughan, Headteacher's PA, on lvaughan@sblacademy.org.uk to make an appointment.

The deadline for submitting applications is **11:59 pm on Sunday 21 April 2024**. Interviews will be held during week beginning 29 April 2024.

I look forward to receiving your application.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robin Bassford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Robin Bassford
Headteacher