



April 2017

Dear Applicant

Thank you very much for your interest in becoming the Headteacher of Downend School.

Following a period of rapid change and focused school improvement, the school was judged "Good" in all areas by Ofsted in September 2014. Downend has a strong and growing reputation as a school of choice in the local area, based on our aspiration to provide 'an exciting and vibrant learning community where every young person is supported to achieve their very best'. The school is heavily oversubscribed with 306 first choice applications for 210 places this year.

I joined Downend as Headteacher in September 2011 and became Chief Executive Officer of the CSET academy group from September 2016. The vacancy arises as the current Headteacher, Mark Fuller is moving to a new position with the UK Defence Technical Training College.

CSET is a multi-academy trust formed in 2013 by The Castle School in Thornbury, and now includes Marlwood and Mangotsfield secondary schools as well as Charfield, Severn Beach and Lyde Green primary schools. Downend School became a single academy trust in 2013 under an umbrella partnership with CSET and formally joined the CSET group in May 2016.

CSET aims to work collaboratively to strengthen all the schools within the group, foster outstanding professional development for all staff and provide an education for our students which goes beyond that which any school could provide in isolation.

I am proud of what we have achieved at Downend, but there are many areas of challenge remaining and this post presents the opportunity for a skilled and confident leader to make their mark. Whilst student progress at Downend is very strong in a number of areas, most notably the Sixth Form, there is still work to do in other areas of the school to ensure every student fulfils their potential. We are therefore looking for a new Headteacher to lead us through the next stage of our development and fulfil our ambition of becoming an 'Outstanding' school for all of our students.

We want our new Headteacher to maintain the strongly inclusive ethos of our school. We want you to be committed to working in a collaborative way within and beyond the school to get the very best for our students. You must be determined to continue to raise achievement at Downend, securing consistently high quality teaching and creating a truly successful whole education for all our students.

We can promise you the support of a talented and committed staff, supportive parents and Governors, and enthusiastic and motivated students. The Trust has leadership development as a key priority. As Headteacher you will be supported by the CEO to set ambitious personal development objectives. As one of the Headteachers in the CSET group of schools you will be expected to participate in collective leadership development activities – sharing ideas and best practice is the norm. As a newly appointed Headteacher you will benefit from a quality bespoke induction programme.

Each of the schools in the CSET group has its own unique identity and ethos. The Headteachers are genuinely the Headteacher of their own school and are individually responsible for the vision and accountable for outcomes. Being part of a group of schools brings with it robust challenge and support as well as opportunities to share provision and central costs.

This post will provide a stimulating challenge for a committed, dynamic and intelligent individual who has the skills and tenacity to lead our school to excellence.

I enclose:

- * Brief details about our school
- * Job Description
- * Person Specification

I hope that you will be inspired to apply. Your application should comprise a letter of no more than two sides of A4, addressing the person specification and job priorities and, together with a completed CSET application form, should be sent electronically for my attention by 9am on Friday, 21st April 2017 (heather.maccallum@cset.co.uk).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W Roberts', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William Roberts
Chief Executive Officer

About Downend School

INTAKE

Downend School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive, and is located on the edge of Bristol, five miles from the city centre. The majority of Downend students are drawn from the suburban areas of South Gloucestershire LA around the school itself, including areas of relative prosperity to the North and East of the school (Downend and Emersons Green wards) and areas of relative deprivation to the South (Rodway and Staple Hill wards). Historically, a third of the school's intake was from Bristol LA, including areas of significant deprivation (Frome Vale, Hillfields and Eastville wards), but since 2016, the school has filled all places from within the South Gloucestershire catchment area.

Downend School thus has a diverse student community.

There are currently 1048 students on roll as follows:

• Year 7	240
• Year 8	212
• Year 9	171
• Year 10	160
• Year 11	132
• Year 12	61
• Year 13	72

Downend had a planned admission number of 270 after moving to a single site in 2005; this was reduced to 210 from 2011 in line with local demographics, but intakes were further undersubscribed as a result of parental preference for neighbouring schools and academies. The school's reputation locally has recovered strongly over recent years with an 80% rise in Y7 admissions, which represents by far the largest increase in the LA. We now have a planned admission number of 210, and were oversubscribed in 2015 and 2016. Downend is heavily oversubscribed for 2017 having received 306 first choice applications and has agreed to admit 240 students.

The decline in student numbers resulted in significant annual budget reductions from 2012 to 2014, and the school undertook a programme of staff restructuring in order to maintain a balanced budget.

As a result of the changing pattern of admissions, there is considerable variation in the profiles of different year groups at the school. Attainment on entry in recent Year 11 cohorts was below national average, but in lower years it is in line with national average.

Downend draws from five principal primary schools, although nearly 30 schools are represented in a typical intake.

PARTNERSHIPS

Downend School converted to Academy status in March 2013, in partnership with The Castle School in Thornbury. Castle School Education Trust (CSET) has supported a number of strands of school improvement since 2009, through secondments and direct support. Downend School works increasingly closely with the CSET group of schools, and will formally integrate with the CSET academy group during the course of this academic year.

Downend School works actively with primary and secondary schools both within the Mangotsfield & Downend Cluster and across South Gloucestershire, resulting in significant strengths in primary transition and multi-agency aspects of inclusion.

Downend has very strong links with higher education institutions, in particular the four universities in Bath and Bristol. Links with local businesses, including major regional employers such as Rolls Royce, BAE and MITIE are well established, with students securing high quality work experience placements, internships and apprenticeships. Downend has

recently launched a 'Premium Partners' business scheme. The school has strong international links through Modern Languages and the Sixth Form.

CURRICULUM

Students at Downend follow a broad and balanced curriculum, which is increasingly tailored as students progress through the school. All students prepare for GCSEs in English and Maths over their first five years. Students follow a general Science course, leading to Double or Triple Science at GCSE. In addition, all students have weekly lessons in PE and PSHE.

Technology is a strength at Downend, having been the specialism of the school, and we have excellent facilities in this area. The vast majority choose to take a Technology course at GCSE.

Almost all students learn French in Year 7, although we now disapply a small cohort who receive literacy booster sessions during this time. Our more able linguists study German from Year 8.

History, Geography and Religion, Philosophy & Ethics are studied in Key Stage 3 and are popular GCSE options, as are Art, Music and Drama.

In Year 7 students have weekly Challenge lessons which incorporate Personal Learning & Thinking Skills, culminating in the Year 7 Camp at the end of the Summer Term. We have recently extended this into Year 8 and Year 9. Students also have discrete lessons in IT/Computing.

We have a Nurture Group in Key Stage 3 which provides for a small number of students each year who are not yet secondary-ready socially or academically.

Choices for Key Stage 4 are made through a Pathways system, with parents, students and staff making decisions collectively about course choices. The Yellow Pathway covers the English Baccalaureate subjects and some additional choices. The Blue Pathway incorporates some BTEC courses alongside GCSEs. The Red Pathway is a specialist alternative curriculum focusing on preparation for employment.

ACHIEVEMENT

Students have historically joined Downend with a prior ability that was on average below and sometimes significantly below, the national average. This is no longer the case with our most recent intakes which are in line with national average.

Results at Downend have improved in recent years, with attainment rising from well below national average (5ACEM average 43% 2007-2011) to broadly in line with national average (5ACEM average 55% 2012-2016). In 2016 our Progress 8 score for the whole cohort was -0.38, but this was impacted on by a number of students on alternative provision. The progress 8 score for the cohort taught at Downend in 2016 was -.017. The main areas of focus for the school are in three areas – the progress of the disadvantaged, students of middle ability prior attainment and English.

A combination of rising intake profile and continued school improvement should enable the school to achieve further improvements in results in the future.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

We aspire to create an innovative and dynamic learning environment at Downend School. Considerable investment in professional development for teachers over the last five years has resulted in a confident professional community where there is an open dialogue about teaching and learning.

Teaching is usually good in all subjects, and a growing proportion is outstanding. Overall areas of strength include: careful planning of lessons to ensure students make good progress; a positive climate for learning based on strong relationships between teachers,

other adults, and students; high expectations; explicit learning objectives and opportunities for self-reflection so that students know how to improve.

The current focus of staff training is to further increase the sophistication of questioning and differentiation; provide more opportunities for independent learning, and more consistent cross-curricular teaching of literacy.

The school places an emphasis on promoting engaging learning experiences for students. In 2012 the school opened an Innovation Centre to promote and provide space for kinaesthetic learning activities in lessons and in the wider curriculum. The centre is well used by students of all ages and has contributed to a more dynamic approach to learning across the curriculum.

Every teacher participates in a Personal Development Programme encompassing a range of professional training programmes tailored to the needs of individual teachers.

ETHOS & BEHAVIOUR

The ethos of the school has been transformed in recent years through the consistent raising of expectations. Students are enthusiastic about learning, are well prepared for lessons and respond quickly to staff requests. Students conduct themselves well in school and take pride in being part of the school community. The behaviour of students in lessons and around the school and their attitude to learning have improved considerably, as a consequence of a new curriculum, better teaching, consistently higher expectations, and much more robust approaches to the management of challenging behaviour.

The Supervision system, introduced in September 2011 to enable teachers to remove students who disrupt learning, ensures that low-level disruption to lessons is now uncommon. The proportion of days lost to exclusion was the lowest in South Gloucestershire in 2014/15, having been the highest in 2011/12, and has remained at a low level ever since.

In September 2012 the school launched a House system with reorganised pastoral support including four full time Assistant Heads of House, and an integrated specialist Inclusion Centre. As a consequence the school is far more responsive to issues identified at an early stage by students, parents and staff, and is able to respond to incidents of poor behaviour immediately.

A new school uniform was introduced in September 2012.

Attendance in 2015/16 was 94.3%, for the current academic year it stands at 95.6%

LEADERSHIP

The SLT currently comprises:

Mark Fuller	Headteacher since April 2016, previously Deputy Headteacher since September 2013
Wyn Lotwick	Deputy Headteacher since September 1996
Gill Miller	Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion), appointed September 2007
Elaine Feltham	Assistant Headteacher (Curriculum), appointed September 2007
Jarah Cole	Assistant Headteacher (Teaching & Learning), appointed September 2015 – formerly Head of Technology
Kim Humphris	Business Manager since 2004

In addition, the Extended SLT includes:

Kate Long	Head of Sixth Form since May 2014
Ben Hickman	Assessment Co-ordinator since September 2014 (& Head of Maths)
Pam Keegan	Senior Head of House since September 2015

A new TLR structure was implemented in September 2013, moving from a faculty to subject leadership model and removing 8 posts to sharpen accountability for middle leaders.

We benefit from a highly committed group of governors with a range of background experience. Governors have a sophisticated understanding of the school's position, support school leaders in driving up standards, and have overseen the efficient management of financial resources and staff.

SIXTH FORM

Downend Sixth Form has had the highest value-added in South Gloucestershire for the last four years, with very high retention and completion rates. In 2015 we achieved the highest value added of any state school in the West of England. We have been working closely with Mangotsfield School in order to provide joint Sixth Form provision since September 2014. Recruitment since September 2016 has been based upon a single curriculum offer across both schools, which has increased applications across the two schools.

PREMISES

Over the last five years Downend School has undergone substantial refurbishment, including the opening of a new IT Hub, Inclusion Centre and Innovation Centre. In 2015, we completely refurbished the Dining Hall, Sixth Form Centre, Library and Drama Centre. We aim to complete our refurbishment project by 2018 with works in Science and the Sports Centre. In total we have attracted £2.1 million for five different capital projects over the last five years.

OFSTED

Downend School's 2014 Ofsted Report is on our website. The 2012 Ofsted Report, which provides additional context, is available on the Ofsted website.

PROSPECTUS

Our school prospectus (2016) and our joint Sixth Form prospectus (2016) can be viewed on our website.

APPLICATION FORM

This is available from the Downend School website.

Downend School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be subject to checking through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).



Castle School Education Trust

Aim: to provide quality education in a caring environment

Mission: to create a robust collaboration of schools that provides:

- Strong dynamic and sustainable school leadership
- Excellent professional learning for staff
- A high quality, whole education for children and young people with opportunities, experiences and excellent outcomes that no school can achieve alone.

Values:

- A deep-rooted and continued commitment to inclusive education
- Absolute commitment to a 'rounded' quality education. This includes a commitment to a curriculum which promotes achievement for all and excellent outcomes for students
- A strong belief that working collaboratively and in partnership with others - who share our values - strengthens all
- A strong belief in the importance of collective responsibility for the success of all children in our community