January 2023

Dear applicant,

**Director of English**

I would like to welcome you to Falinge Park and for your interest in this post which has arisen due to a request from the previous post holder to step back from leadership due to personal reasons. We have been fortunate to retain the previous post holder in school as an English and Media teacher and we feel the retention of this long serving member of staff will support the induction of the successful applicant.

The English curriculum and the role of Director of English is, as we know, a highly influential and important role in school. It can be a difficult role with the glare of headline figures at GCSE and the sharp focus on the subject area. It can be even more complex when faced with some of the issues our school faces in terms of literacy and external factors. Nevertheless, the way we operate at Falinge means that the post holder will be extremely well supported in this position, not just within school but also from a wide supportive network across the authority and nationally.

As a school, we have constantly sought expert advice and have worked closely with Professor Rob Coe and Professor Stuart Kime on the What Makes Great Teaching Toolkit. We have been awarded gold for the quality of our professional development by Teacher Development Trust and encourage participation in a variety of professional associations such as SSAT. The opportunity comes at an exciting time for the school and also a time of some change. Recruitment has not been a challenging issue for us in the fact that many staff have joined and stayed with internal promotions within school. However, we have seen a number of staff promoted externally to Headship, Deputy Head, and pastoral leaders, and we have waited to recruit to some of these positions so we can support staff induction together and so that we can appoint the right people who align with our values but who can bring fresh perspectives to the role.

There has been a specific impact of the pandemic on our school and we were possibly impacted due to its disproportionate impact on the communities we serve. We are back on our feet now after a difficult year in 2021-22, which you will identify through the GCSE outcomes – for example, we are currently seeing our attendance above FFT National Average and disadvantaged pupils’ attendance is 4% higher than those nationally. It is a tough job but made easier through our policies and practice and open, honest and transparent culture.

**Why Falinge?**

Our objective is simple at Falinge: **to create a compelling learning experience.** We do this by believing in people and positive relationships. This underpins our actions with each other and with the children. We have only one non-negotiable in school and that is our commitment to Safeguarding.

If you visit the school, I would hope you would notice the warm, welcoming environment; the excellent behaviour of the children; strong staff morale; a commitment to professional development of all staff; and a strong sense that this is a place where learning is valued. It is a place where calculated risks can be taken in a supportive environment and where we operate through a positive culture rather than a criticising, deficit model.

Our values are writ large: securing equity; strengthening communication; building communities; celebrating diversity. Our big aims of the curriculum and the learning behaviours we hope to instil in our pupils are: show kindness; show empathy; be curious; be responsible; take positive action.

We have developed our community wing of the school and are working closely with our charitable and voluntary organisations on social action and social justice projects. We believe in the beauty of civil society: of schools and community partners working together, ultimately benefiting the wellbeing and agency of communities. We would expect the successful applicant to be part of this approach.

We do work hard at the school but wellbeing and sensible policy-making is at the heart of our practice. We do not have a culture of “meeting for meeting’s sake” or a tick-box approach to school improvement. We are sensible with workload and expectations and are not afraid to stop if what we are doing isn’t having an impact on compelling learning.

As with any organisation, we don’t get it right all of the time – but we make sure that we work in a non-judgemental environment and the focus of all our actions has to be for the benefit of the children.

**Next steps?**

If you are interested in applying, please look at the person specification, our website and familiarise yourself with what we are about. If you would like to visit the school please contact my PA Lisa Fitton on fittonl@falingepark.com to arrange a visit and we will make sure we accommodate you. If you want to have a conversation prior to applying then please contact me via Lisa Fitton. When writing your application, I am interested in understanding **why you want to work at our school** as well as gathering information about your skills, knowledge, leadership and vision for this role.

Yours faithfully,



**Janice Allen**

**Headteacher**