**The Academy of Central Bedfordshire**

**Headteacher post**

**Information for candidates**

The Academy of Central Bedfordshire is an alternative provision free school providing services for schools and the local authority in Central Bedfordshire and surrounding areas. You may have seen from the website that The ACB exists to make a positive difference to each of our students, by recognising everyone as an individual and providing a personalised approach to their education to enable them to learn, mature and thrive.

The ACB was established in 2012 in the wake of local authority reorganisation on the initiative of a group of secondary and upper school headteachers working with the local authority, with the aim of using the government's desire to see more free schools as a way of improving the alternative provision in the local area. This vision of co-operative working is reflected in the composition of the governing body, which has a majority of members who represent the partner schools in the authority.

The ACB is contracted by Central Bedfordshire Council to provide 'day 6' services for students who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. In addition, the academy works with individual schools who wish to commission part time or full time places for students who may be at risk of exclusion, who may flourish in an alternative setting or with the specialist courses that the academy can provide, or who may benefit from intervention in the form of a short term block placement with a view to reintegration back into mainstream education at a later date. In addition, the academy has expanded its range of provision in recent years to provide vocational opportunities for students from partner schools on a half day release basis in areas such as construction, hair and beauty and motor vehicle education. These students are, in general, not deemed to be 'at risk' but may benefit from a more practical or vocational curriculum that is unavailable in schools.

In addition, The ACB is contracted to deliver education provision for up to twelve Year 11 students, from across the Local Authority area, with the students being from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. This is part of the wider Central Bedfordshire Council project funded by central government as one of five pilot projects to promote and support the engagement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community children and young people in education and work skills training.

The ACB works extensively with other agencies and has been piloting a project in relation to helping protect all children, (not just those who attend The ACB) from criminal exploitation.

Recent negotiations with CBC have been concluded successfully and there is now a long term agreement for The ACB to provide services to the LA, which has secured the future of The ACB for at least 5 - 10 years. Demand for services from commissioning schools has shown a steady growth in recent years and accounts for about £300k of income annually. The financial position of The ACB is secure for the foreseeable future. The Kingsland site is part of the Houghton Regis educational campus - there is a considerable amount of redevelopment work taking place on this site at the moment, including the closure of Houghton Regis Academy and its replacement by a new secondary school, due to open in 2022. The impact of this development on The ACB buildings themselves remains a matter for continued negotiation with the LA.

The academy has a very strong record at securing placements in education, training or employment with the graduates at the end of year 11 – we are aware that the long term sustainability of post-16 placements is not always achieved as the young people may find the transition to settings with lower levels of support to be challenging. There is an aspiration to look at developing a post-16 provision within the academy, although this is very much a long-term ambition at present.

The geographical reality of Central Bedfordshire means that the academy is based on two sites, one at Kingsland and one at Stotfold. This allows the academy to be responsive to the needs of local schools and reduces the transport demands on the local authority. However, the challenge of ensuring consistency and coherence across two sites which are nearly 20 miles apart is obvious, and this will be a key task of the successful candidate. The overwhelming majority of staff work exclusively at either the Kingsland or the Stotfold sites.

Until 2020, the individual sites were led by two Heads of School who, in turn, were overseen by the Head of Oak Bank School who also had a role as Executive Head of The ACB. In 2020, the Executive Head stepped back from this role and governors made the decision to appoint the Heads of School as Co-Headteachers on an interim basis. To move the academy forward into this next phase of its journey, the governors feel that this is now the time to return to a more traditional leadership structure. To ensure a transparent and competitive interview process for the successful candidate we are therefore advertising the post of Headteacher of The Academy of Central Bedfordshire to take effect from September 2022.

The academy enjoys a good relationship with it’s commissioning schools, Central Bedfordshire Council and neighbouring local authorities, local and national businesses, charities and community organisations. We work hard to involve parents, carers and those who are already supporting our children and young people. Our entire team is passionate about removing barriers to learning for our students and absolutely committed to helping them transform their lives.

The academy has a developing reputation nationally. A recent visit by Will Quince, Minister for Children and Families, was quoted in the speech he gave to the IncludEd21 Conference where he named the academy and spoke about the 'transformative effect' he saw of the work with young people.

If you wish to discuss this post further or have any questions before you submit an application, please contact Steve Gray, Chair of Governors, at sgray@acb.beds.sch.uk.

To arrange an informal site visit, please contact Helen Nicholson, who is based on the Stotfold site (hnicholson@acb.beds.sch.uk)

Closing date for applications: Tuesday 30th November 2021 at 3.30pm