



August 2018

Dear applicant,

Thank you for expressing an interest in applying for a senior leadership position at BSiX. As even a cursory study will reveal, the college is currently in challenging circumstances, beset both with major financial difficulties and equally sizeable quality issues. The abiding aim of the Corporation, staff and local politicians is to preserve BSiX's existence as an autonomous, self-governing institution. At present, our prospects of doing so have been brought into serious question by the dual failure to attract planned numbers of students and to give convincing expression to the college's fundamental assumption that a comprehensive, inclusive ethos and the achievement of academic excellence can be complementary and not conflicting realities.

Despite the scale of the task ahead, there are grounds for optimism. Staff are fully aware of the situation, but morale is high. There is much strong classroom practice, some excellent support services and a general willingness to respond positively to changes of approach and the need for economy. A re-constituted governing body, led by a supportive but demanding and ambitious Chair, is determined not to tolerate the continuation of discredited policy and insufficiently high expectation. A clear priority now is to assemble a senior management team with the collective ability to harness the energies and skills of staff, the diligent oversight of governors and - most importantly - the aspirations of students and to implement coherent and effective strategies for improvement.

My own appointment as Principal, like that of the Chair, dates from May 2018. As a veteran of three previous college principalships, this was the year I had intended to begin the process of reducing my work commitments. In the event, the opportunity to contribute to the recovery of a college with unquestionably important values and the potential to be a massive asset to its community was irresistible. I have not regretted the decision for a second; rather, I impatiently await the arrival of managerial reinforcements keen to join the task of raising educational quality and securing financial stability in ways which, as far as possible, respond directly to prevailing realities whilst minimising the damage done to staff motivation and wellbeing. As important as proven expertise in a given area of responsibility, each of the new Vice Principals must possess a commitment to working as part of a team and taking an active interest in all aspects of the college's operation. It would be perfectly reasonable to apply for more than one of the VP positions, stating a first preference whilst explaining why a second option would be similarly attractive and doable.

In summary, the advertised posts are not for the faint-hearted. There are many difficult tasks to accomplish and a pressure to move quickly. BSiX has no divine right to remain independent or to shape its own future direction, and the repercussions of failure are potentially severe. That said, the

sense of professional satisfaction to be derived from a successful upturn in the college`s fortunes would be comparably massive. Anyone interested in ultimately becoming a Principal could well learn a lot and enjoy ample opportunity to prove his or her credentials for the job. I will not work into my dotage and governors have made no secret of the fact that they would like to attract now my possible successor as head of BSix.

I trust that I have not deterred any prospective applicants and look forward to hearing from you!

Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kevin Watson", followed by a comma.

Kevin Watson  
**Principal**