



Subject Leader, Psychology

January 2019

Information for Candidates

Introduction

This document, along with the Job Description and Person Specification, will give you an idea of the vacancy. We wish to appoint someone who is looking to make a valuable contribution to the Psychology department and the wider school. The person appointed will be passionate about teaching and learning as a whole as well as their specialist subject. The ability to teach A-Level is essential.

The School

Vyners is a well-established and heavily over-subscribed school with a reputation for high standards of behaviour and attainment. Our core values of Community, Aspiration, Respect and Endeavour underpin everything we do as does our absolute commitment to ensuring our students get a better deal here than they would in any other school in the country.

It was built in 1959 as a four form entry mixed grammar school. In 1977 it became comprehensive and expanded to five forms of entry and in 1996 expanded again to take six forms of entry. In 1991 the school became grant maintained and in 1999 a Foundation School. Specialist College Status in **Mathematics and Computing** was obtained from September 2003. The school converted to academy status on 1 November 2011, a move which allows us greater financial freedom and security, as well as giving us the opportunity to continue to push the boundaries of excellence. Since January 2018 the school has been part of the **Vanguard Learning Trust** which also includes one other secondary school and a local primary school. The current school roll is **1181 with 240 in the Sixth Form**. Our standard admission number is 180 and we are a six form entry school with a significant number of families wanting to send their children to Vyners to be educated.

Despite being a relatively small site, the school has developed some impressive facilities; a large sports hall, extensive ICT facilities and specialist teaching areas. Classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboard technology and the school network is constantly upgraded. We have invested over £1,000,000 improving the learning environment over the past four years and have exciting plans for the future.

The school was graded satisfactory by Ofsted on two consecutive visits, most recently in April 2012. They visited the school again in December 2013, agreeing fully with the school's self-evaluation, grading us as **Good** overall with **Outstanding** judgements for Behaviour and Safety and Leadership and Management. *"Leaders at all levels including student leaders are highly ambitious for their school. Plans for improvement are systematic and rigorous. Everyone works together to make sure that teaching and achievement improve rapidly."* The school achieved excellent examination results in 2018. This meant that our headline figure was 79%. We are very proud of our A-Level results with nearly a third of all grades A* - A and 54% A* - B grades. We firmly believe that we can build on this success again this year.



Location

The School is situated close to the 'village' of Ickenham in a very pleasant residential area on the edge of the Green Belt. Although only thirty minutes or so from the centre of London by underground, access to the countryside is equally quick via the M40, M25 or M4. The School itself is well situated on a residential road, surrounded by many mature trees, which provides a pleasant atmosphere for both work and leisure.

Teaching and Learning

The current agenda and aspirations for the school are challenging and motivating as we move towards Outstanding. We continue to develop our curriculum to meet the needs of the learners and to improve the skills of our staff to deliver this curriculum. To support this work the whole school community is committed to improving teaching strategies and understanding better how students learn. We know that effective learning cannot be left to chance; we have to refine and change our approaches if we want to make real and lasting improvements. We recognise the need to prepare students for the 21st century and make extensive use of new technologies (mobile technology, Web 2.0 tools) and are striving to develop more independent learners. Google Classroom is embedded in the school as a tool to support learning. Our key focus this year is exceptional teaching, which promotes engagement with the processes of explanation, practising and testing to enhance learning.

Developing and training Middle Leaders in the effective use of data and helping them to develop a range of different teaching strategies within their teams have been priorities. Each year we deliver significant staff development, including our annual Staff Conference, which has a focus on developing specific aspects of teaching and learning. The theme of our conference in 2017-18 was research and evidence to enhance classroom excellence.

The Staff

Staff morale at Vyners is high, supported by a positive working environment and reviewed through staff surveys. The school puts a great deal of time and resources into training and developing its staff. Appraisal is focused on school improvement, professional development and well-being. Staff meetings encourage high levels of discussion and feedback and some staff are involved in one of our Teaching and Learning bursaries to develop and recommend major changes to whole school policy. Professional development is run every Tuesday after school, and a 'Teaching and Learning Community' meets on Wednesday mornings to develop knowledge and understanding of pedagogy and share good practice. Many staff give freely of their time to run numerous lunchtime and after school activities.

The Students

Central to everything which happens at Vyners are our students. Staff seek to ensure that every young person feels valued and listened to. Relationships between staff and students at Vyners are excellent; raised voices are seldom heard and students appreciate the fact that they are encouraged to express and discuss their views. The Student Council plays an important role in the development of policy at Vyners. Students take part in the development of the school vision and values and all applicants for teaching posts are interviewed by a student panel.



The Psychology Department

Curriculum

We currently have 60 students studying Psychology at A-level in years 12 and 13 within the sixth form. With such a strong cohort we are committed to setting high expectations when students join us in Year 12. Students are encouraged to broaden their psychological knowledge through; independent reading, conducting small-scale research projects and successful completion of all exam-based assignments. All students follow the reformed AQA Psychology syllabus (see details below).

Our Psychology teachers have always demonstrated a high level of commitment to students' progress, evidenced especially by the additional hours we are prepared to invest in top-up teaching and support. We strive to work together as an enthusiastic and effective team with an appropriate blend of serious endeavour and an all-important sense of humour!

The department is constantly looking for ways to further improve the achievement of all our students. We value new and inspirational ideas from all our staff, regardless of how many years they have been teaching and actively encourage the sharing of good practice.

LEVEL	COURSE	BOARD
A-Level	Introductory Topics in Psychology (Paper 1)	AQA
	Psychology in Context (Paper 2)	
	Issues and Options in Psychology (Paper 3)	
AS Level	Introductory Topics in Psychology (Paper 1)	AQA

Results

	2016		2017		2018	
KS5: A2	A*-B	A*-E	A*-B	A*-E	A*-B	A*-E
Psychology	47%	100%	65%	97%	23%	100%



Staffing

Our Psychology Department is currently comprised of a Subject Leader who exclusively teaches A-Level Psychology. Staff are expected to aspire to teach to the highest level they feel confident to manage, so that everyone has realistic opportunities to broaden his or her career portfolio.

Facilities

- Every room has an interactive SMART board, and the Department has access to wireless laptops available for use.
- The school has invested in several sets of Chrome Books that can be used for specific learning tasks within lessons.
- An excellent range of teaching resources are available including in-house material, practical equipment and ICT base teaching aids. Whilst certain textbooks are recommended, the philosophy within the department has always been to allow the schemes of work to dictate the resources used rather than the reverse situation.
- We have a dedicated Sixth Form study area, which is supervised throughout the school day to ensure that students utilise their study periods effectively.
- Standard texts include 'AQA Psychology for A Level Year 1 and AS' (Flanagan, Berry, Jarvis & Liddle)

Other information

- Students have the opportunity to participate in psychology-themed trips where they support the curriculum and learning. Recent trips have included: The Science Museum, Wellcome Museum, London Zoo and Freud's Residence.