



Birkdale
School

Appointment of Head

September 2024 | Reference: TATKB



Welcome from the Chair

Thank you for your interest in the role of Head of Birkdale School.

The Birkdale family comprises Birkdale Senior and Birkdale Prep, both in the leafy heart of west Sheffield, and S. Anselm's Prep in idyllic surroundings on the edge of Bakewell in the Peak District National Park. Whilst sharing resources and being a strong community together, each site has a unique family feel. The role of Birkdale Head includes oversight of all three sites, with a primary focus on being Head of the Senior school.

The Senior School (Y7- Y13) is in the final stages of becoming fully co-educational, with girls having joined Y7 this September and so closing the gap with the mixed Sixth Form. Both Prep Schools are fully co-educational: Birkdale from Reception to Y6, and S. Anselm's from Pre-School to Y8. All three schools share a vision to provide an academically strong and well-rounded education in the context of being unashamedly Christian with an evangelical foundation. There is a requirement for the Head and other members of the leadership to be committed Christians with an active faith.

After six years of dedicated leadership our current Head, Peter Harris, is leaving to take up an exciting headship opportunity overseas in Nairobi. Therefore the Governors would welcome applications from Heads or experienced Deputy Heads who can demonstrate a deep passion and enthusiasm for leading Birkdale through the exciting next phases of its life. This will involve working with the Senior Leadership and Governors to chart a course for our financially sound school through the challenges

facing the independent sector as they apply in the local context of a great Yorkshire city. The next decade may well include bringing further schools into the Birkdale family, significant property development and more radical market differentiation.

I hope this pack provides you with some helpful information regarding Birkdale, and answers some of your initial questions. If the role interests and excites you, and you prayerfully believe that you can bring the skills, experience and character that we are seeking, we would be delighted to consider your application.

With best wishes,

Paul Houghton
Chair of the Board of Governors



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About Birkdale

Birkdale has a long history and trusted brand reputation in its regional market, but success in the next decade will require clarity of purpose communicated effectively. This will demand strong leadership.

The Birkdale family of schools educates around 870 pupils from ages 3 to 18, across the Birkdale and S.Anselm's sites. Birkdale has educated girls in its Sixth Form for 30 years but in September 2020 started the transition to being a co-educational school, taking girls from PP1 (Reception) to P1 (Y3). In September 2024, girls joined the Senior School, which will therefore be fully co-ed from September 2028.

The School has three sites in south-west Sheffield: the 11-18 (Y7 to Y13) Senior School, the 4-11 (Reception to Y6) Prep School, and extensive playing fields and facilities at Castle Dyke on the edge of the Peak District National Park. In September 2023, S. Anselm's, a 3-13 boarding and day prep school in Bakewell, joined the Birkdale family. S. Anselm's feeds pupils into Birkdale Senior at Y9, as well as preparing others for Common Entrance to national public schools.

Since its foundation in 1904, Birkdale has grown and flourished as one of the leading academic independent schools in the region. The three schools now attract pupils from Sheffield, Rotherham, the Peak District and surrounding areas. Looking to future market challenges and opportunities, the Birkdale Board is open to shaping further independent school integration and consolidation, and the Head will play an essential part in this strategic direction.

Birkdale is the only HMC school in South Yorkshire and the Head is also a member of the Society of Heads. The Heads of the Prep Schools are members of IAPS.



Birkdale School Values & Ethos

Academic Excellence

To provide the best academic education for each individual pupil, which will enable them to achieve their full potential and equip them for the rest of their life. At Birkdale there is a dedicated team of outstanding academic specialists that deliver high quality expert teaching in a wide range of subjects in an aspirational and supportive environment.

This results in:

- Strong outcomes in public examinations, enabling our pupils successfully to gain entry to their chosen university or profession
- A curriculum tailored to suit each individual, promoting intellectual curiosity and independent thought
- Provision of a wide variety of academic clubs, entry in national competitions and trips to further develop and widen pupils' horizons

Rounded Education

At Birkdale there is a strong emphasis on enabling pupils to develop their whole selves, with the help of a broad range of activities that extend far beyond the academic curriculum. Birkdale's vision is that each pupil is educated as an individual, including spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, enabling them to be well-equipped for life.

Throughout the school we provide a wealth of extra-curricular activities, including a broad offering of sport, outdoor pursuits, music and drama opportunities, with most pupils involved in multiple aspects of these. Regular trips, including both residential and day trips, locally and internationally, encourage insight and enable pupils' horizons to be broadened in many different ways. Many pupils take part in our full Duke of Edinburgh programme (Bronze, Silver and Gold).

Christian Ethos

Birkdale is a Christian school that warmly welcomes both Christian and non-Christian staff and pupils. The Governors and Senior Leadership of the school seek to lead under the authority and love of Jesus Christ. They actively promote and expect all staff and pupils to live by the School's values which are drawn from the Christian faith: Respect, Humility, Integrity, Courage and Compassion.

The Christian ethos of the school manifests itself in the particularly friendly and supportive family atmosphere.



Respect



Humility



Integrity



Courage



Compassion



The Senior School

The Senior School is located in the leafy Sheffield suburb of Broomhill, adjacent to residential properties and the University of Sheffield. Sheffield has moved on a long way from its traditional industrial past. It is now a clean, green city enjoying excellent sporting and artistic amenities, with the added attraction of the Peak District right next to it.

The catchment area of the School extends beyond the city to Rotherham, Doncaster, Barnsley, Chesterfield and the Peak District, with a number of parent-run buses serving Birkdale and Sheffield Girls' School (GDST).

The main intakes are at 11 and 16. Birkdale Prep School provides over half the entry at 11, which is through a day of entrance testing. Academic Scholarships are awarded on the basis of further tests and Music & Sports Scholarships are also available. The expectation is that Prep school pupils will move into the Senior School, unless it has clearly been communicated to parents that it is unlikely to be suitable for them. Other pupils come from a very large number of maintained primary schools and a small number of independent schools.

The Senior School also awards a substantial number of bursaries each year in order to widen access to the School.

Year groups up to GCSE consist of around 70 pupils, while each Sixth Form year contains about 100 pupils. Pupils in S1 follow a broad curriculum which is common to all, including Latin. German and Spanish are introduced in S2. For GCSE, in addition to the common core of English, English Literature, Mathematics and Science (leading to either separate sciences or Trilogy), pupils choose four further subjects, making 9 or 10 GCSEs in all. 28 subjects are offered at A Level, in addition to a substantial enrichment course and the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

The Head is supported by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), Deputy Head (Academic) and three Assistant Heads with senior pastoral responsibility: for the Lower School (Y7-8 or S1-S2), the Middle School (Y9-11 or S3-S5) and the Sixth Form. Turnover of teaching staff is low. The Bursar oversees financial and property matters, and he is also Clerk to the Governors.



Birkdale Prep

Birkdale Prep School is for pupils aged 4 - 11 years and is situated next to the Botanical Gardens, approximately 10 minutes' walk from the Senior School. The heart of the complex is Clark House, a Grade 2 Listed building. The Pre-Prep School consists of PP1 - PP3 (Reception - Y2) and is located at Belmayne House. The Prep School comprises P1 -P4 (Y3 - Y6). Each year group currently has two classes, making 14 forms in total.

The main entry points are at the ages of 4 and 7, although some pupils do join at other stages. The overwhelming majority of pupils proceed to the Senior School at 11+.

The friendly, family atmosphere enables Birkdale Prep pupils to be happy, confident and successful as they take advantage of the fantastic opportunities available to them.



S. Anselm's

S. Anselm's is a vibrant, non-selective, co-educational prep school that teaches from Pre-School to Y8. It was awarded the Tatler 'Prep School of the Year' in 2021. S. Anselm's joined the Birkdale family in September 2023.

S. Anselm's offers provision for both day pupils and boarders, with full and flexi-boarding options available. The school day is from 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, with Y6 to Y8 having academic lessons on Saturday morning and sport on Saturday afternoon. Roughly every three weeks, the school breaks up for an exeat (a three day weekend).

At S. Anselm's, the combination of tradition and informality engenders a sense of partnership between teacher and pupil, and the sense of deep school community is palpable. The Bakewell site and grounds are a wonderful place to spend your childhood. S. Anselm's prepares pupils to leave at the end of Y8, for a wide range of senior schools including Birkdale and Senior Boarding Schools across the UK. Those pupils who sit Common Entrance during Y8 invariably perform outstandingly, with children often gaining places at their first choice of public school.



The Opportunity



Birkdale's governing body is aware of the opportunities and challenges facing the independent sector and wish to appoint a new Head who is similarly engaged with the strategic landscape in which these schools operate. The new Head will share the Board's commitment to the ethos that underpins the School and use this as a guiding principle in how they lead the community.

The next Head of Birkdale will not only lead Birkdale Senior School and its ongoing transition to full co-education, but will also oversee Birkdale Prep and S. Anselm's through collaborative partnerships with each of their Heads. The Head will work with Governors and the Schools' leadership teams, bringing initiative and ideas to develop further the vision for Birkdale to ensure that the family of schools is delivering an outstanding academic offering for girls and boys aged 3 to 19, which is underpinned by a Christian ethos and holistic approach to education.

The successful candidate will be a committed Christian who is supportive of, and able to contribute to, the Governors' vision, as required by the School's founding documents. They must be a capable teacher who values academic rigour and remains engaged with developments in learning and teaching. They will have relevant senior management experience in schools, have proven decision-making and leadership skills, and the ability to communicate effectively in a way that is warm, compassionate and engenders trust and respect. They will have a proactive and positive approach to management and know how to work with and through others to get things done.

The successful candidate will be a proven leader, able to deliver strategic development, taking people with them through exciting change and tough decisions alike.

The Role

The Head is responsible to the Governors, and subject to their directions, for the leadership and management of the Birkdale family of schools, and the education, welfare and discipline of its pupils, although:

- the Head of the Prep School and S. Anselm's, have dual reporting lines – a solid line to the Head of the School but a dotted line for reporting into the Governors; and
- the Bursar (who is also Clerk to the Governors), whilst responsible to the Head for many non-educational matters, is directly responsible to the Governors for the financial management of the School.

In any matter affecting the management and internal regulation of the Birkdale family of schools, the Head, after consulting with Senior Leadership and subject to the directions of the Governors, has the right to make decisions affecting all three schools.

The key responsibilities of the Head are:

- to progress and develop, with the Governors, Birkdale's strategic vision
- to provide leadership in the delivery of the School's vision: developing and pursuing an ambitious programme of academic excellence and strong parental communication
- setting and maintaining the highest of standards in the care for and rounded educational development of each individual pupil as part of the Birkdale community embedding and demonstrating by example the principles and practical outworking of Birkdale as a Christian school
- To manage and develop Birkdale as a successful business, in particular positioning the School in the regional market and proactively selling the School to prospective parents.



The Person

The successful candidate will have proven leadership and management experience at a senior level within an education setting. They will have an active Christian faith and an ability to articulate such faith with confidence and relevance. In addition, the ideal candidate is likely to be able to demonstrate a track record in all or most of the following:

Qualifications

- Good Honours degree, a recognised teaching qualification and a strong academic profile
- Evidence of continued professional and personal development

Knowledge and Experience

- Proven leadership and management experience at a senior level within an education setting
- An ability to think and act strategically, to delegate and to build relationships of trust
- Effective leadership of whole school developments
- Effective management of change
- In depth knowledge of the regulatory environment in which schools operate, including safeguarding and child protection
- Successful marketing experience with experience of effective pupil recruitment and retention practices
- Experience of building positive relationships with all stakeholders and external agencies including internationally
- Effective line management of staff, and of acting as a coach and mentor

Personal qualities, skills and characteristics

- A natural facility for building effective relationships through good interpersonal skills
- Able to inspire, challenge and motivate and empower others, winning hearts and minds
- An ability to relate to young people, and to inspire and challenge them to be enterprising and fulfil their potential
- Ambitious, both personally and for the School

- Understands their personal responsibility with regards to keeping children and young people safe, with the ability to maintain a culture in which this is central
- A belief in working in partnership and as part of an established team of staff and Governors
- Good at thinking creatively to anticipate and solve problems
- Naturally entrepreneurial and open to realising opportunities
- Clear judgement and decision maker; prepared to have difficult conversations where necessary; resilient
- Self-aware, a good listener and able to accept advice
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including numeracy and IT skills; good attention to detail
- Down to earth, relatable and good sense of humour
- A sensitivity and tolerance to those of other faiths or none, is essential.



Terms of Appointment

The position becomes vacant in April 2025, but it is envisaged that there will be an interim position before the new Head takes up the post.

It is the Governors' hope that a new Head would be in post no later than January 2026, but ideally at some point in 2025 and will be negotiable depending on the successful candidate's notice period.

A competitive package accompanies the post, dependent on experience. A large house is available, on site, and would form part of the remuneration discussion.

School address: Birkdale School, 4 Oakholme Road, Sheffield, S10 3DH



How to Apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Birkdale School on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role via www.saxbam.com/appointments using code TATKB. Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application

The closing date for applications is 9am on Thursday 24th October.

GDPR personal data notice:

According to GDPR guidelines, Saxton Bampfylde Ltd are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

KCSIE online checks:

In line with the latest KCSIE guidance, Saxton Bampfylde will conduct a search of online records that are publicly available on shortlisted candidates. These checks are used only to meet the intended purpose of the KCSIE's recommendation in relation to whether an applicant is suitable to work with children and young people. All data will be held in line with data protection regulations.





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