



THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL

What we think, we become

Head Teacher Pack
December 2014



THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTENTS

03	Welcome to our school
04	How to apply
05	About us
06	The Staff
07	The Children
08	The Community
09	The Trustees
10	Job Description
13	Selection Criteria
14	Opportunities and Challenges
15	Additional Information

The Dharma Primary School

The White House Ladies Mile Road, Patcham, Brighton BN1 8TB

T. 01273 502055

E. headship@dharmaschool.co.uk

W. www.dharmaschool.co.uk/

F. <https://www.facebook.com/dharmaschool>

T. @DharmaSchoolBN1

Limited Company No: 2763238

Registered Charity No: 1015691

THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL

WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in becoming the Dharma Primary School's new Head Teacher. We hope you find this information pack a useful introduction to our unique school.

Founded 20 years ago in the seaside town of Brighton, the Dharma Primary School was born of the desire to provide a primary school education based on Buddhist principles with mindfulness at its heart. Today the school is one of only a handful of Buddhist-inspired primary schools in the western world. It has more than 75 pupils, 27 staff and a thriving parental community. A happy and inspiring place, it is widely recognised for its ability to nurture creativity, raise self-awareness, encourage empathy and develop confident children with a love of learning.

Last year our long-serving Head Teacher, Peter Murdock, retired from the school and our subsequent recruitment drive for a new head did not result in a permanent appointment. After re-assessing the needs of the school, we are once again looking for an exceptional individual with an established Buddhist practice and a passion for primary school education to take up the reigns and lead the school into the next phase of its development.

We have put a lot of thought in to the recruitment process. Working with one of the school's parents, a pioneer in the field of 'mindful recruitment', we have come up with an innovative new approach. It is described in more detail on page four but in broad terms we hope it will allow for a much deeper engagement with potential applicants and provide a positive experience regardless of whether you decide to progress with a formal application.

The appointment comes at an exciting time in the school's history as this year we celebrate our 20th anniversary and launch a number of new projects. In the pipeline is a proposal to expand the Early Years department and we are also poised to forge a new partnership with Thich Nhat Hanh's Wake-Up Schools initiative (<http://wakeupschools.org/>). This brings with it the possibility of the Dharma Primary School becoming a flagship school for this well respected international programme and a centre of excellence for mindful education.

When we asked our parents, staff and children what kind of Head Teacher they would like, the overwhelming response was that we need an experienced and inspiring teacher, a strong leader and effective manager, with a heart-felt commitment to Buddhist practice. Desirable personal qualities included wisdom, kindness, compassion, authenticity, integrity and a highly developed sense of humour!

For the right individual this post represents a rare opportunity to lead the UK's first Buddhist-inspired school into a new phase of development, at a time when the Buddhist values of mindfulness and compassion are at the forefront of educational thinking.

We hope that you will now take the time to read on and find out more about our school. Should you require any additional information, please contact Darius Norell - dnorell@dharma-school.co.uk

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post requires an enhanced DBS check.

With warm wishes.

The Trustees

THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL

HOW TO APPLY

When applying for a job, it is often difficult to know what it will really be like.

This process is designed to enable candidates and the school to get as accurate a view as is possible of each other, in order to recruit the best possible Head Teacher for the school.

Mindful Recruitment is a process where you can learn about yourself, the opportunity and how well you might fit. It is a way of engaging and deepening your relationship before having to decide whether to make a formal application.

Through it, you might realise that the role is not what you thought, or that what you have to offer is not what is needed, or that there is something entirely different you wish to put your energies towards. All of these outcomes we would regard as positive.

And you may of course decide that this opportunity is exactly what you have been looking for.

Either way, we recognise this recruitment process has the potential to attract and bring together a community of people who are committed to the Dharma, are passionate about education, with a willingness and capacity to lead. As a result of going through this process, our hope is that in whatever form you do this work in the future; whether it be here at the Dharma Primary School or at another school or in another way, that you are better able to do it.

To this end we will be holding a series of four online seminars/facilitated conversations exploring Dharma, Education and Leadership. These will be held at the beginning of February and we will do our best to accommodate different time zones given the international interest in the role.

Salary:

£40-50K. Dependent on experience and in keeping with the school's budget.

Role: Full time with 4 weeks holiday

Pre-application engagement:

Four online sessions to be held in the first two weeks of February. Booking for these sessions from January.

Formal application closing date:

27th February

Shortlisting:

Beginning of March

Interview and assessment:

Mid March

Appointment date: End of March

1. Please read this pack carefully. On p10 you will find the job description, which outlines the responsibilities of the role and lists the key selection criteria.
2. Everyone who has downloaded the HT pack will be contacted in early January and invited to take part in some pre-application online sessions.
3. Of the four sessions scheduled, we expect everyone to take part in the final session and to sign up for at least one other.
4. On completing these sessions you will be contacted by the school and invited to make an application and enter a formal process.
5. Applicants will then be shortlisted and invited for interview, at which point references will be sought and pre-employment and ID checks undertaken.
6. An offer of employment will be made subject to DBS checks.
7. Any queries on the application process, please contact Darius Norell – dnorell@dharmaschool.co.uk

THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL

ABOUT US

A foundation for all-round excellence, designed with mindfulness at its heart

The Dharma Primary School is the first primary school in the UK to be based on Buddhist principles. The school opened its doors in Brighton in September 1994. It was conceived by a group of parents who spent many happy times at the Amaravati Buddhist Monastery family camps in Hertfordshire. The pilot scheme for a primary school was established in the front room of a house in Sussex with four pupils.

Since then, the Dharma Primary School has gone from strength to strength and in June 1995 with an increase in pupils the school moved to its present location at The White House, in Patcham, Brighton, a 1930s detached house set in its own grounds. Currently the school has more than 70 pupils on the roll from three to eleven years of age.

The school is open to families of all religious faiths, spiritual and cultural backgrounds and has close links with the local community and with Buddhist groups in the Brighton-Hove area and beyond.

Children's ages: 3-11
Current school roll: 76
Number of classes: 5

Ethos and Vision

We intend that our pupils leave our school with a good heart, sound ethical values and a sense of responsibility combined with the academic and social skills that enable them to make a successful transition into secondary education. We hope our pupils will then go on to act in ways that will help to create a more compassionate, intelligent and peaceful world.

Children are introduced to the benefit of stillness through regular meditation practice enabling them to develop a reflective understanding of themselves, their life and the world around them. We discuss key Buddhist teachings to help children understand cause and effect, cooperation and change, known as karma, interdependence and impermanence.

Core objectives:

- To guide students to develop mindfulness, wisdom and compassion through the sharing of Buddhist teachings and practices.
- To provide a sound academic education, which is informed by the National Curriculum and enables children to learn and be challenged in ways that accord with their needs and potential.
- To foster self-esteem by teaching emotional literacy and problem solving skills and enabling children to learn from and transform conflict.
- To constantly strive to create a nurturing environment in which a love of learning is fostered, and positive, respectful relationships are developed among and between all tiers of the school: children, staff, parent community and trustees.



THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL THE STAFF

Plum Village visit, Sept 2014

In the safe, secure environment of a small community school, our committed, skilled staff are dedicated to helping children excel. Working together they provide a rounded academic education informed by the National Curriculum, but with the flexibility and creativity to respond to the children's needs, talents and interests.

Almost all of our 22 teaching staff work part-time and share their classes. This is an approach that has evolved over the years and we believe brings renewed energy to the classroom and a diversity of skills and interests to a small school.

This year the staff will begin an ambitious piece of work revisiting the school's ethos and curriculum with the intention of developing, refining and then publishing a Dharma Primary School curriculum. How do you teach Maths mindfully? How do you bring the dharma into sport? How can literacy embrace the noble truths? It's something we hope to develop and share with the wider educational community.

Although the school actively seeks Buddhist teachers and staff we are committed to excellence in teaching and work practice and do not always require applicants to be practicing Buddhists. We do however expect all staff to take an interest in, read about and embrace all aspects of Buddhist teaching and to deepen their understanding of Buddhist philosophy.

We asked our staff why they chose to come to the Dharma Primary School. Here are some of their replies:

"A desire to work with children in an atmosphere that means there is time for the individual."

"The chance to be a part of something so special and unique."

"A deep commitment to and love of teaching, coupled with the opportunity to take part in the creation of a unique curriculum truly underpinned by the Buddhist ethos of the school."



THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL THE CHILDREN

The school is open to families of all religious faiths, spiritual and cultural backgrounds and has close links with the local community and Buddhist groups in the Brighton-Hove area and beyond. Currently all children have English as their first language and the school supports a small number of children with special needs.

Most children join the school in reception but there are many who arrive later on, possibly from home schooling environments or the mainstream system. The school is very experienced at smoothing these transitions allowing the children to very rapidly settle in and thrive.

A cherished characteristic of the school is the mixing that occurs between year groups and the close friendships that result – it is not uncommon to find a 4-year-old inviting a 10-year-old to their birthday party. This is encouraged by our vertical grouping system, with two year groups in each class, and by interclass projects such as reading buddies.

From the Dharma Primary School children make successful transitions to secondary education with most moving on to local state secondary schools and a few to the independent sector. Secondary schools often comment on how confident, expressive and emotionally intelligent our children are.

We asked children from all over the school what qualities they think are important in a head teacher. Here are some of their answers:

“A Buddhist who knows how to make mindfulness and teachings like that interesting and fun for us.”

“To have an understanding of children’s feelings and really listen to us and take what we say on board.”

“Someone who’s calm and who doesn’t get scary angry with people. Someone kind and good-hearted and good at their job.”

“My Mum.”



THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL THE COMMUNITY

Summer Fayre 2014

We believe that parents and family play an integral role in the child's education and parental input and views are valued. Twice a term there is a community meeting where there is the opportunity for issues raised by parents to be discussed with the Head Teacher and trustees. Each class has a parent representative who assists in organising social events for parents within the group, and when necessary are able to direct parents to relevant individuals with suggestions or concerns.

Our strong sense of community is fostered through events such as weekly pujas, a conscious parenting group, an after school sangha, invited speakers, festival days and school concerts. These bring us all together in an appreciation of the children's work and performances.

The support and commitment of our parent body is a strength of our school. We rely on the generosity of parents and supporters, many of whom regularly give their time, volunteering and helping to run fundraising events such as school dances, winter celebrations and our annual summer fayre.

We asked the community what they felt were the strengths of the school. Here are some of their responses:

"The teaching staff. Their commitment and love of the children is a complete joy to see."

"The sense of community and the deep sense of nurturing."

"The creative approach to teaching. The obvious fun the children have and the sense of fun with the teachers too."

"Small classes, mindful teachers, a focus on honouring feelings, an effort to create community and connection, a kind and gentle approach, respectful of children."



THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL THE TRUSTEES

The school is governed by a board of trustees that fluctuates in size from six to twelve individuals. Two of the trustees are elected from the parent body and the remaining from the local community, all are elected on the basis of their skills and experience. The board meets at least once every six weeks and has an active and supportive relationship with the staff and school.

David Glendining – Chair

David Glendining has been a Buddhist practitioner for more than 40 years and has supported the Dharma Primary School since its inception. He is a Trustee of the English Buddhist Monastery Trust, a charity fostering the Buddha's teachings in this country, and is Chair of the Cittaviveka Advisory Group, a lay group helping to run Chithurst Forest Monastery in West Sussex. He facilitates a local meditation group and for the last 12 years has run a Product Development consultancy. He brings to the board experience of running a business and of charitable activities within a Buddhist framework.

Tony Owers – Treasurer

Tony has been practising Buddhism for more than 20 years. After a long corporate career, which culminated in a key role as a Human Resources Director, he ran his own recruitment business and an Art Gallery in Hove and is currently a practising artist. Tony brings to the Board of Trustees business and personnel management experience.

THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Job Description

Accountable to: the Board of Trustees

Nature and Scope of Job

The role of Head Teacher is to lead and manage the planning, delivery and evaluation of the educational programme for the school, underpinned by the principles of mindfulness in education and the school's Buddhist ethos. The Head Teacher will:

- Provide educational leadership through the coordination of the school's teaching and learning programmes and the professional development of staff. One day per week classroom teaching will be required.
- Provide spiritual leadership for the whole school community through guidance, instruction and modelling, based on a compassionate and mindful approach, encompassing all Buddhist traditions.
- Work with the governing body, in consultation with others, to further develop, communicate and implement the overall strategic vision for the school.
- Work collaboratively to unite, direct and nurture all members of the school staff, and communicate effectively with parents and the wider school community. Including representing the school on a national and international level.
- Be responsible for managing the school's policies, regulations and procedures in line with The Independent School Standards (England) 2010:
(http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/pdfs/ukxi_20101997_en.pdf)
(http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/2374/pdfs/ukxi_20142374_en.pdf)
- Ensure that all students are provided a safe learning environment by leading the school in its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people as required under the Education Act 2002.

Key Areas of Responsibility

1. Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

Supervise the educational programme and learning outcomes of the school, consistent with the school's philosophy and values, including:

- Working with the staff to further develop and implement the school's curriculum, informed but not limited by the National Curriculum and underpinned by the school's Buddhist ethos.
- Working with the staff to further develop and implement a Buddhist pedagogical approach or Teaching and Learning Policy.
- Overseeing the consistent and continuous evaluation of learning outcomes for all students.
- Overseeing reporting procedures to parents and educational authorities.
- Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing classroom practice and working with staff to further promote improvement strategies, consistent with current educational research and thinking.

The Head Teacher is also required to spend one day per week classroom teaching so is additionally responsible for:

- Being a role model for effective teaching practice to staff within the school.
- Ensuring the curriculum is delivered effectively and that pupils receive a high quality education in a supportive setting.

- Planning for the educational needs of the class in collaboration with other part-time teachers to ensure the teaching is well planned and organised.
- Assessing pupil's work and recording their attainments so that their progress is monitored and recorded and appropriate action is taken.
- Regularly and effectively communicating the progress of every pupil's learning to parents and carers.

2. Ethos

Develop a culture of enquiry into the school's ethos for teachers, students and parents, based on the core Buddhist principles of wisdom, compassion and mindfulness, including:

- Modelling Buddhist principles as a whole school approach through all interactions within the school, including staff, students, parents and the wider community.
- Guiding staff, students and parents in developing mindfulness, wisdom and compassion through sharing Buddhist teachings and practice.
- Ensuring a safe and supportive environment that encourages and enables staff and students to take responsibility for their behaviour, and more clearly recognise the consequences of their actions.
- Committing to the 5 Precepts/5 Mindfulness Trainings and using these as a base for promoting ethical action throughout the school community.

3. Vision and Strategy

Work with the Governing Body, in consultation with others, to further develop a shared, strategic vision for the school that reflects its Buddhist ethos and inspires and motivates pupils, parents and staff:

- Working within the school community to translate the vision into agreed objectives and operational plans as documented in the school's improvement plan.
- Ensuring the strategic vision of the school is clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon effectively by all.
- Regularly reviewing and updating the school improvement plan to reflect the developing nature of the school.

4. Leadership

Build a united, supportive and inclusive learning environment, which enables everyone to thrive and achieve their full potential:

- Developing a positive culture whereby everyone works together, shares knowledge and understanding, celebrates success and accepts responsibility for outcomes.
- Developing and maintaining effective strategies and procedures for staff induction, professional development and performance review.
- Providing opportunities for professional development through on going mentoring and coaching and taking appropriate action when performance falls below the required standards.
- Ensuring effective planning, allocation, support and evaluation of work undertaken by staff, ensuring clear delegation of tasks and devolution of responsibilities.
- Managing the staff's workload to allow space for reflection and sharing and a healthy work/life balance.
- Regularly reviewing own practice, setting personal targets and taking responsibility for own continuing personal development.
- Being accountable for the efficient and effective running of the school to students, parents, carers and trustees and promoting collective responsibility.

5. Resources, Policies and Procedures

Manage, evaluate and supervise effective, clear procedures for the operation and functioning of the school, consistent with the philosophy, vision and values of the school including:

- Human Resources
- Policies and Procedures
- Budget Management
- Generation of alternative income streams
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Preparation for Independent Schools Inspectorate
- Facilities Management

6. Communication and Community Building

Facilitate the building of relationships both internally and externally to create a nurturing and fruitful community that will support the school now and in the future:

- Using wise speech in all communications: being truthful, useful and timely and with a heart of loving kindness.
- Fostering good relations within the school community of staff, parents and students and all those connected to the school.
- Representing the school locally, nationally and internationally as an inclusive and innovative learning environment, underpinned by the principles of mindfulness in education and the school's Buddhist ethos.
- Working with the board and staff to further develop the relationship with the school's newly created 'Wise Council' of monastics, Dharma teachers and educators to ensure that the ethos is well grounded and accurately reflects the Buddha's teachings.
- Working with the board and staff to further develop the relationship with Plum Village and the Wake Up Schools initiative.
- Building links with other Buddhist and mindfulness organisations and networks, both in the local community and around the world.
- Initiating and overseeing fundraising in support of the schools development plan.

7. Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment

Lead the school in its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people as required under the Education Act 2002 and share this commitment with all staff and volunteers.

- Ensuring that the policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are fully implemented and followed by all staff.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed practices.
- Ensuring that sufficient resource is allocated to enable the designated safeguarding person and other staff to take part in strategy discussions and any inter-agency meetings or assessment of children.

THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Selection Criteria

Your formal application should specifically address each of the following selection criteria:

SC1: Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

Capacity to be a role model for primary school teaching practice and lead on the development of a curriculum underpinned by the principles of mindfulness in education and the school's Buddhist ethos.

SC2: Ethos

Capacity to provide spiritual leadership for the school and create classroom practices and a whole school approach that authentically engages with the school's Buddhist ethos and vision.

SC3: Vision

Capacity to develop and implement a clear vision for the school and to successfully deliver a strategic plan.

SC4: Leadership

Capacity to inspire, develop and unite the staff and wider school community to create an innovative, inclusive and supportive learning environment underpinned by the school's Buddhist ethos.

SC5: Resources, Policies and Procedures

Capacity to effectively manage financial, physical and human resources including policies and procedures and fundraising initiatives.

SC6: Communication and Collaboration

Capacity to establish and maintain productive community partnerships both internally and externally to enrich the school's learning environment and support the school's development.

SC7. Safeguarding

Capacity to model appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and promote the welfare and safeguarding of children within the school.

Additional Information Required

The following criteria must be judged as satisfactory when pre-employment checks are completed:

- Identity check
- Evidence of teaching experience and relevant qualifications
- Provision of contact details of at least four referees
- Evidence of engagement with Buddhist teachings and any retreat experience
- Right to work in the UK (this can be applied for in conjunction with the school if necessary)
- Enhanced certificate of disclosure from Disclosure and Barring Service (UK)
- Additional police/criminal record checks if the applicant has lived outside the UK
- If successful at point of offer you will also be required to sign a Fitness Declaration form

THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Opportunities and Challenges

When the school first opened its doors in 1994, it was the first primary school in Europe to use the principles of mindfulness and the values of Buddhism to inform a primary school education. Now, 20 years on, as the educational world catches up, it is timely for the school to reflect on what it has learnt, where it is now and its vision for the future.

We asked our trustees and staff what they felt were the opportunities and challenges the school now faces:

“Connecting with the world of education, on a national and international level, to share our experiences, build partnerships, and ensure we are a part of the on-going discussion on the role of mindfulness in schools and the benefits it can bring.”

“Developing a unique curriculum underpinned by the ethos of the school that can be shared with others.”

“Expanding the Early Years department with the addition of a new building on the site. This would secure a financial base for the school and feed in to the upper years.”

“Nurturing our new relationship with Plum Village and the Wake Up Schools Initiative and positioning ourselves as a leader in mindful education.”

“To see the school striving for academic excellence whilst still holding on to its creative and flexible approach.”

“Finding additional revenue streams or a benefactor to boost the school’s financial position, allowing it to grow and develop.”

“Improving and developing the school buildings and facilities.”

“Finding ways to offer our education to people without the financial means.”

“Uniting the staff in their practice and creating an environment in which they all can thrive.”

“Creating space for the teachers where they can be nurtured and sustained.”

“Addressing the gender imbalance (historically the school attracts more boys than girls).”

“Looking outside the school and even the UK for inspiration. We have the freedom to be innovative, creative and ground breaking when it comes to education.”

“Ensuring the school is kept at capacity. More children makes the school better for everyone.”



THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Brighton Pavilion

Staff Information

Teaching Staff: Head + 12PT teachers

Teaching Assistants: 9 PT

Admin/Finance Officers: 3 PT

Support Staff: 3 PT

Class Information

Class		Maximum Size	Present Size (Sept 2014)
Sunflower	Nursery	14	14
Dragonfly	Foundation	12	12
Mountain	Years 1&2	20-22	17
Ocean	Years 3&4	20-22	15
Lotus	Years 5&6	20-22	16
Total		86-92	74

School Information

Location: The school is located on the outskirts of Brighton in the quiet residential area of Patcham.

School Buildings: The school owns a beautiful building, set in its own grounds, that was built in the 1930's and was once a family home. Today the buildings have been extended and adapted and now contains 5 large classrooms, a large reception/office area, smaller offices for its administrative staff and a small staff room.

Secondary Education: From the Dharma Primary School most children move on to local state and independent secondary schools in Brighton. Although part of the original vision was to start a Dharma Secondary School, no plans are currently in place.

OFSTED Inspection: The school was last inspected in February 2010 and was deemed to provide *'a good quality of education where pupils enjoy coming to school and become confident and self-aware... outstanding personal and social development.'* Follow this link to read more: http://www.dharmaschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Ofsted_Index.pdf

Financial Budget 2014/2015: The budget for this financial year is approximately £450K. A small surplus is also held.

The Local Area

The school is fortunate to be situated between one of England's best-loved seaside towns and the beautiful South Downs National Park. A five-minute drive from the school will take you to the top of Ditchling beacon with views out to the sea, and along the 140km of rolling South Downs. Nearby there are beautiful rural villages but also the cosmopolitan offerings of Brighton. A 50-minute train ride will take you to the heart of London and 20 minutes away is Gatwick's international airport with regular flights to cities across Europe.



View from Ditchling Beacon