



Headteacher Recruitment Pack

Sandringham School

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Welcome

From the Chair of Governors and Chair of Trustees



Thank you for your interest in the role of Headteacher at Sandringham School.

Sandringham is a very special place. As one of ten schools within the **Ambition Education Trust (AET)**, it sits at the heart of a vibrant learning community in St Albans. We are a school that combines academic excellence with a deep sense of care, inclusion, and opportunity for all. Our students are remarkable young people, confident, motivated, and proud to be part of Sandringham, and our staff are dedicated professionals who give their all to make a genuine difference every day.

After 21 very successful years of principled leadership Mr. Alan Gray is retiring from headship in August 2026 to focus entirely on his role as CEO of the Ambition Education Trust. With our Interim Head of School feeling it is the right time for them to step away from senior leadership, this creates a significant opportunity for an exceptional leader to join Sandringham at an exciting moment in its journey, and work with our two highly experienced deputy headteachers to lead the school forward.

We see this as a rare and wonderful opportunity for someone who is passionate about education, values teamwork and collaboration, and is driven by a belief in the limitless potential of young people. Whether you are an ambitious Deputy Head ready to take that next step, or an existing Headteacher seeking a new challenge, we are looking for someone who will embrace our ethos, inspire our community, and lead with both courage and compassion.

As Headteacher, you will be warmly supported by the Local Governing Board, the Trust Board, the Senior Leadership Team, and Alan Gray (CEO) and Margaret Chapman (Co-CEO). You will have the freedom to shape the next chapter of the school's development, while being part of a wider network that thrives on collaboration and shared ambition. We want a leader who will continue to raise aspirations, nurture talent, and ensure Sandringham remains at the forefront of educational excellence, not only for our own students, but for the wider community we are proud to serve.

The new Headteacher will lead an experienced and cohesive Senior Leadership Team comprising two Deputy Headteachers, five Assistant Headteachers, a Strategic business and operations director, and a seconded Associate Assistant Headteacher, supported by the central Ambition Education Trust team.

If you are an inspiring, ambitious leader with the energy, creativity, and moral purpose to make a lasting impact, we would love to hear from you.

We look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to our exceptional community.

Deborah Strazza
Chair of Trustees

Julia Shaw
Chair of Governors



About the School



Sandringham School is a large, highly successful, and oversubscribed mixed comprehensive school with a long-standing reputation for excellence. It has been graded Outstanding by Ofsted in every inspection since 2008, including the most recent in 2024.

Becoming an academy in 2011 and a founding member of a multi-academy trust in 2017, Sandringham now plays a leading role within the Ambition Education Trust, a cross-phase partnership of five primary and five secondary schools across Hertfordshire.

At the heart of Sandringham's success is its distinctive learning culture. Visitors consistently remark on the exemplary behaviour, maturity, and positivity of students, and on the calm, purposeful atmosphere that pervades the school. Central to everything is a clear and inclusive mission: "Everybody can be Somebody" and our three values: Responsibility, Relationships and Respect. This philosophy underpins the school's ethos, ensuring every young person feels valued, supported, and encouraged to achieve their very best. The same principle applies to staff: mutual respect, collaboration, and professional trust define daily life at Sandringham.

Relationships between students and staff are exceptional. Classrooms are places of curiosity and challenge, where students are confident to express their views and take an active role in shaping their learning. The Student Leadership Team plays a significant role in influencing school policy and contributing to the school's ongoing development.

Sandringham is an eight-form entry comprehensive with over 1,800 students, including more than 600 in the Sixth Form. The Sixth Form is a beacon of excellence, popular both with existing students and those who join from other schools, drawn by its reputation for outstanding teaching, pastoral care, and results.



Key Statistics



LOCATION:

St Albans, Hertfordshire

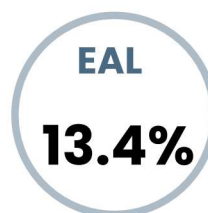
TYPE OF SCHOOL:

Comprehensive, Co-educational, Multi-Academy Trust (AET)

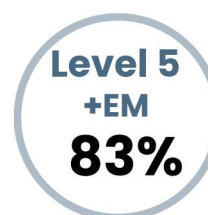
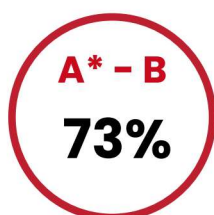
AGE RANGE:

11-18 years

POPULATION:



POST 16 RESULTS 2025

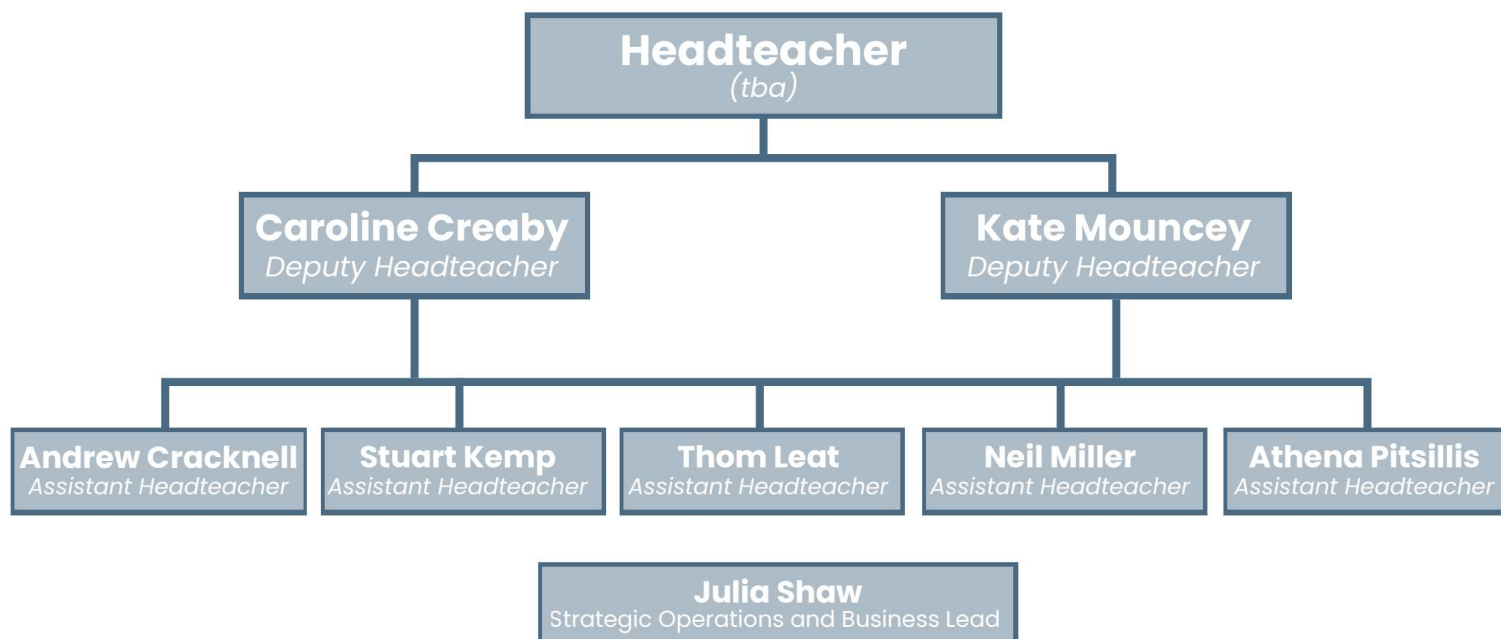


Average Grade **B+**
Value added **+0.51**

GCSE RESULTS 2025

P8 (2024) **+1.06**

SENIOR LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE



About the Trust



At Sandringham we are delighted to be one of ten schools that form the Ambition Education Trust (AET), a close community of five primary and five secondary schools within Hertfordshire.

Therefore, when you join our school, you are also becoming part of our wider organisation. The Trust's mission is to create a learning community which provides educational excellence for all. We bring that to life by working collaboratively as a group of schools to develop best practice and continuously improve what we do. In being part of the Trust, our colleagues and support networks reach beyond our school, enabling professionals from all areas to share ideas and work together to raise standards.

As Headteacher, you will benefit from working closely with other Headteachers and the Trust executive staff to help plan activities for the wider benefit of pupils and staff across the Trust. This is an excellent support network that will provide you with significant resource to carry out your work at the school.

About the Role

This is an exceptional career opportunity for a talented, forward-thinking, and ambitious leader to build on Sandringham's success and help shape the next exciting phase in the journey of this truly outstanding school.

As Headteacher, you will lead a highly talented and loyal senior leadership team to:

- Uphold and embody the school's values and vision
- Drive continuous improvement across all areas of school life
- Ensure the highest academic and personal standards for every student
- Lead and inspire a talented, dedicated staff team who thrive in a culture of collaboration and innovation

You will also benefit from a strong network within the Trust and extensive opportunities for professional growth and development.



We are looking for a leader who:

- Leads with empathy, visibility, and dynamism, setting the tone by example
- Has a proven track record of successful senior leadership
- Brings deep expertise in teaching, learning, curriculum innovation, and behaviour management
- Inspires, supports, and challenges colleagues to deliver excellence and drive continuous improvement
- Communicates confidently and effectively with all stakeholders
- Uses data and strategic planning to secure measurable improvement
- Values community partnerships and parental engagement
- Has a proven record of raising achievement and aspiration across diverse student groups
- Shows a commitment to or has been involved in collaboration in a wider context, such as with other schools

Job Description



Post:	Headteacher
Contract:	Full time, Permanent
Salary:	L37-43 (competitive, commensurate with experience)
Reporting to:	Chair of Governors, Trust CEO and Co-CEO
Line Management:	Deputy Headteachers and Senior Leadership Team
Liaising with:	Senior Leadership Team, Faculty and Subject Leaders, Governors, Teaching and Support Staff, Parents, and the Trust Executive Team

Purpose of the Role

Uphold all the current Headteacher Standards at all times.

The Headteacher will lead the school with **vision, integrity, and purpose**, ensuring that its aims and priorities are realised through people, policies, and practice.

Working closely with the **other senior leaders in the school and executive leaders in the Trust**, you will ensure that resources are used efficiently to deliver exceptional outcomes, promote wellbeing, and strengthen the school's reputation for excellence.

Key responsibilities include:

- Providing strategic leadership and day-to-day management across the school
- Securing the commitment of staff, students, and the wider community to the school's vision and values
- Reporting regularly to governors and trustees on progress and performance
- Representing the school effectively with external partners such as the DfE, Local Authority, and professional networks

Teaching and Learning

- Continue to raise the quality of teaching and learning across the school, maintaining a culture of high expectations.
- Use data, benchmarks, and feedback to monitor student progress and target support
- Evaluate and enhance the quality of curriculum delivery and student outcomes.
- Maintain and strengthen an inclusive learning environment where all students can succeed
- Extend curriculum and co-curricular provision to develop character, leadership, and ambition
- Ensure parents and carers are actively engaged in their child's learning and development

Leadership and Management of Staff

- Build a culture of professional trust, collaboration, and respect
- Communicate the school and Trust vision clearly and consistently
- Review the organisational structure to ensure it reflects values, needs, and financial sustainability
- Recruit, retain, and develop a high-quality staff team
- Provide tailored CPD opportunities for all career stages
- Implement rigorous performance management aligned with strategic goals.
- Promote staff wellbeing and work-life balance across the organisation

Managing Systems and Resources

- Embed a culture of accountability and continuous improvement
- Work with governors, trustees, and the CPFO to plan and manage budgets effectively
- Ensure the school estate, facilities, and IT infrastructure are well maintained and meet curriculum needs
- Oversee HR systems that support staff wellbeing, recruitment, and retention

Job Description



Community and Partnerships

- Strengthen collaboration across Trust schools through shared CPD and best practice
- Build and sustain partnerships with local schools, curriculum networks, and community organisations
- Develop strong relationships with parents, local businesses, and the wider community
- Represent the school positively to a range of audiences, including governors, trustees, and the media
- Ensure parents and students are well informed about the school's direction, priorities, and achievements

Additional Information

The Trust is committed to **safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people**, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We are also committed to equality of opportunity and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure accessibility in accordance with the **Equality Act 2010**.

This job description will be reviewed regularly and may be amended, following consultation, to reflect changes in priorities or responsibilities.



Person Specification



Specification	Essential <i>and desirable</i>
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate and qualified teacher • Further professional development in areas of leadership and management (eg NPQH) • <i>Postgraduate qualification or further studies</i>
Knowledge and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least three years' experience at Senior Leadership level before starting • Proven record of developing and enhancing pedagogy, innovation and leading change successfully • Understanding of current educational issues • Understanding of the role of Governors and parents in school development • Understanding of value-added and other data to support raising standards • Experience of teaching at all levels 11 – 18 • Experience of contributing to whole-school continuous professional development • Experience of working in a high-performing school setting • <i>Experience of management of physical, financial and human resources</i> • <i>Experience of working in a multi-academy trust, team-work and collaboration across a trust environment</i>
Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion for outstanding learning • Drive, sense of purpose, commitment and perseverance • Excellent interpersonal and persuasive skills • Flexibility and sensitivity to the needs of individuals • Excellent communication and presentation skills; oral and written • Enthusiasm and humour • Willingness to reflect on, and evaluate performance within the context of a team • Outstanding classroom practitioner who inspires and is respected by students • Resilience and relentless energy • <i>Wide range of interests</i>

Person Specification



Specification	Essential and <i>desirable</i>
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear vision for raising standards• Ability to lead by example, take responsibility and to be accountable• Ability to inspire and motivate those around them• Ability to hold people to account effectively• Substantial problem-solving ability• Ability to prioritise effectively and balance values with pragmatism• Intellectual curiosity
Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Genuine concern for students and staff and understanding of how they learn• Commitment to helping all students and staff to fulfil their potential
Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential and ambition for executive leadership in the future



Benefits and Remuneration



The post is offered in the range **L37 – L43** on the Leadership spine, in line with a Group 8 category school.

There are many other benefits on offer both at Sandringham and by working within the AET. We want to help support your wellbeing and work-life balance.

- Member of the Ambition Education Trust (AET) headteachers forum
- Access to expert coaching in the first year and ongoing mentoring and support from the CEO and Co-CEO
- Health and Wellbeing (gym, swimming pool, free eye tests and flu immunisations, cycle to work scheme, employee assistance programme)
- Rewards, recognition and fun (staff fund, retail discounts, employee referral bonus, long service awards, social events, House community events)
- Life made easier (Tea and coffee, deliveries, borrow books, on-site car valet, EV charging)
- Professional Development (Free access to all National College online training, NPQ support, Alban TSH)
- As headteacher, you will be a member of the St Albans and Harpenden Secondary Heads group (STASSH) and the Hertfordshire Association of Secondary Heads (HASSH)

St Albans

The Jewel in the Crown is St Albans – an extremely attractive Cathedral City some 20 miles north of London, with its various weekday markets, and exceptional range of restaurants and pubs and bars. It is close to both the M25 and M1 and St. Pancras International station can be reached by train in under 20 minutes.

Appointment process

Applications must reach the school by **9.00 am, Friday 16 January 2026** and be submitted via MyNewTerm.

Prospective candidates are very welcome to look around the school and meet the Executive Headteacher/CEO and other senior staff. We have identified the following dates/times for visits:

- Friday 12 December 2025 (8.50 – 10.50 am)
- Wednesday 17 December 2025 (8.50 – 10.50 am)
- Thursday 8 January 2026 (1.00 – 3.00 pm)
- Monday 12 January 2026 (8.50 – 10.50 am)

Please contact one of the two Headteacher PAs to arrange (alternative dates for tours may be arranged if these dates are unsuitable):

Mrs Lesley Dunkley dunkleyl@sandringham.aetrust.uk (Monday – Wednesday) or
Mrs Penny Powell powellp@sandringham.aetrust.uk (Thursday – Friday) to arrange a visit.

Alternatively, if you would like a confidential conversation with the Executive Headteacher, please arrange this through either Lesley or Penny.

Interviews are scheduled for Thursday 29 and Friday 30 January 2026.

If you are a **dynamic, forward-thinking leader** with the passion, integrity, and expertise to inspire others, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Alan Gray

Executive Headteacher

CEO Ambition Education Trust



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