



Headteacher Candidate Pack

Welcome



Dear Prospective Candidate,

We are a large and expanding special needs school based in the north of Luton. We provide an outstanding education for students with severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties.

This is an exceptional opportunity for a candidate with the right skill set and extensive experience leading in a special school setting to join our outstanding school community.

Woodlands is a leading SEN school and a popular choice amongst local parents, and we seek to appoint the right candidate who can maintain our excellent relationships within the community, with parents and our students.

At Woodlands, we believe that learning in school should inspire, support and empower our young people to achieve their full potential so that they can become successful adults. Our school curriculum prioritises giving students the opportunities to practise and develop the skills and attributes that will support them to engage and participate well in life – life within, life outside and life beyond school.

We prioritise functional learning and life skills, empowering students to become independent and confident. Independence will look different for different students. By keeping the needs and aspirations of our young people at the centre of what we do and by working closely with parents, professionals, and the wider community, we make sure every opportunity is maximised for each individual.

We are proud that we have a caring and harmonious community where all students have an opportunity to flourish, and our high expectations set no limits on what our students can achieve.

The school was rated as Outstanding in the most recent Ofsted inspection (May 2024); this is testament to all those connected to Woodlands from senior leadership, staff and students.

The school faces various challenges despite its excellence in service and teaching standards. The future of SEN education throughout the country is very much in the public limelight, especially post-16 education, and schools are increasingly finding challenging behaviour patterns with students, which creates challenges within the school setting and financial pressures when students access out of school provisions. Our school is not alien from these predicaments.

However, we remain dedicated in focusing on our students and in providing a safe environment for all to enjoy and excel. Our attention to quality and care is unquestionable and this has prompted Luton Borough Council to work alongside us to build a second site for the school to meet the increased local demand for SEN support. This will no doubt bring its own challenges but also excellent opportunities.

We seek to employ a Headteacher who will embrace all these opportunities and challenges and take Woodlands into the next phase as a school at the forefront of excellent SEN education. The appointee will carry on and develop further the outstanding work that happens at the school, as well as taking on the exciting challenge of leading the school as it expands to a second site.

We hope that our excellent school provisions are maintained and further promoted within, and outside of the school community, and we look for a leader to work strongly with the Governing body and other stakeholders to uphold our values and vision.

Our new Headteacher will be required to have extensive SEND experience and excellent leadership and communication skills to further enhance the qualities within our fabulous staff team.

We look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

Nadeem Butt
Chair of Governors
Woodlands Secondary School

Our Values



Our Mission Statement:

To empower children and young people with the skills and attributes they need to become successful adults.

Vision

At Woodlands we believe that learning is a lifelong journey and we aim to inspire and support our students to achieve their full potential. Our curriculum offer is tailored to the individual needs of the young person. Our broad and balanced curriculum focuses on functional learning and incorporates life skills to support and promote independence. Woodlands Secondary School provides a vibrant fun and inclusive learning community where all members, students, families and staff are continuously learning together.

We believe that children and young people learn best when they are happy and emotional wellbeing is a high priority for all members of our community.

At Woodlands we keep the young person at the centre of everything we do, working closely with parents, professionals and other stakeholders to ensure that every opportunity is maximised.

At Woodlands we aim to:

- Promote functional communication skills, including the use of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC).
- Facilitate student voice and listen to what students say, what matters to them and what makes them feel safe.
- Involve students in decision making and making choices in a range of situations.
- Provide a curriculum that meets the needs of individual students and helps them prepare for their life in school and the wider community.
- Ensure that learning is functional and is focused on developing skills which will support transition to adulthood.
- Create a learning environment that encourages students and staff to be the best they can be.
- Focus on individual wellbeing by supporting students to develop confidence and positive self-esteem.
- Equip students with the tools which will enable them to successfully develop their resilience (dealing with disappointment and managing change) both in school and into adulthood.
- Equip students with the tools to regulate their behaviour to the best of their ability and to have a better understanding of other people's behaviour, both in school, the community and in adulthood.
- Meet students' physical, sensory, medical and therapeutic needs, in collaboration with other professionals.
- Promote physical wellbeing and a healthy lifestyle.
- Work closely and in collaboration with parents, carers, the Local Authority, other professionals and key stakeholders.
- Ensure a successful and positive transition into Woodlands and the later transition to post school provision by working with students, parents and post school agencies.
- Encourage independence, confidence and involvement in the school community and the community beyond the school gates.

Job Description



Introductory Statement:	The responsibilities of the post are to be performed in accordance with the provisions of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document and within the range of teachers' duties set out in the document. The Headteacher's performance will be guided by the Standards for Headteachers, as set out by the DFE.
Start Date:	September 2026
Salary:	Leadership spine L33-39 (£113,646 - £131,578)
Reporting to:	Governing Body
Responsible for:	Senior Team Teaching Staff Teaching Assistants Administrative and Support Staff
Liaising with:	Other Leadership Group members, relevant associate staff, external partners, LA staff, Parents and Governors.



“Learning for Life”

Our emphasis on self-improvement and the continuing desire to do what we do well, is integral to the successful delivery of high-quality teaching and learning that serves to meet the complex needs of all our students.

Our school, and the needs of the students on our roll, demands flexible, strategic and operational leadership; a leader who will be expected to exercise individual initiative within a team framework, have a broad perspective of the school and have attention to detail at all levels.

Our Headteacher must retain the confidence of staff, pupils, parents and governors to reach the shared vision of empowering our young people with the skills and attributes to become successful adults.



Job Description

Job Purpose (including main duties and responsibilities)

- To provide strategic and operational leadership and management that enables the school to give every student an outstanding education.
- The post holder will promote the highest possible standards of achievement and well-being to secure the long-term success of the students.
- To deliver the vision, values and curriculum to ensure that Woodlands Secondary School overcomes student barriers to learning, equipping them with the skills for their futures.
- To develop positive partnerships with local schools and the wider community, the Local Authority and other agencies, including health and social care.
- To instil a creative and innovative style of leadership that inspires the pursuit of excellent educational standards and high aspirations for all students.
- To demonstrate a dynamic and professional leadership style, which motivates staff, sets high expectations and enhances achievement for all.
- To create a culture that challenges prejudice, values diversity and promotes equality.
- The post holder will be required to carry out their duties in line with professional standards and codes of conduct.

Job Description



Leadership, Strategic Direction and Development

- Work with the Governing Body to create the strategic vision, ethos and curriculum plan for the school. Ensure the successful delivery of the vision, ethos, aims and objectives as determined by the Governing Body.
- Provide dynamic, consistent and motivational leadership team to the staff, children, families and wider community served by the school.
- Translate the school's vision and aims into operational objectives and plans, motivating and empowering others to carry the vision forward.
- Deliver a curriculum model that will address the barriers to learning of student's attending Woodlands Secondary School.
- Implement robust and sustainable strategies to drive through changes necessary to deliver high quality services, within the school and for the broader community.
- Effectively liaise and work with and support the educational, social and behavioural needs of pupils attending Woodlands Secondary School.
- Gain and maintain respect across all stakeholders, inspiring individuals to contribute positively to shared ideas and plans.
- Ensure provision reflects the highest professional standards and our desire to do our best by our young people.
- Ensure that statutory requirements, the decisions of the Governing Body and the needs of the pupils, their parents/carers, commissioners and the community are met.
- Develop a school that is constantly willing to learn and improve.
- Ensure that the school's values, ethos, policies and procedures are relevant, fair, inclusive and consistently implemented.
- Be responsible for the leadership, development, and resourcing of policies.

- Advise the Governing Body on the formation of the annual budget to ensure the school achieves its objectives.
- To be accountable for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing, health and safety, and risk assessment of the school ensuring that the school provides a safe working environment for both staff and pupils.
- Deliver effective operational management for Woodlands Secondary School financial and physical resources.
- Supervise the efficient management of the school budget.
- Supervise effective use and development of school premises and resources.
- Act in accordance with legislation affecting the conduct of the school, particularly that governing health and safety matters and employment rights.

Teaching and Learning

- Secure and sustain high quality teaching and effective learning across the school.
- Ensure effective systems are in place to monitor, evaluate and review classroom practice and promote improvement.
- Maintain high expectations amongst staff for the progress of all pupils.
- Ensure the development and implementation of appropriate curriculum, which motivates students and is personalised to meet the needs of changing cohorts.
- Promote curriculum enrichment activities.
- Lead on school improvement initiatives.
- Ensure systems are in place to assess, monitor and report on student progress and achievement.
- Facilitate and Promote 'Students Voice' and involve students in a meaningful way.



Job Description

Pupil Welfare

- Develop and promote effective relationships within the school, families and the local community.
- Promote and implement systems which facilitate high levels of attendance.
- Provide nurturing and attentive pastoral care for all pupils.
- Ensure that pupils' needs identified through their EHCP targets are addressed and that suitable provision is in place.
- Ensure that the health and care needs of each pupil are assessed and consistently met.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to understand and adopt healthy behaviours and lifestyles.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

Partnerships

- Create, maintain strong links and collaborative ways of working with all stakeholders including the wider community and other Schools, to achieve common goals.
- Engage with other public and voluntary sector agencies, and the local community to provide learning opportunities for students.
- Work with partner agencies to protect and safeguard pupils.
- Foster and maintain links with regional and national Special School communities

Managing people and developing strong working relationships

- Ensure that safer recruitment is at the heart of staff selection.
- Ensure all staff are fully informed of strategic and operational objectives.
- Provide inspirational leadership and guidance for staff.
- Establish and maintain a suitable staff structure to meet the needs of the school.
- Implement the School's Appraisal Policy and processes that will set operational and/or performance goals for all members of staff, which linked to the long-term objectives as set out in the school improvement and development plans.
- Ensure the implementation of effective HR policies and procedures for staff induction, professional development and performance review in line with school policy.
- Encourage and manage the on-going professional development of staff ensuring that the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) strategy is aligned with the strategic goals of Woodlands Secondary School.
- Create and develop an organisation in which staff recognise that they are accountable for the success of the school.
- Participate in CPD in pursuit of school improvement and disseminate learning to appropriate school staff.

Job Description

Safeguarding Pupils

- Have due regard for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils ensuring that all child protection procedures are adopted and adhered to by the school community.
- Effectively manage processes regarding low level concerns and allegations to ensure that young people are kept safe.
- To always ensure the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
- Report to the appropriate authorities any concerns relating to child protection or protection of vulnerable adults.
- Ensure that the school is fully compliant with its responsibilities for safer recruitment.

Accountability

- Provide information, objective advice and support to the Governing Body, to enable it to meet its responsibilities for securing effective teaching and learning; outcomes for students and value for money.
- Present a coherent and accurate account of the school's performance in a form appropriate to a range of audiences, e.g. governors and parents.
- Ensure that parents and students are well informed about student progress and can understand and support with targets for improvement.
- Work closely with the Governing Body to regularly review performance and development, set personal targets and take responsibility for own development.

Carry out such other duties as required by the Governing Body and are commensurate within the role.



Person Specification

In order to effectively undertake this role, the following attributes have been identified as important for the post holder to have.

AREA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	HOW ASSESSED
Qualifications			
Qualified teacher status	✓		A/I
NPQH		✓	A/I
An additional special qualification in SEND		✓	A/I
Evidence of relevant professional development at senior leadership level	✓		A/I
Commitment to further develop own professional knowledge and skills	✓		A/I
Experience			
An experienced Headteacher, with evidence of successful leadership in a SEND environment	✓		A/R
Experience of collaborative working with vulnerable families and multi-agency teams to support pupils and their families	✓		A/I/R
Experience of managing change	✓		A/I
Understanding of financial planning, budgetary management and principles of best value		✓	A/I/R
Proven record of innovative curriculum design that reflects the needs of all pupils	✓		A/I/R
Experience of managing and leading a wide range of staff	✓		A/I/R
Experience as a lead for Appraisal	✓		A/I/R
Experience of planning and evaluating a School Improvement Plan		✓	A/I/R
Experience of using a range of tools and evidence, including learner performance data, to support, monitor, evaluate and raise standards in all aspects of provision	✓		A/I/R
Experience of working successfully with governors, parents, Local Authority and other partners	✓		A/I/R
Successful experience of working with a diverse community	✓		A
Evidence of implementing effective whole school safeguarding policies and practices	✓		A/I
Experience of being the Designated Lead for Safeguarding or the Deputy Designated Lead for Safeguarding		✓	A/I
Experience of planning and implementation of school expansion		✓	A/I
Knowledge and experience of the common inspection framework in a leadership and management role. (Ofsted)	✓		A/I/R

Person Specification

AREA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	HOW ASSESSED
Leadership Skills			
Proven experience of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> leading with honesty, integrity with a strong work ethic holding others to account, with high expectations of staff conduct compassion & empathy for all members of the school community 	✓		A/I/R
Evidence of understanding that decisions need to be made in the best interests of the school	✓		A/I
Abilities and Skills			
Develop and communicate a clear vision so that others are inspired to embrace it	✓		A/I
Able to provide effective and inspirational leadership that inspires confidence and motivates staff, parents and pupils.	✓		A/I/R
Able to prioritise and organise the demands of being a Head Teacher and being able to delegate effectively, being mindful of your wellbeing and workload, and that of others	✓		A/I
Experience of leading and managing a wide range of staff	✓		A/I/R
Evidence of knowledge of financial responsibility in a school setting, understanding the pushes and pulls of finance in education, particularly in the SEND sector	✓		A/I/R
Demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills, both written and oral	✓		A/I
Knowledge and Understanding			
Knowledge and understanding of pupils with a wide range of severe, profound and complex educational needs.	✓		A/I/R
Experience of managing transitions to the next setting	✓		A/I
Clear understanding of the role of self-evaluation in the continuous improvement of the school, using an assess-plan-do-review cycle to evaluate and improve provision, outcomes and practice across all areas	✓		A/I
Knowledge and understanding of local and national trends and requirements in special education	✓		A/I
Knowledge and understanding of responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010	✓		A/I
Personal Qualities			
Exceptional role model with the highest standards of integrity, who is approachable and demonstrates a strong and collaborative leadership style	✓		I
Dynamic and reflective leadership qualities that ensure the continual drive towards excellence for all staff	✓		A/R
Putting the best interests of the school at the forefront of all decisions, however difficult or challenging	✓		I/R
Ability to manage change and work under pressure	✓		I/R
Willingness to ask for advice and support where necessary	✓		I/R

Key:

These attributes will be identified by means of the application (A), interview (I), and references (R) as appropriate.



Arrange a Visit / Apply

If you wish to discover more about this exciting opportunity or to arrange a visit, please contact Alpha Parish at Academicis (our recruitment partner):

aparish@academicis.co.uk | 07436 971517 | 01223 907979

CLOSING DATE:

Monday 1st December 2025

SHORTLISTING:

Wednesday 3rd December 2025

INTERVIEWS:

Tuesday 9th December 2025

