



Job Application Pack

Deputy Headteacher

(Designated Safeguarding

Leader)

The Vacancy

Deputy Headteacher (Designated Safeguarding Leader) September 2026

Full time

Leadership pay scale 17-21

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” Mahatma Gandhi

Castledon School is a special school committed to *Unlocking Potential* for children and young people with additional needs. Guided by our values of **Belonging, Opportunity and Achievement**, we are seeking an experienced leader to join the senior leadership team as Deputy Headteacher, with responsibility as the Designated Safeguarding Leader.

This is an exciting leadership opportunity for someone who believes that feeling safe, understood and valued is the foundation for learning.

The successful candidate will work collaboratively alongside the Headteacher and wider Senior team as part of a strong senior leadership team. They will play a central role in ensuring pupils are safeguarded and supported to thrive, contributing to both the strategic and operational leadership of the school.

Key areas of responsibility will be discussed at interview, and will include safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and safety, therapeutic provision, and support for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children.

Central to the role is the leadership of Castledon’s therapeutic, relational approach to behaviour, recognising the impact of trauma, attachment and additional needs. The Deputy Headteacher will champion positive relationships, emotional wellbeing and consistent practice, ensuring behaviour support is underpinned by care, understanding and high expectations.

As noted in the school’s most recent Ofsted inspection, *“Staff support pupils’ behaviour exceptionally well... Pupils’ culture is incredibly positive and they treat each other with kindness and respect.”*

The role requires a strong understanding of the complexities of a special school environment and a commitment to inclusive practice. Safeguarding, wellbeing and care will be embedded across all aspects of school life, enabling pupils to feel a sense of belonging, access meaningful opportunities and achieve their potential.

Applications

To apply for the role please [click here](#). CVs will not be accepted without a completed application form.

You must complete the application form fully and give details of all employment, training and gaps in employment since leaving secondary school to the present day. Any additional information, which you wish to bring to the notice of the selection panel, should be included in your letter of application (supporting statement). Please ensure you say why and how you meet the criteria from the person specification in your letter of application. Full job description and person specification can be found at the end of this pack.

Shortlisted applicants may be screened prior to interview by checking social media sites. The purpose of such screening will be to ascertain whether a candidate demonstrates appropriate conduct, behaviour, and suitability for employment in a school environment.

Closing date: 6th March 2026 at Midday

Interview date: 20th March 2026

If you have any queries, wish to discuss the role informally or undertake a visit to the Trust, please do not hesitate to contact us via email recruitment@zmat.co.uk or telephone 01702 426707.

We look forward to receiving your application. You will be notified of your application status within two weeks of the vacancy closing date.

Safeguarding Children & Young People

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All staff and volunteers are therefore expected to behave in such a way that supports this commitment. Appointment to this post will be subject to the following satisfactory pre-employment checks:

- Health
- Identity
- Relevant work qualifications
- Right to work in the UK
- Barred List Check (previously List 99)
- Disclosure & Barring Service Check (for all staff and volunteers)
- References
- Childcare Disqualification Declaration Check (relevant Primary School posts only)

Welcome from the CEO



It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our Trust, and I very much hope this job application pack gives you a sense of what it is like working in our Trust, including our vision and values.

We are a small, locally-based Trust in South East Essex, currently comprising one primary school, three secondary schools, and one special school: Laindon Park Primary School and Nursery, The James Hornsby School in Basildon, Castle View School in Canvey Island, and The King John School in Benfleet, and Castledon School in Wickford.

We are intentionally a small Trust and very much see our role as central to the communities we serve.

As a member of staff within the Trust, you become part of a dynamic network of staff working to achieve a shared vision for all of our children. You become a valued member of a small group of schools, able to shape the education of future generations. In doing so, we hope that you feel really well supported

in your career, and that your well-being is always considered. As a member of our Trust, you engage in a professional learning journey which develops you as a practitioner, and allows you to use your talents to transform lives and make a genuine difference.

Our Core Purpose

To enhance the life chances of every child and drive social equity.

Mission Statement

A quality education and experience for all.

Values

Dignity

Collaboration

Positivity

Aspiration

Vision

Zenith Trust will ensure excellence across the pillars of high quality, inclusive education, school improvement, recruitment and retention, finance and operations, and governance and leadership. We will harness the transformative power of collaboration so that all students attend truly outstanding schools.

Regardless of background or need, all students will achieve highly and have high levels of well-being, because they are taught and supported by the very best staff, who are well-trained and supported, buy into Zenith's vision, and are committed to providing a quality education for all. School leaders act ethically, inclusively, and always with the child's best interests at heart. Our students will be aspirational for themselves, enjoying their time at school, and flourishing as individuals within a safe, secure and nurturing environment.

All Zenith schools value students' social, moral, cultural, and spiritual development, building exceptional character so that students are kind, resilient, and inspired to be life-long learners. By working closely with the families and local communities we serve, and listening to students' voices, students will be well-prepared for life in a modern, tolerant Britain. They will secure outstanding academic outcomes and high quality destinations, always well-prepared for their next steps. As adults, they will lead happy, purposeful, and rewarding lives, and make a positive contribution to the world.

Andy Hodgkinson
Chief Executive Officer

Why work for Zenith Multi Academy Trust?

Thank you for considering Zenith Multi Academy Trust as your potential new employer.

If you share our commitment to securing transformational change and sustainable school improvement, and would like to be part of our vision to provide excellence in education, we would love to hear from you.

In return we can offer you:

- A friendly Trust, which places staff wellbeing and development at the forefront of everything we do
- School settings with excellent facilities
- Access to high quality and bespoke CPD across the Trust, including a collaborative project with the Education Endowment Fund (EEF)
- A supportive and positive Early Careers programme run in partnership with University College London and Chafford Hundred Teaching School Hub
- The opportunity to develop your career with and across the Trust Schools
- The Trust is an early adopter of the new NPQs

Staff Wellbeing

The Trust is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all staff, and supports management practices that promote good health and wellbeing for all its employees. The Trust recognises that wellbeing and performance are linked. Improving employees' ability to handle pressure and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved individual and Trust performance, including better outcomes for students.

The Trust has adopted a number of policies to support our commitment to staff wellbeing, including:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing policy, which focuses on the Trust's commitment to maintaining the health and wellbeing of staff
- The Health and Safety policy, which provides a framework for, and measurement of, safe places to work; and
- The staff Recognition and Reward policy, which ensures our staff feel valued for the work they do and recognised for the contribution they make.

The wellbeing and training of our staff are seen as critical in creating the most effective and talented staff team. The high calibre of our staff means that we are constantly striving to improve so that we can provide the outstanding level of education that all our diverse and amazing young people deserve.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

At Zenith Multi Academy Trust, all staff are encouraged to develop their knowledge, skills, understanding, and attitudes to enhance their professional work, regardless of experience. We work towards 'a culture of excellence', where all staff have the opportunity to continue to improve and sharpen their knowledge and practice. All staff who work in the Trust also have access to our innovative, online learning platform 'Zenith Institute', which provides staff with bespoke training and access to the latest research. The Trust pays for membership of a whole range of professional/subject associations, which staff can access free of charge.

Working for Zenith brings other benefits:

- Free Benenden Healthcare Scheme
 - Access to a GP 24/7 hours a day seven days week for you and your immediate family
 - Access to a Mental Health Helpline 24 hours a day seven days a week
 - Access to a care adviser who can provide advice and information on adult care issues
 - Medical Diagnostics
 - Medical Treatment at one of the hospitals in our treatment network for certain procedures
 - Physiotherapy
 - Mental Health Counselling Support
 - Financial Assistsances to a care adviser who can provide advice and information on adult care issues
- Access to Benenden Healthcare rewards and discounts scheme
 - 46% off digital fitness subscriptions
 - 22% off activity trackers from Fitbit
 - Save up to 11% on the cost of gift cards of E-Gifts
 - Lifestyle shopping vouchers – save 6%
 - Home movies rentals – save up to 40%
- VIVUP Employee Assistance Programme and Lifestyle savings membership
- On site staff counselling programme
- Access to Bike2Work scheme
- Annual calendar of wellbeing events
- Eye sight tests
- On-site free medical health checks
- On-site free flu jab clinics
- Free access to on-site gym facilities
- Generous Teachers' Pension and Local Government Pensions schemes
- Generous annual leave entitlement for full-time support staff up to 29 days + 8 bank holidays per annum





Simon Holliday is the Headteacher of Castledon School. This school is a community special school based in Wickford, Essex that aims to unlock the potential of learners aged 5 to 19 with moderate learning difficulties and complex needs. Our motto is "Unlocking Potential".

We work closely with parents, staff and students to create a safe and inclusive community that is based on mutual respect and understanding. Staff, parents and students helped devise the "Castledon Code" which encourages all within our community to be safe, kind, and responsible.

Our school has a range of facilities and resources to support our students' learning and development, including specialist classrooms and equipment, therapy rooms, a sensory room, a soft play area, a music studio, a swimming pool, animal care shelters, and an art room. Our students have access to a range of pathways, including life skills, vocational, and academic. We work with our learners and families to identify their goals and aspirations and offer bespoke pathways that are tailored to each individual student.

Our school has won several awards, including the 2022 Essex SEND Teacher of the Year award. We also recently won the Educational Business Award for Environmental Practice in 2022, and the Community Award in 2021, Academy Partnership Award, and SEN Provision Award in 2019.

We invite you to follow us on Instagram to keep up to date with our school community.



Steve Durkin is the Headteacher of Castle View School. The school is a place where students are put first in everything the school does. Their aims are to pursue excellence, to be the best they can be and they achieve this by working together with parents and the wider community to bring out the very best in their young people.

A good education inspires, opens doors, and makes a difference to the lives of individuals, their families and the wider community. Therefore, the school takes their responsibilities as educators very seriously, doing all they can to help their students achieve anything and everything they set their minds to. The school also takes great pride in providing a happy and harmonious learning environment – one where every student is known as an individual.

As well as valuing academic success, the school strives for every child to become a well-rounded, caring, and confident individual who plays a part in their community, and has the skills and mind-set to contribute positively to its wider society.



Daniel Steel, is the Headteacher at The King John School. As a parent of two young children himself, he leads the school through the eyes of a parent, with very high expectations and aspirations for his students. The King John School is a popular, oversubscribed school where students' very high attendance and levels of achievement reflect their commitment and enjoyment of school life. The school is a large, mixed comprehensive with a well-established sixth form, and serves the ever-growing communities of Thundersley and Benfleet, as well as welcoming students from further afield.

To enable their students to be happy and successful learners, they strive to create a caring, supportive, and aspirational learning community, with high expectations and opportunities for all. They believe in offering a broad and balanced curriculum to enable students to flourish as individuals, and to achieve future success in whatever they choose to become later in life. This includes a strong emphasis on sport and the Arts. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are extensive for all to support in developing knowledge, skills, and cultural capital beyond the classroom setting. These opportunities include enterprise, creative performing arts, and a wide variety of trips and visits. Added to this, their sporting expertise which puts them at the top of the county and national championships in a whole range of sports you will see the school has a lot to offer. They strive to nurture and develop global citizens of the future by celebrating success and valuing aspiration. There is a strong focus on developing students' character by instilling the King John PRIDE values of positivity, resilience, integrity, dignity, and equality. They are determined every student should maximise their potential.

The recruitment, retention, and training of fully-qualified staff play a key part in their drive to secure strong academic outcomes for all students, and to instil a life-long love of learning. They understand the vitally important role of partnerships between families and school, and value their relationships with all members of the community they serve.

They have a thriving sixth form, which has been significantly extended to provide a wealth of additional state-of-the-art facilities. Students achieve well in a wide range of subjects and over a three year trend, the results are in the top 15% of over 2000 schools with 68% A*, A or B grades at A-level. Students' destinations are very strong, and they progress to Higher Education, including Cambridge and other Russell Group universities, apprenticeships, and employment.



Laindon Park is a small school located in a rural, unspoilt area. Their building retains a Victorian character with many historical features. The Headteacher of Laindon is Cristina Portoles, who ensures that they are a school where the child is at the heart of everything they do and leads the decisions they make.

"Pupils enjoy learning and playing together at this small, friendly school. They are confident that everyone is welcome here. From the early years, children learn to share ideas and equipment. Older pupils proudly take on roles in the school to help each other and to care for the school environment," (Ofsted February 2023).



The James Hornsby School is an oversubscribed 'Good' school; as rated by Ofsted, where students are at the heart of all they do. They have a strong family ethos where they believe "Together we excel".

The Headteacher, Tammy Nicholls firmly believes that investing in staff is a priority to ensuring every student receives a high quality education, enabling them to achieve their best. Family, Pride, Ambition, and Excellence are their key drivers for success not only for their students, but for their staff as well. As such staff retention and well-being is high.

The James Hornsby School is extremely proud of the strong family ethos that has been built, which focuses on developing personal character, resilience, independence, and removing barriers to success. They have a vertical tutoring system and every student and staff member are placed into a college structure, this strengthens the sense of belonging.

Their ethos ensures a safe and happy environment where students are at the centre of all they do. They have highly effective safeguarding structures in place and work in collaboration with parents and carers to ensure high levels of attendance, welfare and outcomes.

They have created an environment where all students can make great progress, this is underpinned by a well-structured curriculum that is rigorous and aspirational and is supported by Quality First Teaching.

The ultimate purpose is to ignite hope, drive ambition, and advance the life chances of everyone who is part of their family. They will help students gain qualifications that will open the door of opportunity and develop the character to get them through.

They welcome the chance to meet with you and discuss your development opportunities as part of the James Hornsby and Zenith family!



Testimonials

Having worked at a mainstream comprehensive, I was excited to move roles into a smaller Special Needs school in 2020. As the Exams Officer, I am responsible for ensuring all of our learners are fully supported for their exams, whether that being in exam conditions or through coursework.

Castledon is a very supportive employer, which values each of its staff members both inside and outside of the workplace.

- **Exams Officer, Castledon School**

Having moved from mainstream education to SEND six years ago, I certainly feel I have significantly upskilled during my time at Castledon. I have gained significant knowledge of SEND education and its many teaching and learning strategies whilst thoroughly enjoying the contact with our young people. Students are mostly grateful, receptive and willing to try (even if this means overcoming hurdles and challenges along the way). It is rewarding to know that I am making a difference to the outcomes of so many students and enabling them to achieve their many potentials both academically and socially.

- **English Teacher, Castledon School**

Since beginning my role as a TA at Castledon school I have had the incredible opportunity to work with amazing young people with special educational needs. The ethos of the school is all about creating a safe, kind, and responsible environment, which is evident as soon as you walk through the door of any classroom! The young people constantly inspire me with their incredible minds and can-do attitude. Even when faced with more challenging situations, it's the concrete relationships established between students and staff that turn it all around. I have been given a plethora of opportunities for training to expand and develop my knowledge and skills around working with SEND students, which is invaluable to my career development within the school. You will always be greeted with a smile and warmth from any member of staff you interact with, and the modelling of this behaviour is reflected in the students alike.

- **Teaching Assistant, Castledon School**

I completed the last term of my SCITT at Castledon and am now in my second year of being an ECT. The collegiality and expertise of the staff at Castledon has enabled me to develop as a teacher and exposed me to effective strategies when transitioning to SEN. Specialists within the school, as well as dedicated and experienced staff, provide CPD and support for individuals and new staff members so that they can offer the best opportunities and care for the students. As a result, I have grown in confidence in managing the range of needs and adapting to different students accordingly. The positive relationship between staff and pupils is such an important part of the job and being a part of the amazing students' progress at this school is truly rewarding.

- **Classroom Teacher, Castledon School**

Job Description Core Purpose

The Deputy Headteacher shall play a major role under the overall direction of the headteacher in;

- Formulating the aims and objectives of the school;
- Establishing the policies through which they shall be achieved;
- Managing staff and resources to that end; and
- Monitoring progress towards their achievement;

The Deputy Headteacher shall undertake any professional duties of the headteacher reasonably delegated to him/her by the headteacher.

The Deputy Headteacher shall undertake the professional duties of the headteacher in the event of his/her absence from the school

Principle Accountabilities Management

Responsibilities will be discussed at interview and will be matched to your experience, strengths and development needs.

Safeguarding

Fulfil personal responsibilities, and support the headteacher in securing compliance by those working in school, for safeguarding as set out in the Children's Act, Statutory Guidance and by the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. These include:

- Operating a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services;
- Operating clear whistleblowing procedures,
- Sharing information, with other professionals
- Operating safe recruitment practices
- Ensuring appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking Induction, safeguarding training and reviews of practice
- Operating and monitoring clear policies for dealing with allegations against people who work with children.

Specific Duties Teaching

- Plan and teach lessons to the classes they are assigned to teach within the context of the school's plans, curriculum and schemes of work.
- Assess, monitor, record and report on the learning needs, progress and achievements of assigned pupils.
- Participate in arrangements for preparing pupils for external examinations.
- Whole school organisation, strategy and development

- Contribute to the development, implementation and evaluation of the school's policies, practices and procedures in such a way as to support the school's values and vision.
- Work with others on curriculum and/or pupil development to secure co-ordinated outcomes.
- Supervise and so far as practicable teach any pupils where the person timetabled to take the class is not available to do so.

Health, safety and discipline

- Promote the safety and well-being of pupils.
- Maintain good order and discipline among pupils.

Management of staff and resources

- Direct and supervise support staff assigned to them and, where appropriate, other teachers.
- Contribute to the recruitment, selection, appointment and professional development of other teachers and support staff.
- Deploy resources delegated to them.

Professional development

- Participate in arrangements for the appraisal and review of their own performance and, where appropriate, that of other teachers and support staff.
- Participate in arrangements for their own further training and professional development and, where appropriate, that of other teachers and support staff including induction.

Communication

- Communicate with pupils, parents and carers.
- Working with colleagues and other relevant professionals
- Collaborate and work with colleagues and other relevant professionals within and beyond the school.

The Governing Body is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.