



# Birchwood High School



## Head of Geography Recruitment Pack



## Contents

Letter to the applicant .....	Page 3
About Bishop's Stortford & Birchwood High School .....	Page 4
Our school values and ethos .....	Page 5
Key facts and statistics .....	Page 6
Job description .....	Page 7
Person specification .....	Page 8
Completing your application .....	Page 9
Important application information .....	Page 10



## Letter to applicants

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your interest in both Birchwood High School and the role of Head of Geography.

Birchwood High School is a large 11-18 school with around 1400 students from Bishop's Stortford and the surrounding area. We are proud to be an inclusive and non-selective school which serves the needs of all students regardless of their starting points. Student needs are supported through a strong balance of academic progress, pastoral support and curriculum enrichment.

We try to ensure that every Birchwood geographer understands the interconnectedness of humans and the environment and that they are equipped with the skills to tackle the world's future problems. We are looking for someone who can contribute to this aim by inspiring our students and staff.

Geography is currently taught across KS3 to KS5 at Birchwood High School, and the department prides itself on providing a broad and inventive program of study that is applicable to students in the 21st century. Our curriculum is as broad and balanced as the national curriculum but designed with our specific learners in mind, we combine study of the local area with national and international case studies and students particularly enjoy topics like 'Risky World' and 'Changing China'. We also try to provide lots of practical experiences for our students, there is fieldwork embedded for all year groups, sometimes conducted in the local area, sometimes further afield in places like London and Norfolk.

Geography is one of the more popular GCSEs and A Levels within the school, we typically have 5 GCSE groups per year and two A Level groups per year. A large part of this success is due to our strong KS3 curriculum provision and our fantastic teachers.

We are currently seeking to employ a well-qualified and passionate teacher to lead our Geography department. The successful candidate will be a dynamic and inspirational individual with excellent subject knowledge. They will be able to lead, develop and enhance the teaching practice of others so as to drive the curriculum and outcomes of the department.

For more information about the Humanities Faculty and the curriculum maps please visit the school website ([here](#)). If you have any further questions about this post, please feel free to email the Head of Faculty, Mrs H Walsh on [hwalsh@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:hwalsh@birchwoodhigh.org.uk).

To apply, please ensure that when completing the online application form you include in your statement any relevant experience to date, your values, how you would make a difference to student outcomes and why you want to be part of the Birchwood Community.

Applications should be submitted using the [mynewterm](#) platform no later than **9.00am on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025**. Interviews will be held shortly after.

If you would like to find out more about the role and/or arrange an informal visit to the school, please contact Sarah Wilkinson directly.

Yours sincerely

Mr Sam Griffin  
Principal



## About Bishop's Stortford and Birchwood High School

Bordering the county of Essex, Bishop's Stortford is a thriving, historic and picturesque market town situated in Hertfordshire. The town is served by direct train links into London Liverpool Street, Cambridge and Stansted Airport and the M11, M25, A120, A10 and A414 making Bishop's Stortford easily accessible to Cambridgeshire, London, Hertfordshire, Essex, and Stansted Airport. With such great transport links, easy access to beautiful countryside and a wide range of excellent local primary and secondary schools, it is easy to see why this is a favoured commuter area.

Our School is located in the north-east of Bishop's Stortford, close to the town centre and the train station. It is situated in an attractive open setting within a residential area backing onto mature woodland. Converted to a Single Academy Trust in 2011, Birchwood is a well-established, attractive, all round inclusive, co-educational secondary school and sixth form.

We have a PAN of 240, and a current sixth form of 225, making us one of the biggest schools in the local area. Most students enter our school at Year 7 from primary schools within the town and surrounding area. We work hard to foster good relationships with our local primary schools and a particular emphasis is put on transition to Year 7.

We have great pride in being an inclusive school with an all-ability ethos that respects and responds to the different backgrounds and situations of all our students. We offer a broad curriculum choice and an extra-curricular programme that encompasses the National Curriculum and beyond. It is central to our ethos that the curriculum is accessible to all students and Birchwood has a strong local reputation for SEND provision.

Investment has been made in initiatives to facilitate recovery from the pandemic, these include a whole school literacy programme, now in its second year, and the development of an intervention centre to provide targeted support where it is most needed. Students, staff, and trustees have worked together on recent initiatives to champion equality, diversity, and inclusion, with a particular focus on gender equality as well as LGBTQ+, race and ethnicity, to foster a whole school culture where everyone feels welcome and safe to bring their whole selves to school.

Our school buildings and facilities are modern and well maintained. They include a light and welcoming library, dedicated sixth form centre, cafeteria and kitchens, and a full range of equipment and rooms to support our wide curriculum offer. We also have a modern sports hall and gym, a dance studio, and a dedicated drama studio. Staff have access to a large staff room and shared work area. In addition to the indoor facilities, there are well maintained grounds which include social areas, a 3G AstroTurf pitch and a large playing field for grass pitches and athletics. There is also a detached playing field that offers opportunities for future development. The quality of the facilities and our outward focus means that we have an established busy community lettings programme which includes use by drama, music and sporting groups.

Trustees have recently released reserves of £400,000 to invest in improvements to our buildings and facilities. These have included updating the PC's and computer suite, remodeling our reception area, upgrading some of our toilet facilities and the Personalised Learning Centre - which is our hub for SEND provision. We have also installed new boilers and new CCTV and telephone systems.

# Our School Values and Ethos

Our core values are encompassed in our mission statement:

“ At Birchwood we are part of something special, welcoming all, supporting all, and encouraging all.

Enjoying together the exploration of ideas, the excitement of learning and the celebration of our achievements, in a school where we feel safe.

*“your dreams, your future, our challenge”*



# Key facts and statistics

Location:

Bishop's Stortford

Status:

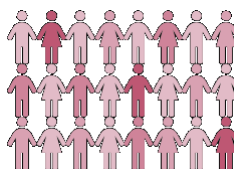
Single Academy Trust  
(established in 2011)

11-18 Yrs

Age Range

1205

Students  
Yr7 to Yr11

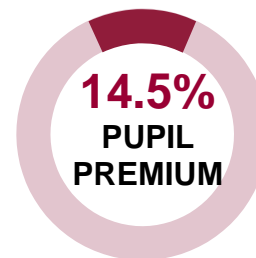
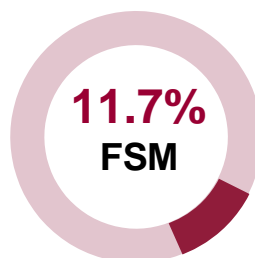
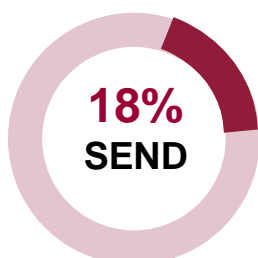


225

Students in  
Sixth Form



Rated **good** in JUNE 2019





## JOB DESCRIPTION: Head of Geography

**Salary:** MPS / UPS and TLR fringe 2b

**Line of Responsibility:** The Head of Geography is directly responsible to the Head of Humanities

Geography is one of the three departments that form our Humanities Faculty. The Head of Geography is responsible for the leadership, development and organisation of the subject.

In addition to core teaching responsibilities the main roles and responsibilities of the Head of Geography will include:

### Teaching, Learning and Assessment:

- contribute towards the overall aims and objectives of the Faculty
- lead, develop and monitor the production of schemes of work within Geography
- promote personalisation and differentiation within the subject of Geography at Key Stage 3, 4 and 5
- support the Head of Humanities in setting and allocating students to groups
- keep up with developments in Geography teaching, disseminating training and information where appropriate
- In conjunction with the HoF develop accurate assessment processes for Geography in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5
- In conjunction with the Head of Humanities and other Heads of Department monitor teaching, learning and assessment within Geography, contributing to programmes of lesson observations and learning walk observations
- In conjunction with the HoF contribute to the intervention planning for key students
- In conjunction with the rest of the leadership team with the Faculty, be responsible for health and safety within the faculty

### Leadership and Management:

- Mentor, guide and support staff within the department ensuring their wellbeing is reviewed regularly
- establish high levels of expectations of all pupils within Geography
- in conjunction with the Head of Faculty,
  - make detailed arrangements for the induction of newly appointed teachers
  - encourage and support staff training and development through the application of ALCAME, regular departmental discussion and the introduction of new ideas and techniques, arrange departmental INSET where appropriate
- in the event of an unforeseen absence by a colleague, ensure that appropriate cover work is set and, if the absence is prolonged, that work is marked
  - monitor teaching and learning and pupil progress within Geography
  - contribute towards the appointment of new staff, as appropriate
  - ensure teachers within the department contribute to Faculty procedures for the monitoring and recording of pupil progress
  - arrange internal examinations and assessment where necessary
- arrange extra-curricular events and opportunities to extend and enrich classroom teaching and learning

### Whole School:

- undertake any other duties as may be required from time to time as negotiated with the Principal



## PERSON SPECIFICATION: Head of Geography

<b>Education &amp; Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualified Teacher Status (with DFE Number), including Numeracy/Literacy/ICT tests for NQTs after 2002.</li> <li>• First/Second Class Degree, preferably in related or other appropriate subject</li> <li>• Willingness to continue to develop own expertise (evidenced through taking responsibility for own continuing professional development)</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching Ability/ Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of good teaching skills, leading to consistently high standards of achievement.</li> <li>• Experience of managing staff</li> <li>• Teaching experience at KS3, KS4 and &amp; KS5</li> <li>• Knowledge of current generic developments in teaching and learning.</li> <li>• Evidence of working with other professionals as part of a team.</li> <li>• An ability to use ICT and new technologies effectively to support learning and engage students</li> <li>• The ability to create effective lesson plans.</li> <li>• An understanding of how to use assessment to inform planning for good teaching and learning.</li> <li>• Successful experience in raising student achievement and adding value.</li> <li>• Experience of personal involvement in the wider curriculum.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills, Knowledge &amp; Aptitudes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent subject knowledge.</li> <li>• Ability to develop a broad and imaginative range of teaching skills.</li> <li>• Ability to lead and manage an effective team</li> <li>• High level communication (both orally and in writing) and presentation skills applicable to a range of audiences.</li> <li>• Ability to think creatively and imaginatively to solve challenges.</li> <li>• Ability to make informed use of assessment.</li> <li>• Ability to build good relationships with students and colleagues.</li> <li>• Ability to work with initiative, as an individual and as a team member.</li> <li>• Capacity and willingness to evaluate own and others performance</li> <li>• Well organised with the ability to maintain accurate records.</li> <li>• Able to reflect on practice.</li> <li>• Ability to anticipate problems and identify opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Qualities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hardworking and committed to inclusive education.</li> <li>• A belief in valuing each individual student and responding to their needs.</li> <li>• A commitment to the highest standards of child protection.</li> <li>• Enthusiasm for the subject and a desire to communicate this to others.</li> <li>• A willingness to learn and develop new skills.</li> <li>• To work proactively within the ethos of the school.</li> <li>• Capacity for working under pressure and meeting deadlines</li> <li>• Self-motivated and self-confident.</li> <li>• The ability to build on the experience, advice and contribution of others.</li> <li>• Humility and self-reflection</li> </ul>



# Completing your application pack

## Application Form

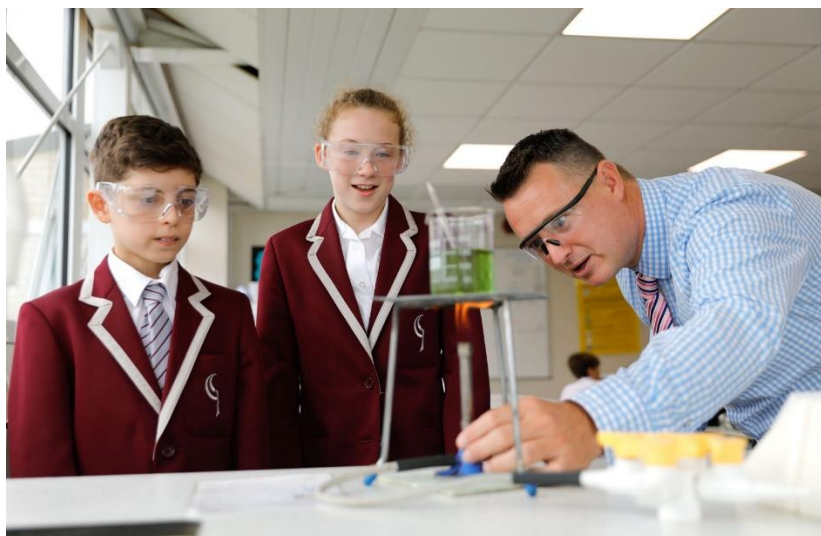
Applicants must apply online via the [mynewterm](#) platform (CVs are not accepted). Please complete all aspects of the form fully. Include your full work history with no unexplained gaps since leaving school education and all the training you have completed, with particular focus on recent training that has helped you develop your skills.

## Person Specification and Personal Statement

Please refer to the Person Specification to help guide you in terms of your personal statement. Be sure to evidence additional aspects such as training and qualifications together with your background and experience.

## References

Please make sure your referees are aware of your application and that they are able to provide a swift turnaround. Preferred referees are your last two employers, and you should provide their official organisation email address for us to contact. One referee will be your current or most recent Headteacher / Principal.



# Important Information

<b>Salary:</b>	MPS / UPS Fringe and TLR 2b
<b>Start date:</b>	As soon as possible
<b>Closing date:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> January 2025, 9.00am
<b>Interview date:</b>	Shortly after closing date

<b>School website link:</b>	<a href="https://www.birchwoodhighschool.co.uk">https://www.birchwoodhighschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Any questions, call our HR Manager Sarah Wilkinson</b>	01279 756371

Birchwood High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and visitors to share this commitment. Appointment to this post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) as well as other pre-appointment checks, including an online check, outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023).

To help us meet our high standards and aspirations of a fully diverse and inclusive workplace, we strongly encourage suitably qualified applicants from all backgrounds to apply and to join us.



The ABC of being a Birchwood student:  
Achieve, Belong, Conquer!



Birchwood High School  
Parsonage Lane, Bishop's Stortford,  
Hertfordshire CM23 5BD  
[www.birchwoodonline.co.uk](http://www.birchwoodonline.co.uk)