DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL STRATEGY JOB INFORMATION





DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL STRATEGY

Newcastle upon Tyne Royal Grammar School

Required as soon as possible

THE POSITION

The Royal Grammar School is seeking to appoint an experienced and inspirational leader to implement the next phase of our ambitious Digital Strategy for the school, which envisages putting a device in the hands of every child in order to support their learning while ensuring that all staff are confident in using education technology effectively.

This is an ideal position for someone with exceptional strategic planning and operational skills, with experience of managing major projects. They should be passionate about education and have the technical ability to advise and lead where significant change to infrastructure and purchase of new technology is required. A background in education is not essential for this post but the postholder would quickly need to develop a good understanding of the demands of the high performing academic environment and be able to engage effectively with teachers. This role could either be an appointment of up to two years for the project duration of rolling out the Digital Strategy or, for the right candidate, a permanent appointment with the potential to serve on the Senior Leadership Team. We would welcome applications from any person who feels that they have relevant experience.

This is a new position to the school and reflects our commitment to further establishing the school as a leader in the field. The aims of this role are:

- to ensure that the school's use of technology promotes innovative learning by digitally confident students, inspired by skilled and creative teaching.
- To provide secure, sustainable infrastructure and systems to support the school's needs.
- To continue to develop and move forward in this rapidly changing landscape to ensure that the school is at the forefront of new developments.

The Director of Digital Strategy will work closely with the School Leadership Team (SLT); made up of the Head, Deputy Head, Director of Finance and Operations (DFO), Head of Junior School, Deputy Head Academic, Deputy Head Pastoral, Head of Sixth Form, Director of Development and Director of Partnerships.

Information for both teaching and support staff roles at the school can be found in the Job Vacancy section of our website to illustrate how different applications are considered and include additional information about the school.

Background and experience will certainly be considered when it comes to working out a final employment package with the successful candidate, but the role is not limited to term time only.



Job description: Director of Digital Strategy Deadline: 9am Monday 8th February 2021



THE SCHOOL

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. 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 extra-curricular activities, and our commitment to bursaries and partnerships. In December 2020, we were named as the North East Independent School of the Decade by the Sunday Times.

RGS has grown substantially in recent years. There are now some 1,320 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 43% 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.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategy development:

- Lead the school Digital Strategy Group.
- Oversee, implement and further develop the school Digital Strategy, updating the Head, SLT and Governing Board regularly on progress.
- Responsible for an effective strategy to ensure digital technology has a significant impact on enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.
- Regularly gather information about the use of IT and its effectiveness within school from students, teachers, support staff and other stakeholders to help inform the strategy development.
- Identify, plan and support with training needs for staff around all areas of IT.
- Responsible for and lead on a strategy to enable effective communication, through a range of different technologies.
- Liaise and build relationships with existing and potential technology partners.
- Keep abreast with technical developments in the Education Sector and beyond to inform the IT strategy and benefit the school.

Training / CPD:

- Lead on the design and delivery of a programme of IT training to enhance the digital literacy of all staff and pupils.
- Develop and deliver high quality CPD to staff. Review the impact of training on outcomes.
- Lead on an effective strategy to support the use of digital media across the School.
- Liase and share good practice with other schools building a supportive network.

Budget:

- Oversee the budgets for IT and Digital Learning, working alongside the DFO and Director of IT Services to review and manage this.
- Support the Director of IT Services to ensure that the school keeps up to date with improvement opportunities to deliver high quality and secure services cost-effectively.

Job description: Director of Digital Strategy Deadline: 9am Monday 8th February 2021



Alongside the Director of IT Services be responsible for the overall procurement of all IT
equipment, software and hardware, including exploration of operational efficiencies and
to ensure best value for money.

For candidates coming to this role from a teaching background they would have the opportunity to continue teaching a limited timetable in a relevant discipline.

The Director of Digital Strategy is accountable to the Director of Finance and Operations.



KEY CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

In the first twelve months you will have:

- 1. Consulted with relevant stakeholders to understand fully the complex nature of the project.
- 2. Created and reached agreement on an implementation plan that lays out operational priorities, timelines, funding and other resource needs.
- 3. Started the process of rolling out the implementation plan.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The following person specification indicates those areas of skills and personal characteristics, qualifications, training and experience that are either essential or desirable in the candidates being interviewed.

QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Essential criteria

• A strong record of academic achievement and educated to degree level or equivalent.

EXPERIENCE

Essential criteria

- A commitment to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children.
- Successful experience of strategic planning and leading IT change.
- Proven track record of successful team leadership with the ability to influence, motivate and persuade at all levels.
- An in-depth understanding of IT needs across an educational setting, from a strategic level.

Job description: Director of Digital Strategy Deadline: 9am Monday 8th February 2021



Desirable criteria

- A strong understanding of running IT projects in a large academic, or complex, environment and the impact that this can have on daily operations
- The ability to communicate technical concepts to a non-technical audience, both orally and in writing.
- Experience of multiple project delivery, with budgetary management, including the procurement of IT equipment.
- Experience of implementing innovative and practical solutions to deliver strategic change.
- Experience of delivering IT training to both students and staff with a wide range of abilities.

SKILLS

Essential criteria

- Exceptional IT skills being able to lead by example.
- Excellent communication and coaching skills, and a track record of building relationships with all levels of stakeholders.
- Ability to react to a changing environment and respond promptly with thoughts and options, offering innovative solutions.
- First class organisational and administrative skills, with the ability to work independently and imaginatively and to take initiative.

Desirable criteria

- A superb eye for detail and consistency.
- Excellent data handling skills.
- Able to reflect and evaluate the impact of projects to ensure progress.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Commitment to the RGS ethos.
- An exemplary degree of personal integrity and maturity.
- Able to remain calm under pressure and work to tight deadlines, managing competing priorities
- Highly motivated and target-driven.
- Excellent interpersonal skills including the ability to relate well to people on all levels, to resolve conflicts in a sensitive manner, to encourage and motivate.
- Flexible in attitude and approach, able to work at a strategic level yet also in a hands-on capacity.
- Prepared to challenge and to ask questions.
- Willing to be involved in the wider life of the school.



Job description: Director of Digital Strategy Deadline: 9am Monday 8th February 2021



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 alongside several theatres that attract national touring productions. Newcastle/Gateshead is home to The Sage, one of the country's leading music venues which not only hosts world-class concerts but is active in the teaching and development of young musicians in the region. There's also music from classical to club as well as musicals and opera at the Theatre Royal 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 some really 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!

Job description: Director of Digital Strategy Deadline: 9am Monday 8th February 2021



HOW TO APPLY

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 a covering letter of application. You must complete the application form, even if you want to also attach a CV. You are welcome to apply electronically, please email all documents to jobs@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk.

Please read the Information for Applicants with particular care before applying. Note that the RGS is committed to the safeguarding of children and applies the Government's Safer Recruitment procedures, which will include:

- Checking that the submitted CV provides a continuous record of education and employment from age 16;
- provision of two satisfactory references, at least one of which must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer;
- completion by you of a confidential form of declaration of health (after offer of appointment) and, if necessary, a satisfactory report following a medical examination;
- · evidence or other verification of your qualifications;
- · a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure Report from the DBS.

The closing date for this role will be **9.00am on Monday 8th February 2021**. We anticipate that there is likely to be two rounds to this process with remote interviews W'c 22nd February 2021 and a second round in school shortly thereafter. We will hope to make the appointment as soon as the second-round interviews have concluded, offering the post and gaining acceptance, so applicants should arrive for interviews with a clear idea of what would be involved in moving to the area (if necessary) and working at the RGS. Potential candidates taken through to the second round are welcome to come and visit the school subject to lockdown restrictions at the time.

Hours and Benefits

- Working Hours Normal working hours will be those necessary to carry out the duties of the post as Director of Digital Strategy.
- Holidays This role is not limited to term time only and the school offers a generous annual leave entitlement of 31days plus Bank Holidays for staff who work all year round. Staff are required to save 5days of annual leave for when the school is closed over the Christmas period and to assist with the smooth running of the school, we ask that Holidays are taken during the school holidays.
- Salary The salary will be commensurate with the experience and qualifications of the candidate for a role of this nature working in an educational charity.
- Pension The School is part of the Teachers' Pension Scheme and all teachers are
 automatically included in the Scheme. For non-teaching staff we offer a support staff pension
 scheme with Aviva and on receipt of a 6% employee contribution the school makes an
 employer contribution of 10%. There is also the option of a 3% employee and 5% employer
 contribution if preferred.
- Death in service scheme with Aviva of 5x annual salary.
- Lunch lunch is provided in school during term time.
- Education 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.
- Car Parking There is a staff car park on site with limited spaces available.

Job description: Director of Digital Strategy Deadline: 9am Monday 8th February 2021



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. To help us achieve this, please submit the equal opportunities form with your application. This will be sent directly to the HR team for monitoring purposes.

Safer recruitment

RGS Newcastle is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. In accordance with our Child Protection Policy we are unable to process applications without a fully completed application form. The post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. You must declare any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not 'protected' as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013 and 2020) The applicant may post such a declaration in an envelope marked 'Private & confidential for the Headmaster' which will only be opened should the candidate be shortlisted. The successful applicant must obtain Children's Barred List clearance and DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance at enhanced level.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the Headmaster or the Director of Finance and Operations via e-mail on hm@rqs.newcastle.sch.uk or by calling 0191 281 5711.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Tel: 0191 281 5711

General enquiries: hm@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk or communications@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk

Job description: Director of Digital Strategy Deadline: 9am Monday 8th February 2021