

Monk's Walk School

Application Pack: PA to the Headteacher

Start date: Mid December 2019

Application deadline: Monday, 4th November 2019



‘Excellence for All’

Our School

We are a mixed school of about 1,350 11-18 year old students in Welwyn Garden City, a Hertfordshire new town on the outskirts of London. Transport links are superb – direct rail links to London in less than 30 minutes; M1, A1(M), M11 and M25 all minutes away. WGC is a pleasant place to live – it even has John Lewis! The school is situated in a greenbelt area in the prosperous northwest corner of the city. Our grounds are magnificent and the view from the school is lovely, the view of our buildings slightly less so – this is an area we are constantly working on within the usual financial constraints. In September 2019 we started construction of a new block to replace one of our older teaching blocks.

Monk's Walk is a genuinely comprehensive school, although the intake profile is changing – the prior attainment of students coming into the school is rising. The number of students with learning challenges is below the national average, with 11.6% supported at school action plus or with an Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP). Our support for students with SEND is a real strength of the school. We have a small number of students with visual and hearing impairment. We have a few students with autism. The school has an extremely effective behaviour policy and in general behaviour is very good indeed. Our students want to learn and our parents are, on the whole, extremely supportive.



Parental confidence in the school is high; there were 737 applications for 226 places in Year 7 for September 2019, with 238 of those as first preference. Each year we hear appeals for students wishing to join the school.

There is a genuine 'buzz' around the school and we have a very strong reputation in the city. In February 2018, the school was judged once again by Ofsted to be 'good' - please read the inspection letter which can be found on our website (or on Ofsted's) should you wish to apply. We were really pleased with the comments made by inspectors. They won't be back until 2022, all being equal.

GCSE exam results in 2019 were excellent. A Level results were also very strong; we were delighted as we have been working on these as a priority for several years now. We are very proud of the destinations of our sixth form students, with almost all students who applied making it to their first or second choice university or high quality apprenticeship. Students access a range of universities, including Oxbridge and the Russell Group.

In terms of progress, disadvantaged and SEN students better in the school than they do nationally. BME students attain very well and have good progress, as do each of the ability groups. We pride ourselves on the fact that Monk's Walk is an inclusive school.

The school has about 230 in the sixth form. We are also a member of a consortium with four other schools which provides a wide range of opportunities for students. At Monk's Walk we concentrate on providing A Level only, with large numbers of students studying the facilitating subjects. Vocational programmes can be taken at Oaklands College or in other consortium schools.

We do not pursue academic achievement at the expense of the wider development of the individual, however. Form tutors, heads of year and heads of house all have important roles in the social, personal and academic support of individuals. Our house system is strong, providing a range of all-ability competitions and activities for mixed-age groups. Recently we have become the first school in the country to have a recycling machine with the credit going as house points. Over 12,000 bottles have been recycled since May. All members of staff are allocated a house, except me who has to try to stay impartial, of course.



The range of extra-curricular opportunities, trips and visits plays an important role in the lives of our students and we guard this expansive programme jealously because we believe that busy, stimulated students make successful students. Last year our students had the opportunity to take part in over 200 trips and visits, including trips to New York, Paris, Madrid and the Belgian battlefields. We have large groups undertaking World Challenge and DofE at bronze, silver and gold level. A range of staff, including support staff, involve themselves in these activities which further enriches school life for both them and our students.

Being a large school has enabled us to maintain a very broad curriculum at all key stages. Music is a particular strength; over 1/3 of our year 10 and 11 students study towards an examined Music course and over 250 peripatetic lessons take place each week. We have a full orchestra that sounds pretty good.

Knightsfield School (a special school for hearing impaired children) is co-located with Monk's Walk School. We have an outstanding partnership arrangement; at key stage 3 Knightsfield students join classes in Drama, PE and Art. Some students are also integrated into GCSE groups. Knightsfield students join ours for lunch every day in our canteen in B Block.

The school's SLT is a strong and cohesive team. This is my eighth year in post as Headteacher. It's my second headship and before this job I was Head of Secondary School Effectiveness for Hertfordshire. There are two deputies, Matt Grinyer and Toby Eager-Wright, as well as four substantive Assistant Headteachers, Amber Cook, Nick Haynes, Tamara Kirk and Ben Farlow. Tracie Smith (no relation) is our Business Manager and also a full member of SLT. Our mug shots are on our website, unfortunately, although mine is an old picture because I am too vain to have a new one done.

The school became an academy in September 2012. The decision to convert was purely pragmatic and trustees have no intention to make changes to teachers' pay and conditions beyond those made as part of national agreements.

Induction, training and continuing professional development have a very high priority in the school. All new members of staff take part in an induction programme on joining the school.

All staff are supported by a broad programme of continuing training and development. Individual staff are supported on programmes of further study/professional qualifications. The school runs a well-developed performance management system. All staff are actively supported to achieve their individual targets.

The Role of the Headteacher's PA

My PA's role is vital, as the postholder sits absolutely at the heart of the school. The PA provides professional and administrative support to me and at times to members of the senior leadership team. Personal qualities, including resilience, ability to exercise good judgement, flexibility and discretion are just as important as professional competence or formal qualifications. Confidentiality is essential as the PA will have access to highly confidential and sensitive information about the school. There will be some project management as part of the job, but the key role is to support me so I can provide the highest possible standard of professional leadership and maintain a very positive profile, both inside and outside the school. In other words, to make me look good despite myself!

The role can be pressurised and intense at times. However, it is also highly enjoyable to be at the centre of a forward-looking and successful organisation. People generally like working at Monk's Walk because it is a friendly environment. My current PA, Sue Duthoit, has worked with me for 5 years and is making a family move out of Hertfordshire.

The PA attends the school's senior leadership meetings to take notes. These meetings take place after school on Monday (to about 5pm) and before school on Wednesday beginning at 7.45am. About 3 times a year we host a headteacher's consortium meeting which starts at 7.30am. As I am the chair of the consortium group, my PA manages the administrative support to the fortnightly meetings throughout the year. The PA also organizes the hospitality for a few key evening events in school.

The workload for this post ebbs and flows. It is vital the postholder is flexible to allow for pressure times. In return, there is some flexibility around working in the holidays, although please note this is not a term time only position.

Headteacher's PA – Job Description

Post Title:	Headteacher's PA
Job Grade:	H7 £25,408 - £27,608
Hours :	Full time (please note this is not a term-time only position), permanent
Responsible to:	Headteacher

Job Purpose

- To support the headteacher so she can provide the highest possible standard of professional leadership and maintain a very positive profile both inside and outside the school
- To provide professional and administrative support to the Headteacher
- To provide, at times, administrative support to other members of the school's leadership team
- To carry out some project management work

Key Processes

- Provide professional and efficient administrative support for the Headteacher including confidential secretarial support, the preparation of reports, responses to correspondence and regular accurate paper and electronic filing. Proofread documents.
- Plan the Headteacher's diary, including internal and external events
- Preparation for, and assembly of, relevant paperwork all Headteacher's meetings, including trustees' meetings
- Provide administrative support for the Senior Leadership Team meetings
- Working independently but as directed by the Headteacher, to take responsibility for the preparation and compilation of formal correspondence, reports, emails and presentations, ensuring confidentiality at all times
- After discussion, to prepare draft responses and resolve problems on behalf of the Headteacher
- Assist the Headteacher in the staff recruitment process
- Provide hospitality for all meetings led by the Headteacher and some key events in the school's calendar
- To support some key processes, eg staff leaving events, marking important events in the lives of staff etc
- To receive the Headteacher's phone calls, responding to queries or redirecting them as appropriate
- Collate all documentation needed for fixed-term or permanent exclusions, including returns to the Local Authority

Project management (currently):

- Management of complaints received by the Headteacher's office
- Management of school policies.

This job description sets out the duties of the post at the time it was drawn up. The Headteacher may vary the duties from time to time without changing their general character or the level of responsibility entailed.

This post is classed as having a high degree of contact with children or vulnerable adults and is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. A Disclosure and Barring service

check will be sought through the Criminal Records Bureau as part of the schools pre-employment checks. If you are invited to an interview you will receive more information.

Headteacher's PA – Person Specification

All aspects essential, except those marked (D) desirable

1. Educational Qualifications

- High level of literacy and numeracy, probably Maths and English to GCSE grade C (or equivalent).

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2. Professional Experience

- Experience of working in a school (D) or other environment where stakes are high
- Experience of working in professional and administrative support to a senior manager/leader

3. Professional Knowledge and Understanding

- Confident and competent user of Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint
- Effective practice and approaches to administration
- Able to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- Written accuracy and the ability to proofread are vital skills
- Evidence of Continuing Professional Development
- Able to prioritise and plan effectively
- Produces work that demonstrates attention to detail and accuracy

4. Personal Qualities and Skills

Ideally, we are looking for someone who:

- Is discreet, trustworthy and able to maintain confidentiality
- Is confident in dealing with staff and students
- Is resilient and can work under pressure
- Is co-operative, flexible and responsible
- Equality – supports equality and diversity and respects stakeholders regardless of personal characteristics
- Has good judgement and can prioritise according to the requirements of the post
- Is self-reliant and can work on own initiative
- Can plan and organise
- Has a good telephone manner and can at times deal with challenging conversations
- Is reliable, well organised and committed to high standards
- Is sympathetic to the needs of the school community
- Likes students and is friendly
- Is punctual, with a smart appearance
- Is patient and can maintain optimism when the going gets tough !

Your Role in Our Future

Monk's Walk School is a thriving, vibrant, learning community where our aim is to bring the best out of everyone. It is a very good school with the ambition and plans to be even better.

I hope this information has given you a flavour of our school. Please read the Ofsted report and visit our website and Facebook page – Monk's Walk School Official - for more information. If you feel you can be my new PA and would like to join us, then please apply.

If you would like to talk about the post in a bit more detail before applying, or would like to visit the school, please contact Tracie Smith; Tracie is the Business Manager. Her e-mail address is ts@monkswalk.herts.sch.uk.

How to Apply

I really hope the information we have provided makes you want to apply to join us.

Please apply, using the application form on our website. You should also write a letter of application. In your letter of application, please can you explain how you demonstrate that you fulfil the requirements of points 2, 3 and 4 on the person specification (page 6 in this pack).

The deadline for us to receive your application is noon on **Monday 4 November** and interviews will take place during the week beginning 10th November. Please e-mail your application to: recruitment@monkswalk.herts.sch.uk.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kate Smith
Headteacher
September 2019