



John Watson School

a community special school

Headteacher Information Pack

Application closing date: Midnight, 14th April 2024
Shortlisting: 16th April 2024
Interview dates: 19th & 22nd April 2024

Wheatley Site : Littleworth Road, Wheatley, Oxford, OX33 1NN
Holton Site : Steve Drywood Building, Wheatley Park School Campus,
Holton, Oxford OX33 1QH
Tel: 01865 452 725

Contents

1. Letter from the Chair of Governors	Page 3
2. About John Watson School	Page 4
3. Key School Information	Page 6
4. Children's wishes for our new Headteacher	Page 7
5. Staff wishes for our new Headteacher	Page 8
6. What parents/carers say about our school	Page 9
7. Headteacher Job Description	Page 10
8. Person Specification	Page 13
9. Important Information	Page 17
10. Application Process	Page 18



1. Letter from the Chair of Governors

Dear Prospective Headteacher

Thank you for taking the time to read this information pack, where you will be able to learn more about John Watson School, a local authority-maintained community special school located across two sites in the villages of Wheatley and Holton, just to the east of Oxford.

The school was originally established in 1965 as a training centre for mentally handicapped children and became known by its current name from 1970. Today, we are a flourishing school that serves pupils aged 2 to 19 with moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex needs, including ASD.

In its almost sixty year history, the school has been served by just four Headteachers and we are now seeking to appoint a strong, dynamic, highly effective and dedicated Headteacher to start with us in September 2024 to lead our school into the future.

We strongly believe that every child deserves the opportunity to realise their fullest potential in an environment where they feel welcome, happy, safe, supported and challenged. Our aim is that each child should be empowered to ensure that they can live as full and independent a life as possible and to be the best that they can be.

Our chosen candidate will have a robust understanding of special education and be an inspiring, compassionate and empathetic leader who is committed to our vision and values and to providing the best possible education for our pupils.

We have a very special school at John Watson and should be delighted to welcome you to see it in action for yourself and so that we may answer any questions that you may have. In order to arrange an appointment to visit, please contact our School Business Manager, Amy Wilkinson, at sbm@johnwatsonschool.org

On behalf of our whole school community, I would like to thank you for your interest in the Headteacher position at John Watson School and we look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

Lynn Wong
Chair of Governors

“Adults take good care of pupils, respect their views and listen carefully to what they have to say. Pupils feel secure and valued, and grow in confidence as a result.”

Ofsted, October 2022

2. About John Watson School



John Watson School's two sites are located approximately one mile apart in the neighbouring villages of Wheatley and Holton in South Oxfordshire. Both villages are attractive, thriving and expanding communities approximately 5 miles to the east of the city of Oxford, with amenities which support our pupils in developing their independence, social and communication skills. Both of our sites

are shared with other local mainstream schools, with which we have close working relationships.

Within the past 5 years, both sites have benefitted from significant investment in terms of expansion and refurbishment, which has improved our classroom accommodation and the overall environment in which our pupils learn. We are fortunate to have outdoor grounds and facilities that are capable of providing our pupils with further areas for outdoor learning and play and these continue to be improved. In the last year, we have installed a new activity park and trim trail on our Wheatley site and also sail shades, to provide shelter from the sun to facilitate outdoor learning and play. Further works are being planned in the current academic year to add a new sensory room and therapy room to our Wheatley site, to refurbish the existing staffroom and to create a new quiet space for staff to work on planning and preparing lessons. We also have plans to further develop the outdoor space on our Holton site to increase the facilities available to pupils there.



Organised into 13 classes, including Early Years and Sixth Form, our school draws its pupils, all of whom have an Education, Health and Care Plan, from around Oxfordshire, with the majority coming from East Oxford. Presently, we also have a small number of pupils from Buckinghamshire. Notwithstanding our relatively rural location, we are proud that our pupil cohort represents a diverse community from a broad range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

We set high expectations for all of our pupils and through providing them with appropriate support and challenge, we seek to help every pupil meet those expectations. Our wish is for all pupils to aspire to be the best they can be and we offer a rich and varied curriculum to cater for the wide variety of interests and needs within our school.



Our curriculum and, indeed, life at John Watson School, is underpinned by our vision “to develop a love of learning for life through providing high quality education that respects and celebrates pupils’ unique strengths and abilities” and our values, which we call “SLICE”:

SAFETY

LEARNING

INDEPENDENCE

COMMUNICATION

ENGAGEMENT

We recognise the uniqueness of each of our pupils and the need for each of them to have their own learning journey. Our ambitious and sequenced curriculum is therefore tailored to meet their specific needs and aspirations.

We have a very strong safeguarding culture and are dedicated to pupil welfare. Our highly-skilled and strong staff body is fully committed to delivering for each and every pupil. Attendance at school and supporting our pupils’ families have a direct correlation to positive educational and life outcomes and we therefore work closely with each of our pupil’s parents/carers and involve external professionals and organisations, where appropriate, to ensure that all pupils’ needs may be fully met.

We recognise that our school cannot be what it is without our staff. It takes an exceptional group of people to work in a school like ours; and our new Headteacher will be expected to lead the ongoing professional development of this group of special people to work together with only one agenda, namely to enable our school and its pupils to thrive. We are therefore fully committed to the wellbeing of our staff and to making our school one in which they are proud to serve.

Our Governing Body is made up of a supportive, dedicated and pro-active group of individuals with a diverse range of skills and who provide strong strategic oversight of the school to ensure that pupils are central to every decision that is taken by the school. The Governing Body will not only be a sounding board to the ideas our new Headteacher will bring, but will provide challenge to allow the Headteacher to maximise their performance. The Governing Body is very much looking forward to working with a new Headteacher.

Our new Headteacher will be joining John Watson School at an important time in the school’s history. Currently and, for over a decade, our school has been federated with a maintained nursery school which shares our Wheatley site and where there are historic ties. It has become clear that the interests and needs of the two schools are becoming increasingly divergent and where Governors will be looking to defederate the two schools in the very near term. It is anticipated that this process will be complete by the end of this academic year or, in any event, by no later than the end of the first term in the 2024/2025 academic year.

Defederation will enable both schools to follow their own paths into the future. During the course of the next academic year, Governors, in conjunction with our new Headteacher, will need to explore and consider how best to develop the long-term future of John Watson School in terms of whether to remain a maintained school or to convert to academy status.

*“Pupils thrive in the school’s safe and nurturing environment.”
Ofsted, October 2022*

3. Key School Information

Type of School: Local authority-maintained community special school

Date School Established: 1965

Location: Wheatley and Holton, Oxfordshire

Age Range: 2-19

Gender: Mixed

Published Admissions Number: 107

Number of Pupils on Roll: 109 of which 13 are in the Sixth Form and two Year 14s

Leadership Structure: Headteacher, two Deputy Headteachers and an extended leadership team of five

Staffing Structure:

HEADTEACHER	
WHEATLEY SITE	HOLTON SITE
Deputy Headteacher	Deputy Headteacher
8 Teachers	6 Teachers
15 Teaching Assistants	14 Teaching Assistants
School Business Manager and DSL Home School Link Worker to be appointed	

Average Attendance (September 2023 to December 2023): 90%

Percentage of Pupils with English as an Additional Language: 27%

Percentage of Pupil Premium Pupils: 32%

Budget: In surplus

Ofsted: The school was judged to continue to be Good in an ungraded inspection in October 2022. The latest Ofsted Report is available [here](#)

4. Pupils' Wishes For Our New Headteacher

Our new Headteacher should be...

wanting to help
us learn

happy and join
in games

listening to the
students, tell funny
jokes, interested in
playing instruments
and thoughtful

caring

able to go
swimming

kind

helpful, generous and
fun, listens and likes to
play an instrument and
sport

generous



5. Staff Wishes For Our New Headteacher

Firm but fair, easy to talk to, willing to listen and take in new ideas

Be approachable, proactive and responsive

Actively show interest in the pupils and listen to the views of staff

Have communication, team building and collaboration skills

Have a clear vision for the school moving forward

*Experienced with the type of needs we have at JWS,
who is approachable, willing to listen, flexible and has empathy*

Be present and visible during the day

Support mental health and wellbeing

Approachable to students and staff and who gets involved with students

Positive and upbeat!

*Efficient, knowledgeable, approachable,
copes well in stressful situations, calm natured*

*An experienced SEN teacher, good leader, excellent communicator with
parents, staff and children*

They must want to progress the school

*Hands on, caring and who listens to and supports staff by not only
looking for the good working service of the school,
but also for the mental health of staff*

Compassionate, caring and driven leader

6. What Parents/Carers Say About Our School

Lovely time every day at school, lots of activities.

My son is lucky to attend John Watson as he benefits greatly from the small class sizes and the one-on-one attention from staff. He has matured in leaps and bounds and I know that when he is at school, he is being nurtured, supported and championed.

We are really happy with the school and teaching and how happy our child is at school.

Really enjoyed the first year – a changed kid.

All of the staff at John Watson do a fantastic job with our young person and ensure that they communicate with us at all times. We are always very well informed and supported.



7. Headteacher Job Description

This job description should be read in conjunction with the current conditions for headteachers contained in the current National School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. For full details, please refer to the role of headteachers, as defined in the Headteachers' Standards 2020.

If successful with your application, you may also be required to undertake such additional duties as may be reasonably determined by the Governing Body from time to time. The job description is subject to annual review and the Governing Body reserves the right to change the job description to reflect upon changes in the demands of the post, in consultation with the post holder.

PURPOSE OF THE POST

The Headteacher will be responsible for providing effective professional leadership and management of the school and, working together with the Governing Body, will develop and deliver an agreed strategic plan to implement continuous improvement to advance and maintain an ambitious, inclusive, safe and secure learning environment, to achieve success in all areas of the school and to deliver an outstanding education to pupils.

The Headteacher will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school and will have a sound grasp of the essentials of running a successful special school. They will act as an effective outward-facing ambassador for the school and be capable of communicating effectively with all stakeholders.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Management

- Take management oversight and responsibility for the day-to-day operation and management of the school in accordance with the statutory conditions applicable to headteachers' employment, the policies of the Governing Body and in consultation with the local authority
- Ensure that the school's systems, organisation and processes are well considered, efficient and fit for purpose
- Provide a calm and well-ordered environment for all pupils and staff, focused on safeguarding pupils, developing good behaviour in school and in wider society
- Act as a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead but, as Headteacher, have ultimate responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of pupils by ensuring that the Single Central Record is accurate and up to date, that safer recruitment practices are adopted, that the school's policies, procedures and practice related to safeguarding are fully implemented and followed by all staff, that resources are allocated to enable staff to discharge their responsibilities, that staff training is compliant, and that staff, pupils, parents/carers and others feel able to raise concerns
- Take the lead in working with staff, pupils and families to enhance awareness of safeguarding issues and ensure that systems are in place to ensure the needs of Children We Care For (pupils under the care of the local authority) are met
- Properly monitor and operate a balanced budget which meets the needs of the school as laid out in the School Improvement Plan and review and communicate this to Governors on a regular basis as part of budget monitoring
- Monitor and evaluate the level of staffing required to achieve the school's aims and objectives
- Take opportunities to generate new income where appropriate and where beneficial to the school and the community.
- Ensure that agreed financial management standards for the school are fully met
- Ensure the highest possible standards are maintained in accordance with Ofsted requirements
- Produce all policies required to be adopted by the Governing Body and ensure that they are implemented, monitored and updated in a timely manner in accordance with Ofsted, all other applicable statutory requirements and the rules and regulations of applicable regulatory bodies

- Provide effective strategic leadership and, together with the Governing Body, develop the school so that it may meet the needs of pupils in the present and in the future
- Articulate clear values and moral purpose and be capable of demonstrating optimistic personal behaviour, positive relationships and attitudes towards pupils, parents, Governors and members of the local community
- Be the school's outward-facing ambassador
- Interact with and be visible to all stakeholders, including being visible on a day-to-day basis to pupils and staff
- Lead by example, with integrity, creativity, resilience and clarity
- Be a positive role model in helping others recognise difference and respect cultural diversity
- Encourage the development of a culture that offers equality of opportunity to all pupils and staff regardless of gender, social, cultural, linguistic, religious or ethnic background through a range of activities and empowering all pupils and staff to excel
- Be committed to supporting all staff in the performance of their work by providing clear expectations and guidance, a clear and thorough appraisal and performance management process, encouraging and advising on Continual Professional Development and career development, appropriate training and Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (PPA) and other opportunities
- Sustain wide current knowledge and understanding of special education and school systems locally, nationally and globally, and pursue continuous professional development
- Create an outward-facing school which works with other schools and organisations to champion best practice and secure excellent achievements for pupils
- Develop effective relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues in other public services to improve academic and social outcomes for pupils
- Develop and deliver an effective school self-evaluation form (SEF) which identifies appropriate priorities for the next academic year and integrate and implement the key priorities of the SEF into an effective School Improvement Plan
- In consultation with Governors and members of staff, ensure that the School Improvement Plan is meaningful, motivating, manageable and regularly reviewed, with regular reporting to Governors
- Communicate the long-term objectives of the school to all stakeholders and effectively deploy staff resources within the school to ensure that the objectives detailed in the School Improvement Plan adopted by the Governing Body are achieved and to report progress on the School Improvement Plan on a regular basis
- Effectively implement the school's Behaviour Policy to create an environment where pupils are given the best opportunity to successfully achieve their individual learning targets
- Communicate effectively with all parents and carers and encourage them to be involved in their children's education and in the life of the school
- Facilitate the work of the Governing Body by providing, on a regular basis, all necessary information (including financial information), advice and support to enable the Governing Body to fulfil its role and to encourage their involvement and participation in school activities
- Be responsible in conjunction with Governors, where appropriate, for the appointments of all teaching and non-teaching staff
- Prioritise and resolve day to day issues in a calm and reassuring manner
- Ensure that the school environment is attractive and motivating for learning in addition to being sustainable
- Provide facilities management oversight of all property that is part of the school to ensure that the school's buildings and grounds are safe, appropriately equipped and well-maintained
- Take overall responsibility and accountability for compliance with all applicable Health and Safety legislation

Teaching and Learning

- Take responsibility for creating and shaping the teaching and learning values in our school and for the ongoing evaluation of the overall quality of education
- Ensure, in consultation with staff and Governors, the provision of an appropriate curriculum and that the curriculum is evaluated and updated taking account of local and national initiatives, policies and statutes
- Oversee management of the curriculum, to include regular evaluation and assessment of pupil data and ensuring that this is used to inform appropriate planning and practice

- Develop a wide range of teaching and learning opportunities to ensure that the school is able to meet the ongoing changing needs of its pupils
- Ensure that each pupil is offered a personalised, relevant and balanced curriculum with a broad range of learning experiences in line with their targets as set out in their Education, Health and Care Plans. Ensure there is regular monitoring, evaluation and review of each pupil's progress, through analysis of assessment data, including a review outside of the normal annual review, where appropriate
- Ensure that pupils are always engaged in safe, healthy, carefully planned, high quality educational activities in an environment that is stimulating and designed to promote enjoyment and excitement in learning
- Ensure that the learning environment is maintained to a standard compatible with the highest quality learning opportunity for all pupils
- Demand ambitious standards for each pupil, overcoming disadvantage and advancing equality, as well as instilling a strong sense of accountability in staff for the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes
- Secure excellent teaching through an analytical understanding of how pupils learn and of the core features of successful classroom practice and curriculum, leading to rich curriculum opportunities and pupil wellbeing
- Oversee effective assessment, recording and reporting on pupil progress and ensure that there is sufficient rigour and challenge for each pupil when setting targets
- Ensure that an effective system is developed for informing parents and carers about their child's progress and enabling parents and carers to share, understand and enjoy their child's learning
- Ensure that pupils and families are supported to access other services as needed and to work with other professionals to meet identified needs
- Design and implement plans for the provision and continual improvement of integrated services for children through partnerships
- Provide classroom cover if necessary, in the event of staff absence

Community

- Maintain and build on the established role of the school to all stakeholders and the wider community
- Promote and maintain good links with the local community
- Develop and promote community involvement in the school
- Increase parental engagement so that parents/carers have greater impact in supporting pupils in their learning
- Work strategically with other professional providers to continually review, improve and develop provision
- Promote equal opportunities and ensure community cohesion

8. Person Specification

The table below sets out the criteria which we are looking for in the successful candidate. The column to the far right indicates how we will be assessing that the criteria is met.

For any criteria that is to be assessed as part of your application, we would encourage you to ensure that you include this information when you complete the application form, as it will inform our decision making at the shortlisting stage.

SAFEGUARDING	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED IN APPLICATION (A) or AT INTERVIEW (I)
Enhanced DBS	X		(If offered role)
Committed to the safeguarding of vulnerable young people	X		A & I
Able to demonstrate a robust understanding of safeguarding principles and practice for safeguarding young people	X		A & I
Be able to model and oversee the school's Safeguarding Policy	X		I
Be prepared to undertake all appropriate safeguarding training	X		I
Experience and training as a Designated Safeguarding Lead		X	A & I
Knowledge of online monitoring systems		X	A
QUALIFICATIONS			
QUALIFICATIONS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED IN APPLICATION (A) or AT INTERVIEW (I)
University degree or equivalent	X		A
Department for Education recognised Qualified Teacher Status	X		A
Evidence of a commitment to continuing professional development	X		A
National Professional Qualification for Headship, if not already a headteacher		X	A
Relevant postgraduate qualification		X	A

EXPERIENCE	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED IN APPLICATION (A) or AT INTERVIEW (I)
Held a senior leadership role within a special school for a minimum of three years	X		A
Thorough understanding of SEND provision	X		A & I
LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT & KNOWLEDGE			
LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT & KNOWLEDGE	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED IN APPLICATION (A) or AT INTERVIEW (I)
Understands what constitutes an outstanding school	X		I
A thorough understanding of the current Ofsted inspection framework for special schools and evidence of working with the statutory framework for education, the SEN Code of Practice, safeguarding, health and safety laws and all related legislation and regulations	X		A & I
Understands the range of special needs of the school's pupil cohort	X		A & I
Up to date and relevant knowledge and understanding of current national developments in education, with particular reference to special school education	X		I
Committed to the vision and values of the school and being capable of clearly articulating the same to all stakeholders	X		I
Committed to own personal professional development	X		A & I
Exceptional interpersonal skills, an effective communicator and someone who listens	X		I
Able to offer a range of emotionally intelligent leadership styles, both collaborative and decisive; and an understanding of how to use elements of both to deliver school improvement	X		I
Strong motivation and drive	X		I
Being both a team player and having the skills to effectively lead and manage a team with imagination, creativity and resilience	X		I

Experience in the recruitment of staff		X	I
Understands how to deploy staff effectively and develop and sustain a shared vision with all stakeholders for future development	X		I
Knowledge of Teacher Standards and experience of applying these to the management of staff, staff appraisals/performance management and supporting staff in their professional development	X		I
Experience of leading the implementation of successful school-wide strategies	X		A & I
Ability to develop and deliver an effective School Improvement Plan based upon effective self-evaluation which identifies priorities and targets	X		I
Ability to manage and drive change	X		I
Understands the role of the Governing Body in strategic leadership of the school and evaluation of effectiveness	X		I
Able to demonstrate an understanding of the key drivers of school budgets and financial planning	X		A & I
Understands that budget setting is linked to assessment and the School Improvement Plan		X	A & I
Understands the importance of school policies and their implementation	X		I
Demonstrated ability to organise, prioritise and manage projects and own time, as well as supporting others to manage theirs	X		A & I
Knowing when to delegate, where appropriate	X		I
Show resilience, confidence, calmness and positivity in dealing with conflict and challenging situations	X		I
Able to work under pressure and meet deadlines	X		A & I
Understands the roles of different agencies operating within the wider spectrum of Children's Services and has the ability to maximise the effectiveness of multi-disciplinary teams	X		A & I

Capable of establishing mutually beneficial working partnerships with families, stakeholders and the wider community	X		I
Actively engages with parents/carers to support their child's learning	X		I
Committed to promoting inclusion, diversity and access	X		A & I
Proficiency in the use of technology for teaching, learning and management		X	A & I
TEACHING & LEARNING			
	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED IN APPLICATION (A) or AT INTERVIEW (I)
Experienced in assessing the quality of education	X		A & I
Ability to develop outstanding teaching in others	X		I
Experienced in managing, planning and overseeing the development of a curriculum capable of meeting the needs of the pupils served by the school	X		A & I
Understands the need to continually monitor, assess and review the curriculum	X		A & I
Understands the need to link the school's resources directly to support the curriculum and achieve learning outcomes	X		I
Experience of carrying out regular evaluation and assessment of pupil data, ensuring that this is used to inform appropriate planning, practice and implementation of strategies as well as raising standards	X		A & I
Open to considering and accepting new ideas to promote outstanding learning and pupil progression	X		I

9. Important Information

Employer	Oxfordshire County Council
Reporting	Reports to the Governing Body
Salary	Leadership Scale
Level	Group 5 - indicative pay range L23 to L29 - £81,070 to £93,902
Contract/Hours	Permanent, full-time
Start Date	1 st September 2024
Closing Date for Applications	Midnight, 14 th April 2024 – we reserve the right to close this advertisement earlier if we receive sufficient applications ahead of the closing date
Shortlisting Date	16 th April 2024
Interview Dates	19 th & 22 nd April 2024

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 School Business Manager, Amy Wilkinson, at sbm@johnwatsonschool.org

School Website

To find out more about our school, please visit www.johnwatsonschool.org or scan the QR code below



10. Application Process

All applicants must complete the standard Oxfordshire County Council application form, a copy of which is available here: <https://www.johnwatsonschool.org/current-vacancies/>

Please ensure that all aspects of the form are fully completed as we will not otherwise be able to consider your application. Please include your full work history and ensure that you provide an explanation where there are any gaps since leaving school.

Completed forms should be sent to sbm@johnwatsonschool.org.

Please do not send CVs as applications will only be considered using the application form provided.

John Watson School and Oxfordshire County Council are committed to safeguarding and to promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment and the offer made to the successful candidate will be subject to and conditional upon an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check and other relevant employment checks outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, including a minimum of two references, one of which should be from the applicant's most recent employer. As part of our recruitment process, we will require you to fill in an overseas check and self-declaration prior to interview.

