

Personal message about the Science Subject Leader position

Hello, and thank you for showing an interest in the Science Subject Leader position we have advertised. We have a vacancy due to promotion to a mainstream role. I would like to tell you a bit more about the school and the kind of person we are looking for:

- Our students are terrific: all have well-documented difficulties, but also untapped strengths and talents
- We've been judged as 'outstanding' four times by [Ofsted](#). Most recently in [July 2018](#), which inspected our relatively new sixth form for the first time. (It's fair to say they were impressed!)
- However highly we've been judged, we can't stand complacency and are focused on continual improvement.
- We are a National Support School and among the first special schools in the country to receive the [World Class Schools Quality Mark](#). Our vision aims even higher: Our vision aims even higher: 'Achievement for all in a unique world-class school'
- We take all that stuff in our School Development Plan very seriously: Preparing for Adulthood (PfA), Visible Learning (John Hattie), and Wellbeing (students and staff)
- We intend to be the best in the world at what we do; to achieve this we need staff who are already very good and also intend to be the best at what they do
- We would welcome greater diversity in all areas of staffing to reflect more closely the community we serve (please see 'Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity').
- We are involved in a long-term CPD programme linked to John Hattie's 'Visible Learning' meta-research, so we need someone that can lead strongly, evaluate the impact of our strategies when deciding whether to park, develop or share them, and is open to learning themselves.
- Although our students are secondary age, they are working well within primary expectations of attainment in English and Maths, but many have talents in other areas of the curriculum, especially practical subjects.
- Whatever their starting points, all of our students achieve high-quality accredited outcomes at Key Stages 4 & 5.
- Many people tend to stay because their job is rewarding but remains challenging (I'm in my 26th year here), though some do relocate, retire, or get promoted elsewhere
- The work is never easy, and nor should it be, because our students deserve the absolute best from us
- The best indicator for future success is whether someone is performing well in their current role, including the challenging parts of it (which usually involve other people!)
- If you are open to learning and change, and if your values and skills chime with us, you will love it here
- We're not looking for clones or mavericks, but real leadership and team-playing. This means a willingness to learn from others as well as working collegiately to making improvements in our teaching practice
- We need someone who will not just develop what we already have but be able to help lead us into new territory.
- I used to be a science teacher and am an enthusiastic supporter of its continual development in the curriculum e.g. through developing our range of accreditation and our use of SOLO taxonomy for success criteria

This probably isn't the job for you if

- You don't like moving out of your comfort zone, learning, or working hard
- You're looking for a way out of your current situation rather than a way forward
- Your values are different than the school's
- You are uncomfortable receiving and providing both support and challenge in order to improve

We will not consider applicants who have not taken the trouble to find out about the school and/or send in 'generic' supporting statements or CVs. For safeguarding purposes, one of your referees MUST be your current or most recent Headteacher (or equivalent). Unfortunately, this job is not suitable for a newly-qualified teacher. If you are an Early Career Teacher interested in moving to a special school, my advice is to build your track record in mainstream then keep an eye for future vacancies.

Hope to hear from you soon!

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Kieran McDonnell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Headteacher