

Job Description

Head of Mathematics

George Watson's College wishes to appoint a permanent Head of Mathematics in the Senior School. The post represents a rare opportunity for an outstanding practitioner to make a high profile contribution to the success of one of Scotland's leading schools.

THE SCHOOL

George Watson's College is one of the country's best co-educational independent day schools. Despite its size, everyone remarks that it has a small-school 'feel': the close-knit and friendly relationships amongst all its constituents are a hallmark of the School. Its motto – *ex corde caritas* (Love from the Heart) – is central to its values as it seeks to sustain what is described as 'The Watson's Family'.

This tangible sense of togetherness is significantly enhanced by everyone being on one purpose-built site, which is located in the attractive residential district of Morningside, to the South West of the centre of Edinburgh. Edinburgh itself is the second strongest city economy in the UK, outside of London, with the highest percentage of graduates and professionally qualified adults in the UK and over 25% of school age children attending fee-paying schools. Watson is proud of its independent status and, whilst remaining true to its Scottish roots, seeks to sustain and develop an international perspective. The curriculum is adapting to the innovations inherent in Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence and the new Scottish National Qualifications.

The School welcomes a wide range of academic ability, and has very high academic standards, with 90% of pupils going on to Higher Education and a large proportion of pupils achieving outstanding success. Watson's also has excellent facilities, and offers a huge range of courses as well as extra-curricular activities. In addition, it has particular strengths in Sport, Music, Drama, Outdoor Education, Technology and in Support for Learning. The School is very well resourced with a campus-wide IT network.

The Principal, Melvyn Roffe, took up his post in 2014. Leadership of the Senior School is delegated to Gordon Boyd, Head of the Senior School, and the Senior School Leadership Team, including three Deputy Headteachers and three Assistant Head Teachers. A similar structure exists in the Junior School.

The Senior School

The Senior School is led by the Head of Senior School who works closely with a team of Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and Principal Teachers. The leadership model enables Principal Teachers to shape the character of their department or area of responsibility within an overall ambition for the Senior School and George Watson's College as a whole. Principal Teachers are encouraged to play a role in the development and implementation of practice in all aspects of the Senior School, especially in

improving curriculum design, pupil support and learning and teaching. The Senior School Leadership Forum draws all leaders together

Approximately two-thirds of pupils in the Senior School have progressed there from the Junior School. On arrival, they have a carefully worked out induction programme which includes a residential experience together in the first term.

In First and Second Year, a diverse and stimulating timetable balances challenging academic progression with a variety of learning experiences, including in two foreign languages. Pupils study many of their subjects in their form classes but are set in English and Mathematics. This enables them to progress at a pace that provides the appropriate level of challenge and provides them with an opportunity to mix with the rest of their year group.

From Second Year, pupils discuss their personal targets and study options with teachers, through to their key certificate examinations, and we ensure that they choose subjects and levels that match their abilities and aspirations.

At Watson's we are proud of the exceptionally broad range of certificate courses we offer. Available at various levels of certification within the national qualifications framework, our extensive provision includes subjects across the spectrum of arts, sciences and social sciences, with a notably wide selection of languages, including Mandarin Chinese.

It is important that we prepare pupils for the increased independence they will require after school. A programme of study skills encourages independent thought and enquiry. Throughout their time at Watson's, pupils make confident use of our outstanding IT facilities and our Library.

The Mathematics Department

The Mathematics department has identified a common experience to which all pupils studying Mathematics at George Watson's College are entitled. All staff have a responsibility to:

- aim to ensure that over a period of time there is an effective variety of delivery of teaching in order to support various learning styles (such as independent, collaborative, self-study, investigative, etc)
- aim to ensure that a diversity of effective resources and approaches are used at appropriate times (textbooks, worksheets, discursive activities, open-ended tasks, video, technology, practical items, etc)
- have an open mind to try out new ideas and be willing to share successful practice and resources with the department
- aim to ensure that each pupil receives appropriate praise, encouragement and involvement in positive experiences
- aim to ensure that commonly agreed sanctions for discipline, punctuality and organisation are consistently applied, making use of official departmental procedures where appropriate
- aim to ensure that all pupils know both when to use a calculator and how to use it effectively

To support these aims, all pupils have the responsibility to:

- be willing to attempt all tasks that are asked of them and to work either independently or with any other pupil(s)
- take their share of responsibility for ensuring that they have a firm grasp of all that they are taught arising from both classwork and homework
- be encouraged to be proactive in seeking help if required from any member of the maths department

We cater for a wide range of abilities when carrying out these aims. The department has strong links with the Additional Support for Learning Department, which allow several forms of in-class help. In addition, we liaise with our Junior School to help support the mathematics met by pupils in P6 and P7.

Curriculum

Pupils are taught in ability sets in all years. In S1, this setting is fairly loose, but becomes more finely tuned as pupils progress through to S5. We typically have 11 sets in S1 and S2, moving to 12 sets in S3 and S4. Ten of these sets in S4 are normally entered for SQA National 5 Mathematics.

For those pupils studying SQA Courses, we often have eight S5 sets attempting a one-year Higher, one set attempting Higher over two sessions, and three more S5 sets studying SQA National 5 Mathematics. Those who complete the SQA Higher Course in S5 can go on to choose from all of the Advanced Higher Courses in S6: Mathematics, Statistics and Mechanics. These Advanced Higher courses are currently taught collectively by ten members of the department.

Awards and Competitions

Every session, we have a large entry for the Scottish Mathematical Challenge and we enter pupils for all divisions in the UK Mathematical Challenge competitions. We have good levels of success at both - from the latter some pupils have progressed through to rounds for the Mathematical Olympiad and have come away with Gold or Bronze Medals. In addition, small teams of pupils from S1 to S6 often compete in various Maths Team competition days, both locally and nationally.

Over the past 25 years, we have progressed through to some National Finals, taking either winning position or runners-up.

Resources

Most of our courses use textbooks as their main resource. We currently use publications by TeeJay Publishers, Hodder Gibson and Leckie & Leckie.

To complement all of these texts we have developed an extensive electronic database that cross-references each textbook chapter and topic with many other useful resources that can be used - these include past exam papers, video solutions and other revision materials. We are always developing our use of Moodle that the school began using in 2012, as well as identifying the most effective ways of incorporating pupil owned laptops and tablets into our teaching.

Staff

The department of 15 staff is managed by the Head of Department and two Assistant Head of Departments. The department includes four promoted staff - an Assistant Headteacher, two Heads of Year and the Houses Coordinator - with responsibilities outwith the department. It is widely recognised that the department has a very clear sense of team unity, and common purpose.

All members of staff are encouraged to develop their areas of interest and responsibility both within, and separate from, the running of the department.

Over a period of time, all staff are involved in teaching all levels of ability to all year groups, up to and including S6 Advanced Higher.

Additional Support for Learning (ASL)

Many pupils work with teachers and Pupil Support Assistants to support their learning in particular ways. This is broadly based and includes support for pupils' specific learning needs as well as for additional 'Assessment Arrangements' in SQA examinations. A mix of in-class and small group support is provided.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The person appointed will:

- be a trained and qualified graduate teacher of Mathematics eligible for registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland;
- be an outstanding and confident teacher of Mathematics who is able to demonstrate the very highest standards of teaching Mathematics in secondary schools;
- to lead an engaging and challenging Mathematics curriculum that enables all pupil to enjoy the subject and achieve at the highest level;
- be flexible and imaginative in developing new ideas and resources, as well as adapting to curriculum changes and strategic priorities;
- have excellent leadership, interpersonal and communication skills and be able to work with colleagues from different disciplines and across both Junior and Senior Schools, as well as partners from the wider community;
- have the strong organisational skills necessary to lead a successful department in a high profile school.

JOB SPECIFICATION

Line Management

The Head of Mathematics is accountable to the Head of Senior School through one of the Deputy Heads of Senior School as line manager and Quality Assurance Manager (QA).

General Responsibilities

In addition to the general responsibilities of a teacher at George Watson's College, the Head of Mathematics is responsible for the delivery of the mathematics curriculum through the Senior School.

The Head of Mathematics will be expected to teach approximately 35 periods of an appropriate subject per ten day timetable cycle.

The person appointed will be responsible for teaching classes in the School using their skill, experience and best endeavours. They will abide by the Code of Conduct for Staff at George Watson's College. A contribution to enrichment and the wider life of the School is an expectation of all staff.

Specific Responsibilities

The person appointed will:

- Lead, develop and monitor the effectiveness of the Mathematics curriculum in the Senior School, liaising with other Heads of Department as necessary to achieve common objectives;
- Act as Line Manager to other members of the Mathematics department, promoting good practice and high standards and intervening where necessary to provide support to colleagues;
- Ensure that trainee teachers in the Department are supported appropriately
- Act as Line Manager to the support staff allocated to support the work of the Mathematics Department;
- Ensure that all teaching and learning in Mathematics is effective and that all pupils are being properly prepared for public examinations where appropriate;
- Contribute to professional discussions with senior staff and others to contribute to the development of the policies and practice of the school.
- Review the performance of the Mathematics department on an annual basis, using performance data and other evidence as appropriate;
- Prepare an annual bid for curriculum and other funding and exercise proper control over the departmental budget as allocated;
- Liaise with the Head of Additional Support for Learning (ASL) to ensure that the learning of pupils in Mathematics is supported by ASL and that the work of the Department is tailored to meet the needs of our pupils.
- Liaise with the Deputy Headteacher (Learning & Teaching) to ensure that pupils and staff in the subject area have appropriate access to necessary digital learning resources including IT.
- Liaise with fellow Heads of Department - particularly the sciences, Computing and the Design, Technology and Engineering departments - to ensure that our approach to developing literacy is shared between colleagues and embedded and developed in pupils.
- Liaise with the Head of Additional Support for Learning and with the Heads of Guidance to ensure

- Liaise with Heads of Year to ensure that the appropriate targeted support or arrangements to support the wellbeing of individuals is provided in the Department.
- Contribute to enrichment provision of the Senior School by developing and implementing opportunities for pupils both in lesson time and at other times.

Additional Responsibilities:

The Head of Mathematics shall undertake such other responsibilities as the Head of Senior School may from time to time reasonably require.

REMUNERATION

Teaching staff at George Watson's College are paid at a level which is 8% higher than the Scottish Teachers' Pay Scales. The salary is pensionable under the Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme.

DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND - PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS SCHEME

All staff must be prepared to undergo screening to confirm their suitability to work with children and young people.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / PROFESSIONAL REVIEW

All staff are required to participate in appropriate programmes of continuing professional development and undergo professional review as set out in the School's policy.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Please include a letter of not more than 800 words giving us more information about you and why you would like the role, addressed to Mr Gordon Boyd, Head of Senior School.

Any specific questions relating to the advertised post can be emailed to vacancies@gwc.org.uk

Candidates called for an interview will be asked to teach a lesson as part of the selection process and complete a brief interview task. Further information will be provided in due course.

Closing date: 11:59pm on Sunday 3 December 2023

Interview date: Tuesday 12 December 2023