

Kingsmead School and Sixth Form

Teacher of Religious Education Applicant Pack (May 2021)

Salary: MPS/UPS

Start Date: September 2021

May 2021

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for making the time to look into Kingsmead. If you are someone who prefers a short introduction then please indulge on how much it matters to me that this is a two-way process; so you know you are making a good decision to apply, I want to get across why the school is so special, my style of leadership, where I want the school to go and my ambitions for you. That will take a few more paragraphs than the average bumf.

**What makes Kingsmead special?**

To start with the school part of that, Kingsmead is special in that it defies the odds with a broad range of children in an area with high levels of deprivation and – sadly – currently some of the highest levels of youth violence in London. Despite the challenges that the context throws up, one would never believe it from moment to moment in the school.

I am about to give you a fact that may seem like I am being a bit specific, but it matters to me. I am proud that this is a school that is open to children without them having to be of a ‘correct’ sex, faith or test score. I am proud that we offer that to as many children as possible despite it being much simpler to have a smaller school. I am proud that we do that both with a high Ebacc entry and with a huge list of GCSEs (and A Level) options.

So, here is my fact: Kingsmead was one of only four schools in England in 2019 that were large, mixed, comprehensive schools - in areas of above average deprivation - that had an above average P8 score **and** an Ebacc entry of 75%. At the risk of repeating for emphasis, it shows we challenge every student despite not being able to choose them, having 270 in a year group, them being incredibly diverse, having our own Sixth Form to run and facing considerable structural challenges around language, cultural capital and aspiration.

Kingsmead is forever a work in progress. We know nothing real is achieved by gaming the system or focusing on the short-term. Our motto is ‘Practice to Perfect’ for a reason. This school first opened in 1967 and for many years suffered from the perception that it was a school for children ‘from the wrong side of the A10’. It is now one of the most oversubscribed in the borough and it belongs to the community. We have around 100 teachers, some of whom have been here for decades yet are still committed to improving.

Every child completes RE GCSE in Y11 and the subject is taken very seriously by our diverse community. The Learning Director of Department is established in the school and has a great effect. This post only becomes available after a retirement of a colleague who has worked in the school since 1982! Religious Education will be a team of the successful applicant and one other specialist plus several experienced non-specialists. You will share an office with the five strong Geography team, a twenty second walk from the six strong History team.

**What is the Head’s style of Leadership?**

There is plenty more to find out of course, but I want to turn from what is distinctive about Kingsmead, to my style of leadership. To give you a flavour of where I am coming from, I was a free school meals child at secondary school who did really well while younger (cannot tell you why), remained ambitious, but did not have the graduate parents or the understanding of what was really needed to excel. I left school furious about that, and about being turned down for Oxbridge. I am no longer furious, but I am driven by a refusal to accept that schools cannot find the right ways to be incredibly ambitious for their children. We must control the controllable rather than despair at what is out of our control.

I have worked in schools in Hertfordshire, Hackney, Brent and Enfield. More importantly though, I have been involved in doing different things in those circumstances, from setting up a Sixth Form, to getting top results at KS4 in Hackney to turning around a thoroughly broken school in Brent. In 2013 I was accepted on the ‘Future Leaders’ program - which was run by the predecessor to Ambition Institute - and it helped me to view school leadership not as something one earns by dint of long service, but by one’s expertise, impact and ambition.

I am aiming for a school that is genuinely transformative. It would be simplest to do that by buying into the hero model of leadership and a high-stakes, anxiety fuelled culture that steamrollers people. That is not desirable or sustainable. I also have too much faith in others (and too much of a desire to enjoy my work) to be able to carry it off. I believe that if you find the right people their own internal standards and ambition make all of that redundant. It is possible to work hard, care deeply about success **and** be a pretty great human being. What one can then focus on is developing the substance of what we all are doing through our school values of courage, nurture, collaboration and rigour.

**Where is the school going?**

That is both the school and my style dealt with. Now to turn to my ambitions for the future version of the school. Kingsmead is already a very successful school by the standards on paper and in lots and lots of other ways, and what we are already doing is remarkable to most people. Nonetheless, I have a version of what I am determined it will be in the future that goes far beyond where we are now. To do that will of course require urgency and very high standards, but it will also require good judgement, time and commitment to developing ourselves and one another.

I want three things; I want children to leave a school with the academic learning to empower them and results to match. I also want them to leave valuing behaviours that will both impress people and help them to build meaningful relationships. Lastly, I want them to leave with a clear map of the way the world works and the place they want to take in it. Unless equipped with all three, they will always be at a disadvantage.

It should not come as a surprise to any applicant that the path to that will involve deep curriculum thinking, rooted in an intellectual approach to the subject and pedagogy. Nor should it be a surprise that we want to focus on research-informed practice and the best possible application of the science of learning. I could write out a list of education books I love here, but I am far more interested in those that have informed your practice.

**How will you be developed?**

Thinking of which, the final part after the school, my leadership and the plan, was my ambition for you. The recruitment process for this role will be designed to make everyone prove their abilities, but the person who gets the role will probably not manage to tick off everything on the job description and person specification. That is absolutely expected, because we are looking for the right person, not an archetype. We all need development and I am I fully committed to developing you.

I am actively interested in your weaknesses as much as your strengths because we all have both. A big reason for taking the sting out of appraisal at Kingsmead was so that it could actually be about someone’s development rather than be viewed as a stick to beat people with. That way we can have open conversations about where we are as professionals. We have connections with a wide range of schools and internal training programs. I am happy to bring you support and challenge from both inside and outside the school and I will want to tailor any development to your needs. Again, the motto ‘Practise to Perfect’ is there for a reason.

Lastly, to go back to where I started, this is a two-way process. There are further details of the school on our website and I actively encourage you to contact the school to arrange a conversation with me before applying. I will be absolutely open everyone and answer any questions you may have.

Teaching is incredibly hard work at the simplest of times, but if you want to achieve anything of worth, doubly so. When one works intelligently on the right things, with the right people and with a shared sense of purpose, it never feels that way. If you are excited by the idea of being one of the most important in making that happen over the next few years, I am excited to meet you.

If you want to ask questions, or just get a sense of me and the school in person, then please do just ask.

My email is dmedway@kingsmead.org

Best wishes,



David Medway

Headteacher

**Application packs can be requested by emailing**HR@kingsmead.org **or by visiting the staff vacancies page on our website (**<https://www.kingsmeadschool.org/vacancies/>**)**

**Please do not send CVs, as they will not be considered.**

**Closing date: Monday 24th May 2021, 1pm. Interviews later that same week.**

***We reserve the right to interview early and appoint, if the right candidate comes along.* *You are actively encouraged to apply as soon as possible as this role is likely to be filled at speed.***

This post is subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure and the post holder must be committed to safeguarding the welfare of children. No job description can be fully comprehensive.