

## 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](mailto: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



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- 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](mailto:katestannard@seaxtrust.com)

**Candidates wishing to apply should download and complete the SEAX Trust application form  
available from: [www.seaxtrust.com](http://www.seaxtrust.com)**

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## 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*