



Merchiston Castle School was founded in the centre of Edinburgh in 1828 by Mr Charles Chalmers. In 1833 the School then moved to its second location, the old Merchiston Tower (now part of Napier University) with a total of 30 boys and the School started under the name of Merchiston Castle Academy. In 1930, the school moved to its current location, a 100 acre campus situated on the southern edge of Edinburgh, in the conservation village of Colinton; the buildings are surrounded by beautiful parkland which includes extensive playing fields.

Merchiston, an independent boarding school and the only boys' boarding school in Scotland, has a current roll of 452 pupils and the Senior School is 75% boarding; this is the highest pupil roll in the history of the School. Currently, there are 58 full time and 14 part time members of the teaching staff, and admin and support staff number approximately 115.

In the Scottish private sector, boarding schools traditionally cater for pupils beyond the English norm of 13-18 and so Merchiston is an all-through 8-18 school. The 8, 9 and 10 year olds have their own primary classroom teachers, although in the case of the 10 year olds Senior School teachers augment the teaching. Therefore, it can be anticipated that teachers applying for any post within Merchiston will be expected to teach pupils from as young as age 10 to the rigour of the public examination year groups in the Fifth and Sixth Forms.

Merchiston has a high academic reputation, with almost all leavers moving on to university. The curriculum is broad, even though the school is not large. As part of being a Scottish school with a difference, the School predominately follows the English curriculum and boys usually complete 8, 9, or 10 GCSEs and in the Sixth Form, boys usually take 4 or 5 subjects at AS level and 3 or 4 at A2 level, in many cases supplementing their programme from the wide range of General Studies on offer. Standards are generally high with 81% of all GCSEs taken awarded grades A*/A/B, and 82% awarded A/B at A2 level. Some of the pupils in the Merchiston Sixth Form take some Scottish Highers as well as AS levels over two years. A substantial number of leavers attend Oxford and Cambridge; 5 boys were successful this year and 4 the year before.

The School has its own Memorial Hall which acts as both a Chapel and a secular centre. The School is a non-denominational Christian School and the religious life of the community is looked after by the Chaplaincy Team.

The School performs strongly in Technology & Engineering and Music is strong particularly on the Choral side, with the choir frequently touring overseas as does the Pipe Band. Our extensive games programme caters for almost all of the established school sports. Rugby is the main winter game, with the school enjoying a reputation second to none in the country and beyond. Cricket is played to a high standard in the summer, and there are facilities and coaching available to boys in many other sports. At present, boys have the opportunity to participate in over twenty different sports. Major overseas tours are a feature of both rugby and cricket and our new Tennis Academy (run in conjunction with St George's School for Girls and Tennis Scotland) provides first class coaching to talented boys and girls allowing them to develop their skills whilst maintaining a structured academic and co-curricular programme.

Merchiston has strong links with neighbouring girls' schools. Joint activity at all ages in such areas as drama and music, in addition to frequent social events, encourage the young people to develop their social skills. Reel Club is particularly popular with few Merchiston boys leaving school without some skill at Scottish Country Dancing.

A school with a distinctly Scottish flavour, Merchiston makes the most of its advantageous geographical position on the edge of the capital city. It adheres to Scottish values and traditions: a striving for excellence, a belief in the value of the individual, in hard work, integrity and good manners.

The Pupils: The pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. Some families are wealthy but the school supports about 200 of the 452 pupils on roll with reduced fees and bursaries. Some live in the Edinburgh area, but many live in other parts of Scotland, the North East of England, Yorkshire, and the South of England. A small number of pupils are not British, boys being welcomed to Merchiston from such countries as Australia, China, Germany, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Russia, Spain, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe. The upper third of pupils are highly intelligent and should achieve top grades in all exams. The bottom third are less academic but will still achieve A level grades sufficient for entry to good universities. All boys are encouraged to develop their full potential in academic study, in games, in cultural pursuits, and in service to the community both within the School and beyond the gates.

Visitors often comment on how happy boys appear to be. Discipline is straightforward. Parents are consulted and kept fully informed on major issues and communication on minor routine matters is welcomed.

Successful teachers at Merchiston are able to stretch the more able, whilst encouraging the weaker pupils to attain high grades. The School believes in a culture of reflection and self evaluation in all aspects of its performance, not least that of teaching and learning. Merchiston aims to achieve the best possible exam results for pupils, while managing an emphasis on the principle of an all round education.

Merchiston's unconventional horizontal House system, based on year groups, has great strengths, particularly leading to the formation of wide groups of friends of the same age. All members of the Lower Sixth embark upon the Lower Sixth Helpers' Scheme where they assist with the running of each boarding house within the school for a portion of the year, giving them experience of each different age group, before boys are nominated to be prefects, associated with a particular House, in the Upper Sixth. This system also gives the Headmaster the advantage of being able to allocate Housemasters according to their strengths with particular age groups.

The Staff: We are a very friendly Common Room. Many of the staff are young and a growing proportion are women. Many staff joined Merchiston straight from university, others after taking a PGCE. Some members of staff have worked at an independent School before, others have not. Equally, there is a good balance in the Common Room between those with experience and those embarking upon their first post. What all staff members have in common is an enthusiasm for their work and a willingness to be involved in the life of the School beyond 'normal' school hours.

Many of Merchiston's staff particularly appreciate the social opportunities afforded by our proximity to the City of Edinburgh. Merchiston is a community three miles outside the city centre, the campus has a rural feel with the Pentland Hills as a backdrop and views to Edinburgh Castle through the tree line. The School is surrounded by woods and playing fields, and The Dell at the back gives access to a section of the Water of Leith. It is a good environment in which to bring up a young family – there are many other children, and the local nurseries and primary schools are excellent.

Conditions of Appointment

- § Salary is usually by negotiation and will depend on the qualifications and experience of the successful applicant. Additional allowances are payable as appropriate. Posts are superannuable under the Scottish Teachers Pension Scheme or through the Merchiston Support Staff Pension Scheme.
- § Admin staff are entitled to the following holidays: two weeks at Christmas, two weeks at Easter and three weeks in the Summer. All holidays must be taken outwith term time and it is essential that there is always adequate office cover. However, over and above this, we always try to be flexible and to acknowledge that the needs of the administrative staff are similar to those of teaching staff and consequently at half-term and other school holidays we try ensure that everyone can benefit from some extra time off on a rota basis. The Administrative Staff work as a team and holidays are arranged cooperatively through the Headmaster's PA.
- § The School will pay 50% of the cost of membership of the BUPA Healthcare Scheme should staff choose to participate in this scheme.
- § Children of full-time members of staff who attend the School as day pupils are eligible for an 80% discount on the fees, with reciprocal agreements of 25% and 50% staff discounts at St George's School for Girls and St Margaret's School for Girls respectively. Children of part-time members of staff receive a reduced discount of 50% of the day fee.
- § We also have an agreement with a local leisure centre, *Greens*, whereby Merchiston members of staff pay a discounted subscription.
- § All appointments are probationary for the first year. Essentially, all teaching candidates must also prove themselves capable of gaining registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland. This means that teachers should have completed a PGCE before embarking upon a teaching position at Merchiston. In practice, newly-appointed teachers will be given a clear indication of their progress during their first term and an unequivocal decision about their future employment no later than by the end of their second term. The procedure will be explained in detail at interview.
- § All new staff, whether experienced or inexperienced, will have the benefit of guidance by an experienced and trained mentor, whose role it will be to help them through the first few terms of their employment. The School believes in, supports and resources an extensive system of continuing professional development and all teachers are expected to participate in it throughout their careers.
- § All appointments are subject to a satisfactory medical examination, to be undertaken at the School's expense.
- § Retirement is currently at age 65 years, but in line with current legislation, there is the possibility of extending employment beyond this age by mutual agreement and if circumstances permit.
- § All appointments will be subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure from Disclosure Scotland. Applicants are encouraged to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We ask that this information is sent under separate cover marked for the attention of the Headmaster. At interview, or under separate discussions, we undertake to ensure an open and measured discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters which might be considered relevant for the position concerned. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to a position working with children could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment and will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- § Applicants should note that the School, in addition to requiring two satisfactory references, is required to ascertain the reasons for termination of previous employment in all cases where a candidate has worked with children; in practice, this means asking each of those employers for a brief reference.
- § In order to satisfy child protection policy, the authenticity of information on the successful candidate's curriculum vitae will be checked. Upon appointment, successful applicants will be asked to exhibit Examination and Degree Certificates.
- § At Merchiston, we are committed to equality of opportunity and to following practices and providing a service which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. We aim to ensure that no applicant or member of staff is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, religion, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, physical or mental disability, or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.