

Headteacher vacancy

The St. Christopher School

Mountdale Gardens, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 4AW
www.thestchristopherschool.co.uk



Headteacher

Group 7 - L28-34
From September 2026

Closing date: 20th April
Shortlisting: 21st April
Interviews 27th/28th April

NURTURE

EMPOWER

INSPIRE





Headteacher required for September 2026

A letter from the CEO-Designate

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the post of Headteacher at The St. Christopher School.

The St. Christopher School does something genuinely special. Our pupils — aged 3 to 19 with Autism Spectrum Disorder and co-existing conditions — arrive with complex needs and extraordinary potential. The staff who work here are among the most skilled, committed, and creative educators I have encountered. The families who trust us with their children do so because they know we take that responsibility seriously.

We are part of SEN Trust Southend, a growing Multi-Academy Trust of four special schools in Southend-on-Sea. As CEO-Designate, I am determined to build a Trust where headteachers are genuinely supported, professionally challenged, and given the freedom to lead their schools with real autonomy. This appointment is one of the most important we will make.

We are looking for someone who is ready for the full weight of headship — the accountability, the complexity, and the privilege. Someone who will lead The St. Christopher School with the same care and ambition that our pupils deserve. Someone who understands that in a specialist SEND school, every day matters and every decision has real consequences for children whose lives depend on getting it right.

If that sounds like you, I hope you will apply. I would encourage you to visit the school before you do — not because we expect you to, but because once you have spent time with our pupils and staff, I am confident you will want to be part of what we are building here.

I look forward to reading your application.

Yours sincerely,

Dan Woodman CEO-Designate, SEN Trust Southend



About Us

The St. Christopher School is one of Southend's most established and respected special schools. Located in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, we serve approximately 262 pupils aged 3 to 19 with Autism Spectrum Disorder and co-existing conditions. Many of our pupils are at early cognitive developmental stages, with unique communication needs that require specialist, highly adaptive teaching every single day.

We don't just teach — we transform lives. Families trust us with their most vulnerable children. Staff come to us because they want to work somewhere that genuinely makes a difference. And our pupils inspire us to be better educators every single day.



SEN Trust Southend

SEN Trust Southend

SEN Trust Southend is a Multi-Academy Trust serving children and young people with a wide range of special educational needs across Southend-on-Sea and the surrounding area.

Together, our schools serve approximately 650 pupils and employ around 400 staff. We also operate Christopher's Cottage, a short breaks and respite centre for children and young people across Southend.

We believe that being part of a Trust should make headship better, not more bureaucratic. Our headteachers work together, share practice, and support each other through a genuinely collaborative professional community. Central team support covers HR, finance, governance, and IT — freeing headteachers to focus on leading their schools.



The St. Christopher School
ASD 3-19



St. Nicholas
Complex needs 11-16



LANCASTER
SCHOOL

Lancaster School
Severe and Profound &
Multiple Learning
Difficulties | Ages 11-19



Kingsdown School
Severe and Profound &
Multiple Learning
Difficulties | Ages 3-11

NURTURE

We cultivate trusting, compassionate relationships with pupils, staff and families

EMPOWER

We develop potential — enabling every pupil and colleague to grow and flourish

INSPIRE

We lead with optimism and belief in what every young person can achieve

The Role

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

Job title	Headteacher
School	The St. Christopher School, Mountdale Gardens, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 4AW
Trust	SEN Trust Southend
Salary	L28–L34 (Headteacher Group 7) — dependent on experience
Contract	Permanent, full-time
Start date	September 2026



Role Overview

The Headteacher is the strategic and operational leader of The St. Christopher School. You will hold full accountability for the school's educational standards, culture, safeguarding, and operational effectiveness. This is a genuine headship with real autonomy — the CEO provides strategic oversight and challenge, but the day-to-day leadership of the school, its staff, and its pupils rests with you.

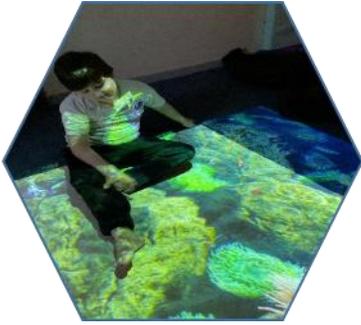
You will also be a core member of SEN Trust Southend's Headteachers Group, contributing to trust-wide strategy and peer collaboration across all four schools.

Strategic Leadership and Vision

- Lead the development and implementation of the school's vision, ethos, and strategic priorities
- Build a positive, inclusive school culture reflecting the Trust's values: Nurture, Empower, Inspire
- Contribute to trust-wide strategy through the MAT Headteachers Group
- Engage effectively with the Local Governing Body, providing clear evidence-based reporting
- Lead rigorous self-evaluation and maintain a high-quality School Improvement Plan

Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

- Ensure the curriculum is ambitious and appropriately adapted to meet complex SEND needs
- Drive high expectations for pupil progress, using data to identify and address underperformance
- Promote evidence-based, adaptive teaching including AAC, PECS, and augmentative communication
- Oversee EHCP quality, ensuring outcomes are ambitious and Annual Reviews are conducted to a high standard
- Monitor teaching quality through regular observations, learning walks, and progress reviews



Safeguarding and Pupil Wellbeing

- Act as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), ensuring all policies, procedures, and training are in place
- Ensure the school meets all statutory requirements under Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Embed a therapeutic, trauma-informed approach to behaviour and pupil wellbeing
- Maintain strong multi-agency relationships around vulnerable pupils



Staff Leadership and Development

- Recruit, retain, and develop a high-quality staff team of approximately 100 people
- Conduct or oversee performance management, setting ambitious objectives and holding staff to account
- Support staff wellbeing proactively, recognising the demands of a specialist SEND environment
- Line-manage senior leaders within the school, providing regular coaching and professional challenge



Operations, Finance and Governance

- Manage the school's delegated budget, ensuring resources are deployed to maximise impact
- Work with the Trust CFO to produce accurate budget forecasts and monitor expenditure
- Oversee site management, ensuring health and safety requirements are met
- Attend and report to the Local Governing Body; support trustees to fulfil their functions effectively
- Ensure compliance with all statutory reporting requirements including Ofsted and DfE obligations



Person Specification — Headteacher

E = Essential D = Desirable

Criterion	E	D
QUALIFICATIONS		
Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)	✓	
Degree-level qualification	✓	
NPQH or equivalent senior leadership qualification		✓
DSL trained (or willingness to complete training on appointment)	✓	
DSL experience in a substantive leadership role		✓
EXPERIENCE		
Substantial experience as a Headteacher, Deputy Head, or Assistant Head	✓	
Current or recent headship experience		✓
Experience working with pupils with autism, SLD, PMLD, or complex needs	✓	
Experience across multiple SEND designations		✓
Proven track record of improving teaching, learning, and outcomes	✓	
Experience leading a school through Ofsted inspection		✓
Experience managing a delegated school budget	✓	
Experience working within or alongside a Multi-Academy Trust		✓
Effective working with a governing body or board of trustees	✓	
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING		
Strong working knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice and EHCP processes	✓	
Deep understanding of effective SEND pedagogy and adaptive teaching (AAC, PECS, augmentative communication)	✓	
Up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding legislation including KCSIE	✓	
Knowledge of therapeutic thinking, trauma-informed practice, or Positive Behaviour Support		✓
Ability to interpret and act on pupil progress data in a specialist SEND context	✓	

SKILLS AND ABILITIES		
Ability to articulate and implement a compelling vision for a specialist school	✓	
Demonstrated ability to lead, motivate, and develop a diverse staff team	✓	
Excellent written and verbal communication with families, agencies, and governors	✓	
Ability to analyse complex data to drive school improvement	✓	
Ability to work constructively within a MAT, balancing school autonomy with shared accountability	✓	
PERSONAL QUALITIES		
Genuine passion for SEND education and belief that every pupil can achieve	✓	
Ability to remain calm, positive, and effective under sustained pressure	✓	
High ethical standards and transparent, honest approach to leadership	✓	
Works generously with colleagues, sharing practice and supporting others	✓	
Holds high expectations for pupils, staff, and self regardless of starting points	✓	

The St. Christopher School is not an ordinary school. And we're not looking for an ordinary Headteacher.

Our pupils face challenges that most people will never fully understand — and they meet them every day with courage, humour, and a determination that will change how you think about teaching. The staff who support them are among the most dedicated professionals you will find anywhere in education.

What they need is a Headteacher who feels the weight of that and is energised by it. Someone who will fight for every child, back every member of staff, and know that the work they do genuinely changes lives.

If that's you, we'd love to hear from you. Come and visit. Have a conversation. See what makes this school — and these young people — so special.

We hope you'll apply.



The St. Christopher School

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