



DR CHALLONER'S
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Finance Business Partner (Astra)

Start Date: September 2021

Challenge with reward



Finance Business Partner (Astra)

Full Time Equivalent Salary	Range: 4- 5: £25,220-£30,196 starting salary commensurate with experience) plus generous pension scheme.
Actual Salary	30 hrs - £18,063 to £21,626 37.5 hrs - £22,577 to £27,031
Hours per week	30 - 37.5 hours
Working weeks per year	41 weeks (Term Time plus 2 weeks)
Holiday Entitlement	23 days plus 8 bank holidays (FTE)

For September 2021 we want to appoint a Finance Business Partner to play a key support role in the new Astra Teaching School Hub - Buckinghamshire. The successful candidate by leading an effective support staff provision and providing day to day technical advice and support to Astra staff will play an important role in shaping the quality of teacher development across the county. Financial Management and Business Analysis will be a pivotal part of the role, which sits within the staff of Dr Challoner's Grammar School.

This is an opportunity to join a highly successful organisation as we embark on the next stage of our development. The Teaching School Hub will be working closely with over 200 schools in Buckinghamshire to provide superb training and development for teachers for the benefit of students. The school also runs the Astra SCITT, judged Outstanding by Ofsted in 2018, is a highly successful teacher training enterprise, training around 80 teachers a year, with placements in schools across the county.

For more information click [here](#)

If you would like to discuss the role further please contact Sean Kennedy (Chief Financial And Strategy Officer) on skn@challoners.org

Closing date: Wednesday 23 June 2021, noon. Please apply as soon as possible. Suitable shortlisted candidates may be called for interview before the closing date.

To apply for the post, please email a completed application form to Alison McAloon (Head's PA & HR Officer).

Email: employment@challoners.org

We are an equal opportunities employer and welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons regardless of their race, sex, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age.

Dr Challoner's Grammar School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, therefore successful candidates will be required to complete relevant safeguarding and an enhanced DBS checks.

A warm welcome...

From Mr David Atkinson, Headmaster Dr Challoner's Grammar School



Dear Applicant,

I hope that the information which follows will help inform your decision about whether to make a formal application for this post. I see the Astra SCITT and Teaching School Hub very much as part of the school, with a similar ethos and culture.

Like most job applicants you will want to find out a bit more about us. These days there is a wealth of data about schools which you may wish to look at. Proud though we are of that data, such research never tells the whole story and you will only be sure that you want to work here when you get 'that feeling' within the first few minutes of walking through the door.

When you do your research you'll find that our Ofsted inspection, carried out in November 2019, graded the school as outstanding in every respect. We believe that this judgement is a reflection of the fact that Challoner's is genuinely a special place. The report echoed what many visitors tell me – that the school has a distinctive ethos and culture of teamwork, loyalty and aspiration, with the well being of staff and students at the heart of what we do. Our students are intensely proud of coming to school here, and our staff feel similarly about their place of work. The relationship between staff and students is a very special one, and we see ourselves as running the school with the students rather than for them. The SCITT Ofsted inspection from 2018 paints a very similar picture.

Our motto - Excellence with Integrity - demonstrates the purpose behind this ethos. We also highlight three key values which we believe can underpin the effective education of all our students. These are Aspiration, Kindness and Resilience. Our staff demonstrate these characteristics in their own ways, and inculcate the same attitudes in our students. This is not an attempt to produce a 'standard Challoner' student, but a means of encouraging our young people to find their own ways of demonstrating those crucial characteristics to help them flourish in the future.

These values underpin the Astra ethos as well. As a SCITT and the Teaching School Hub for Buckinghamshire we want to demonstrate the same attitudes in all our work. By doing this we believe we can have a positive influence on teachers and children across a wider area. At the same time Astra staff are very much part of the Challoner's family, with all the benefits that brings

Despite its formidable academic record, Challoner's is not an examination hothouse – it's a place of genuine creativity, fun and comradeship. In staff we appoint, we look for that much undervalued quality of humanity, along with an acceptance that young people will always make a few mistakes – and that it's our job to ensure that they learn from them. Two of the most immediately noticeable qualities of the people who work here are their humour and their sense of proportion. Even on the dullest of days, laughter pervades the school and reflects a genuine warmth and professional respect amongst colleagues. Sharing a laugh and a joke with colleagues and students is the norm and serves to brighten our daily work no end. One of the reasons our teachers are prepared to give up so much of their time to run educational visits (we do more than any school I know) and other co-curricular activities is that spending time with our students is so rewarding and enjoyable.

We don't believe that just getting good GCSE and A Levels necessarily makes our students into good learners. Therefore we put a lot of thought and effort into how to make their time at school into a really worthwhile apprenticeship in the arts and crafts of learning which will stand the test of time, equipping them to make a success of whatever they choose to pursue in later life. Our Learning at Challoner's framework has been carefully developed over the years to promote valuable 21st century transferable skills without compromising the high academic ambitions that characterise learning here.

As you will find out, Challoner's is at the forefront of innovation and is therefore the very antithesis of some people's notion of a traditional grammar school. Establishing a Teaching School Alliance, a SCITT and now looking forward to running the local Teaching School Hub shows this, as well as our outward looking attitude. We also have a large number of young teachers who provide a constant influx of fresh ideas and enthusiasm, along with older hands who add wisdom and experience to the mix but who aren't in any way tired or cynical. We believe that the next generation of leaders will be drawn both from among our staff and our students and we take our responsibility for their development very seriously. We take the care of our staff very seriously. To keep them fresh, we have a two week Half Term break in October, so working at Challoner's now has many of the advantages of the independent sector! In addition, we do our very best to promote good mental health at work through the way we organise things, and the way we relate to each other. This kindness for others, not just students, is one of the hallmarks of our ethos. We have worked closely with MIND, using their Workplace Wellbeing Index to identify the best ways to promote wellbeing and positive mental health. This resulted in our achieving their Gold award in 2018, 2019 and 2020 against the standards of that Index - one of only a handful of organisations in the country to do so.

You'll find a lot more information about the school on our website www.challoners.com (which we hope encapsulates that intangible 'feel' of the school) and about the Astra Teaching School Hub and SCITT www.astra-alliance.com. If you would like further clarification or just an informal chat with someone, please feel free to contact us by phone or email. I enclose some information about your subject at Challoner's along with some general information about the school, a Role Profile and a Person Specification. When I read your application, I will be trying to assess whether you would be a 'good fit' for our school, so I hope that some of the things I have said will be useful to you in writing your supporting statement.

I do hope that you will decide to make an application to join us and that we will have the chance to meet.

With best wishes.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Atkinson', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mr D Atkinson,
Headmaster



'The facilities are outstanding in many respects. The forward-thinking management and leadership ensure learner-led environments are possible'.

Why work for Dr Challoner's Grammar School?



Dr Challoner's Grammar School is based in Amersham. The school benefits from outstanding modern facilities including spacious, light classrooms, all of which are fully equipped with a whiteboard and digital projector. The school also enjoys recently modernised sports, music and arts facilities.

Staff often remark that DCGS is a great place to work. Staff retention is very high which we think reflects the supportive and friendly environment in which we work. Students are hard working, capable and diligent. New staff to the school often remark that they enjoy working in an environment where students want to learn. The Ofsted inspection from November 2019 noted that the school has a culture of teamwork, loyalty and aspiration, and that staff feel exceptionally well supported.

Working at Dr Challoner's is busy and very rewarding. The School has high expectations of its staff, so looks to offer a positive range of benefits in addition to the ones already mentioned.

- Engaging, able and well-motivated students
- An innovative approach to learning
- Outstanding facilities in every subject
- The school offers a friendly working environment with supportive and caring colleagues.
- Access to an Employee Assistance Programme including financial and legal advice, counselling and health programmes
- Preferential admission for qualified children of staff (some restrictions apply)
- Access to onsite cardio fitness and weights room
- Free onsite parking
- Access to regular staff social events
- Generous pay based on the London Fringe Allowance
- Dr Challoner's offers access to join the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS"). The LGPS is a Career Average Related Earnings ("CARE") Defined Benefit Pension Scheme. Full details of the superb benefits conferred by membership of this scheme can be seen by following the hyperlinks.
- The School operates a successful and well recognised professional development scheme, which all colleagues have access to and are encouraged to make use of.
- All teaching staff are issued with a Chromebook computer for use during their employment at Challoner's
- There is an extensive induction programme for all staff joining the school, with components tailored to individual requirements, such as for those new to the teaching profession.

Excellence; Collaboration; Innovation; Support

Who we are

We are an outstanding, forward-thinking partnership offering initial teacher training, newly qualified teacher induction, continuing professional development and school to school support, led by Dr Challoner's Grammar School in Amersham. Having recently gained Teaching School Hub accreditation - one of only 87 schools in the country to do so - we are in a position to extend our provision further beyond our existing Teaching School, SCITT and NQT Appropriate Body services in order to further address the recruitment and retention needs of our local area. This includes the implementation of the Early Career Framework and revised suite of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) from September 2021. Our focus is to provide high quality training and support to benefit the learning of all teachers and students in Buckinghamshire.

We are linked to a range of research institutions, including University of London for the SCITT's PGCE provision. We have collaborated with CAMSTAR (Cambridge, School Teachers and Research) on action research projects and we are in partnership with Buckinghamshire New University for our well-established mentor support programme.

By joining us, you will become part of a genuinely collaborative school-led partnership with an Ofsted 'Outstanding' ITE provider that works for the benefit of its local community. Working with Astra is exciting and very rewarding with a positive range of benefits including exceptional professional development and working with a supportive team of experienced professionals based in an Outstanding lead school. We have an innovative approach to training and technology, embracing new challenges and working collaboratively with our partner schools. We aim to reflect our lead school's motto (Excellence with Integrity) and the core values of Aspiration, Kindness and Resilience are embedded in our practice.

Background and Context

Established in 2013, the Astra Teaching School was a founding partnership of just four local schools. Since then, it has grown to include nearly 200 schools both within and beyond Buckinghamshire.

The Astra SCITT gained accreditation from the DfE as an ITT provider in 2015 and has since awarded QTS to over 250 new entrants, including those on the Assessment Only route, meeting the needs of local primary and secondary schools, including selective, non-selective, comprehensive, special schools, PRUs and schools in all Ofsted Categories. The current cohort of 75 primary and secondary trainees (in 13 secondary subjects) are placed in local state schools.



The quality of provision is outstanding. Leaders, managers, tutors and mentors have worked purposefully and persistently to develop, establish and advance the partnership's core principles of excellence, collaboration, innovation and support."

Ofsted ITE Inspection Report, 2018

The SCITT works across three recruitment Hubs in Bucks and provides outstanding support for new teachers and their mentors, rated 'outstanding' in all categories for ITE by Ofsted in November 2018.

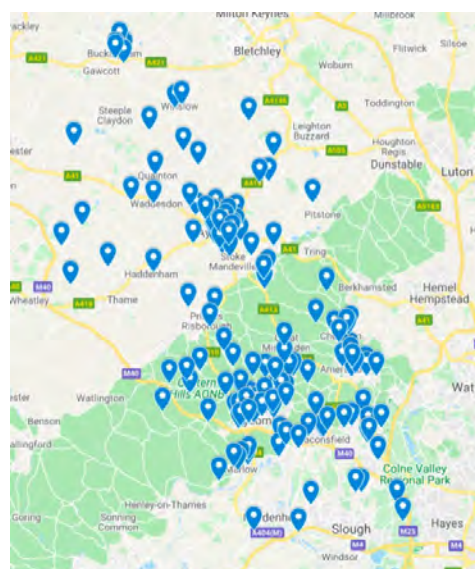
Our Appropriate Body provision for NQT induction is also the largest in Bucks and, like our Assessment Only provision, serves schools throughout the UK and overseas. We are also an experienced delivery agent for research-led CPD, accrediting, training and deploying over 60 Specialist Leaders of Education from (and into) a range of schools in Buckinghamshire.

More information can be found on our website:
www.astra-alliance.com

Our recent and prestigious Teaching School Hub accreditation celebrates the exceptional work of our partnership so far, and provides an excellent opportunity to extend our activities and network even further. Our current reach into Buckinghamshire primary and secondary state schools is shown in this map with engagement through ITT, NQT, NPQs and research-led CPD.

'Astra was the obvious choice of training providers, with the wide range of schools, and enthusiastic leaders. It provided a great starting point towards a brand new career!'

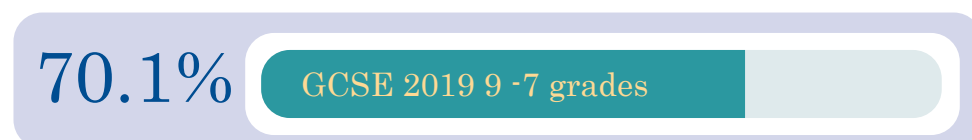
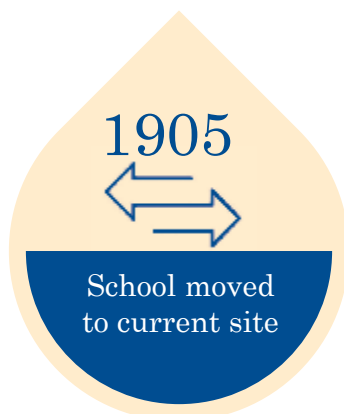
'For me, it was vitally important that I worked with an institution that would push and develop me to my fullest potential.'



Dr Challoner's Grammar School at a glance



2020 qualifications were awarded through the provision of a centre assessed grade, because of the cancellation of public examinations. As such those results are not comparable with previous years' outcomes, and are not published here.



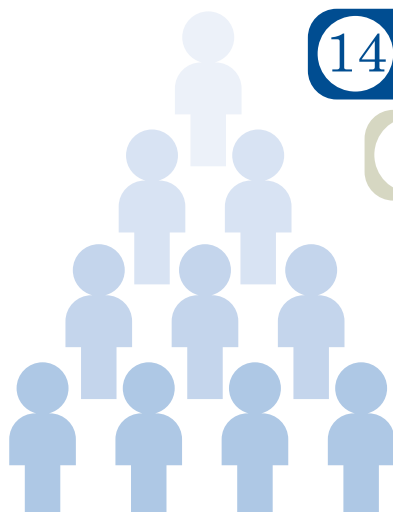
1351 Staff Years of experience of working at DCGS

Current staff have worked over 10 years **62**

31
Staff promoted internally in past 2 years

Staff development 2020/211:

96
CPD requests approved 201 /20



14 staff on the Leadership Development Programme

7 Leadership shadowing programmes

5 Early Career Development programme

4 NQT programme

2 on Pilot CCT NQT Coaching programme

Dr Challoner's Grammar School at a glance

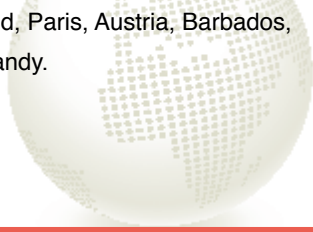


Due to school closures in 2020 and 2021 and on going guidance on educational visits, the data reflects both current and d previous yyears ffigures.

2 week October half-term

International residential trips

Marseille, Murcia, Bruges, Ardeche, Berlin, Bensheim, Sicily, Krakow, Iceland, Washington, Geneva, Namibia, Portugal, Holland, Paris, Austria, Barbados, Normandy.



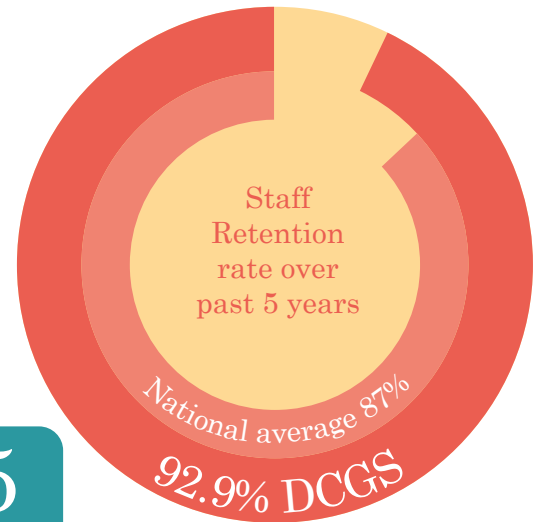
55 Staff usuallyy g go on residential trips (inc Support Staff)

Gold Mental Health awards
(One of 15 nationally to do so)

3

Average Number of extracurricular Clubs and Societies per Term

85



Staff Survey Results

What % staff rate positively

DCGS

Sector Average



1 staff member wedding reception at school
1 played nationally for their country
123 Strawberries eaten at Staff Wimbledon

Staff Football End of Term Gatherings Christmas Party Secret Friend

Staff Yoga Time to Talk Day Mental Health Day Staff Badminton

"How's it going?" Step Challenge Secret Santa

Leavers Dinner French Film Society Staff gathering

Staff Wimbledon Staff Tennis Pub trips

Staff Cake Rota Staff Tea and Coffee



Staff walked 5302.47 miles in 3 weeks (twice round the earth's circumference)!

Staff Society



Role Profile



Job title

Finance Business Partner (Astra)

Job purpose

Empowering all Astra staff through the provision of high quality business support

Objectives

To help lead an effective support staff provision for the Astra Business Unit.

To provide day to day technical advice and support to Astra staff.

Principal Responsibility Areas

- A Financial Management
- B Business Analysis
- C Data and Processes
- D Line Management and Service Delivery
- E Other Duties

Key Tasks

A – Financial Management (Astra)

- To lead the month and year end business processes for Astra.
- To investigate and report on significant budget variances throughout the year
- To meet regularly with budget holders to assess financial performance and to provide management information, analysis and advice to assist in improved decision making.
- To produce monthly budget monitoring reports including year end forecasts to the Chief Financial and Strategy Officer for consolidation into the organisation's overall management accounts.
- To prepare grant claims (including Annex G's) and associated backing documentation. Liaise with auditors as appropriate.
- To support the Chief Financial and Strategy Officer in the preparation of the final accounts, liaising with auditors as appropriate

- To work with all Astra budget holders to assist in producing a recommended budget for future years.
- With budget holders, develop robust plans for realising income and effective monitoring of income levels throughout the year. Proactively manage debtors associated with Astra.
- Raise invoices for Astra, as appropriate, ensuring correct rates of VAT are charged, depending on service.
- Help onboard new suppliers, including determining their status under IR35, and assist in getting them set up on the new finance system so that the team can raise requisitions as soon as required.
- To provide advice to all Astra colleagues in areas of complexity including but not limited to:
Administration of the payment of bursaries and school direct salaried grants to ITT trainees and partner schools.
Liaise with the school's Payroll department and colleagues to ensure effective commissioning of services and payment in relation to IR35 suppliers.
- To review the financial impact of census returns including the levels of bursary and salaried payments due to trainees and partner schools. To work with the Systems and Data Manager (SCITT) in reconciling income due in and amounts to be passed across.
- To work with service leaders to draft or update service level agreements for services in accordance with regulations and commercial viability for authorisation by the Chief Financial and Strategy Officer.
- To maintain a live register of all Astra related contracts.

B– Business Analysis

- To provide business and commercial advice to the Principal of Astra.
- To draft business reports for governors as appropriate.
- To regularly review government policy changes, identifying threats and opportunities for Astra.
- To regularly review the Astra service offering to ensure that it meets our customers needs and wants and that we are competitive in terms of cost and quality to other potential providers.
- Provide support to the Recruitment, Compliance and Service Delivery Manager regarding the implementation of marketing strategies for attracting new entrants into the Astra SCITT.
- Provide support to the Astra Events Logistics and Comms Officer regarding the implementation of marketing strategies to relevant educational professionals.
- Where relevant, to work with senior leaders to prepare new cases for new business or service redesign including scenario analysis of likely cost implication of service redesign.



Role Profile continued



B - Business Analysis (continued)

- Support senior leaders in analysing contract terms or terms of services provided by the DfE to understand their potential implications on current and future service delivery.
- Coordinate the monitoring of progress and statutory reporting of Teaching School Hub KPI's.
- To liaise with ECTs and their schools regarding any reduced or extended induction periods and ensure compliance with the TRA and DfE regulations, liaising with the Astra Principal as appropriate.

C - Data and Processes

- To be the member of support staff with oversight of the data processes and systems used by Astra, identifying best practice and improvements in how data can be used and coordinated across the organisation.
- To analyse new and existing business processes and systems and make recommendations for improvement in their implementation or current use.
- To lead on the maintenance and development of the CRM system to ensure that it empowers other Astra staff and partners in the delivery of their objectives to the fullest extent practicable.
- To create an effective digital culture within the Astra Team.

D - Line Management and Service Delivery

- To set high standards as a manager modelling, at all times, the highest possible standards of professionalism, ethical leadership, and personal behaviour.
- To support and manage direct reports in accordance with DCGS procedures, including provision of appropriate induction and carrying out annual appraisals.
- In conjunction with the Recruitment, Compliance and Service Delivery Manager, manage the Astra Team workload to ensure that peaks and troughs within each sub business unit can be effectively managed by deploying staff as appropriate.
- To effectively hold those who the role line manages to account whilst empowering them to fulfil their roles effectively.

D - Other Duties

- To be the logistics lead for running events for the business units above.
- To ensure that content on Astra's digital platforms in relation to the business units you support remains relevant and fit for purpose.
- To provide classroom or duty management in the absence of a teacher on an occasional basis.
- To assist occasionally in the invigilation of examinations at peak times.
- To accompany students as an additional adult on educational visits on an occasional basis.
- To provide support and cover for other colleagues in the support staff team when required.
- To undertake professional development activities to assist in relevant aspects of the role.
- To comply with policies and procedures relating to child protection, health, safety, welfare, security, confidentiality and data protections, reporting any concerns to the appropriate person.
- To undertake general office duties including mail, filing, photocopying, collating and minuting meetings.
- To undertake any other reasonable task required by the Headmaster or Principal of Astra.

Person Specification

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications	<p>Appropriate Financial Qualifications / or significant successful experience of business partnering at a high level.</p> <p>Good standard of general education up to A Level or equivalent.</p>	<p>Degree and/or Further Education Qualification.</p> <p>Accountancy qualification.</p>
Previous Work Experience	<p>Experience of working in a role which demands the ability to work accurately and to deadlines.</p> <p>Successful experience of leading and managing other staff.</p> <p>Successful experience of leading and managing other staff.</p>	<p>Experience of working in a finance or business partnering role at a senior level.</p> <p>Experience of managing change successfully and implementing new systems/procedures/controls</p> <p>Successful experience of project management.</p> <p>Experience of working within a school or other public sector environment.</p>
Professional Skills & Experience	<p>Meticulous approach to work with a high standard of accuracy.</p> <p>Ability to summarize and convey information quickly and concisely; good literacy and communication skills.</p> <p>Excellent ICT skills.</p> <p>Knowledge of principles and methods of financial control and reporting, and their adaptation to various purposes.</p> <p>A good working knowledge and understanding of methods of ordering, contracts, purchasing and value for money.</p>	<p>Experience of dealing with recruitment, disciplinary and capability issues.</p> <p>Knowledge of best practice in compliance and audit.</p> <p>A good working understanding of controls regarding the management of income collection.</p>
People management Skills	<p>Good communicator with excellent Interpersonal skills.</p> <p>Able to relate well to staff, senior leaders, governors and external stakeholders, building effective working relationships.</p> <p>Evidence of effective team leadership and line-management of staff.</p> <p>Ability to know when and how to delegate effectively (and when not to)</p> <p>Ability to inspire confidence in others.</p>	
Other Personal Qualities	<p>Ability to evaluate own development needs and those of others and to address them.</p> <p>Good verbal and written communication skills, including the ability to negotiate effectively with contractors and service providers.</p> <p>A diplomatic and patient approach.</p> <p>Initiative and ability to prioritise one's own work and meet deadlines.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to adopt a "hands on" approach to working.</p> <p>A willingness to seek specialist advice and an awareness of where to seek it.</p> <p>Recognising the need to "get the job done".</p>	<p>Sense of humour</p>

Making an application

The purpose of the selection process is to assess your suitability for the post and give both the panel and yourself an opportunity to gain further information before making a successful appointment. It is also an opportunity to seek clarification on information which you have provided on the application form and accompanying information. The interview will also assess your suitability to work with children and will include questions relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

How to apply

To apply for this position, you will need to complete an application form, which can be downloaded by following this link.

Completed applications should be sent to employment@challoners.org

Please note that only fully completed application forms will be considered.
CVs will not be included in the short-listing process

Short-listing

Applications will be assessed based on the information provided on the application form; only those best fulfilling the criteria for the role and the person specification will be short-listed.

Subject to the number of applications, short-listing may take place before the deadline for applications has passed.

If you have not heard from us within three weeks of the closing date, you can assume that your application is not being progressed on this occasion.

Interview

A first round of interviews may be conducted remotely.

During the second round of interviews candidates will also be given a tour of the school, and there will be a chance to meet members of the team informally over lunch or coffee.

Selected candidates will then be formally interviewed by the Head and other members of the school management team.

Please note that the school adheres to all social-distancing guidelines in schools.

(Support Staff) Administration Task

The interview process for support staff will include a skills test which is relevant to the role in which you are interviewing for. These will be completed using Google docs and Google sheets, which are very similar to Microsoft Word and Excel.

As part of our safer recruitment process please find a link to our Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Statement and recruitment of ex-offenders policy.

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore that the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure and cannot be taken into account. Further information about filtering offences can be found at DBS filtering guide. It is an offence for any applicant to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

Excellence with integrity

At DCGS...

**We are determined to give our best to everything we do
We are prepared for the opportunities and challenges of today and the future
We serve the wider community**

At DCGS We Value...

Aspiration



Kindness



Resilience



In All Our Actions And Intentions

At DCGS everyone learns through...

Teaching that is rigorous, engaging and high quality

Developing leadership at all levels

Maintaining a culture of high expectations

Showing a concern for everyone's wellbeing

Providing a first class learning environment

Ensuring a breadth of opportunities for all

Promoting an open and outward facing attitude

Engaging with the global potential of technology

Exploring innovative and sustainable approaches