

# Alfriston School

A Secondary Special School for girls aged  
11-18 with Moderate Learning Difficulties



## HEADTEACHER RECRUITMENT PACK



**Alfriston School**  
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*Learning for Living*

# Welcome letter from the Chair of Governors

Dear Applicant,

On behalf of the governing body at Alfriston School I am writing to express our appreciation for your interest in the Headteacher position. This vacancy has arisen as a result of our current Head deciding to embark on her retirement after a wonderfully successful 17 years at our School.

Alfriston is a secondary aged special needs school with 159 Students aged 11 to 18, who experience mild to moderate learning difficulties. We are an independent academy, rated outstanding by Ofsted, and consider our innovating approach to preparing our girls for life after school as being best in practice.

At Alfriston, we pride ourselves on our commitment to fostering an environment of academic excellence, personal growth, and community engagement. As we embark on the search for a new Headteacher, we are seeking an individual who shares our dedication to these principles and possesses the vision, leadership, and expertise to guide our school to even greater heights.

The role of Headteacher is pivotal in shaping the future direction of our school and ensuring the continued success of our students. We are seeking a dynamic and visionary leader who can inspire our students, support our amazing staff, engage with our diverse community, and uphold the values and ethos that define Alfriston.

As a member of the governing body, I can assure you that our selection process will be thorough, fair, and transparent. We will carefully review each application and seek candidates who demonstrate not only exceptional qualifications and experience but also a genuine passion for education and a commitment to the well-being and success of every student.

If you believe that you possess the qualities and attributes necessary to lead Alfriston into the future, we invite you to submit your application by 5pm on Monday 4th March 2024. Please refer to the attached application pack for further details on the application process, timetable and requirements. Further information about our School is available on our website [www.alfristonschool.com](http://www.alfristonschool.com)

Thank you once again for considering Alfriston as the next step in your professional journey. We look forward to receiving your application and, hopefully, welcoming you to our school community.

Thank you for your interest.

Yours faithfully,

Kalpesh Brahmhatt  
Chair of Governors

# About Alfriston

Alfriston is an outstanding Special School with Academy status for girls aged 11-18 with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD). We became an Academy on the 1st of March 2012 however the school has been delivering high quality education since 1950. We currently have 159 pupils on roll, and provide a weekly boarding provision for 20 pupils. Pupils attend from all over Buckinghamshire and some neighbouring counties. All the pupils have an Education Health Care Plan and are taught in small groups and with additional support.



Alfriston is a Sports College and one of just 50 lead schools from across England that have been established and selected for our recognised expertise in engaging young disabled people in PE and Sport. Our role is that of inclusion champions and visionaries to pave a way for inspirational, accessible and meaningful PE and school sport for every young person. We aim to empower teachers to be more inclusive in their practice, and provide inclusive competition and competition pathways for young people, raising their aspirations and providing inclusive leadership opportunities.

Our staff are specialist subject teachers from a mixed background of primary and secondary education and are all experienced in working with a range of special needs and abilities. Our aim is to provide pupils not just with a body of knowledge but with the skills required for a lifetime of learning, to prepare pupils for integration into the wider community, able to enjoy and participate in life as contributing adults. Alfriston provides a holistic environment that recognises the need of the individual in order to secure the best outcomes for adulthood. Our ethos is routed in Learning for Living covering key areas of: Engagement, Organisation, Independence, Risk Taking, Resilience and Social Interaction.

We consider the staff team as our most valuable resource. Training and development is a high priority in the school. There is also personal support given to staff to manage the diverse and challenging work needed to support pupils with significant special needs. At present there are 70 staff employed at the school working in the teaching, support, residential and administrative teams. We are proud of the excellent standard of education provided at Alfriston.

## Key Information

Age Range	11 – 18 Years
Number of Children	159
% of children with English as an additional language	13%
% of children on Free School Meals	27%
% of children in receipt of Pupil Premium	25%



Learning for Living

# Alfriston Values

Alfriston's school moto is "**Learning for Living**" we support, encourage and inspire our pupils to achieve throughout their journey with us.

## Our Aim

Our aim is to provide pupils not just with a body of knowledge but with the skills required for a lifetime of learning, to prepare pupils for integration into the wider community, able to enjoy and participate in life as contributing adults.

## Our Vision

Alfriston School provides a holistic environment that recognises the need of the individual in order to secure the best outcomes for adulthood. Our ethos is routed in Learning for Living covering key areas of: Engagement, Organisation, Independence, Risk Taking, Resilience and Social Interaction.

We aim to provide:

- A curriculum to build skills for life-long self-esteem, confidence, team work, social interaction and the protection of physical and mental health to meet the individual needs of our school community, providing relevant education and experiences, and the attainment of qualifications where appropriate.
- Independence at all ability levels to ensure all pupils become young adults who can find purpose and engagement within their communities, through employment or other means.

## Our Values

"To provide a safe and happy environment, where our pupils can grow in confidence, through opportunities to work with others, to acquire the education and skills to achieve their full potential."

- Environment – physical, emotional, nurturing, equality, peer groups
- Confidence – enjoyment, self-esteem, self-belief, friendship, individuality, participation, fulfilment
- Opportunities – offer a range of experiences within, and beyond the curriculum
- Work with others – teamwork
- Education and skills – achievement, learning, academic attainment, life skills, vocational skills
- Potential – happiness, independence, vocation, being the best, you can be.



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# Wellbeing

Wellbeing is the state of feeling happy and healthy. It encompasses our overall health, including our cognitive, physical and emotional health. If our level of wellbeing is good, we are much more likely to be motivated, engaged and productive. Good wellbeing is also associated with higher levels of resilience and therefore helps us to cope better when faced with challenges.

Our whole school approach at Alfriston in supporting our pupils' wellbeing includes providing a tailored social and emotional skills curriculum delivered in small groups, which helps promote self-esteem and confidence. In addition, pupils requiring further support receive this in the form of 1:1 or small group interventions, which can be either short or long term.

The wellbeing department specialises in supporting an array of needs including, but not limited to, anxiety, self-esteem, resilience, anger, social and friendship difficulties and low mood. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) is rooted within each intervention and lesson, aiming to provide pupils with the skills to support themselves in times of challenge or difficulties as young adults.

Alongside our approach for pupils, parenting workshops and courses are available to our families and provide advice about home environments where challenges caring for a child with SEN may arise. Lastly, we offer an array of activities for pupils during the school holidays, including cooking and swimming. These experiences help pupils socialise and see their friends in an environment with which they are familiar. In addition to this targeted approach, the Wellbeing Team offer daily support to pupils in the form of someone to talk to, to help them problem solve and think through situations, and develop resilience.

Staff wellbeing is of equal importance to us, good wellbeing at work is associated with meeting potential, developing strong relationships, and doing things we consider important or worthwhile. Staff's general wellbeing can be heavily influenced by the demands and pressures of their roles, the school recognises this and supports staff with all aspects of their working life.

Alfriston School offers staff:

- A supportive, nurturing and inclusive school culture.
- The opportunity to voice their feedback through conducting termly staff wellbeing surveys.
- Recognition initiatives (Amazon vouchers, gratitude mug, comforts fund etc).
- Mental health support (Buckinghamshire Employee Assistance Programme scheme, access to school counsellor, exercise discounts and free access to Headspace app)
- Staff wellbeing board (updated information on local schemes, group events, policies)
- Continued Professional Development (weekly CPD sessions created internally, captured through views and wishes of staff, external visitors, options for training etc).
- Mental health policy (guidance for staff for supporting mental health in school).
- Staff wellbeing budget.

# Boarding

Our boarding opportunities for the pupils are the focus of our school ethos "Learning for Living", we pride ourselves on teaching all pupils life skills to support them in their pathways for their futures.

Our boarding facilities have provisions for 20 pupils to board 3 nights per week during term times (Monday to Wednesday).

Every boarding pupil works towards achieving termly targets in line with their EHCP goals or wider developmental goals such as independence, organisation or social interaction. Boarding is a vital part of our school life and the pupils informative years, helping them to grow in confidence and acquire the skills to achieve their full potential.



# Safeguarding

At Alfriston School, we are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and ensuring that the highest priority is given to following guidance and regulations to safeguard all our students.

We ensure that all staff members and Governors are familiar with the safeguarding policy, understand why supporting the safeguarding of children and young is an essential part of their role within school, are confident to be able to recognise a safeguarding concern and know the appropriate action to take. Staff are all aware of the process on how reporting a concern and are trained in the use of CPOMS.

Our curriculum is designed to teach our pupils about staying safe, we maintain an environment where pupils feel confident to approach any member of staff if they have a worry or problem.





# Our Curriculum

The curriculum at Alfriston School provides an experience that is broad and balanced and reflects each individual pupil's learning needs. We enable our pupils to meet their full educational potential, to make progress in their learning, their behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

There are aspects to our curriculum that are similar to many mainstream schools, but class sizes are smaller and staff to student ratios are higher. In addition, we also provide lessons during which pupils can learn and practice the skills needed in order to fully access and enjoy life in school and beyond.

The timetabled curriculum at Key Stage 3 includes subjects for all pupils that are recognisable from mainstream settings: English, Maths, Science, Religion and Ethics, PE and PSHE. These are presented alongside subjects which enrich our pupils' lives and facilitate enjoyment and successful participation in community life beyond school: Art, Music, Dance, Drama, Design Craft, Home Economics, Forest School, Social Skills and Environmental Studies.

The curriculum at Key Stage 4 and 5 provides many individual learning pathways for our students. In Key Stage 4 all students continue to study English, Maths, Science, Religion and Ethics, PE and PSHE. Enrichment and preparation for life beyond school is facilitated through dance, work related learning, participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme and through the use of half termly optional units of study which target individual need. The optional units provide cultural enrichment, engagement with community organisations, and the development of both prevocational and vocational skills and competences. The role of enrichment and preparation for transition beyond school is further developed in Key Stage 5 with students accessing work experience, community engagement and college link courses alongside aspects of the Key Stage 4 programme.

The Social and Emotional Curriculum delivered currently include topics such as: Choices, Responsibility, Strengths, Things I find hard, Setting Targets, Understanding my Emotions, Being in Charge of my Emotions, Point of View and How to Sort out Problems. These sessions aim to help pupils develop their skills in managing emotions and interactions with others. Each session focuses on collaboration between the teacher and pupils and building group cohesion. In the same way as our targeted and universal interventions, the social skills curriculum includes CBT concepts. Across the two-year curriculum, pupils receive an assessment to help evaluate pupil progress in line with our learning for living criteria.



Learning for Living

# Why work for Alfriston?

Alfriston School benefits from outstanding modern facilities, all of our classrooms are fully equipped with interactive screens and access to class sets of laptops or iPads. All teachers are provided with a laptop that is renewed every three years. The school enjoys a recently modernised performing arts and music facilities that include the use of a dance studio, sound/recording studio and performance space, along with our exceptional sports facilities that caters for a range of indoor and outdoor activities including mountain biking, trampolining, cycling, football and many others. The school also enjoys use of its spacious swimming pool designed by a bespoke architect, as part of an upgrade of the sports facilities at Alfriston, the architects developed a concertina-like roof structure that echoes the shape of the pitched roofs on other buildings in the area causing minimal sound reverberation which is beneficial for the use of our students with their Special Educational Needs.

Staff often remark that Alfriston it is a great place to work. Staff retention is high which we think reflects the supportive and friendly environment in which we work. Our pupils are inspirational and full of potential. Staff feel they are people “You just want to be with!” Having been rated ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted in July 2013 it was noted “The excellent personal and academic opportunities offered ensure that the school makes a huge difference to the lives of students. As a result, all groups achieve outstandingly well from their individual starting points.”

The school culture of teamwork and aspiration is reflected in the report where it states “The headteacher has a very ambitious vision for the school. Senior leaders and managers place a significant focus on improving staff performance through regular high-quality training and checks on their work. The governing body makes an excellent contribution to the school’s effectiveness and work tirelessly to raise achievement through its regular visits to check teaching and learning.”

We can offer:

- A dedicated and committed team of brilliant and innovative staff and governors who want to work collaboratively with their next school leader.
- Extraordinary pupils who want a compassionate, warm and nurturing Headteacher to help prepare them on their journey towards adulthood.
- Fantastic support for your wellbeing and a commitment to your continued professional development.
- Strong links with other local SEN schools
- The opportunity to take our unique model on to the next stage, within the wider context of SEND provision
- We want our new Headteacher to continue to take our school community from strength to strength
- The opportunity to play a key strategic role in taking our school to even greater heights.



# Headteacher Job Description

The Headteacher will be responsible for:

## Shaping the Future

- In partnership with the Governing Board, working with pupils, staff, families and friends to lead a vibrant school community and continue the school's excellent progress
- Working with the local authority, local schools, parents, carers and young people, to ensure that pupils who would be appropriately placed at the school are admitted as swiftly as possible
- Continue to be forward-thinking in the future development of the school and in increasing its sphere of influence
- Leading with a clear and articulated vision, showing personal and professional commitment to that vision at all times and remaining motivated when under pressure
- Developing effective relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues in other public services to improve academic and social outcomes for all pupils
- Working with other schools and organisations to champion best practice and secure excellent outcomes for all pupils
- Engaging positively with pupils, parents, governors and the wider community.

## Leading teaching and learning

- Understanding the local, national and global influences on learning and developments in the field of special education and looking at current practice, policy and research to inform pedagogy and practice
- Seeking to provide the very best learning environment and experiences for the pupils including the use of current technologies, making learning creative and exciting, and leading to the greatest range of life choices for them
- Leading and modelling effective teaching and learning practices, securing high levels of performance and accountability from all staff to overcome disadvantage and to advance equality
- Maintaining a strong value-based ethos within which staff are motivated and supported to develop their own skills and subject knowledge and to support each other, providing opportunities for staff to engage in on-going high quality professional development
- Holding all staff to account for their professional conduct and practice

# Headteacher Job Description

The Headteacher will be responsible for:

## Managing the organisation

- In the ongoing pursuit of aspirational progress and focused planning, ensuring that effective and transparent tracking, target setting and assessment processes increase achievement and attainment in the development of a lifelong love of learning
- Distributing leadership and management throughout the organisation, forging teams of colleagues who have distinct roles and responsibilities and hold others to account for their decision making
- Providing a safe, calm and well-ordered environment for all staff and pupils, focused on making sure pupils are kept safe from harm and are well prepared for effective learning
- Ensuring that high quality staff are recruited, induction practices are effective and that professional development opportunities and effective succession planning support retention
- Ensuring that line management and accountability are effective in securing high standards.

The post holder is expected to have regard to the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers at all times.

# Headteacher Person Specification

A candidate will only be considered for shortlisting and move forward in the remaining person specification criteria if they meet the essential criteria of the Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience and Professional Development sections.

## Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

- Qualified Teacher Status
- Degree or Equivalent
- Successful teaching of pupils with Learning Difficulties, Autism and/or Speech Language & Communication needs
- Recent successful senior leadership experience within a relevant setting
- Secure knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice and related current legislation, as well as more recent developments
- Knowledge and ability to improve outcomes across the school for pupils with a range of needs and abilities
- Additional qualifications in relevant approaches and strategies
- Knowledge and understanding of strategic financial planning and its contribution to school development and pupil outcomes

## Professional Development

- Evidence of appropriate and recent professional career development
- NPQH qualification
- Evidence of a personal commitment to lifelong learning
- Understanding of Behaviour for Learning

## Leadership Skills

- Ability to articulate a clear vision to a range of stakeholders
- Proven record of inspiring, enabling and motivating others to succeed in an inclusive environment
- Ability to delegate and effectively achieve objectives and provide development opportunities for staff
- Demonstration of excellent communication skills, including written and verbal communication
- Ability to build effective relationships with staff, families, governors and the wider school community
- Success in establishing and maintaining teams and supporting multi-agency practice
- Active involvement in effective school self-evaluation and development planning
- Knowledge and experience of working with children with SEND
- Successful track record of developing staff through effective performance management
- Commitment to developing practices that support staff wellbeing
- Experience of implementing a strategic plan across a whole setting, identifying priorities and evaluating the impact
- Experience of leading change effectively and successfully

# Headteacher Person Specification

## Personal Qualities

- Passion for the education of children with SEND
- Evidence of leading with integrity and demonstrating resilience, whilst also showing compassion in dealing with complex issues
- Adaptable leadership style
- Evidence of being pro-active, self-motivated, organised and able to manage own time and resources well, often under pressure.
- Commitment to safeguarding, child protection and to promoting health & safety and the wellbeing of pupils
- Ability to demonstrate a clear understanding of what is appropriate and inappropriate professional practice towards pupils

# Information for Candidates

Pay Range	Leadership Group 5 £73,034 - £98,935
Start Date:	September 2024

## School Visits

Visits to the school are warmly welcomed and can be arranged by contacting Ellie Davison on 01494 673740 or [ellie.davison@alfristonschool.com](mailto:ellie.davison@alfristonschool.com)

## Applications

Please submit your completed application form by email to Angela Marchant by Monday 4th March 2024 at 5.00 pm [angela.marchant@alfristonschool.com](mailto:angela.marchant@alfristonschool.com)

## Interviews

Interviews will be held on Thursday 21st March and Friday 22nd March 2024

The Selection Panel reserves the right to hold the second round of interviews if two or more candidates perform equally well at the first interview. The Selection Panel will notify you of its decision as soon as possible after the interviews have concluded. Candidates who are unsuccessful at the interview will be offered an opportunity for feedback on their performance.

Candidates will be asked to undertake a range of activities and we will ensure that you have plenty of opportunities to ask all the questions you may have.

*This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children which will be reflected throughout recruitment. The selected candidate will be required to provide suitable references and undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before taking up the post.*

# Information for Candidates

## Application Form

Using the standard application form provided (CVs are not accepted) please complete all aspects of the form fully. Include your full work history with no unexplained gaps since leaving school education. Include all the training you have completed, particularly those in recent years which have helped to prepare you for headship.

## Person Specification and Personal Statement

When writing your responses it is really important you address each of the requirements in the person specification. Ensure to evidence additional aspects such as training and qualifications together with your background and experience within the personal statement.

## Covering Letter

You may wish to include a covering letter of no more than two sides of A4 paper and at a font size of no less than Arial size 11.

## References

Please make sure your referees are aware of your application and that they are able to provide a swift turnaround. Preferred referees are your last two employers and you should provide their official organisation email address for us to contact. One referee will be your last Headteacher or Chair of Governors



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