

Job Description

Role: Assistant Headteacher

School: Oak Lodge School, Heath View, East Finchley, N2 0QY
Barnet Special Education Trust

Contract: Full time, Permanent

Start date: September 2026

Salary: Leadership Pay Scale – Outer London £58497 to £68799

About Oak Lodge School

Oak Lodge School is a special school for young people aged 11-19 with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs. We are part of Barnet Special Education Trust, a forward-thinking multi-academy trust dedicated to providing outstanding education and care for children and young people with special educational needs across Barnet.

At Oak Lodge, we pride ourselves on our person-centred approach, small class sizes, and therapeutic environment. Our students benefit from a highly adapted curriculum, specialist facilities, and a multidisciplinary team including therapists, specialist teachers, and support staff who work together to meet each young person's unique needs. We focus not only on academic progress but also on developing communication, independence, social skills, and emotional wellbeing, preparing our students for meaningful and fulfilling adult lives.

Main Purpose of the Role

As a key member of the Senior Leadership Team at Oak Lodge School, the Assistant Head will drive and oversee all aspects of student personal development across the school. This role is crucial in preparing students with learning disabilities, autism, and complex needs for life beyond school, ensuring that every young person has access to a rich, broad, and balanced set of experiences that support their academic, social, emotional, and independence development.

You will work closely with our leadership team and external partners to create meaningful opportunities tailored to our students' individual needs and aspirations.

Key Responsibilities

- **Lead the design and implementation of a high-quality, accessible work experience programme** specifically tailored for our learners, building partnerships with local employers and supported employment services.
- **Oversee and develop the school's social enrichment and clubs programme**, ensuring a wide range of sensory, creative, physical, and social opportunities that are inclusive and adapted to individual needs.
- **Collaborate with the Preparation for Adulthood Lead** to secure the best possible post-16 and post-19 outcomes for school leavers, including transitions to further education, employment, independent living, and community participation.
- **Work with subject leaders** to enrich the curriculum with real-world learning experiences and establish links with external organisations, including charities, community groups, and specialist services.
- **Support and implement targeted intervention groups** to address communication, sensory, and social-emotional needs across the school, using evidence-based approaches.
- **Work with the Educational Visits Co-ordinator** to formalise and expand the educational visits programme, ensuring all trips are accessible, purposeful, and supported by thorough risk assessments tailored to our students' needs.
- **Collaborate with subject specialist teachers** to ensure progression and opportunities in the arts, life skills, and vocational learning, celebrating student achievement and promoting independence.
- **Provide professional development, coaching, and annual review oversight** for an assigned group of teachers.
- **Oversee assessment and monitoring** for assigned teachers, ensuring progress is tracked effectively through person-centred learning plans and EHCP targets.
- **Offer pastoral support and foster parental engagement** for assigned class groups, maintaining strong communication with families and involving them in their child's development.
- **Lead and contribute to staff professional development** in areas of responsibility.
- **Develop, implement, and monitor policies** for areas of responsibility, ensuring they reflect best practice in SEND education.
- **Support the school's safeguarding procedures** and contribute to student regulation and wellbeing alongside the wider leadership team.
- **Manage budgets** for assigned areas of responsibility, ensuring resources are used effectively to benefit all students.

Person Specification

Qualifications and Training

- Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or equivalent
- Evidence of relevant and recent professional development, particularly in SEND, autism, or personal development

Desirable: Specialist qualifications or training in autism, learning disabilities, de-escalation techniques, SCERTS, trauma-informed practice, child development or therapeutic approaches

Experience

Essential:

- Successful teaching experience in a special school or specialist setting, ideally with leadership responsibilities
- **Demonstrable experience of working with young people with special educational needs, including learning disabilities, complex needs and/or autistic learners**
- Experience developing and implementing enrichment, personal development, or work experience programmes tailored to SEND students
- Experience of developing and implementing person-centred learning plans and adapting curriculum and resources to individual needs
- Understanding of how to regulate students using pro-active strategies and de-escalation techniques
- Experience working collaboratively with multidisciplinary teams, including therapists, families, and external agencies
- Experience contributing to EHCP implementation, annual reviews, and progress tracking
- Experience supporting or leading staff teams in a SEND context
- Experience working with external partners, organising accessible educational visits, and building community links

Desirable:

- Experience in a secondary special school setting
- Experience of transition planning and preparation for adulthood for young people with SEND

Skills and Knowledge

Essential:

- Strong understanding of the needs of young people with learning disabilities and complex needs, including communication and sensory profiles
- Knowledge of person-centred approaches, differentiation, and scaffolded teaching strategies
- Knowledge of regulation strategies, use of special interests, and transactional supports to enhance student engagement
- Strong understanding of personal development, enrichment, safeguarding, and SEND best practice
- Excellent leadership, communication, and organisational skills, with the ability to communicate effectively with students, families, and professionals
- Knowledge of current SEND legislation, including the SEND Code of Practice and EHCP processes
- Ability to coach and mentor colleagues and foster professional growth in SEND pedagogy
- Skilled in developing and monitoring policies and procedures relevant to SEND settings
- Effective budget management skills
- Strong record-keeping and reporting skills, with attention to detail

Personal Qualities

Essential:

- Empathy, patience, and a genuine commitment to improving outcomes for young people with special educational needs
- High expectations for all students and a strong commitment to inclusive practice and equality
- Ability to inspire and motivate students and staff, celebrating small steps and individual progress
- Collaborative and approachable leadership style, with the ability to work flexibly and adapt to the changing needs of students
- Strong commitment to the ethos and values of Oak Lodge School and Barnet Special Education Trust
- Resilient, flexible, and able to work under pressure while maintaining a calm and positive approach

- Commitment to upholding confidentiality, safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of vulnerable young people at all times
- A proactive approach to professional development and staying current with SEND best practice