

November 2020

To potential Deputy Head Academic candidates,

Thank you for your interest in the Deputy Head Academic role at Ballard School. This is an extremely exciting time to be joining Ballard. Our pupil numbers are soaring, having increased by over 20% since September, 2018. We are putting on several extra classes in Year 7 and Year 8 over the next couple of years, and now have waiting lists in most year groups. Most importantly, our reputation for delivering a first-class holistic education is growing, and we have, I believe, become the local independent day school of choice. The Governors are ambitious for the School and are keen to build on our success; exciting opportunities lie ahead.

The School setting is inspirational; we are sited on 34 acres of stunning countryside in New Milton and situated between the New Forest and the coast. Ballard serves Hampshire and Dorset and has great transport links. Having moved out of London three years ago to take up the post here, I can vouch for the quality of life in this part of the world. On weekends and Summer evenings, it is only a short journey to the beautiful New Forest and stunning coastline... but it is the community that makes Ballard such a great place to work. Ballard is a happy, positive and supportive community. We have a culture of unconditional respect, kindness and inclusion that makes settling in here so easy. All the staff here have a passion for helping children be the best that they can be, and parents forever tell us that the staff here go the extra mile. The Ballard Family and The Ballard Way are phrases I hear a great deal around the place.

I am often asked what we mean by The Ballard Family and two members of staff have helped me to answer this question. Our Head of Pre-Prep told me that as we know the pupils extremely well, and we know their families very well too, when we challenge, inspire, support and nurture our children, we do so in a way that makes us an extension of their family. The out-going Deputy Head Academic once told the Senior School that in his eyes, the term The Ballard Family means that the values that they find at home with their families (kindness, support, honesty, respect, looking after each other and their surroundings) are the same values we have at Ballard; essentially, family values and Ballard values are the same. When our young people leave us, they do so as confident, down-to earth, polite and balanced young men and women. Parents have entrusted us with the most important of tasks – educating and nurturing their children. They must have toured the School and felt that special ‘sense of place’ that so many prospective parents describe to me upon their first visit. They must have seen in Ballard something that made them decide that our ethos, sense of community and family, and vibrant teaching was what they wanted for their children.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a huge challenge for us all, and I firmly believe that Ballard has risen to that challenge. During the first lockdown, we ran a full timetable for most of the School via Microsoft Teams, and parental feedback was universally positive. As I said in my Virtual Speech Day address last Summer, “During this lockdown, I have never been more proud to lead this dynamic and inspirational community”. It will be one of the key tasks of the new Deputy Head Academic to build on our successes and put into practice the skills and knowledge we learnt whilst in lockdown.

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‘Excellent’ & ‘Outstanding’ (ISI & OFSTED)

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The Leadership Team is a tight-knit team. We have all been appointed to the Leadership Team recently (our Bursar in March 2018, our Deputy Head Pastoral in September 2019 and myself in September 2018). We are looking for someone to bring new ideas and a fresh pair of eyes to the School as we continue to shape our vision for the coming years. The Deputy Head Academic will play a central role in our future, as we strive for an ever more robust and aspirational curriculum for all.

We want someone who is aware of and inspired by the latest thinking and trends in education, who is familiar with the ideas of educational authors such as Mary Myatt, John Tomsett, Tom Sherrington, Ross Morrison McGill and Andy Buck. We need someone who can take people with them, lead the Heads of Department and enthuse every teacher to try something new in a culture of support and trust. Whilst the successful candidate will need to understand how to create and manipulate data and understand IT systems, we need a 'people' person who can work with collegiality, build positive relationships and lead teams. Schools work best when there is an ethos of trust, honesty and transparency, and you will find that here at Ballard.

Whilst a key focus of the new Deputy Head Academic will be teaching and learning, the successful candidate will soon realise that there is so much more to Ballard. We run around 120 activities per week for our Year 3s to Year 11s, and our sporting and performing arts provision is exceptional. We hold the Gold Artsmark award which is awarded by the Arts Council, and last year we were awarded the School Games Award. This year we were nominated for Independent School of the Year. If you want a flavour of what goes on here, have a look at the website and read some of my reflections in "From the Headmaster's office" which is found on the "Meet the Head" page.

As I intimated earlier, this is an exciting time to be joining the School. The ambitious and driven Leadership Team, Senior Management Team and Governors are keen to build on recent successes; an ambitious strategy and further growth are clearly on the horizon. Please take the time to apply if you wish to be part of the team that is leading this fantastic School into the future. You will require resilience, stamina, passion and a sense of humour; I can promise that it will be fulfilling, rewarding and a great deal of fun. It is an opportunity not to be missed.

With best wishes,



Andrew McCleave
Headmaster

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