



SEAX Trust Executive Team
Chief Financial & Operations Officer
Candidate Information Pack



SEAX Trust

A Special Schools Trust based in Essex



Welcome to SEAX Trust

Thank you for your interest in this pivotal position within the Executive Team at SEAX Trust.

SEAX Trust is a multi-academy trust of five special academies, each with their own unique style and specialism. Our schools span Essex; from Brentwood, to Chelmsford and on to Colchester. They serve over six hundred wonderful young people with a range of special educational needs: from moderate learning difficulties; speech, language and communication needs and social, emotional and mental health needs, as well as meeting the needs of a significant group of pupils in all of our schools with an autism diagnosis.

At SEAX, we work to make sure that every young person has an excellent education, which gives them every chance for the brightest of futures. We believe learning is more than simply expanding knowledge, but for our young people it is about developing skills and opportunities to be ready for a great future contributing to communities. It starts with the relationships we build together in our educational communities and has led to one of our values, which is to: *'Put Young People at the Heart of Everything we do'*.

Key to our success is the commitment of our highly valued body of staff. They are the people who have made our schools the joyful, kind beacons of hard work and learning they are today. You will find some of their testimonies in this pack and further information on our websites, but if you would like to visit or speak to us to find out more, we would welcome your phone call or email.

We now have a very exciting opportunity to appoint a Chief Financial & Operations Officer—a brand new position within SEAX Trust! The successful candidate will be based within and lead the operational staff within the Trust's Executive Team, with an opportunity to work flexibly, and will work to support our schools, Trustees and the CEO in terms of the Trust's next steps for strategic financial and operational development. This is an exciting time for SEAX, as our brand new provision, The Hawthorns School moves into its permanent building in Chelmsford and the Trust looks forward to welcoming more schools in this phase of growth.

As you discover more about us, if you feel you support our values and think you might be someone special who could make a difference for our young people at SEAX, we most certainly want to hear from you.

Ruth Sturdy
CEO, SEAX Trust



Ruth Sturdy
CEO, SEAX Trust

The SEAX Trust Vision

Our Vision:

SEAX is a Trust which:

- puts no limits on what we believe young people can achieve; creating opportunities and meeting individual needs so that our young people can live rich and fulfilled lives
- Values our staff and is committed to providing an environment which creates opportunities for professional growth and development
- has the courage and drive to challenge and champion change to enable equal opportunity and equity for all
- influences, respects, listens and acts and which in turn is known as a voice to listen to, act upon and respect.

The Trustees and Executive Team, along with the Headteachers, have worked together to develop this Vision and the Seven Key Drivers which we use to ensure that all our decisions are based on strong principles.

Our Seven Key Drivers are:

- **Ensuring an excellent education** with a focus on meeting individual needs and where no limits are placed on achievement
- **Young people are prepared for the future;** for meaningful and suitable employment, self- advocacy and independent living
- **Leadership at all levels** including governance supports our academies and challenges them to better meet the needs of our children and young people
- **Investing in our staff** means that they are well equipped and passionate about providing the very best for all our young people
- **Providing a safe, sustainable and stimulating environment** in which we push the boundaries of what is possible through harnessing the power of edtech
- **Collaboration and sharing** are central to our belief that we all learn from each other
- **Financial decisions** are always made with our children and young people at the centre of our thinking which results in value for money



Job Description

Chief Financial & Operations Officer

SEAX Trust Central Team

Actual Salary: £72,394 to £79,574 per annum*

LGPCD Salary Scale 14 + Fringe*

(*Salary negotiable for the right candidate)

Full time: 37 hours per week/52 weeks per annum

Job Title:	Chief Financial & Operations Officer
Grade:	Scale 14 (Points 54-58) plus Fringe Area Allowance
Based At:	Executive Team Office in Brentwood, with regular visits to our 5 schools and with the offer of additional flexibility to work from home/at our other schools
Reports to:	CEO
Liaison with:	CEO, Trustees, Executive Team as lead for operations across the Trust
Job Purpose:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic financial and operational lead for SEAX Trust• Ensure financial efficiency and effectiveness in terms of whole Trust budget planning• Deploy high-level strategic people skills in order to foster excellent working relationships, both within and outside the Trust, thereby developing and promoting the Trust's vision for business and operational excellence.
Principal Accountabilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead the operational and business vision, in line with the SEAX vision, with a primary focus on meeting key strategic milestones through the use of relevant key performance indicators• Chief Finance Officer for the Trust and, as such, supporting the Accounting Officer in ensuring that the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) operates compliant and robust financial governance in line with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook• Responsibility to the Board of Trustees for the monitoring of cashflow, financial planning and other financial activities• Lead all operational functions of the Trust working to ensure that all business functions including Finance, HR, Governance & Compliance, Estates and IT are run efficiently, effectively and are in line with the Trust's strategic direction• Providing a comprehensive business and financial support service in liaison with Trustees, CEO and contracted business support services to the academies

Job Description

You need to be collaborative and a strong team player, with the ability to lead and motivate others, while also being adaptable to the changing demands of the role.

You're a confident communicator with the ability to manage numerous high-level projects at once with a methodical approach to problem-solving.

Strategy, Change & Growth:

Working closely with the CEO, Trustees and the Headteachers, in order to bring our plans to life, you'll be a big part of managing changes across our academies.

- Plan and implement cross-Trust growth strategy in relation to finance and operations
- Lead and support teams in times of change
- Develop an exemplary level of trust with colleagues and other stakeholders, ensuring that all forms of communication are respectful and of the highest professional level
- Uphold the vision and values of the SEAX Trust in all communications with internal and external stakeholders

Business Planning & Performance:

As the expert behind our strategic plans and budgets, ensure that our finances are robust and that we are always on the right track.

- Develop and maintain a medium and long term financial plan for the Trust
- Contribute to the delivery of the business plan for the growth of the MAT
- Produce long term financial plans and forecasts aligned with the strategic planning of the MAT and its member academies
- Manage the MAT's service contracts and seek best value in procurement across the Trust
- Work with SEAX staff and legal advisers to oversee new schools joining the MAT and manage any risks relating to finance and estates arising from due diligence
- Work with project managers and legal advisers to ensure the conversion process is managed accurately and in a timely manner
- Work under the guidance of the CEO in order to meet the challenge, embrace change and to achieve results

Risk Management:

Risk management is a key part of the role. Collaboration with finance, HR, and legal teams is essential. Additionally, a proactive approach to driving efficiency and keeping abreast of educational trends is crucial.

- Provide a bespoke finance support service to all Trust academies, including regular visits to academies
- Regularly up-date the trust's academies with new compliance requirements
- Create and maintain excellent working relationships and ensure that effective communication paths are maintained between academy communities and the Trust
- Ensure all forms and returns required by the government departments are prepared and submitted on time

Job Description

- Implement a sound system of internal control across the Trust and monitor its effectiveness

Financial Oversight & Compliance:

In this role, you'll manage all financial aspects, ensuring full compliance with regulatory standards and providing transparent financial reporting to senior management.

- Develop and maintain a secure overview of the management of all financial issues both at the central trust and each of the Trust's academies
- Provide efficient financial assistance to the CEO, the Trustees and Headteachers regarding all aspects of financial management
- Keep the CEO, the Trustees and other key personnel up-to-date with the current developments and changes in finance matters
- Support in ensuring the financial stability of the Trust
- Advise the CEO and Trustees on all matters relating to financial strategy and the impact of decision on the financial position of the Trust
- Manage the Trust's balance sheet to include intercompany reconciliations, fixed asset accounting and control account reconciliations
- Support in the preparation of consolidated financial statements in the format specified by the DfE and in accordance with the audit timetable
- Work closely with external auditors and regulatory bodies to meet reporting obligations
- Co-ordinate the trust's annual internal scrutiny programme in consultation with trustees
- Take an active part in the implementation of, and on-going compliance with GDPR requirements

Administration:

With the day-to-day support of the school HR Administration Teams, you will make sure that we are highly effective, working with and line managing the Director of HR to monitor staff attendance, recruitment and retention.

- Work with the CEO to develop a thoughtful approach to the centralisation of business operations within the Trust
- Line manage Trust operational executive team members
- Provide well-written reports to Trustees at all trustee meetings and present these in a confident manner.

Estates:

Line managing and working closely with the Trust's Estate Manager, and with an excellent Site Team in place, you will strategically lead the maintenance and development of our school buildings, whilst ensuring high levels of health and safety compliance.

IT:

Line managing and working closely with the Trust's Head of IT in the development and delivery of an ICT strategy that supports educational and development plans.

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Governance:

You'll be a key contributor in our Trustee Board and Resources, Audit & Risk committee meetings, highlighting key strategic issues and ensuring these can be challenged to drive effective decision making.

- Review Trust policies, processes and procedures to ensure compliance with various external regulations, including filing deadlines regarding VAT, PAYE, DfE, HRMC, Charity Commission and Companies' Acts
- Ensure that effective communication paths are maintained between academy communities and the Trust
- Establish and deliver accurate and timely reporting systems with regard to finance and business planning for Trustees and the CEO, including analysis and recommendations
- Produce regular reports in a clear and concise format for Trustees

Supervision:

Reporting to the CEO, you'll be overseeing the Estates, IT, Governance & Compliance and HR leaders in the executive team as well as line managing the Trust's central Finance Manager

- Deliver personalised finance professional development and training for central Trust staff and academy administration staff, including presenting to groups of staff
- Personally undertake regular professional development to ensure services provided to Trust academies are fit for purpose and compliant
- Be motivational to staff teams, delivering Trust Vision and Ethos at all times

General Duties

- Establish constructive **relationships** and be supportive of, and sensitive to, the needs of colleagues, young people and their families and the wider Trust community
- Encourage **interaction and teamwork** within the academies and Trust; attend relevant Trust meetings, as required, share ideas and new initiatives
- Respect **confidentiality** and maintain **professionalism** at all times
- Actively engage in relevant training opportunities, taking responsibility for own **professional development**
- Participate in the **performance and development review process**, taking personal responsibility for identification of learning, development and training opportunities in discussion with line manager
- Contribute to the overall **ethos, work and aims** of the Trust
- Comply with all **Trust policies and procedures**, including the Code of Conduct and those relating to child protection, equal opportunities, health & safety, confidentiality and data protection, reporting concerns to an appropriate person.

Job Description

The duties above are neither exclusive nor exhaustive and the post-holder may be required by the CEO/Directors of Business to carry out appropriate duties within the context of the job, skills and grade.

The SEAX Trust and all of its academies are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to complete a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) application, medical checks and references.

This job description will be reviewed annually and may be subject to change or modification at any time after consultation with the post-holder. It is not a comprehensive statement of procedures and tasks but sets out the main expectations of the Trust in relation to the post-holder's professional responsibilities and duties.

Person Specification

Qualifications & Experience

- MAAT, ACA, ACCA, CIPFA or equivalent accountancy qualification
- School Business Management qualification (desirable)
- Experience of working in a school/educational setting as Business/Finance manager (desirable)
- Educated to NVQ Level 4
- A record of continuing relevant professional development
- Experience of leading and managing business operations across multiple sites

Leadership Qualities & Personal Attributes

- Have effective leadership qualities with the ability to enthuse, establish cooperation and manage performance
- Have the ability to influence others through well-respected, trusting relationships
- Be a strong presence, with high visibility in the academy environments
- Have strong team-building skills and an inclusive management style; be open to new ideas and understand how to explore and nurture these
- Have a clear understanding of the value of distributed leadership within a coherent organisational structure, where delegation & distribution of roles do not preclude cross fertilisation of views and ideas
- Be able to understand how and when to delegate, and to whom
- Be able to prioritise effectively
- Be capable of working under pressure; be willing & able to work long hours when necessary, and be able to manage time effectively
- Understand the importance of setting, by example, the appropriate ethos & culture at SEAX Trust
- Be able to build trust and mutual respect among staff, trustees, governors, colleagues from other academies and schools, suppliers, parents and students
- Be able to manage and influence internal and external stakeholders and outsourced service providers

Management

- Possess excellent management & administrative skills
- Possess well developed analytical skills with attention to detail and high levels of accuracy
- Possess a good understanding of financial and business issues, and how these impact the educational needs of the Trust's students
- Be confident in engaging in strategic finance and business planning and monitoring
- Understand the importance of a stable financial position and the significant link between staffing and the likely outcomes for pupils

Strategic

- Have a clear understanding of the future direction of the Trust and what strategic steps are necessary to support this
- Work strategically, keeping the end goal continuously in mind and prioritising this above other daily tasks
- Have a clear understanding of why schools need to have a strong reputational staff base and how this can be achieved and maintained

Person Specification

- Maintain a good working relationship with the SEAX Trustees, ensuring they are appropriately informed about personnel and staffing matters
- Understand the importance of good PR within the wider community
- Have a genuine interest in working collaboratively with other schools
- In collaboration with the Trustees and academy Headteachers, identify the medium/long- term future business needs of the individual academies
- Understand how to drive new ideas forward, facilitate and manage change

Dealing with People

- Have outstanding oral communication skills in both formal and informal situations with different 'audiences'
- Have excellent written communication skills
- Be available and approachable, treating people respectfully, fairly and professionally
- Be able to develop and sustain excellent working relationships with staff and stakeholders at all levels, both individually and collectively, supporting them appropriately
- Have the capacity to understand quickly and appreciate the expectations and hopes of Trustees and staff

Personal

- Understand how to achieve all the above, whilst maintaining a good sense of humour and work/ life balance, underpinned by the energy, enthusiasm and determination which will undoubtedly be needed to ensure the continued and future success of the SEAX Trust

Equality Issues

- Be able to identify when discrimination is taking place in service delivery or the workplace and be able to take appropriate action where this is identified

Special Requirements

- Suitable to work with children and young people
- Ability to work flexibly to meet the demands of the post

Other Requirements

- A willingness and ability to work across the Trust, as required, including the ability to use own means of transport
- Able to attend all Trust sites and occasional evening meetings

Safeguarding

- The post holder *must* promote and safeguard the welfare of children, young and vulnerable people and the post is subject to exacting pre-employment checks, including an enhanced DBS check



Procedure

Candidates should download and complete the SEAX Trust application form available from:
www.seaxtrust.com or www.essexschoolsjobs.co.uk

- Required:** As soon as possible
- Visits:** If you would like to make an appointment to visit, please telephone Kate Stannard, Director of HR on 01245 963006
- Closing Date:** Mid-day on Friday 6th December 2024
- Interview:** To be held at the **SEAX Trust Office** on:
Monday 9th December (Activities) and Friday 13th December 2024 (Interviews)
- Salary and benefits:** 37 hours per week/52 working weeks per annum
Actual Salary: £72,394 to £79,574* including Fringe Area Allowance.
LGPCD Salary Scale 14* + Fringe Area Allowance.
(*Salary is negotiable for the right candidate in relation to experience, qualifications and 'right fit'.)

Flexible Working:

This role will be based at the Trust's Central Office at Grove House School in Brentwood, with the additional flexibility for the successful candidate to agree a pattern of home-working and/or to work from another of our Trust schools in Colchester and/or Chelmsford.

References:

Referees will be contacted **prior to the interview date** to request references on all shortlisted candidates. The Trust also reviews social media relating to shortlisted candidates as part of the screening process to ascertain whether candidates demonstrate appropriate conduct and behaviour and suitability for employment in an educational environment.

Applications should be addressed to:

Mrs Kate Stannard
Director of HR & Assoc CIPD
SEAX Trust
c/o Grove House School
Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood
Essex CM2 1BN

Telephone: 01245 963006
Email: jobs@seaxtrust.com

Our Staff

Although our staff base includes a wide range of professions, from teachers to care workers and administrators to caterers, more importantly, everyone at SEAX has some very special qualities, kindness, dedication, patience and adaptability.

These qualities are key for our administration teams, in the same way as they are for our pupil-facing staff. On any one day, you may be dealing with busy teachers, distressed parents or government departments. Although, at times, you may need to juggle a number of tasks before deciding which one to tackle first, we can promise you that every day will be different, interesting and extremely rewarding. But, if you ever run into difficulties, there will always be someone there to help you, because everyone at SEAX is regarded as an individual and everyone's needs matter.

Professionalism is central to our values and we expect everyone in our community to treat each other with respect. We model the values we want our pupils to develop and, as a result, we believe our schools are unique in the level of care and consideration we all show for others.



Testimonials from Staff

"The supportive atmosphere makes it a joy to come to work."

"I feel completely valued and heard, which is so rare and important."

"Our collaborative culture uplifts everyone, staff and students alike."

"The positive impact we have on our students' lives is deeply fulfilling."

"There is a genuine sense of care for staff wellbeing and personal growth."

"Every day presents a new opportunity to make a difference."



"The team spirit here is incredible. We all pull together for our students."

"I've grown so much professionally, thanks to the development opportunities on offer."

Our promise when you join us

We know that what makes SEAX Trust different is our body of highly valued staff and, in recognition, we implement a wide range of rewards in all of our Trust schools. Joining us means that you will become part of a team of outward-looking professionals, where you will have an opportunity to influence the future.

We promise to offer you:

- An extensive range of training and professional development opportunities
- Support from experienced and dedicated practitioners
- A career pathway progression model with a range of exciting internal career opportunities
- Recognition of achievement
- Direct involvement in wider decision-making
- A fair work/life balance and right to request flexible working from day one
- A highly supportive central team
- A firm commitment to the strengths of equality and diversity
- A sense of cohesion and belonging and opportunity to join cross-Trust groups
- A policy to raise matters of concern
- A Wellbeing Charter offering free counselling support for you and your close family members



Kate Stannard

Director of HR, SEAX Trust

"Although it's true that it's impossible to please everyone all of the time, we will promise to listen, to be fair and to support your request whenever we can. We have an open-door approach in the Trust's Central Team and we're always out visiting our schools, so we really get to know our staff and hear what they have to say. It's good to reflect that at a time when teaching is in national difficulty, we've proven that our SEAX teachers stay in the profession." **Kate Stannard, Director of HR, SEAX Trust**

When life gets in the way of work commitments

We understand that not everyone wants to work full-time and that life sometimes gets in the way of work commitments. That's why, at SEAX Trust, we have introduced a number of ways to get round this.

We have a firm belief that working more flexibly is the way forward and one of the ways to attract and retain the very best staff. We offer the right to request a change in your working pattern from the day you first start work; you can make up to two requests each year; we promise to consult you on our decision and we won't ask you to explain how you think the change could work.

We know you have commitments to young children and elderly relatives and we don't want this to get in the way of your career. We like to offer as many staff as we can the option of working from home, as a regular part of the job, or as and when they need to. We also offer carers an extra week's unpaid leave each year.

We offer sabbaticals for staff development and training, job-shares, flexi-time and, if it's possible, we'll let you pop out to see your child's Christmas Production, too.

We can't promise that we'll be able to meet your request, but we will if we can, and we want you to feel able to ask.

Talk to us at interview about your concerns and we'll see what we can do.



Equality and Diversity

Our commitment to equality and diversity goes far beyond our policy. Supporting children and young people from minority groups is what we do best and it's no different when it comes to the rest of our community.

We recognise that a diverse workforce brings a richness of knowledge and skills, helps our young people relate better to our staff and ensures we are making the most of the talent pool available to us. Therefore, we firmly encourage applications from minority groups.

We have a solid belief that all staff are of equal value, whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, race, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment and whatever their sexual orientation. And we have a 'no tolerance' policy in terms of bullying, victimisation and harassment.

We monitor and publish our Gender Pay Gap figures annually and have a fair and unbiased Pay Policy. We recognise and adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty and our Leadership Team and Trustees set out and publish their new equality objectives at regular intervals.

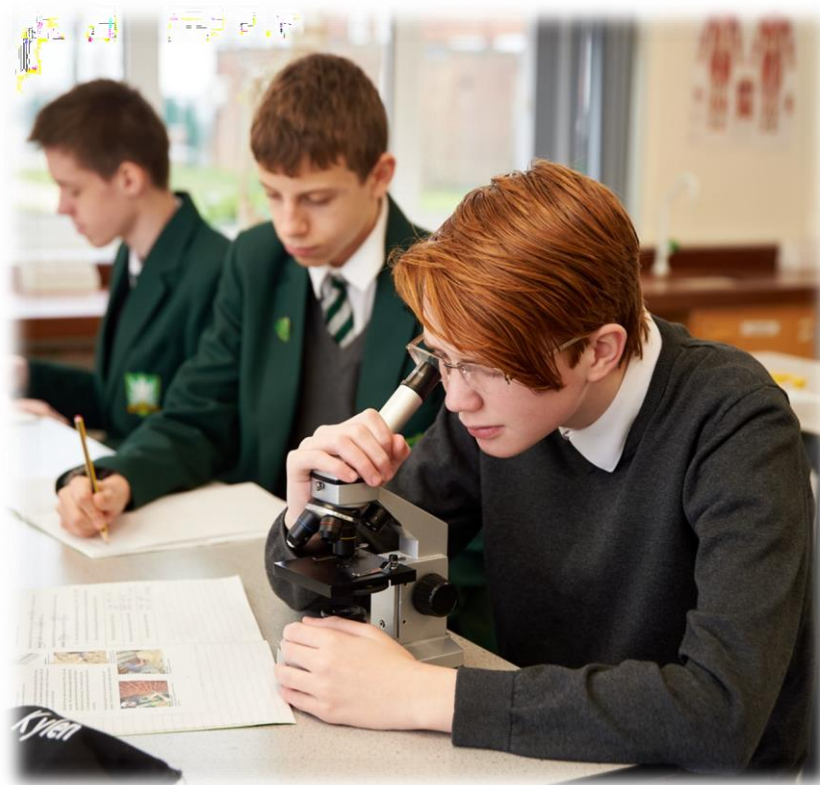
As an organisation, we have acquired recognition as a 'Disability Confident Employer' and actively seek to employ people with disabilities. In fact, we now have a number of our own former pupils working in permanent roles across SEAX.

If you need specific adjustments in order to submit your application, at interview or in your daily work, all you have to do is ask.



Our Recruitment & Selection Process

Our aim is to find the right person for the job. We want you to have (or be willing to learn) the skills you'll need for the role. This doesn't mean that you already need to have a long list of qualifications. It's more important to us for you to have a 'can-do' attitude, a willingness to learn and for you to be approachable and show commitment. We want you to be happy at work and to feel rewarded by the job you do.



The Job Description

The Job Description sets out details of the role; the tasks you'll undertake, and the responsibilities you'll have. It also includes details such as who you'll report to, the salary grade and purpose of the job.

At SEAX, each job forms part of a wider network of roles known as 'Job Families'. A Learning Support Assistant, for example, is part of the Class Support family which includes HLTAs and Cover Supervisors. We find this helps staff aspiring to progress, allowing everyone to see clearly what their next career steps might be. It's often the case that our Learning Support Assistants choose to go on to teacher training—something that we actively encourage and support within SEAX.

The Person Specification

The Person Specification allows you to see at a glance exactly what qualifications, skills and past experience might be necessary for the role. It will form the basis of your written application and our Recruitment Panel will judge all applicants fairly against this in the shortlisting process.

If you don't already have all of the requirements listed in the Person Specification, it doesn't necessarily mean that you aren't the right person for the job; consider whether you are prepared to learn and, if so, explain this to us in your application.

The Key Information Sheet

The Key Information Sheet sets out the remaining details and covers everything else you need to know.

How to Apply

When you've read through all the information and perhaps taken a look at our website, we hope that you'll consider submitting an application. However, if at any point you'd like more information to help your decision, or if you'd like to arrange an informal visit to one of our schools before applying, please telephone or email us and we'll be delighted to make the necessary arrangements.

In line with our safer recruitment process, once you've made the decision to apply, you'll need to complete one of our Application Forms. It's important that you complete this fully, as it helps us to shortlist applications fairly and, in addition, working with children means that we need to administer a number of background checks, some of which are completed prior to interview. Further details are set out in the Application Form itself.



The Interview Process



We hold interviews as soon as we can after the post has closed, but, where possible, we like to request references prior to interview, so that they are available to the Interview Panel on the day. This means that interviews usually take place about a week after the post has closed.

We aim to keep all candidates fully informed at each stage of the recruitment process; so, you should know when your application has been received; whether or not you have been successful in securing an interview and, of course, after interview, whether you have been successful in securing the post.

Our Student Views

"The support here makes me feel like I can achieve anything."

"This school helps me with my challenges and I feel proud of what I can do now."



"The teachers understand me. I have fun learning and trying new things here. The projects we do are really interesting and make me think differently."



"When I started here, I hadn't been to school for a while. I didn't go out. Today I went into town and met some friends."

"I've made friends and I feel safe here. It's nice to know everyone cares."

SEAX Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to complete a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) application, medical checks and references.