



**Head Teacher  
Recruitment Pack  
Starting September 2025**



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## Letter from the Chair of Governors

Thank you for your interest in the headship of Longwill Primary School for Deaf Children. Longwill School is a regional provision, situated in Northfield in the South of Birmingham. Our pupils all have an EHCP and travel from a wide area of Birmingham and 10 Local Authorities. The school is commissioned for 65 places and children can start at any point in the school year. Our small size has allowed us to build a caring community where children learn to be mutually supportive, and know that they can count on our staff for help and support. The main special need of all the pupils is their deafness, however some pupils do have additional needs, all benefit from the Sign Bi-lingual approach the school takes throughout the day.

The school's senior leadership team comprises a headteacher, a deputy headteacher and one assistant headteacher. There are approximately 35 staff altogether.

Longwill School was last visited by Ofsted in November 2022; we were delighted to be graded Outstanding in all areas. The report stated that:

"Pupils work hard to achieve the ambition that leaders and staff have for them. The commitment to ensuring that every child is proud to be deaf lies at the core of this fantastic school."

"Inspirational deaf and hearing staff inspire pupils to believe they can achieve anything and give them the knowledge and skills they need to succeed."

Earlier this year Longwill school achieved the Gold Rights Respecting Award. We are the first Special school in Birmingham, and indeed the West Midlands to achieve this. The Rights Respecting Program is embedded in all areas of the curriculum, and is an extremely important element of the ethos of the school.

Visitors to our school consistently mention the positive, friendly atmosphere and the confidence of the pupils. The pupils are consistently encouraged to become independent both in their learning and in their everyday lives.

The successful candidate should expect to take over the leadership of an excellent school, where both staff and children are extremely proud to be part of the Longwill community. In our search for a new Head Teacher, we hope that we will be lucky enough to find a qualified teacher of the deaf with proven leadership experience. However, we realise that this may be a difficult task and therefore will welcome applications from outstanding leaders in other areas of education.

If you believe that you are the person to take us forward, we want to hear from you. You can get further information from our website and you are welcome to arrange an informal visit to the school.

Caroline Lane

## **Longwill School Mission Statement**

Longwill has a strong commitment to realising and celebrating the potential of our Deaf bilingual pupils. This underpins our vision, plans and action to improve and develop learning. Everyone in school has a sense of purpose, a passion for lifelong learning and a responsibility for his/her own development. Each child is viewed holistically and places a strong emphasis on personalised learning. Every member of the school is of equal worth. Tolerance, good behaviour and respect are therefore crucial.

We want independent free thinkers, ready for 21st century life, capable of embracing the technology of tomorrow, who are adaptable, self-reliant resourceful and tolerant of change and who can contribute to the wider community.

Longwill is a bilingual, bicultural learning environment, which strives to support and develop the communication needs and abilities of its members so that the pupils are equipped to function effectively within both the Hearing and the Deaf world; proud of their heritage and confident to move freely in whichever world they choose.

# Introduction to Longwill School for Deaf Children

**A wealth of information can be found on the school website.**

Longwill School is a small Primary Specialist School (with foundation status, part of the Birmingham Special Schools' Co-operative Trust) catering for up to 65 children aged 2-11 whose primary need is profound deafness and its associated delayed language. As a result, all pupils require a sign bilingual learning environment. Some pupils will have additional needs over and above their deafness. Longwill is a regional provision, and the pupils come from across the West Midlands. The school is based in the south of the city (Northfield area), with easy access to several motorways nearby. The school is outward facing and actively seeks partnerships with others locally and nationally for the benefit of the child.

All pupils have an EHCP in place.

## **The Learning Environment**

- Longwill is a sign-bilingual, bi-cultural learning environment, which strives to support and develop the communication needs and abilities of its members so that the pupils are equipped to function effectively within both the Hearing and the Deaf world.
- We educate our pupils as independent free thinkers, ready for 21st century life, capable of embracing the technology of tomorrow, who are adaptable, self-reliant, resourceful and tolerant of change and who can contribute to the wider community.
- Pupils are taught within small class sizes by Teachers of the Deaf.
- 8 Deaf staff act as positive cultural and linguistic role models, teaching British Sign Language (BSL) and supporting learning in the classroom. Both languages (English and BSL) are equally valued and promoted.
- We have three Learning Mentors on our staff to support pupils' emotional health and wellbeing.
- We teach English through a variety of means, using BSL, Sign Supported English, Signed English, as well as communicating orally where appropriate.
- We employ a digital team to ensure that Longwill continues to lead the way in using digital media to enhance Deaf education.
- We work closely with Speech and Language Therapists, our Audiologist and a range of other professionals to support positive outcomes for Deaf children.

## **Initiatives**

- The school is part of the Birmingham Special Schools Co-operative Trust. It has an outward facing approach and recognises the benefits of strong partnership working.
- The school is an active member of the Sign Bilingual Consortium.
- The curriculum is personalised to meet the needs of D/deaf sign bilingual pupils and so includes the teaching of Deaf Studies and BSL throughout the school. Many children will undertake BSL accreditation (Level 1 and Level 2) before leaving the school.
- We teach BSL throughout the school and run accredited BSL courses to encourage the wider community of schools to develop their sign language skills.
- All our Teachers of the Deaf engage in Action Research and collaborate closely with universities in developing and improving ways to teach Deaf pupils

- ‘Visual Phonics by Hand’- was developed at Longwill to support phonic skills for Deaf pupils, who are visual learners.
- The school holds the Gold Rights Respecting Schools Award (UNCRC) and is proud of our achievement in creating a school where pupil voice is strong and pupils are confident contributors to making the world a better place.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

The school is on a shared site with 2 other special schools and a specialist Post 19 college. It has been in its present location since the 1960s. The school is set in green parkland and has ample space for children to play (three playgrounds for Early Years, KS1 and KS2). There is a wealth of play equipment for the children to use. The school has two Forest School bases within its extensive grounds.

Recently, the lighting has been refurbished, two PCFs (personal care facilities) have been built and a new lift installed. The school is accessible and has ramps to all ground level classrooms and the school hall. KS2 Pupils swim weekly at Northfield Swimming Baths, less than a mile from school.

## **THE GOVERNING BODY**

We have a strong governing body who both support the school and bring challenge. They bring a wide variety of skills and expertise which enables them to carry out their role successfully.

The school is governed, in accordance with an Instrument and Articles of Governance, by a governing body of 12 members, comprising:

- 2 Parent Governors
- 1 Governor appointed by the Authority
- 1 Staff Governor
- 2 Foundation Governors
- 5 Co-opted Governors and
- The Head Teacher

The head teacher automatically becomes a member of the governing body unless he or she elects otherwise and notifies the Clerk of the governing body in writing of his or her decision not to become a member of the governing body.

The full governing body meets twice a term usually on a Wednesday evening. We also have a Curriculum Committee and a Finance, Staffing and Premises committee.

It is expected that the governors will take an active interest in the life of the school and they are invited to school functions.

## **STAFFING**

### **Teaching Staff**

Teacher staffing for each academic year is determined by the governing body in the light of the school's formula funded budget during the preceding Spring Term.

The SLT consists of Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher, this has recently been extended by the recruitment of an Assistant Head Teacher. There are five members of the Senior Management team (SLT plus phase leaders). All the Teachers are leaders in their own right and as such they have a curriculum responsibility. The school has well-established a coaching culture where everyone is encouraged to develop their skills.

The teaching staff establishment for 2024/25 is head teacher plus 9.4 teachers (FTE).

### **School-Based Support Staff**

The school-based support staff currently includes a School Business Manager, Office Manager, Administrative Assistant, classroom-based support staff, and a Site Supervisor. Support staff total 29 FTE. On site catering is provided by City Serve.

### **BUDGET**

The delegated budget for 2024/25 is £2,020,543.

The Governors have been able to set a balanced budget.

### **ORGANISATION AND CURRICULUM**

Longwill Curriculum is inclusive and ambitious; it is under-pinned by our key principles: Connected Child, Connected Curriculum and Connected Community, It is with these principles that staff at Longwill are driven in their desire to open the eyes of learners to the wonders of our world and community. Ensuring that our Deaf pupils have a solid connection with their own Deaf identity through a secure connection with their universal rights, enabling them to value the connected curriculum and feel a strong sense of belonging to their community.

#### **Common Values and Purpose**

Our curriculum:

- Is broad, exciting and challenging and aims to achieve high standards.
- Is underpinned by the UN Convention on the rights of the child, ensuring that pupils know their rights and are encouraged to seek those which are not being met.
- Is used to increase pupil's knowledge, skills and understanding as they grow and develop and become more aware of the world around them.
- Is carefully planned, structured and sequenced to ensure that learning is continuous, and that our pupils make expected and above expected progress.
- Engages the children's interests and curiosity, encourages and motivates them to want to learn.
- Is exciting and promotes first-hand experience to reinforce their learning and to underpin their growing knowledge, skills and understanding to equip them for later life.
- Will open their eyes to the wonders of the world about them and cause them to marvel at the incredible and fantastic world in which we live.
- Encourages pupils to be curious, to ask questions, make connections, work collaboratively and develop a thirst for learning which will stay with them throughout their lives.

- Is structured to ensure that all pupils from the earliest opportunity are encouraged to develop independence, self-discipline, responsibility and the ability to build resilience.
- Celebrates all teachers and other professionals as 'life-long learners,' committed to an ongoing development of their own knowledge and skills to optimise the pupils' learning experience.

### **Aspects regarding the pupil's Deafness**

- The curriculum provides opportunities for our profoundly D/deaf pupils to learn British Sign Language to achieve the fullest possible educational advantage in school and later in their lives.
- Deaf Studies is taught to all pupils throughout the school. Deaf members of staff plan and deliver Deaf Studies lessons once a week. This covers issues around Deaf culture, identity and community, history, technology, communication and language.
- The place of teaching assistants and D/deaf adult communicators is considered vital for the best possible delivery of curriculum in Longwill. They are included and consulted in all developments and there are regular meetings and discussions.
- The connected curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life as a Deaf person in a hearing world now and in the future.
- The approach to the curriculum is varied but reflects the need for deaf children to directly experience the world. Provision is made for the pupils to make educational visits, be involved in residential trips, environmental visits, and forge links with local mainstream schools with an aim to extend their understanding of the world they live in.
- A creative curriculum, where subject areas are linked together by a common theme is particularly useful for deaf children. Meeting target vocabulary regularly and exploring concepts from a variety of different angles reinforces the new language that a deaf child has to assimilate.
- The use of KWL charts (graphic organisers- what they **know**, **want-to-know** and **learned**) help pupils to organise information before, during and after a unit of lessons. KWL charts support Deaf pupils to organise their thinking, activate prior knowledge and monitor pupils' learning.

### **Aspects regarding the specific Special Educational Needs of some children**

- The curriculum meets the children's diverse needs, starting places, abilities and special educational needs.
- Outside agencies, offer a range of input and advice to teachers and Learning Mentors; they are used to the fullest advantage of each individual child. Joint working practices are supported by management, in providing time for discussions, rooms to work in, joint planning and access to staff for the best use of their expertise.
- The place of therapy for some children is built in to the timetable and is directed by their need and entitlement.
- Some children can benefit from regular inclusion. Special inclusion programmes which take into account the needs of individual pupils' communication needs will be considered.

- Close links with local mainstream schools offer pupils the opportunity to collaborate with hearing peers. Drama, RPSHE, R.E, Art, Signed Singing, E-Safety and outdoor learning provides a suitable context for shared projects.

### Teaching Group Arrangements

- Main school is divided up into two Phases, Lower School and Upper School each led by a senior teacher. Together staff plan for the medium term and short term, in line with the long-term themes.
- Curriculum content, organisation and documentation is continually under review in order to fulfil the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988, the revised National Curriculum 2014 and the changing needs of the school. The review of all curriculum policies takes place over a three-year period.
- Projects are organised flexibly according to the amount of learning and relevance to the EYFS and National Curriculum outcomes. This means that topics are not necessarily half a term in length.
- A long-term curriculum map for each class in school is developed and shared with parents on the school website. This gives a brief indication of what is taught within each curriculum area and makes cross curricular links to the rotational topics.

## LONGWILL SCHOOL DATA

Pupils making at and above expected progress					
Subject	Pupils 2023-2024	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-21
Reading	47	72%	84%	84%	98%
Writing		64%	82%	94%	96%
Maths		70%	88%	90%	91%
Science		60%	90%	96%	89%
		47 pupils	50 pupils	51 pupils	47 pupils

Over the past two years, we have undertaken a thorough review of our assessment procedures and implemented significant refinements to ensure that the proportion of pupils achieving at or above expected progress reflects high attainment in core subject areas. While current pupil progress data may not appear as strong as in previous years, we are confident that our revised and ambitious targets will lead to more meaningful outcomes.

We now require pupils to secure **70% of National Curriculum objectives** before progressing to the next level of knowledge and skills, alongside 80% attainment of Longwill Statements. This approach shifts the focus from the previous model, which emphasised **80% completion of steps and favoured breadth over depth**. By setting these new benchmarks, we aim to foster a deeper, more comprehensive understanding in core subjects, ensuring that pupils demonstrate mastery of key concepts rather than surface-level knowledge.

Further detailed analysis of this data is available.

## LONGWILL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DATA 2023-24

Overall Attendance 2023-24 (Year 1-6 only)	<b>91% *</b>
Persistent Absence: Pupils with attendance below 90% (Y1 – Y6)	34% *
Overall Attendance 2023-24 (Whole School)	<b>90.9% *</b>
Attendance excluding absence for religious observance (Whole School)	90.95%
Attendance excluding medical appointments (Whole School)	92.26%
Attendance excluding religious observance and medical appointments (Whole School)	92.58%
Attendance excluding illness (Whole School)	95.4%
Attendance excluding medical appointments and illness (Whole School)	97.04%
Attendance of pupils subject to Pupil Premium (Y1-6)	89.97%
Attendance of pupils not subject to Pupil Premium (Y1-6)	94.53%

	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>COVID</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>
Y1-Y6 Attendance	91.7%		90.2%	90.6%	<b>91%</b>
Whole School Attendance	90.74%		88.9%	89.24%	<b>90.9%</b>

\*Longwill's data compares favourably against national benchmarked attendance and PA figures for special schools.

Pupils' attendance remains a strong priority within our small special school (52 pupils). As a result, attendance (excluding medical appointments and illness) is excellent and is showing year on year improvement since the pandemic. The regional nature of our provision and the long distances pupils travel to school will always be a factor that we aim to mitigate with a proactive approach to attendance, collaborative support for families and multi-agency working. Our persistent absence rate was 34% last year. This is better than the national benchmark for special schools.

Many of our pupils have additional medical and physical needs over and above their deafness and we work with every individual family to overcome as many of the barriers to attendance. Prior to Covid, we had made significant improvements in narrowing the gap in attendance of those pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding. However, the impact of the pandemic on this group has resulted in the gap widening to 4.5%. Therefore, this will be monitored closely throughout the year and I am pleased that the Special Schools DLP Project (Delivering Local Provision) will provide a focus upon the promotion of good attendance. We will continue to strive to encourage the very best attendance because we know that good attendance correlates with good outcomes for our pupils. Our school target will remain 95% and we will work closely with parents to achieve it.

### **BSL**

- Although not a National Curriculum subject, BSL plays an integral part in the communication policy of Longwill and the Sign Bilingual ethos of delivering the curriculum. (UNCRC A: 30 Every child has the right to speak their own language).
- It is vital that BSL is given the highest priority as a language of communication around school, between staff and children. The expansion of the linguistic community for the children is of highest importance and Deaf communicators will be working with the children to deliver our policy.
- Deaf adults will be seen working in classes and withdrawing children for 1:1 BSL language development sessions
- As stated earlier, in recognition of the sign language skills and ability of our children, some pupils are entered for their Level 1 and Level 2 BSL examination.

### **Deaf Studies**

- Deaf Studies Curriculum runs throughout the school from Foundation to Y6. It covers 5 areas of learning: Culture, Community, History, Technology and Identity. Learning is planned, delivered and evaluated by Deaf staff in close liaison with class teachers and the Curriculum Lead.

### **Forest School**

- The school values its Forest School provision very highly. Our Early Years Lead is a qualified Forest Schools Practitioner and so all foundation dept pupils participate in weekly outdoor learning sessions.
- The school commissions an external FSP to lead sessions one day each week for main school pupils (on a rota basis)
- The school also runs a Forest School Nurture Group for KS1 and KS2 pupils, which meets weekly.

### **Religious Education**

Religious Education is provided in accordance with the Authority's "Agreed Syllabus". The religious beliefs of all pupils and their parents are respected, and appropriate arrangements are made for the withdrawal of pupils from RE lessons and acts of worship, when parents request this.

## **PASTORAL CARE AND DISCIPLINE**

**UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:** Longwill is a Gold Aware rights respecting school and upholds the conventions of the right of the child. Our approach to pastoral care and discipline is underpinned by

- Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
- Article 29: Education must develop and encourage a child to respect their own rights and that of others and the environment around them.
- Article 14: Duty bearers must help children to make good choices
- Article 37: Sanctions should not hurt or humiliate children.

The school follows a TIAAS (Trauma Informed Attachment Aware School) approach and all staff are Team Teach trained.

## **PARTNERSHIP MONITORING, ADVICE AND SUPPORT**

The school has excellent relationships with professional agencies to ensure the best outcomes for our children, these include:

- Birmingham Special Schools Co-operative Trust
- Birmingham Special Schools Headteachers Association
- Sign Bilingual Consortium
- SENAR

### **Birmingham Special School Co-operative Trust**

Longwill school is one of 7 Special Schools across the city which form part of Birmingham Special Schools Co-operative Trust. This became established in 2019. The schools work together to increase the range of opportunities available for both pupils and staff across the Trust schools. Activities range from robust training packages for staff to Creative Arts projects for the pupils. Alongside this, the trust school also operate a Peer Review process.

## **EDUCATION FOR A MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY**

The LA, as an integral part of its policy for 'Education for a Multi - Cultural Society' is committed to the promotion of justice and racial equality through the establishment of a strong multi-cultural perspective in all its schools. This is to be achieved through the implementation of three major objectives:

- Preparing all pupils for life in a multi-cultural society, building upon the strengths of cultural diversity;
- Providing for the particular needs of children, having regard to their ethnic, cultural and historical background.
- Being aware of and countering racism and the discriminatory practice to which it gives rise.

As a Gold Rights Respecting school, we believe in promoting the Rights of the Child. We promote British Values democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and we actively encourage mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. This all feeds into our rich ethos, curriculum and extends to our enrichment activities.

## **PARENT/TEACHER LINKS**

The school works closely with parents and its approach is underpinned by the core principles of co-production. It holds the Birmingham SEND Bronze Award for Co-Production. The school is outward facing and actively seeks partnerships with others locally for the benefit of the child.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child underpins the school's commitment to promote the voice of the child and work collaboratively with all its partners to put Deaf children's needs and outcomes at the forefront of all we do. Longwill holds the Gold Rights Respecting Award.

Working collaboratively with parents throughout the child's school life at Longwill is a priority for the school. Parent voice is actively sought on all aspects of school life:

- Our EHCP annual reviews offer parents and other professionals an opportunity for 'shared conversations', where parents are full empowered, and their 'voice' heard.
- Parents are involved in new initiatives from the inception of the work (e.g. parents included in the steering group when the school reviewed its RE policy).
- Parent consultations are held three times a year.
- Parent workshops run termly alongside these events.
- Parent coffee mornings take place monthly and focus upon a different theme at each meeting.
- The school runs various parent courses to support parents understanding of their child's needs (for example, Visual Phonics by Hand or supporting your child's emotional health and wellbeing).
- The school uses apps such as Class Dojo for daily communication and staff regularly communicate with parents via telephone, TEAMS meetings or face to face.

## **OTHER EXTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICES**

Longwill works closely with other organisations to better support our pupils. For example, we have close links with a range of partners as well as commissioning additional support for pupils from:

- Deaf CAMHS (supporting the emotional well-being of our Deaf learners)
- Special School Nursing Team
- Educational Psychology
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Behaviour and Autism Outreach

## **HEADTEACHER INDUCTION**

All new head teachers are able to access induction and support, on a rolling programme, provided by the Teaching Schools across the city, in partnership with Schools HR Services.

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL DIRECTORATE OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES**

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL IS COMMITTED TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT AND WE POSITIVELY WELCOME YOUR APPLICATION IRRESPECTIVE OF YOUR GENDER, RACE, DISABILITY, COLOUR, ETHNIC OR NATIONAL ORIGIN, NATIONALITY, SEXUALITY, MARITAL STATUS, RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEPENDANTS, RELIGION, TRADE UNION ACTIVITY AND AGE

**Applications are invited  
for appointment to the post of**

**Headteacher  
of  
Longwill School for the Deaf  
Bell Hill, Northfield, Birmingham B31 1LD  
Tel: 0121 475 3023  
Email:enquiry@longwill.bham.sch.uk**

**Chair of Governors: Mrs. Caroline Lane  
Head Teacher: Mrs. Alison Carter**

**Group 3, Leadership Group pay range: L18 – L24 £71,729 - £83,081 (2023-24)  
Starting salary dependant on experience**

Due to the retirement of our long serving headteacher in July 2025 the governing body of Longwill School for the Deaf are looking to appoint an inspirational and dedicated headteacher.

Longwill is a highly successful innovative primary school for deaf children who require a sign bilingual education. Our pupils are aged between 2-11 and we currently have 54 pupils on role. We are an outstanding school, (Ofsted Nov 2022). Longwill is a regional provision taking children from 10 local authorities.

We are looking for someone inspirational who can lead this exceptional school and its committed staff team.

The governors, staff, parents and, most importantly, the children all feel extremely proud of our school - as you will see when you step through our doors.

**The successful candidate will be expected to take up the appointment at the beginning of the Autumn Term 2025.**

**Further information and an application pack is available on the school website:  
[www.longwill.bham.sch.uk](http://www.longwill.bham.sch.uk)**

**Informal contact and visits to the school are most encouraged.**

**Completed application form should be returned no later than 12 midday, Monday 16<sup>th</sup>  
December 2024.**

**Please note that we are unable to accept CV's.**

Birmingham City Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be subject to all necessary pre-employment checks, including enhanced DBS, prohibition check; Childcare Disqualification (where applicable); medical fitness; identity and Right to Work in the UK. An online search will be carried out on all shortlisted candidates.

# Longwill School for the Deaf

## Job Description - Headteacher Group 3, L18-24: £71,729 - £83,081 (2023-24)

### Full time, permanent contract

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check is required for all successful applicants and online checks will be undertaken on all shortlisted candidates.

The appointment is subject to the current conditions of employment for Head Teachers as required by Paragraphs 44-47 & 52 of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

This job description may be amended at any time following discussion between the head teacher and member of staff and will be reviewed annually.

#### 1. Job Purpose

As required by paragraph 44-47 and 52 of the School Teachers Pay and Conditions document, to be responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school.

#### 2. Duties and Responsibilities

##### 2.1 General

2.1.1. To act in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs 42-48 & 52 inclusive of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

2.1.2 To undertake the professional responsibilities of a Head teacher as set out in paragraph 46 of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

2.1.3 To act in accordance with other legislation affecting the conduct of the school, particularly that governing health and safety matters and employment rights.

##### 2.2 Specific

#### Core Purpose:

The core purpose of this role is to provide professional leadership, strategic direction, and management in order to ensure the school's continued success. To achieve this, the Head Teacher will work in partnership with staff, governors, Special Schools Co-operative Trust, parents,

children, the wider School and Deaf community and agencies to:

- Inspire the whole School community and effectively provide vision, leadership, and direction.
- Create and maintain an environment which promotes and secures outstanding teaching,

effective learning, and high standards of achievement, behaviour and a passion for learning.

- Promote excellence, equality and high expectations of staff and pupils and carry out day to day management of the school including statutory compliance.
- Evaluate the School's performance, identify priorities for continuous development, plan and implement school improvements.
- Deploy resources to achieve the school's aims and priorities within the limits of the school budget.
- Work with the Birmingham Special Schools Co-operative Trust, promote the Trust's values and contribute effectively to the purposes of the Trust, in conjunction with the other schools within the Trust.

### **Key Areas:**

#### **Strategic direction and shaping the future:**

- Ensure that the school's agreed mission statement and aims are at the centre of everything it does and is clearly articulated, shared, understood, and acted on effectively by all. Also to ensure alignment with the BCSST mission, vision, values and strategic objectives.
- Drawing on experience and best practice, work together with the Governing Body, school leaders and staff to create and implement a strategic improvement plan underpinned by sound financial planning.
- Monitor and evaluate the effects of policies, performance and practice, taking appropriate Action to secure continuous improvement.
- Be outward looking to ensure that the Governing Body and school leaders are well Informed about current and innovative educational thinking and developments in order to ensure the school is well placed to make decisions in the best interests of its future development.

#### **Leadership and Management:**

- Lead by example as a model of professional conduct and presentation, demonstrating high personal standards of expertise and commitment.
- Ensure that the school is a safe environment and that there is an effective safeguarding culture, including demonstrating compliance to both local and national expectations.
- Maximise the contribution of all staff and develop a performance culture which supports the best possible outcomes for deaf children.
- Develop constructive working relationships with Governors, staff, children, parents and External partners.
- Plan, allocate, support and evaluate work undertaken by groups, teams and individuals, Ensuring clear delegation of tasks and devolution of responsibilities in a manner that is consistent with their terms and conditions of employment.
- Implement and maintain effective systems for appraisal, lead continual professional development within a coaching culture. (CPD of staff, and demonstrate effective approaches to reducing workload).
- Arrange for the Deputy Head Teacher or other suitable person to assume responsibility for the discharge of the Head Teacher's duties at any time when absent from School.
- Work closely with the Business Manager and Governors to manage the financial resources effectively and efficiently to achieve educational goals and priorities.
- Work with the school leadership team to oversee an effective admissions process for new pupils, ensuring appropriateness of placement and effective induction procedures.
- Work with the Governing Body and school leadership team to recruit staff of the highest quality, complying at all times with safer recruitment practice.
- Work with the school leadership team to deploy all staff effectively to ensure the highest quality of education provided.

- Work closely with the site staff and organise accommodation efficiently and effectively to ensure the needs of the curriculum and health and safety regulations are met at all times.
- Ensure that the range, quality and use of all available resources is monitored, evaluated and reviewed to improve the quality of education for all children and provide value for money.
- Use and integrate a range of technologies effectively and efficiently to manage the school.

### **Leading teaching and learning:**

- Ensure that learning is at the centre of strategic planning and resource management.
- Work with the school's leadership team to secure and sustain outstanding teaching and learning throughout the school employing a robust system of monitoring, evaluation and review supported by high quality CPD.
- Create a culture and ethos of challenge and support where all children can achieve success and be engaged in their own learning
- Ensure that school resources are effectively targeted to ensure all groups of children achieve well, that additional needs are addressed and there are high aspirations for all our pupils.
- In collaboration with the staff team, to be responsible for determining, organising, implementing, and monitoring the curriculum and its assessment to ensure that they meet with statutory requirements; are relevant to the needs of all children; fulfil the school's duties under Standards and Framework Act 1998 and any subsequent revisions in relation to the National Curriculum.
- Ensure that there is a robust system of assessment of children's achievement, and that there is an effective, accurate method of reporting to parents which ensures parents are well informed about their child's attainment and progress and how they can support this at home.
- Maintain the principles of assessment for learning and effective use of children's data, to set Challenging yet realistic targets for all children.
- Ensure that pupils' EHCPs are used to inform individual targets and are regularly reviewed in line with Local Authority expectations.
- Take a strategic role in the development of new and emerging technologies to enhance and extend the learning experience of children.
- Determine and implement policies which promote self-discipline and regard for authority and the law; good conduct and behaviour; positive strategies for developing equality in the community; positive strategies and programs for children's support and clear guidance on exclusions and other disciplinary matters.
- Develop effective links with the wider community both D/deaf and hearing to enhance teaching and learning.

### **Developing self and working with others:**

- Regularly review own practice, set personal targets, and take responsibility for own personal development.
- Develop and maintain effective strategies and procedures for staff induction, professional development, and performance reviews.
- Treat people equitably and with dignity and respect to create and maintain a positive Culture across the school.
- Ensure clear delegation of tasks and responsibilities, so that teams and individuals undertake effective planning, allocation, support, and evaluation of work.
- Develop an excellent working relationship with the Governing Body, school leadership team, engaging regularly in open discussion.
- Motivate and inspire the whole staff team, developing excellent, professional working relationships.

- Build a collaborative learning culture within the school and actively engage with other schools in the Co-operative Trust and beyond to build effective learning communities.
- Foster excellent relationships with local and national professional partners – particularly other schools using a Sign Bilingual approach so that children and staff may benefit from the development they offer.

### **Securing accountability:**

- Create and develop an organisation in which all the members of the school recognise that they are accountable for the success of the school.
- Present a coherent and accurate account of the school's performance in a form appropriate to the range of audiences, including governors, staff, parents, Ofsted, DfE and others to enable them to play their part effectively.
- Work with the Governing Body, providing information, objective advice, and support, to enable it to meet its responsibilities.
- Promote an ethos that enables everyone to work collaboratively, share knowledge and understanding, celebrate success and accept responsibility for outcomes.
- Co-operate and work with relevant agencies to safeguard children.

### **Strengthening community:**

- Collaborate with the Deaf community, other communities and agencies to promote the academic, spiritual, moral, social, emotional, and cultural well-being of children and their families.
- Ensure learning experiences for children are integrated with the local and wider communities.
- Actively engage with parents and carers, community figures, businesses and other organisations to enrich the school and its value to the wider community.
- Co-operate and work with relevant agencies to protect children and young people.

### **3. Line Management**

- 3.1 Responsible for the supervision of all staff employed in the school (other than school meals staff).

### **4. Conditions of employment**

- 4.1 The above responsibilities are in accordance with the requirements of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document in terms of duties and working time, also any local agreements and LA guidance on interpreting conditions of service.

### **5. Review and Amendment**

- 5.1 This job description is normally subject to annual review. Subject to the provisions of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. It may be amended at the request of the Governing Body or the Head teacher but only after full consultation with them. It may be amended at the request of the Head Teacher or the post holder but only after full consultation between them. It will be signed if agreement is reached.

**6. Complaints**

6.1 If, following review and amendment, agreement is not reached, the appropriate procedures should be used for the settling of any disputes.

Job description issued after consultation

.....

Signature of the Chair of the Staffing

Committee

Copy received by

.....

Signature of the Head teacher

Date

.....

**PERSON SPECIFICATION: HEAD TEACHER**

Longwill School for Deaf Children is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check is required for all successful applicants and online checks will be undertaken on all shortlisted candidates.

	<b>ESSENTIAL</b>	<b>DESIRABLE</b>	<b>METHOD OF ASSESSING</b>
<b>INITIAL QUALIFICATIONS</b>	Qualified Teacher status. Qualified Teacher of the Deaf	NPQH	AF
<b>FURTHER QUALIFICATIONS/ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	NVQ Level 2 or above in British Sign Language (Signature accredited) or a willingness to undertake training to at least that level or beyond.		AFI
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of teaching in more than one school.</li> <li>• Recent successful leadership experience as Headteacher, Head of School, Deputy Headteacher.</li> <li>• Positive experience of implementing whole school/service improvement.</li> <li>• Experience of having had a positive impact on the culture of a school.</li> <li>• Successful experience of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and of demonstrating impact on pupil outcomes.</li> <li>• Successful experience of developing relationships with professional partners outside the school and relationships within the wider community.</li> <li>• A proven track record of School Development planning and self-evaluation.</li> <li>• Excellent understanding of financial management.</li> <li>• Experience of policy development and implementation.</li> <li>• Wide experience of working with stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have experience of working successfully with the Governing Body.</li> </ul>	AF, I, P

	<p>and the promotion of co-production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of implementing appraisal.</li> </ul>		
<b>SKILLS AND ABILITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote the school as a centre of excellence for Deaf Education.</li> <li>• Detailed knowledge and Understanding of all 3 Key Stages in the Primary Phase.</li> <li>• Experience of using data and target setting to raise standards.</li> <li>• To understand what outstanding teaching and learning looks like.</li> <li>• To have experience of designing an outstanding curriculum.</li> <li>• To be an inspiring leader of learning, demonstrating, promoting and encouraging outstanding classroom practice.</li> <li>• To work to high professional standards, strategically and operationally, leading by example.</li> <li>• To manage implementation of change effectively and sensitively.</li> <li>• Continue to develop the coaching culture already embedded.</li> <li>• To deal effectively with underperformance, should it arise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant teaching experience within a special school for D/deaf children.</li> </ul>	AF, I, P, T
<b>OTHER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to work effectively with parents</li> <li>• To be fully versed with the Code of Practice for SEND, and have a clear understanding of the responsibilities of school with reference to EHCPs</li> <li>• To promote the development of independence skills in all pupils.</li> <li>• Excellent written and verbal communication skills (which will be assessed at all stages of the process)</li> </ul>		AF, I, P, T

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show a commitment to advancing equality and inclusion within the school and wider community.</li> <li>• To be outward facing, working co-productively with others both locally and nationally.</li> <li>• Ability to effectively implement Safeguarding legislation and maintain a culture of safeguarding awareness, risk assessment and management.</li> </ul>		
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- Those elements marked **AF** - will be assessed in your **Application Form**
- Those elements marked **AF/IP** - will be assessed in your **Application Form** and during the selection process e.g. **Interview, Presentation**.
- Those elements marked **IP/T** - will be evaluated during the selection process e.g. **Interview, Presentation, Task**

**NB:** *If shortlisted, any relevant issues arising from references will also be taken up at interview. References will be used to support the selection panel's assessment.*

# Birmingham Special Schools' Cooperative Trust

## STRATEGIC IMPACT REPORT TO TRUST GOVERNORS

Date: June 2024	Time Period: Sept 23-May 24	Written By: Tracy Ruddle: Trust Development Leader
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### BSSCT VALUES

a. Trust b. Confidentiality c. Open and honest discussion d. An appreciation of how actions can impinge and impact on others e. A focus upon the workings of the Trust at a collaborative, rather than at individual school level

### VISION OF BSSCT

To work in partnership to advance the education of Special Schools' learners and staff and benefit the wider community achieving more together than working alone.

### STRATEGIC AIMS OF TRUST

a. Ensuring high quality provision for special education learners; b. High quality professional development to promote leadership at all levels; c. Creating mutually beneficial, meaningful partnerships.

### HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THESE AIMS

Through the writing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of an annual Trust Development Plan

<https://onedrive.live.com/edit.aspx?resid=B42E8621D3D0D5E5!1333&ithint=file%2cxlsx&authkey=!AHBKSn5Mp4F6MFE> (look under the second tab at the bottom) The Plan identifies key objectives to be achieved over each academic year in order to achieve the strategic aims.

OBJECTIVES 2023-2024	Ofsted Areas
Providing safe opportunities for independent interaction for learners to improve communication and confidence and enabling them to flourish outside of their own school	Quality of Education
To create learner voice tools especially for the most complex learners	
Continue to improve communication about the work of the Trust both within the Trust schools and externally.	Leadership & Management
Raise attendance across all Trust schools	Behaviour and Attitudes
Develop Trust and Leadership professional development to ensure that school leaders are supporting and holding each other to account more.	Leadership and Management
Ensure pupils have access to a broad curriculum to enable them to discover further talents	Personal Development

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

ACTIONS	IMPACT
New TDP written and being implemented. <a href="#">TDP 2023-2024</a>	The work of the trust is now closely aligned to school improvement in all and individual schools.
Shared Trust events calendarized including Common Ground Arts Project	Many more of the 7 schools are now able to send staff and or pupils to shared events as there is sufficient time to ensure they can benefit from these.
Trust web site in process of being updated and a new updated logo.	Communication about the work of the Trust is being improved to enable access by a wider audience to raise awareness of disability alongside providing shared activities to benefit a greater number of Special Needs children .
Autumn, Spring and Summer Term newsletters produced	
The Leadership Programme has been rewritten and 16 leaders have been enrolled and attended the course	11 Trust leaders have received 4 full days of leadership CPD. 5 further external leaders enrolled provide £1500 of funding towards course costs. (Full cost £2560 to cover

across this academic year. The course was advertised to all Special Schools in Birmingham. This year it involved Industry experts and 5 of the Trust's HTs and as required alumni from earlier courses.



Leadership Programme Flyer

2 key subject networks: Maths, English meet termly and these are led by a leader from one of the schools. Protocols have been written and CPD provided for English, Maths and PSHE leaders in all 7 schools to enable subject peer reviews to take place. Delivery of a pilot Subject Maths & English Peer Review at Dame Ellen Pinsent led by DEP Maths leaders and Maths leaders reviewers from Hamilton, Fox Hollies and Longwill.

Whole School peer reviews carried out at Fox Hollies and Wilson Stuart.

Hamilton received intensive support in both Maths and English to help leaders further develop the curricula as its moves into an All Through Provision.

Following RACC issues at Baskerville Trust schools approached to provide help. Hamilton school provided 2 classrooms daily for 14/15 pupils along with hall space, lunchtime space and playground facilities. A further 2 days a week was offered by The Pines

room hire and catering). Leaving a cost to the Trust of £1060 (£151.42 per Trust school (£96.36 per Trust Leader). This is covered within the annual payment each school contributes to the Trust.

The participants have clearly gained a great deal from the first three days. See evaluations.

[Day 1 Evaluations](#)

[Day 2 Evaluations](#)

[Day 3 Evaluations](#)

Headteachers are clear that the impact is already being seen in their own schools. Furthermore, the Trust 'owns' the training package and Headteachers are involved in delivery saving on current and future external facilitator costs.

21 subject leaders have been trained in the Trust subject review model and understand the principles and protocols under which subject reviews must be carried out.

Dame Ellen Pinsent has had a subject Review in both Maths and English. The school found the process extremely helpful both for identification of Maths strengths and possible action points for development. The 3 external reviewers described the process as invaluable for their own professional development and all have adopted ideas to use in their own schools. The protocols were adhered to and over time it will enable all Maths leaders to deeply see Maths practice in one of the Trust Schools. A further English review was carried out in April and was equally helpful to the school and reviewers.

The purpose and focus of the reviews are clear and all 3 reviewers have the necessary documentation to prepare fully for the review. The reports are clear and both schools have found them highly useful for school improvement and is useful for individual schools to demonstrate to Ofsted they are working externally and getting quality assurance.

Reports from the Maths leader at Hamilton identified had helpful the proves had been for Maths development. "Thank you all of your support yesterday. It was really helpful to have your input to back up what we have been preparing. I think it would be useful to carry out a full review of the teaching and learning following the new curriculum implementation."

14/15 Baskerville pupils received long term daily full teaching provision with appropriate facilities thus providing long continuity to their education.

<p>To develop professional development for Teaching Assistants Dame Ellen Pinsent and Longwill are piloting teaching assistant swap days.</p>	<p>Teaching Assistants recognise the value of this opportunity and have asked to be part of the process. It is hoped that the impact will be similar to that of the subject review .</p>
<p>Next Steps  Write TDP for 24-25  Evaluate TA swap days  Support Hamilton  Identify schools for whole school peer review and subject reviews  Make a decision on Leadership Programme 24-25</p>	

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

ACTIONS	IMPACT
<p><b>Common Ground Arts Project:</b>  Funding has been successfully bid for, resident artists have been sourced for all 7 schools and a full day planning CPD has been carried out additionally Arts training films are being created.  <a href="#">2024 — commongroundarts</a></p>	<p>Schools have an additional £64,000 to support the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the programme. Project leaders in all 7 schools have had support to ensure the project makes the best use of resident artists as possible. Training films for Art subject leads and teachers of Art will support ART CPD for the future and is future proofing the success of the Arts across both Trust Schools and other Special Schools..</p>
<p>Rights Respecting Schools conference at Longwill opened up to Trust schools</p>	<p>All BSSCT schools are attending this event.</p>
<p>Fox Hollies have opened up a Maths workshop to 2 schools in the trust</p>	<p>Hamilton have taken up the offer  6 schools participating</p>
<p>Forest Schools day 19/3/24</p>	<p>6 Number of schools participating</p>
<p>World Book Day</p>	<p>Fox Hollies joined Dame Ellen Pinsent School for their Let's Connect event on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> Feb. Snow White was the theme with a key focus on performing arts. The children got to share learning experiences and sensory environments, that helped them re-tell the story of Snow White in their own way.</p>
<p>Let's Connect event at Dame Ellen Pinsent</p>	<p>Shared resources and ideas have improved shared theme days e.g. World Book Day and Number Day enabling more children to benefit from high quality resources and teaching across all 7 schools. A cross trust phonics document has been produced to improve the teaching of phonics.</p>
<p>English Maths Subject Networks</p>	<p>Shared resources and ideas have improved shared theme days e.g. World Book Day and Number Day enabling more children to benefit from high quality resources and teaching across all 7 schools. A cross trust phonics document has been produced to improve the teaching of phonics.</p>

<p>Next Steps  Agree shared events for next year</p>	
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**BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES**

ACTIONS	IMPACT
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<p>Worked with Special Schools DLP to explore issues with attendance and ways to improve it including PA, FT and permanent exclusions</p> <p>Created a Co-operative database for attendance and identified the key areas of concern and ways to improve them.</p> <p>Worked with DLP to ensure the right personnel and strategies are in place to support BSSCT priorities.</p>	<p>This has not got off the ground as fast as we had hoped this year. However, Denise is now leading on the DLP project and both Simon and Alison are part of the steering group for this (it is a city wide Special School DLP project with £400k funding for 2 years) so the Coop Trust as playing a big part in this. The DLP has 3 main KPIs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve Attendance</li> <li>• Reduce suspensions/exclusions</li> <li>• Improve attainment.</li> </ul> <p>This will remain on next year's TDP</p>
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**Next Steps**

Include updates on DLP project at each half term's HT meeting.

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**ACTIONS**

Running a shared Forest Schools day at Wilson Stuart

Let's Connect event

**IMPACT**

Provided safe opportunities for independent interaction for learners to improve communication and confidence and enabling them to flourish outside of their own school and make new friends.

**Next Steps**

Agree further shared personal development activities for 24-25

**CHALLENGES AND RISKS**

Changes to Government agendas and priorities  
 Financial commitment required to maintaining the Trust  
 Guaranteeing a BSSCT voice at key BCC For a meetings  
 SENAR and Tribunal decision making processes

**LINKS TO STAKEHOLDERS**

Arts Project all key stakeholders invited  
 Termly BSSCT newsletter sent to all staff, governors and partners  
 Termly Trust Board meetings with a governor from each of the trust schools represented.

**KEY DOCUMENTS BSSCT ADHERES TO**



BSSCT Collaboration Agreement-Strategic I

[TDP 2023-2024](#)

School inspection handbook - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

[SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Trust Collaboration Agreement 2022](#)

<https://www.coopschools.uk/>

**BSSCT SCHOOLS' CURRENT OFSTED JUDGEMENTS**

	Grading Sept 23	Grading July 24	Date	Current SEF Judgement	Likely Term for next Ofsted
Baskerville	Good	Good	21/9/22	Good	Autumn/26/Spring 27
Dame Ellen Pinsent	Outstanding	Outstanding	23/10/18	Outstanding	Summer/Autumn 24
Fox Hollies	Good	Good	25/5/22	Good	Summer/Autumn 26
Hamilton	Outstanding	Outstanding	5/12/19	Requires Improvement	Summer 24/Autumn 24
Longwill	Outstanding	Outstanding	13/1/23	Outstanding	Autumn 26/Spring 27
Pines	Good	Good	26/7/19	Good	Summer/Autumn 24
Wilson Stuart	Outstanding	Outstanding	7/5/19	Outstanding	Summer/Autumn 24

All 7 schools are either Good or Outstanding.  
 In Sept 2023: 4 schools are outstanding and 3 good.  
 By June 24: No Ofsted inspections

## **Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy Statement**

This policy has been adopted by the school and reflects Birmingham City Council's policy, whilst also personalising it to our own provision. As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Longwill School and complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly and undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

Longwill's recruitment of ex-offender policy aligns with principles found in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC). Article 40 of the UN CRC emphasises the right of every child who has been accused or found guilty of breaking the law to be treated with dignity, with the aim of reintegrating them into society. Longwill's commitment to supporting the rehabilitation of ex-offenders echoes this, as it ensures that individuals are given fair opportunities for employment, enabling them to contribute positively to the community. By promoting rehabilitation and reducing discrimination based on past convictions, the school upholds the UN CRC's vision of restorative justice and social reintegration, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their past, are treated with fairness and respect in line with human rights standards.

Longwill School can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that the school is legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where a position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended).

We can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected and are committed to the fair treatment of staff, potential staff or users of our services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability or offending background and this policy is made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process.

Longwill School actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records and selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and job descriptions will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Longwill School ensures that all those in its employ who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences and also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, the school ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment. Longwill School makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice which is available to view [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice> and undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Version

Date Approved      October 2024

Date of Review      36 months from approval date