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Monday, 10th December 2018

Dear Applicant,

Headteacher Vacancy

Thank you for your interest in the vacancy that will arise when our current headteacher leaves the school next summer after eight years in post.

The context

Seven Mills Primary School is a small but vibrant and successful single-form entry primary school (with 236 on roll), located just a few minutes' walk from the shops, businesses and public transport of Canary Wharf on the Isle of Dogs. The school was built in the mid 1960s and serves the Barkantine Estate, close to the Thames. The school is generously sized – both inside and in terms of outdoor space – and it is oversubscribed in almost all year groups. The school's reputation locally is of a good, caring school which is sensitive to the needs of the community it serves.

Our school is diverse and very many children speak English as an additional language. Around 70% of the pupils are of Bangladeshi heritage and 60% of pupils are eligible for pupil premium. As such the local community is one of significant social deprivation. Seven Mills provides many extended school activities and has a nursery on site which we still fund for 30 full-time places for rising 4-year-olds. Behaviour at the school is excellent and parental engagement is strong and positive. In January 2018 the school was once again graded 'good' by Ofsted.

The school is a local authority school, and is a member of THEP (Tower Hamlets Educational Partnership), the key vehicle for delivering school support and improvement work in the borough. The school is also a member of the local Isle of Dogs cluster of schools – comprising the one secondary, two church primaries and five community primaries located on the island.

The headteacher is supported by a small senior leadership team and a strong and stable governing body. The leadership team sees its role as ensuring that:

- teaching and learning across the whole school is of the highest quality;
- our children experience a stimulating, engaging and meaningful curriculum;
- our families receive the very best pastoral care and support.

Our ethos is child-centred, and we believe that we can achieve good academic results without ever losing sight of the fact that primary schools can and should be fun. We want every child to experience excitement and success every day, and we want our children to know that we value kindness, co-operation and enthusiasm for a broad range of activities – not just doing well in exams or tests.

Headteacher: Mr Mike Hirst
Deputy Headteacher: Ms Laura Cookson

In recent years, a number of refurbishments have taken place at the school, the largest and most recent being the remodelling of the playgrounds and the construction of a stand-alone annexe with parents' room and group teaching spaces, to replace an old prefabricated building.

The school is fortunate in having a strong roll – most year groups are full. However, there are no plans for the foreseeable future to expand the school beyond its current capacity. (The way that the school is built and located on its site would make an extension to two forms of entry difficult to accommodate.)

The school is also fortunate to have been generously funded in recent years, and it has a surplus budget, with a deliberate reserve which is retained in order to ease any future financial pressure during the anticipated transition to a national funding formula.

The role

As a small school, we are used to our headteacher having a hands-on and open door approach to leadership. Visitors to Seven Mills comment on the calm, positive and purposeful atmosphere, and we pride ourselves on being friendly and approachable. We respect and celebrate diversity, and we have always worked hard to provide our pupils with a broad and engaging curriculum. We would like our new headteacher to build on these strengths.

The person

The single most important attribute for a successful candidate is to be an excellent and enthusiastic teacher. We believe that school leaders should be able to 'walk the talk'. In consequence, breadth of teaching experience across the primary age range is a desirable attribute for candidates.

An ability to deal efficiently and accurately with paperwork is also important to us, though admin should never take priority over people. We are looking for candidates who can demonstrate a solution-focused approach to problems, and have a wide repertoire of leadership styles that are employed appropriately depending on circumstances.

The application

Completed applications should be submitted using the Tower Hamlets application form posted on the school website, ideally in **signed hard copy**. Supporting statements should be no more than **1,200 words long**, and should explain the experiences you have had that make you a good candidate for this post.

Visits are strongly encouraged – please contact Mrs Nazma Ghani the school office on 0207 987 2350 to arrange a time. Alternatively you may email the headteacher, Mr Mike Hirst on head@sevenmills.towerhamlets.sch.uk. Questions can also be answered by initial phone conversations with either myself, as Chair of Governors, or with our Local Authority advisor, Alison Gawthrope, who can be contacted on 0207 364 6381 or at Alison.Gawthrope@towerhamlets.gov.uk

We look forward to receiving your application.

David Smith
Chair of Governors

Headteacher: Mr Mike Hirst
Deputy Headteacher: Ms Laura Cookson