



SPA SCHOOL CAMBERWELL

HEADTEACHER APPLICATION PACK



WHERE PUPILS ARE HAPPY SAFE HEALTHY
AND READY FOR THE FUTURE

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WELCOME FROM THE EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER

Dear Candidate, Thank you for your interest in the Headteacher position at Spa School Camberwell. We provide a specialist, high-quality education for autistic pupils aged 4 to 16. As part of the Spa Education Trust, our school is built on a foundation of expertise, compassion, and ambition, ensuring that every pupil receives the support they need to thrive academically, socially and emotionally. In this way, we work together to achieve our vision of ensuring that every pupil is happy, safe, healthy and ready for the future. We are very proud of our school. It is a place where pupils feel safe, valued, and engaged. With exemplary behaviour and attitudes, recognised as 'Outstanding' in our last Ofsted inspection, our students benefit from a structured, well-planned learning environment that fosters confidence, independence, and lifelong learning. We are committed to developing communication and interaction skills, ensuring that every pupil is equipped for their future. We are now seeking an inspirational and dynamic Headteacher to lead our school into its next exciting chapter. The successful candidate will be a visionary leader, passionate about autism education, and dedicated to enhancing opportunities for autistic pupils, who are the most important members of our school community. With a strong, collaborative team, a well-designed curriculum and a supportive community, this is a unique opportunity to make a lasting impact in our school. Our pupils also have a clear vision of what will make a truly inspirational leader for their school. When asked, they told us that a really good Headteacher would be one who:

'Knows a lot about the things we learn.'
'Understands other people's needs.'
'Helps us understand how we change.'
'Keeps an eye on all the people.'
'Does endless paperwork!'

If you feel you could meet the high expectations of our pupils, and if you share our values, ambition, and commitment to improving the life chances of young people, we would love to hear from you. This is a unique opportunity for an outstanding and ambitious school leader. We would be delighted to welcome you to tour our very special school and to receive your application for this exciting post.

Steph Lea
Executive Headteacher



VISION AND VALUES



“ Leaders have established clear values and expectations, ensuring a positive school culture. ”

Ofsted 2023

Our Vision

SpaSchool Camberwell is a happy and vibrant community made up of pupils, families, staff and governors, all working together to provide an excellent education for autistic pupils.

Spa School Camberwell's aims are that all students:

- Are happy, safe and healthy
- Learn and achieve at every level
- Develop independence, self-advocacy and communication skills
- Are ready for the future

Our Aims

At Spa SchoolCamberwell, we all recognise that our pupils are the most important members of our community.

As a result, our team of skilful, dedicated and committed staff work together with our families on our three core aims:

- To support each pupil's learning and development
- To help each pupil to transition to the next stage of learning
- To encourage each pupil to be an active member of the local and wider community

VISION AND VALUES

“ Staff know their pupils very well and relationships are warm and positive. ”

Ofsted 2023

Our Ethos and Values

We are very proud when visitors to Spa School Camberwell tell us that our ethos is palpable from the moment they enter our buildings, as all members of staff work hard to nurture an ethos based on our core values of **Kindness** and **Respect**.

All members of our community are expected to bring these values into work each and every day. We are friendly and patient with one another, especially when there are challenges, and we demonstrate strong empathy with all our pupils by trying to see the world through their eyes. This is the ethos we will expect our new school leader to nurture. As a member of our Student Council put it, 'A really good Headteacher understands other people's needs.'

We have very high expectations of one another. At Spa School Camberwell all staff are expected to share a commitment to:

- Always put the interests of the pupil first
- Maintain high standards and a rigorous approach
- Work collaboratively with each other
- Have high expectations for all pupils
- Develop and extend a deep understanding of autism
- Know what outstanding learning is and how to deliver it

Behaviour is recognised by Ofsted to be outstanding as a result of the culture which is embedded across the school. Pupils' conduct round the school, and when interacting with one another and with staff, was described by the inspectors as 'exemplary'.

“ Spa School is doing fantastic with my child and my child is happy going into school every day. ”

Parent 2024

Pupil Happiness and Wellbeing

All staff work hard to achieve our vision for every pupil at Spa School Camberwell to be happy, safe and healthy. It is important to us all that our pupils are helped to make and sustain friendships, enjoy their learning and develop their own individual interests.

VISION AND VALUES

“ Pupils enjoy coming to this school...they like their lessons and the teachers and the other adults that help them. ”

Ofsted 2023

We value each pupil as a unique person, and we find time to celebrate their achievements so that they can each shine as an individual. We have developed a strong culture of learning and thriving, celebrating achievement and fostering individual talents.

Achieving Individual Potential

At Spa School Camberwell, we are fortunate to offer a rich and ambitious curriculum designed especially for autistic pupils. Teaching is adapted to meet the learning needs and style of the individual pupil. Staff provide personalised teaching in all subjects. Mathematics, reading, communication and writing form part of the core curriculum offer, with a wide range of other subjects and activities to personalise the curriculum to each individual need.

Our enrichment curriculum offers a wide range of activities to develop character, resilience and the confidence to live independently. Such activities include representation on the Student Council, age-appropriate access to activities such as learning to travel and to go shopping with independence, and Work Experience.

The enrichment curriculum develops

independence and important life skills within and outside the school, as well as fostering self-advocacy. This strength was recognised in our last Ofsted inspection when inspectors noted that the curriculum ‘develops pupils’ social and communication needs as well as their progress in academic subjects.’ Consequently, we are very proud to offer a curriculum which has been developed to ensure that each and every pupil is ‘ready for the future.’



“ Leaders provide a wide range of trips, visits and other activities which support pupils’ personal development. ”

Ofsted 2023

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Spa School Camberwell is a special all through school for autistic pupils aged 4 to 16, rated as 'Good' by Ofsted in our last inspection of January 2023. We continually reflect on and evaluate our provision to ensure pupils flourish beyond inspection frameworks. The school opened in 2020 and, owing to our success and reputation, pupil numbers have increased each year and have now reached capacity. The school is part of Spa Education Trust. We work in close partnership with Spa Bermondsey, our special school for autistic pupils aged 11-19. Everything about Spa School Camberwell has been designed specifically to meet the needs of autistic pupils. We have a beautiful building at the heart of our vibrant local community, as well as a rich and engaging curriculum, which is carefully planned to meet the individual needs of each student.

Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is rich and ambitious and has been carefully developed for autistic pupils who have an Education and Health Care Plan. Content is carefully tailored and sequenced in each Key Stage with distinct differences between the EYFS, primary and secondary phases. There is a thematic approach in the primary curriculum, with increased subject specialism through subsequent Key Stages. Accredited courses are offered to match individual ability and need.

Staff are trained in specialist approaches to meet communication and interaction needs and to include specialised therapeutic content. Staff adapt lesson planning to include personalised targets in English, number and communication, and plan for personalised learning objectives in all lessons.



“

The curriculum is well-designed, focusing on both academic progress and social communication skills.

”

Ofsted 2023

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL



“ An appropriate, structured phonics programme is in place to help pupils read fluently... the curriculum for mathematics is particularly well thought out and implemented.

Ofsted 2023

”

Our curriculum includes a wide range of enrichment activities which allow each pupil to follow individualised interests and to develop confidence for life outside school. These include activities such as yoga and dance. Furthermore, pupils benefit from opportunities to learn in the community as well as on residential trips. We also offer projects with external partners such as The Globe Theatre, The Young Vic Theatre, The Royal Academy of Dance and The Museum of London.

In addition, pupils benefit from integrated speech and language therapy, individual sensory programmes and personalised behaviour support programmes.

Our pupils' progress is assessed against individualised targets and goals. We strive to meet the personalised needs of each individual student. Our classes have an average of 7 to 8 pupils with a high level of staff support.

Our Learning Spaces

At Spa School Camberwell, a great deal of careful thought has gone into the design of our learning spaces. Our school is housed in a beautifully renovated Victorian building which had a brand-new extension in 2020. All of the spaces are light, airy and well maintained. Primary and secondary pupils have many separate facilities including entrances to the building and outdoor play spaces

“ The school environment is carefully planned to meet pupils' needs and to help them develop key skills.

Ofsted 2023

”

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

The learning environment has been specially designed to provide the right balance of security, independence and challenge for our pupils. Our facilities include the provision of small group rooms, a library, an assembly hall with panoramic views of the city, and a dining room. In addition, we offer specialist rooms for teaching cooking, drama, art, music and science.

Our outdoor spaces support our pupils' self-regulation and sensory regulation with the provision of landscaped grounds which feature: low level seating for social times; lovely gardens designated for horticultural activities; and sports areas and outdoor play and gym equipment. The site is a quiet and tranquil place offering calm in the busyness of south London.

Each classroom has been planned and adapted to meet the sensory needs of the pupils. Each space has a consistent layout to encourage independence and is divided into different areas using low level cupboards, screens and furniture to support transition between activities.

Blinds and low energy lighting are used for even light coverage to support pupils who may be sensitive to light, and primary classrooms lead directly onto designated outside learning spaces.



KEY INFORMATION

Status	Academy Free School
Last Ofsted	January 2023
Ofsted Judgement	Good
Year established	2020
Type of school	Special
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Appropriate authority	Spa Education Trust
Location	Southwark
Age range	4 to 16
Number of pupils on roll	113
Proportion of pupils with SEND	100%
Proportion of pupils with EHCP	100%
School Website	www.spa-education.org

WHAT DO OUR PUPILS SAY ABOUT SPA SCHOOL CAMBERWELL?



“ Pupils enjoy coming to this school. Everyone works together to make sure that pupils are happy, safe and getting ready for their future. *Ofsted 2023* ”

At Spa School Camberwell, our team works with dedication and skill every day to ensure that all of our students are happy, safe and ready for the future. We have an active student council whose members speak very highly of our school and express the view that 'Spa Camberwell is great' because:

“ *The work we do challenges me.* ”

“ *People listen to my ideas and think they are important.* ”

“ *We have fun lessons like cooking, PE, and drama and trips to look forward to.* ”

“ *Spa Camberwell is great because we learn.* ”

“ *I can talk to adults when I feel upset.* ”

“ *I feel successful in lessons.* ”

“ *I learn to be a good and positive person.* ”

“ *I get to do important preparation for growing up.* ”



WHAT DO OUR PARENTS SAY ABOUT SPA SCHOOL CAMBERWELL?

Each year, we ask families to complete our survey. The feedback from these important stakeholders is overwhelmingly positive, as some of the very typical comments below indicate:

“ The school is caring and cares for my child’s wellbeing. ”

“ The school shows a high level of commitment. ”

“ Parents have great feedback on how my child is doing on a day to day basis, which is good if your child is not explaining themselves and also gives information about what the children are learning over the term. ”

“ You are helping our children to achieve and helping parents with all kinds of information about our children and also how to help. ”

“ The school is continually evolving. ”

“ The school provides clear communication with parents, listening to our concerns and offering support and solutions. Teaching is good. All staff are very friendly. ”

“ The school provides a very unique way of teaching our children and supporting parents. It is unlike many other schools and stands out above many. ”

“ We appreciate the support and emphasis the school places on independence and can see the difference already. ”

“ Spa School is doing fantastic with my child and my child is happy going into school every day. ”



“ Creating a school where children are happy and accepted for who they are. ”

Ofsted 2023

SPA SCHOOL CAMBERWELL HEADTEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION

Employed by:	Spa School Camberwell
Job title:	Headteacher
Responsible to:	Executive Headteacher
Salary:	L24 £100,951 – L29 £112,823

The Trust recognises this as a pivotal leadership role and is committed to offering strong support, professional development and appropriate challenge to the successful candidate. **Our recruitment processes follow the guidance in the DfE document Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education. All staff will be required to undertake a disclosure from the Disclosure & Barring Service.**

Strategic Leadership

- Lead the development of the school through the production of strategic improvement plans based on robust self-evaluation of the school's performance
- Communicate the strategic vision for the future of the school effectively to the Executive Headteacher and all stakeholders
- Model the vision and values consistently in everyday work and practice

Organisational Management

- Day to day management of the school including pupils, staff, resources and premises
- Ensure all policies and procedures, including Safeguarding and Health and Safety, are fully adhered to
- Produce and implement school improvement plans and policies
- Ensure that policies and practices take account of national and local initiatives
- Work with the Executive Headteacher to manage the school's financial and human resources effectively and efficiently
- Work with the Executive Headteacher and Finance Manager to ensure budgets are set and managed within policies agreed

Implement Trust and DfE policies and strategies (e.g. in relation to compliance, finance, HR and IT)

Manage and organise the school environment ensuring it meets the needs of the curriculum, health and safety regulations and reflects the distinctive characteristics of a special school for autistic pupils

- Ensure that health and safety policies are fully implemented and managed
- Ensure that effective safeguarding strategies, systems and support are in place work with relevant agencies

SPA SCHOOL CAMBERWELL HEADTEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION

- Maintain the highest possible standards of Safeguarding acting as the Designated Lead
- Develop strong and effective partnerships with pupils, parents and the broader community, including local organisations and schools

Leading Learning & Teaching

- Develop a shared expectation of outstanding teaching and learning for autistic pupils
- Lead collaborative CPD so all learn from the very best each has to offer
- Demonstrate and develop best practice in curriculum design and development for primary and secondary aged autistic pupils
- Demonstrate and lead best practice approaches to positive Behaviour Support matched to the needs of autistic pupils
- Coordinate a planned annual cycle of assessment, monitoring, evaluation and reporting
- Ensure a consistent and continuous school wide focus on pupil achievement using data and benchmarks to monitor progress
- Coordinate the analysis and interpretation of information on pupil progress to inform planning for improvement
- Develop relevant strategies for improvement



Leading & Managing Staff

- Support and maintain the ethos and culture of the Trust, promoting staff wellbeing and the highest standards of courtesy and mutual respect
- Recruit, retain and deploy staff appropriately, managing their workload to achieve the vision and goals of the school
- Develop and maintain effective strategies and procedures for staff induction
- Promote and coordinate professional development for all staff in line with the school / trust improvement plans
- Implement successful appraisal processes for all staff
- Deal effectively with underperformance, in line with relevant policies
- Develop the school leadership team, reflecting the Trust vision and values

SPA SCHOOL CAMBERWELL HEADTEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION

- Encourage initiative, teamwork and the development of leadership across the trust
- Regularly review own practice, set personal targets and take responsibility for own personal development

Accountability

The Headteacher is accountable to the Executive Head Teacher, Local Governing Body, Trustees, and will also engage with key stakeholders including parents/carers and the broader school community.

- Create and maintain an effective partnership with parents and carers to support and improve pupils' achievement and personal development
- Create and implement positive strategies for promoting equality, for challenging prejudice and for dealing with harassment
- Present and deliver regular monitoring reports to the Executive Headteacher
- Develop systematic procedures for school self-evaluation and use the outcomes of evaluation to further improve the school
- Develop and present coherent and accurate accounts of school performance to a range of audiences including the Executive Team, Board of Trustees, Academy Committee and parents and carers
- Meet all statutory reporting requirements including attendance, behaviour and safeguarding
- Coordinate the school website and ensure compliance
- Maintain detailed understanding of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and maintain a range of strategies to demonstrate the school's achievements
- Ensure individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, understood and met

Other

The range of responsibilities listed above is not exhaustive and is subject to change at the direction of the Executive Head Teacher.



HEADTEACHER PERSON SPECIFICATION

	CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	HOW ASSESSED?
1	Qualifications/Training			
1.1	Qualified Teacher Status	X		A
1.2	National Professional Qualification for Headteachers		X	A
2	Experience			
2.1	Track record of delivering excellent teaching in a special school Senior leadership position in a school for autistic pupils	X		A, R
2.2	pupils Experience of working with autistic pupils	X		A
2.3	Developing and monitoring School Improvement Plans leading to discernible impact	X		A
2.4	Leading staff development	X		A, R
2.5	Proven success in developing curriculum	X		A
2.6	Management of support staff	X		A, R
2.7	Day to day operational management in a school setting		X	A
2.8	Leadership role in the Ofsted inspection process Leading through coaching and mentoring	X		A
2.9	Leadership experience in a primary setting		X	A
2.10	Knowledge and Understanding	X		A
2.11	A thorough understanding of successful strategies for teaching autistic pupils		X	A
3				
3.1		X		A, I

Key: A = Application Form, I = Interview, R = References

HEADTEACHER PERSON SPECIFICATION

	CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	HOW ASSESSED?
3.2	Secure knowledge of curriculum best practice for autistic pupils	X		I
3.3	An understanding of effective strategies for developing the quality of teaching and improving pupil outcomes	X		I
3.4	Ability to analyse and use data to improve educational outcomes	X		I
3.5	An understanding of positive behaviour support and the needs of autistic pupils Knowledge of current education legislation, national	X		I
3.6	initiatives and strategies Thorough understanding of safeguarding best		X	I
3.7	practice, policies, and statutory requirements	X		I
4	Skills and Qualities			
4.1	Ability to inspire, motivate and train staff	X		I, R
4.2	Ability to actively engage parents and carers from all communities and communicate positively with them	X		I, R
4.3	Excellent organisational skills and a proven ability to prioritise tasks effectively Ability to work under pressure with enthusiasm and	X		I, R
4.4	dynamism Commitment to pupil happiness and well-being and	X		R
4.5	a commitment to all pupils succeeding Excellent communication skills	X		I
4.6	Optimism, resilience and a sense of humour	X		A, I, R
4.7		X		I, R

Key: A = Application Form, I = Interview, R = References



ADVERT FOR THE POST

Spa School Camberwell: Headteacher

Pay: L24 £100,951 – L29 £112,823

Responsible to: The Executive Headteacher

Status: Full time / Permanent

Spa School Camberwell is a special school for autistic pupils aged 4-16. The school opened in 2020 and has grown year on year. Owing to our reputation and success, the school is now at full capacity with classes in all key stages.

Our pupils are happy, safe and healthy. They make great progress and there is a strong focus on learning. Our staff are committed to making sure all our pupils have the best opportunities in everything we offer. They are committed to professional development and are well supported. The Trust is seeking to recruit an inspirational Headteacher to lead the school forward in the next stages of development. This is a unique leadership opportunity to build on the excellent foundations in place.

The successful candidate will:

- have a clear vision and strategy for the development of the school
- have outstanding senior leadership experience in a special school
- have an excellent understanding of the high-quality autism education
- demonstrate a commitment to our vision
- be committed to offering the best opportunities for our pupils and their families
- have the skills to inspire and motivate pupils, families, staff and the broader school community.

Applicants for the post must have senior leadership experience in special education.

Visits to the school are encouraged prior to application. Optional group visits are offered on either **Wednesday January 28th 2026 9.30am or Wednesday January 28th 2026 at 4.30pm**

Please email our HR Manager at recruitment@spa-education.org to make an appointment.

Completed application forms, including personal statements, must be sent to:

recruitment@spa-education.org by Monday 2nd February 2026 at noon
Interviews will take place on Thursday 12th February 2026.

Please note the further information provided in the How to Apply section of the candidate pack available on the school website.

The Trust acknowledges the importance of the role of the Headteacher and will actively offer long term support, encouragement, CPD and realistic challenge to the successful candidate.

The Trust welcomes applications regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity or religion.

HOW TO APPLY

Thank you for your interest in Spa School Camberwell. Trustees and governors look forward to receiving your application. Please apply by completing the school's application form available on the school's website at <https://spa-education.org/vacancies>

As part of the application, you are requested to submit a personal statement of no more than 1000 words stating clearly how your knowledge, skills and experience meet the criteria set out in the person specification, which will be assessed in the application (**identified with A**). Applicants must complete all sections of the application form in full. Incomplete applications will not be considered for shortlisting.

Your completed application form, including your personal statement, must be sent to: recruitment@spa-education.org by **Monday February 2nd 2026 at noon**.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS	Noon on Monday 2 nd February 2026
SHORTLISTING	Week Commencing Monday 2nd February 2026
SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES	Invited to interview by Friday 6 th February 2026
INTERVIEWS	Thursday 12th February 2026

References will be taken up shortly after shortlisting and prior to interview using the contact details supplied on your application form.

Further information about Spa Camberwell can be found on the school's website spa-camberwell.org

Visits to the school are encouraged prior to application. Optional group visits are offered on either

Wednesday January 28th 2026 at 9.30am or Wednesday January 28th 2026 at 4.30pm

Please email our HR Manager at recruitment@spa-education.org to make an appointment.

If you would like to find out more about this exciting opportunity, or if you are unable to make one of the school visits above, please email for an informal conversation to:

Steph Lea - Executive Headteacher at slea@spa-education.org

The Spa Education Trust welcomes applications regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity or religion.