

Dear applicant,

Assistant Headteacher – Creative Partnerships and Community Cohesion L13-17

Thank you for your interest in this position which I am very pleased to be appointing to. This is a new role in the school and comes about from a restructure we undertook in 2017/18 to strengthen our provision. What was unusual about this restructure was that it resulted in no job losses nor has it seen staff lose responsibilities. Instead, we have been able to build a staffing structure which is enabling our staff to develop, build capacity across the school in all areas and providing the time and the space for staff to think and to focus on our school objective of creating a compelling learning experience. The manner in which we achieve this, our culture, is described below:

Our objective

To Create a Compelling Learning Experience

Our strategy in achieving this

*Believing in people: professional learning and reflective practice.
Positive relationships.*

I am now in a position to advertise this role and it's important that I share why I have waited until now as it will give an indication of how our school operates. One of my Deputy Headteachers has been applying for promotion and has now secured a Headship; another of my Assistant Headteachers was reaching retirement age. I wanted to wait until my DHT had secured their Headship and to give my AHT time to make the decision about retirement before I fully implemented the structure. It was fair to give my AHT time to make the decision to retire when they were ready and to support them in their final year – giving them a new position in which they were not comfortable in leading was not the way I lead the school – so I waited.

The role is now available and is the final piece in the jigsaw of creating a compelling learning experience.

Context of the role

Our curriculum and pastoral care is very strong. We have spent two and a half years building a curriculum which works for us and we are very proud of. The "hidden" curriculum is just as important to our success as the taught curriculum. We have worked over the past three and half years since my appointment in 2015 in building strong relationships with a number of partners: Comino, People's History Museum, SEERIH and Manchester City in the Community. We have strong relationships with our primary schools and all SLT are governors of our key primary schools and have recently become a strategic partner with Alliance for Learning Teaching School. We work closely with the teaching schools in Rochdale and are committed to the regeneration of the town. I believe that a school should be part of the community and not dictate to the community what they should do and we have worked hard to build these links through reaching out – we offer English speaking lessons for EAL parents and work incredibly closely with community safety officers within the Local Authority.

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We know that we need to do something different with finite resources and an increase in the challenges we face as a multi-cultural school in Rochdale and this role will help achieve this. I envisage the successful applicant will:

- Build links with voluntary organisations within and around Rochdale
- Work closely with youth organisations as part of the LA and Kashmiri Youth Project
- Develop supportive groups for parents and advocates for these groups which will help us to strengthen the home-school partnership
- Identify contextual issues and work with the rest of the team in building these into the taught curriculum.

This list is not exhaustive and the successful applicant will be able to develop the role over time. It is important to note that we do not rush for quick fixes and recognize instead that systemic change takes time, careful consideration, coherence and synergy. If you were successful, you would be well supported by an excellent Senior Leadership Team and a staff of committed and talented individuals across the school. I'm not interested in a box ticker, nor in someone who sees leadership as a "I say – you do" role – how we achieve our success and the way we make people feel is just as important to us as is the outcome. That is not to say we don't have high expectations and a commitment to improve, it is just that we adopt a kinder way of doing this.

I would expect the successful applicant to teach PSHE on a teaching load of 20/50 but I am also willing to address that based on the successful applicant's preferences.

I hope I have piqued your interest! If I have, please read further as to what you will find if you work at Falinge Park High School.

Our school

We are a large multi-cultural school in the centre of Rochdale. Facilities are excellent and we are fully staffed with specialists in each area. The school is full in each year although there is some movement within year groups sometimes due to pupils returning to their home country and also through Hard to Place pupils coming into the school and we will go over our PAN where there is a need i.e. a Looked After child, new arrival to the country. Behaviour is very good both in the classroom and around the school at unstructured times. We are a community school which serves the community and are proud to create a positive environment for our pupils and the future of Rochdale. Inclusivity, equality of opportunity and creativity permeates throughout our school in an open, honest and transparent culture. It is an exciting place to be a leader and we work incredibly hard to look after our staff and our pupils. We don't get it right all of the time but if you are an experienced leader or new to Senior Leadership we will make sure we listen to your needs and bring out the best in you.

We work closely with Assessment Academy, SSAT and Teacher Development Trust and have a unique approach to professional development and performance development which is based in successful research. In our last audit by the Teacher Development Trust, they noted that *"Collaborative planning and enquiry is a key aspect of professional development and learning at FPHS"* and *"There is a strong culture of disciplined risk taking and innovation at FPHS. Interviews were consistently positive"*

regarding the level of trust that exists within the school and how this has impacted on staff development. Staff were consistent in their views that they “don’t have to be perfect all the time”Significantly, a majority of teaching staff are also evaluating the risks and practice they have taken.”

We had a short Ofsted inspection in February 2018 which stated that the school continues to be good. As the Headteacher, I don’t chase the outstanding grade, and instead have been very clear that we should aim to be consistently good and to focus on Key Stage 3 as well as Key Stage 4. We were pleased that the Ofsted report recognised this and stated:

“The response to Ofsted’s questionnaire from staff was overwhelmingly positive. Staff are proud to work at the school and are confident in your leadership. This culture, where staff feel valued and their work and life balance is considered important, is appreciated by those who work at the school. The promotion of this culture has proven to be successful, as the outcomes for most pupils are strong.”

“You and your leaders have been cautious in not adopting quick-fix solutions and have preferred to take a more considered approach to school improvement. In the circumstances of Falinge Park High School, this approach has been appropriate.”

Next steps

If you visit the school I would hope you would notice the warm, welcoming environment; the excellent behaviour of the children; strong staff morale; a commitment to professional development of all staff; and a strong sense that this is a place where learning is valued. We do this through peer to peer collaboration, learning hubs, accredited courses, lesson study and developing a culture where we can take risks and learn from mistakes. This is an exciting opportunity for the right person to join our school and the right time for someone who is interested in developing in a supportive environment.

As with any organisation, we don’t get it right all of the time and it can be a demanding role being a senior leader in an area of high-disadvantage and challenge, especially as I do expect leaders to be visible across the school – but, we make sure that we work in a non-judgmental environment and we focus our actions have to be for the benefit of the children.

Next steps?

If you are interested in applying, please look at the person specification, our website and familiarise yourself with what we are about. If you would like to visit the school please contact my PA Lisa Fitton on fittonl@falingepark.com to arrange a visit and we will make sure we accommodate you.

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When you write your application letter, please make sure you include within the letter your educational philosophy and vision for the role. Please also identify why you would like to work at our school.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Allen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Janice Allen
Headteacher