The Blue School

‘The best we can achieve’

Information pack for applicants

Teacher of Mathematics



The Blue School

Welcome to The Blue

Applying for a new job is an important step so it's vital that you learn as much about us as you can to decide whether this will be the right place for you. This information booklet attempts to provide you with an insight into life at The Blue School, to try to convey the things that are important to us, the strengths that we have and the areas that we are looking to develop over the coming years.

When visitors spend time with us, and when new staff join the school, their first impressions are often related to the quality of the students, the commitment of the staff and the calm environment in which we operate (most of the time!). Our aim is to achieve the best that we can in all aspects of school life and we firmly believe that the culture of the school is such that this is a realistic goal for both students and staff.

Details about the school

The Blue School is an 11 to 18 Church of England coeducational academy with over 1500 students. As the only state secondary school providing 11 to 18 education in the area, our students are drawn from the city of Wells and its surrounding villages and they provide us with a genuinely comprehensive intake. We enjoy a good reputation in the community and, consequently, we are regularly over-subscribed. Whilst being an academy enables us to have greater autonomy in the management of the school, we still retain strong links with Somerset Local Authority and work closely with other local schools. In 2017 we were designated a Research School, one of only two in the South West.



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History

The school was originally founded in 1641 when it was established as a charitable foundation as a result of the legacy of Ezekiel Barkham, a citizen of Wells and strong church member. The name was attached over time as result of the blue uniforms that were provided for the original students.

Today's students are encouraged to take pride in the school's history, which is celebrated each year by Y7 students in a Founders' Day Service, and to value the traditions which have contributed to the development of their school. As a Church of England School, we try to apply Christian values in our interactions with each other, whilst also celebrating and affirming the differing religious and secular backgrounds of those who form our school community.

Students and their learning

One of the reasons for the success of the school is the nature of the students and the support that we receive from their families. Students join us from our 11 partner primary schools in Y7, as well as from outside of our traditional catchment area, and are placed in mixed ability tutor groups for their time in the school. Tutors stay with their group for the duration of Key Stages 3 and 4, working under the leadership of a Pastoral Team Leader.

In Y7, students are taught in mixed ability groups for all subjects, except for Mathematics, English, PE and MFL. As students progress through the school, more setting occurs with departments making decisions about the most effective ways for students to experience their subjects. There are a wide range of extra-curricular activities for students and we are always looking for ways of extending that provision. All students also have the chance to be part of the School Council which has a considerable impact on school life.

Our school population is genuinely comprehensive and will give you the rewarding opportunity to work with youngsters with a wide range of abilities and individual needs. New staff often find the emphasis placed on student learning in the classroom refreshing and rise to the challenges that this brings. Although the majority of our students engage effectively and willingly with the learning ethos of the school, there are some who are less inclined or able to do so, which means that working at the school ensures that the full range of teaching and learning skills can be practised and further developed. The inclusive nature of the school is very important to us and it is something which is recognised by those who work with us to support the learning of more vulnerable groups of youngsters.

Students achieve outstanding results at Key Stage 3 and in the Sixth Form whilst standards at Key Stage 4 are good. We are currently planning a five year curriculum from Year 7 to 11 to ensure consistent progression.

All staff in the school work hard to enable students to succeed. This includes the large number of support staff who contribute to the learning of students by providing high quality administrative, financial, catering, premises and IT services, or by working directly with them in classrooms and around the school.

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The school environment

The quality of our environment is a source of pride for us, and one which we believe contributes to the orderly atmosphere of the school. Our campus is a most attractive one, with approximately 32 acres of playing fields and a superb view across the city which creates a very green and spacious feeling to the place. In recent years we have redeveloped the buildings to create a Learning Resource Centre, a Design and Technology Centre, a Business Studies Suite, new dining areas, a Sports Centre, a new Science Block, a Training Kitchen and most recently a new teaching block. Whilst there are still areas of the school that would benefit from being redesigned and refurbished, facilities for students and staff are of a high quality and plans are in place to attend to specific areas of the school in the future.

Following the achievement of Science College status in September 2003, significant investment was made in refurbishing existing Biology labs and building a new block to house Physics and Chemistry. The Science Block also contains a state of the art Science/ICT lab which is proving of great benefit not only to our students, but also to the students of our Partner Primary Schools. Science and Mathematics rooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards, and a variety of learning opportunities have been introduced for students in both subjects. All other curriculum areas have benefited from improved resources and facilities as a result of the increased financial investment in the school. We opened a new Sixth Form Centre in the heart of the school in September 2018.



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The school staff

We value the contributions that all staff make to the effectiveness of the school. The importance of staff is reflected in our school structures, in our approach to training and development and in our daily interactions with each other. New staff often comment on the high expectations that we have of each other, the professionalism with which we approach everything and the care and support that is a prominent feature of the school.

At all levels within the school, we invest significant amounts of time and money to support and develop our staff. We have a well-established induction process for Newly Qualified Teachers which introduces them to important features of the school and which provides opportunities to discuss ideas and any concerns on a regular basis. They are supported throughout the year by a subject mentor and by one of our Senior Professional Tutors. A whole school CPD programme is in place with different staff leading workshops that explore aspects of learning and teaching. In addition to this, all staff have access to individualised training to develop their own expertise and to enhance the work of their team. As a Research School, we aim to promote and share evidence-based practice, both within the school and with other schools.



One of the features of the school is the strength of each of its many teams. Each of the curriculum, pastoral and support teams has a Team Leader who provides the vision and direction for their particular area, often with the support of a Deputy or an Assistant Team Leader. In such a large school, these teams are vital in creating opportunities for staff to share ideas and experiences and to develop networks of support.

The Leadership Team of the school consists of the Headteacher, one Deputy Headteacher, five Assistant Headteachers and the Business Manager. Whilst having their own specific role and responsibilities, each one is also linked to particular teams within the school and is actively involved in evaluating and supporting the work of all staff.

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Further information

Further information about different aspects of school life can be found on the school website at www.theblueschoolwells.co.uk. In particular, the following documents in the Information Section might be helpful in providing more details about the organisation of the school and the curriculum.

Information/General Information/Prospectus: School Prospectus; Welcome Booklet; Key Stage 4 Prospectus; Sixth Form Prospectus.

Information/General Information/School Policies: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The application process

Completed application forms and a covering letter should be sent to Miss Julie Biggadike, HR Assistant, The Blue School, Kennion Road, Wells, BA5 2NR or via e-mail jobswiththeblue@educ.somerset.gov.uk.

Candidates selected for interview will be given the chance to look round the school as part of the process and to meet students and staff as well as undertaking the more formal parts of the selection process. If invited to interview, you will be asked to bring various pieces of documentation to verify your identity and to comply with the requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service in ensuring the safeguarding of children.

Closing date: Friday 17th January 2020

Interviews: Friday 24th January 2020

