



Headteacher Application Pack

Full time, permanent
Required for January 2027

Spurcroft Road, Thatcham, West Berkshire, RG19 3XX
01635 871541 | www.spurcroft.w-berks.sch.uk

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Letter from the chair of governors

Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the headteacher post at Spurcroft Primary School and Nursery. We hope this pack gives you a clear picture of our school, the role, and the journey we are inviting you to lead with us.

Spurcroft is a maintained primary school in the heart of Thatcham, serving a mixed and loyal community. We educate around 371 pupils from Nursery to Year 6. The school knows its families well, and our staff team is genuinely committed to the children we serve. Our most recent Ofsted inspection in November 2022 rated the school good.

We are at an important point in our journey. Our current headteacher is moving on, and we are looking for a successor with the experience, ambition and resilience to take Spurcroft forward.

We have real strengths to build on. Our staff have embedded structured improvement programmes in reading, phonics, writing and maths. Our governing board is engaged, wellinformed and willing to do the work. Our community is supportive. Our nursery, our wraparound provision, and our lettings give us a distinctive footprint in Thatcham. And our pupils, as our most recent inspection report observed, respond positively to high ambition and enjoy learning.

What we are offering is a leadership role with genuine scope to shape a school. The right candidate will find a governing board ready to support and challenge them, a staff team invested in improvement, and a community that wants its school to succeed.

We strongly encourage you to visit before applying. There is no substitute for walking through the school, meeting our pupils, and seeing the work for yourself. If, having done so, you believe you are the leader we are looking for, we very much look forward to receiving your application.

With best wishes,
Phil Spray
Chair of Governors
Spurcroft Primary School and Nursery

Advertisement and application process

Headteacher

Required for January 2027 (or April 2027)

Full time, permanent

Advertisement published

Monday 18 May 2026

Closing date

Friday 19 June 2026, 12 noon

Shortlisting

Week commencing 22 June 2026. Shortlisted candidates will be notified by Friday 26 June 2026.

Interviews

Tuesday 14 July 2026 (preparatory day) and Wednesday 15 July 2026 (formal interview day). Shortlisted candidates must be available on both days.

About the role

Spurcroft Primary School and Nursery is a community primary school in Thatcham, West Berkshire, with around 371 pupils on roll from Nursery to Year 6. Following the planned departure of our current headteacher, we are seeking an experienced, resilient and values-driven leader to take the school into its next chapter.

The school has strong relationships with its families, values its staff, and takes seriously its responsibility to give every child the knowledge and skills they need for life. It is also a school facing real strategic and financial challenges. We are looking for a leader who is energised by that combination, someone who wants the scope to make a genuine difference in a school that will value everything they bring.

What we offer

- A committed, capable staff team invested in the school's improvement journey.
- A knowledge-rich curriculum underpinned by structured programmes including Read Write Inc phonics, Master Readers, White Rose maths, and Cornerstones.
- A loyal and engaged community in the heart of Thatcham.
- An active, well-informed governing board that takes its strategic role seriously.
- A school of real character, with a nursery, community lettings, and strong local partnerships.
- A clear governance commitment to invest in the headteacher's professional development and to provide constructive support and challenge.

What we are looking for

- An outstanding practitioner with significant leadership experience at headteacher, deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher level in a primary school
- A proven track record of improving pupil outcomes, including for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.
- The financial acumen and confidence to lead a school operating on a multi-year deficit recovery trajectory.
- A visible, community-focused leader who builds trust with staff, parents, pupils and governors.
- Someone who leads with integrity, makes difficult decisions when needed, and brings out the best in those around them.

Visits

Visits to the school are warmly encouraged and strongly recommended. We believe candidates make better-informed decisions, and we make better appointments, when both sides have spent time together before the formal process. Visits can be arranged by contacting the clerk to governors at clerk@spurcroft.w-berks.sch.uk.

Safeguarding

Spurcroft Primary School and Nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, satisfactory references, online searches and full pre-employment checks in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Equal opportunities

We welcome applications from all sections of the community regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

About our school

Spurcroft Primary School and Nursery is a maintained community primary school serving Thatcham and its surrounding area in West Berkshire. We are a school deeply rooted in our community. We know our families. We take seriously our responsibility to prepare every child to flourish, both at Spurcroft and beyond.

Our most recent Ofsted inspection in November 2022 judged the school to be good across all areas. Inspectors observed that pupils respond positively to staff's high ambition for them, that pupils with SEND are identified quickly and well supported, and that pupils enjoy learning and behave well overall.

We have a nursery on site, run our own wraparound provision through Wild Wood Club, and host a long-term tenant in Dingley Specialist Early Years Centre, with whom our early years staff work in partnership. Our extensive grounds and outdoor learning environments are a distinctive feature of the school.

Key facts

School	Spurcroft Primary School and Nursery
Local authority	West Berkshire Council
Type	Maintained community primary school with nursery
Age range	3 to 11 (Nursery to Year 6)
Number on roll	Approximately 371 primary pupils, plus 35 nursery pupils on roll (30 full-time equivalent)
Class structure	Currently 13 classes, reducing to 12 from September
Most recent Ofsted	2029 Good (November 2022)
Address	Spurcroft Road, Thatcham, West Berkshire, RG19 3XX
Telephone	01635 871541
Email	office@spurcroft.w-berks.sch.uk
Website	www.spurcroft.w-berks.sch.uk

Pupil outcomes (2024/25)

The table below summarises the school's most recent published outcomes. These provide important context for the role and reflect the improvement journey the next headteacher will be leading.

Measure	2024/25 outcome relative to national
EYFS good level of development	Above national average
Phonics Year 1	Well below national average
Phonics Year 2	Slightly below national average
Multiplication tables check Year 4	In line with national average
KS2 reading	Slightly below national average
KS2 writing	Well below national average
KS2 maths	In line with national average; greater depth above national average
KS2 combined	Well below national average

Our pupils

Our pupils are a diverse group, drawn from a mixed catchment. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Our SEND register is broadly in line with the national average, with most pupils having needs in the area of cognition and learning. We also have a small but growing number of pupils with EHCPs. Pupil numbers are gradually reducing, in line with demographic trends across the local area. We are working through a planned reduction from thirteen to twelve classes, with a corresponding planned reduction in our published admission number. These are decisions the governing board has taken openly with the local authority and the school community, with a clear focus on educational and financial sustainability.

Our leadership structure

The senior leadership team at Spurcroft currently comprises the following roles. The incoming headteacher will be joining a team with significant experience and a shared commitment to the school's improvement journey.

Headteacher — vacant Deputy headteacher — Mrs Jo Griffiths Assistant headteacher and SENCO — Mrs Rhian Davey School business manager — vacant

Our vision and values

Our vision

Spurcroft Primary School and Nursery is committed to ensuring all pupils have the knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for their future. We focus on high standards of teaching, an engaging knowledge-based curriculum, and a thriving relationship with our community.

We are dedicated to developing all children to be ready for their future, in collaboration with families and the wider community. Our mantra is simple: the future begins here.

Our school values

Our six school values run through the curriculum and the daily life of the school. They were developed in consultation with pupils, staff, parents and governors, and they are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain meaningful.



These values are not posters on a wall. Pupils talk about them, staff model them, and we use them as a shared language for the kind of community we want to be. As one pupil said in our last Ofsted inspection: “Believing in ourselves is the greatest thing we can learn.”

Our key objectives

Our school improvement plan is built around four key objectives. We want our headteacher to lead these forward with energy and rigour.

- Pupil outcomes — to improve outcomes throughout the school so that 80% of pupils achieve age-related expectations and 40% achieve greater depth in core subjects.
- Quality of teaching — to ensure every lesson meets the expectations set out in our principles for learning.
- Broader curriculum — to improve the quality of the implementation and leadership of the broader curriculum.
- Leadership and management — to provide effective financial leadership while supporting the school’s future vision and strategic priorities.

Our curriculum and approach

Our intent

Our curriculum is knowledge-based and ambitious. We want pupils to know more, remember more, and be able to apply what they have learned. Communication, reading, writing, maths, science, computing and PE have a high priority, and these are complemented by music, art, design technology and the humanities so that pupils develop a broad general knowledge and the opportunity to express themselves creatively.

How we teach

Across the school we use a coherent set of approaches and programmes which give our staff structure and consistency, and our pupils the best chance to succeed.

- Read Write Inc for systematic synthetic phonics, supported by an external consultant and the Whiteknights literacy partnership.
- Master Readers as our whole-school approach to reading comprehension from Year 2 to Year 6.
- White Rose Maths, taught through a mastery approach, with mastery number underpinning fluency in the early years and key stage 1.

- Cornerstones as the planning backbone of our broader curriculum, supporting a consistent pedagogical approach across foundation subjects.
- Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) as our whole-school approach to play and breaktime wellbeing, beginning in 2026.

Inclusion and SEND

We are an inclusive school. Our SENCO and inclusion team work closely with class teachers, families and external professionals — including educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, and the local authority's CALT and EDIT teams — to ensure that pupils with SEND make the strongest possible progress. We have a small but increasing number of pupils with EHCPs, and SEND provision is a strategic priority for the school.

Personal development and behaviour

Pupils at Spurcroft behave well. Our most recent Ofsted inspection observed that pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning and that staff are swift to guide pupils who need reminding of expectations. We are extending this work through OPAL, through our developing PSHE and RSE curriculum, and through the everyday application of our school values.

Working with our community

We work closely with parents and carers, with our local secondary schools, and with a wide range of partners across Thatcham and West Berkshire. Our wraparound care, our nursery, our partnership with Dingley Specialist Early Years Centre, and our community lettings all reflect a school that sees itself as part of the wider life of the town.

The opportunity and the challenges

We believe candidates make better decisions, and we make better appointments, when the picture is honest from the start. This section sets out openly what the next headteacher will be taking on.

The opportunity

- To lead a school with strong foundations: a good Ofsted, a committed staff team, an engaged governing board, and a community that is loyal to the school.
- To embed and build on a coherent curriculum which is well into implementation, with clear next steps already mapped out in our school improvement plan.
- To shape the school's strategic future, including the governing board's active consideration of academy conversion as a route to sustainability.
- To work in close partnership with a governing board that takes its strategic and accountability roles seriously and is invested in supporting the headteacher's professional development.

The challenges

We are clear about the work ahead. The next headteacher will need to lead confidently on the following.

- Financial sustainability — the school is operating on a multi-year deficit recovery plan. The headteacher will work closely with the finance governor, the school business coordinator, and West Berkshire Council to maintain the trajectory back towards a balanced position.
- Pupil outcomes — key stage 2 attainment has been below national averages for several years. Structured improvement programmes are embedded but are not yet consistently visible in published outcomes.
- Falling pupil numbers — pupil numbers are gradually declining and we are managing a planned reduction from thirteen to twelve classes, with a corresponding reduction in our published admission number.
- Strategic structural decisions — the governing board is actively considering academy conversion via Equinox Learning Trust. The next headteacher will work with the board through this process, which remains at an exploratory stage.
- Ofsted readiness — our last inspection was in November 2022. The next inspection is on the horizon, and the headteacher will need to ensure the school is consistently wellprepared.

What we will do for our headteacher

The governing board recognises that headship in a school like Spurcroft is demanding work. We are committed to being a constructive partner.

- Provide clear, timely strategic direction and decisive support on significant decisions.
- Invest in the headteacher's professional development through agreed CPD and external coaching where appropriate.
- Maintain monthly full governing board meetings with a structured agenda, wellprepared papers, and clear follow-through.
- Draw on the support of West Berkshire Council, and external partners including Equinox Learning Trust.

- Champion the school in the community and provide a visible, supportive presence at school events.

Job description

Post details

Headteacher, Spurcroft Primary School and Nursery

Full time, permanent

Required for January 2027 (or April 2027)

Accountable to

The full governing board of Spurcroft Primary School and Nursery.

Core purpose

As headteacher, you will provide outstanding professional leadership and management of the school, ensuring high standards of teaching, learning, and pupil wellbeing, with a strong and unwavering emphasis on safeguarding. Working in close partnership with the governing board, you will shape and deliver the school's strategic vision, manage its resources effectively, and sustain a culture of ambition and inclusion for every pupil.

This job description reflects the headteachers' standards (2020) and the teachers' standards (2012), which apply to all teachers including headteachers.

Key responsibilities

School vision and strategic leadership

- Develop and articulate a compelling, values-led vision for the school that is shared by staff, pupils, parents and the governing board.
- Lead the development and implementation of the school improvement plan, ensuring priorities are evidence-informed and progress is regularly reviewed.
- Work in effective partnership with the chair of governors and the full governing board, providing accurate and timely information to support strategic decision-making.
- Act as designated safeguarding lead, or ensure an appropriately qualified DSL is in post, and ensure safeguarding is central to the school's culture.
- Represent the school professionally to West Berkshire Council, Ofsted and other external stakeholders.

Teaching, learning and curriculum

- Maintain and develop a culture of high expectations for the quality of teaching across the school.
- Ensure the curriculum is well-designed, coherently sequenced, and effectively led by subject leaders with appropriate expertise.
- Use pupil outcome data rigorously to identify underachievement, target intervention, and hold staff to account for progress.
- Lead or oversee the school's improvement programmes — including reading, phonics, writing, maths and broader curriculum — and ensure their impact is monitored and evaluated.
- Ensure that assessment is used consistently and effectively across the school to inform planning, identify gaps in learning, and drive improvement — and that assessment practice is coherent, manageable, and well understood by all staff.

Pupils and inclusion

- Ensure all pupils, especially those with SEND, those who are disadvantaged, and those with EAL, receive high-quality provision that meets their individual needs.
- Maintain robust safeguarding arrangements in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Promote pupil wellbeing, positive behaviour, and strong attendance across the school, working closely with families where additional support is needed.

Staff leadership and development

- Direct and oversee the professional development of the senior leadership team and all staff.
- Recruit, develop and retain high-quality staff, creating a culture of professional growth and accountability.
- Lead performance management processes with rigour and fairness.
- Ensure that appraisal and performance assessment processes are applied consistently across the school, with clear targets linked to school improvement priorities and appropriate support in place for all staff.
- Manage staffing structures effectively, including any future restructure decisions, in consultation with the governing board and West Berkshire HR for Schools.
- Foster a positive, collaborative working environment in which staff feel valued, supported and well-led.

Finance and resources

- Take overall responsibility for the school's budget, working with the school business coordinator and the finance governor to ensure resources are deployed effectively and in line with the governing board's priorities.
- Lead the school's deficit recovery plan, ensuring the multi-year trajectory towards financial sustainability is maintained.
- Ensure value for money across all areas of school expenditure and identify income-generating opportunities where appropriate, including through lettings and partnerships.
- Work effectively with West Berkshire Council on financial monitoring, returns and statutory reporting.

Health and safety

- Take overall responsibility for health and safety across the school site, including compliance with relevant legislation and the maintenance of a safe environment for pupils, staff and visitors.
- Ensure that risk assessments are current, comprehensive and effectively communicated, and that health and safety responsibilities are clearly allocated across the staff team.
- Report to the governing board on health and safety matters, ensuring the board can fulfil its oversight responsibilities in this area.

Community and partnerships

- Build and sustain positive relationships with parents, carers and the wider Thatcham community.
- Develop effective partnerships with other schools, the local authority, Equinox Learning Trust, and external agencies.
- Lead on the school's engagement with its community lettings, nursery provision, and wraparound care offer, ensuring each contributes positively to the school's community relationships, financial sustainability, and reputation.

Governance

- Work transparently and constructively with the full governing board, providing clear, accurate reports on school performance, finance and risk.
- Attend and contribute to full governing board meetings and any panel or working group meetings as required, including the academisation working group.
- Ensure the governing board has the information it needs to fulfil its strategic and accountability functions.

Note

This job description reflects the main duties of the post. It is not exhaustive and may be amended by the governing board in consultation with the headteacher. The headteacher is expected to comply with the requirements of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and to demonstrate the personal commitment to safeguarding and child protection set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Person specification

All criteria will be assessed through the application form, supporting statement, and references. Criteria will additionally be explored at interview through a combination of panel interview, school-based tasks, and stakeholder meetings. Candidates must be able to demonstrate the essential criteria to be considered for appointment.

Criterion	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and experience		
Qualified teacher status	✓	
Evidence of relevant continuing professional development at leadership level	✓	
National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) or equivalent		✓
Successful experience as a headteacher, deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher in a primary school	✓	
Experience of leading or contributing significantly to school improvement in a primary setting	✓	
Experience of leading or supporting a school through Ofsted inspection	✓	
Experience of financial management and budget oversight in a school context	✓	
Teaching, curriculum and outcomes		
Strong knowledge of the primary curriculum and current evidence-informed pedagogy	✓	
Experience of leading or improving literacy outcomes, including phonics	✓	
Demonstrable track record of improving pupil outcomes, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND	✓	
Understanding of assessment frameworks and the use of data to drive school improvement	✓	
Experience of curriculum design or implementation at wholeschool level		✓
Leadership and management		
Ability to provide clear, values-led leadership that inspires confidence in staff, pupils, parents and the wider community	✓	

Experience of developing and sustaining high-quality teaching across a school	✓	
Ability to manage performance, support staff development, and lead a cohesive team through change	✓	

Criterion	Essential	Desirable
Experience of working constructively with a governing board and a clear understanding of the respective roles of governance and school leadership	✓	
Experience of leading or contributing to a school in financial recovery or operating under a deficit		✓
Ability to manage competing priorities and maintain momentum across multiple improvement workstreams	✓	
Awareness of the academy conversion process and the strategic considerations involved		✓
Understanding of health and safety legislation as it applies to schools, and experience of managing health and safety responsibilities effectively on site	✓	
Experience of leading or overseeing nursery or early years provision, including understanding of the EYFS framework and the particular pastoral and developmental needs of younger children		✓
Experience of overseeing out-of-hours or wraparound provision (such as before and after school clubs or holiday clubs), with an understanding of the operational, safeguarding and financial considerations involved		✓
SEND and inclusion		
Sound understanding of the SEND code of practice and statutory obligations under the Children and Families Act 2014	✓	
Experience of working with SEND pupils, their families, and external professionals to deliver effective provision	✓	
Commitment to inclusive education and a demonstrated ability to narrow gaps for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups	✓	
Community, ethos and vision		
Ability to articulate and embed a compelling vision for the school that is shared by staff, pupils, families and governors	✓	
Experience of building and sustaining positive relationships with governors, parents, carers and the wider community	✓	
Commitment to a knowledge-based, community-rooted approach to education and to the school's values	✓	
Openness to collaborative working with other schools, multiacademy trusts, or local authority partners		✓
Personal qualities		
Resilience, integrity, and the ability to make difficult decisions with confidence and transparency	✓	
A clear and unwavering commitment to safeguarding and child protection, with a strong understanding of the headteacher's responsibilities under Keeping Children Safe in	✓	

Education

Criterion	Essential	Desirable
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Excellent communication skills, both written and oral, with the ability to engage a wide range of audiences	✓	
Energy, optimism, and a genuine passion for improving outcomes for all children	✓	

Spurcroft Primary School and Nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The successful candidate will be subject to an enhanced DBS check, satisfactory references, online searches, and full pre-employment checks. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

How to apply

Application form

Please complete the application form in full. CVs will not be accepted in place of the application form. Please complete all sections relevant to your experience. The supporting statement section should set out clearly how you meet the requirements in the person specification, with reference to your current and previous experience. Please limit your supporting statement to no more than two sides of A4, in Arial 11 point.

Visits

Visits to the school are warmly encouraged and strongly recommended. To arrange a visit, please contact the clerk to governors at clerk@spurcroft.w-berks.sch.uk. Visits will typically include a tour of the school during the working day and a short conversation with the chair of governors.

References

References will be sought for shortlisted candidates prior to the interview date. We require positive and supportive references from:

- Your current or most recent employer.
- A second professional referee. Where you are not currently employed in a role working with children, this must be your most recent school or college employer.

The governing board reserves the right in exceptional cases to seek additional references from previous employers where appropriate. Final confirmation of appointment is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks, including health and attendance, which will only be requested following a formal offer.

Submitting your application

The application form is available to download at <https://pdflink.to/spurcroft/>. Late applications will not be considered. It is essential that shortlisted candidates inform their referees of the interview dates.

Interview process

Interviews will be held over two days. Tuesday 14 July 2026 will be a preparatory day, including candidate tasks, a school tour, and meetings with stakeholders including pupils, staff and governors. Wednesday 15 July 2026 will be the formal interview day, with the panel making a recommendation on the day. Shortlisted candidates must be available on both days.

The successful candidate will be expected to take up post in January 2027, or in April 2027 if a full term's notice is required from a current maintained school post.

Contact

For an informal conversation about the role before applying, please contact:

Phil Spray, Chair of Governors

Via email: chair@spurcroft.w-berks.sch.uk