

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for enquiring about the post at Surbiton High School that we have advertised recently. On the web site you can find an application form and details of the post and of the School. Please send to me at the above address your completed application form, together with your Pupils' Examination Results Form (where applicable), Confidential Disclosure and Applicant Monitoring Form, and a covering letter of no more than two sides, supporting your application.

Surbiton High School is one of the country's leading Girls' Schools in the independent sector. Our academic success at both GCSE and A-level is shown by our regular appearance in the Top 100 Schools table of both the Times and the Telegraph. We also provide "Added Value", in that our girls achieve even better examination results than might be expected for their ability range, in comparison with similar schools. Surbiton High is academically a very successful school, and we look forward to recruiting new colleagues who will continue this success and develop it further by their commitment to improving teaching and learning.

We are, however, not just concerned with examinations. Our School provides all pupils with a secure and encouraging environment in which their happiness and development are nurtured, valued and monitored, helping them to mature and develop into secure, happy and confident young women. The personal development of pupils is of exceptional importance to us, and is emphasised through our pastoral systems and the range of extra-curricular activities that we offer. We expect new colleagues also to contribute to these aspects of the life of our School.

Surbiton High is thus a school that combines academic success with an emphasis on the individual needs of each girl. This is much appreciated by parents, as can be seen by the ever-increasing numbers who apply for entry for their daughters: in the highly-competitive independent school market of South-West London, we have seen our applications grow by over 50% in recent years. The quality of our environment and resourcing levels – with over £15 million invested in the last 10 years – is another factor of our popularity. In such an admissions climate, entry is continuing to be academically very selective, and we are unfortunately unable to offer places to the majority of those who apply.

In common with all teaching posts, posts at Surbiton High School are subject to Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Board. Any offer of employment is thus conditional on clearance from the above, on the receipt of two satisfactory references, a satisfactory medical questionnaire, confirmation of qualifications, and documentary proof of the right to reside and work in the UK according to the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.



We hope that the enclosed documentation will give you a good picture of what our School is like. As well as being a learning community, Surbiton High is a Christian community. As a member of the Church Schools Company, we expect all employees to act in a manner which is consistent with the Company's principle objective, namely to promote education based on Christian principles. While we recognise that employees may come from other faith groups (as also do many of our pupils), and welcome this diversity, we do, however, expect everyone in our community to conduct themselves appropriately in the light of this principal objective. As a School we, in turn, respect the different faiths of our colleagues and pupils, and welcome them and their contribution.

Surbiton High School provides a well-resourced environment where learning takes place in an atmosphere of order and calm, and high-motivated students make teaching a most rewarding process. We look forward to receiving an application from you to join us.

Yours sincerely

Ann Haydon

Principal

Joys of being independent August 27, 2004

In the last of our summer series, Julie Greenhough confesses her guilty secret and sings the praises of a career switch

Now that last term is a distant memory and you are relaxing away from the stress and strain of the classroom, I have decided to come clean about my guilty secret, a burden that I have been carrying for a whole year.

Many are the times I have tried to get it off my chest. I wanted to speak out for myself before I was outed, yet I was worried that I would become the subject of taunts and ridicule. So, while I have you in a more carefree mode, here goes: I have gone independent. In fact, I have switched from the state sector to the independent sector. There. I have said it aloud. Still with me? OK then, here comes the rest: independent, single-sex and faith school all in one. Try not to fall out of your deck chair! It is extreme, I know, but allow me to explain.

I thought about confessing earlier in the year and hiding behind Diane Abbott. Politically left of centre, the working-class daughter of a trade union man, I am a shining example of comprehensive education eager to repay the system. I recall vehemently refusing to train anywhere other than mixed-sex comprehensives when on teaching practice, damning faith schools as perpetuating a selective opiate system, and shunning independent teachers at Inset days as being on a soft option.

All of this was done in blind ignorance, I hasten to add. My knowledge of the independent sector was based on images of Eton, ice-cold baths and repressed sexuality. I did not even know what a prep school was. No one carried the torch for comprehensive education higher than I did.

And yet I have just had the most rewarding year of teaching in my career.

Nor, I now realise, am I alone in having made the shift.

Most significantly, I have time to teach. Yes, of course, cash plays a huge part. We have resources, lots of them, but nothing extreme. Why shouldn't every pupil have a copy of the class text? Why did I have to pay out of my own pocket to photocopy the set scenes in Macbeth because we were short of copies and had no budget left? Fundamentally, I do not just teach; I enable pupils to learn. My work is no longer about delivering a utilitarian educated workforce of tomorrow, but of equipping and celebrating the whole self as a learner for life. We form a community of learners, not just a group enduring and making do.

The little things also help. Tea, toast, jam and Marmite at the end of the day, free lunches and drinks, a laptop. Not a single item has been stolen from my classroom; indeed I find myself with more pens and rulers at the end of the year than at the beginning. Recruitment crisis? What crisis? Teacher retention? Not an issue. My wall displays are read and admired, not destroyed. There is an unlocked stationery cupboard so I no longer have the indignity of being handed a rationed number of board pens each term. No more having to ask to use the photocopier and having to justify what I want to copy. No more being called

an "effing c***" by 11-year-olds as a matter of course. No more tables being thrown at my head. No more violent assaults from parents or pupils.

I tried really hard in the state sector, yet each term that passed saw me more disaffected. Issues of quality of life and personal safety outweighed the guilt and pangs of conscience and professionalism. I yearned to put to good use the creative force that the PGCE had ignited and I rallied against yet more government initiatives, drives, tests and constant reforms that sapped my enthusiasm.

Now I find myself in the weird position of agreeing with Prince Charles that Labour's education policy is stifling learning and encouraging faddish teaching methods. It still angers me that some schools have everything and some virtually nothing. The polarities of class and location still remain.

Our education system is only nominally comprehensive. Policies of raising educational achievement for all do not, it seems, entail reduced inequality so the policies perpetuate a grossly unfair system of leading-edge schools, specialist schools, faith schools, and city academies.

It is no longer a simple choice between state or independent. The new education policies of both major parties only seem to create yet more divides. Goodbye comprehensive Utopia, hello real world. It is not all a bed of roses, however. When it rains, the plastic buckets still come out to catch the water from leaking ceilings. But that's all I can complain about.

At the end of the day, pupils are much the same underneath. When I ask my Year 7 tutor group to reflect on what has been their most memorable moment of the year, and what they have learnt that they will take with them next year, Matthew exclaims without hesitation that he can now suck sherbet lemon up his nose. Daniel goes one further: "I can suck my own toe now, Miss!"



Surbiton High School

Quality Assurance



In 2002 Surbiton High School was the first independent School to appoint a Vice Principal (Helen Morgan) with a specific brief for Quality Assurance. We are a high-performing school as is seen each year in our examination results, especially in terms of value-added. We are not, however, complacent, and are always striving to improve; improving learning in particular is important to us. We are therefore establishing a Quality Assurance system based on setting standards of excellence in all we do.

The key initiatives for this year are:

The monitoring of teaching and learning

This is obviously the major thrust overall of our Quality Assurance; we wish teaching and learning to be of the best possible quality so that they benefit your daughter.

- ***Pupil shadowing*** As Principal, and therefore responsible for all learning in the School, I take a keen interest in what happens in the classrooms. I do *pupil shadowing* 3 or 4 times most weeks; I go unannounced to a class and observe the lesson, with a special emphasis on how the girls are learning. Afterwards I take a group of 4 or 5 girls and ask them some standard questions about how they learn, how they know what they need to do to improve, and what we could do to make learning better. These views are fed back to the Heads of Department.
- ***Classroom observations*** All Curriculum Managers (Principal, Vice Principals and Heads of Department) regularly carry out formal *classroom observations* on teaching throughout the school, to identify good practice and note areas for further development.
- ***Peer observations*** All teachers, including Curriculum Managers, also do *peer observations* where they observe the class of a colleague, usually in a different curriculum area or a different Key Stage from their normal teaching, to identify teaching and learning strategies that can be fed into our sharing of good practice.
- ***Work sampling*** Curriculum Managers take in samples or complete sets of work to monitor the attainment levels of pupils, the quality of the girls' work and the quality of the marking

Target setting for pupils The setting and monitoring of overall SMART targets for individual pupils was introduced some years ago and has been working its way through the school. We are now extending this to individual targets for each subject. The aim is for pupils to learn to take more responsibility for improving their own learning and achievement by identifying appropriate targets and drawing up action plans for achieving them.

Pupil Tracking Through tracking the actual performance of pupils against the performance that is predicted (using the suite of programmes produced by the University of Durham) we can identify girls who are under-achieving and also those who are under-aspiring. We then work with them to put this right.

Curriculum Reviews Every year each Head of Department attends a curriculum review meeting with the Principal and Vice Principal where they consider the department's self-assessment, its achievements during the year, the examination results, staff development, extra-curricular activities and overall contribution to the school. The outcome is an action plan for consolidation of strengths and further improvement.

Appraisal Our staff appraisal system is aimed at doing things even better each year. At the yearly appraisal meeting for each teacher, there is an assessment of overall performance under 4 headings, the 3 objectives from the previous year are evaluated, 3 new objectives are determined, and development needs are identified. At least one objective is based on improving learning, so that the system impacts on teaching quality.

Input from girls and parents Pupil feedback sheets and Class Climate surveys give us the views of girls on their learning and how to make it more effective; we also survey parents from time to time.

We believe that our Quality Assurance system, coupled with our extensive learning support (available to all pupils, and giving help with a wide range of needs to girls from Year 7 to Oxbridge entrants), helps ensure that pupils at Surbiton High School will achieve their academic potential.