



Head of Department - English

Candidate Pack

Opportunity through community

Dear candidate,

Thank you for expressing an interest in this position. The Reach Free School is an 11 to 18-year-old school in Rickmansworth that serves pupils of all backgrounds and abilities. It was opened in September 2013 by teachers and local parents and continues to go from strength to strength.

Academic achievement, our school community, and a love of learning are key to this school's ethos, and we take great pride in knowing all of our pupils and what it is that makes them the individuals they are. Everywhere you turn in this school, pupils and staff work together to achieve the very best.

Our GCSE and A Level results are strong, we have a positive local reputation, and we remain innovative in our approach. All of this ensures that future generations of young people have access to an excellent, non-selective school right in the heart of their community.

Everyone involved in the school wants the very best for our pupils, and there are incredibly high expectations regarding their learning behaviour, how they conduct themselves, and the contribution they bring to the school. We expect all pupils to:

- Commit their best efforts to all that they do
- Work with their teachers to exceed their goals
- Support each other to achieve their potential
- Demonstrate exemplary behaviour in all that they do
- Take pride in their school and its community within its walls and beyond
- Enjoy learning

The school plays an active role in the community, working with local businesses, supporting local events and providing a hub for local services. Pupils are involved in the school's wider responsibilities, developing leadership and decision-making skills, communication and collaboration and independent, self-led learning.

The school was inspected by Ofsted in October 2024, who confirmed that effective action had been taken to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection. As such, the school has elements that are outstanding and others that are firmly good. Attracting the very best staff is the most effective way to continue our development, which is important for us as we move through the school's second decade.

If you are passionate about contributing to the continued development of our unique school, then we look forward to receiving your application.

Richard Booth
Headteacher



The Ethos of the School

The Reach Free School's ethos and curriculum are designed, first and foremost, to meet the needs of the young people in the local area. The core of our ethos is to personalise the education of every pupil so that they can maximise their potential and realise their dreams and aspirations.

We believe in the following principles:

Achievement – Realised through recognising the individual needs of every learner

Community – Embracing, utilising and supporting the local community for the benefit of all learners and building partnerships to support teaching and learning

Enjoyment – A commitment to innovative practice and the application of technology to develop enthusiasm for learning

Features of The Reach Free School

A Smaller School – With 750 pupils, The Reach Free School is a close-knit environment, ensuring a strong sense of community.

Modern facilities - In September 2018, the school moved to its £19 million new home with first-class facilities throughout.

'Outstanding' Judgements - In October 2024, the school was inspected by Ofsted, confirming that effective action had been taken to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection. Here, the school received outstanding judgements for the 'Effectiveness of leadership and management' and 'Personal development, behaviour and welfare'. Many of the strengths identified in 2019, remain in place, including "Pupils experiences at this school are exceptional" and "pupils' behaviour is exemplary".

Transition – From September 2023, we have reverted to four classes in year 7, having taken an additional form of entry in 2022. Each year 7 class benefits from their own Home Room and a dedicated Assistant Teacher for the first year. This Assistant Teacher is the form tutor for this class, and supports learning in a range of subjects for their pupils. Together, these help ease the transition from primary to secondary school for the children and help us understand each child as an individual.

Focus on English and Mathematics – The school focuses on English and Mathematics, the building blocks for success in other subjects. Literacy and mathematics pervade teaching and learning at the school, and all teachers play a role in developing pupils' skills in these areas.

Reach Beyond – This is the school's all-encompassing wider curriculum, which includes a reading programme for key stage 3, a targeted academic support programme from year 10, our REACH Time PSHE programme and community projects, where pupils work together on local projects. Reach Beyond helps develop our pupils into creative, confident, and proactive individuals. At Sixth Form, we have a Reach Out programme for students as they prepare for life beyond school.

Technology-Rich – All pupils are provided with a school device, and teachers are encouraged to use the latest technology to teach creatively

Expectations

At The Reach Free School, we expect our Heads of Department to:

- Be passionate about their subject, and learning as a lifelong skill
- Be outstanding practitioners who inspire pupils and colleagues
- Be creative in delivering a rigorous, aspirational curriculum
- Believe that every child can and will succeed
- Be committed to securing the best outcomes for all pupils at the school with an in-depth understanding of how data can be used to maximise progress
- Support the senior leadership team with evidence-informed teaching methods
- Have a passion for education and be open to innovative approaches in everyday aspects of school life
- Offer enrichment experiences related to their subject area and beyond
- Contribute to the overall development of the school
- Be flexible in their approach to work, adapting to new challenges
- Support and mentor colleagues who are training

In return, we will offer you:

- A happy and supportive working environment with high expectations and standards
- Access to the latest technology to assist in developing your teaching and learning
- Competitive salaries based on skills and experience
- Access to the Teachers' Pension Scheme
- A staff committee that organises various social events
- A comprehensive employee assistance programme
- A £500 new employee referral scheme
- Free parking
- A BUPA cash plan to contribute to medical care
- A Cycle to Work Salary Sacrifice Scheme
- An Electric Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme (when eligible)
- Up to five days paid leave in compassionate, emergency or exceptional circumstances. For example, our staff can see their children perform in assemblies or shows.
- A network of outstanding practitioners to collaborate with and learn from, both in school and across the Watford Partnership for Teacher Training
- A comprehensive professional development programme together with opportunities to further develop your career





Job Description

Job Title:	Head of English
Reports to:	Assistant Headteacher
Hours:	Full-time
Salary Range:	Academy Trust Scale, dependent on skills and experience (Up to £65,033)
Start Date:	September 2025

English at The Reach Free School

We want our English curriculum to empower pupils so they can head into the world literate, articulate and with an appreciation for literature because they see themselves reflected in it.

We aim to develop pupils' critical awareness through the exploration of a variety of different viewpoints and a diverse range of texts. We want our pupils to experience the best of what has been written and spoken to become excellent writers and speakers academically and beyond. The English department is passionate about conveying the importance and power that language can have in our everyday lives.

Key Stage 3 is vitally important; it is here that the foundations of successful study at GCSE level and beyond are laid. More importantly, it is where we can instil a love of reading for pleasure and a love of learning. To this end, we strive for a balanced curriculum, incorporating both Literature and Language across all three years.

At GCSE level, all pupils study both Literature and Language, building on the skills and knowledge acquired at KS3. We follow the Eduqas syllabus for GCSE English Literature, and for GCSE English Language, we follow the AQA syllabus.

At A Level, we follow the Edexcel syllabus for English Literature and, for Film Studies, Eduqas.

Main duties

The Head of English at The Reach Free School will:

- Plan, develop and implement whole-school and departmental priorities, including aspects of the School Development Plan and the Departmental Action Plan
- Lead the review of the Department Action Plan, audits, curriculum overviews and policies

- Oversee the planning of Schemes of Learning indicating approaches to teaching, content, classroom organisation and resources
- Lead and line manage others in the department to ensure that high-performance standards are achieved and maintained
- Design and implement strategies for improving literacy across the curriculum
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- Have a competitive mindset to ensure results are above national and local averages
- Celebrate the success of the English department and challenge underperformance where required, this includes with staff and/ or pupils
- Support and mentor teachers in training, both in school and across the wider partnership of local schools
- Lead a targeted department CPD programme and subject studies sessions across the wider partnership of local schools
- Ensure that the regulations and procedures relating to Health and Safety are followed, taking responsibility for the safety, welfare and discipline of pupils within the learning environment
- Support and uphold the ACE ethos of the school – achievement, community, enjoyment
- Create a happy, secure and stimulating learning environment
- Have a sympathetic understanding of every child's needs
- Have clear aims and objectives for every lesson and communicate them to the pupils
- Have well planned work, imaginatively introduced, which caters for all pupils' needs
- Utilise ICT to enhance the quality and variety of teaching and to support pupils in applying this key tool in their own learning
- Engage in continuous formative and summative assessment, tracking the progress of pupils in line with school systems and providing guidance to pupils on the next steps in their learning
- Use data effectively to inform future teaching and learning
- Maintain pupil records and report progress to parents, guardians and carers
- Secure high standards of behaviour in line with the school's Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy
- Share their talents, skills, ideas and enthusiasms for the benefit of the whole school and be ready to accept responsibilities that extend beyond the classroom
- Complete the requirements of the school's performance management process
- Attend to personal and professional development to ensure you keep abreast of local, national and school-based initiatives and best practice

Wider Responsibilities

All teachers at The Reach Free School will:

- Deliver extra-curricular activities
- Partake in activities aimed at promoting the school, including, but not limited to, open evenings, visits to primary schools and community events
- Actively engage with Insight Groups (school working parties) to ensure they are familiar with best practice and research-informed practice
- Carry out other tasks commensurate with their position, as directed by the Senior Leadership Team

Job context

Teachers in the upper levels of the Academy Trust pay scale are expected to make a wider contribution to the school. In particular, they will:

- be role models for professional practice in the school
- be expected to mentor teachers in training
- support the wider development of colleagues, particularly if they are underperforming or want to be more impactful

- make a distinctive contribution compared with other teachers
- contribute effectively to the wider team.

The Academy Trust will endeavour to make any necessary, reasonable adjustments to the job and working environment to enable access to employment opportunities for disabled applicants or continued employment for any employee who develops a disabling condition.

Review of Duties

The specific duties attached to any individual teacher are subject to annual review and may be changed after discussion with the teacher.

Salary

The Reach Free School operates its own payscale, which exceeds the Main Payscale used by other schools in the fringe area. Teaching salaries range from £33,233 to £53,428 (FTE) and will be awarded based on the candidate's experience, skills and suitability. As this is a position of responsibility, additional Reach Point payments of £11,605 will be added to the salary.

Person specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education to degree level • GCSE Maths and English (grade A*-C) or equivalent • Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's Degree • Evidence of relevant recent continuing professional development (CPD) • Qualifications/interests relevant to extra-curricular activities
Knowledge and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding subject knowledge • Knowledge and application of Assessment for Learning (AfL) • Recent experience of successful teaching, leading to high achievement for pupils of all abilities • Thorough knowledge of current subject requirements related to the National Curriculum and Examination requirements (GCSEs, A-Levels) • Knowledge of the emerging trends and developments related to your subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of leading and managing teams • Experience of planning and delivering teacher training and/or mentoring/coaching • Experience of the collection, analysis, and use of data to inform the planning and delivery of teaching and learning • Experience of a variety of schools and school environments • Experience of successful strategies for developing literacy across the curriculum

	Essential	Desirable
Skills and Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to motivate, inspire and support all pupils to achieve and succeed • Ability to reflect and develop your practice for the benefit of all learners • Ability to work collaboratively • Able to communicate effectively with a wide range of audiences • Commitment to The Reach Free School's core values of achievement, community, and enjoyment (ACE) • Confident use of technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A desire to develop the use of technology in the subject
Other qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of health and safety requirements related to the role • A flexible approach to working patterns and expectations, understanding the evolving nature of the school and role • A desire to succeed in all aspects of the job • A commitment to the promotion of health, safety and safeguarding of children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to teach other subjects • A desire to take up a Senior Leadership role in the future

How to apply

Completed application forms, along with recruitment monitoring forms, should be submitted in one of the following ways:

Electronically to:	Mrs Keri McKay, HR Officer, kmckay@reachfree.co.uk
By post to:	The Reach Free School Long Lane Rickmansworth Hertfordshire WD3 8AB

Once your application has been received, it will be acknowledged by email.

If submitting your application electronically, please save your form with your name at the beginning of the file name.

In compliance with Safer Recruitment guidelines, CVs will not be accepted.

Potential candidates may contact The Reach Free School with any questions on 01923 711517 or via email at kmckay@reachfree.co.uk.

Safer Recruitment

The Reach Free School is dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We expect all staff to share this commitment. To ensure we fulfil this responsibility, all candidates will undergo a thorough selection process designed to deter and identify unsuitable applicants. Details of this process are outlined below. Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Disclosure

This role involves significant access to children, and any appointment will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for previous criminal convictions. Candidates must disclose any convictions, cautions, or bind-overs, including 'spent convictions' as defined under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (2013 and 2020), prior to appointment. Failure to disclose relevant information may result in termination of employment. However, a criminal background will not automatically exclude individuals from employment; each case will be considered based on the nature and timing of the offence(s).

Online searches

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) asks schools to carry out online searches on shortlisted candidates as part of the process of assessing suitability. The school will also carry out a prohibition from teaching check. Non-disclosure may lead to termination of your employment.



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