



## BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL

### Information for Candidates applying for the role of Head of Chemistry

Required for September 2025

Birkenhead School, awarded the Sunday Times Independent Secondary School of the Year in the North West for 2025, was founded in 1860. It is an HMC independent day school providing education for boys and girls drawn from the whole of the Wirral, Liverpool and as far afield as Chester and North Wales. There are currently some 126 children in Early Years (57 in Nursery aged under 3 years old, 69 in our “Pre-Prep” aged 3 to 5 years old), 301 pupils in the School’s Prep (ages 5-11) and 527 students in Years 7 to Upper Sixth Form. Birkenhead School has been fully co-educational since September 2008, offering the choice of an independent education to all local children. Across the School approximately 45% of students are girls.

Situated in the leafy suburb of Oxton, the School enjoys excellent facilities. The main campus has a ‘village green’ atmosphere, with classrooms and laboratories looking out over the cricket square. Recent capital developments have included a new landscaped playground and outdoor classroom area. There are ongoing and substantial investments in facilities. In addition to the main campus, the School owns 17 acres of playing fields on two sites nearby – the primary one being McAllester Field on Bidston Road.

#### SCHOOL ORGANISATION & VALUES

The School comprises Nursery and Pre-Prep (Early Years), Prep and Seniors and integrates their objectives and activities within a ‘One School’ ethos. The Headmaster chairs the School’s Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprising the Head of Prep, Deputies and the Bursar.

Birkenhead School prides itself on being a family school and this has been greatly strengthened by the opening of the Nursery in 2006. Becoming fully co-educational in 2008 reinforced this, and at present, 234 families have more than one child in the School and 33 of those have three or four children here.

A key feature of the School is its strength of community, which runs through the student, staff and parental bodies. The School is embedded within the wider Wirral community, has strong links with local businesses and charities, and offers an extensive bursary programme. The School aims to inspire students both inside and outside the classroom, knowing each individual and providing them with outstanding opportunities to find their niche.

A dedicated, talented and collegiate staff body is required to achieve this excellence and sense of community. The School’s informal motto is Respect, Responsibility and Resilience, to which the School has recently added Inclusivity, Compassion, Integrity, Humility and Courage as defined School values. Birkenhead School recruits on attitude as much as the quality of an individual’s qualifications on paper, an approach that has played a considerable role in the winning of the Sunday Times award – in short, staff go above and beyond.

#### SENIORS

527 STUDENTS  
AGED 11-18  
296 BOYS / 231 GIRLS

#### PREP

301 PUPILS  
AGED 3-11  
162 BOYS / 139 GIRLS

#### NURSERY/PRE-PREP

125 CHILDREN  
AGED 3 MONTHS – 5 YEARS  
69 BOYS / 56 GIRLS



## BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL

### THE DEPARTMENT

The department consists of three staff who teach Chemistry as a separate subject from Year 9 upwards, and contribute to the delivery of science in Years 7 and 8. At GCSE, around half of the students are entered for the AQA GCSE separate sciences (Higher Tier) and the rest take the GCSE Combined Science (either Higher or Foundation Tiers). We follow the AQA specification at A Level.

Last year, 57% of our GCSE Chemistry students achieved Grade 9 (92% Grade 8/9) and 92% of A-level students scored A\*/A. Value-added scores and retention rates are the highest in the School. Class sizes are small, on average around 18 at Key Stage 4 (Combined Science sets are smaller) and 12 in the Sixth Form.

The department is well equipped, with three laboratories and two prep rooms supported by a full time Chemistry technician, who also coordinates the distribution of duties within the technician team.

The wider Science department has an excellent reputation, both within School and beyond. The majority of the School's most academic students study a science-based course at A-level (around half of the sixth form take Chemistry) and most go on to top universities, including Cambridge and Oxford. A significant portion of the cohort go on to secure Medicine or Dentistry places.

There are strong links to the community through science fairs, outreach activities and success in Olympiads and CREST awards. We enjoy good relationships with Merseyside STEM, the RSC, the Liverpool Universities and local companies.

### THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We are looking for an enthusiastic and dynamic candidate with relevant experience to lead our Chemistry Department. The successful candidate will balance a determined work ethic and strong academic rigour, with good humour, teamwork and positivity. Birkenhead School recruits on attitude as much as the quality of an individual's qualifications on paper. All applicants should be outstanding Teachers, but also possess the wider interests and passions that will inspire students outside of the standard curriculum. All staff are expected to contribute fully to the wider life of the School and the co-curricular provision.

The Head of Department is responsible for the overall performance of the Department and will report to the Head of Middle School on all aspects of the department.

#### Head of Department Responsibilities

- Lead, manage and develop the department to ensure it achieves the highest possible standards of excellence in all activities, including personal organisation and administration.
- Be accountable for student progress and development within the subject area, ensuring the provision of an appropriately broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum.
- Hold regular meetings of the department, both formal and informal, sharing common learnings and opportunities. To share national initiatives, whole school issues and teaching methods; invigorating morale, and establishing team spirit.



## BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL

- Maintain the departmental handbook, which is regularly reviewed and updated, with consideration to departmental policy including marking, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies. Development of appropriate syllabuses and schemes of work, and the management and improvement of the department's resources.
- Manage cover work for the Department, ensuring students continue to achieve during periods of short, medium or long term absence of staff members.
- Analyse and evaluate performance data and examination results, communicating with the SLT and department members.
- Lead the team in all aspects of people management, including absence, learning and development, health, safety and wellbeing. Hold regular performance conversations/professional review with each member of the department, feeding into the School review process.
- Encourage and make provision for the professional development of the team.
- Participate in the recruitment of new staff, ensuring they are properly inducted into the department.
- Consult with colleagues to formulate aims, objectives and strategic plans for the Department which have coherence and relevance to the needs of students and to the aims, objectives and strategic plans of the School, ensuring all members of the team are familiar with its aims and objectives.
- Ensure departmental policies are adhered to and that members of the department keep to School deadlines and policy, insofar as it applies to the department.
- Allocate teaching within the department within the constraints laid down, delegating responsibilities to teachers within the department.
- Where appropriate, ensure that Health and Safety policies and practices, including risk assessments, are in line with national requirements and are updated where necessary, including liaising with the School's Health and Safety Officer.
- Propose, negotiate and administer the departmental budget, including any ICT requests.

### **Responsibilities in relation to the students and to what is taught**

- Develop a department academic extension programme to stretch, challenge and inspire students. Including active membership of relevant bodies.
- Keep abreast of developments in the subject, maintaining contacts with other schools, exam boards and professional associations.
- Ensure the department monitors the progress and learning of students, for example by comparing performances of parallel groups; ensuring appropriate testing is conducted and that marking is swiftly and competently undertaken.
- Ensure students are properly prepared and entered for exams and overseeing course work.
- Organise the setting and marking of internal exams and determining appropriate grade boundaries thereafter.
- Give appropriate guidance to students who wish to study the subject at further levels.
- Co-ordinate the organisation of field work and other extra-mural activities in relation to the department.
- Maintain the image of the subject as an interesting and valuable one. Keep learning environments stimulating and interesting.
- Liaise with students over Chemistry and other related subjects at Universities, including Oxbridge.
- Liaise with University departments and specialists within their field.
- Liaise with Prep staff to organise and oversee enrichment activities.



## BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL

- Liaise with the Deputy Head over matters concerning the timetable and curriculum and the day to day running of the department, and with the Assistant Head (Pastoral) over students.
- Ensuring that departmental sections of the School and Sixth Form Library are appropriately stocked.

### **Responsibilities in relation to the School:**

- Communicate departmental matters to the Deputy Head, discussing examination results and raising issues of concern.
- Proactively engage in continuous professional development to reflect on and improve teaching repertoire.
- Contribute to the life of the community, particularly by leading and contributing to co-curricular activities.
- Representing the School at Parents Evenings, Open Days and other events
- Support and develop the use of ICT within the department.

### **Additional Work Elements:**

- Adhere to the School's Code of Conduct
- Commit to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students.
- Support and encourage the School's ethos and objectives.
- Ensure facilities, including equipment and teaching areas, are maintained in an appropriate condition.
- Demonstrate a commitment to improving and developing the school's processes and facilities.
- Attend Heads of Departments' meetings
- Carry out such duties that may be reasonably required by your Line Manager.

This job description is not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities or duties but reflects the major core of the role.

### THE PERSON

#### **The ideal candidate will:**

- Have a secure knowledge and understanding of own subject/curriculum area including current developments in teaching and learning.
- Have QTS/PGCE qualification.
- Have prior teaching experience at Key Stages 3, 4, and 5.
- Be an excellent classroom practitioner with a genuine passion for Chemistry, with evidence of consistently high standards of achievement.
- Possess enthusiasm, confidence and a diligent 'can-do' mindset alongside the gravitas to be an outstanding ambassador for the School.
- Develop and maintain good relationships with students and colleagues.
- Have a sound understanding and awareness of Safeguarding procedures.
- Develop creative and innovative teaching techniques.
- Be IT literate to support teaching and learning.
- Inspire staff and students through action.



## BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL

### REMUNERATION & BENEFITS

#### Salary

Birkenhead School operates its own salary scale, competitive depending on experience and expertise.

#### Hours

This is a permanent full-time position. The post holder will be required to contribute to co-curricular opportunities and work as necessary to carry out the duties of the role. All staff are expected to attend all training days.

#### Holiday

You will be entitled to school holidays and Bank Holidays.

#### Pension

The School operates an auto-enrolment pension scheme.

#### Other Benefits

We will value and support your contribution to School life and in return provide you with excellent rewards;

- Working with fantastic young students
- Working as part of a committed team
- Term time is 34 weeks
- Discount on School Fees for permanent members of staff
- Free use of the fully equipped on-site gym
- Access to the Employee Assistance Programme
- Support for your continuous professional development
- Lunch provided during term time
- Electric Car charging points on site

### APPLICATION

A letter of application indicating skills and experience, together with a completed application form, including the names and email addresses of at least two referees, should be sent for the attention of the Headmaster via: [chw@birkenheadschool.co.uk](mailto:chw@birkenheadschool.co.uk)

Applications may also be sent by post to: **Cheryl Wallace (Human Resources), Birkenhead School, 58 Beresford Road, Oxtown, Wirral, CH43 2JD.**

Application forms can be downloaded from the School's website: [www.birkenheadschool.co.uk](http://www.birkenheadschool.co.uk)

Candidates are welcome to contact the Head of Middle School, Mr Rupert Rule on [rar@birkenheadschool.co.uk](mailto:rar@birkenheadschool.co.uk) with any questions relating to the role.

To meet our safeguarding obligations, an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check is undertaken as part of the recruitment process for all new staff. As Birkenhead School is an educational provider, it is permitted to ask whether an applicant has any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings which would not be filtered in line with current guidance, as defined by The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (2013 and 2020). It is a criminal offence for an individual who is barred from working with children to apply for

**Birkenhead School, Registered Office:** The Lodge, 58 Beresford Road, Oxtown, CH43 2JD

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## BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL

a role which is classed as regulated activity (i.e. involves working with children). As such, candidates are asked to also complete the separate Criminal Record Declaration Form on the School's website. The information disclosed on this form will not be kept with your application form during the application process.

Candidates selected for interview will be offered the opportunity to have a tour of the School and meet with relevant members of the department.

**The closing date for applications: 9.00am on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

Shortlisted candidates are likely to be invited to interview the following week.