



French Language Assistant

15/09/25 – 31/05/26 (Fixed Term Contract)

Part time- flexible (min 3 days per week)

Required from w/b 15 September 2025

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Departmental Information

The Modern Foreign Languages Department (MFL) is a lively, forward-looking and successful department. It consists of six committed staff, plus native French, French and Spanish language assistants. Housed in a modern suite of rooms, with classrooms, a Foreign Language Assistants' teaching room, two staff workrooms (with networked computers) and a resources room. The department is well resourced, having interactive whiteboards in all classrooms. All pupils are also provided with Chrome books.

Pupils who attend our preparatory school, are taught French and Spanish co-currently from the age of four. In the last two years, they study these languages for two periods per week. Pupils are taught in mixed-ability tutor groups and the emphasis is on creating a positive attitude towards language learning. There is a focus on good pronunciation and confidence in the language, as well as pupil enjoyment and developing language-learning skills. Regular contact is maintained between the Senior and Prep Schools to ensure a smooth transition in the MFL curriculum and to pass on information regarding both the effort and attainment of pupils in their final year at the Prep School.

Pupils from the other main feeder schools of Birkdale may also have been taught some French for between two and four years either as a single lesson per week or in some cases for up to three lessons per week, although increasing numbers of pupils come to the Senior School with experience of other languages such as Spanish. The diversity of prior experience is taken careful account of in the planning of lessons especially in S1 (Y7).

Apart from a separate group for beginners of French, pupils are initially taught in mixed ability groups. Setting is introduced from the start of the Easter term, following the November examinations when common speaking, listening, reading and writing tests are taken. In Year S2 (Y8), all take a half-year taster course in French and Spanish in addition to continuing with French in setted groups. Pupils then opt to continue with one or two languages, with some taking two languages. French, French and Spanish are available to GCSE and AS/A2 level (AQA) and pupils consistently achieve good grades.

Almost all pupils achieve a level 4 or above in a modern language at GCSE. The department has an excellent track record in students gaining excellent grades with a good proportion achieving grades 8-9 at GCSE level. At A-Level the trend continues with all students typically achieving between grades A*- C.

Class sizes are small with even form groups not exceeding 24 pupils although most groups are smaller than this, especially in setted or option groups. Pupils of all levels are encouraged to develop into true linguists, to make links and push their intellectual curiosity beyond the remit of the framework provided by the schemes of work. The department aims to create a vibrant and stimulating atmosphere in the classroom where each pupil is

encouraged to achieve their full potential.

We have a full, regular programme of cultural activities and trips abroad, for example cinema and theatre visits and participation at sixth-form days and conferences. Each September, The European Day of Languages is celebrated with a variety of activities and competitions.

Study trips and homestay visits to France, Frenchy and Spain are a key part of what the department offers to pupils at various stages in their language learning. Pupils in S2 and S3 (Year 8 and 9) usually have the opportunity to participate in a taster visit to either Spain or Frenchy. This academic year, for example, the Department is running the 'Taste of France and Frenchy' trip to Alsace/Black Forest in May. For older pupils, study trips include visits to Paris, Seville and Berlin. Last year we had great visits to both Berlin and Cantabria, which the students thoroughly enjoyed and gained valuable experience from. We also have several informal links and contacts with French, French and Spanish speaking countries which enhances the learning experience for all of our students.

The Appointment

We are looking to welcome a French Language Assistant to support our successful and friendly Modern Foreign Languages Department. French is taught to all pupils in S1 and S2, with a good proportion opting to study it in the third year and at GCSE.

However, the work of the French assistant will be mainly with pupils aged 14 -18 preparing for GCSE and A level examinations. Some work will be done alongside the teacher in the classroom but most of the time small groups will be taken out for intensive oral work with the assistant. It is important that the appointee has a good knowledge of the general cultural and literary background of the target-language country as well as being interested in current social and political issues so as to cope with the work at Sixth Form level.

We are happy to offer substantial support and guidance initially and have a good stock of resources, but a reasonable amount of initiative and imagination are expected. A contribution to the wider life of the department and school will also be expected.

The role will involve between 8 – 10 contact hours per week over a minimum of 3 days, the exact details will be discussed at interview. This is a great opportunity for someone with native level French language skills who may be looking at exploring teaching as a profession. The role is for a fixed period only but with the possibility of being renewed for a second-year by mutual agreement.

GENERAL DUTIES INCLUDE:

Under the direction of the Head of Modern Languages:

- Undertake up to 8 - 10 hours of class contact time (depending on sixth form numbers) plus appropriate liaison with the class teacher, preparation and marking
- Undertake other appropriate duties in the modern languages department during periods when there is reduced teaching contact time
- Assist with the promotion and development of French within the school
- Support with the preparation and conduct of French internal examinations
- Participate in modern languages extra-curricular activities such as language clinics, clubs, theatre and cinema visits and language events in the school
- Assist with the maintenance of an attractive teaching environment including displays of pupil work

PERSON SPECIFICATION

- Must be fluent in speaking, reading, writing and listening in French, and be of native language level in all four areas.
- An open, friendly and confident personality.
- A keen follower of modern French culture and current affairs, and an interest and passion in imparting this knowledge onto pupils.
- The ability to deliver quality lessons that demonstrate imagination and originality. Students should look forward to their sessions with the Language Assistant, and should be able to apply session content to their wider studies of the language.
- The ability to demonstrate initiative.
- Some experience in the classroom in either a leadership or supportive capacity, and preferably in a language-learning environment would be desirable but not essential.
- Be in sympathy with the strong Christian ethos of Birkdale School.
- Be able to work within organisational procedures and meet the required standards for the role.
- Be able to work collaboratively and supportively with school colleagues.
- Be able to relate effectively to parents and to pupils.

- Display commitment to the protection and safeguarding of children and young people, and be able to form and maintain appropriate relationships.

OTHER DUTIES

- To be aware of your responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- To undertake such other duties which may reasonably be regarded as within the nature of the duties/responsibilities/grade of the post.
- The post holder must comply with the Schools' Equal Opportunities Policy and its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Key Terms and Conditions

- This role is working during **term-time**. You may wish to note that the length of Birkdale's terms are slightly shorter than those of a maintained school and therefore the school holidays are longer. Term dates are on the school website.
- **Salary** will be paid, depending on the number of contact hours as a proportion of the gross monthly salary as set by the British Council (currently £1,013.05) for a standard 12 hours of contact per week
- **Pension**: Birkdale offer an attractive private pension scheme APTIS with Aviva which is open to all staff.
- **Sick pay**: The company sick pay scheme, provides ex-gratia sick pay at the full rate for up to 3 months in any 12 months, with 50% income protection for extended sickness
- **Additional Benefits**: Death in service and access to additional wellbeing and health support including unlimited, 24/7 remote GP appointments, Unlimited mental health support, Physiotherapy, Personal training, Nutrition consultations and more.
- Staff are entitled to a **remission of school fees** amounting to 71.6% for full-time staff and pro rata for part-time staff.
- During term time, lunch is provided to staff on site.
- Car parking is available on site.

School Information

THE BIRKDALE FAMILY

Birkdale is a very successful independent day school located in Sheffield for children aged from 4 to 18, amounting altogether to 770+ pupils. Birkdale is located on three sites in south-west Sheffield, the 11-18 (Y7 to Y13) Senior School, the 4-11 (Reception to Y6) Prep School and the playing fields at Castle Dyke.

Birkdale is the only HMC (Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference) school in South Yorkshire and the Head Master is also a member of the Society of Heads. The Head of the Preparatory School is a member of IAPS (The Independent Association of Preparatory Schools).

The Christian ethos of the school manifests itself in the particularly friendly and supportive atmosphere. A good proportion of the staff are committed Christians, although as a community Birkdale is open to all, whatever their beliefs.

There have been some exciting developments in recent years which include, the introduction of girls at Birkdale. From September 2020, Birkdale began the process of moving from being a school for boys only, with a co-educational sixth form to being a fully co-educational school.

By September 2023 all year groups at the Prep School will be co-educational with the first 11+ co-educational cohort joining the Senior School in September 2024. This is an exciting time to join an expanding, exceptional family of schools.

As of September 2023, S.Anselm's school in Bakewell joined the Birkdale Family of Schools. S.Anselm's is a prestigious independent boarding school located in Bakewell. The school operates as a day and boarding school for boys and girls from age 3 to 13.

Since S. Anselm's has become part of the Birkdale family, there are no intended day-to-day changes for pupils, families or staff at either school. However, in the process of bringing the two schools together, central functions such as Marketing, IT, Finance and HR now cover both schools.

For more information, please visit our school websites:

<https://www.birkdaleschool.org.uk/>



<https://www.sanselms.co.uk/>



APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applicants should provide all of the following:

1. A cover letter **addressed to Kathryn Higham, Head of MFL** of no more than one side of A4 - font size minimum 11 explaining why you would like this role and the skills and experiences you can bring to it
2. A completed Birkdale School application form
3. The names, addresses, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers of two referees

Closing date for applications –Monday 17th March 2025 (12:00 noon)

Interviews – w/c Monday 24th 2025

Email your application to: Kathryn Higham, Head of MFL at Recruit@birkdalschool.org.uk by the closing date.

For an informal discussion regarding the role please do not hesitate to contact Alicia Webster, HR on 01142 66 8408 on ext 646.

Applicants who do not provide a Covering Letter and Application Form as stipulated will unfortunately not be considered. If you have any difficulties in providing this, please do not hesitate to contact the HR team at Recruit@birkdalschool.org.uk

Pre-employment checks:

The Birkdale Family of Schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children and young people. All applicants must be willing to undergo the relevant pre-employment checks relevant to the role.

Current legislation applying to this post includes the The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2008 and the Asylum & Immigration Act 1996. Therefore, the successful candidate will be required to prove their eligibility to work in the UK and undergo appropriate criminal record checks, including an application for an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service. Details of the documentation etc needed in connection with all the above requirements will be sent to the shortlisted candidates. Prior to taking up appointment, we will then request a declaration about medical fitness, and proof of qualifications from the successful candidate.

Under the guidance set by KCSiE 2022 Birkdale School will conduct an online search for all shortlisted candidates.

Equal Opportunities Statement:

At the Birkdale Family of Schools, we strive to create a supportive and nurturing environment for all individuals. We are dedicated to promoting equality and diversity, providing a level playing field for all of our staff and students. We aim to foster an inclusive culture, where diversity is celebrated and where everyone feels empowered, and encouraged to reach their full potential. We are *stronger together*.