

January 2018

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in working at Bedford Free School. This is an exciting opportunity to join a talented Science department that is already the best locally.

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 students 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, extended time given to numeracy, literacy, knowledge quizzes and reading, silent corridors and impeccable student behaviour, and extracurricular activities which 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 best schools in the country.

I am an experienced Principal a few weeks into my second headship. My leadership team and I are highly visible, supporting teachers and maintaining order, addressing the whole school in silence every morning, and ensuring 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.

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 nationally. These results have been achieved through good teaching and hard work and Science has made a solid contribution to this success, particularly in 2016 and 2017 which saw a significant improvement in all measures. The team is made up entirely of subject specialists, which is increasingly unusual in the present climate. The department is housed in spacious, purpose built laboratories and enjoys an additional, dedicated classroom. A full time, highly qualified technician supports the teaching staff on a daily basis and curriculum planning is centralised, meaning teachers do not have to spend hours preparing for lessons. 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 student behaviour is exemplary.

If you are a well-qualified expert looking to work with truly wonderful students and in a talented and dedicated department with bags of 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 students 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

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 5 teachers and each member of staff is a highly qualified subject specialist. Two of our teachers completed their teacher training at BFS, and results improved significantly between 2015 and 2017 and are expected to be even better in 2018 and beyond.

The Curriculum

Key Stage 3

Students follow a knowledge based, academic curriculum in Key Stage 3 and begin their GCSE studies in Year 9. All staff contribute schemes of work and resources as directed by the HoD who has overall responsibility for curriculum design and assessment.

Key Stage 4

We follow the new Edexcel GCSE Combined Sciences course and each year around 30 students are invited by the HoD to study Triple Science. All examinations are taken at the end of Year 11. Planning for the new specifications is in place and centralised so teachers only need to tweak things for their own classes, which significantly reduces teacher workload.

Extracurricular

Each member of the department contributes to the BFS Electives programme – these are the usual extracurricular clubs offered in most schools but timetabled into the school day to ensure that every student 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.

Science offer an exciting range trips to places including the Science Museum, London Zoo. There is also a well-established STEM 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 students, regardless of background, with the cultural literacy that they need to be successful in their GCSEs, A Levels and at university.

Reading

Developing our students 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 students 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 student will have read 100 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 students 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 students is our systems and routines. On appointment all staff are given a copy of 'Teach Like a Champion' 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 students know what is expected of them.

As well as a generous salary scale which is above the national average, 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 (www.edapt.org.uk)

Bedford is a pleasant and affordable town in which to live and offers great access to London (30m to St Pancras from Bedford Station) and Cambridge. Our school is growing into a multi academy trust with a local primary school joining us this year, and we expect to gain approval to open an additional secondary school in St Neots in September 2018. 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 students 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@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk