**BRIEFING FOR APPLICANTS**

Head of Philosophy & Ethics/Religious Studies

Teachers Main Pay Scale / UPS + TLR 2.2

**An introduction to our school**

Our school is an 11-16 mixed, community, comprehensive school of around 950 students. We are lucky to be based in a relatively new building, with great facilities, on a beautiful site at the edge of the Peak District market town of Chapel-en-le-Frith. The Peak District National Park is quite literally on the school’s doorstep and provides endless opportunities for walkers, cyclists, mountain bikers, climbers, cavers and other outdoor enthusiasts.

The nearest big towns to the school are Buxton and Stockport but good transport links mean that the school’s staff travel from a wide area with many commuting from Manchester, Sheffield, Chesterfield and the towns of East Cheshire. A sizable contingent of staff live in the villages of the Peak District. For anyone considering relocating it is a wonderful area in which to live, with a good mix of housing, decent schools, easy commutes and a good quality of life.

We believe that our school is unusual in many ways. Perhaps the most obvious of these, which may even make us unique, is structural. The current school was formed by merging, in a new building, the local area special school with the existing high school. The special school became the current 35 place enhanced resourced SEND provision, always referred to simply as ‘Learning Support’ in school. To meet the moderate to severe special educational needs of its cohort, Learning Support operates as a ‘school within a school’. The Learning Support department runs a full independent curriculum with significant dedicated SEND trained staffing. Whilst Learning Support can provide an independent, tailored, learning experience for students, in every other way this cohort is fully integrated into the life of the school. This arrangement makes for a wonderfully inclusive school with young people who are very accepting of difference. Our inclusive approach spreads more widely too and we often buck local and national trends by accepting students with difficult and complex backgrounds.

This inclusivity does however make the school’s published data rather tricky to interpret. The DfE data effectively merges the results of an average sized comprehensive school with that of a special school. In short, though we think our 2022 performance table outcome look quite respectable, we are rather better than the raw numbers make us look. Some years ago, we set ourselves a challenge; “*to* *achieve results ranking alongside the best schools nationally; whilst remaining a highly inclusive, friendly, community school”*. We have not achieved this yet, but it is a mantra that has guided us since. Undoubtedly, the balance between inclusivity and excellence is a difficult one, but both governors and staff are fully committed to making it work, despite its undoubted challenges in the current educational environment.

We think that we are different in other ways too. Our governors value the arts and creative subjects and we retain high uptake in these areas. We are not a top-down organisation; we are a team, and we work together to do the best we can for the young people in our care. If you join us, you can become involved in developing the future of our school community. Perhaps most importantly, we recognise that happy, committed staff make for a successful school; we work really hard to look after and develop our staff.

Visitors to our school notice these differences. People frequently comment on the sense of community, the calm atmosphere, and the fact that our staff smile, joke and enjoy what they do. At the start of our most recent Ofsted inspection the lead inspector commented, after meeting the staff in briefing, that he had never met such a welcoming, smiley and relaxed staff team at the start of an inspection. The report from that inspection, in May 2019, gives a very good picture of the organisation that we are.

Like most schools, we have our strengths and weaknesses. We are proud of the work we have done recently on curriculum development, on teaching and learning and on research-based practice, with many staff now engaged with research and further professional qualifications. Our challenges remain those of many rural schools, getting our results to be clearly above average requires that we better engage disadvantaged students and that we raise aspirations of some boys in particular.

We are in the minority of secondary schools that remain local authority run. This is by choice after careful research and consideration. We are not, however, an isolated school. We have good links with other local schools, with local further education providers and with universities. We are a member of the Peak Edge Group of local primary and secondary schools.

**Philosophy & Ethics Department at Chapel-en-le-Frith High School**

Let’s start by talking about names. We have always referred to this subject as philosophy and ethics in school, because that best reflects our view of it. Under the last three, all brilliant, heads of department, the subject has always been about big ideas, big questions, and thinking skills, not simply about learning about religion. In year 7 to 9 the subject is called philosophy and ethics on student timetables, it is very popular, and does not suffer from the ‘why do we have to do this’ attitude occasionally seen in schools. At GCSE we’ve changed the subject name to religious studies to match the GCSE that we teach. Finally, we have to advertise this as a religious studies job, as otherwise it ends up in the wrong part of the TES!

So, we have a philosophy and ethics department, which delivers year 7 to 9 philosophy and ethics, and an optional GCSE in religious studies. The GCSE is popular, with typically two classes of around 25 each year. Outcomes are very good.

The department has also recently chosen to deliver GCSE citizenship, again a very popular and very successful GCSE. Whether this continues to be offered by the department is for discussion with the successful applicant.

The location of our school means that our cohort is not the most diverse and many students do not to have a faith. All the more reason we think, for this subject to be taught well. It never ceases to amaze me how intrigued our students are to learn about those whose lives are different to their own. Throughout the year 7 to 9 curriculum, we look at Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism and Humanism and this leads to studying the AQA GCSE Spec ‘A’ course in years 10 and 11. Our focus until this year has been on the religions of Christianity and Buddhism, this year we have experimented by teaching Christianity and Islam.

After Easter, the Philosophy and Ethics department will have one permanent staff member (the successful applicant) and the support of a team of highly competent non-specialists. The incoming head of department is most likely to pick up the teaching of the current GCSE Religious Studies GCSE groups. The current citizenship groups are taught by others.

The department needs, depending on whether citizenship continues, about 1.5 staff, including the head of department to run. There is certainly the possibility of appointing a full time teacher of philosophy and ethics/religious studies in the future.

This vacancy arises because the head of department left in the autumn term to take up a post elsewhere in the education sector. He left a very well organised and effective department, which is currently being managed by our head of geography. If you are the successful applicant you will inherit a department that works well. This should give you an opportunity to settle in and understand the school and department before you consider making changes and improvements.

Safer recruitment and our values

The school uses robust safer recruitment procedures that meet the requirements of [Keeping children safe in education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2) . These processes are designed to deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment or volunteering opportunities in the school.

Our safer recruitment processes form a vital part of our whole school approach to safeguarding and are an essential part of creating a safe environment for our learners. Further details on the safer recruitment of staff in school can be found in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy which is linked [here](http://www.chapelhigh.org.uk/internet_assets/documents/parents/policies/2022/Chapel%20High%20Safeguarding%20and%20Child%20Protection%20Policy.pdf).

When you apply for a job in our school you will be asked to disclose any previous criminal convictions. You will be asked to provide a full employment history and the names of two referees. One of these referees must be your most recent employer and, if the employer is a school, must be the headteacher. We will follow up on any issues raised by your references at interview and we may contact your referees to verify their identity or for further information.

Everyone who works in the school, including volunteers will have appropriate Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks. For teachers, qualified teacher status will be checked. Appointment to a post will be subject to satisfactory references, satisfactory DBS checks, the checking of qualified teacher status (for teachers), checking of the right to work in the UK, and health clearance.

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School is committed to creating an inclusive workplace which promotes and values diversity in age, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability and ethnicity. We expect our staff and volunteers to share these values.

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School

**Job Description**

This document has been drawn up based on the Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document and other statutory provisions

**Head of Department Philosophy and Ethics/Religious Studies**

Reporting to: senior leadership group line manager.

**Main responsibilities**

Heads of department are expected to carry out the duties required of all classroom teachers with the following additional responsibilities:

**Leading curriculum development**

* Create a clear curriculum vision and intent for PaE/RS and translate this vision into everyday work and practice.
* Ensure the provision of an appropriately broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum, in line with the aims and ethos of the school and school policies.
* To keep up to date with national developments in the teaching of PaE/RS, in terms of curriculum content, teaching methodology and innovative practice and ensure that curriculum development reflects these.
* Ensure that curriculum development reflects and responds to the needs of students in both the local and national context.
* Maintain clear curriculum maps and schemes of work, in line with school policy and ensure that teaching resources are available for teachers to use.
* Celebrate and promote the importance of PaE across the school community and with parents.

**Leading teaching and learning**

* Actively promote the school’s approaches to teaching and learning within the department; support staff in adopting them.
* Be accountable for the quality of teaching and learning in the department.
* Monitor and ensure the consistent implementation of the school’s teaching and learning policies and expectations.
* Develop rigorous assessment procedures within the department in line with school policy in order to provide regular and accurate attainment data.
* Ensure the shared and clear understanding of the relevant GCSE examination board’s specification and assessment criteria amongst subject staff.
* Ensure that all subject staff understand and make effective use of data to track student performance in order to raise their attainment.
* Rigorously monitor student progress within the department and establish effective intervention strategies to challenge underperformance.
* Develop and enhance the teaching practice of others.
* Challenge the underperformance of staff where necessary and develop strategies to support improvement.

**Behaviour and attitudes**

* Be responsible for maintaining a positive learning ethos within the department.
* Support staff in managing behaviour within the department in line with school procedures, including the use of departmental behaviour plans and by liaising with parents and pastoral staff as required.

**Leadership and management**

* Lead by example and promote an effective team.
* Ensure that all staff in the department share in the development of and support the vision and aims of the department.
* Be responsible for the line management and performance management of identified staff within the department.
* Contribute to the selection and recruitment of teachers and support staff, including the induction and assessment of new teachers and initial teacher trainees, where appropriate.
* Provide professional advice and support and identify training needs.
* Liaise with the Examinations Officer to maintain accreditation with the appropriate examination bodies and to manage exam entries.
* Manage the resources of the department within the limits of the delegated budget and in accordance with the school’s financial procedures.
* Effectively manage and deploy teaching and support staff to best meet the needs of students and the department.
* Manage the learning environment in the department and enforce school expectations for the presentation and maintenance of the classroom environment and resources.
* Ensure that Health and Safety policies and practices in the department comply with statutory and school requirements.
* Contribute to and support the implementation of school policies.
* Ensure that appropriate work has been set in the case of staff absence and liaise with the learning supervisor team during the period of absence.
* Ensure that assessment data recorded on school systems is reliable and accurate and that staff understand and adhere to whole school procedures.
* Contribute to and participate in the school’s monitoring and evaluation programme.
* Provide accurate reports to the Headteacher, governors and the LA when required.
* Represent the department at whole school events such as Open Evening.
* Lead the development of effective subject links with other schools and the community, including attendance at appropriate events.
* Lead the department’s extra-curricular programme, ensuring that a wide variety of sports clubs continue to be available to students and that the school continues to be well represented in competitive sport.

Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task may not be identified. You will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from the Headteacher to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in this job description.

**Person Specification**

**Head of Department – Philosophy & Ethics/Religious Studies**

**Essential:**

* Qualified teacher status.
* Successfully completed induction period (NQT year).
* Experience of teaching PaE/Religious Studies to students aged 11 to 16.
* Knowledge and experience of curriculum development.
* A strong personal background in PaE.
* A good understanding of the use of data to identify underachievement and areas for improvement.
* A good knowledge of teaching and learning strategies in PaE and the ability to communicate them to others.
* Detailed knowledge of the GCSE specifications for Religious Studies.
* An absolute commitment to inclusive education. The ability to relate positively to **all** students and show a fundamental commitment to them and their development.
* Commitment to achieving high standards.
* A team player who is an effective manager of people. The ability to work constructively with teachers, teaching assistants and non-specialist staff.

**Desirable:**

* Experience in a leadership role.
* A leadership qualification e.g. NPQML.
* Experience of working with other schools.
* Experience of working with governors.
* Recent CPD or experience that supports the development of the PaE curriculum.
* Experience of delivering the Citizenship national curriculum.

**Notes on Applying**

Applying for any job is time consuming and difficult, these notes aim to make it easier.

**Please note: we do not use either the Derbyshire County Council or the TES online application process. You need to either complete a paper application and post it or word process the application and e-mail it to us.**

**The Application Form**

Please complete the application form neatly, fully and accurately, including exact dates. The form may be typed or handwritten, but if you do write it by hand please use black ink. Indicate clearly on the front page the post you are applying for.

From a safeguarding point of view we are required to ensure that there are no unaccounted for gaps in your employment or educational history. Please explain any gaps that do appear; notes like “gap year” or “bringing up children” are really helpful.

**Referees**

Please use referees who have direct, recent experience of your work and who are in responsible positions. We may need to contact them at short notice so please be specific over addresses and contact details, e-mail addresses are very useful. One referee must be your current or most recent employer; if you are working in a school it should be your headteacher. References will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends.

**The Supporting Statement or Letter of Application**

The supporting statement or letter is probably the most important part of your application. You should make statements which demonstrate how your qualifications, personal qualities and experience match the post, focus on the impact of any work you have done. You should take particular care to demonstrate how you meet the person specification included as part of these details.

**CVs**

In line with current safeguarding guidance we do not accept CVs. Please do not waste your time by submitting a CV.

**Arrangements for Interview**

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted as soon as possible after the closing date. For teaching posts referees are contacted prior to the interview stage. If you are shortlisted, any relevant issues arising from your references will be taken up at interview.

**Appointments**

Appointments are made conditional upon the successful candidate meeting the Local Authority’s requirements for satisfactory references; satisfactory DBS checks; qualification checks and (for teachers) checking of Qualified Teacher Status.

**Submitting your Application**

When you have completed your application, the completed form and covering letter should be posted to the school, addressed to the headteacher, to arrive before the closing date. You may e-mail applications to Diane Hibbert, Personnel Administrator. ([dhibbert@chapelhigh.org.uk](mailto:dhibbert@chapelhigh.org.uk))