

# Headteacher

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## The St. Christopher School, Leigh-on-Sea

### Job Description & Person Specification

<b>Job title</b>	Headteacher
<b>School</b>	The St. Christopher School
<b>Trust</b>	SEN Trust Southend
<b>Pay range</b>	L28–L34 (Headteacher Group 7)
<b>Responsible to</b>	CEO, SEN Trust Southend
<b>Start date</b>	September 2026
<b>Contract</b>	Permanent, full-time

## 1. Role Overview

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The Headteacher is the strategic and operational leader of The St. Christopher School, one of four special schools within SEN Trust Southend. The school serves approximately 262 pupils aged 3–19 with Autism Spectrum Disorder and co-existing conditions, many of whom are at early cognitive developmental stages with complex and unique communication needs.

Working within the Trust's distributed leadership model, the Headteacher holds full accountability for the school's educational standards, culture, safeguarding, and operational effectiveness. The Headteacher reports directly to the CEO and is a core member of the Trust's Headteachers Group, contributing to trust-wide strategy and peer collaboration across all four schools.

This is a genuine headship with real autonomy. The CEO provides strategic oversight, challenge, and support — but the day-to-day leadership of the school, its staff, and its pupils rests with the Headteacher.

## 2. Strategic Leadership and Vision

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- Lead the development and implementation of the school's vision, ethos, and strategic priorities, in alignment with the Trust's overall direction.
- Build a positive, inclusive school culture that reflects the School's values: Nurture, Empower, Inspire.
- Work collaboratively with the CEO and fellow Headteachers to contribute to trust-wide strategy and to share learning across all four schools.
- Engage actively with the Local Governing Body (LGB), providing clear, evidence-based reporting on school performance and strategic direction.
- Represent the school positively in the local authority, with partner agencies, and in the wider SEND community.
- Lead the school's self-evaluation, producing and maintaining a high-quality School Improvement Plan (SIP) and School Evaluation Form (SEF).

## 3. Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

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- Ensure the curriculum is ambitious, coherent, and appropriately adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, including those with SLD, PMLD, and autism.
- Drive high expectations for pupil progress and achievement, using data effectively to identify and address underperformance.
- Promote evidence-based, adaptive teaching practices across the school, including the use of AAC, Core boards, and augmentative communication approaches.
- Oversee the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), ensuring outcomes are ambitious, provision is matched to need, and Annual Reviews are conducted to a high standard.
- Lead a culture of continuous professional learning, ensuring all staff have access to high-quality CPD relevant to a specialist SEND setting.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning through regular lesson observations, learning walks, and pupil progress reviews.

#### **4. Safeguarding and Pupil Wellbeing**

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- Act as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the school, ensuring all safeguarding policies, procedures, and training are in place and effective.
- Ensure the school meets all statutory requirements under Keeping Children Safe in Education and relevant SEND legislation.
- Promote the physical, emotional, and mental health of all pupils, embedding a therapeutic, trauma-informed approach to behaviour and wellbeing.
- Maintain strong relationships with families, social care, health, and other agencies, ensuring effective multi-agency working around vulnerable pupils.
- Oversee pupil behaviour, exclusions, and pastoral systems, ensuring they are fair, consistent, and proportionate.

#### **5. Staff Leadership and Development**

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- Recruit, retain, and develop a high-quality staff team, fostering a culture of trust, professional pride, and continuous improvement.
- Conduct or oversee performance management for all staff, setting ambitious objectives and holding people to account with fairness and respect.
- Support staff wellbeing proactively, recognising the particular demands of working in a specialist SEND environment.
- Manage staffing structures, timetabling, and deployment effectively to meet the needs of pupils and ensure value for money.
- Line manage senior leaders within the school, providing regular 1:1s, coaching, and professional challenge.
- Prepare and support staff in their contribution to Trust-wide networks and peer collaboration.

#### **6. Operational Management and Finance**

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- Manage the school's delegated budget effectively, ensuring resources are deployed to maximise impact on pupil outcomes.
- Work with the Trust's CFO to produce accurate budget forecasts and monitor expenditure throughout the year.
- Oversee the physical environment and site, ensuring health and safety requirements are met and the building is well maintained and fit for purpose.
- Lead admissions, including in-year consultations, ensuring the school meets its place-planning obligations and the needs of the local authority.

- Ensure compliance with all statutory reporting requirements, including Ofsted, DfE data submissions, and local authority obligations.

## **7. Governance and Accountability**

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- Attend and present at Local Governing Body (LGB) meetings, providing high-quality written reports on school performance and strategic priorities.
- Support the LGB to carry out its functions effectively, including providing appropriate challenge and holding the Headteacher to account.
- Maintain a clear, transparent line of accountability to the Trust Board through the CEO, providing accurate and timely information as required.
- Ensure all Trust-wide policies are implemented effectively within the school, and contribute to the development of trust-wide policy where appropriate.

# Person Specification — Headteacher

The St. Christopher School | Group 7 | L28–L34

Criterion	Essential	Desirable
<b>Qualifications</b>		
Teaching qualification	Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)	
Leadership qualification		NPQH or equivalent senior leadership qualification
Safeguarding	DSL trained or willingness to complete training on appointment	DSL experience in a leadership role
<b>Experience</b>		
Headship or senior leadership	Substantial experience as a Headteacher, Deputy Head, or Assistant Head	Headteacher experience in a special school or SEND MAT
SEND specialism	Experience working with pupils with SLD, PMLD, autism, or complex needs	Experience across multiple SEND designations
School improvement	Proven track record of improving teaching, learning, and pupil outcomes	Experience leading a school through Ofsted inspection
MAT context		Experience working within or alongside a Multi-Academy Trust
Budget management	Experience managing a delegated school budget	Experience contributing to trust-wide financial planning
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>		
SEND legislation	Strong working knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice, EHCP processes, and relevant legislation	
Specialist pedagogy	Deep understanding of effective SEND pedagogy, adaptive teaching, and communication approaches (AAC, SCERTS, etc.)	
Safeguarding frameworks	Up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding legislation including KCSIE	
Therapeutic approaches		Knowledge of therapeutic thinking, trauma-informed practice, or Positive Behaviour Support

Data and assessment	Ability to interpret and act on pupil progress data in a SEND context	
<b>Skills and Abilities</b>		
Leadership and vision	Ability to articulate and implement a compelling vision for a specialist school	
People leadership	Demonstrated ability to lead, motivate, and develop a diverse staff team	
Communication	Excellent written and verbal communication with a range of audiences including families, agencies, and governors	
Analytical thinking	Ability to analyse complex data and information to drive school improvement	
Distributed leadership	Ability to work constructively within a MAT structure, balancing school autonomy with trust-wide accountability	
<b>Personal Qualities</b>		
Commitment to inclusive education	Genuine passion for SEND education and the belief that every pupil can achieve	
Resilience	Ability to remain calm, positive, and effective under pressure	
Integrity	High ethical standards and a transparent, honest approach to leadership	
Collaborative	Works generously with colleagues across the Trust, sharing practice and supporting others	
High expectations	Holds high expectations for pupils, staff, and self, regardless of starting points	

*This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check and satisfactory pre-employment checks in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.*

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