



**Head of Religion and Philosophy
Information Pack**

Completed applications should be emailed to recruitment@mgs.org

Closing date: 09:00 on Wednesday 24 January 2018

Head of Religion and Philosophy

We are seeking to appoint, from 1 September 2018, an outstanding individual to lead teaching and learning in our Religion and Philosophy department. The vacancy arises following the retirement of the current post-holder, Dennis Brown.

Religion and Philosophy at MGS

The Religion and Philosophy department is highly regarded by pupils, staff and parents. We emphasise the academic nature of the subject, and strive to make the subject interesting, challenging and fun.

There are currently six full-time and two part-time staff, all of whom are specialists in Religious Studies, Theology or Philosophy. Religious Studies is taught throughout the School and is offered at IGCSE and A-level. In addition, all Year 12 pupils study our innovative 'Perspectives' course, with several colleagues from other departments assisting with the teaching of this course. This is a pupil-led discussion course that is aimed at widening pupils' knowledge and in guiding them to become more articulate and critically aware. MGS runs a significant and valued programme of PSHE, and the Head of PSHE is a member of the Religion and Philosophy Department.

MGS is a multi-cultural and multi-religious school, and the teaching in the department reflects this. In Years 7 and 8 we teach aspects of the six major world religions. This course is currently being developed to include philosophical topics such as personal identity, miracles and life after death. The Year 9 course consists of a study of Ethics and Philosophy of Religion. Ethics in the first half of the year discusses topics such as moral reasoning, punishment, war, medical ethics and financial ethics. In the second half of the year, Philosophy of Religion covers the nature of God, arguments for and against the existence of God, the Problem of Evil and an exploration of the nature of knowledge, faith and belief. In Year 10, pupils who choose to continue with RS currently study for the Edexcel IGCSE. In Year 10, they choose from Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism, and in Year 11 they study Philosophy and moral issues. We currently have four IGCSE sets in Year 10 and four in Year 11. Last year, over 95% of boys achieved an A or A* grade in the subject.

Pupils who choose A-level Religious Studies follow the OCR Specification, focusing on Philosophy of Religion, Developments in Christian Thought and Ethics. At present, over 50 pupils are studying for A-level RS. It is rare for any pupil to achieve less than a B grade.

Members of the department also contribute to the Sixth Form options programme, delivering courses to pupils who are interested in developing their knowledge of Philosophy or Ethics, as well as contributing to the preparation of pupils applying for medical degree courses.

Every year, several pupils are accepted to read Theology, Religious Studies or Philosophy at top-flight universities. We have a consistently good record of Oxbridge success, and maintain strong links with several Oxford and Cambridge colleges and Theology, RS and Philosophy departments at leading universities.

Job Description

The Head of Religion and Philosophy is responsible for leading and managing the department, creating and developing a shared sense of vision and purpose and maintaining high professional standards in the team. The role requires someone who is an excellent teacher, has an ability to think and act strategically, and an ability to motivate members of the department. A keen commitment to achieving academic success and developing intellectual engagement amongst pupils is essential.

All members of staff are expected to act as a Tutor and make a significant contribution to the co-curricular life of the School.

The Head of Religion and Philosophy reports to the Academic Deputy Head.

Whilst this job description gives an indication of the range of responsibilities, it should not be regarded as definitive. Specific duties include:

- Responsibility for high-quality teaching in the department.
- Monitoring and managing the performance of staff, including regular work scrutiny and lesson observation; carrying out annual staff reviews; dealing with any concerns about teaching which may arise among pupils or parents; undertaking regular discussions with the Academic Deputy Head.
- Monitoring the progress of boys through the use of tracking data; ensuring that intervention strategies are used to support boys, where appropriate.
- Advising on Religion and Philosophy in the Junior School.
- Maintaining the departmental development plan annually as a working document for the department.
- Maintaining the departmental handbook as a working document.
- Ensuring that the department is prepared for inspections.
- Assigning teaching allocations; organising internal departmental responsibilities; making decisions on examinations and specifications; schemes of work.
- Leading regular departmental meetings and producing minutes for the High Master and Academic Deputy Head.
- Attending meetings of heads of department; representing the views of members of the department to the High Master and senior leadership team and vice versa.
- Liaising with pastoral staff regarding academic progress, as necessary.
- Advising on university courses in Religion and Philosophy and drawing up a programme of teaching and coaching which supports applications to leading universities, including Oxford and Cambridge.
- Maintaining, developing and promoting a full programme of trips and visits.
- Promoting Religion and Philosophy at meetings of parents and boys and on Open Days.
- Fostering links with universities, other schools and examination boards.
- Representing MGS Religion and Philosophy Department in HMC Divisional meetings and other regional and national forums.
- Drawing up the annual departmental budget submission.
- Providing staff training to support the teaching of Religion and Philosophy, as required.
- Coordinating the Year 12 Perspectives course.

Why work at MGS?

The School

The Manchester Grammar School has a long and distinguished history, and is an exciting, stimulating and rewarding community in which to work.

It was founded in 1515, by Hugh Oldham, Bishop of Exeter, to prepare able boys from the Manchester area, regardless of their background, to go to Oxford or Cambridge. The School has gained an international reputation for academic excellence, and enjoys a strong record of success with top universities, both in the UK and overseas.

We take our motto, *Sapere Aude* ('Dare to be Wise'), as meaning that we must challenge our pupils and expect to be challenged by them, and this is one of the things which makes teaching at MGS so rewarding.

Bursaries and social mobility

MGS's Foundation Bursary Appeal has been the most successful appeal of its kind held by any school and is a cornerstone of our ethos. Its aim is to ensure that a place at MGS is available to any boy who passes our entrance assessments, regardless of his family's financial background. More than 200 boys currently receive full or partial means-tested bursaries. (The average bursary is more than 90% of the school fee.) Our long-term ambition is to be needs-blind, so that every boy who passes our entrance assessments can take up a place, regardless of his parents' ability to pay.

Our pupils

The School comprises over 1550 boys in Years 3 to 13. All boys are assessed for entry on the basis of their considerable potential by observing their individual talents in imaginative lessons. A formal entrance exam only plays a part in entry to Year 7. Our admissions policy aims to be needs-blind to enable the School to be a diverse community of talented individuals from all backgrounds.

Boys come from across the North-West and from every type of background, and the boys who join the School each year come in equal numbers from maintained and independent primary schools.

Our teachers

Staff at MGS come from every walk of life. Every year we welcome to our staff NQTs as well as experienced teachers. We expect all applicants to have a good degree. However, a teaching qualification, whilst desirable, is not essential; we can and do provide full support for those who wish to become qualified after appointment. Often teachers who have taught for a number of years join us to gain extra experience before moving on to become a head of department elsewhere. We are deeply committed to the professional development of our staff. Many colleagues have gone on to deputy headships and headships elsewhere; likewise, many staff choose to stay with us.

People who teach here will have a love of their subject and will have the ability to inspire and challenge able pupils. Our teachers enjoy making an active contribution to co-curricular activities, both for the reward of the activity itself and because of the different dimension it gives to their relationship with their pupils.

Our co-curriculum

The co-curriculum is central to the ethos of MGS. Life outside the classroom is extraordinarily vibrant, both in terms of its diversity and quantity, and is a source of great enjoyment and challenge for our pupils and staff alike. It includes sport, music, drama, adventure, service and intellectual activities.

The School values the passion and commitment of its teachers in sharing their interests and enthusiasms with pupils outside of the classroom and seeks to enable staff to play to their passions whenever possible. Staff are given great autonomy over the activities they organise, and our pupils are given equal freedom to develop passions of their own.

MGS has a particularly vibrant musical co-curricular life, with numerous opportunities for boys to perform in ensembles of all ages, shapes and sizes. For many boys, music is a pivotal element in their lives, and many of our best musicians are members of local and national youth orchestras and choirs. We have 24 musical groups with 280 participants, and typically more than a dozen drama productions each year including musical theatre (most recently Sondheim's *Assassins* and *Little Shop of Horrors*). There are also 95 representative sports teams and 40 different sports.

Every year 250 pupils go on four week-long camps and we have overseas treks; we offer a wide range of outdoor pursuits and are one of the largest centres for D of E in the North-West. Alongside this there is a vast range of educational trips and visits, both in the UK and abroad. On average, each pupil spends twelve days a year on trips.

Our facilities

Recent developments have included the purchase of a new Steinway Model D grand piano for the Memorial Hall and four new Steinway upright pianos for the music department. There is also a new sports hall, major upgrades to our multi-gym, swimming pool and sports pitches, and a new, exceptionally equipped theatre and drama studios.

Manchester and the North-West

Manchester is a vibrant and exciting place, as you would fully expect of Britain's second city. One of the fastest growing cities in Europe, it has a cosmopolitan outlook, a flourishing, varied cultural life and excellent restaurants and nightlife. It is a wonderful, stimulating place to live, with outstanding sport and leisure facilities, catering for every possible interest.

Theatre is vibrant and diverse, with venues including the innovative Royal Exchange, Home, The Lowry (in Salford Quays), Palace Theatre and Opera House. The Bridgewater Hall is an international centre of musical excellence and home to three major orchestras, whilst the Manchester Evening News Arena, the Apollo and many smaller venues contribute to the diverse range of music on offer in the city.

Befitting a city with such rich history and traditions, Manchester has excellent galleries and museums, and is, of course, a major centre for soccer, cricket, cycling and many other sports. Media City in Salford (adjacent to Manchester) is one of the country's most important centres for television and radio production, and is growing all the time.

Whilst offering all that you would expect from a major city, Manchester has the advantage of being very accessible and enjoys excellent transport links. London is only two hours away by train and Manchester's international airport is only five miles from the School.

Areas of outstanding natural beauty are close by. The Peak District National Park, the Pennine Way and the Cheshire Plain are within an hour's drive, whilst the Lake District and Snowdonia are within two hours.

There is a wide choice of places to live, with ample rented accommodation. Property prices compare very favourably with those elsewhere in the country. Many staff live in the South Manchester suburbs, but others live surrounded by the Pennine moors or the Derbyshire hills. There is an excellent choice of schools, both private and maintained, at all levels.

For more information about the city, visit www.visitmanchester.com.

How to apply

Candidates of any age and any level of experience are invited to apply. Appropriate induction and support will be given.

Further information about the School is available on our website.

Applicants should complete an application form; this can be downloaded from the vacancies section of the School's website (follow the link at the bottom of the homepage), and emailed to recruitment@mgs.org. The closing date is 9.00am on Wednesday 24 January, and we expect to hold interviews shortly afterwards.

The Manchester Grammar School is an equal opportunities employer and we welcome applications from all sections of the community. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and successful applicants will be required to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Our Safer Recruitment policy may be viewed on our website (click on 'our policies' at the bottom of the homepage).

We would like to thank all applicants for their interest in the School and for taking the time to apply. However, please note that, because of the high volume of applications we receive, we regret that we are unable to reply individually to each application. Applicants who have not heard from us by 31 January should assume that they have not been shortlisted for interview.

January 2018