Monday 14th October 2024

Dear Applicant

Thank you for taking an interest in the post of Head Teacher here at Bassenthwaite School and Ducklings Nursery. It is with great sadness that I will be retiring from my position at the end of the summer term 2025, as the past eighteen years as Head here have been extremely rewarding and positive. My work as leader of a school team has been a very exciting adventure and I have had a lot of fun along the way!

I hope that when you find out more about what a special place Bassenthwaite is, you will be inspired to apply for the post to lead the school forwards, continuing the great work that has gone on here over recent years and also, take the school in new directions.

I came to the school in 2007 and I have enjoyed the challenge of leading the school through many OFSTED inspections, ensuring we have always been considered a “Good” school with many outstanding qualities. As a whole school team, we have completed a huge amount of focussed work on the intent, implementation and impact of our curriculum, the development of Global Learning, emotional literacy and using evidence-based research across the school as well as increasing the emphasis on Music and the Arts. Alongside these key areas of focus, we have established our progressive programme of residential visits from Year 3 to 6, developed our collaborative work with other schools and organisations locally and forged our link with Fumbuni Primary School in Tanzania through the British Council Connecting Classrooms programme. It has been a busy eighteen years!

As Head Teacher at Bassenthwaite, you can expect to work with a strong and experienced teaching team, a highly effective Governing Body and board of Directors and some very supportive parents/carers, not to mention a very passionate group of pupils. Our development work has been collaborative across all groups of our community at all times and everyone has had a voice in the process. Our school vision, “Small School, Big Opportunities” encapsulates our belief that we should grab all that is offered to us and “have a go”.

This year we have already had a camp out at school with all our KS2 pupils, and our EYFS and KS1 children have been for horse riding lessons. We will soon be off on our KS2 residential where we will hang out in trees, zip wire and climb to new heights. In February, we will be taking part in the Young Voices concert in the Co-Op Arena, Manchester where we will join a choir of 8,000 children in a shared singing extravaganza. We never have a “normal” half term – there is forever something going on!

Our teachers are constantly involved in action research to develop their pedagogy, some driven by their own interests and some by school improvement needs. There is always a conversation about learning taking place somewhere between colleagues! Our core pedagogy, developed over the past three years, has been driven by WELL (Western Excellence in Learning and Leadership) and the Education Endowment’s Great Teaching Toolkit, which have provided the resources to ensure the excellent attitudes to teaching and learning that we see in class.

In addition to, or as a result of all the fun and improvements that we have brought about together in the past eighteen years, our performance data has been consistently high, and Bassenthwaite is currently a very successful school. We ensure our children make substantial progress and achieve to the best of their abilities. I have great aspirations for the future of Bassenthwaite School and I am sure that, under the right leadership, the school will continue to grow from strength to strength.

Some of the particular memories that I will take away from Bassenthwaite School include several exhausting but very rewarding trips including The Forbidden Corner in Leyburn, Eden Camp, The Hancock Museum in Newcastle… not to mention the hundreds of campfires, outdoor adventures, sporting events and fell walks we have had each term with everyone, in a variety of weather conditions! I also have many, many fond memories of school productions, music concerts and choir performances both in school, in town and the surrounding areas, particularly when teachers took part alongside the children in a summer production of “Olivia”.

I thank you for reading this letter and wish every candidate in the appointment process success. I hope that whoever is appointed is as happy and rewarded as I have been during my time here.

Yours sincerely

Sara Royle

Mrs Sara Royle

Head Teacher, Bassenthwaite School and Ducklings Nursery