



OLA
OUR LADY'S
ABINGDON



APPOINTMENT OF

**TEACHER OF BIOLOGY
(FIXED TERM CONTRACT)**

FROM 1st JANUARY 2025
FOR 12 MONTHS

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF OLA

Dear Candidate,

This is an exciting time to be joining OLA and a future of opportunity awaits the successful candidate. As the Head of OLA, I am honoured and privileged to be leading a school which is high performing in all areas, and which has the full support of the Governing Board to grow the school pupil headcount, invest in futureproofing the school and develop the staff so that they can empower our pupils to be the best versions of themselves. The value-added for public exam results is excellent; pastoral care is child-centered and consistently of the highest quality, and; the co-curricular programme is growing from strength to strength. OLA is defined by its Catholic ethos and this underpins all that we do:

Each child who joins us embarks on an educational journey, directed by our mission statement, providing for each one in accordance with their needs and encouraged by our ethos summed up in our school motto, "Whatever you do, do it well". Our ethos provides an individual approach that ensures we uncover a child's potential and nurture them to achieve, enabling them to thrive both academically and as people.

Our ethos is reflected in the positive relationships that exist between all members of our school community. We are proud of our distinctive family atmosphere, which fosters a tangible sense of community and happy relationships between staff and pupils.

If you choose to apply for this post, we will give your application all the seriousness it deserves. OLA is a wonderful, vibrant and happy environment in which to work, with a palpable sense of belonging among our staff. The role we are looking to fill is important to the flourishing of the school and I hope you will feel that you are the right person to fill it.

Kind regards,

Daniel Gibbons

Mr. Daniel Gibbons
Head of OLA





ABOUT THE SCHOOL

OLA is a Catholic co-educational day school located close to Oxford in the heart of Abingdon, welcoming pupils of all faiths and none. It was established by an Order of Catholic nuns founded by the Venerable Catherine McAuley called the Sisters of Mercy, who came to Abingdon in 1860 at the invitation of Sir George Bowyer of Radley Park. Reverend Mother Clare Moore was a national heroine who had worked closely with Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War - their joint portrait, entitled 'The Mission of Mercy', hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. Recently returned from Constantinople, Mother Clare brought three young Sisters to Abingdon on January 10th 1860 and teaching commenced the very next day. The girls' and boys' schools, now Our Lady's Abingdon School, were actively run by Sisters for almost a century.

Our co-educational ethos provides an atmosphere where pupils are at ease with one another and natural relationships are fostered. OLA is a purposeful, outward- looking school with a happy, family atmosphere that gives children the freedom to develop within a structured framework. As our school motto says:

age quod agis – whatever you do, do it well



MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission statement reflects the reality of daily life at OLA, and encompasses the vision and values of our founding Sisters at Our Lady of Mercy. 'As God's family we learn to love, respect and forgive - guided by His Word'.

We believe that God created each of us as a unique person with gifts that need to be recognised, celebrated and developed. Inspired by the words of our foundress, Catherine McAuley, "*To each according to their needs*", we encourage a respect for every individual, regardless of background, beliefs or ability.

Our aim is to develop a loving, caring and welcoming community in which all may grow as children of God. In partnership with parents and the wider community we seek to respond to God's invitation to faith, mercy and love. To develop skills for life in an ever-changing world, we cherish integrity, compassion, openness, forgiveness and reconciliation, co-operation and courage. We nurture wisdom, the value of learning, independent thinking, a sense of self-worth and care for each other that all may reach their full potential.

AIMS AND ETHOS

The following are central to our Mission Statement and the school wishes to foster a happy, caring Christian atmosphere in which these aims may be realised:

AIMS

- To encourage respect for the worth of the individual and in this way to develop self-confidence
- To enable all pupils to achieve their full potential
- To guide pupils to make informed moral choices
- To develop independent thinking and a love of learning

ETHOS

We believe that every human being is created to become a unique person with gifts that should be accepted and valued.

Our foundress Catherine McAuley said: "*To each according to their needs*".

We owe it to our pupils to help them recognise and achieve the best of which they are capable to obtain the qualifications they need and to develop a sense of personal fulfilment.

A sound Christian framework is important as a basis for the whole of their lives

This is the basis of life-long learning

ACADEMIC

OLA promotes a challenging and progressive curriculum, which reflects the learning requirements of each individual pupil. It aims to nurture independent, analytical and creative thinking and to build the confidence in our pupils to articulate clearly their views of the world around them.

The School achieves strong academic results, as a result of effective and well-developed relationships between pupils and staff and a positive attitude to learning. In 2023, an 95% pass rate was achieved at GCSE, with 69% of all grades at 9 to 6. Our 2023 results were higher than 2019, which was a great achievement. In addition, 46% of pupils achieved at least one 9 grade, demonstrating that pupils can achieve at the highest level in any subject for which they have an aptitude and passion. A Level results were equally impressive, with 57% of all grades at A* to B. Similar to GCSE, almost half of our students achieved at least one A grade. OLA's value-added is outstanding, year on year, and belies our raw results which reflect our relatively broad ability intake. Upper Sixth leavers achieved places at a range of prestigious universities, including Cardiff, Bath, York, Warwick, Kings, Leeds and Birmingham.

In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils study Mathematics, English, Science, a Modern Foreign Language (French or Spanish), Geography, History and Religious Studies as core subjects, alongside other practical-based subjects such as Art, Drama, Music, Design Technology, Food and Nutrition, Latin, PE, Textiles, and Computer Science. Year 9 pupils choose up to four of these practical subjects to study in greater depth.

At GCSE, pupils choose up to three optional subjects in addition to their core subjects of Mathematics, English, Science (Double or Triple) and Religious Studies. There is the option to study Further Maths as an extra GCSE, and also an additional Modern Foreign Language (French or Spanish).

This wide range of options is also offered at A Level, in addition to Economics, Philosophy, Ethics and Religion, Psychology and Business Studies. OLA Sixth pupils study three A Levels, with many choosing the additional option of the Extended Project Qualification. University application and career choice guidance is excellent, and the majority of OLA Sixth leavers go on to their first choice of university and to study a diverse range of subjects.



ACADEMIC (continued)

A new faculty structure was introduced from September 2022, the aim of which is to improve the efficacy of the academic leadership structure and create a clear middle leadership level within the School. The faculty structure comprises:

1. **English, Drama and Film and Media** (including responsibility for Academic Enrichment and Literacy)
2. **Mathematics and Computer Science** (including responsibility for Academic Scholarship and Numeracy)
3. **Science** (including Academic PE)
4. **Religious Studies** (including responsibility for Chaplaincy, PSHE and RSE)
5. **Creative Arts** (Art, Design Technology, Food Technology, Textiles and Music)
6. **Humanities** (Business, Economics, Geography, History and Psychology)
7. **Languages** (Modern Languages and Classics) (including line management of the EPQ Coordinator)

Within the above are Subject Coordinators for each subject who report to the Head of Faculty. Academic staff report to the Subject Coordinator who, in turn, report to the Head of Faculty. The Head of Faculty is also a 'Subject Coordinator' and, as such, will line manage the staff within their own subject.

OLA provides academic enrichment beyond the classroom and curriculum. A strong track record exists of enriching pupil experiences by applying their learning in real contexts through a varied trips programme. The School runs a Scholarship Programme, which seeks to enrich pupil experiences and extend their learning beyond the classroom. Lower Sixth pupils benefit from tailored programmes in preparation for life beyond school, and there is a parallel path for those who have expressed an interest in Oxbridge.



THE WHOLE PERSON

OLA offers a growing programme of activities that enable our pupils to explore passions and to develop important skills and characteristics, including teamwork and determination, all within the safety of a caring and compassionate community. The rich programme of activities caters for broad tastes, from creative arts, coding and textiles to a variety of academic clinics.

The School has a particularly impressive offering in the performing arts. Several choirs and orchestral groups provide regular music performance opportunities, and take-up of instrumental lessons is high. Music partnerships with local schools are strong, and visiting musicians provide a series of masterclasses. OLA has its own drama studio and theatre. Pupils across the school community are involved in productions, including an annual inclusive whole-school musical. The School is also a LAMDA (London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art) centre through which pupils can develop skill and confidence in public speaking, articulation, presentation and acting skills.

OLA offers a range of sports for all ages and abilities to encourage participation, fitness and an enjoyment of team sport. Sports on offer include swimming, gymnastics, cricket, athletics, rugby, netball, hockey and football. OLA has generous facilities including a heated indoor swimming pool and access to the extensive range of facilities at the Tilsley Park Centre. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is also popular at OLA, with many pupils supported through to the Silver and Gold Awards.

In the development of our pupils OLA pays special attention to pastoral care and spiritual nourishment, promoted by all staff but particularly by our dedicated chaplaincy team that arranges retreats, assemblies and liturgies. Our beautiful Chapel is a real centre for prayer and our Catholic ethos ensures all pupils, whatever their background, have opportunities to step back from the busy school day and benefit from quiet reflection. We have a justified reputation for being a caring, compassionate and nurturing school with a calm purpose that gives all pupils the opportunity to thrive in a safe environment.

OLA prepares children for life. Pupils leave us at 18 as young adults not only equipped academically for university, but as well-balanced individuals with the confidence to make their way successfully in the world beyond school. Following their chosen paths with enthusiasm and confidence, they can use the broad skills they have acquired at OLA to become valuable members of society.



JOB DESCRIPTION

We seek a well-qualified and inspirational professional to teach Biology at all levels up to, and including, A Level, to all year groups. Biology is based within the Science Faculty, along with Chemistry, Physics and Academic PE. The Head of Chemistry is also the Head of Science.

At GCSE, pupils study AQA Combined Science (Specification 8464) or separate Sciences (Specifications 8461, 8462 and 8463), and OLA Sixth students also study OCR (Specification H420). All pupils at OLA study Biology, Chemistry and Physics in Years 7, 8 and 9, and decisions are made about Combined Science or separate Sciences for Year 10. Pupils are taught in small groups throughout the school, and A-level Biology is popular.

Candidates who are able to teach another subject should make this clear in their application.

This position is a fixed-term contract for 1 year.

We welcome applications from both experienced candidates, ECTs and those at the very start of their teaching careers.

THE FACULTY

The Science Faculty staff area has a committed and well-motivated team who keep abreast of changes and developments in their subjects. GCSE and A-level are taught by subject specialists, and teachers can be asked to teach Biology or Chemistry to KS3 classes, if required.

The three Sciences are housed in eight spacious and well-equipped laboratories which are grouped around a central preparation room. In addition to the ICT equipment in the laboratories themselves, the school has two ICT suites available for class teaching and individual project or research work. Biology, Chemistry and Physics are very popular subjects in the Oxford area owing to the proximity of two universities, Harwell, Culham and other centres of scientific research. Science Enrichment is very strong within the Faculty, with a range of competitions, events and activities for all year groups, as well as outreach for local primary schools. For example, a team of Sixth Formers won the UK Space Design Competition hosted by Imperial College.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE POST

All teachers are expected to share in supervision duties, attend relevant parents' evenings, staff meetings, Open Days et al, and to contribute to the extra-curricular life of the School.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications	Essential	Desirable
A good degree in Biology or a related discipline	X	
Experience		
Teaching experience across the full age and ability range at KS3		X
Teaching experience across the full age and ability range at KS4		X
Experience of teaching A-level		X
Experience of organizing fieldwork		X
Experience of full commitment to STEM	X	
Skills/ Knowledge and Abilities		
Outstanding and enthusiastic classroom teacher	X	
Track record of motivating learners and raising achievement	X	
Ability to use assessment data to inform planning and set targets	X	
Ability to work as part of a team	X	
Excellent written communication skills	X	
Excellent organisational skills	X	
Excellent oral communication skills with staff, students & parents	X	
Positive, enthusiastic, flexible with a pro-active 'can do' attitude	X	
A commitment to using ICT to develop learning	X	
Excellent IT skills	X	
Ability to teach pupils with SEN as well as social, emotional and mental health difficulties	X	
Able to drive a minibus or willing to undertake training	X	
Personal Qualities		
A sense of humour and genuine understanding and liking for our students	X	
Excellent interpersonal skills	X	
Enthusiasm	X	
Creativity	X	
Approachable, open and honest	X	
Dedicated, conscientious and hard working	X	
Commitment to safeguarding and the welfare of students	X	
Understanding of and commitment to OLA's ethos	X	

WORKING AT OLA

Salary

OLA has its own salary scale. Experience and qualifications are considered when setting starting salaries.

Benefits

Lunch is provided at no cost during term time, with tea and coffee available throughout the day. Snacks and light meals are provided to staff who are required to work in the evening for school events.

Free on-site parking.

CPD and training are encouraged and the school has an exciting annual INSET programme for staff.

Full support for teachers wishing to complete an on-the-job PGCE.

Staff have agreed access to the School's equipment and facilities, including the indoor swimming pool.

Pension

The School participates in the DfE Teachers' Pension Scheme.

School Fee Reduction

Teaching staff benefit from a staff discount on basic tuition fees of 50% for full-time staff, pro rata for part-time staff, and qualify for this benefit after completing two years of service.

Non-contractual benefits are given at the discretion of the Governing body and can be withdrawn without notice.

Location

The school is located in Abingdon-on-Thames, an historic market town situated eight miles to the south of Oxford with its world-renowned reputation as a centre of academic excellence. The town supports a mixed, international community which enjoys a good selection of restaurants, cafes and bars situated a just few minutes' walk away from the river and gardens of Abbey Meadows. The town benefits from excellent bus links to Oxford, which is just a 15-minute ride away and provides a wealth of social and cultural opportunities.



SELECTION PROCESS

- **Application deadline: 9.00am Friday 11th October.** Early applications are encouraged and the School reserves the right to interview suitable candidates prior to the deadline.
- **Interviews: TBC**
- Applications should be made via the online application form which can be accessed on the TES website at www.tes.com/jobs/employer/-1030286.
- Ensure that your application form is completed in full with no gaps in your education/employment history. Incomplete applications may be discounted.
- Two referees should be provided, one of whom must be your current or most recent employer.
- Applicants will be required to prove their right to work in the UK at interview. **The School cannot offer sponsorship to candidates who do not already have the right to work in the UK.**
- Candidates should expect to complete other selection exercises in addition to interview.
- The successful candidate will be required to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and social media check, in addition to other necessary safeguarding measures.
- For any outstanding queries please contact Mrs Hayley Green, HR Manger at hr@ola.org.uk
- Whilst we aim to acknowledge receipt of applications within 24 hours, this is not always possible, particularly during holiday periods.

Our Lady's Abingdon is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young adults and all staff and volunteers are expected to share this commitment. Successful candidates are required to undertake various safeguarding checks which include an Enhanced DBS and social media check.

Full details are available on the school website.

