



ABINGDON

*Vacancy for a teacher of Biology
required from September 2010*

Abingdon School is an ancient foundation that has varied in form over the centuries, but remains essentially as it began in the Middle Ages, namely a boarding and day school for boys. The main school nowadays houses some 870 boys aged eleven to eighteen, of whom more than 300 are in the sixth form, and 110 are boarders. There is also a preparatory school at Frilford, near Abingdon, for 250 boys aged five to thirteen. The two establishments together form an independent charity, governed according to a scheme approved by the Charity Commissioners. Full particulars can be found in the Independent Schools Year Book.

The School stands in spacious grounds close to the centre of Abingdon, a rapidly growing town, which still retains some relics of its historic past. Dayboys are drawn from a region that includes the University and City of Oxford, a number of large scientific establishments such as those at Harwell and Culham, and a wide area of the Upper Thames Valley and the Berkshire Downs. A wider region supplies numbers of weekly boarders, and there is a thriving community of full boarders.

Boys are selected for entry by examination, and the curriculum is geared towards the academic pupil. The expectation is that the majority of boys who enter the School proceed to university, with a significant number winning places at Oxford and Cambridge every year.

The School has developed considerably over the last half-century, not least by way of a major building programme, including the opening of a magnificent multi-million pound Sports Hall in October 2008. It is now the largest independent school in its region, and school policy is aimed at securing and developing a national reputation. The strength of the Masters' Common Room is seen as the key to Abingdon's continuing success, and the Headmaster seeks recruits of the highest possible standard, men and women with a powerful professional vision who are prepared to exert themselves wholeheartedly for the benefit of their pupils and the furtherance of the School's objectives.

Abingdon has its own salary scale, which is more generous than the Standard National Scale. The successful candidate will be placed on this scale according to his/her qualifications and experience.

This post arises on the occasion of the appointment of Alun Watkins to the Headship of Victoria College, Guernsey. The Headmaster is seeking to appoint a well-qualified graduate to fill the vacancy, to teach Biology throughout the curriculum.

Completed application forms should be submitted to the Headmaster, Abingdon School, Park Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1DE. The forms should be accompanied by a handwritten covering letter from the candidate. The closing date is **Monday 25 January 2010**. Interviews for those selected are likely to be arranged for **Monday 8 February 2010**.

If you would like to discuss matters informally with the Head of Biology, Simon Bliss, please contact him, in the first instance, by e-mail at simon.bliss@abingdon.org.uk More general information about the School can be found on our website at www.abingdon.org.uk

January 2010



Biology department

The Biology department is large, experienced and thriving, and comprises six full-time teachers. It has four well-stocked laboratories, a prep room served by a full-time technician, a greenhouse, and an office with workspace.

The department's programme of work is fully co-ordinated through all of the seven year-groups in the School. In the Lower School (11- and 12-year-olds), the syllabus is strongly based on Common Entrance requirements, with the intention of harmonising with the practice of Abingdon's prep school at Frilford. All three sciences are compulsory for boys in the Middle School although boys will opt for either three separate science GCSEs or two GCSEs in Science and Additional science. In the fourth and fifth years, six sets study AQA Biology and two study AQA Science/Additional Science. The Department has written its own course in the third year which develops wider skills of "How Science Works". Setting in the fourth and fifth years is arranged by ability. Last year's results in GCSE Biology were as follows: A* 38, A 44, B 19 and C 2.

At A level, numbers of Biology candidates have climbed steeply in recent years, and there are now eight sets in the two Upper School years. The AQA AS and A2 specifications are followed, with AS examinations taken at the end of the lower-sixth year. Often boys go on to study biology, or related courses at university including a number of boys who study such courses at Oxford and Cambridge Universities. They are encouraged to attend Biology Society lectures, talks by external speakers, and practice interview evenings whenever possible, and extra classes are arranged both for Oxbridge pupils and for those boys who require additional tuition. Biology A level results in 2009 were A 27, B 4, C 3, D 1 and the AS results were A 19, B 13, C 9, E 1 and U 1.

At all levels of the School, practical work is presented as an essential component of the Biology course; much of it is structured to meet assessment requirements, but boys are also encouraged to tackle open-ended problems. A level Biologists take part in local fieldwork and carry out laboratory-based ISA coursework investigations. Some boys also took part in a safari trip to Tanzania in 2007 and the department is likely to launch a trip to Costa Rica in the next few years.

Aspects of the role and person-specific criteria

The successful applicant will need to be able to work as a member of a team, to be organised and to be able to cope in a busy working environment. A genuine interest in the subject is essential and experience of a wide range of practical techniques, including ecological sampling, would be beneficial as would experience in the use of ICT in lessons. They will be expected to teach at all levels, including Oxbridge classes, within the department, to contribute to the continuing development of new ideas and practices, and to be responsible for some aspects of departmental administration. The post would particularly suit a current Biology teacher looking for experience of teaching in a larger department.

At Abingdon, the majority of teachers also become tutors to a group of boys in one of our Houses with responsibility for pastoral care and delivery of the School's PSHE programme. The School currently has a 42 period, six day timetable and in addition to a teacher's period loading there are periods set aside for tutoring and a departmental meeting, if possible, and from time to time colleagues are allocated private study supervisions as well as cover lessons for absent teachers as needed. Contributions, as appropriate, are expected to the School's Other Half programme and this can be discussed at interview. All staff members also have two or three duty days per term on which they work with a partner to oversee elements of the daily supervision of the boys outside of the classroom. Colleagues who are attached to one of our three boarding houses have additional duties in the evenings and at weekends.

January 2010