

KL/SB

March 2010



Dear Applicant

LEAD PRACTITIONER FOR MATHS (TLR 2b - £4225)

We hope that the enclosed information will help in your decision about whether to make a formal application to us.

So many facts and data relating to schools are now readily available online and prospective candidates will clearly wish to make use of these though, of course, we know that they can never tell the whole story. You'll discover that our students achieve highly against national measures and that levels of attendance and parental support are very good. Our Ofsted report, November 2008, describes such aspects as students' behaviour and attitudes, staff training provision, extra-curricular, leadership, and assessment as all *good*, and personal development and well being as *outstanding*. We have been told that our ethos is distinctively memorable and we regard this as probably the greatest compliment we can be paid. We think that it's down to our students most of whom are intensely loyal and proud of their school, and to our staff.

Most significantly, at Ousedale we know that we are responsible for education in its widest sense. In all teachers whom we appoint we look for that often ignored quality of *humanity* and a realistic acceptance that it is in the nature of young people to make mistakes – it's such a crucial part of our job to ensure that they learn from them. Probably the most endearing and appreciated characteristics of our staff are those of proportion and humour. Even on the bleakest of winter days the laughter in our staffroom indicates a genuine collegueship and professional respect. Without the contribution of our 70+Associate Staff, Ousedale would not be the place it is. A rarely published statistic is the number of staff who choose (or move) to have their own children attend the school which employs the parent – we have many, and what greater testimony is that!

Our profession is subject to almost daily scrutiny and 'bright idea' proposals. I see it as an important part of my job here to protect staff from 'initiative overload' so that we can direct our energies and skills to the fundamentals of ensuring that our students are happy, safe and learn effectively. However, Ousedale is a dynamic and evolving organisation, so development is vital for its improvement and success. For this reason (and the money which provides welcome staffing and material resources!) we became a specialist school; the big issue is that change needs careful management and an acceptance that much of what we do, though longstanding and traditional in basis, still needs to be valued and, if necessary, defended.

You'd expect us to say that Ousedale is an excellent place to work and learn and, I suppose that it's only by visiting us and talking to students and colleagues, that you could properly test this opinion. We've always believed that good relationships are the key and it's basic common sense that happy and achieving students find it easier to gain success in all sorts of fields. This doesn't mean, however, that there is any lack of clarity or inaction when there are infringements of our Code of Conduct and teachers would tell you that they're well supported by the usual range of disciplinary sanctions.

It's now something of cliché to claim that teachers are a school's most valuable resource. We're not ashamed to re-state the obvious - the best teachers are definitely those who continue to enthuse about their subjects and want to learn themselves. We invest significantly in training and development activities for all staff and potential applicants should also know that we have excellent support for teachers new to the profession and an established mentor scheme for other staff.

Unusually, Ousedale is a dual-campus school: our Newport Pagnell site for 11-16 students from its local area and the 6th Form; our Olney site (8 miles away) for 11-16 students from its locality. The majority of staff teach in one location, with a few teaching for whole days at each campus. A single system of governance, leadership and management operates over both campuses, with some individuality allowed!

You'll find much more information about Ousedale on our website, www.ousedale.org.uk, to help your decision about whether to apply. If you need further clarification or just an informal chat please contact us by email or phone. I enclose some information about the department, a Person Specification, a Job Description, and an application form which should be completed and accompanied by a supporting letter of no more than two sides. These should be received by 4.00pm Monday 15th March, though earlier returns would be appreciated. We intend to hold interviews in the week beginning 22nd March.

I do hope that you'll make an application to join us and that we will have the chance to meet.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Leaver', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ken Leaver
Headteacher

Enc.