



Head of Chemistry

Candidate Information Pack



RGS



Introduction

A very warm invitation to join us...

The Royal Grammar School in Newcastle is a remarkable school with a 500-year history of welcoming people from all backgrounds. From history's Vice Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood, to recent Nobel Prize molecular biologist Sir Gregory Winter, RGS has educated thousands of young people who have gone on to make an indelible mark on the world. It is an exciting place to learn, that is forward thinking and inclusive. We aim to create a sense of belonging, to foster a belief in each other, inspire a love for learning and encourage an ambition to succeed.

The RGS has a reputation for excellence across academic and co-curricular activities and our students benefit from the wide range of opportunities they can enjoy. We are equally dedicated to our pastoral care as we believe that happy children learn best. We encourage our students to be intellectually curious, to think creatively and to challenge themselves in everything they undertake. We believe that academic results should be the consequence, not the purpose, of an outstanding and well-rounded education. That said we are immensely proud of the academic achievements of our community and it is testament to our students' commitment and teachers' dedication that we are ranked as one of the highest performing schools in the country. The RGS is the Sunday Times' North East Independent School of the Decade and we were separately awarded overall Independent School of the Year for the whole of the UK for 2023 following winning the category for Outstanding Educational Partnerships. Most recently, RGS was awarded the Sunday Times' North East's Independent Secondary School of the Year for Academic Performance for 2024 as well as overall Independent Secondary of the Year for the North East.

The Head of Chemistry is a tremendous opportunity for an innovative, energetic teacher and leader to join our Science Faculty. Chemistry is a very popular subject at the school with a fantastic track record of success, and we are fortunate to have an experienced team of highly qualified teachers to work with the Head of Department to support the development of the subject and its students.

If you are committed to helping us continue that journey and apply the latest thinking in teaching and learning to lay the strongest possible foundations for our students, then we would be delighted to hear from you.

Geoffrey Stanford - Headmaster



RGS Newcastle

There's more to life at RGS...

Thomas Horsley, the original settlor of the Royal Grammar School Newcastle (RGS) pledged his legacy to the School in 1525. Almost 500 years later, RGS continues to flourish as the premier independent school in the North East of England and as one of the country's leading schools, and the Sunday Times' North East Independent School of the Decade 2020. Most recently, RGS was awarded the Sunday Times' 2023 North East's Top Independent Secondary School for Academic Performance. We regularly lead all northern schools in national league tables and pride ourselves on academic excellence, a high level of pastoral support, involvement in a wide range of sports and other co-curricular activities, and our commitment to bursaries and partnerships.

The RGS has grown substantially in recent years. There are now some 1,340 students, over 260 of whom are in the Junior School. The Sixth Form of 350 students is one of the largest in the independent sector. We became coeducational 20 years ago and girls now comprise 46% of the school.

The school is based in the heart of the City, immediately opposite Jesmond Metro station. The school occupies over 30 acres of land and has state-of-the-art facilities, including five brand new art studios, a new library, a new Sixth Form Centre, a 25m swimming pool, two Sports Halls, a Performing Arts Centre, outdoor football/rugby pitches at Mooracres, an artificial turf pitch for hockey and the former County Cricket Ground.

Academically the school is highly selective. Students are assessed for entry at the key entry points (Y3, Y5, Y7 and a handful at Y9, plus sixth form). The biggest entry points are Y3 (60 students), Y7 (c.75 students) and Y12 (c. 45 students). Beyond the academics, in Junior School (Y3-6) entry is assessed through activity days whilst at Y7 students are assessed through online tests and an interaction day. Sixth form entry is through interview only. Students sit baseline tests in Y7, Y10, and L6 – the average GLA CAT score for both the current Y7 and L6 is 1117.

Academic selection and excellent teaching means the school's results are exceptional. The published figures for 2023 are on the school's website. For A Level, 34% of A level grades were at A*; 71% A* - A; and 89% A* - B. For GCSE, the proportion of grade 9s was 41.2%; 9 – 8 was 67.8%; and 9 – 7 was 85.8%. These results placed the RGS 51st, nationally, in The Sunday Times Parent Power survey, up from 73rd place in 2022. Additionally, Top School Guide ranked the RGS 16th nationally for co-educational schools; and overall, 37th for A Levels and 48th for GCSEs.

In 2021 The Sunday Times Parent Power survey judged RGS Newcastle to be the North East Independent School of the Decade. Since then, the RGS has consistently ranked first for academic results in the North East. In 2023, as well as receiving accreditation for the Wellbeing Award for Schools, the RGS was awarded the overall title of Independent School of the Year for the whole of the UK, following winning the category for Outstanding Educational Partnerships. We have more recently been awarded the title of Sunday Times Parent Power North East Independent School of the Year for 2024. Furthermore, School Sports Magazine recently ranked the RGS as the 27th best sports school (independent and state) in the UK.





Our Vision and Ethos

We believe in inspiring young people and equipping them to make a positive contribution to society.

Through promoting excellence, the RGS aims to raise aspiration and attainment across the North East.

By inspiring and nurturing hearts and minds, we can give those around us the freedom to create and shape their own future.

A future that is built on our sense of history and belonging in the city but is fueled by an ambition to succeed and evolve.

A place where freedom of expression, ideas and beliefs can be shared, exchanged and grow openly in our happy environment.

An environment where we look out for each other and treat everyone with care and respect, within and beyond our community.

A spirit to challenge, inspire and stretch the minds of everyone here so we feel free to explore, free to think, free to try, free to dream of possibilities and free to be ourselves.

The four pillars of our ethos are embedded in everything that we do:

- Belief in each other
- Ambition to succeed
- Sense of belonging
- Love for learning



The Role

We are seeking to appoint an outstanding and dynamic person to be the new Head of Chemistry, following the successful promotion of our current Head of Department to a Head of Science role at another school. You must be an excellent Chemistry specialist with the ability to inspire our enthusiastic students from Year 7 through to A Level and Oxbridge. If you are a highly resourceful, collegiate and forward-thinking practitioner then we want to hear from you.

Being 'willing to go the extra mile' is a major part of the role for all teachers at the RGS, not merely in specialist activities, but in a huge range of extra-curricular sporting, artistic and cultural work. We are keen to invite applications from those who would like to make their own distinctive contribution to this ethos. We very much value colleagues who are willing to contribute to our extra-curricular programme.

This role is **responsible to** the Head of Science and EDT.

This role is **responsible for** (staff):

Members of the Chemistry department

The appointed Head of Chemistry will be required to be in post from 1st September 2024.





RGS Sport

Sports Reception



RGS

The Department

The Chemistry department is located within the Science and Technology Block (STC) that accommodates Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Engineering, Design and Technology. There are a total of 10 highly qualified teaching staff (6 full time and 4 part time) supported by 2 full time technical staff.

Chemistry is an extremely popular subject within the school. The subject is compulsory up to Year 11 where all students take a GCSE in the subject. A significant number of students elect to study the subject at A level with a total of approximately 150 students taking the subject in the Sixth Form, placing the RGS as one of the largest Sixth Form Chemistry departments within the independent sector.

Students in all year groups are highly motivated and extremely pleasant to teach. Exam results at both GCSE and A Level are consistently excellent and the majority of our sixth form students go on to study science-based degrees at top universities throughout the country.

The Curriculum

The school operates on a two-week timetable and the subject is delivered as follows:

| Year | Course | No. Periods per cycle | No. Sets | Approx. Set Size |
|------|---|-----------------------|----------|------------------|
| 7 | RGS Chemistry course (states of matter, separating mixtures and acids and alkalis) in separate science lessons | 2 | 6 | 24 |
| 8 | RGS-based course designed to develop practical skills and introduce some key concepts such as atomic structure, metals, non - metals etc. | 2 | 6 | 24 |
| 9 | Topics include formulae and equations, structure and bonding and introduction to reactions. Towards the end of year 9 students start some of the GCSE topics inc. solubility, separation techniques and alkane chemistry. | 3 | 6 | 24 |
| 10 | EDEXCEL IGCSE | 5 | 6 | 24 |
| 11 | EDEXCEL IGCSE (4CH0) | 4 | 6 | 24 |
| 12 | AQA LINEAR (7405) | 10 | 6 | 11-14 |
| 13 | AQA LINEAR (7405) | 11 | 6 | 11-14 |



2023 External Exam Results

| IGCSE (Pearson Edexcel) | |
|-------------------------|------|
| %9 | 40.9 |
| %9 - 8 | 68.6 |
| %9 - 7 | 86.1 |

| A level (AQA) | |
|---------------|------|
| %A* | 31.3 |
| %A* - A | 81.3 |
| %A* - B | 92.5 |





Job Description

(The job description for this role is subject to regular review)

Head of Department as subject teacher

The Head of Department should play a full part in the school as a subject teacher.

Leadership of teaching and learning

The Head of a Subject Department exercises leadership of learning and of teaching in the department and therefore has responsibility for all aspects of management of the department; the deployment of staff and resources, conducting appraisals, providing regular positive encouragement where due and being willing to address tough issues on the occasions where necessary (seeking advice on employment law where necessary); the teaching and thus the quality of learning, attainment and progress of the students and the monitoring of these; the academic care of students; health and safety issues and the general welfare and professional development of the teachers in the department. The Head of Department naturally has a duty to lead the department in (and ensure departmental colleagues' contribution to) the furtherance of the school's ethos and vision and the declared educational aims and priorities.

Programmes of study

It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to ensure that programmes of study, schemes of work, syllabuses etc are fully planned, reviewed and developed as appropriate and effectively taught in order both to allow students to achieve their potential and to meet external (generally examination board) requirements. The Head of Department is also responsible for the accurate and timely submission to the Exams Officer of external exam entries.

Differentiation

The department should lay a strong emphasis on appropriate differentiation of work according to students' abilities.

Setting and marking work

The Head of Department should ensure that the department has coherent and useful policies for the setting and marking of work and homework, for expectations of standards that should be achieved and for assessment.

Reporting

The Head of Department must ensure that reporting to parents is consistent within the department and follows any whole-school policies in operation.

Induction and professional development

The Head of Department is responsible for the induction of new colleagues and also has a part to play in the continuing professional development and career planning of all members of the department.

Monitoring performance

The Head of Department should ensure that students' progress is tracked, and that intervention is agreed and implemented by the department where underperformance (potential or actual) is identified. It is also the responsibility of the Head of Department to monitor the performance of the department through value added and any other appropriate indicators.

Deployment of staff and resources

The Head of Department arranges with the Academic Deputy Head the deployment of members of the department so that the teaching requirements of the department are covered, in suitable accommodation and with adequate resources and facilities. The Head of Department has overall responsibility for any health and safety issues within the department, even if the routine management of such issues is delegated to a member of the department, and day-to-day management of any technical support staff attached to the department.

Planning and resources

It is the Head of Department's responsibility to manage and take care of the department's resources and to work with the Academic Deputy Head and Director of Finance each year to produce an appropriate annual budget for the department and to play a part in the school's strategic planning for the provision of IT throughout the school. The Head of Department is also responsible for the effective control of the budgets allocated to the department.

Communication and sharing good practice

Heads of Department should ensure that good practice is shared beyond, as well as within, the department. They should promote good communication within and between departments and with the school's senior leadership, both through formal Heads of Department meetings (at which the feelings of their department on school issues should be expressed and from which decisions and discussion should be relayed back to the department) and through informal means of keeping in touch with colleagues at all levels.

Co-curricular leadership

At the RGS it is also expected that Heads of Department will themselves be very active in the co-curricular activities that the school believes have a very positive impact on curricular learning, and that they encourage and support members of their department in doing the same.



Person Specification

Educational Attainment

- An outstanding academic record including a good degree in a subject that is part of the RGS curriculum.
- Qualified teacher.

Experience

- Experience of teaching in a highly academic context
- Experience of teaching the full 11-18 age range

Skills

- Excellent ability to manage a large team of professionals (both teachers and technicians) with clear direction, tact and sensitivity
- Inspirational teaching in their own classroom
- The ability to inspire professional teachers to really push themselves in developing innovative teaching and learning strategies using technology where appropriate
- Excellent organisational skills in managing complex administrative tasks to tight deadlines
- The ability to delegate and develop the skills and professional aspirations of the members of the team
- Financial acumen in managing a complex budget
- The ability to recognise and develop skills of the members of the team in constructing a departmental timetable bid
- Flexibility, tact and diplomacy in dealing with teachers, non-teachers and senior leaders
- A clear understanding of the role of middle management in progressing the school's development plan and the department's place within that
- Strong people management skills

Skills and Personal Qualities

- A dedicated team player, who strives for excellence and leads by example, with the ability to work as part of the SLT, contributing to effective strategic and operational decision making in a school setting.
- High professional standards of conduct, appearance and engagement with a commitment to personal professional development.
- Active supporter of Equality and Diversity.
- Confident and experienced public speaker with outstanding interpersonal skills to build strong relationships and enable effective dialogue with pupils, parents, staff, alumni and visitors.
- Organised and able to prioritise workload, balancing decisiveness and consultation appropriately, with problem solving skills to manage competing priorities and the judgement to manage sensitive and complex situations with clarity and care.
- Reliable and calm under pressure to be able to offer stability and consistency to the school community.
- Self-reliant and self-motivated, being able to work independently and as part of a team, while being adaptable and flexible with working patterns to meet the needs of the school community.
- A keen eye for detail.



Living in the North East

Whilst the North East is beloved and popular with so many, we know that not everyone will have had first-hand experience of it, so this is a short introduction to a city and region which we love, and believe you will too. Newcastle is a medium-sized city with an historic centre and a vibrant life of its own. There's culture and arts in the form of the award-winning BALTIC Art Gallery and The Sage, alongside several theatres that attract national touring productions. There's music from classical to club and we are home to the Royal Northern Sinfonia. There's also a growing food culture with some fantastic restaurants.

If you like sport then there's certainly no shortage of top class entertainment: from Premier League football being played at St James' Park and EFL at the Stadium of Light to first class cricket at Durham (a mere half hour away), and great rugby at the Falcons, not to mention basketball and even ice hockey, and then there is the annual Great North Run. The North East has also produced some of the country's finest athletes in track and field and there are clubs aplenty to get involved with, most famously in Gateshead.

The coast and the hills are minutes away from the city centre. By car you can be in the middle of nowhere in 45 minutes, the Scottish Borders is only an hour away and the Lake District an hour and a half. The coast is served by the Metro (our version of the Tube), but some of the country's best beaches are up the road in Northumberland, less than 40 minutes by car. There's mountain biking, road cycling, climbing, and endless hill walks in stunning countryside. There are green spaces all over the city too, with plenty of parks for children and dogs alike to run around.

There are three local teaching hospitals, two universities in the city with another three close by. Some pioneering medical work goes on at the RVI, Great North Children's Hospital and the Freeman Hospital. History abounds with more castles than you could count and sites of interest for almost every period of English (and border) history. Add that to a proud, independently minded and very friendly local population and we have most things you could want.

There are excellent primary schools in the region and city as well as some good secondary schools too, but staff do get a discount at the RGS. There are also a number of good competitor independent schools as well.

The RGS is on the edge of the city centre, a ten-minute walk from the main shopping areas. The leafy, affluent suburbs of Jesmond and Gosforth are close by with housing ranging from purpose-built flats in terraced streets and conversions of bigger houses to terraced houses, post-war semis and large, family-sized detached houses with big gardens. All of this is within walking distance of the school so no commute is needed. Properties are very affordable both within the city and the surrounding area. If you want to travel to work then you could wake up with a sea view, hop on the Metro and be at school just half an hour later. The region wins tourism and lifestyle awards for very good reasons!





Terms and Conditions

- This is a full time, permanent post.
- The Head of Chemistry will report into the Head of Science and EDT.
- Working Hours - Normal working hours will be those necessary to carry out the duties of the post.
- Salary - The salary will be commensurate with the seniority of the role.



What We Offer

- During term-time, staff are provided with a free lunch, if on site.
- The school offers an alternative to the TPS, the Aviva Pension Trust for Independent Schools (APTIS) which is a defined contribution and salary exchange scheme administered by AVIVA. There is provision for life assurance and income protection under the APTIS scheme and increased flexibility regarding employee contributions and fund management. Further information on the APTIS scheme and salary exchange will be made available on appointment.
- The employee will become eligible for sick pay under the RGS Teaching Staff Sick Pay Scheme after a qualifying period. Details of the scheme will be provided on appointment.
- The school offers an optional healthcare plan for all staff which includes optical, dental and physio cover, access to telephone GP consultations and a host of other benefits (terms and conditions apply). Further information will be available to the employee once in post.
- As with all RGS employees, the employee will be encouraged to become involved in the wider life of the RGS community.
- It is the school's policy is to allow all eligible members of staff to educate their children at the school at concessionary rates, subject to their children meeting the academic entry requirements and subject to a place being available.
- Ongoing educational support and development of all staff with the provision of external and internal training courses, and our middle leaders training programme for existing and aspiring managers.
- We offer an interest free travel loan for a corporate Metro travel pass after a qualifying period. Further information will be available upon starting in post.
- We offer a Bike to Work scheme for qualifying members of staff. Terms and conditions apply. Details will be shared upon starting in post.
- Free use of a well-equipped gym, fitness suite and swimming pool at permitted times.
- Opportunity to see free school productions in the Miller Theatre located in our Performing Arts Centre.
- Access to our onsite confidential counselling service.
- We offer access to the school medical team (1 doctor and 2 nurses) for triage medical advice and free flu vaccinations.
- Invitation to join staff clubs and wellbeing activities during term-time as well as staff social events throughout the year.
- Opportunity to join in with RGS tradition and become a member of the Stowell, Collingwood, Horsley or Eldon House.





How to Apply

Candidates are advised to read the 'Information for Applicants' with particular care before applying.

If you have any queries or would like to arrange a visit to the school, please do not hesitate to call Philip Heath (Head of Science and EDT) on 0191 281 5711, or email p.heath@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk

If, having looked through the website (www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk) and read this job information pack and the Information for Applicants, you think this particular post would suit you, please say so (and why) in:

1. A covering letter and
2. A fully completed RGS application form.

You must complete the application form, even if you want to also attach a CV. Please email all documents to jobs@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk by the closing date.

The closing date for this role is 9.00am on Monday 4th March 2024

Interviews will be held shortly after the closing date. We will hope to make the appointment as soon as possible following interview, offering the post and gaining acceptance, so applicants should arrive for interview with a clear idea of what would be involved in moving to the area (if necessary) and working at the RGS.

Reasonable travel expenses will be considered to attend an interview if candidates live outside the local area. This is normally up to a maximum contribution of £100 on provision of receipts. If your expenses will be significantly higher than £100 and an overnight stay is required, please note all expenses will need to be booked and approved in advance. If you plan to claim expenses, please contact the Head's Secretary, Sandra Ellis S.Ellis@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk in advance of your interview, who will talk you through the policy and advise on eligibility for reimbursement.





Further Information

Equal Opportunities

We are looking to appoint staff from a wide variety of backgrounds. Not just because it is the right thing to do but because at the RGS we recognise that those different experiences provide fresh perspectives, opportunities to challenge existing beliefs and provide opportunities to act as excellent role models for our diverse student body. We are committed to creating an inclusive and diverse school culture and our staff are at the heart of this. We are proud to be an equal opportunities employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships. Whilst all applications are considered on merit, we would particularly welcome applications from black and minority ethnic candidates who are currently under-represented in our staff community.

We encourage all candidates to complete an 'equal opportunities' form with your application. This will be sent directly to the HR team for monitoring purposes.

Safer Recruitment

RGS is committed to the safeguarding of children and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and those working in school to share this commitment. The school applies the Government's Safer Recruitment procedures to all candidates. More information regarding the checks can be found in the Information for Applicants and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2023).





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