

Headteacher

The Hawthorns School, Chelmsford

Salary: £79,474 - £93,400 + £6,234 Residential Allowance

Required Easter or September 2025



This is a unique and exciting opportunity to continue the excellent work of the founding Headteacher as she retires. Currently in temporary accommodation, our brand new purpose-built free school opens in January 2025 and we seek a passionate and knowledgeable Headteacher to lead and inspire staff and pupils as The Hawthorns School enters its next exciting phase.

CEO's Letter



SEAX Trust

CEO: Ruth Sturdy

Contact Address: SEAX Trust, c/o Grove House School, Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex CM15 9DA

Telephone: 01245 963006 Email: jobs@seaxtrust.com



Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in this post. The Hawthorns School opened its doors in our newest school building in January 2023, for children with autism. The School is currently in temporary accommodation, and preparing to move into a permanent purpose-built school and bespoke residential facility in January 2025, when we will expand our provision to 50 pupils in KS2 and KS3. Then, in September 2025 we will complete our final stage of growth to 70 pupils which will include KS4.

The current Headteacher and her team have already established a therapeutic, dedicated, tight-knit and supportive team, which prioritises the needs of the pupils through an evolving curriculum with the development of social communication at its core.

In this role the successful candidate will lead the work to shape the future of the School, enabling pupils to develop the skills necessary for their next steps, together with the SEAX Trust CEO and Director of Education, Hawthorns' current Leadership Team and Local Governance Group.

Our model is holistic and bespoke to the individual child, within the inevitable constraints of a school setting, and we are therefore seeking a forward-thinking, creative Headteacher who recognises that adapting and trialling different methods may be necessary before goals are realised. We are committed to developing pupil achievement through the aims of personal growth, participation and preparation for adulthood and our core offer forms a key part of this. We seek someone with a combination of leadership experience and an understanding of autism, to ensure that this is the focus of all who are in, or with, the school.

This role will be challenging at times, as all the best jobs are, and the successful candidate will be fully supported by the current dedicated and dynamic team. In addition, The Hawthorns is one of a community of Special Schools, supported by the well-established and highly regarded SEAX Trust. The Trust respects and trusts each school to evolve its unique identity, whilst providing layers of support and networking at all professional levels. Together, in close partnership with Essex Local Authority, The Hawthorns School could not be in a better position to continue fulfilling its aims of personal growth, participation and preparation.

If you are a current leader who is looking for a new challenge, has a can-do attitude and a keen sense of humour, then we'd like to hear from you!

We can offer you professional fulfilment, development, care and attention to wellbeing, a highly supportive and dedicated team and a delightful pupil community.

Ruth Sturdy
CEO, SEAX Trust

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The Hawthorns Free School

A new and exciting school which will ensure the best life chances for its pupils

The Hawthorns School is the fifth and newest school to be part of the SEAX Trust. The development of the school has been a long process following several set-backs related to building contracts, rising costs and Covid. One thing that has remained certain throughout has been the commitment of the DfE, Essex Local Authority and the SEAX Trust to the building of the school, so that we can benefit the young people of Essex who have a diagnosis of autism.

The school has been open since January 2023 in temporary accommodation, a decision taken so that we can offer educational opportunities to some of the many young people we want to serve. It moves into a brand-new building in January 2025. The school has grown to 34 on roll currently, with the number rising to 50 in January 2025 and then 70 in September 2025, when it will be full. In April 2025 we will open our residential element which will accommodate ten pupils from Monday to Thursday. We are very excited about the opening of the new school building and all the facilities it will offer and see it as a great addition to the Trust portfolio of schools.

Details of the curriculum can be found on the school website but, in essence, it is a curriculum with communication at its centre. All pupils at the school have a desire to communicate using language, although their ability to do so varies. We use SCERTS as central to our approach and all staff have been trained with on-going training and development from Emily Rubin. Through the understanding of individual needs and positive relationships, the pupils at the school thrive. The curriculum is increasingly well developed as the staff at the school learn about the pupils and their particular needs but it is firmly based on the National Curriculum and adapted as necessary. All the pupils have the development of social communication as a core need, as well as requiring adaptations to engage with learning and increasing independence. The promotion of these skills is therefore central to everything at the school. There is a strong commitment to work together with families to prepare young people for adulthood with the skills, knowledge, confidence and understanding to navigate our complex world with as much independence as possible.

The new post holder will join the school at a very exciting time and will be able to build on and develop further the positive ethos, great relationship with parents and carers and have the opportunity to work with an amazing, dedicated and highly knowledgeable staff. It really is a great time to be joining the school and the Trust!



Architect's Plan: The Hawthorns School

Headteacher Job Description

Main purpose

The Headteacher will:

- Establish and sustain the school's ethos and strategic direction together with the Executive Committee and Trust and through consultation with the school community
- Establish and oversee systems, processes and policies so the school can operate effectively
- Effectively line manage the Residential Facility's Leader and ensure the seamless link between the education and residential
- Identify problems and barriers to school effectiveness, and develop strategies for school improvement that are realistic, timely and suited to the school's context
- Make sure these school improvement strategies are effectively implemented
- Monitor progress towards achieving the school's aims and objectives
- Allocate financial resources appropriately, efficiently and effectively

Qualities

The Headteacher will:

- Uphold public trust in school leadership and maintain high standards of ethics, behaviour and professional conduct
- Build positive and respectful relationships across the school community
- Serve in the best interests of the school's pupils

Duties and responsibilities

School culture and behaviour

The Headteacher will:

- Create a culture where pupils experience a positive and enriching school life
- Uphold ambitious educational standards in order to prepare pupils from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life
- Ensure a culture of staff professionalism
- Understand that in a neuro-diverse community like The Hawthorns, behaviour that may be challenging is a form of communication and that an approach to individual challenges will link to a deep understanding of each young person and their needs. The Headteacher will ensure that this is understood by staff and clearly demonstrated by all adults in school
- Use consistent, fair and trauma informed approaches to managing behaviour, in line with the school's behaviour policy

Teaching, curriculum and assessment

The Headteacher will:

- Establish an expectation of a "no limits" curriculum which ensures that barriers to access are overcome through knowledge of the young people, knowledge of autism and a wide range of imaginative solutions to how and what our young people learn

Headteacher Job Description

- Ensure teaching is underpinned by subject expertise
- Effectively use formative assessment to inform strategy and decisions
- Ensure the teaching of a broad, structured and coherent curriculum
- Establish curriculum leadership, including subject leaders with relevant expertise and access to professional networks and communities
- Use valid, reliable and proportionate approaches to assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum
- Ensure the use of evidence-informed approaches to reading so that all pupils are taught to read

Additional and special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities

The Headteacher will:

- Promote a culture and practices that enables all pupils to access the curriculum
- Have ambitious expectations for all pupils
- Make sure the school works effectively with parents, carers and professionals in relation to additional needs and provide support and adaptation where appropriate
- Make sure the school fulfils statutory duties regarding the [SEND Code of Practice](#).

Managing the school

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure staff and pupils' safety and welfare through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of a duty of care
- Manage staff well with due attention to workload
- Ensure rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk

Professional development

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure staff have access to appropriate, high standard professional development opportunities
- Keep up to date with developments in education
- Ensure training and continuing professional development is effectively planned, delivered and evaluated
- Make sure professional development opportunities draw on experts both within, and beyond the school
- Seek training and continuing professional development to meet the needs of all staff members

Governance, accountability and working in partnership

The Headteacher will:

- Understand and welcome the role of effective governance

Headteacher Job Description

- Ensure that staff understand their professional responsibilities and are held to account
- Ensure the school effectively and efficiently operates within the required regulatory frameworks and meets all statutory duties
- Work successfully with SEAX Trust and its schools sharing expertise and offering support through understanding that we all work collaboratively to improve the life chances of every member of our school communities
- Maintain working relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues to improve educational outcomes for all pupils

Safeguarding Responsibilities:

The Headteacher will:

- Support, guide and act with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, in order that they may act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff within the school in relation to child protection and safeguarding.
- Be familiar with, understand and ensure that all staff apply the school's Child Protection Policy appropriately.
- Support the DSL to ensure that staff make referrals to the relevant external body as necessary and in line with KCSIE.
- Support the DSL's liaisons with local authority officers and other relevant agencies/parties in relation to child protection and safeguarding issues and concerns.
- Ensure that all staff receive relevant safeguarding training in line with KCSIE, in order that the appropriate level of knowledge and skill is maintained.
- Keep up to date with developments relevant to the role in line with KCSIE.
- Assist the Designated Safeguarding Lead with raising awareness of child protection policies as appropriate in line with KCSIE.
- Ensure cover for the Designated Safeguarding Lead as required.

Equal Opportunities:

The Headteacher will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the Equalities Act 2010.

Safeguarding Statement:

The SEAX Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The Headteacher will be responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of all children for whom they are responsible, or with whom they come into contact, in accordance with the Trust's Safeguarding Policy. The successful candidate will be required to complete a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) application, medical checks and references.

This job description will be reviewed annually and may be subject to change or modification at any time after consultation with the post-holder. It is not a comprehensive statement of procedures and tasks but sets out the main expectations of the Trust in relation to the post-holder's professional responsibilities and duties.

Person Specification

If you are selected for interview, the recruitment and selection procedure will collect evidence from any of the following activities:

A: Application Form **I:** Interview **R:** Reference

Personal qualities	A	I	R
Qualified Teacher Status & Degree (essential)	X		
NPQH or working towards (essential)	X		
Advanced qualification in autism in children and young people (desirable)	X		
Experience of working with children with autism (essential)		X	X
A commitment to the seven principles of public life (The Nolan Principles) (essential)		X	
The ability to provide inspirational leadership with a 'can do' attitude and to generate high expectations, enthusiasm and commitment (essential)		X	X
Strong negotiating and influencing skills (essential)		X	
Relentless pursuit of the best possible education and learning in the interests of all children and young people (essential)	X	X	X
Exceptional inter-personal skills in managing and coaching individuals at all levels to out-perform against their targets and objectives while also decisively challenging under-performance (essential)		X	
Strong organisational skills (essential)	X	X	X
Astute financial management (essential)	X	X	X
The ability to analyse and use data to establish benchmarks and set challenging targets for improvement (essential)		X	
The ability to make effective use of stretched resources, including excellent understanding of the strategic importance of ICT and commitment to its innovative use in a working environment (essential)	X	X	X
An understanding of what constitutes an effective school with high quality provision (essential)		X	
An unshakeable belief in the right of children and young people to high quality education and to raising standards of achievement whilst recognising the value and worth of each individual and providing an experience which meets their needs (essential)	X	X	
The ability to formulate a compelling vision, supported by a clear strategic plan underpinned by targets and goals for each school (essential)	X	X	
Relentless energy and passion in pursuit of the vision, treating challenges as opportunities and creating new targets from setbacks (essential)	X	X	
Decisiveness, including challenging children and young people, staff, institutions and others to produce positive outcomes (essential)	X	X	
Ability to work calmly, patiently and sensitively under pressure and to manage and resolve conflict (essential)		X	X
Leads by example while adopting a flexible management style that involves appropriate stakeholders in decision making (essential)		X	X
Possesses integrity and can inspire commitment, enthusiasm and confidence from staff, children and young people, parents/carers, and the community (essential)		X	X
A lifelong learner who understands the value of creative and innovative thinking and taking appropriate risks as a means to improvement (essential)	X	X	

Details



- Required:** Easter or September 2025
- Visits:** By appointment. Afternoons of the 5th and 6th November—please book an appointment with the current Headteacher's PA, Carrie Massey on 01245 207607
- Closing date:** Mid-day on Tuesday 12th November 2024
- Interview:** 19th & 20th November 2024
- Salary and benefits:** **£79,474 - £93,400** STPCD Leadership Points 20-27 (negotiable for the right candidate) + Residential Schools Allowance **£6,234** (Relocation Package available)

Application process Applicants should complete the SEAX Trust Application Form and submit it to the return address no later than the closing date above. All applicants are strongly advised to read the job description and person specification for the post prior to submitting their application.

Selection process Applications are ranked against the person specification for the role and those shortlisted will be subject to a face to face interview with the selection panel. There may also be a skills test/observation or practical assessment. Details regarding selection panel members and assessments will be made available to shortlisted candidates.

Shortlisted candidates Applicants shortlisted for the post will be notified as soon as reasonably practical upon completion of the shortlisting process.

Referees The referees for all shortlisted candidates will be contacted prior to the interview date.

On-Line Searches In line with statutory requirements, SEAX Trust carries out online searches (including social media) as part of its due diligence on all shortlisted candidates. This helps identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the Trust might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Probation All teaching and support staff new to employment with the SEAX Trust will be required to satisfactorily complete a six month probationary period.

Interview expenses Please note: SEAX Trust does not reimburse candidates for interview expenses.

Further information Applicants who require further information should contact Mrs Kate Stannard, Director of HR, SEAX Trust on 01245 963006 or by emailing: katestannard@seaxtrust.com

Candidates wishing to apply should download and complete the SEAX Trust application form available from: www.seaxtrust.com

celebrating diverse abilities

Work with us ...

The **SEAX Trust** is a growing partnership of Special Academies within the community of Essex, whose Vision is to:

Provide outstanding educational experiences for children and young people with special educational needs and to

Put the well-being and achievement of pupils at the heart of all decision making

Our greatest asset towards achieving our Vision is our body of **highly-valued staff** and, in recognition, we implement a wide range of **strategic and person-centred reward practices** in all of our Trust Academies.

Be rewarded by us ...

By becoming part of a team of **outward-looking professionals**, where you can influence the future

Progress with us ...

A focus to provide high quality **professional development** opportunities for all staff;

An extensive range of **training and development** opportunities, including **Challenge Partners**;

Experienced and **dedicated practitioners** who are keen to help you learn;

A range of exciting internal **career opportunities**.

Be inspired by us ...

Challenging roles and **recognition** of achievement;

A **motivational** strategy towards both education and business;

Headteacher **involvement** in wider decision-making;

Teachers who **stay in the profession**

Be reassured by us ...

A strategic aim to ensure a **fair work/life balance**;

A **highly supportive** organisational culture;

A firm commitment to the strengths of **equality and diversity**;

A sense of **cohesion and belonging**;

A policy to raise **matters of concern**.

All posts are subject to satisfactory medical checks, enhanced DBS clearance, on-line checks and references.

We look forward to hearing from you soon

celebrating diverse abilities

Our Staff



Although our staff base includes a wide range of professions, from teachers to care workers and administrators to caterers, more importantly, everyone at SEAX has some very special qualities; kindness, dedication, patience and adaptability.

These qualities are key for our administration teams, in the same way as they are for our pupil-facing staff. On any one day, you may be dealing with busy teachers, distressed parents or government departments. Although, at times, you may need to juggle a number of tasks before deciding which one to tackle first, we can promise you that every day will be different, interesting and extremely rewarding. But, if you ever run into difficulties, there will always be someone there to help you, because everyone at SEAX is regarded as an individual and everyone's needs matter.

Professionalism is central to our values and we expect everyone in our community to treat each other with respect. We model the values we want our pupils to develop and, as a result, we believe our schools are unique in the level of care and consideration we all show for others.



Testimonials from Staff



"The supportive atmosphere makes it a joy to come to work."

"I feel completely valued and heard, which is so rare and important."

"Our collaborative culture uplifts everyone, staff and students alike."

"The positive impact we have on our students' lives is deeply fulfilling."

"There is a genuine sense of care for staff wellbeing and personal growth."

"Every day presents a new opportunity to make a difference."

*"The team spirit here is incredible.
We all pull together for our students."*

"I've grown so much professionally, thanks to the development opportunities on offer."



Our promise when you join us



We know that what makes SEAX Trust different is our body of highly-valued staff and, in recognition, we implement a wide range of rewards in all of our Trust schools. Joining us means that you will become part of a team of outward-looking professionals, where you will have an opportunity to influence the future.

We promise to offer you:

- An extensive range of training and professional development opportunities
- Support from experienced and dedicated practitioners
- A career pathway progression model with a range of exciting internal career opportunities
- Recognition of achievement
- Direct involvement in wider decision-making
- A fair work/life balance and right to request flexible working from day one
- A highly supportive central team
- A firm commitment to the strengths of equality and diversity
- A sense of cohesion and belonging and opportunity to join cross-Trust groups
- A policy to raise matters of concern
- A Wellbeing Charter offering free counselling support for you and your close family members



"Although it's true that it's impossible to please everyone all of the time, we will promise to listen, to be fair and to support your request whenever we can. We have an open-door approach in the Trust's Central Team and we're always out visiting our schools, so we really get to know our staff and hear what they have to say. It's good to reflect that at a time when teaching is in national difficulty, we've proven that our SEAX teachers stay in the profession." **Kate Stannard, Director of HR, SEAX Trust**

When life gets in the way of work commitments



We understand that not everyone wants to work full-time and that life sometimes gets in the way of work commitments. That's why, at SEAX Trust, we have introduced a number of ways to get round this.

We have a firm belief that working more flexibly is the way forward and one of the ways to attract and retain the very best staff. We offer the right to request a change in your working pattern from the day you first start work; you can make up to two requests each year; we promise to consult you on our decision and we won't ask you to explain how you think the change could work.

We know you have commitments to young children and elderly relatives and we don't want this to get in the way of your career. We like to offer as many staff as we can the option of working from home, as a regular part of the job, or as and when they need to. We also offer carers an extra week's unpaid leave each year.

We offer sabbaticals for staff development and training, job-shares, flexi-time and, if it's possible, we'll let you pop out to see your child's Christmas Production, too.

We can't promise that we'll be able to meet your request, but we will if we can, and we want you to feel able to ask.

Talk to us at interview about your concerns and we'll see what we can do.



Equality and Diversity



Our commitment to equality and diversity goes far beyond our policy. Supporting children and young people from minority groups is what we do best and it's no different when it comes to the rest of our community.

We recognise that a diverse workforce brings a richness of knowledge and skills, helps our young people relate better to our staff and ensures we are making the most of the talent pool available to us. Therefore, we firmly encourage applications from minority groups.

We have a solid belief that all staff are of equal value, whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, race, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment and whatever their sexual orientation. And we have a 'no tolerance' policy in terms of bullying, victimisation and harassment.

We monitor and publish our Gender Pay Gap figures annually and have a fair and unbiased Pay Policy. We recognise and adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty and our Leadership Team and Trustees set out and publish their new equality objectives at regular intervals.

As an organisation, we have acquired recognition as a 'Disability Confident Employer' and actively seek to employ people with disabilities. In fact, we now have a number of our own former pupils working in permanent roles across SEAX.

If you need specific adjustments in order to submit your application, at interview or in your daily work, all you have to do is ask.



Our Recruitment & Selection Process



Our aim is to find the right person for the job. We want you to have (or be willing to learn) the skills you'll need for the role. This doesn't mean that you already need to have a long list of qualifications. It's more important to us for you to have a 'can-do' attitude, a willingness to learn and for you to be approachable and show commitment. We want you to be happy at work and to feel rewarded by the job you do.



The Job Description

The Job Description sets out details of the role; the tasks you'll undertake, and the responsibilities you'll have. It also includes details such as who you'll report to, the salary grade and purpose of the job.

At SEAX, each job forms part of a wider network of roles known as 'Job Families'. A Learning Support Assistant, for example, is part of the Class Support family which includes HLTAs and Cover Supervisors. We find this helps staff aspiring to progress, allowing everyone to see clearly what their next career steps might be. It's often the case that our Learning Support Assistants choose to go on to teacher training—something that we actively encourage and support within SEAX.

The Person Specification

The Person Specification allows you to see at a glance exactly what qualifications, skills and past experience might be necessary for the role. It will form the basis of your written application and our Recruitment Panel will judge all applicants fairly against this in the shortlisting process.

If you don't already have all of the requirements listed in the Person Specification, it doesn't necessarily mean that you aren't the right person for the job; consider whether you are prepared to learn and, if so, explain this to us in your application.

The Key Information Sheet

The Key Information Sheet sets out the remaining details and covers everything else you need to know.

How to Apply

When you've read through all the information and perhaps taken a look at our website, we hope that you'll consider submitting an application. However, if at any point you'd like more information to help your decision, or if you'd like to arrange an informal visit to one of our schools before applying, please telephone or email us and we'll be delighted to make the necessary arrangements.

In line with our safer recruitment process, once you've made the decision to apply, you'll need to complete one of our Application Forms. It's important that you complete this fully, as it helps us to shortlist applications fairly and, in addition, working with children means that we need to administer a number of background checks, some of which are completed prior to interview. Further details are set out in the Application Form itself.



The Interview Process



We hold interviews as soon as we can after the post has closed, but, where possible, we like to request references prior to interview, so that they are available to the Interview Panel on the day. This means that interviews usually take place about a week after the post has closed.

We aim to keep all candidates fully informed at each stage of the recruitment process; so you should know when your application has been received; whether or not you have been successful in securing an interview and, of course, after interview, whether you have been successful in securing the post.

Our Student Views

"The support here makes me feel like I can achieve anything."

"This school helps me with my challenges and I feel proud of what I can do now."



"The teachers understand me. I have fun learning and trying new things here.. The projects we do are really interesting and make me think differently."



"When I started here, I hadn't been to school for a while. I didn't go out. Today I went into town and met some friends."

SEAX Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to complete a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) application, medical checks and references.