



BLACKDOWN EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

BELIEF IN EVERY CHILD



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WELCOME TO BLACKDOWN EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Thank you for your interest in this post. Please take some time to have a look at this pack and gain a sense of who we are and what we stand for. All Multi-Academy Trusts are different, and we are keen to explain why we believe that our values and ethos make us a great employer.

The Blackdown Education Partnership is a high performing, values driven Trust created by the merger of two founding trusts which shared important values. Put simply, we believe that collaboration, partnership working and sharing our best ideas will enable us to enact our core values of:

- Equity
- Opportunity
- Community

and create schools in which all our pupils thrive and achieve.

Our schools are all characterised by a strong ethos, ambitious culture and compassionate environment which together drive success. We are lucky enough to employ brilliant people who share our vision, many of whom have started careers with us and stayed to progress these careers. We want people to join us who believe that whatever their role, they can make a difference to the life chances of pupils. We are totally committed therefore to helping all our staff thrive and fulfil their professional ambitions. A large number of colleagues are currently undertaking leadership development training which ranges from the full suite of NPQs to some more bespoke leadership programmes run through our outstanding network of partners.

We are always willing to consider flexible working requests and job-shares and pride ourselves on a family friendly approach across our schools. The best resource we can provide for pupils is highly skilled, happy and fulfilled staff.

Recruiting a Headteacher is the most important thing we will ever do as an organisation. Our Headteachers lead their schools with passion, optimism and an absolute commitment to their communities. Leading a school is both a great privilege and a great responsibility. Our job is to support Headteachers to deliver on our shared vision for brilliant schools where children flourish.

We are looking for an individual who shares the same vision and values – if you believe that you have the skills, drive and vision to help us achieve our aims we would be delighted to receive your application.

LORRAINE HEATH, OBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Introduction from the Director of Secondary Education

The Castle School is entering an important new chapter, and we are delighted that you are considering applying for the role of Headteacher. As Director of Secondary Education, I am pleased to introduce a school with a distinguished record of academic excellence, exceptional pastoral care, and a deeply rooted commitment to serving its community.

This vacancy arises following the promotion of the current Headteacher to a senior leadership position within one of the country's largest multi-academy trusts. Their contribution to the school's success has been significant, and the incoming Headteacher will inherit a school that is both high performing and highly aspirational. As with all exceptional schools, The Castle School's leadership team recognises that improvement is a continuous endeavour. This transition presents a rare opportunity for an outstanding leader to shape the next phase of the school's development. Important work lies ahead as we continue to respond to national priorities, including the government's Achieving and Thriving White Paper and the outcomes of the curriculum and assessment review.



CHRIS ELLISON



About The Castle School

The Castle School is entering an important new chapter, and we are delighted that The Castle School is a thriving, fully comprehensive 11–16 secondary school with over 1,200 pupils on roll. Its history, traditions, and strong sense of identity contribute to a warm and vibrant school culture, where relationships are central to the way staff and pupils work together.

The school's core aim is for every child to achieve, belong, and participate: this underpins all aspects of school life. This philosophy is reflected in the school's achievements. In October 2023, The Castle School was graded Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted, and it continues to perform within the top 5% of schools nationally for academic outcomes. Despite these successes, we remain committed to continuous improvement and to ensuring that our provision continues to evolve in the best interests of our pupils.

OUR EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

At The Castle School, the highest priority is placed on every student's academic progress and personal development. There is a relentless focus on high-quality teaching and a continually refined curriculum. Staff at all levels are regarded as the school's greatest strength. There is a deeply embedded culture of high support and high challenge. This ethos enables colleagues to flourish professionally and to deliver exceptional outcomes for pupils.

Equity sits at the heart of our mission. We are unwavering in our belief that all young people are entitled to excellent education, and we are relentless in our focus on removing barriers so every student can thrive. Our curriculum is designed to empower pupils with the knowledge, skills, and character they need to contribute positively to the world. We seek not only to develop confident, articulate and resilient learners but also compassionate and empathetic young adults who are well prepared for their next steps in education, training, or employment.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Leading The Castle School is an exceptional professional opportunity. The school's strengths are significant, but so is its ambition. The new Headteacher will play a central role in shaping the school's strategic direction and ensuring that its culture, curriculum, and provision continue to evolve in the best interests of all students. We are seeking a leader who believes in the transformative power of education and who is committed to building on the school's ethos of excellence.



Role

Headteacher – The Castle School

Full time, Permanent

Leadership scale 32-37 (£106,626 – £120,524)

Start Date: January 2027 or sooner if possible

We are seeking an inspirational leader to shape the future direction of The Castle School. You will bring a strong moral purpose, a clear vision for exceptional education, and an unwavering commitment to securing transformational outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable.

The school is a founding member of the Blackdown Education Partnership (BEP). We are a Trust of primary and secondary schools across Somerset and Devon. The successful applicant will join a collaborative team of seven secondary headteachers who are united by shared values and who work together to drive improvement across the Trust.

As Headteacher, you will lead a high-performing school with a strong reputation, ambitious culture and a deep commitment to continuous improvement. Alongside leading the school, the role offers opportunities for system leadership across the community and wider South West educational landscape.

Please take time to read the whole application pack and any relevant information on the school's website. We strongly encourage prospective candidates to visit The Castle School before submitting an application, although we recognise this may not be possible for everyone. James Lamb, the current Headteacher is available to show prospective candidates around the school by appointment.

To arrange a visit, please contact Ania Sennah directly at asennah@castle.bep.ac.

We also welcome prospective candidates to book a virtual meeting or phone call with Chris Ellison, Director of Secondary Education, by contacting Paula Gibson on gibsonp@bep.ac

CVs are not accepted, please complete the application form in full. If you can meet the requirements of this role, we would love to hear from you. All applications should be made by completing the online application form via E-teach available at www.bep.ac/vacancies and include evidence of how you meet the person specification for the role. For full details of the role, please see the job description and person specification.



Closing date: Midday Tuesday 12th May 2026

**Interviews Monday 18th or Tuesday 19th May 2026 – The Castle School
Wednesday 20th May 2026 – Trust Offices, Orchard Grove Primary School**



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Job Specification

Job Title: Headteacher, The Castle School
Location: Taunton, Somerset
Responsible to: Director of Secondary Education
Salary Grade: 32-37
Working time: Full time, Permanent

Key Purpose of the Job

To be accountable for the overall performance of The Castle School, its relationship with its community and the Trust and upholding the mission and values of Blackdown Education Partnership.

1. Ensure that the school provides an excellent quality of education for all pupils at the school.
2. Ensure that effective safeguarding is at the heart of all decision making
3. Build on existing strategies for transforming the educational experiences and outcomes of pupils and enact measurable and sustainable improvement
4. Communicate the school's vision to all stakeholders and drive the school improvement strategy empowering all pupils and staff to excel.
5. Set targets for pupil achievement and progress which reflect an ambition for what all pupils can achieve, and through which disadvantaged pupils are enabled to achieve in line with their peers.
6. Establish a creative, responsive and effective approach to teaching and learning and be relentless in its implementation and monitoring impact.
7. Implement effective change management when change is necessary, leading change and ensuring buy in from all key stakeholders.



8. Build effective relationships and make a positive contribution to the collective work of the Trust.
9. Ensure compliance in terms of all statutory and legal duties.
10. Deliver financial sustainability
11. Manage all staff, ensuring they are working consistently and effectively across the school
12. Develop a transparent and positive relationship with all stakeholders

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Delivering High Quality Education

1. Secure consistently high standards of teaching and learning and assessment across the school and in every year group.
2. Ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND receive the highest quality teaching and support
3. Ensure that developments within the school are consistent with our core objectives and further seek to serve our local community.
4. Demand ambitious standards for all pupils overcoming disadvantage and advancing equity, instilling a shared sense of accountability in staff for the impact of their work on pupil outcomes
5. Ensure that a commitment to a fully inclusive approach permeates all decision making
6. Seek to create and sustain a highly ambitious culture which secures excellence both in and outside of the classroom
7. Deliver excellent outcomes for all pupils in order that they make strong progress and are supported to take their chosen next steps post 16.





Leadership and Management

1. Promote the sharing of best practice across the school between teachers and a culture where less than good practice is challenged and improved.
2. Create an ethos within which all staff are motivated and supported to develop their own skills and support each other.
3. Ensure high levels of staff morale and well-being
4. Engage in the effective recruitment, induction and retention of high-quality staff
5. Identify emerging talents at all levels, coaching and encouraging aspiring leaders in a climate of excellence, leading to good succession planning.
6. Hold all staff accountable for professional conduct and practice.
7. Ensure that systems, organisation and processes are all effective, efficient and fit for purpose, upholding the principles of transparency integrity and probity.
8. Provide a safe, calm and well-ordered environment for all pupils and staff with a strong focus on safeguarding and the development of exemplary behaviour in school and in the wider society.



9. Enable effective curriculum delivery through appropriate sharing of teaching expertise.
10. Establish and implement rigorous systems for managing the performance of all staff, addressing under-performance, supporting staff to improve and valuing excellent practice.
11. Monitor, evaluate and review school practice and promote school improvement strategies.
12. Welcome strong governance and actively support the local governing body and Trustees to deliver their functions producing relevant reports and key information as required
13. Ensure that all leaders within the school are supported and challenged to undertake their leadership responsibilities and seek to create effective teams of developing leaders at all levels in the school.
14. Uphold and model the highest personal and professional standards including integrity, honesty, diligence and respect for others at all times when executing duties in line with the post and taking a tough principled stand where necessary.

Wider engagement and contribution

1. Develop the capacity for the school to work across Blackdown Education Partnership and improve outcomes for all pupils.
2. Develop effective relationships with other services to improve academic and social outcomes for all pupils.
3. Work effectively with other Headteachers across the Trust to share best practice and create effective Trust wide systems where appropriate
4. Inspire and influence others-within and beyond the Multi Academy Trust-to believe in the fundamental importance of education.
5. Engage positively with parents, governors and friends of the school to maintain strong relationships and partnerships and safeguard the reputation of the school and the Trust at all times.
6. Maintain a presence in local and national professional networks and through these and other means ensure a current overview of relevant policies and developments.





General

1. Ensure compliance in terms of all statutory and legal duties - that the school is compliant in terms of statutory and legal obligations, such as H&S, Fire Management and Safeguarding and ensure that policies, systems and processes are integrated, consistent and working effectively.
2. With the support of the Chief Financial Officer/School Business Manager, lead on strategic financial planning to ensure the equitable deployment of budgets and resources, in the best interests of pupil outcomes and the sustainability of the school
3. Prepare policy review papers as required and requested.
4. Maintain strong relationships with the School's Local Governing Committee and provide them with accurate, timely and relevant information to enable them to discharge the duties that have been delegated to them by the Trust Board.
5. Contribute to the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare and safety of children and young people with regard to the relevant documents published by the Department of Education, within any School within Blackdown Education Partnership.

Other Duties

1. Be committed to your own continuing professional development and will participate in induction training, staff review processes and professional development opportunities.



2. To undertake additional duties as required, commensurate with the level of the post.
3. The post-holder will be expected to have an agreed working pattern to ensure that all relevant functions are fulfilled through direct dialogue with employees, members of other agencies and community members.

Special Factors

1. This role will involve traveling between schools within the Trust (and new ones that may join in the future). The reimbursement of travel costs to schools, other than the location of your home school, will be as per the Trust's travel policy.
2. There will be a requirement to work beyond school hours particularly in supporting and attending school and Trust based events.
3. Working patterns will be aligned with school term dates and holidays must be taken during school closure periods
4. The post-holder will support the achievement of the Trust's objectives by working proactively with colleagues on projects or activities outside their direct area of responsibility as required.
5. The post-holder is expected to familiarise themselves with and adhere to all relevant Trust and Policies and Procedures.
6. To be aware of and assume the appropriate level of responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and to report any concerns in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding policies.
7. To comply with legislation, policies and procedures relating to confidentiality and data protection, reporting any concerns to the appropriate person.
8. To comply with the Trust's ICT Acceptable Use and Confidentiality Agreement for Staff.
9. To comply with the Trust's Health & Safety policy, procedures, and statutory requirements.



Person Specification

Qualifications	Essential	Desirable
Minimum of degree level qualification or equivalent	✓	
Qualified Teacher Status	✓	
NPQH		✓
Advanced (Level 3) safeguarding training		✓
Relevant post graduate management qualification or equivalent		✓
Completion of other recognised leadership development qualification		✓
Knowledge and Experience		
A proven track record of senior level strategic leadership and management in a similar setting	✓	
Knowledge of the wider educational developments and policy	✓	
A proven track record of transformation or turnaround in a school in challenging circumstances		✓
A comprehensive understanding of curriculum development, pedagogy, innovation and delivery to a high standard	✓	
Awareness of regulatory and inspection frameworks	✓	
Secure knowledge of DfE publications and guidance which regulate safer working practices and approaches to vulnerable children and young people.	✓	
Effective management of student behaviour in order to drive aspirations and success	✓	
Effective management of people to maximise their performance	✓	
Experience of working with and reporting to a Board or Governing Body		✓
Experience of managing budgets combined with a proven track record of maintaining robust financial management systems		✓
Experience of developing successful partnerships with a wide range of external stakeholders including local authorities, employers, businesses, educational institutions, professional organisations and government agencies.		✓



Ability to establish a positive ethos with an accent on high achievement for all	✓	
Strategic vision and the ability to articulate and implement the strategy	✓	
Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to carry out effective negotiation	✓	
Personal Qualities		
Empathy with the needs and aspirations of all pupils	✓	
An excellent communicator, able to take the lead in promoting the school and trust to the wider community and larger audiences	✓	
A passionate commitment to the raising of standards of achievement	✓	
High standards of personal and professional integrity	✓	
A personal commitment to the principles of equality and diversity	✓	
A willingness to contribute to system leadership and to support the development and improvement of other schools within and outside of the Trust	✓	
A sense of humour and the ability to bounce back when things don't work out as hoped for	✓	
Appreciation of work life balance	✓	
Willingness to ask for help and support if necessary.	✓	

The duties of this post may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or level of responsibility entailed.

As this post meets the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, all applicants who are offered employment will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS) before the appointment is confirmed. This will include details of ALL cautions, reprimands, or final warnings as well as convictions, whether "spent" or "unspent". Criminal convictions will only be taken into account when they are relevant to the post.

You have a duty of care for your own health and safety at work and that of others who may be affected by your actions at work.



The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Disclosure Certificate.



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The Blackdown Education Partnership was formed in 2023 from the merger of two founding trusts: The Castle Partnership Trust and Uffculme Academy Trust. This merger brought together 5 primary and 5 secondary schools in Devon and Somerset. Since that time we continue to grow and are currently a 13 school MAT of 6 primaries, 7 secondaries, 5 pre-schools and one sixth form.

We are also a strategic partner for SWiFT and run the mid-Devon ITT hub on their behalf where we recruit and train the teachers of the future.

We believe that education is transformative: it changes lives; and that schools are uniquely placed to engineer social change through powerfully addressing disadvantage in all its forms. The trust that is placed in us to nurture and support our pupils into flourishing and confident young people is one which we are committed to justifying.

We serve a diverse range of communities in Devon and Somerset and are dedicated to working in partnership with everyone invested in these communities to enrich our children's lives and empower them to carve out positive futures for themselves.

LEADERSHIP

Our Senior Leadership Team brings together both the Education and Business Functions of the Trust – we continually strive to deliver student and business related outcome in line with our strategic plan.

Working in partnership with our support functions we aim to harness the power of deep collaboration to ensure that through our collective endeavours all Headteachers are enabled to deliver on our mission.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

We recognise the potential in collaboration, networking and sharing the of best practice to harness our collective energies for the benefit of our families and communities.

We run a number of Professional networks and School reviews which bring positive contributions to our staff and secures powerful professional learning for those taking part.





We take staff wellbeing seriously and take active steps to reduce workload. We have a wellbeing offer which ranges from gym membership and support with personal fitness to talking therapies and subscribe to a Wellbeing service. We also allow employees personal days to enable everyone to enjoy some flexibility over attendance and participation in events that they might not otherwise be able to.

We are always willing to consider flexible working requests and job-shares and pride ourselves on a family friendly approach across our schools. The best resource we can provide for pupils is highly skilled, happy and fulfilled staff.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US:

- Eligibility to join excellent pension scheme
- Option to make additional voluntary contributions to pension for local government pension scheme members which can help boost retirement benefits
- Access to a range of continuous professional development opportunities
- Trust wide charity events designed to encourage our people to participate in meaningful activities
- Access to wellbeing provision which offers information and advice on a range of workplace and personal issues
- Flexible working opportunities
- Enhanced special leave provision, including additional time off as part of our 'Personal Day' entitlement which supports employees to achieve a better work/life balance
- Free car parking
- On site catering facilities, all of which provide healthy and nutritious meals at a low cost
- Gym membership. Many of our schools have on-site gyms, the use of which is available to employees at a discounted rate
- Cycle to work scheme which enables employees to purchase a bike and accessories for their commute to work
- Free tea and coffee.



In numbers

1370
NURSERY & PRIMARY
AGED STUDENTS

7009
SECONDARY &
6TH FORM
AGED STUDENTS

1
SIXTH FORM

6
PRIMARIES

7
SECONDARIES

5
PRE-SCHOOLS

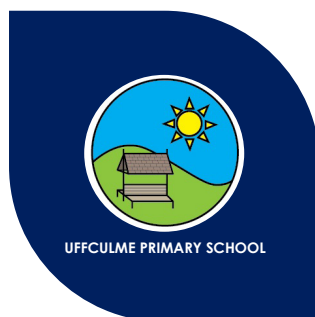
13
SCHOOL MAT

8379
STUDENTS

122
TRUSTEES AND
GOVERNORS

1262
STAFF

Our Schools



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LOCATIONS

All our schools are situated in the beautiful countryside of Devon and Somerset, within easy commuting distance of Exeter to the west and Bristol to the North, being close to some of the most beautiful coastlines of Devon and Dorset.

Our schools' varied locations allow our staff to access not only beautiful beaches, but also some of the best areas for walking, biking and other outdoor activities; yet the cities of Exeter, Bristol and Bath are close by.





www.bep.ac/bepmanifesto