



WOLVERHAMPTON

GRAMMAR SCHOOL

NOTES FOR APPLICANTS OF TEACHING POSTS 2010

The School

Wolverhampton Grammar School is an independent co-educational selective HMC day school. There are currently 650 students in the school, of whom 255 are girls. The school was founded in 1512 and in 1875 moved to its present site, with its many trees and extensive and attractive playing fields, on the residential western side of Wolverhampton. It is close to the open countryside of Shropshire and Staffordshire, while benefiting from good road (M5, M6, M6 Toll and M54) and rail connections with the rest of the country. Wolverhampton and its environs remain one of the cheaper areas for housing.

In 1944 WGS became a Voluntary Aided Grammar School in the maintained system; in 1979 it reverted to independence to avoid closure. Since independence a considerable amount of building and conversion have improved the school's facilities, adding a library, design centre, computer rooms, laboratories, language laboratory, a sports centre, sixth form centre - comprising a senior library, social and teaching areas, careers suite and tuck shop - and an artificial hockey pitch. 2005 saw the completion of a music block extension that has provided a handsome rehearsal/recital room and state-of-the-art recording studio combined, plus several additional instrumental teaching rooms. Last year we moved into a magnificent Arts Centre (The Hutton Theatre), housing both Art and Drama, a conversion of a large former garage. The entire school is networked, with broadband Internet access for all staff and students, and digital projectors and interactive whiteboards are widespread and in regular use. All candidates for teaching posts are now expected to be confident in the use of ICT and able to use it in their teaching.

Nowadays the school aims to be amongst the best, both in terms of academic success and extra-curricular provision. In recent years we have managed an A/B pass rate at A level of 75.9% (last year: 77%): at GCSE our students generally achieve around 60% A and A* grades. In every sense the school is enormously ambitious, and this obviously has an implication for the type of student, parent and teacher that we hope to attract. A lot of innovation goes on: the section below, *Widening access*, gives a flavour. There are opportunities for imaginative thinking, and members of staff who have bright ideas find ready support for putting them into action. It's hard to get the message about what we offer across to parents who seek something special for their children: we believe that, in the breadth and the quality of both the curricular *and* the extra-curricular, and in the sheer quality and freshness of thought that underlies so much of what we do, WGS *is* extraordinary.

Widening Access and Educational Innovation

From the start of independence, and thanks to its deep involvement in the government's Assisted Places Scheme, WGS consciously avoided becoming the exclusive preserve of the wealthy: nowadays a few – fewer than we would wish - means-tested Governors' Aided Places are now being awarded each year to replace, to a small extent, the 40+ assisted places that the school offered from 1981-1997. Since then, though its catchment area has widened, WGS has been working hard to retain a social mix close to that of its years as the town's grammar school and is constantly looking to swell its bursary funds so as to increase the number of children that it can help from less affluent homes. We don't have to be too gloomy about this: in 2008 there were 10% of our students in receipt of bursary support, no mean achievement given that we do not have a sizeable endowment.

A ground-breaking scheme, the OpAL Programme (**O**pportunities through **A**ssisted **L**earning - designed to allow bright dyslexic children to enjoy the academic challenge of WGS despite their specific learning difficulties) started in September 1998. All new members of staff are required to undertake some basic dyslexia awareness training. What is exciting about this scheme is not just that the school has found it can cater properly for a new category of bright children (4-6 each year) whose dyslexia would ordinarily be a barrier to success in our entrance test: the collective thinking about appropriate teaching styles in relation to students' widely differing learning styles – and difficulties – that was necessary with the introduction of the OpAL Programme has radicalised *all* the school's teaching. Teachers are thinking more and more about the individual needs of all their students, not just those with obvious or diagnosed difficulties, and each year we promote a cross-curricular scheme for the explicit teaching of *integrated learning skills*, and we're now trying to combine that with work on multiple intelligences.

Since 2006-7 we have been running in Years 7, 8 and 9 extended 25-hour projects devoted to *independent learning*: these have grown out of our experience with **Big Six** (see next paragraph).

September 2004 saw the start of **Big Six**, an exciting new (and slightly mischievous) idea, the school's first Year 6 (age 10+ entry) since 1944. It is designed to release bright children about to enter Year 6 from the six-month grind of preparation for government SATs that takes the joy out of learning in that year in so many schools. Instead our **Big Six** curriculum is skills - rather than content-based, founded on the concept of *learning to learn* (the posh word is meta-cognition). 24 children joined in that first year, and there are currently 40 in **Big Six**, so it seems that we have struck a chord with parents. Early indications are that it is indeed achieving what we hoped: these lively youngsters really are switched on to learning, and are having a tremendous time enjoying the richness of secondary school life a year early. What we (teachers, as well as students) are learning about learning is having a very positive knock-on effect on our work on nurturing academic motivation and commitment in our students of all ages. It's proving a great educational idea: it's good for business too.

Thinking

As might be apparent, the school is committed to self-analysis and change for the better. The *WGS Philosophy*, first published in September 1992, genuinely reflects the aims and ideals of the school and we are a long way towards the realisation of these goals. It is important that an applicant for a teaching post should be in sympathy with that philosophy which really is a driving force in the school and which contributes to the uniquely happy, relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere in the school (the 2007 ISI Inspection Report, available at www.isinspect.org.uk, described WGS as a 'model of a happy, tolerant multi-cultural community'). We would claim that a sincere attempt to run the school along child-centred and democratic lines - in which both students and teachers have a real voice and are all active participants in the shaping of the educational process - creates an educational ethos which is positive, cooperative and immensely productive (witness a thriving peer support programme). WGS really is a special place that needs to be experienced to be understood.

Teaching

WGS is an ambitious school with many opportunities for like-minded teachers. Four former members of staff are currently heads and four are deputies - in both sectors. The Head is committed both to the involvement of every member of staff in discussion and to the provision of adequate training for all members of staff. Discussion is always needed as the school constantly monitors its position in relation to the ceaseless change and turmoil that too often constitute the national education scene! We try to exploit our independence to cherry-pick the best and where possible stand aloof from the crazier government prescriptions.

A standard teacher's job description is enclosed. It can only be a statement of the bare bones of the job, a bare minimum indeed. WGS teachers are immensely committed and hard-working: their professionalism is characterised by a readiness to engage in cooperative planning, review and design of improvements - and by their readiness to go the extra mile for their students. Just as students have a valued and positive voice in the school, so do teachers. Indeed, there is an *expectation* that teachers will get involved and contribute their views and creativity to whole-school issues. **NQTs should note that WGS operates a formal system of induction leading to nationally recognised Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).** The school does not operate a Performance Management system as generally envisaged, preferring instead a method of individual appraisal that feeds directly into departmental and whole-school planning so that the circle is closed and teachers can easily see where their appraisal leads.

Curriculum

The school is organised into Lower and Middle Schools and Sixth Form, each with its own head of section. There is not room here to give full details of the curriculum at each stage, but it is one which is challenging and broad: for example, from Year 7 all students learn three separate sciences and French, German and Latin, as well as English, maths, history, geography, theology and philosophy (the latter does some great work on critical thinking and philosophy), art, CDT, ICT, music, PE, games and PSHE. Year 11 students do a total of 10 GCSEs. A level and GCSE results demonstrate an established pattern of consistently high achievement: year-to-year fluctuations are small. The school is proud of the pastoral care it provides through form tutors in Years 7-11 and through tutors in the Sixth Form.

Extra-curricular

To complement all this academic endeavour, the school offers an unusually wide range of extra-curricular activities. The energy and commitment of the staff in these are remarkable, and it is expected that any applicant for a post at WGS will become similarly involved. Drama and music are first-rate: there are regular and ambitious concerts, and concert tours take the school's name abroad. The first production in our new theatre was a wonderful *As you like it*. 2008/09 saw *A Christmas Carol* and the Junior play was *James and the Giant Peach*. All manner of clubs and societies flourish, and the peer-group pressure is definitely for students to become involved, rather than otherwise. (Picture galleries of many of these are to be found on the school's website).

In sport, the school plays football, hockey, netball, cricket, rugby, athletics and rounders at a high standard: Tours are occasional but popular: and twice as many played netball and cricket in Barbados in December 2008. There are thriving clubs for squash, badminton, basketball, running/cross country and gymnastics, and a huge annual ski-trip in February. A structured programme of outdoor education is still growing, leading from all-age rock-climbing activity (on our own bouldering wall) and a four-day Year 7 expedition every June through various stages to senior expeditions to (so far) Malaysia, the Himalayas, Mt Kilimanjaro, Ecuador and Peru. The breadth of the sport we offer means there is always a need for applicants able to contribute usefully: Debating is also growing, and additional assistance would be welcome there too.

How to apply

WGS is privileged to enjoy the services of a committed, highly professional and caring staff, while its students are eager, enthusiastic, demanding and extraordinarily friendly. If all this paperwork doesn't tell you enough about all that, do visit our website (www.wgs.org.uk) which is regularly updated. If you think that the school's very distinctive ethos and environment would suit you, and that you have something to bring to it, please send a letter of application and complete the enclosed application form: between them they should identify all the experience and particular skills which you would bring to WGS, if appointed, as well as giving some indication as to why you feel suited to **this** post at **this** school **now**. You may also send a CV if you wish, but **you must complete the application form**: if you wish to word-process it, please e-mail my PA, Jannette Boss (headsqa@wgs-sch.net), and a blank will be sent electronically.

If you wish to apply electronically, please send your application to me direct at head@wgs-sch.net. The appointment will be offered subject to the conditions of appointment which follow; these include satisfactory CRB child protection checks; the receipt of two satisfactory references, one of whom must be your current or most recent employer; evidence of good health; proof of qualifications/degree certificate etc. These legal and official matters are dealt with on the following pages: I'm sorry that they are not as 'user-friendly' as the preceding information, but hope you'll understand the necessity to be very precise: we are obliged by the CRB to follow certain procedures and to have particular policies in place. Besides, we take Child Protection very seriously and do all we can to ensure that our procedures are effective, safe and carefully followed: for that reason our Child Protection Policy is attached (there is further information in the Teaching Staff handbook on spotting signs of abuse and what to do in response).

Candidates called to interview are always asked to teach an observed trial lesson, and the students' opinions are sought afterwards. A circus of interviews follow with the Head, Deputy Head, Head of Department etc as appropriate – and with a small panel of senior students. This latter will take the form of an informal discussion, though the students will not have access to confidential information about you: nonetheless they will contribute to the final deliberations. This is in keeping with the principle of involving students, giving them responsibility and developing a democratic ethos throughout the school.

Wolverhampton Grammar School is an Equal Opportunities employer, actively seeks applications from candidates of both genders and all backgrounds (see **POLICY STATEMENT ON THE RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS** paragraph 2 below) and strives always to live up to the demanding principles outlined in its Equal Opportunities and Race Equality Policy – also attached.

I will ring all candidates who attend for interview later in the evening to discuss the outcome and provide feedback. If you are called to interview you should therefore have a good idea on the day as to whether the job is going to suit you: hence the wealth of information included in this bundle. Candidates (and their partners) are always welcome to come and look round the school in advance.

Vincent Darby
Head
January 2010

WGS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Child protection

policy The Children Act stresses the duty of all citizens to be alert for signs of child abuse and to take action when they see or suspect it. In all such matters the protection of the child is paramount. Schools have a particular responsibility for child protection. WGS will take action in cases of suspected abuse and takes for granted the support of parents in the protection of children.

All members of staff are asked to be alert to signs of abuse and know that they should report any concerns or suspicions to the Head who is the school's designated teacher responsible for child protection. The school follows the guidance provided by the Wolverhampton City Council Children's And Young People's Services *Safeguarding And Protecting Children: Guidance For Schools And Education Services* which is stored electronically in the *teaching staff handbook*.

Everyone should be aware that children who are suffering abuse may be too frightened to tell anyone: they need encouragement and sympathy if they start to talk about their problems.

Abuse may take a number of forms:

- neglect
- physical injury
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse

Any allegation or suspicion of abuse by a member of staff should be reported direct to the Head or, in his absence, the Deputy Head. Any allegation or suspicion of abuse by the Head should be reported to the Deputy Head who will immediately inform the Chairman of Governors. (There is more information for teachers in the *teaching staff handbook*).

for students If you are worried about possible child abuse - in connection with yourself or with someone else - you should talk to a member of staff. WGS encourages an open atmosphere in which you can talk to anyone with whom you feel comfortable.

We will treat any information you give us with complete privacy and will not share it indiscriminately. We may have to share information, only on a 'need to know' basis, to enable other professionals to take appropriate action. See the confidentiality policy earlier in this handbook.

listening, advice and counselling at wgs

People often say that there is a need for 'counselling' but do not really know what that means. A counsellor cannot solve your problems but can listen, help you to look at the problem from every point of view, to understand your own feelings, to weigh up the alternatives and to make your own judgement about the action to be taken. Sometimes just getting things off your chest to a neutral person can change how you see things. Sometimes a problem needs to be discussed with the person you think is causing it, or with someone who can change things.

help available in school

WGS takes very seriously the need to provide care and advice for all its students. Form tutors and sixth form tutors accept that pastoral care is a most important part of that job: they will normally hope to be the first person you will turn to for help. Subject teachers, too, see pastoral care and support of their students as being an integral part of their academic role. **At WGS any student may always approach any member of staff for help or advice.** Teachers are used to balancing the various parts of their job and you can feel safe to trust them to be discreet and caring when helping students in difficulty. Teachers who want to improve their counselling skills receive basic level training.

Even so, students are still sometimes nervous of discussing problems with teachers because they are both advisors and authority figures. For that reason the Student Parliament planned various ways in which students can have access to advice and/or counselling from people within school or through an outside counsellor, currently Mrs Ros Howard. Sometimes the hardest problems are the ones you think adults - teachers or parents - might find silly. A Student Parliament initiative led to a scheme of Peer Supporters in school. All Peer Supporters have undergone training in listening and basic counselling skills and are available at lunchtimes and break times around school or in the Peer Supporters Room between Big School and the John Roper Room

how to seek help

Students are welcome to find any of the senior staff, in their offices, and ask to talk confidentially. These include:

- Mr Darby (Head)
- Mr Hills (Deputy Head, Pastoral)
- Mr Anderson (Deputy Head, Curriculum)
- Mrs Fogarty (Head of Years 10 & 11)
- Mr Benfield (Head of Sixth Form)
- Mr Tyler (Head of Teaching and Learning/ Director of the OPAL Programme)

Other members of staff have specifically offered to counsel students:

Mr Bennett	Mr Johnson	Mrs Preston	Mrs Ward
Mrs Dalzell	Mrs Mahey	Mr Ryan	
Mrs Finn	Mr O'Malley	Mrs Laurino-Ryan	

You are advised to choose the person that you feel most comfortable with and who is best placed to help you. It may be someone in the list above, another teacher in the school or someone outside it. If you want to talk to the **school's outside counsellor**, Mrs Ros Howard, you should contact any of the members of staff above - or you can ask the Head's PA, Mrs Boss, who will arrange (in confidence) an appointment in a quiet and private room in school.

helpful telephone numbers

For some problems you would do best to seek specialist help. The glass-fronted notice board in the Derry Hall entrance contains details of many useful help lines, services and their telephone numbers. These are also printed on the Sixth Form notice board opposite Mr Benfield's office and at the back of the Red Book. If you need the use of a quiet place for a confidential phone call, just ask any member of staff.

WGS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RACE EQUALITY POLICY

Equal Opportunities is about valuing differences, and recognising that individuals have different needs.

Every student and employee at Wolverhampton Grammar School has the right to equal opportunities irrespective of

- gender, age, race, religion and political beliefs.
- differences of domestic or social circumstances, disability, physical appearance or sexuality.

All members of the community at WGS are of equal worth and everyone is entitled to be treated with equal respect, courtesy and consideration. This is not only true between student and student but also between members of staff and between teachers and students. We aim to raise awareness, and challenge any instance, of unfair discrimination. We aim actively to promote race and gender equality and the principle of school inclusion and to assess and monitor school activities, achievements, outcomes and student participation by both race and gender.

CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT TO A TEACHING POST AT WOLVERHAMPTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Any offer of appointment will be subject to the following pre-conditions:-

1. The completion by you of the school's standard application form.
2. The receipt of two satisfactory references, one of whom must be your current or most recent employer.
3. The completion by you of a confidential form of declaration of health and, if necessary, a satisfactory report following a medical examination.
4. Evidence or other verification of your qualifications.
5. The completion of a Contract of Employment in the standard terms offered by the Governors (this is however, issued after you take up the appointment: in the meantime the letter of appointment will offer you the employee protection that you need).
6. A satisfactory Disclosure form for you from the Criminal Records Bureau. The School is obliged, under arrangements introduced for the protection of children, to see a satisfactory Disclosure form for you from the Criminal Records Bureau. All information given by you, or received from the Police, will be treated in the strictest confidence. The failure by you to declare any conviction or other Court Orders may disqualify you from appointment or, if appointed, result in the immediate termination of your Contract (see 5 below). All considerations and decisions relating to matters in paragraphs 4 and 5 are in the absolute discretion of the Governors and the Head, having regard to the duty of care they owe to the pupils at the School.
7. A declaration signed by you that you have not been involved in any Court proceedings, or a statement signed by you detailing any such proceedings, and the outcome. Because a teaching post at Wolverhampton Grammar School involves substantial opportunity for access to children, it is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 1986. You are therefore required to confirm that you are not on the DCSF List 99 or disqualified from working with children and further to declare any convictions, cautions, bind-overs or other Orders of the Courts made against you, even if they would otherwise be regarded as 'spent' under this Act (see *Policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders* below). You can do this either by attaching a statement to that effect to your application or, if you are offered the post, by signing such a statement at that point. This statement must say:

I confirm that I am not on the DCSF List 99 or disqualified from working with children. I further declare that I have no convictions, cautions, bind-overs or other Orders of the Courts made against me.

If you cannot sign such a declaration, you are not necessarily disbarred from applying and being offered a post at WGS. Please read the next section carefully and, if in doubt, call the Head to discuss the matter in the strictest confidence.

POLICY STATEMENT ON THE RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS

- As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, Wolverhampton Grammar School complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
- Wolverhampton Grammar School is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability or offending background. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

- Since a Disclosure must form part of the recruitment process for any post at Wolverhampton Grammar School, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover to the Head. We guarantee that this information is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
- Unless the nature of the position allows Wolverhampton Grammar School to ask questions about your entire criminal record we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- We ensure that all those in Wolverhampton Grammar School who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- We make every subject of a CRB Disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.
- We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.