



**April 2018**

Dear Colleague

Many thanks for your interest in the position of Assistant Headteacher – SENCo and Director of Inclusion at Highfields School. This is a new position on our Senior Leadership Team and provides a fantastic opportunity for an energetic and ambitious leader to make a critical contribution to the development of our successful and forward thinking school. We are driven by our core purpose, which is to be 'a happy and inclusive community which values each individual and inspires them to fulfil their potential'. We already do a good job in making that vision a reality. The Assistant Headteacher – SENCo and Director of Inclusion will be crucial in further strengthening our delivery, ensuring that we help all students overcome barriers to learning and enjoy growth and success.

### **Highfields School**

Highfields is an 11-18 comprehensive school of approximately 1200 students. We are based on two sites 1.8 miles apart in the pleasant town of Matlock. Whilst located in the enviable environment of the Derbyshire Dales the school is within easy reach of Sheffield, Derby and Nottingham. We have been judged as a good school by Ofsted in our two previous inspections, most recently in May 2017. We are delighted but not at all surprised that the 2017 inspection team agreed with our own judgments about our strengths and improvement priorities. They were quick to identify and praise the strong ethos of our school, the good behaviour of our students, their positive approach to learning, and to identify the wide range of opportunities they enjoy. They praised leadership at all levels and the work we are doing to ensure that best practice in teaching and learning is shared and developed. They were also incisive in probing our areas for development and the final report gives us some clear next steps for improvement, such as further improving the progress and attendance of key groups of students. We are already working on these as a core focus of drive to be an even more successful and inclusive school.

### **The Senior Leadership Team**

You will join a strong and experienced SLT, and will work with talented committed colleagues to deliver great education for a wonderful, diverse group of students.

Our previous Headteacher, Eddie Wilkes, retired in the summer of 2016 and a new temporary leadership structure put in place with the two Deputy Headteachers, Peter Cole and Ben Riggott being asked by Governors to assume acting roles as Co-Headteachers. They have led a team comprising the two existing Assistant Headteachers, Damian O' Reilly and Claire Rifkin, and supplemented by two temporary appointments, Karl Rodgers and Alison Ruston, to lead on Progress and Well-Being on both school sites. A new Headteacher, Andrew Marsh, has been appointed from September 2018. The existing SLT structure will remain in place for 2018-19 with Peter Cole and Ben Riggott returning to their substantive Deputy Head roles. The Assistant Headteacher – SENCo and Director of Inclusion role will supplement this team and add to our capacity. Roles and responsibilities are flexible and open to adjustment for 2018-19. It is anticipated that this AHT role will assume some responsibilities currently covered by other team members.



## **Learning Support and Inclusion provision**

Highfields has a strong and proud track record of supporting the most vulnerable students in school. We have proportions of students with special educational needs and disabilities roughly in line with national averages: we currently have 25 students with Education Health Care Plans (approximately 2%) and just under 100 students identified as SEND Support (approximately 8.3%). A substantial percentage of our SEND Support students have social, emotional or mental health difficulties. Our students are supported by dedicated, skilled staff and specialist resources. We have Learning Support Bases on both sites as well as specialist Inclusion Bases which support students with behaviour and emotional needs. The aim of specialist provision is to remove barriers to learning and to enable independence and access to the mainstream curriculum as far as possible. Colleagues work closely with external agencies as well as with staff in school, including an experienced and committed pastoral team to achieve this.

In summary the Learning Support Team comprises of:

SEND Teacher/Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator

Two Teaching Assistant Team Leaders (one covering each site)

Approximately 14 F.T.E Teaching Assistants (supplemented by a specialist teaching assistant in Science)

SEND/Pastoral School Business Assistant

Following restructure in 2017 the team is currently led by a member of SLT, supported by a qualified and experienced part time colleague

The Inclusion Team currently comprises of a full time Inclusion Manager supported by three full time team members.

A key focus of the Assistant Headteacher – SENCo and Director of Inclusion will be to integrate and bring unified purpose to these specialist resources and teams, which have been under separate leadership in recent years.

There has also been an increased emphasis on the role of all teachers as teachers of SEND, in line with the Code of Practice. A key feature of our current school improvement plan is to enhance the understanding of all staff of the needs of individual students and to provide the support and development necessary to enable all to be effective teachers of SEND. We have also focused on improving our graduated response to need. A central role of the new appointment will be to continue to support all colleagues in meeting needs in the classroom whilst ensuring that more specialist, high needs are quickly identified and fully met. The result will be improved attendance, reduced exclusion and stronger progress for all.

## **Our Ideal Candidate**

Primarily we are looking for a talented and energetic colleague with the leadership skills, resilience and tenacity to help us improve outcomes for all. Ideally you will already be a qualified SENCo with a track record of improving outcomes for SEND students. Broader experience of working within an inclusion role, supporting vulnerable young people to succeed in a mainstream setting will be very helpful. If you do not already hold the national SENCO qualification substantial previous experience of working with SEND students and the willingness and ability to study for the qualification on appointment are essential. The ability and willingness to contribute to the wider work of the school as a member of a hard working team are also key requisites of the role. Please see the job description and person specification for full details. If you feel that you fit our requirements we will be delighted to hear from you.



## **The Application Process**

Please submit your application via the Derbyshire County Council website <https://jobs.derbyshire.gov.uk/> or through TES online. Within your application please include a statement of no more than 2 sides of A4 detailing your suitability for the post, highlighting:

- Your vision of high quality inclusion in a school like Highfields
- How your previous experience, skills and attributes will help you to deliver the very best outcomes for the students at Highfields School.

## **Please note:**

We **do not** accept CVs

Closing date for applications:

Wednesday 2 May

If you would like to visit Highfields School or have any questions, Please contact Ms J Wheatcroft

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