



Head of Religious Studies and School Chaplain

A rare opportunity has arisen to become the dynamic and forward thinking Head of Religious Studies in this academically selective girls' independent school. We are a DCSF registered 'faith school' with Church of England roots and a broad based tradition of liberal Christian ethos which is welcoming of, and welcomed by, our multi-ethnic community.

Any holder of the post of **Head of Religious Studies** will play a significant part in the spiritual and cultural life of the school and this is first and foremost what we are seeking to appoint. Recent consultation as part of the Strategic Planning process has reinforced the importance to our parents and staff place of the 'values led' approach of the school and of its Christian traditions. We wish to build still further upon this. We are therefore interested in the option of enhancing the post to include a new and more whole school role of **School Chaplain**.

The RS Department

Religious Studies is an important and popular subject at The Abbey School. All students study the subject up to GCSE, which is taken one year early at the end of Year 10, and the subject is offered at AS and A2 Level. Besides the Senior School teaching the department also contributes to the teaching of Year 5 and 6 in the Junior School. From September 2008 the department will be contributing to the Theory of Knowledge unit as part of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. A number of students over recent years have gone on to read Theology, Religious Studies, Philosophy (or related subjects) at Oxbridge and other universities. Academic standards are high and examination results have been very good. The Musson Wells Scholarship, administered through the Bishop's office for the school, has been awarded to university Theology students for the past seventy years.

At Key Stage 3 the department has recently introduced the 'Think RE' series including 'Think RE' Interactive Presentations (2 x 40 minute lessons per week). The course focuses on key religious and social issues and the responses to them from the world religions.

Students begin their GCSE full course in Year 9 and sit the examinations at the end of Year 10. (Each year has 3 x 40 minute lessons per week.)

GCSE OCR Religious Studies A (World Religions)

2301 Paper 1: Christianity through a study of Luke

2302/A Paper 2: Christian Perspective on Personal, Social and World Issues

2310 Two pieces of coursework set in Year 10

Girls from other religious traditions may take Paper 1 in their own religion, though few in fact chose to do so, and all girls take the same Paper 2, as we see discussion of moral and ethical issues as very important for everyone.



The new Head of Department will be able to choose his or her new GCSE Board for September 2009.

In Year 11, having completed their GCSE course, the department has introduced a basic citizenship course looking at how the country is governed and at values in society today. (1 x 40 minute lesson per week).

The AS/A2 Advanced level course is currently that offered by OCR: AS/A Level GCE Religious Studies AS H172: A2 7877

AS G571 Philosophy of Religion
AS G572 Religious Ethics

A2 2771 Philosophy of Religion 2
A2 2772 Religious Ethics 2
A2 2791 Connections in Religious Studies

The department is well resourced with text books, artefacts, CD-Rom software, DVDs and Videos. The school library is also well resourced. All classrooms have their own computer terminal and overhead projectors. The school is well equipped with regards to ICT and computer suites and exciting new developments are afoot.

There have been extensive new building works during the year and from November 2008 the department will be moving into spacious accommodation in the new building, with dedicated classrooms and a shared department office. The School Chapel has also moved to a new location and is being completed this summer.

There are three other members of department: one full time and two part time.

Apart from the usual Head of Department tasks, you will also be responsible for organising the school assembly timetable and taking assemblies when required. You will also be responsible for organising the end of term Christmas, Easter and Commemorative Services as well as the Remembrance Day service in November. You will be responsible for the use of the new chapel and organising ordained ministers with regard to Holy Communion and other services.

All staff are either Form Tutors or Assistant Form Tutors and are expected to take part in the pastoral care of the pupils. They also undertake various supervision duties according to a rota.

School Chaplain

Though the school has Church of England roots, the Chaplain may be of any denomination and be lay or ordained. This will be a new post and so the post holder will be instrumental in shaping it. We aim to

- enrich and build upon the current spiritual life of the school in the Senior School and Junior School
- provide spiritual and moral guidance and support
- organise services, assemblies and spiritual events
- reinforce and educate the girls about our Christian traditions
- show Christianity in action as a welcoming and all embracing force for good
- provide an environment in which the many girls of other faiths (and none) will feel comfortable, supported and enriched, this aiding their spiritual growth
- ensure that our new School Chapel becomes a place of peace, thoughtfulness and worship in which all feel welcome and enriched and where many will want to come

- at a level appropriate to the training and expertise of the incumbent, to be a part of the informal welfare/counselling support team, which includes the Nurse and two other pastoral staff, as well as Heads of Year and from tutors
- help strengthen the links between the Junior School and Senior School.

There is a Bishop's Representative on the Governing Body and we have developed good relationships with the Bishop's Office and local clergy. An ordained Old Girl provides valued support and there is a small but active Parents' Prayer Group which meets monthly. Start of term staff meetings begin with a time of reflection which we would like to revamp and we hope to make more meaningful provision for staff overall. The Junior School assembly and PSHE programme incorporates a Value of the Month and a well attended Thoughtful Club has run there. Christian Viewpoint (Key Stages 4 and 5) and CrossViews (Key Stage 3) groups meet regularly in the Senior School. The Staff Assemblies Working Party has become a standing committee. In both schools, assemblies usually follow the fairly traditional form of hymn, homily or object lesson and time of prayer or reflection. Girls regularly play an active part. Sixth Formers lead weekly assemblies and every form from Nursery to Year 9 presents a form assembly. Special services take place at the end of each term and other occasions such as the Old Girls' Reunion and Remembrance Day are marked.

Salary

The salary is according to qualifications and experience. The Abbey School follows the DCSF Standard Scale (M1 to M6 and Upper Pay Spine 1, 2 and 3) and has its own responsibility allowance scheme. The Head of Department post carries a Responsibility Allowance of between 12 and 14 Abbey Points (currently £5160 to £6020) and enhancement for being School Chaplain will be determined by experience and the extent of the role undertaken. The total salary is enhanced by The Abbey School Allowance of 2 per cent.

Staff are members of the State Teachers Pension Scheme.

Please apply, using the standard application form and enclosing full CV and contact details of at least two referees (ideally with email or telephone numbers) to:

The Personnel Officer
The Abbey School
17 Kendrick Road
Reading
RG1 5DZ

Closing date for applications: Friday, 4 July 2008 with interviews taking place on either Tuesday 8 or Wednesday 9 July.