

HEADTEACHER RECRUITMENT PACK



Blackmarston School
Honddu Close
Hereford

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"Building relationships, empowering communication and enabling opportunities to thrive"

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Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the post of Headteacher of Blackmarston School, on behalf of the pupils, staff and Trustees I would like to warmly welcome you to Blackarston School.

Blackmarston School is a wonderful place where there is a genuine, friendly and welcoming atmosphere which you will feel as soon as you enter the school. This is because one of our fundamental aims is to ensure we provide a calm, supportive and safe environment for everyone.

All the staff team are caring, and together we make a strong, dedicated team where every child and young person is treated with the proper respect to ensure that their rights, needs and aspirations, personal preferences and pathways remain central to the school's organisation.

To achieve this we are committed to ensuring that we work in partnerships with our families, and also in collaboration with a wide range of professionals who can guide and support us in meeting the individual needs of our pupils, and therefore together contribute to enabling all pupils to learn, thrive and achieve.

We also recognise that by further developing strong links with the community we are promoting positive attitudes towards our pupils and the social inclusion of all, whilst developing access and opportunities, to continuing lifelong learning in adult life. In unison we are also enhancing the opportunities available to our pupils to make a unique contribution to their family, school and local community.

Blackmarston is on a journey of transformation. We are seeking a visionary and compassionate Headteacher who can build on the progress made, lead curriculum development, and inspire excellence across the school. This is a unique opportunity to shape the future of a school that is deeply committed to its pupils and community.

Blackmarston School is part of a growing Multi-Academy Trust and the recruitment of the headteacher post is in preparation for further schools joining us in the near future as the right candidate will also be working within the Executive Leadership Team to fulfil the future vision for the Trust as well as the school..

We are looking for a leader who is able to demonstrate their commitment to our vision and values for all our learners .

Lisa Appleton (CEO)

*“Building relationships, empowering communication
and enabling opportunities to thrive”*

About Us - Blackmarston School



*“Building
relationships,
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Our Vision and Ethos

Our vision is to provide an inclusive, holistic provision that will enable all members of the school community to attain their full potential. We provide an encouraging and supporting environment which is happy, safe and secure, caring and positive, with 'every child matters' at the centre of our ethos.

Our Aims

Blackmarston School will:

- * provide a warm and safe environment, in which all members of the school community feel valued and are enabled to become happy and confident individuals, who appreciate their own worth
- * offer at an appropriate level, a stimulating, challenging and enriched curriculum in a variety of environments, both during the school day and beyond, which allows our children to achieve their full potential
- * promote a climate of high expectation, in which the achievements and successes of all are celebrated
- * develop skills, qualities, knowledge and understanding for life
- * ensure the pupils have a voice in all aspects of school life
- * create an environment in which individuals are empowered to accept responsibility for their own development
- * encourage mutual respect and understanding of others so that our pupils become caring responsible individuals, both within school and the wider community.

Core Values

- * Kindness: We care about everyone in school. We try to be a good friend.
- * Achievement: We take pride in what we do. We encourage others to do well.
- * Respect: We treat our school and all the people in it with care and acceptance.

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Characteristics

Blackmarston School is a Primary Special School that makes provision for pupils aged 2-11 years with a diverse range of special educational needs and learning disabilities; predominantly severe, profound and complex.

The school currently has 96 pupils on roll. The number of pupils on roll for the early years and primary phase has remained almost static over the past 5 years.

The catchment for the school is predominantly rural and extends across the county of Herefordshire.

All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan .

Ofsted Context

In June 2023, Blackmarston was judged to have serious weaknesses by Ofsted, with concerns raised around leadership, curriculum development, and consistency in teaching. However, the January 2025 Ofsted Monitoring Visit highlighted significant progress:

- A new leadership structure, including an Interim Executive Board (IEB) and newly appointed middle leaders, has brought stability and clarity to the school.
- The acting headteacher and deputy have introduced a coaching and team-teaching model that is improving staff confidence and consistency.
- The phonics and early reading curriculum is now well-structured and effectively delivered, with pupils showing clear progress.
- Staff training has been strengthened, and there is a renewed focus on meeting individual needs through high-quality planning and resources.
- Leaders have a clear moral purpose and are committed to ensuring that every pupil is known, understood, and supported to thrive.

Ofsted noted that “staff shared a common consensus that there ‘has been a breath of life put into the school’ and for that they are proud”

Looking Ahead

Blackmarston is on a journey of transformation. We are seeking a visionary and compassionate Headteacher who can build on the progress made, lead curriculum development, and inspire excellence across the school. This is a unique opportunity to shape the future of a school that is deeply committed to its pupils and community.

Breakdown of SEN within current Blackmarston cohort	
Special Education Need	% of pupils with this need
Autistic Disorder	52.08%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties	12.50%
Speech, Language & Communication Needs	30.21%
Severe Learning Difficulties	34.38%
Vision Impairment	2.08%
Hearing Impairment	1.04%

About Us - Accordia Academies Trust



Accordia Academies Trust (MAT) was established in April 2022 after the successful conversion of Barrs Court Trust in preparation for the opening of The Beacon College, a Free Special School, in September 2021. In March 2025, Blackmarston School, a primary special school joined the Trust.

The Trust Board is determined to see a high performing and successful Multi-Academy Trust that delivers the very best educational experience for the pupils and students attending our schools and college. Our schools and college play a key role in the community by offering our children and young people opportunities to grow and thrive, academically, socially and emotionally. We want our children and young people to be confident, resilient and as independent as possible

To achieve this, we are committed to ensuring that we work in partnerships with our families, and also in collaboration with a wide range of professionals who can guide and support us in meeting the individual needs of our pupils and students and therefore together contribute to enabling all pupils and students to learn, thrive and achieve.

We also recognise that by further developing strong links with the community we are promoting positive attitudes towards our pupils and students and the social inclusion of all, whilst developing access and opportunities for continuing lifelong learning in adult life. In unison we are also enhancing the opportunities available to our pupils to make a unique contribution to their family, school and local community.

At the heart of our vision is the drive to provide outstanding, high quality education for SEND in our locality. Our schools work closely with each other and with other schools, colleges and education providers, external professional agencies and the Local Authority to achieve this. The MAT Board will be open to further schools, especially specialist settings wishing to join us in our journey.

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Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Headteacher at Blackmarston Primary Special School. On behalf of the Trustees of Accordia Academies Trust, I am delighted to provide you with this application pack, which outlines an exciting opportunity to lead a truly unique and inspiring special school dedicated to the education, care, and well-being of our pupils.

Blackmarston School is a well-established and much-loved school in Hereford, serving children aged 2 to 11 with a range of complex learning needs, including profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), and autism. Our school is built on a foundation of strong relationships, inclusive practice, and a commitment to helping every child thrive.

In March 2025, Blackmarston School became part of Accordia Academies Trust, joining a family of schools committed to transforming lives through inclusive and high-quality education. This partnership has brought renewed energy, support, and strategic direction to the school.

Following an Ofsted inspection in June 2023, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses, prompting a period of reflection and renewal. Since then, significant progress has been made. The Ofsted Monitoring Visit in January 2025 recognised the positive changes underway, including strengthened leadership, improved curriculum planning, and a renewed sense of purpose and optimism among staff. Inspectors noted that "staff shared a common consensus that there 'has been a breath of life put into the school' and for that they are proud."

As Headteacher, you will have the opportunity to build on this momentum and lead Blackmarston School into its next chapter. This is a pivotal leadership role, requiring a compassionate, visionary, and highly skilled individual who can inspire and guide both staff and pupils, while working collaboratively with the CEO, Trustees, families, and the wider community. We are seeking a leader with a proven track record in educational leadership, a deep understanding of SEND, and the ability to foster a culture of excellence, inclusion, and joy in learning.

Accordia Academies Trust is committed to supporting its leaders through professional development, shared resources, and collaborative opportunities. As Headteacher of Blackmarston, you will be a key member of the Trust's leadership team, contributing to our wider mission of transforming lives through education.

We warmly invite you to visit Blackmarston School to experience its welcoming and vibrant community first-hand.

We look forward to receiving your application and learning more about how your skills and experiences align with our aspirations for Blackmarston. This is a rare and exciting opportunity to make a lasting impact on the lives of our pupils, their families, and the wider community.

Thank you once again for your interest, and we wish you the very best in your application.

Yours sincerely,

Trevor Gregory

Chair of Trustees, Accordia Academies Trust



Recruitment Information and Guidance

Safer Recruitment

Accordia Academies Trust (AAT) and its schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We follow robust safer recruitment processes during all recruitment.

Equal Opportunities

We are an equal opportunities employer and welcome applications from candidates of all ages, backgrounds and those with disabilities.

Applications

Official application forms must be completed. CVs will not be accepted.

Applications must be sent by email to: scooke@accordiatrust.co.uk before the closing date noted on the previous page.

Late applications will only be considered in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Trust.

Your application form is an important part of the recruitment process. The decision whether or not to shortlist you for interview will be based on the information you provide on your application form, it is therefore important that you provide relevant information to support your application. You are advised to review the job description and personal specification before completing your application. If you do not clearly demonstrate how you meet the essential criteria in the person specification, you will not be shortlisted for interview.

If you have any questions about the completion of this form please contact scooke@accordiatrust.co.uk for assistance.

References

You must provide details of two referees on your application form. One should be from your present/ relevant employer (or your last employer if unemployed). You may request that referees are not contacted prior to shortlisting, however once shortlisted, you should expect that a reference will be requested.



Employment 'Gaps'

You should identify and explain any gaps in your employment history on your application form. These will be discussed with you in further detail at the interview stage if you are shortlisted.

False Information

Providing false information in support of an application for employment is an offence and could result in your application being rejected or summary dismissal if appointed. If there are serious safeguarding concerns, the Trust reserves the right to make a referral to the police.

Canvassing

You must declare any personal or business relationship with any employee, Trustee or Member of AAT or any of its schools on your application form. Canvassing or the failure to make proper disclosure will disqualify your application or, if appointed, will render you liable to dismissal without notice.

Shortlisted Candidates

Notification

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview by email.

If you are required to prepare anything in advance of the interview, you will be given full details when you are contacted.

You will be required to bring evidence of your identity and stated qualifications to the interview.

You will also be asked to complete a self-disclosure form, which should be returned before the interview (see Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 below)

If you have not heard from us within 10 days of the closing, you should assume that your application has not been successful.

On-line Checks

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, the Trust will undertake reasonable and proportionate on-line checks on shortlisted candidates.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

All posts involving direct contact with children are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. However, amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013 and 2020) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected'. These are not subject to disclosure to employers and cannot be taken into account. Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance/dbs-filtering-guide>

If you are shortlisted, you will be asked to complete a Self-Disclosure Form in order to declare any whether you are barred from working with children, or whether you have convictions that would make you unsuitable to work with children or in the role that you have applied for.

If your application is successful, the information that you have self-disclosed will be checked against information from the Disclosure & Barring Service before your appointment is confirmed.

It is an offence to apply for a role engaging in regulated activity if you are barred from working with children or vulnerable groups. (Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006).

Successful Applicants

Any offer of employment following a successful interview is provisional and subject to satisfactory clearances being obtained, these include:

- DBS & Barring
- Right to Work
- Prohibition checks
- Medical Clearances
- Satisfactory references
- Satisfactory on-line checks

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw a provisional offer of employment at any stage during the recruitment process.



DBS and other checks

All employees of the Trust are subject to Enhanced Disclosure and Barring and Right to Work checks. Other checks to be undertaken will depend upon the role but may include Barring, Prohibition from Teaching, Section 128, Child Care Disqualification etc. (Note: this list is not exhaustive and the Trust reserves the right to carry out all checks necessary to comply with statutory requirements and our commitment to safer recruitment.)

Probation

All employees joining the Trust are subject to a probation period of 6 months.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 2018 (the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Data Protection Act 1998) places responsibilities on us to process personal data that we hold in a fair and proper way. The information you give us will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of personnel management.

The Trust may contact other organisations (such as the Disclosure and Barring Service, previous employers, education establishments, etc) to check the information you have given on the application form. The information will be stored securely, both manually and electronically and destroyed after 12 months (maximum) if your application is unsuccessful. If we offer you a job, we will use some of the information you give us on the application form in your contract of employment.



Specific Information regarding this position

Role	Headteacher of Blackmarston School
Employer	Accordia Academies Trust
Reporting to	CEO and The Board of Trustees
Salary	Leadership Scale
Level	Group 5 – Indicative pay Range L20-L27 £79,475 - £94,332
Contract/Hours	Full time
Start Date	January 2026
Closing Date for Applications	15th October 2025
Shortlisting Date	17th October 2025
Interview Dates	22nd-23rd October 2025

Visiting the School

Visits to the school to find out more about the post are warmly welcomed.

To arrange a suitable time, please email our HR Administrator Shelley Cooke

email: scooke@accordiatrust.co.uk

