



Dear applicant,

Thank you for showing an interest in (maybe) joining our academy.

We opened nearly five years ago as a new academy, and are very proud of the success we have had to date. Our results have increased year on year - although there is still much to do - but some things have remained unchanged since day 1: our insistence on high standards, our strict approach to discipline, our sky high expectations for what our children can achieve and our determination to raise the aspirations and improve the life chances of every pupil. Our numbers are increasing, our parents write appreciative, positive emails to me (which far, far outnumber the odd few who complain about our high standards), and 100% of my staff in our survey say they know what we are trying to achieve and enjoy their work. (Oh, and OFSTED gave us "Good" across the board in our first inspection but that is last in our list of proud achievements).

I love our school, my staff and our children, and I love coming to work every day. I want you to do the same, and if you don't you are in the wrong job or maybe just the wrong school. Teaching is a joyous, wonderful profession and a privileged one, giving us the opportunity to mould young lives and to transform life chances - I know that you remember your great teachers. But there is a teacher recruitment crisis out there, and if you are a hard working, committed and talented teacher you can - and should - be choosy. There are lots of schools and lots of jobs - why would you join us?

I look for only three things in my teachers - that you love children; that you are conscientious, committed and with a clear moral purpose; and that you are passionate and highly knowledgeable about your subject. If you are these things, I would love to meet you. In return, we don't preach work-life balance we practise it. We have a no-marking policy, that means teachers don't spend hours unnecessarily marking (they don't mark!) but instead they use their time to plan exciting lessons, to discuss the best way to teach a topic, and to read books. We don't have unnecessary meetings (we have hardly any meetings) and we do no unnecessary paperwork - indeed, we have hardly any paperwork. We finish at 2 o'clock on a Friday, and I actively encourage staff to leave school at a sensible time every day - I don't care whose car is last in the car park and it isn't ever mine! Our email policy prohibits evening or weekend communication, and I expect teachers to enjoy and to relish every minute of their well earned 13 weeks holiday.

We don't do jargon, we don't do cliches and we put common sense at the front of everything we do. I am constantly looking at school life to make sure we don't do anything that is unnecessary, and that all time is well spent. We don't start (and then abandon) endless pointless initiatives, and I welcome the thoughts and suggestions of every member of the staff team; no one person has a monopoly on good ideas. Staff are supported by a highly visible and talented leadership team, excellent line management and a clear and enforced behaviour policy. I often describe myself as the conductor of the orchestra and I am privileged to lead an exceptionally talented, committed and wonderful team of teachers and support staff, who tell me that they enjoy their jobs and are proud to work in our school. If you would like to join them and me, and to continue our mission to make our good school great, please come and look around and see what I am describing in action. Feel free to email me directly to arrange this (colwella@theebbsfleetacademy.kent.sch.uk).

Yours faithfully,

Alison Colwell, Principal

Principal: Alison Colwell, BA (Hons), PGCE, NPQH

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