

December 2017

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in working at Bedford Free School. This is an exciting opportunity to join and forge a brilliant geography team. There is one other colleague in the department – the head of geography – and the department works in close partnership with the other humanities. This opportunity arises because the current colleague teaching geography is an RE specialist and she is absolutely brilliant, but we intend for this colleague to teach their specialism in the next academic year.

We are also open to applications for a part-time role of 0.6 or greater, up to full-time, and this preference will not form any part of the selection criteria. We may be able to accommodate a request for a part-time role under 0.6 but please contact me before application if this is what you are interested in.

Founded by local teachers, BFS opened in September 2012 with the aim of offering the families in our community a distinctive and world-class choice for their children. Our school values of Respect, Honesty and High Expectations drive what we do every single day to ensure that we give our pupils the best possible education.

Bedford Free School is different. If you are able to visit you will see a silent address in the playground of the whole school at the start of the day focused on our values where we always remind the pupils to “work hard and be nice”, extended time given to numeracy, literacy, knowledge quizzes and reading, silent corridors and impeccable pupil behaviour, and extra-curricular activities that every pupil takes part in. The school is open and supervised from 8-6pm (compulsory from 8.25-4pm). There are no onerous marking policies, graded lesson observations, or requirements for detailed written planning. We centralise detentions so that teachers aren’t all doing their own and chasing their own. Our school is trying to show what is possible to do by learning from some of the most innovative schools in the country. We are outward-facing, with partnerships with schools across the country, and very humble. We know we haven’t yet got everything right but we are ambitious to become one of the very best schools.

I am an experienced Principal a few months into my second headship. My leadership team and I are highly visible, ensuring we are supportive of teachers and maintain order. It is the leadership team that address the whole school in silence every morning and ensure the ethos in the school is productive. Colleagues who visit BFS describe it as revelatory and unlike any school they’ve ever been in. I believe teachers should be able to teach unhindered by bureaucracy or poor behaviour, and should be specialists in their subjects. 100% of the staff who joined BFS in September 2017 say they would recommend working in the school to others including their closest friends if they are teachers.

We are unashamedly ambitious for those in our care – we have now had 3 sets of GCSE results and as we expected, we are among the top performing schools locally. These results have been achieved through good teaching and hard work and geography has made a solid contribution to this success. It is fair to say that we are ambitious for the geography department to deliver even better outcomes at GCSE. Results across the school have been above the national average for the last 3 years, and we are looking for someone with the ambition and dedication to collaboratively lift the geography team to match the exceptional results achieved in English and history already.



The team is made up of an experienced subject-specialist, and the department is housed in spacious, modern classrooms. As an outward-facing school, we visit and collaborate widely – the head of geography recently visited the very successful geography team at Heathfield Community College, for example. We operate a highly selective marking policy to further reduce unnecessary workload and as a result, our teachers are free to do what they do best – teach, and they do this in a highly productive, disciplined environment where teachers are in charge and pupil behaviour is exemplary.

If you are a well-qualified expert looking to work with truly wonderful pupils and in a talented and dedicated department with the potential for further improvement, I would encourage you to visit and see how we do things for yourself. We are situated in the heart of Bedford, just 30 minutes from London, and welcome visitors at any time during the school day.

This role would suit someone with the ability to lead by example, inspire staff and pupils alike and who aspires to join us in developing our growing multi academy trust, Advantage Schools. We will provide support, access to incredible CPD including close links to the highest performing state schools in the country and via our partnerships with some of the groups of schools doing the most exciting things with curriculum and pedagogy, and hence opportunities to progress in your career.

If you would like a confidential discussion about the position or to arrange a visit please contact my PA Esther Logan to arrange an appointment on 01234 332290 or [elogan@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk](mailto:elogan@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk)

I look forward to answering any questions you might have, and to receiving your application in due course.

Regards,



Stuart Lock  
**PRINCIPAL Bedford Free School**  
**EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL Advantage Schools**

### **The Department**

The department is made up of 2 teachers and is line managed by the Head of School. The Head of Department is a highly regarded subject-specialist. Results have been solid in our first three years, and we are ambitious for more. We host trainee-teachers in the department and are in a strong position.

### **The Curriculum**

#### **Key Stage 3**

We deliver a knowledge-based curriculum that demands that pupils know a lot. This is delivered in four lessons a fortnight with an emphasis on remembering content to develop fluency. Knowledge maps and 100% books containing a summary of the knowledge pupils should gather are provided to each pupil at the start of each term, and are subject to revision as we develop our curricular expertise. We hence welcome challenge on the content of the curriculum and what aspects of geography are necessary for young people to be able to join the *community of educated citizens*.

There are no generic impositions on geography that betray the subject – beyond the routines that make the school strong, subject-specialism is respected and teachers are routinely challenged about what is right for their subject rather than what is consistent between very different subjects. This means that pedagogy should come from the curriculum (ie what is taught should dictate how), but we are unafraid of lecturing, teacher-talk and silent practice.

Key Stage 3 is really important to us, partly because not all pupils currently take the subject at Key Stage 4. This means that by the age of 14, it is essential that our pupils know those things that we believe they are entitled to. We believe in this not for reasons of employment or utility, but because we believe that being educated and knowing about the world is an end in itself.

#### Key Stage 4

All pupils study one of history and geography and many study both. We believe that studying both to 16 is a part of a broad and balanced academic curriculum and are ambitious to fit this into the curriculum in the future, time notwithstanding. There is no selection by attainment – all pupils are entitled to study geography.

We follow the new AQA GCSE (9-1) and all examinations are taken at the end of Year 11. Planning for the new specification is in place and centralised so teachers only need to tweak things for their own classes, which significantly reduces teacher workload. We have two sets of mock examinations in Year 11 and one in Year 10. We have established the field work trip at the start of Year 11 and it has been very successful this year.

#### Extra-curricular

Each member of the department contributes to the BFS Electives programme – these are the usual extra-curricular clubs offered in most schools but timetabled into the school day to ensure that every pupil accesses them and to save teachers from giving up their precious 'free' time after school hours to run them. Currently we offer more than 50 activities a week which range from sports teams to knitting, debating and yoga.

Geography plays a key role in our well-established additional programme which includes excursions, an elective and visits to the school from various visiting speakers. We have good relationships with the Harpur Trust schools in Bedford and often attend events and lectures organised by them. Experiences like these help us to provide pupils, regardless of background, with the cultural literacy that they need to be successful in their GCSEs, A-Levels and at university.

#### Reading

Developing our pupils as readers has been, and remains a key priority for all staff. We have 30 minutes of dedicated DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time each day where pupils read classic literature out loud together with their tutor. This approach, which we call '100 Classics' will mean that at the end of 5 years at BFS, each pupil will have read very many great pieces of literature just through DEAR.

Teachers have all been trained in the strategies outlined in the Doug Lemov book 'Reading Reconsidered' and our pupils expect to read out loud in each and every lesson.

#### Why work at BFS?

Based in the heart of Bedford, BFS is already one of the top performing schools in the area which is down to an unashamedly academic curriculum, exceptional behaviour and subject teachers having the freedom to teach as a result. We recognise the subject staff are experts in their fields and the senior team allow heads of department to lead their teams as they see fit.

A strength of our school, and the key to the excellent attitudes of our pupils is our systems and routines. On appointment all staff are given a copy of 'Teach Like a Champion 2.0' by Doug Lemov and the strategies and techniques in this book drive the work we do on a daily basis. We have found that by arming everyone with the same routines, teachers become free to teach their subjects as they see fit because the pupils know what is expected of them.

As well as a generous salary scale, at BFS we offer funding for staff wishing to complete relevant post-graduate study and all staff receive independent workplace advice and support from Edapt paid for by the school ([www.edapt.org.uk](http://www.edapt.org.uk))

Bedford is a pleasant and affordable town in which to live and offers great access to London (30 minutes to St Pancras from Bedford Station) and Cambridge. Our school is growing into a multi academy trust and a local

primary school joined BFS this year, and we have gained approval to open an additional secondary school in St Neots in the near future. These developments, plus others that are planned mean there will be considerable opportunities for career development in the coming years.

Thank you for your interest in teaching at BFS, we encourage candidates to visit the school and can arrange tours at any time – feel free to come and see our school in action, meet our staff and pupils and get a real feel for the hardworking, happy atmosphere we have here.

To arrange a tour or for a confidential discussion about the position contact PA Esther Logan to arrange an appointment on 01234 332290 or [elogan@bedfordreeschool.co.uk](mailto:elogan@bedfordreeschool.co.uk)