



BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL

Information for Candidates applying for the role of Head of Art

Required for September 2026

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, Merseyside, and as far afield as Chester and North Wales. There are currently some 83 children in Early Years (44 in Nursery aged under 3 years old, 39 in our “Pre-Prep” aged 3 to 5 years old), 299 pupils in the School’s Prep (ages 5-11) and 510 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 area and an outdoor classroom. There are ongoing and substantial investments in ICT 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’ concept. The Headmaster chairs the School’s Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprising the Head of Prep, Deputy and Assistant Heads, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Bursar.

Birkenhead School prides itself on being a family school. It is attractive to parents to have all their children in one school, and it is a great advantage for the school to be able to establish strong, long-lasting relationships with families. The move to co-education reinforced this and at present, 217 families have more than one child in the School and 27 have three or four children.

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 business 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 these aims. The School’s informal motto is Respect, Responsibility and Resilience, to which we have 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 in delivering outstanding academic grades and an expansive co-curricular programme which leads to a fulfilled, inspired and happy community – staff, students, parents, grandparents and alumni (Old Birkonians).

SENIORS

510 STUDENTS
AGED 11-18
295 BOYS / 215 GIRLS

PREP

299 PUPILS
AGED 5-11
159 BOYS / 140 GIRLS

NURSERY / PRE-PREP

83 CHILDREN
AGED 3 MONTHS – 5 YEARS
49 BOYS / 34 GIRLS



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THE DEPARTMENT

Art is a busy, successful department where students flourish. It follows the AQA GCSE and A Level Art & Design Fine Art syllabus, with GCSE students last year achieving the highest VA within the School. The Art Department consists of a full time Head of Department and a second full time member of staff, supported by a part time Art Technician. Both staff teach across all senior school years. Staff are dedicated professionals, who in addition to lessons, offer numerous co-curricular opportunities including lunch clubs and regular afterschool sessions to support exam level students. A Level students regularly progress onto Foundation Courses and degrees in areas such as Architecture, Fine Art and Fashion.

GCSE and A Level courses are continually reviewed and refined to deliver stimulating creative opportunities through which students can learn and excel in both practical skills and critical thinking. Students work in two-dimensional and three-dimensional media across all years, including KS3. As well as the main teaching rooms, department facilities include a print room, kiln and dedicated Sixth Form room.

Artist workshops and events for Year 9 upwards enrich students' learning, while a popular annual visit to London Galleries informs A Level work. Successful cultural trips to Madrid and Paris have run in collaboration with Modern Languages. Each autumn Art, Music and Drama run a week-long Festival of Arts which includes an exhibition of student work. The department supports the drama department in creating backdrops for school productions.

The department believes strongly in the value of creativity and prides itself on having excellent relationships with students, supporting them in developing ideas, opinions, and independence through art.

THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We are looking for an enthusiastic and dynamic candidate with relevant experience to lead our Art Department. The successful candidate will balance a determined work ethic and strong academic rigour, with good humour, teamwork and positivity. 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 Assistant Head (Data and Systems) 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.



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- 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 trips, artist workshops 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 Art and other related subjects at Universities, including Oxbridge.
- Liaise with University departments and specialists within their field.



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- Liaise with Prep staff to organise and oversee enrichment activities.
- Liaise with the Assistant Head (Data and Systems) 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 Assistant Head (Data and Systems), 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 Art, 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.



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REMUNERATION & BENEFITS

Salary

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

Hours

This is a permanent, full-time post and the post holder will be required to contribute to co-curricular opportunities and work as necessary to carry out the duties of the role, including evenings and weekends.

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
- Membership of a Defined Contribution scheme
- Term time is 34 weeks
- Discount on School Fees for permanent members of staff
- Free use of the fully equipped on-site gym
- 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 addresses of at least two referees, should be sent for the attention of the Headmaster via: chw@birkenheadschoo.co.uk

Applications may also be sent by post to: **Cheryl Wallace (Head of HR and Compliance), Birkenhead School, 58 Beresford Road, Oxton, Wirral, CH43 2JD**

Application forms can be downloaded from the School's website: www.birkenheadschoo.co.uk

Candidates are welcome to contact the Assistant Head, Mr Steve Parry via sejp@birkenheadschoo.co.uk with any questions relating to the role.



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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 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 is 9.00am on Tuesday 21st April 2026.

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

We reserve the right to close this vacancy and complete the recruitment process when we are in receipt of sufficient applications. Should you wish to apply for this post you are advised to complete and submit your application form as soon as possible.