



MERCHISTON

History Teacher
for September 2008 or January 2009

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 438 pupils and the Senior School is 75% boarding; this is the highest pupil roll in the history of the School. Currently, there are 62 full time and 9 part time members of the teaching staff, and admin and support staff number approximately 80.

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 84% of all GCSEs taken awarded grades A*/A/B, and 84% 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; 4 boys were successful this year and 9 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 180 of the 438 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 taught 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 subject and a willingness to be involved in the life of the School beyond 'normal' school hours.

Many of Merchiston's teachers 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.

The Department: History is a compulsory subject for all pupils at Merchiston from First Form to Fourth Form (P6-S2/Year 6-9). Classes are taught in streamed sets with courses loosely following the Scottish Executive's 5 - 14 Guidelines. Topics taught include Roman History, the Scottish Wars of Independence and World Wars One and Two. History is a popular optional subject in Shell (S3/Year 10) and Fifth Form (S3/Year 11) with about 60% of pupils continuing with the subject. The department follows the OCR Modern World Syllabus B. This includes World History 1919 - 1939, Germany 1919 - 1945, Inter-War America, and Britain 1906-18.

The History Department is traditionally one of the largest in the school at Sixth Form level (S5-6/Year 12-13). Currently there are two sets of 12 at AS and 8 at A2. Pupils study the AQA A Level syllabus. The Department is currently preparing for the introduction of the new A-level syllabuses. It is likely that courses in Early Modern and Eighteenth/Nineteenth century History will be offered from September 2008, but the successful applicant will be able to contribute to the development of the A-level curriculum in subsequent years.

The Department offers the Edexcel Government & Politics A-level, taking the route B Ideologies at A2. An ability to teach this course would be an advantage.

The Department comprises three classrooms. There is an extensive History and Politics library and improving video catalogue. The use of ICT has been growing in recent years and the successful candidate will be expected to take an active role in continuing this process. The department also benefits from a programme of visiting speakers, university based seminars and lectures and subject related trips. In the last year Professor Hew Strachan has visited to talk about World War One, and Sixth Form History and Politics students have been invited to hear Annabel Goldie. Pupils have visited Belgium and France on a trip to the trenches and Glasgow University for a residential reading trip. Recently there have been trips organised to the USA, Russia and also to Eastern Europe. These events have been important in raising the profile and success of the Department and it is hoped that the successful candidate would take a full role in the organisation of this programme.

The Post: We require an outstanding person to teach within this major, dynamic, thriving Department. The successful candidate must be committed to the achievement of academic excellence, able to teach at least to GCSE level, with the expectation of progressing to A-level teaching in due course, and will be expected to help to coordinate trips that challenge and motivate young men at all levels. Contribution to co-curricular activities is essential.

As a Teacher: Every teacher in the School is expected to possess, or work towards possessing, the competencies and skills which are recognised nationally by the GTC and in accordance with the School's policies. For information, these competencies and skills can be found in *Appendix 1*.

As a Tutor: All Merchiston boys have a personal tutor in addition to their Housemaster, who is responsible for their academic progress. All teachers are expected to contribute to this tutorial programme for which training is given, and supporting materials provided. The role of Tutor is integral to the life of the teacher and is an essential part of a boy's experience of Merchiston life. All members of staff are allocated to a pastoral House Tutor Scheme and many members of staff also serve as academic tutors to pupils in the Sixth Form.

As an Enthusiast: A schoolteacher is far more than a classroom teacher and tutor, and the School expects its teachers to contribute whole-heartedly to other aspects of school life by drawing upon their own interests and enthusiasms. All members of the teaching staff are expected to involve themselves widely in the School's extra-curricular activities and to be fully committed to the ethos of boarding education.

Conditions of Appointment

- § Salary will be by negotiation and will depend on the qualifications and experience of the successful applicant. Additional allowances are payable as appropriate. The post is superannuable under the Scottish Teachers Pension Scheme.
- § 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.
- § 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 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 teachers, whether experienced or inexperienced, will have the benefit of guidance by an experienced and trained mentor, usually one of the Deputy Heads, 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 recent 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, 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.

Applicants are invited to submit a full cv, a letter of application and the names, addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers of two referees, one of whom should be a current employer to: Andrew Hunter, Headmaster, Merchiston Castle School, Colinton, Edinburgh, EH13 0PU, or email to headmaster@merchiston.co.uk to arrive no later than **12 noon on Wednesday 14 May 2008**. Please provide telephone numbers or email addresses where you can be contacted during the day and evening.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview as soon as possible with interviews currently scheduled for Tuesday 20/Wednesday 21 May 2008. Please provide telephone numbers or email addresses where you can be contacted during the day and evening. All applications will be acknowledged by email upon receipt.

28 April 2008