

Principal: Vanguard School

Job pack



Liberty
Academy Trust

Principal: Vanguard School

Location: Vanguard School, Lambeth, London

Salary: L18 – L27 (c £77 – 98 k), depending on experience



About Us

Liberty Academy Trust is an education charity established in 2022. Our purpose is to deliver an education for our children that meets their needs, aspirations, and interests, and which prepares them well for adulthood. Our values of courage, determination and teamwork are the key drivers to bring about positive change, so that all our children and young people can be successful now and in their future lives.

We are currently a small Trust of three academies, with plans to grow so that our reach and impact can extend further. Committed to providing an excellent education for autistic children and young people, our approach is to support the whole child, offering a balance of personalised teaching and therapeutic support as standard.

The Vanguard school in Lambeth opened in 2020 and provides a curriculum for students from across the spectrum who have a range of learning needs. The school provides opportunities for the development of a wide range of independent living skills, focusing on community inclusion.

Welcome from the CEO



Thank you for your interest in this role within Liberty Academy Trust.

This is a hugely exciting time for our family of academies as we seek to grow and extend our reach so that we can make a real difference to the lives and life chances of children – and particularly those who are autistic – so that they receive the educational opportunity they deserve.

The Trust currently has three academies based in the local areas of Cheshire East, Reading and Lambeth; all of which are at different stages of development. As a Trust, we are clear about the importance of achieving long-term sustainability for our academies.

Our vision is to lead through moral purpose, whilst taking advantage of collaborative opportunities and partnership work, to secure an excellent educational offer for our children and young people. Employees within Liberty Academy Trust belong to a community of professionals and benefit from an increasingly wide range of networks and development opportunities across the Trust, which will increase further as we grow.

With high expectations for staff and pupils alike, those we recruit can demonstrate that they share our values, are highly motivated to work with colleagues to continuously develop their skills, pursue professional excellence, and are committed to providing the highest standards.

If you see yourself in that description, then we would be delighted to receive your application.

Dr Nic Crossley, Chief Executive

Our **core purpose** is to deliver an education for our children that meets their **needs, aspirations** and **interests**; and prepares them well for **adulthood**.

We support the whole child, offering a balance of **personalised teaching** and **therapeutic support** as standard.

Welcome from the Director of Education

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We are seeking an outstanding and experienced leader who can establish a culture of pride, inclusivity, and the highest expectations for all.

At Liberty Academy Trust, we challenge any notion that, as a special school, our children's aspirations and achievements are limited academically, socially or personally. Our core values of courage, determination, and teamwork drive positive change, ensuring that all our children and young people can be successful now and in their future lives.

Our schools follow an innovative 'Quality of Life' framework. It reflects the commitment of our schools to support every pupil's academic and wider needs, recognising that co-production of goals and measures of success, with families, is central to all we do. This framework is driven by a dedicated team of Keyworkers, Teachers, Learning Mentors, Therapists, and Leaders, all of whom are champions for young people with specialist needs. Our team inspires and creates a safe, friendly, and supportive environment where young people can thrive.

This exciting leadership role offers the chance to play a pivotal part in shaping the academic success and personal growth of our students. We are looking for a leader who can inspire both staff and students, fostering excellence in the education of autistic pupils.

There are many reasons to join us. First and foremost this impactful role enables you to every day make a real difference in the lives of autistic young people and their families. You'll join a supportive environment with strong links and communities of practice across the Trust and we will be committed to your own professional growth.

If you are a dynamic and passionate leader ready to take on this rewarding challenge, we would love to hear from you.

Jo Galloway, Director of Education

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Welcome from the EDI Strategic Lead



At Liberty, we're breaking down the barriers of discrimination every day, striving to advance thinking on what autistic people can do and supporting students to achieve their very best. We are dedicated to advancing equality of opportunity for our students, and this commitment extends into the workplace, and the values that underpin us as a Trust and employer, as educators and colleagues.

We strive to create a world that rejects discrimination of any kind, and to build a Trust which promotes a culture of belonging for all staff and students. In so doing, we not only seek to educate the young people in our care, but also to be educated ourselves, recognising that our beliefs, words, and actions can impact negatively on others.

Through our focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), our aim is to work towards a culture which celebrates diversity, fosters acceptance and empowers every individual to achieve their full potential.

We are looking for a Principal who will enthusiastically embrace our EDI strategy and initiatives and who will work together with EDI champions in the school to truly ensure that all staff and students experience equity and a sense of belonging.

Harriet Mughal, Head of Executive Services, EA to CEO & EDI Strategic Lead

Our three core values of **courage**, **determination** and **teamwork** drive positive change.



The Opportunity

We are a forward-thinking Autism Specific Specialist Free School seeking a new Principal to advance our school in its next stage of development. This is an exciting opportunity for a passionate and inspirational leader within specialist education to shape the future direction of the school and lead the way in transforming the lives of autistic children and young people.

As Principal, you will play a key role in the leadership of the school, providing professional leadership, vision, direction and management of the school; leading, motivating and inspiring a staff team to work together to provide the highest standard of autism specific education. You will help us build a true community school, developing our links with parents, community groups, local authorities, and other schools in the region. You will also contribute and benefit from our professional networks across the Trust.

You will be a visionary who can promote a culture of excellence, champion inclusivity and diversity and drive aspirations of students and staff. You will be a fabulous leader who enjoys working collaboratively with central colleagues and others schools to bring fresh ideas and inspire others to achieve their best. We are looking for an ethical leader who demonstrates integrity and embodies our values of courage, determination, and teamwork.

Our success depends on our skilled and dedicated staff. We offer a competitive salary and pension, as well as a range of benefits and a focus on staff well-being. More importantly, we offer the opportunity to play a part in highly rewarding work, as part of an ambitious and supportive team.



Job Description

Strategy

- Establish and sustain the school's ethos and strategic direction, in partnership with the Trust's executive team and those responsible for governance, and through consultation with the school community.
- Establish and oversee systems, processes and policies that enable the school to operate effectively and efficiently.

School Culture

- Uphold ambitious educational standards which prepare pupils from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life.
- Promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young persons for whom you are responsible and with whom you come into contact.
- Provide the highest standard of support assisting pupils in achieving their maximum potential through the implementation of the Quality of Life and SPELL frameworks.
- Create a culture where pupils experience a positive and enriching school life in line with the Liberty academy trust vision for excellent education.
- Promote positive and respectful relationships across the school community and a safe, orderly and inclusive environment.
- Ensure a culture of high staff professionalism and an unrelenting ambition for the achievement of all.

Teaching

- Establish and sustain high-quality, expert teaching across all subjects and phases, built on an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how pupils learn.
 - Ensure teaching is underpinned by high levels of subject expertise and approaches which respect the distinct nature of subject disciplines or specialist domains.
 - Ensure effective use is made of assessment.
 - Ensure the practice of teachers within the schools is in line with education policies and procedures.
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Curriculum and Assessment

- Ensure a broad, structured and coherent curriculum entitlement which sets out the knowledge, skills and values that will be taught.
- Establish effective curricular leadership, developing subject leaders with high levels of relevant expertise with access to professional networks and communities.
- Ensure that all pupils are taught to read through the provision of evidence-informed approaches to reading, particularly the use of systematic synthetic phonics in schools that teach early reading.
- Ensure valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.

Behaviour

- Establish and sustain high expectations of behaviour for all pupils, built upon relationships, rules and routines, which are understood clearly by all staff and pupils.
- Ensure high standards of pupil behaviour and courteous conduct in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
- Implement consistent, fair and respectful approaches to managing behaviour.
- Ensure that adults within the school model and teach the behaviour of a good citizen.

Additional and Special Educational Needs

- Ensure the school holds ambitious expectations for all pupils with additional and special educational needs and disabilities.
 - Establish and sustain culture and practices that enable pupils to access the curriculum and learn effectively.
 - Ensure the school works effectively in partnership with parents, carers and professionals, to identify the additional needs and special educational needs and disabilities of pupils, providing support and adaptation where appropriate.
 - Ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties with regard to the SEND code of practice and Educational, Health and Care plans.
 - Ensure the school recruits and retains relevant professionals to support the delivery of provision detailed in pupils EHCPs.
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Professional Development

- Ensure staff have access to high-quality, sustained professional development opportunities, aligned to balance the priorities of whole-school improvement, team and individual needs.
- Prioritise the professional development of staff, ensuring effective planning, delivery and evaluation which is consistent with the approaches laid out in the standard for teachers' professional development.
- Ensure that professional development opportunities draw on expert provision from across and beyond the school, including nationally recognised career and professional frameworks and programmes to build capacity and support succession planning.

Organisational Management

- Ensure the protection and safety of pupils and staff through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of the duty of care.
- Ensure rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk.
- Prioritise and allocate financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds.
- Provide leadership to staff, and ensure they are deployed and managed well with due attention paid to workload and Mental Health at Work Standards.
- Provide effective support and supervision to those staff directly line managed, in line with our culture and procedures.

Continuous School Improvement

- Make use of effective and proportional processes of evaluation to identify and analyse complex or persistent problems and barriers which limit school effectiveness and identify priority areas for improvement.
 - Be responsible for completing a school self evaluation report and development plan.
 - Provide regular updates , including Principals reports to the Executive team and those responsible for governance.
 - Develop appropriate evidence-informed strategies for improvement as part of well-targeted plans which are realistic, timely, appropriately sequenced and suited to the school's context.
 - Ensure careful and effective implementation of improvement strategies, which lead to sustained school improvement over time.
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Working in Partnership

- Forge constructive relationships beyond the school, working in partnership with parents, carers and the local community.
- Commit their school to work successfully with other schools and organisations in a climate of mutual challenge and support.
- Establish and maintain working relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues across other public services to improve outcomes for all pupils.

Governance and Accountability

- Understand and welcome the role of effective governance, upholding their obligation to give account and accept responsibility.
- Establish and sustain professional working relationships with those responsible for governance, including the Executive team and Trustees.
- Ensure that staff know and understand their professional responsibilities and are held to account through appraisal and performance management procedures.
- Ensure the school effectively and efficiently operates within the required regulatory frameworks and meets all statutory duties.
- Ensure the school works towards Trust Key Performance indicators.
- Contribute to the broader life of the school and the school's programme of extra-curricular activities. Support and contribute to the school's responsibility for safeguarding students.

General

- Always comply with Trust policies and procedures; including, but not limited to, Safeguarding, Health and Safety and employment policies.
- Work within the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy to promote equality of opportunity for all students and staff, both current and prospective.
- Maintain high professional standards of attendance, punctuality, and conduct; and maintain positive, courteous relations with students, parents and colleagues.
- Engage actively in the appraisal and performance review process, and in relevant continuing professional development.
- Be willing to travel to the Trust's schools and other sites as needed.

Job descriptions only reflect 80% of a role and are not an exhaustive list of duties. You are expected to carry out other activities that are within the scope of the role.

Person Specification

Qualifications and Knowledge

1. Hold qualified teacher status
2. Be qualified to degree level
3. Experienced Head teacher with registration for or completion of NPQH
4. Additional professional or qualifications in Special Education needs, and/or leadership and management would be an advantage
5. Evidence of significant CPD, including around the education of autistic pupils
6. Knowledge of legislation relating to managing a school including Equalities and Safeguarding legislation
7. Knowledge of current legislation and policies in the area of SEN, disabilities and student inclusion, and understanding of current developments and their impact
8. Understanding of effective teaching and learning strategies, including for autistic children and young people
9. Evidence of a thorough understanding of safeguarding and safe recruitment procedures
10. Understanding of the importance of high expectations and equality of access for all
11. An understanding of and competent use of ICT including emerging technologies to aid and promote the quality of teaching, learning and administration

Skills and Experience

12. Senior leadership experience at Deputy Head teacher level or above; experience of leadership within a SEN/autism specialist setting would be an advantage
 13. Able to create a safe learning environment where students are motivated and encouraged to raise their aspirations
 14. Ability to engage the school community in the systematic and rigorous self-evaluation of the work of the school
 15. Experience in leading educational projects, innovation, strategic planning and financial management
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16. Ability to use a range of evidence, including performance data, to support, monitor, evaluate and improve aspects of school life, including challenging poor performance
17. Proven ability to lead, develop, motivate and line manage others within a framework which encourages collaboration and innovation
18. Well-developed skills around planning, organising, resource allocation and budget management
19. Proven ability to establish challenging targets, and to monitor school performance at every level
20. Proven ability to embrace and effectively manage change
21. Excellent written and verbal communication and presentation skills, including the ability to engage with the media
22. Ability to use common software applications; knowledge of best practices for protecting personal and organisation data; and an aptitude for adapting to emerging technologies

Personal Attributes

23. An understanding of and commitment to the aims, vision and values of the Liberty Academy Trust and the principles of public life
24. A clear passion for specialist autism provision which improves life chances
25. An outstanding leader, committed to teamwork and able to be a positive role model for other members of staff
26. Highly self-motivated; able to think and act strategically and work effectively under pressure
27. Actively seeks new approaches, ideas and challenges; willing to be innovative, to instigate change and to take risks
28. Enthusiasm and energy; stamina and resilience; able to remain calm when situations become challenging
29. Able to promote high standards of education, care and behaviour, and present a positive image of the school
30. A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
31. A demonstrable commitment to continuing professional development

All members of the Liberty Academy Trust community are driven by the three core values of courage, determination, and teamwork.



Recruitment Process

Application deadline: 12 noon on Monday 16 June 2025

First Interviews Monday 23 June 2025

Final Interview: Friday 27 June 2025

The Trust pays full regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance 2024. We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works for the Trust who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult including volunteers and staff employed by contractors.

Our safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking online checks and an Enhanced DBS check.

We are an equal opportunities employer. Applications for this job are sought from anyone who is suitably qualified and experienced for the role - including those with protected characteristics, and particularly welcome from neurodivergent individuals. We are very happy to discuss adjustments to the recruitment process for those that need it.

Please note that we can only consider applicants who are legally entitled to work in the UK.

Additional Information: Ethical Leadership

The role of leadership in education is an important one; all adults in our schools act as role models to our pupils. It is therefore appropriate that our work is guided by the framework for ethical leadership which makes clear the characteristics expected of colleagues in our schools.

The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) announced a commission on ethical leadership in education at their annual conference in March 2017. The Commission developed the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education, which builds on the Nolan Principles of Public Service. Further information about the commission is available by visiting [ASCL online](#).

FRAMEWORK FOR ETHICAL LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

1. **SELFLESSNESS** | School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.
2. **INTEGRITY** | School and college leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.
3. **OBJECTIVITY** | School and college leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.
4. **ACCOUNTABILITY** | School and college leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. **OPENNESS** | School and college leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. **HONESTY** | School and college leaders should be truthful.
7. **LEADERSHIP** | School and college leaders should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles, and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead schools and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do.

Leaders should show leadership through the following personal characteristics or virtues:

- a. **TRUST** | *leaders are trustworthy and reliable*
We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.
- b. **WISDOM** | *leaders use experience, knowledge and insight*
We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness. We act calmly and rationally. We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.
- c. **KINDNESS** | *leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper*
We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.
- d. **JUSTICE** | *leaders are fair and work for the good of all children*
We seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.
- e. **SERVICE** | *leaders are conscientious and dutiful*
We demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures, conventions and rules which safeguard quality. Our actions protect high-quality education.
- f. **COURAGE** | *leaders work courageously in the best interests of children and young people*
We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. We hold one another to account courageously.
- g. **OPTIMISM** | *leaders are positive and encouraging*
Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education to change the world for the better.

