

DR CHALLONER'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

ASSISTANT HEAD – PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Start date: April or September 2017

Introduction

This vacancy has been created to provide the school with the leadership capacity to deliver the highest quality of provision of Professional Development to its own staff and to the wider teaching profession through our work as a Teaching School and a SCITT. Remuneration will be on the Leadership Scale at L12-16 (currently £52,206 to £57,588).

The School

Founded in 1624, Dr Challoner's is an academy grammar school for boys with 1300 students (of whom over 400 are in the co-educational Sixth Form). It has around 130 teaching and support staff and draws its intake of 180 boys from the Chiltern District area of Buckinghamshire. Boys take the Buckinghamshire Secondary Transfer Test. In 2016 the school's Sixth Form became co-educational. Nearly 60 students joined us from other schools, of whom 38 are girls.

Challoner's students benefit from an exceptional range of learning activities which are pursued to a very high standard. As well as featuring consistently high up in national league tables for GCSE and A Level, the school adds significant value to its students and was the top grammar school in England for 'contextual value added' in 2010. Challoner's was graded as 'outstanding' in every category at its last OFSTED inspection and in 2012 became one of the first schools to receive the Exceptional Schools Award following an external validation process. The school became a National Teaching School in 2013. After being involved in School Direct for a number of years we became a SCITT in 2016 and, as such, are the hub for a network of 30 partner schools who together host 50 trainees this year. The growth of this area of the school's work has prompted the creation of this new post, to ensure that all aspects of that work are delivered to the highest quality.

Over recent years the school has championed the ideas of 'Building Learning Power' pioneered by Prof Guy Claxton and has developed its own approach to Learning @ Challoner's. We believe that the learning habits developed by students are just as important as the knowledge and understanding they acquire during their time at school. Teachers, students and governors take part in Learning Reviews and a common 'language of learning' now permeates the school. DCGS is an active member of the International Boys Schools Coalition and hosts national conferences on learning as well as supporting many local schools. Quality of teaching is one of the hallmarks of the school and the postholder will have a key role to play in ensuring that our students benefit from the best teaching available. Consequently, professional development is given a high priority and the school has run its own programme of leadership development for staff in association with Ashridge, one of the world's leading business schools.

The curriculum broadly mirrors the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 while students in Key Stage 4 follow a core curriculum of English (Language and Literature), Mathematics, three Sciences, a Modern Language and a Humanities subject, as well as PE, Religious Studies and Citizenship/PSHEE. Boys make two further choices from a wide range of courses and also undertake an enrichment programme which includes climbing, cookery, 'app' development and the opportunity to undertake the HPQ (Higher Project Qualification). In the Sixth Form students follow our own Challoner's Baccalaureate, which combines the best of traditional academic rigour with the opportunity to develop essential skills for higher education and the workplace. Over 20 subjects are offered at A Level, along with the Extended Project Qualification, and students take three or four A level subjects. To complete their programme they carry out a volunteering programme, teamwork activities and charity work. Between 20 and 25 students each year win offers of places at Oxford and Cambridge, while in excess of 70% typically go on to study on competitive courses at other universities.

The school has very strong cultural and sporting traditions and holds both the Sportsmark and Artsmark awards. There are choirs, an orchestra, a swing band, a jazz band, and at least two major drama productions each year. The main sports are soccer, hockey, rugby, cricket, tennis, cross-country, athletics and basketball. DCGS enjoys a very strong sporting reputation and teams compete strongly at regional and national level. Many clubs and societies flourish while the number and range of educational visits is exceptional. A wide range of international links are maintained through foreign exchanges and a very wide range of trips and visits. Close ties exist with Dr Challoner's High School for Girls, through music and drama as well as through social events for students.

Student support, guidance and involvement are key aspects of the school. Great emphasis is placed on developing the school's ethos of 'excellence with integrity' and students are encouraged to accept responsibility for themselves, others and the environment. A system of mentors, prefects and Head Boys supports younger students and provides outstanding opportunities for leadership development. The flourishing competition between the six houses – Foxell, Holman, Newman, Pearson, Rayner and Thorne – is led entirely by senior students.

Dramatic improvements in facilities to support learning have taken place over recent years. IT provision is cloud based, allowing staff and students the chance to work in ways which best suit each individual. All students in Years 8-11 have an iPad to support their learning, and these are widely used in and out of classrooms to encourage creativity and collaboration. Sixth Form students routinely use laptops to support their learning. Sports facilities are first class. The outside space provides for all major team sports, with a floodlit astroturf and eight tennis courts complementing space for rugby, football and cricket. Indoor facilities include cricket nets, badminton and table tennis, a climbing wall and two gym areas. A state of the art drama studio gives ample opportunity for rehearsal and productions, while a new Sixth Form Centre and Library was completed in 2013, providing a genuinely world class facility designed to help students bridge the gap between school and university.

The School has an extremely strong Governing Body with a wide range of high level experience in the fields of education, finance and business management. It is highly supportive of the School and students participate in most of its committees and sit as observers on the Full Governing Body.

The Role

The successful candidate will lead the professional development programme for DCGS staff, identifying needs by utilising the school's personal development review system. They will also lead our work as a Teaching School. This work sits within the Astra Learning Alliance, which is the body delivering our Initial Teacher Training activities. In addition to these two primary responsibilities the successful candidate can expect to take on line management duties and other activities within both DCGS and Astra. The precise nature of these responsibilities will be decided after appointment.

The Person

To fill this rewarding and demanding role, we are seeking someone who has genuine creativity but who also possesses the highest level of organisational capacity; an excellent communicator who can shape ideas and see them through so that they make a real difference to what happens on the ground. Further detail is contained within the Person Specification which is included in this pack.

The type of school you have worked in before is very unlikely to be a factor, although members of our SLT have to be able to hold their own with our highly intelligent students, parents and colleagues.

The Senior Leadership Team

The SLT currently consists of the Headmaster, the Deputy Head, five Assistant Heads and the Resources Director. The existing team is well-established and, like all strong teams, contains a healthy mix of different skills and personalities. The values of our team are, however, extremely closely aligned and we are determined that this will remain the case. This close alignment was illustrated through a recent exercise which generated a set of 'Guiding Principles' for Challoner's. This was an attempt to articulate our distinctive approach to running the school and demonstrated the strong shared values of the team. A copy of the completed 'Guiding Principles' is included in this pack for reference. The current membership of the SLT is as follows:

- David Atkinson (Headmaster)
- Edward Goodall (Deputy Head)
- James Anning (Assistant Head - Logistics & Data)
- Carole Black (Assistant Head - Student Development)
- Dan Colquhoun (Assistant Head - Director of Sixth Form)
- Sean Kennedy (Resources Director)
- Natasha Kremer (Assistant Head - Learning & Teaching)
- Stephanie Rodgers (Director of Astra Learning Alliance)

Student Involvement

Students are involved in every aspect of the management of the school. There is a Student Senior Leadership Team (SSLT) which shadows the SLT and draws together all the strands of student voice in the school. Members of the SSLT represent different parts of the school, such as the Lower School Forum and the Sixth Form Executive, and also co-ordinate the Student

Research Group and '*Challoner's 4 Charity*'. The SSLT meets fortnightly with the Headmaster and is chaired by the School Captain.

Teaching Commitment

We believe that it is important for senior leaders to remain involved in teaching and learning. The teaching commitment for this post is likely to be in the region of 12/25. Subject may be a significant factor in the appointments, since it is important that the new post holder teaches a subject that we offer at A level.

Application Process

If you like the sound of the challenge outlined above, then we would really like to hear from you. To apply, please complete an application form giving us all the usual information about yourself which we require, along with two referees one of whom must be your current employer. Application forms can be downloaded from our website www.challoners.com and completed forms should be sent by email to Mrs Sarah Nicholson (Headmaster's PA) at employment@challoners.com

We are not asking for standard 'letters of application' because we do not think that such letters, which often tend to be rather generic, will tell us what we need to know about candidates before we decide whether or not to meet them. Instead of such a letter, we would therefore like you to write responses to tasks outlined below. Please insert your answers onto the 'support of application' page in the application form.

Task 1: (400 words max)

Describe your role in a significant 'whole school' change in your current school.

Task 2: (400 words max)

What do you think are the characteristics of successful professional development programme?

The deadline for receipt of applications is **12 noon on Monday 5 December**.

We plan to invite long-listed candidates to visit the school for the first stage of the selection process during the first week in January 2017. Shortlisted candidates will then be invited to the final stage which will take place shortly after.

Candidates who are successful in reaching the final stage will be asked to undertake an online psychometric evaluation prior to the final interviews. This is not as alarming as it sounds and is designed to ensure that the successful candidate is a good fit with our team.

We will **not** be hosting informal visits prior to the application process. However, if you have specific queries, please contact the Headmaster's Office on 01494 787525 or by email: headmaster@challoners.com.

Person Specification (Assistant Head)

Qualifications & Experience

You will have:

QTS

A degree

A track record of on-going professional development, including leadership development

At least three years' experience as a middle leader in a UK secondary school

Leading & Deciding

You will be able to:

Provide others with a clear sense of direction

Model high standards of behaviour and relationships

Delegate tasks appropriately and fairly

Motivate and empower others

Make prompt, clear decisions which may involve difficult choices or considered risks

Take responsibility for actions, projects and people

Take initiative, act with confidence and 'under your own steam'

Creating

You will be able to:

Generate ideas, approaches or insights which will add value to DCGS

Offer a range of solutions to problems

Seek and seize opportunities for organisational improvement

Gather comprehensive information to inform decisions

Demonstrate a rapid understanding of newly presented information

Performing

You will be able to:

Work hard and put in long hours when necessary

Accept and tackle demanding goals with enthusiasm and perseverance

Adapting & Coping

You will be able to:

Accept new ideas and initiatives for change

Adapt to changing circumstances

Show respect and sensitivity to others

Adapt your leadership style to suit a range of people or situations

Deal with ambiguity, capitalising on the opportunities it presents
Contribute to a culture of high expectations
Control your emotions even under pressure
Maintain an optimistic outlook
Absorb feedback positively and learn from it

Organising & Executing

You will be able to:

Plan activities and projects ahead of time and adapt when circumstances change
Manage your time effectively
Identify and organise the resources needed to complete projects
Monitor performance against deadlines

Analysing and Interpreting

You will be able to:

Analyse all types of information
Make rational judgements based on analysis of the full range of information
Produce workable solutions to a range of problems
Learn new technologies rapidly
Be a fluent communicator in person and on paper (including being a good listener)

Supporting, Co-operating and Interacting

You will be able to:

Work in line with the DCGS Guiding Principles
Demonstrate loyalty to DCGS and the SLT
Operate effectively within a framework of 'collective responsibility'
Demonstrate empathy with others
Recognise and praise others' contribution
Support and care for others
Develop an awareness of your own strengths and weaknesses and be committed to self-improvement
Use humour appropriately and regularly
Gain consent from others through persuasion and negotiation
Manage conflict and engineer rapprochement

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We believe that our continuing success, underpinned by the aspiration of 'Excellence with Integrity', is based on key aspects of the way we go about our business.

1. A culture which is lively, energetic and fun; where new ideas flourish, where enthusiasm is the norm and where motivation is high...

...in which the people:

- *understand well how to relate to others*
- *are well-mannered and considerate*
- *feel comfortable and at ease*
- *believe that we can always do even better*
- *are allowed to take risks and are not afraid of making mistakes*
- *don't take themselves too seriously*
- *are humble and forgiving*

... which engenders a strong sense of loyalty and in which the team always comes first.

2. A shared view of learning as...

- *a set of attitudes for life*
- *something you can always get better at through perseverance*
- *an opportunity to discover and develop your passions*
- *being about 'the how' rather than just 'the what'*
- *exciting for its own sake and not just as a means to an end*
- *something which can happen anywhere and at any time*
- *a shared endeavour*
- *relevant to the 'real world'*

3. A strategic approach which...

- *puts the students at the heart of everything we do*
- *has ambition for the school to remain 'at the top'*
- *values the contribution of each part of the 'Challoner's family', including alumni*
- *blends respect for the past with willingness to embrace the future*
- *identifies opportunities and responds early in order to secure our distinctive ethos and values*
- *recognises the value of being 'ahead of the curve'*
- *is comfortable taking responsible risks*

4. Leaders who...

- *are respected by colleagues, students and parents because of their commitment to the students*
- *consistently model the school's principles*
- *are committed to 'team working'*
- *are always thinking about the future*
- *show creativity, innovation and flexibility in their planning*
- *are comfortable leading change*
- *help develop the next generation of leaders*

5. Staff who...

- *display strong professional values and integrity*
- *have a passion for what they do*
- *show a 'can do' attitude*
- *give the students as much time as they need*
- *share their expertise and experience with others*
- *challenge each other to do even better*
- *are willing to admit mistakes and share their own learning*
- *help develop the next generation of teachers*