



# Job Description

**Job Title:** Head of School: Nurture

**Reporting to:** Headteacher

**Location:** Serenity School Croydon

**Contract:** Full-time, permanent

**Start Date:** Immediate start or as soon as possible

**Salary:** Competitive, commensurate with senior leadership experience (Leadership Scale)

## Role Summary

Serenity School Croydon is seeking an exceptional specialist leader to take up the role of Head of Nurture Pathway. This is a strategic leadership role focused on ensuring consistently high-quality provision for pupils with Autism and the most complex learning and communication needs. The Nurture pathway supports pupils with significant barriers to learning, including pupils who are pre-verbal or minimally verbal, pupils with complex communication profiles, and pupils requiring highly structured, specialist provision to enable engagement, regulation, communication, and participation in learning.

The postholder will provide strategic leadership, specialist expertise, and school improvement oversight, ensuring that provision enables pupils to develop communication, emotional regulation, independence, engagement, and readiness for learning. This role is central to ensuring that pupils with the most complex needs receive provision that is both highly specialist and highly effective.

## Core Purpose

To improve the quality, consistency, and impact of Nurture provision by strengthening specialist teaching practice, communication-focused provision, curriculum implementation, and leadership capacity.

## Key Responsibilities

### 1) Strategic leadership and school improvement

- Provide expert leadership and support to Headteachers and senior leaders to improve provision for pupils with complex communication and learning needs.
- Lead the strategic development and continuous improvement of the Nurture pathway across SED.
- Ensure provision reflects the specialist expectations, values, and educational model of Serenity Education Group.
- Identify strengths and areas for development and implement targeted improvement strategies.
- Ensure consistent standards and expectations within the Nurture provision.

## 2) Specialist curriculum leadership and implementation

- Lead the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of a specialist Nurture curriculum designed for pupils with Autism and complex communication needs.
- Develop, review, and quality assure specialist curriculum frameworks, including Long Term Plans (LTPs), pathway-specific curriculum models, and Schemes of Learning (SOLs), ensuring they are coherently sequenced, developmentally appropriate, and consistently implemented.
- Ensure curriculum prioritises and enables development of:
  - Communication, including expressive and receptive communication
  - Social communication and interaction
  - Emotional regulation and co-regulation
  - Engagement and participation in learning
  - Independence and functional life skills
  - Attention, focus, and readiness to learn
  - Personal Development, including self-awareness, safety, and participation
- Ensure adherence to curriculum plans, reflecting clear developmental progression and are appropriately structured to support pupils working significantly below age-related expectations, including pupils who are pre-verbal or minimally verbal.
- Ensure curriculum implementation reflects evidence-based specialist practice, including structured teaching approaches, communication-focused environments, and Autism-informed pedagogy.
- Ensure curriculum is appropriately structured, sequenced, and adapted without limiting ambition or long-term developmental outcomes.
- Ensure consistency of curriculum planning, specialist teaching approaches, routines, and communication-supportive environments.
- Support staff in implementing specialist curriculum plans effectively, ensuring provision enables meaningful engagement, communication development, and readiness for learning.

## 3) Communication-focused provision and specialist practice

- Ensure communication development is central to all Nurture provision.
- Support the school to implement effective communication approaches, including:
  - Total Communication approaches
  - Visual communication systems
  - Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC), including PECS and other AAC systems
  - Structured communication environments
  - Explicit communication teaching
- Ensure classrooms are structured to support communication, predictability, engagement, and safety.
- Support staff to understand behaviour as communication and respond appropriately.

#### **4) Teaching, learning, and specialist practice improvement**

- Evaluate and improve specialist teaching practice across Nurture provision through:
  - Lesson visits and learning walks
  - Work and learning evidence reviews
  - Observation of engagement and communication
  - Coaching and mentoring staff
- Ensure teaching reflects specialist best practice, including:
  - Structured teaching approaches
  - Predictable routines
  - Visual supports
  - Clear communication modelling
  - Appropriate scaffolding
  - Effective adult support and interaction
- Support staff in understanding how to enable pupils to engage meaningfully in learning.

#### **5) Personal Development, engagement, and readiness for learning**

- Ensure provision enables pupils to develop emotional regulation and self-regulation.
- Ensure pupils develop independence and functional skills.
- Ensure provision supports readiness for learning and sustained engagement.
- Ensure pupils develop skills necessary for participation in school and wider life.

#### **6) Quality assurance and evaluation**

- Support the Nurture SIP with consistent quality assurance processes.
- Evaluate quality and impact of provision.
- Produce detailed evaluation reports for the SIP Nurture.
- Ensure clear action planning and follow-up.
- Support the school in preparing for Ofsted inspections.

#### **7) Leadership development and capacity building**

- Support and develop staff responsible for Nurture provision.
- Coach and mentor teachers and support staff.
- Deliver specialist training and professional development.
- Build leadership capacity across schools.

#### **8) Organisational leadership and collaboration**

- Work closely with the SIP and Headteacher to implement the SED education strategy.
- Work collaboratively with the MDT.
- Contribute to organisational development and improvement.

# Person Specification

## Essential

### Leadership experience

- Significant leadership experience in a specialist SEND school, specialist provision, or equivalent setting.
- Experience leading provision for pupils with Autism and complex needs.
- Proven track record of improving specialist provision.

### Specialist expertise in Autism and complex communication needs (Non-negotiable.)

- Extensive experience working with pupils with Autism.
- Extensive experience working with pupils with complex communication needs.
- Strong expertise in communication development strategies.
- Strong expertise in specialist Autism teaching approaches.
- Strong understanding of Alternative and Augmentative Communication systems.

### Teaching and curriculum expertise

- Strong understanding of specialist curriculum design and implementation.
- Strong understanding of engagement, regulation, and readiness for learning.
- Strong understanding of specialist teaching practice.

### School improvement capability

- Experience evaluating provision and improving quality.
- Experience coaching and developing staff.
- Ability to identify priorities and implement improvement strategies.

### Professional skills and attributes

- Excellent leadership and influencing skills.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Ability to operate across multiple schools.
- High levels of professionalism and organisation.
- Strong commitment to improving outcomes for pupils with complex needs.

## Desirable

- Experience working across multiple schools or within a MAT or group.
- Experience supporting Ofsted inspections.
- Relevant specialist qualifications or training.

## Safeguarding

Serenity Education Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. All appointments are subject to enhanced DBS and satisfactory references.