



PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO HEADTEACHER CANDIDATE INFORMATION



Thank you for your interest The Swan School, a new free school opening in September 2019 as part of the River Learning Trust. When fully subscribed it will have approximately 1,200 students on the roll, of whom around 300 will be in the Sixth Form.

Our students will be drawn from a local catchment area and the school will be at the heart of the community. The school is opening to meet the rising demand for school places in the city.

Learning from the most successful approaches at the best schools, The Swan School will provide a uniquely challenging and structured experience in a caring and disciplined environment.

The ethos will be academic; we regard an excellent academic education as the entitlement of all young people, no matter what their background or previous experiences of learning. Students will be inspired and nurtured, acquiring the knowledge and skills to think critically and creatively.

They will learn to be confident, resilient and ambitious, and will have high expectations in terms of their own achievements and their contribution to wider society.

To achieve these aims we will draw on best practices proven elsewhere, including a longer school day and electives embedded in the curriculum.

We will also have a family lunch where students and staff eat together to promote healthy eating, caring for others, maturity and conversation skills.

Students will read and be read to and we will expect all students to work to the best of their abilities and have excellent attendance and behaviour.

The Swan School is a new build and as such will benefit from state-of-the-art facilities in Marston, Oxford, an area of natural beauty close to the centre of Oxford.

While our new building is being constructed, the first year of the school will be in purpose-built temporary accommodation adjacent to The Cherwell School South Site, a short distance from our permanent home.

This is a rare and exciting opportunity to be part of starting an exceptional comprehensive school. As a founding member of The Swan's team, you will help to build the foundations of an outstanding school from the ground up.

The successful candidate will share our ambitions for our students. You will relish the challenge of creating a new school that will be different to other comprehensive schools in the city.

You will be a highly motivated team player who is keen to get involved in all aspects of school life and learn new skills. Significant development opportunities will arise as the school grows.

If you have any questions or would like to speak to me about this post, please contact the River Learning Trust central office via office@riverlearningtrust.org or on 01865 558727.

Yours faithfully

Kay Wood (Headteacher)



How will The Swan School be unique?



A Unique Curriculum

The curriculum at The Swan School will be tailored to provide a rigorous academic education. We will have the highest expectations of what students will learn and will encourage them to learn quickly and securely, while being considerate of different starting points.

We know that giving all young people access to knowledge through which they can be successful promotes social justice and ensures students have the full range of opportunities open to them in the future.

The subjects taught will be broadly traditional, but all students will be motivated to stretch students beyond what is normally expected in English, mathematics, sciences, a modern foreign language, history, geography and religious education.

Alongside this, and seen as of equal value, will be their learning in art, design and technology, and music, in which they will be taught to both appreciate the achievements of others and to develop their own creative abilities.

In all subjects, the emphasis will be on expertly-designed learning with high levels of structure. There will be absolute clarity for all on what students are expected to know and do at each point. No time will be spent on tasks that don't move students on.

This will also be evident in the provision of independent work – some of which will be completed in time at the end of the day, and some at home.

This will be purposeful, clear and useful, normally involving practice or learning by heart of material taught in lessons.

A longer day will also mean time for 'electives' every week. Electives are timetabled slots in which students choose from a range of enriching activities alongside the main curriculum. They are set to include specialised sport, music or drama, lectures and volunteering. In effect, they are a chance for students to explore existing passions and discover new ones.

Everyone at The Swan School will work hard, guided by the belief that, through effort and dedication, wonderful things can happen. Students will be expected to show commitment, self-discipline and responsibility in their studies.

As a result, they will produce work of the highest quality and learn to achieve more than they thought possible. Their teachers and support staff will show the same level of dedication and thus experience the professional joys and satisfaction brought by helping young people to learn and grow.

Co-curricular Activities

Students at The Swan School will be able to access a wide range of activities outside the curriculum, helping them to develop confidence, curiosity and resilience, and ensure their development into well-rounded young people. Students will be active participants in the school, local

community and beyond. They will learn consideration and kindness, and contribute to society.

Whilst some activities will be chosen by students through the electives programme, there will be a core programme of activities that all will complete. Because we are a new school, we are able to prioritise these activities and arrange the timetable and school day so that they are an entitlement for all, not an optional extra for a few.

To give an indication of our approach, we intend that every student in Year 7 and 8 will take part in a music or drama performance, either in our own performance space, or in one of the many beautiful venues in the city.

All will be taught public speaking skills so they are able to talk with confidence in front of an audience. Furthermore, all students will learn to debate formally and will take part in competitions that will empower them to set out their views.

Sport will be compulsory and regular, with every student playing in at least one team in the first year.

Support and Inclusivity

The Swan School will be an inclusive school, ensuring that all students learn well, no matter what their previous experiences of learning, background or circumstances.

Our experience in schools confirms that all young people can learn challenging content. Therefore, our approach to teaching students with SEND or other barriers to learning will be to ensure that classroom delivery and organisation is of the highest standard, and to intervene immediately when evidence shows that a student is falling behind.

If a student demonstrates lower than expected levels of literacy or numeracy in the early years, intensive teaching will be provided to ensure that this is, where possible, remedied.

An outstanding learning support team and the extra-flexibility provided by the extended day will allow us to make sure that no student falls behind or does not make good progress.

Good schools do not give up on students, and we intend to be a great school.

Family Lunch

Students and staff will sit and eat together every day to promote healthy eating, caring for others, maturity and conversation skills.

This communal approach will help students to learn good habits, consideration for others, and how to engage in discussions with confidence. Breakfast and healthy snacks at break will also be available.

The School Buildings and Grounds

The Swan School will benefit from the most modern of facilities in new buildings in Marston. This will include state-of-the-art accommodation, equipment and technology, plus a sports hall, activities studio, drama and music rooms, specialist art, design and technology spaces and much more.

The school is situated in an area of natural beauty close to the River Cherwell. The grounds themselves are designed to be an extension of this environment, with wood-clad buildings, mature trees, natural hedgerows and wildflower areas.

Despite this rural feel, the location offers easy access to the centre of Oxford and the many opportunities for educational enrichment to be found there.

Location

The Swan's permanent site will be located in Marston, an area of natural beauty a short distance from the centre of Oxford.

The site is close to several other primary and secondary schools, with whom we will develop close and mutually beneficial working relationships.



Structure of the School

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Year 7	120	120	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
Year 8		120	120	180	180	180	180	180	180
Year 9			120	120	180	180	180	180	180
Year 10				120	120	180	180	180	180
Year 11					120	120	180	180	180
Year 12			40*	40*	40*	120	120	180	180
Year 13				40*	40*	40*	120	120	180
Totals	120	240	420	600	780	960	1140	1200	1260

* Our intention is to open a sixth form by working in close partnership with The Cherwell School



The River Learning Trust is a multi-academy trust that is committed to working together to achieve excellence in education. RLT is responsible for a number of schools and a school-centred initial teacher training provider (SCITT).

Currently, RLT comprises five secondary schools, The Swan School in pre-opening, 12 primary schools, and the SCITT.

Another two primary schools are due to join in 2019 with other secondary schools in discussions about the possibility of joining RLT. The schools and SCITT are united by

their commitment to the principles of the Trust and a common belief in the benefits of everything that is gained by working together.

Further details about the Trust, including its history, names and location of schools, and details about the central team can be found on the RLT website: <http://riverlearningtrust.org>

The principles of the River Learning Trust are:

Everyone Learning – creating and taking opportunities that enhance lives through evidence-based practice supporting adult and pupil learning

Commitment to Excellence – striving for the best educational experience through continuous improvement

Respectful Relationships – acting with care, integrity, and fairness in all we do

As a member of staff in an RLT school you will benefit from the support, opportunities and leadership development provided by the Trust central team and colleagues in other schools.

Job Description

Title of Post: Personal Assistant to Headteacher

Grade: Grade 8 (term time only plus ten days)

Accountable to: Headteacher

Purpose of the post

To be a Personal Assistant to the Headteacher and perform all necessary tasks requested by the Headteacher. To undertake a full range of secretarial and administrative duties to the headteacher and to ensure the efficient and effective running of the Headteacher's office and daily business.

Key responsibilities

Organisation

- To assist the Headteacher in organising his/her administrative workload recommending items to be dealt with in order of priority. Ensure that the Headteacher responds to particular approaches within timescales identified in any agreed priority action list.
- Maintain the diary for the Headteacher, arranging appointments as appropriate, and ensuring that he/she is adequately briefed on matters to be discussed.
- Make travel arrangements for the Headteacher and to provide care for his/her visitors, including the provision of refreshments.
- Liaise with senior staff concerning priorities, deadlines, policies and procedures.
- Assist in the recruitment of staff by placing advertisements, preparing job descriptions, arranging interviews and to remain involved and advise throughout.
- Arrange meetings and when required, take notes. Ensure that matters arising from meetings are dealt with by the appropriate people within agreed timescales.
- Support the Headteacher and other senior managers in the organisation and detailed planning of school events.
- Organise workload and prioritise on a daily basis using own initiative and knowledge of the work, with minimum direct supervision from the Headteacher.
- Specific responsibility for ordering the general office supplies and equipment, to include central school stock such as annual registers, diaries and teacher planners.

Supporting the teacher

- Assemble and prepare papers required by the Headteacher to attend meetings, prepare reports, or reply to requests for information.
- Handle all confidential correspondence with discretion.
- Ensure the maintenance of clear and effective filing, records and other systems and to keep them updated. Maintain confidential personnel files for staff as directed by the Headteacher.
- Maintain staff archive files and produce references when requested.
- Maintain the Headteacher's filing system.

Communication

- Act as a first point of contact within the school for staff, governors, councillors, parents and others seeking contact with the Headteacher.
- Liaise with the School Business Manager (SBM) where necessary.
- Sort and prioritise all incoming post, dealing with telephone calls for the Headteacher, and other school post not individually addressed. Keep a log of mail received and how it has been dealt with.
- After discussion, draft, as appropriate, outgoing correspondence and school documents that are the direct responsibility of the Headteacher.
- Foster links between the school and the local community.
- Maintain the school's main email account with the SBM and other administrative staff.
- Maintain a high degree of confidentiality with regard to issues concerning members of staff and pupils. Respond positively with tact, sensitivity and awareness to pupils and parents in relation to duties undertaken.
- Communicate with the LEA, outside agencies, parents and the local community and to make contact with any other individuals who have business with the school.

Other responsibilities

- Contribute towards instilling a culture of high expectations for all students across the school.
- Provide consistent and effective support for colleagues in line with the responsibilities of this role.
- To consistently apply whole school policies, including behaviour and rewards.
- Participate in regular performance reviews to ensure that any personal development needs are identified and met.
- Attend relevant professional development training. Review and maintain your own professional practice through agreed development activities.
- To be familiar with and adhere to all school policies.
- To fulfil your duties and responsibilities regarding safeguarding pupils, health and safety, confidentiality and data protection, reporting all concerns to an appropriate person.
- To set a good example in terms of dress, punctuality and attendance.
- To be a member of a pastoral team.

Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task undertaken may not be identified. Employees will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from a manager to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in this job description.

Person Specification

Criteria	Qualities	
Qualifications	• Good general level of education, e.g. 5 GCSE's (A-C) including Maths and English Language or further relevant experience in the absence of formal qualifications.	Essential
	• NVQ level 2 in Business Administration or equivalent qualification in a related area or equivalent experience.	Desirable
	• Willingness to undertake training relevant to the role, e.g. first aid and management information system (MIS).	Essential
Experience	• General clerical/administrative/financial work.	Essential
	• Experience of working as a Personal Assistant.	Desirable
	• Good numeracy and literacy skills	Essential
	• Experience of providing high-level support in a busy, politically sensitive environment.	Essential
	• Experience of using a wide range of office equipment and ICT software, information systems in an administrative environment.	Essential
	• Experience of producing meeting minutes and documents of a high quality.	Essential
Skills and knowledge	• High level of ICT skills	Essential
	• Excellent telephone manner.	Essential
	• Self-starter, work on own initiative, strong organisational skills, and good written communications. Ability to establish priorities and meeting agreed targets and deadlines.	Essential
	• Demonstrate a clear commitment to the team approach; exchanging ideas and providing support to colleagues.	Essential
	• Ability to build effective working relationships with a wide variety of individuals.	Essential
	• Proven high communication skills, oral and written in order to produce detailed reports and memos.	Essential
	• Evidence of well-developed interpersonal skills. Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing, negotiating ability and tact to promote good relationships within and outside the school.	Essential
	• Draw logical and accurate conclusions from sometimes complex information.	Essential
	• Embrace responsibility for identifying sound and effective solutions to a variety of different problems.	Essential
	• Experience of managing and organising a senior manager's daily and forward work programme.	Desirable
	• Demonstrates an attention to detail and an ability to stick at routine tasks.	Essential
	• Ability to set up and develop administrative systems, for checking, monitoring data, budgets and job evaluations and the ability to use information technology to a high degree of expertise.	Essential
	• Professional demeanour, good interpersonal skills and ability to deal with various members of the public and senior staff.	Desirable
	Personal qualities	• A fundamental belief that all children can achieve great things, no matter what their background or prior experiences.
• An ability and willingness to empathise and listen, and to be self critical and reflective.		Essential
• Enthusiasm, hard-work, integrity, creativity, flexibility, and resilience.		Essential
• Interest in developing own personal skills.		Essential
• An understanding of, and commitment to, equal opportunities in its widest sense and a commitment to inclusive education.		Essential
• A sense of fun as well as the ability to work hard and calmly under pressure.		Essential
• A commitment to child protection in its broadest sense to empower learners and prevent harm.		Essential



SAFEGUARDING

The Swan School and River Learning Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and preventing extremism; all staff must ensure that the highest priority is given to following the guidance and regulations to safeguard children and young people. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and obtain any other statutorily required clearance. Employment will also be conditional on the receipt of at least two acceptable references (1 from current/latest employer) and evidence of the formal qualifications required for the role.

May 2019