

WE ARE RECRUITING

Head of School - The Forest School

The Forest School is a Generic Special School based in Knaresborough.

- Join our dedicated team.
- Lead our next phase of development.
- Make a difference to the lives of children.
- Be inspired everyday!

Scale: L21-25

Start: September 2026 or Jan 2027



North & West Yorkshire
Specialist Partnership



The Forest School
Every Child, Every Chance

Head of School Recruitment Pack

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The Role

Head of School - North Yorkshire

Scale: L21-25

The Forest School is a well-established and highly regarded special school in Knaresborough, catering to pupils aged 3 to 16 with a range of complex special educational needs. We are committed to providing the highest quality education within a happy, caring, and safe environment where every individual is valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Do you share our vision of an education system where every child can thrive and become as independent as possible?

Are you an exceptional leader who wants to make a real difference to the lives of children in North Yorkshire?

We are currently looking for a Head of School who is:

- An experienced leader, innovator, and practitioner with the ability to establish and sustain expert teaching that meets the diverse and special educational needs of our pupils.
- Passionate about a broad and balanced curriculum, ensuring all children access a structured and personalised entitlement that prepares them for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.
- Able to lead the school on a day-to-day basis with support and guidance from the executive team, fostering a spirit of understanding, cooperation, and respect.

We need a leader who is highly motivated, with the resilience and focus to join us on our journey. Only the very best will do, as our children deserve only the best.

If you are a confident leader, if you are dedicated to improving the life chances of children and have the ability to help both staff and pupils shine, please get in touch!



The Forest School
Every Child, Every Chance



Our Motto

“ Every Child, Every Chance. ”



Our Vision

“ To provide a nurturing, inclusive, and aspirational environment where every pupil takes ownership of their learning, builds emotional resilience, and achieves personal success, preparing children and young people to contribute positively to their community. ”

Our Guiding Values:

Our entire school culture is built upon our five core values. These are the principles that guide our teaching, our expectations, and our support for every pupil:



ASPIRATIONAL CURRICULUM

We offer a challenging and engaging curriculum that inspires every child, regardless of needs or learning style.



INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

We ensure all children have access to a high-quality education that caters to their individual needs.



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

We go beyond textbooks, providing rich and diverse learning experiences that broaden perspectives and ignite curiosity.



STUDENT-CENTRED APPROACH

We believe in student agency, actively involving them in shaping their educational journeys and futures.



INDEPENDENT SUCCESS

We empower students to pursue their aspirations and develop the skills needed to flourish as independent adults.



The Forest School

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Chair of Governors Letter to Applicants

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the post of Head of School at The Forest School Academy, a member of the Wellspring Academies Trust.

I am delighted that you are considering applying to lead our offer for children and young people in our unique school.

Our new Principal will be passionate and knowledgeable about the pursuit of teaching and learning in special schools and has a love of working with all children, young people and their families.

Our person specification provides a more comprehensive list of the qualities we are looking for, but in essence we want to appoint somebody with the wisdom, experience and confidence to embrace and enjoy the experience of leading development of The Forest school. Critically this involves building trusts and relationships with stakeholders and partners. We will provide extensive support through our Executive Principals to the successful candidate brokering and facilitating their initial engagements.

I have worked in the specialist sector for over 20 years mainly with a Local Authority role and for the last 15 years as a governor.

The Forest School Headship is a very exciting opportunity and I look forward to working with the successful candidate.

I hope that I have the opportunity to meet you as the recruitment process progresses.

Yours faithfully

Ken Morton

Chair on behalf of the North and West Yorkshire Specialist Partnership which is a local Governing Body within the Wellspring MAT.



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Executive Principal Message

It is an incredibly exciting time to join The Forest School as we continue our mission to provide a high-quality, inclusive education for children and young people with special educational needs in Knaresborough and the surrounding areas. As a well-established and cherished part of the North Yorkshire community, we pride ourselves on being a place where every pupil is known, valued, and supported to reach their full potential.

At The Forest School, our mission is to provide a happy, safe, and stimulating environment where pupils aged 3 to 16 can build the confidence and independence they need for the future. Our vision is centered on removing barriers to learning and ensuring that every child, regardless of their starting point, has the opportunity to shine.

Our school culture is built upon a foundation of mutual respect and high expectations, guided by the following principles:

- **Aspirational Curriculum:** We offer a challenging and engaging curriculum that inspires every child, regardless of needs or learning style.
- **Inclusive Excellence:** We ensure all children have access to a high-quality education that caters to their individual needs.
- **Experiential Learning:** We go beyond textbooks, providing rich and diverse learning experiences that broaden perspectives and ignite curiosity.
- **Independent Success:** We empower students to pursue their aspirations and develop the skills needed to flourish as independent adults.
- **Student-Centred Approach:** We believe in student agency, actively involving them in shaping their educational journeys and futures.

As we look toward the 2026/27 academic year, we are seeking a leader who is not only committed to these values but is also eager to drive our school forward with innovation and heart. To be successful at The Forest School, you will need a deep understanding of complex needs, a passion for specialist pedagogy, and the vision to sustain an expert teaching environment. We are looking for a leader who wants to be at the heart of our school community, fostering strong relationships and ensuring that our pupils receive nothing but the best.

I look forward to receiving your application and potentially welcoming you to our dedicated and passionate team.

Yours sincerely,

Shona Crichton

Wellspring is a community of 33 thriving Special, Alternative, Primary and Secondary Academies across Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. The Trust has considerable provenance in the development of wholly new settings having delivered 12 such projects from inception. This experience and substantial capacity represent a substantial enabler for our new Head of School, working in complement with the North and West Yorkshire Special Partnership team to ensure South View has the very best start possible.

At Wellspring Academy Trust we believe that every school is unique, because it has a unique history, it serves a unique community context and is full of unique individuals.

We value and celebrate the unique identities of our academies. We encourage them to innovate, create and develop their uniqueness because we want others to learn from them. Excellence is about diversity, not conformity.

We do not believe that one size fits all.

Our culture is: Open. Transparent. Outward-facing. Generous. Supportive. Collegial. Collaborative. Inclusive. Progressive. Plural. Courageous. Curious. Caring. Confident. Ethical. Respectful.

If you want to work with, and – more importantly – contribute to a culture like this, we might be a fit.

To learn more about Wellspring's employee proposition and commitment to workforce development, please navigate to our website. www.wellspringacademytrust.co.uk/careers/

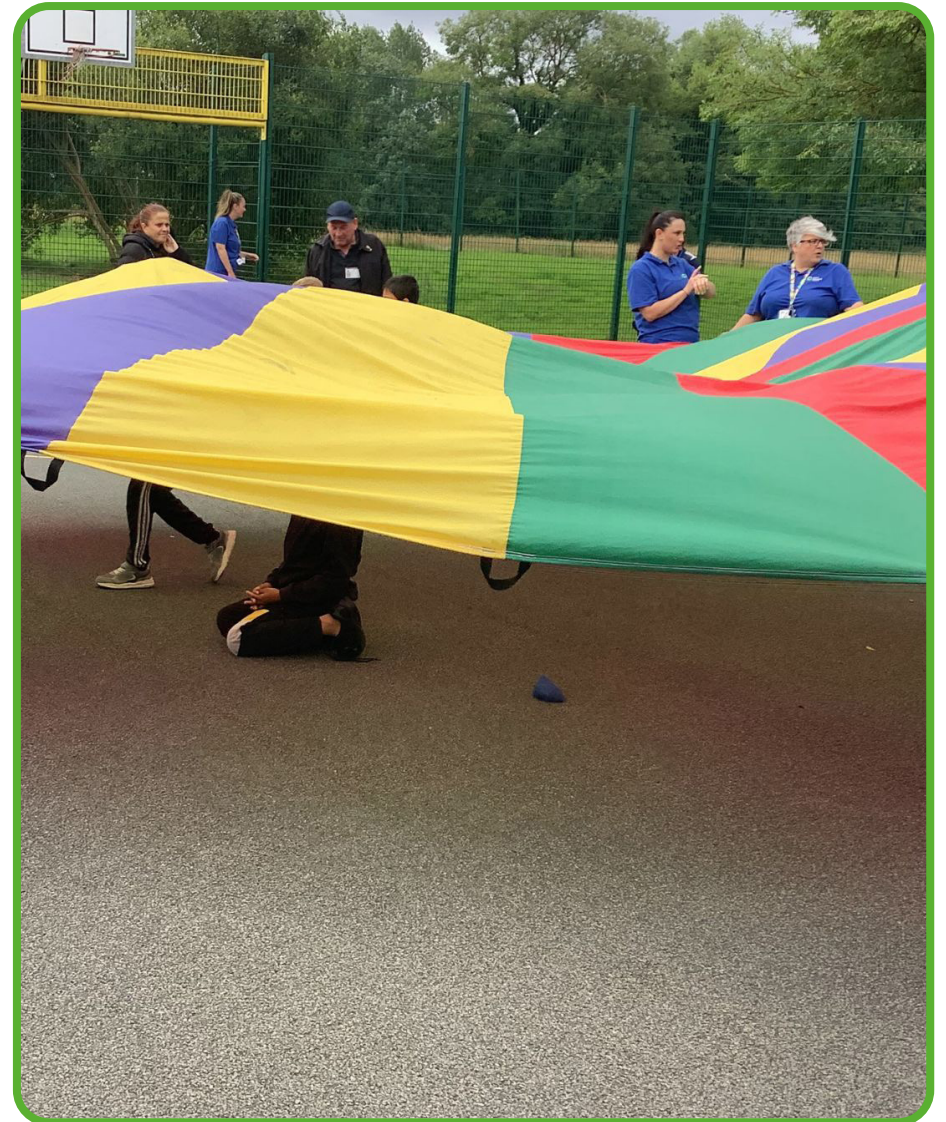


EDI Statement: Wellspring is strongly committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in its recruitment processes, aiming to reflect the diversity of our communities and the nation at large. We would enthusiastically welcome applications from black and minority ethnic groups and those with other protected characteristics.

Safeguarding

Our Schools and academies are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment.



Next Steps...

For more information about the role, please speak to Shona Crichton, Executive Principal. You can arrange this with Lauren Harper - PA to the Executive Principal - l.harper@springwellacademyleeds.org

We strongly recommend a visit to one of our other regional schools and this can also be arranged with Lauren Harper.

To apply, please submit an application through My New Term. Your application should outline why you feel your experience makes you a strong applicant for this exciting opportunity.

Please note that candidates are expected to demonstrate all the essential criteria and have a strong communication skills.

Deadline for applications: 8.00am Friday 29th May 2026





Are you an exceptional School Leader ready for a larger canvas? This is a strategic **career bridge** designed for a leader who has mastered single-site management and is hungry for regional impact.

The Path to Executive Principal

This role offers a deliberate pathway from school-level leadership to an Executive Principal position. You will maintain excellence at your home site while beginning to influence the wider region, guided by our Regional Operating Framework.

We are looking for:

- **Systems Thinkers:** Leaders who build scalable processes, not just quick fixes.
- **Mentors:** Those who find success in developing other senior leaders.
- **Strategists:** Visionaries ready to align resources and talent across multiple schools.

“ This is the move for the leader ready to trade local influence for a regional legacy. ”

Ready to take the next step?

Review our **Regional Booklet** to understand how the region works within the trust.

If you have the ambition to lead beyond your own school gates, we want to hear from you.



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