

Head of Religious Studies

Location	Mercia School (Sheffield)
Salary	Teachers' pay scales + TLR 2b
Contract term	Full time 1.0FTE, permanent
Responsible to	Headteacher
Start date	1 September 2025
Closing date	Midnight Thursday 6 March 2025

Mercia School

Mercia School (11-18) opened in 2018 in a brand-new building. Leaders and governors have an ambitious vision for the school and are determined that all pupils, irrespective of background will thrive and achieve well. The school has secured a strong reputation for educational excellence and during the last three years, has been the most over-subscribed school in the city.

Mercia School has a strong commitment to reduce workload for teachers. Within the longer day and ten training days, staff have dedicated time to complete all essential tasks and professional development. Everything is designed to ensure teachers have the time and energy to teach, and leave school at the end of the day without further work to undertake.

In February 2023, Ofsted inspected the school and graded all aspects of provision, and its overall effectiveness, to be 'Outstanding'. Mercia School published exceptional GCSE results in the summer of 2023, achieving the highest Progress 8 score for disadvantaged pupils, this high-level of performance was repeated in 2024.

Mercia Collegiate Sixth Form opened in September 2023. As the school continues to grow, it is crucial that we sustain our culture and effectiveness, and this role is central to our continued success.

Mercia School is a part of Mercia Learning Trust, a successful partnership of four primary and three secondary schools located in the south-west of Sheffield. Established in 2012, with one secondary school, our trust has grown to serve over 5000 pupils, with 650 staff.

Our staff are a crucial part of our trust, just like our pupils. We are devoted to recruiting, training, retaining and taking good care of our highly skilled and dedicated team.

The role

We are seeking a highly skilled and talented religious studies subject specialist. You will join a school with an incredible culture where you can contribute to the development of the religious studies curriculum. You will be committed to continuous improvement, striving to be the best teacher you can be. As such, you will deliver exceptional lessons and secure outstanding learning, progress and attainment for every pupil. Furthermore, all teachers contribute to the pupil elective and enrichment programme and are expected to engage in all aspects of school life.

At Mercia School, lessons are:

- based on a carefully constructed, sequenced and ambitious curriculum
- demanding and carefully planned so that all pupils make strong progress and secure necessary disciplinary knowledge
- taught in a traditional way that gives pupils time to practise and master content
- focused on learning, retention and strong foundations, and preparation and readiness for GCSE and beyond
- always delivered to pupils who have exceptional behaviours and attitudes for learning, and in lessons without distraction

This is also a unique opportunity to join one of the best schools in the country and make a difference to the life chances of its pupils.

You can find out more information [here](#).

Job description

Purpose

Lead all aspects of a subject department, securing exceptional lessons to all pupils, irrespective of background. Guaranteeing all achieve exceptional outcomes and go on to lead happy and fulfilling lives.

Key responsibilities

- Help deliver the vision of Mercia School and promote its ethos and culture, particularly through exemplary leadership of the religious studies department.
- Work cooperatively and constructively with the whole staff and subject team.
- Develop, produce, and maintain appropriate documentation to underpin the work and operation of the department.
- Design, develop and refine a curriculum so it is challenging, appropriate, inspiring, knowledge rich and focused on mastery.
- Implement our Mercia School Teaching and Learning Policy (traditional and didactic) and ensure exceptional lessons to all.
- Fully prepare teachers and pupils for success through public examinations at GCSE and A Level.
- Induct and support teachers and coordinate and deliver CPD as required.
- Ensure systems to assess, monitor and report pupil progress and attainment are in place.
- Provide leadership, line management and coaching to the subject team.
- Implement school quality assurance process to regularly review and refine systems to secure continuous improvement.
- Ensure the efficient administration of the department through effective communication and department meetings.
- Report to others, including parents and carers.
- Promote and maintain school policy regarding pupil conduct, behaviour and expectations.
- Keep abreast of local, national, and international best practice and research.
- Support key aspects of staff recruitment as required.
- Efficiently manage departmental resources.
- Advise our leadership team on the creation of the religious studies timetable
- Develop and maintain effective external strategic partnerships

Class teacher duties

- Act as a role model of exceptional practice for other staff.
- Ensure lessons are carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Deliver exceptional lessons in line with school policy.
- Following policy, ensure consistently high standards and expectations in lessons so that pupil engagement, attitudes to learning, productivity and learning is exceptional.
- Prepare pupils for GCSE and A Level examination.
- Engage in regular assessment and review of pupil progress and attainment and react to findings accordingly.
- Ensure the provision of a safe and secure learning environment.
- Participate in regular quality assurance, including reciprocal observations, and performance management processes.

General/other

- Attend and participate in relevant meetings and training as required.
- With others, ensure that all communication and consultation relating to the religious studies department is appropriate.
- Promote the religious studies department and school within our trust, city and elsewhere.
- Take part in activities and events as directed.
- Where appropriate act as a mentor to ECTs/Teach First in line with school policy.
- If possible, become a subject examiner/moderator at GCSE or A Level.

- Fulfil all other teaching and pastoral duties as directed and in line with school policy, including:
 - family lunch every day with pupils
 - the house system
 - the elective programme
 - daily duties
 - committing to the longer school day
- Contribute to the overall development of Mercia School and Mercia Learning Trust, ensuring both operate because of shared and collective responsibility, including, contributing to trust partnership activities to drive school and trust improvement.
- All schools in Mercia Learning Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Therefore, all employees are expected to share this commitment.
- Be aware of the school's duty of care in relation to staff, students and visitors and to always comply with all health and safety policies.
- Be aware of and comply with the codes of conduct, regulations and policies of the school and its commitment to equal opportunities, as set out in the staff handbook.
- Any other delegated roles as directed by the headteacher.

This job description is current at the date as shown, but in conjunction with the post holder, may be changed by the headteacher to reflect or anticipate changes in the role which are commensurate with the grade and job title.

Person specification

Role: Head of Religious Studies

Attributes	Essential	Desirable	Assessment
Qualifications and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree in religious studies or a relevant equivalent (2:1 degree as a minimum is desirable) • Qualified teacher status • Recent and relevant CPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant professional development relating to knowledge-based curriculum • 2:1 degree or higher • Middle / subject leadership training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application • Interview • References
Skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly effective communication skills • Able to use/learn and adopt traditional pedagogical approaches • Clear commitment to and understanding of child protection matters • Exceptional subject knowledge and knowledge of the National Curriculum • Knowledge of current initiatives relating to achievement and inclusion • Knowledge of relevant GCSE or A Level syllabus and assessment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application • Interview • References
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching religious studies to a full range of age and prior attainment within a secondary school • Evidence of strong pupil progress, outcomes and examination success for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam board examiner • A level teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application • Interview • References
Personal qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear understanding of working effectively with the leadership team • Proven record of being transparent, approachable, and accountable • High expectations which motivate and challenge pupils • Ability to receive and act on feedback 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application • Interview • References

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- Sense of humour and perspective
 - Strong attention to detail
 - Aligned to values of our trust and schools

How to apply

- All candidates must complete the following application process:
 - submit an application form via <https://www.eteach.com/careers/merciatrust>
- We do not accept CVs or council forms.
- After your application has been submitted:
 - in all cases written references will be taken up and made available to interviewers before the final selection stage
 - an email and/or letter will be sent to shortlisted candidates with details of the interview process
 - if you have not heard from us within two weeks of the closing date, please assume that, on this occasion, your application has been unsuccessful
- Further information:
 - Take a look at www.merciatrust.co.uk/careers for more on what it's like working for the trust, what we offer you, and what we're looking for
 - Should you require any additional information about the role or the school or would like an informal discussion or out of hours visit, please contact us on 0114 553 9080 or gdarlow@merciaschool.com
 - For more information about the application process, please email recruitment@merciatrust.co.uk

The closing date for applications is Midnight Thursday 6 March 2025.

The small print

Mercia Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. If you are shortlisted, your suitability to work with children will be explored, and this will include disclosing convictions. The information you disclose may be discussed with you during the interview.

The successful candidate will therefore be required to complete a DBS check in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 and the Police Act Regulations.

In accordance with DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, an online search will be completed on all shortlisted applicants prior to interview. Any relevant information will be discussed further with the applicant during the recruitment process.

We are an equal opportunities employer. Our staff are recruited and promoted on the basis of their merits and abilities and no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of racial group, origin or nationality, sex, disability, marital status, age, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs or trade union activity. Please indicate whether there are any reasonable adjustments or access requirements you would need to help you to attend an interview. If you wish to discuss your requirements prior to submitting your form, please contact our recruitment team on 0114 349 4230.