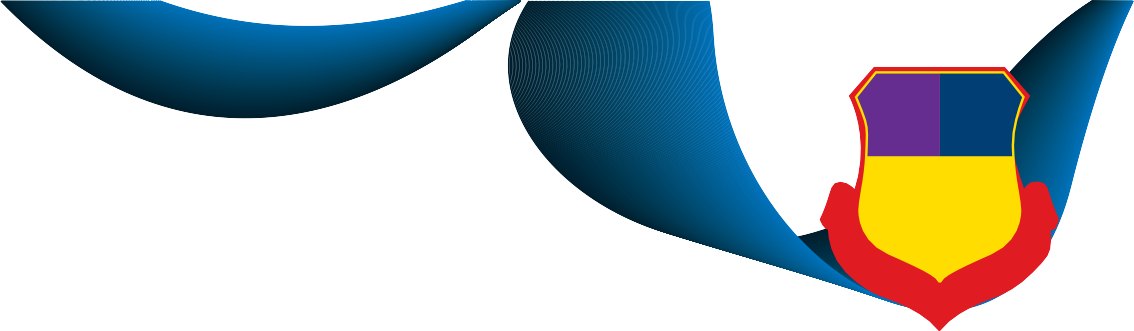
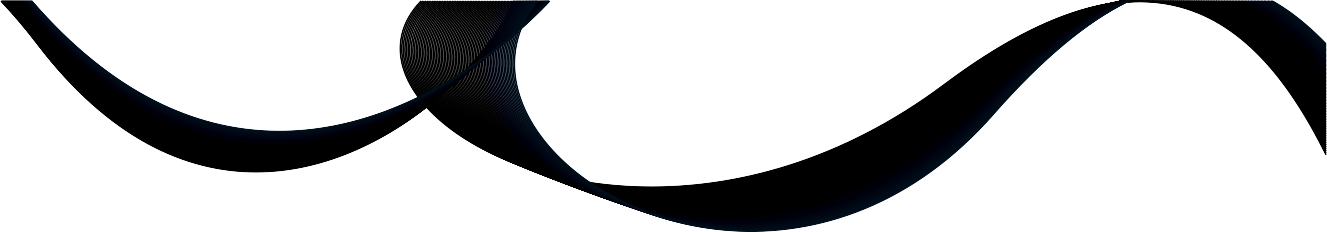
2 November 2018

Dear Applicant



*for* life

learning

Thank you for requesting information for the post of **Deputy Headteacher** at Walton-le-Dale High School from 1 May, 2019. I hope that our website [www.waltonledale.lancs.sch.uk](http://www.waltonledale.lancs.sch.uk) will give you a good overall “flavour” of the school.

Walton-le-Dale is a relatively small school which gives us a distinctive atmosphere. Many visitors comment on the warmth and friendliness of the school. It is a school where the students and staff know each other well (helped by a vertical pastoral system in Y8-Y11). Our smaller size allows us to see each child as an individual and to cater for them individually. We are proud to be one of only a few secondary schools in Lancashire with the Inclusion Mark, achieved in 2008 and renewed several times since. We currently have Flagship status for the Inclusion Mark and this reflects the importance of this to our ethos.

This is, and will continue to be, a student-centred school. Everything we do must have the interests of our students at the heart of it. The strengths of Walton-le-Dale lie in the relationships within the school. Our challenge is to ensure that we make use of these strong relationships to get the best out of our students in terms of achievement. However, a great education is more than exam results and I believe our success is also reflected in the way our students turn out after 5 years at Walton-le-Dale. Everyone in the school works hard to make this happen.

Our students come from a wide catchment area. Around a third of the students come from the Blackburn area, whilst the rest are local or from the Preston area. We have a large number of feeder schools. We are truly a comprehensive school, with a relatively higher proportion of students from the more deprived areas of the region. The ability intake is mixed, although historically we have had relatively few students at the top end. In recent years the ability profile has tended to improve. It is noticeable that we have a significant number of students who join the school late. These are often vulnerable students with a wide range of educational, social and emotional needs. We believe they are attracted to us because of the quality of care we offer. We also have an excellent reputation for the quality of our learning support.

We place a strong emphasis on trying to deliver a curriculum which is relevant and appropriate to our students. In KS3 we have created our own ‘Opening Minds’ curriculum which uses ‘integrated humanities’ content to develop core learning skills. The school offers Key Stage 4 students a wide variety of options for a relatively small school. These curriculum developments are matched by a strong focus on teaching and learning with a great deal of work going on to develop brilliant teaching in an inclusive school – a key focus for our current school improvement plan.

There is a strong team of staff across the school – all staff, not just teachers. They are incredibly supportive of each other, both in a personal and professional sense. Lesson planning is often shared and cross – faculty sharing of expertise is also common. Our team of pastoral and learning support staff is exceptionally strong, with Progress Co-ordinators responsible for the vertical “Sections” of the school from years 8 to 11 and a separate Progress Co-ordinator for Year 7, who also handles transition. We have a team of 14 teaching assistants at various levels and we are extremely proud of the work that we do to support our students based on need. Attendance is a priority for us – we have an attendance officer supported by members of the pastoral and learning support teams.

The school was 60 years old in 2017 but has good modernised facilities including the recent addition of a full sized astroturf pitch. The school historically had a Children’s Centre on site which is now leased by a commercial nursery.

**The Senior Leadership Team:** The team currently consists of myself, Liz Laverty (Deputy Head), Anne Snape (AHT Inclusion & SENCo), Rachel Long (AHT Teaching & Learning), Jo Withers (AHT Assessment), Paula Wall (AHT Curriculum), Sandra Hinchliffe (School Manager), and Stacey Eckersley (Business Manager). The team is undergoing significant change this year with the retirement of Anne Snape, Liz Laverty and Sandra Hinchliffe. I first came to WLD in 2007 as DHT (Standards), had a few years off as a headteacher elsewhere in Lancashire, and this is my second year as headteacher at Walton-le-Dale.

The restructured SLT from Sept 2019 includes this Deputy Headteacher role which incorporates the roles of the current DHT with the AHT for Inclusion. Additional appointments will be made to support this, for example the appointment of a SENCO. It is intended that this appointment of DHT will be made from 1st May 2019 to allow for a couple of months of handover before the current post-holders retire.

I am very fortunate in the calibre of my senior colleagues; teamwork is fundamental to the way we operate, sharing almost all information, and making many decisions together, usually through the weekly SLT meeting and brief morning meetings before the school day begins. The team is spread throughout the school and each individual is responsible for areas of the school, specific subject and department areas and a selection of ‘routines’ and events, as well as specific responsibilities related to individual job descriptions. We are not perfect, but we are learners like everyone else in the school. Whilst we all have job descriptions we often all end up going well beyond this and supporting each other. We all spend much of our day in classrooms, on corridors and being around students. This reflects the ethos across the school, not just in SLT.

You will have noticed that I have not mentioned Ofsted yet! We were obviously very disappointed to be declared to “require improvement”, having been a “good” school for a decade. Please have a look at our website to see our responses (<https://www.waltonledale.lancs.sch.uk/about-us/ofsted>) and outlines of our School Improvement Planning (<https://www.waltonledale.lancs.sch.uk/blog/2018-09-09-13-57-45-school-improvement-planning>). The fundamentals of the school have not changed; we were just not consistent in our practice across the school. The school improvement plan focuses on the fundamentals of the school and incorporates the actions identified by Ofsted. We are absolutely determined to restore our “Good” or better status, but, more than that, to continue to do the very best for every young person who walks through our doors.

Finally, please understand that this is a key leadership post where you will be a main driver of change and improvement. You will undoubtedly need energy and a passion for education. We want someone who has ideas, will take risks, will take people with them and will finish what they started. You will be the strategic lead for inclusion and pastoral care and be responsible for many of the aspects of the school that make us popular with students and parents/carers. You will combine the strategic aspect of your role with a deep care for individual students and their families. You will receive high quality support and encouragement from Governors, myself, the senior leadership team and the middle leadership. If you feel you are up to this exciting challenge and believe you have the same educational philosophy as us we would welcome an application. If not, I wish you good luck in your future career.

**Closing date for applications is at 12noon on 16 November 2018. Interviews will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday 4th and 5th December.**

If you wish to have a look around the school, you will be most welcome on **Tuesday 13 November at 10am or 2pm.**  Please give my PA Sandra Hinchliffe a ring and she will make the necessary arrangements.

Yours sincerely



James Harris

Headteacher