April 2021

Dear Colleague

Thank you for your interest in a teaching post at The Urswick School. This letter is designed as an introduction. Do also please look at our website which includes newsletters to parents and our prospectus.

We are a Voluntary Aided Church of England School located in the heart of Hackney, close to Mare Street and Hackney Central Station. Most of our children live locally and both our students and staff reflect the diversity of the area. We articulate this with the simple phrase ‘we are a Christian School but not a school just for Christians’. We are an LGBT Best Practice School for ‘Educate and Celebrate’, and have recently won the Wellbeing Award for schools.

Our students arrive at the school with attainment below the national average. Around 70% of our students are eligible for Pupil Premium Grant. This places Urswick as the fifth most deprived cohort in England and the most deprived secondary school in London. A significant proportion live in overcrowded housing conditions and do not have internet access at home. We aim to ensure that students make accelerated progress, graduate into our Sixth Form and then to University. Our school mission statement is ‘Believe and Achieve’ – we have high aspirations for our students and offer them all the support possible to break the glass ceiling. This is one of the things that makes teaching at Urswick both enjoyable and rewarding.

I am in my thirteenth year as Headteacher (and am also Executive Head of New Regent’s College in Hackney). Dele Rotimi is Head of School and he runs the school on a day to day basis. We have a stable and experienced staff team. We are an expanding school.

Since September 2019, Urswick has become six forms of entry and take 180 children in each year group. Our Sixth Form, which is in its eighth year, also continues to expand. Many of our students go on to Russell Group Universities. Two have received Oxbridge offers this year.

Behaviour at the school has been recognised as Outstanding by a series of OFSTED reports. This is not achieved by boot camp methods but by ensuring our expectations are made very clear to students and our behaviour policy is consistently enforced. There is a very positive atmosphere in the school and an extensive rewards system which students very much subscribe to.

Our current award winning building is a very pleasant place to work. From lettings income we provide every child with a free school lunch each day whether they are entitled to Free School Meals or not. The free lunches extend to staff provided you are willing to eat lunch within the canteen. We have dedicated work rooms, teachers are all issued with an iPad, there are tea points where hot drinks are provided free to all staff, and a number of staff social events are organised each year.

We have an excellent record of supporting the professional development of NQTs. We also offer NQTs to start their employment on the first Monday in July, and so get paid for the Summer holidays. Please see the document about provision for NQTs which is on our website.

During ‘lockdown’ we had about 80 vulnerable learners and key worker children in school each day and provided Remote Learning for those unable to attend. Our attendance in the Autumn Term was 93% and has returned to similar levels of attendance since the return in March.

Consistent with the school’s Risk Assessment and DFE guidelines, short listed candidates will be invited to attend a face-to-face interview and deliver a demonstration lesson. Unless medically exempt, you will be asked to wear a face covering in indoor spaces including the classroom, though a designated ‘teacher only’ zone means teachers can remove their face covering when talking to the class because the teacher is socially distant from the students. We will not be offering the opportunity to interview or complete the recruitment process remotely. We will ensure social distancing can be maintained throughout the recruitment process.

I hope this has given you some sense of the school. When we interview for teaching posts there is always an opportunity to have a guided tour of the school and meet our children. I look forward to receiving your application.

Yours faithfully

Richard Brown

Richard Brown, Executive Head