



## HEADTEACHER APPLICATION PACK



Vermont School  
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Southampton  
Hampshire  
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[www.vermontschool.co.uk](http://www.vermontschool.co.uk)





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Headteacher  
Mrs M Smyth BEd (Hons)

February 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are delighted that you have considered applying for the post of Head Teacher at Vermont School.

At Vermont, we are looking to appoint an exceptional senior leader who will build on the success of the school and lead us into the future. We are passionate about our pupils' achievements and work collaboratively to enable them to lead more effective lives in the future. The new Head Teacher will share our vision and will join the Vermont Family to support all members of our school community. They must be committed to maximising children's full potential and enable them to achieve a happy, purposeful and fulfilled life.

Vermont School is an exceptional school with outstanding features. We are committed to providing exciting, challenging and high-quality teaching within a happy, caring and supportive environment. The school provides great opportunities to extend children's knowledge, experience and interests through an enriched curriculum. Vermont Staff are dedicated and skilled, always encouraging every child to achieve their best, and ensuring and promoting the safeguarding and welfare of students within the school.

The Governing Body, who are supportive and proactively involved in the life of the school, welcome your expression of interest for the post of Head Teacher at Vermont and we look forward to meeting you in due course.

Please contact the school office on [info@vermontschool.co.uk](mailto:info@vermontschool.co.uk) to arrange a visit to our wonderful school prior to the interviews which are on the following dates:

6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Start time 08.30 (for both day one and day two should you be taken forward).

Yours faithfully,

**Trevor Amos (Chair of Governors)**


## BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Vermont School is a day special school maintained by Southampton City Council. It is currently situated close to a residential area and within a short walk of the Sports Centre.

Rated Good at the last Ofsted inspection in 2018, the school currently admits 50 children (mostly boys) aged from 5-11 who have a primary social, emotional, and mental health difficulty. In addition, they may have mild to moderate learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties or mild physical or sensory impairment.

We want all children to enjoy school and to achieve their best.

Educational provision is carefully tailored and monitored to meet individual needs. Our school aims are like many mainstream primary schools. However, the way we try to achieve these aims are different. We follow a two-tier curriculum that is underpinned by a unique behavioural, emotional, and social curriculum which we have developed and improved over the last four years.



“At my old school, I was just the naughty one. Here they understand me, I fit in.”



Children are currently placed in five classes. Each class is staffed by a highly skilled teacher supported by passionate teaching assistants who are all excellent role models for the pupils. Staff *choose* to work at Vermont, but it can be an extremely challenging place to work. With that in mind staff wellbeing and mental health is a high priority. We have developed three mental health first aiders to support staff and make other support services available such as supervision sessions with our educational psychologist.

Following a major SEN review in Southampton, the plan is to grow the school, as part of a reconfiguration of special schools, over the next few years. The numbers are expected to rise from the current 50 pupils to a projected 76 by 2024/25. We are currently working with our Local Authority on a feasibility assessment looking into moving Vermont into a new site to accommodate a larger number of pupils in 2024/25.

We currently have a predicted small surplus carry forward for this current year. Our SBM works closely with the headteacher, governors and LA when producing the budget annually, both in terms of the current year and the future projections. With rising costs in all areas, delivering a surplus budget going forward is going to be a challenge. This will hopefully improve with our planned move during the financial year 2024/25.

We have been recently developing our outreach provision. This initially started within the Aspire Community Trust, but with more interest, our SENCO and Pupil Inclusion and Engagement Officer are now delivering training and support across the city. This includes whole school training, training for parents and child specific observations and troubleshooting. This is in its early stages but has the potential to become extremely popular and successful with the right backing and development, as there is no other provision like this for children who experience challenging behaviour within Southampton.

## ASPIRE COMMUNITY TRUST

We have developed a strong partnership with the [Aspire Community Trust](#). This comprises of nine schools (one secondary and 8 primary schools). The Trust successfully cooperates to support member schools and drive excellence across the board, whilst enabling schools to maintain their independence. Collaborative approaches include headteacher, DSL, curriculum, school improvement and SENCO networks, safeguarding audits, school improvement visits and support for OFSTED preparations by the Trust's own part-time OFSTED inspector.

## PROVISION

### “THE VERMONT FAMILY BELONG, BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE TOGETHER”

All children are valued regardless of their ability or behaviour. We provide all our young people with a fresh start to their education and give them access to a broad and balanced curriculum designed to meet their own educational and social needs. However, this brings a set of often extreme challenges. Until children learn strategies for emotional regulation and social skills, they can frequently use anger, violence, and aggression to have their needs met.



Our ethos and provision are therefore based primarily on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Four years ago, we devised our Marlyn Curriculum to support our children who have experienced challenges in their young lives. Many of our children have early developmental trauma, ACEs and/or continue to live in challenging circumstances. In recognition of this fact, we aim to satisfy the needs lower down in the hierarchy before enabling children to

attend to needs higher up. Only then can children achieve academically.

We use PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) and the Zones of Regulation to support this process and teach children how to understand and regulate their emotions and behaviour.

We use the International Primary Curriculum to support academic achievement. Because of their extremely fragmented education (many of our children have been out of education, part time or have been to several schools before coming to us), our children can be extremely behind age related expectations. Staff work hard to plan work that meets the children's individual interests and needs. We take account of children's challenging backgrounds when setting targets and making assessments of children's academic achievements and to support this, we also assess their social and emotional progress.

Because of the range of needs our children experience, it is important we work closely with outside agencies and parents/carers. We run our own NVR training sessions, led by our two skilled NVR trainers. By running this ourselves, we can tailor this specifically to the needs of our children as well as providing parents with a valuable support network with parents in similar positions to themselves.



## DAVE & BRYN - THE SCHOOL DOGS

Dave and Bryn are our school dogs. They are Working Breed Cocker Spaniels and Dave is Bryn's Dad!

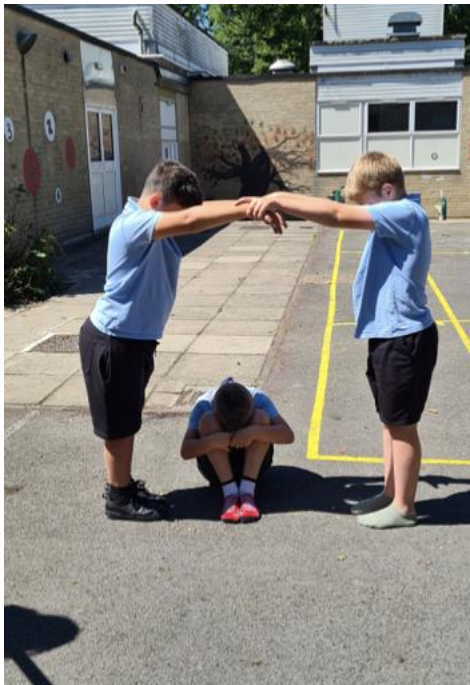
The dogs come into school on separate days and help children by listening to them read, giving them cuddles or just being there when a child needs their unconditional companionship. They spend time with the children throughout the day and are particularly fond of tummy rubs!



## SCHOOL PRIORITIES (From the SIP 2022-23)

**English and Maths** – to create a more rigorous approach to monitoring each half term (part of a wider school monitoring goal which implements Sonar Tracker using curriculum intent and Marlyn Curriculum statements).

To develop progression of skills documents breaking down each strand from P3 to KS2 expectations in both subjects.



**PSHE** – to ensure all teachers are aware of the new framework and to create a curriculum intent to ensure that steps in planning are clear and lessons are differentiated. To ensure that pupil mental health questionnaire answers are shared with Pastoral Lead so identified pupils are supported.

**Attendance** – to increase attendance by 5% from current level of 85% with full analysis every half term.

**SEMH Assessments** – in addition to pupil profiles, implement National Early Learning Goals and profile assessment for 5-year-olds for those pupils across the school with significant need.

**Computing** - embed online safety teaching and practice and develop a curriculum that enables a working knowledge of Word, PowerPoint and how to use search engines.

**Behaviour** – to reduce the number of behavioural incidents and level 3 incidents by an average per child to 93 (from 96) per academic year.

**SEND** – to develop teacher's confidence in leading annual reviews supported by the SENCO.

**RE** Ensure all staff are aware of new planning from "Living the Difference IV" to ensure school is prepared for SACRE visit (due Summer Term 2023)

**Outreach** – Continue development of outreach with mainstream schools by developing an effective business plan.

## SCHOOL STRENGTHS (SIO Report Oct 2022)

- Inspirational and highly effective teaching that motivates and inspires pupils
- Highly skilled staff who know and understand their pupils and meet their needs well
- Committed and supportive Governors
- Effective and thorough safeguarding processes and procedures in place to ensure the safety of all pupils
- Good achievements and progress made by the vast majority of pupils
- Well planned curriculum with clear links across all areas
- The breadth and balance of the curriculum is appropriate and ensures activities are diverse, engaging and differentiated to meet the needs of every pupil
- Strong and effective engagement with outside agencies
- Very good focus on staff well-being ensuring support is timely and effective
- Weekly meetings of the DSLs is particularly good practice, ensuring information is shared and issues are dealt with promptly
- Good use of additional funding to provide additional support in reading, writing, maths and social, emotional and mental health skills
- The school analyse the behaviour data well and are aware of trends and patterns in behaviour and they have responded appropriately with a good degree of success
- There is a strong coaching culture embedded across the school, which staff report has encouraged greater openness and understanding of their strengths and weaknesses
- The Senior Leadership Team have a very good overview of the quality of education in their school. They know every pupil exceptionally well, so know what needs to be done to ensure each pupil makes good progress, thrives and reaches their full potential
- Staff workload and well-being is a high priority for the SLT this year
- Outreach provision is strong. The Lead for Outreach works with a range of schools across the city.



## AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (SIO Report Oct 2022)

### Assessment/Goal setting

- Further develop implementation of National Early Learning Goals and Profile assessments for 5-year-olds for pupils that arrive in school with significant developmental needs to ensure that these pupils are assessed accurately, and their needs met.

### Attendance

- Continue strong focus on attendance (85% in summer term, goal is to increase by 5% to 90%).

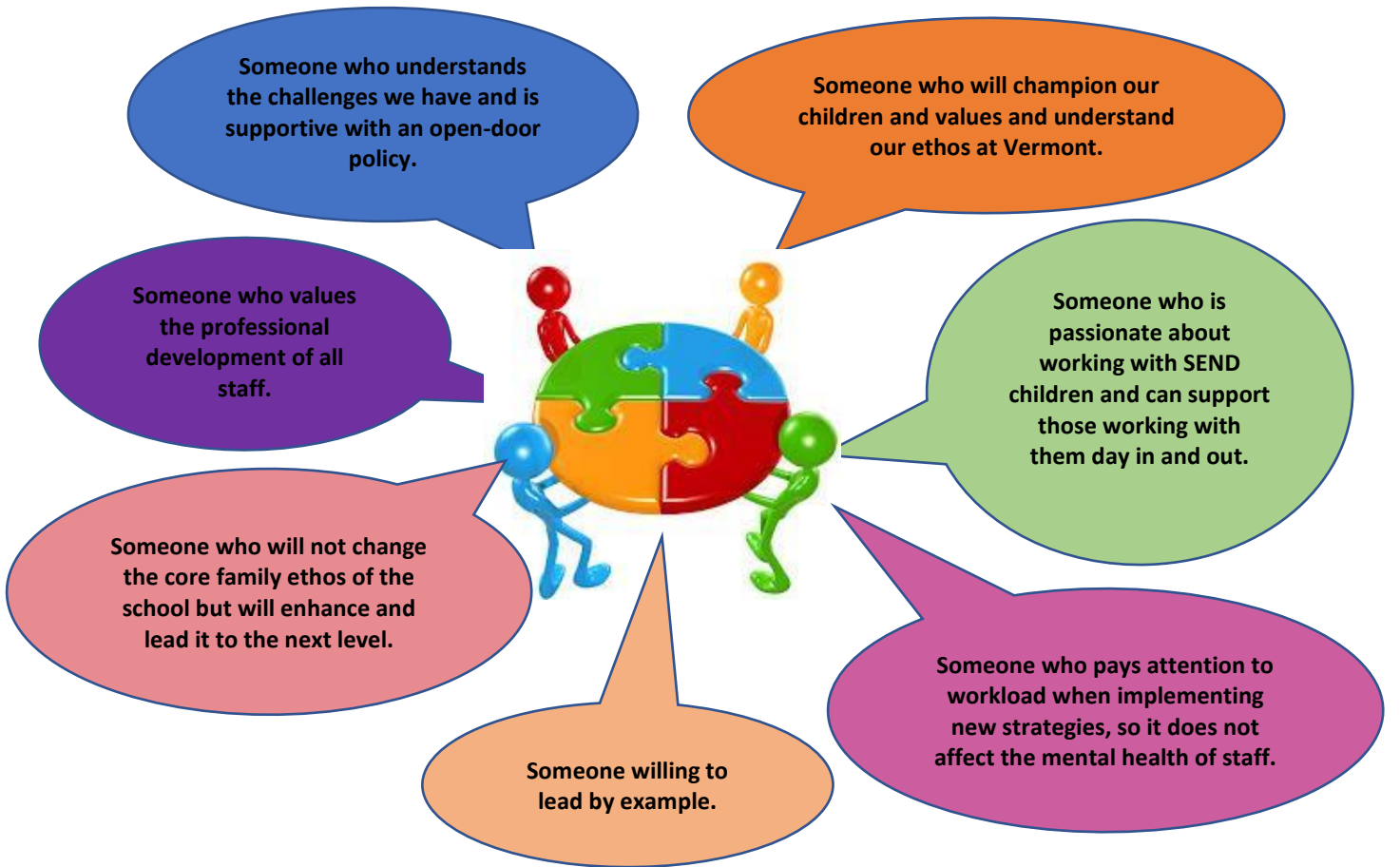
### Outreach

- Continue/develop effective outreach support to schools with SEMH needs/for pupils on limited timetables/with limited access to education and formalise this support with LA

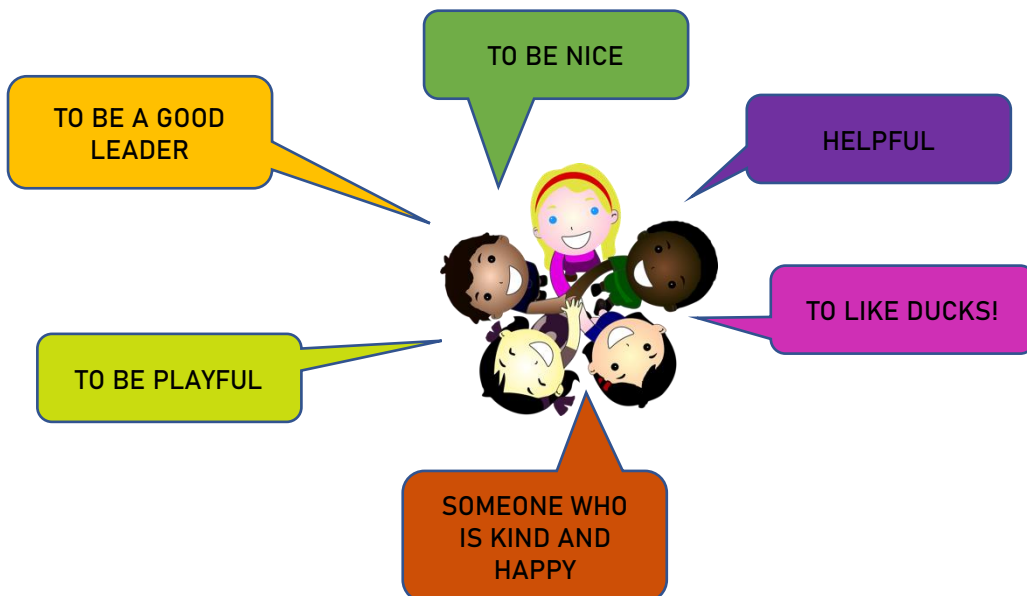
### Teaching

- Continue to share inspirational teaching with peer observations, peer mentoring and coaching so all teaching is consistently good or better

**WHAT STAFF WOULD LIKE FROM A NEW HEADTEACHER**



**WHAT CHILDREN WOULD LIKE FROM A NEW HEADTEACHER**



## OFSTED (January 2018)

Rated 'Good' at our last inspection in January 2018, we continue to consistently receive outstanding SIO reports twice a year. With OFSTED due, we are keen to appoint someone who can take us from Good to Outstanding.

**VERMONT SCHOOL**  
The Vermont Family belong, believe and achieve together

**OFSTED AND US**  
What the inspectors said...

"Vermont School's values of 'belong, believe and achieve together' are evident throughout the school."

"You have a considerate understanding of pupil's varied and often complex needs"

"Behaviour around the school shows that pupils treat each other with respect."

"[The] staff provide such a warm welcome that they [the pupils] quickly settle and start to thrive. This is at the heart of what makes your school such a positive place."

"Pupils value highly the support that they receive and recognise the progress that they have made since joining the school."

"Parents are delighted with the positive attitudes to learning that their children develop after joining the school."

"Pupils learn how to think about the effect of their behaviour on their learning and what to do to be able to learn well. "

"As a result of teachers' high expectations most pupils are making good or better progress in all aspects of their learning."

"Behaviour management is very effective. This is evident in lessons, in the way that staff handle incidents...and in the attitudes that pupils show towards their work and the school as a whole."

Our last OFSTED inspection took place on January 25th 2018.

WE WERE RATED  
**GOOD**  
"The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school."  
"Safeguarding is effective."

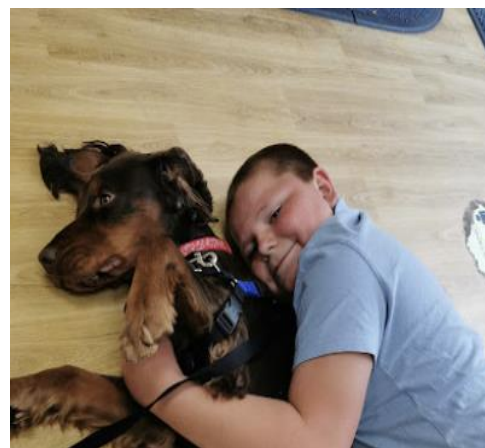
**Ofsted**  
raising standards  
improving lives

## THE FUTURE FOR VERMONT

With the predicted rise in numbers over the coming years, we have been heavily involved in the plans to move Vermont to a larger school location on the other side of the city.

The plans for the St Monica's site include a part new build and significant adaptation of the current school to ensure it is safe and caters for the needs of our increasingly complex children.

Our new headteacher will liaise closely with the planners, architects, and the local authority to ensure the plans to give Vermont an exciting new school will meet our needs and come to fruition.



We encourage any candidates to book an appointment to come and see us.



Address: Vermont Close, Southampton, SO16 7LT  
Telephone: 023 80767988  
Email: [info@vermontschool.co.uk](mailto:info@vermontschool.co.uk)  
Website: <https://www.vermontschool.co.uk/>  
Headteacher: Maria Smyth  
Deputy Head: Lynne McKeown  
SENCO: Davina Ashbolt-Smith  
Business Manager: Jane Valentine  
Chair of Governors: Trevor Amos  
Education Office: Children and Young People's Services, Southampton City Council, One Guildhall Square, Southampton.  
Catchment Area: Vermont School serves the whole of the City of Southampton. Pupils living outside of this boundary can also attend Vermont providing a request to attend the school from their home Local Authority to Southampton is agreed and there are vacant places.

School Location:

