



Headteacher Recruitment Pack



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Welcome from Chair of Governors

Thank you for taking the time to consider applying for the role of Headteacher at Watlington Primary School. This is a fantastic opportunity to lead a vibrant and ambitious school with a strong enthusiasm for learning and a commitment to continual improvement.

We are at the heart of the local community in Watlington, a small village in the south of Oxfordshire. We have a passionate team focused on providing the best possible learning experiences for every child, ensuring an outstanding education in its widest sense.

Our children are motivated and engaged in their learning, our staff are an experienced and collaborative team, and our governing body is forward-looking, supportive and fully committed to the school's continued development.

We are looking for a Headteacher who can work in partnership with our children, staff, governors, parents and wider community to lead the school into the next phase of its development with drive, energy and passion, while maintaining the core values and vision of the school.

At our most recent Ofsted inspection, the school achieved three 'Good' judgements and two 'Outstanding' judgements. We are very proud of this outcome, which reflects our commitment to providing exceptional learning and pastoral care for all children.

We believe that schools are always developing and improving, and we are seeking a candidate who can bring experience, vision and ambition to make a real difference for our wonderful children and staff. If this sounds like the kind of challenge you are looking for, we would be delighted to welcome you to visit the school and see for yourself what makes it so special.

We have a number of exciting initiatives underway, including work with Voice 21, Steplab and Rights Respecting Schools, and we look forward to welcoming a new leader who will shape the next chapter of Watlington's journey.

We have put together this pack to give you an overview of the school's current context. If you have any questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We look forward to meeting you.

Mat Van de Pette
Chair of Governors

Introducing Watlington School

Watlington Primary School, Love Lane, Watlington, Oxon, OX49 5RB
<http://www.watlington.oxon.sch.uk>



Watlington Primary School is a thriving rural primary school with 230 pupils on roll, including 25 children in our excellent nursery provision. The majority of our three and four-year-olds in nursery continue into Reception, reflecting the strong start we provide for our youngest learners.

Our motto, '**Bright Futures**', underpinned by our values '**Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Resilient**' are at the heart of our school.

Our vision sets out high aspirations for every pupil:

- We are a child-centred, caring and motivational school.
- We support each other in a spirit of openness and inclusivity.
- We work with integrity to ensure all children have the skills they need to achieve their ambitions.

Our most recent Ofsted inspection in 2024 resulted in a very positive outcome, including two Outstanding judgements. We are proud of this achievement, but not complacent, recognising that there is always more to do to continue developing and improving the school.

The original primary school was established in Watlington in 1874. In February 2000, we relocated to our current purpose-built accommodation, which is situated on a shared site with Icknield Community College and Rainbow Corner Day Nursery. This provides valuable opportunities for collaboration and transition.

The school benefits from excellent facilities, including eight well designed classrooms, a dedicated Foundation Stage unit, a large sports hall and a multi-purpose/music room. There are separate library areas for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils. The entire site is fully accessible, with adaptations to support wheelchair users throughout.

We also have extensive outdoor provision, including a large playing field and specially resourced play areas for each phase. These include an allotment, pond area, outdoor gym and climbing equipment, supporting both learning and wellbeing.



Our pupils come from a range of backgrounds: 16% are eligible for Pupil Premium funding, and 6% have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average at 13%, and the number of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (8 pupils) is also in line with national figures.

Inclusion is central to our values and is embedded within our adaptive curriculum. We have developed an innovative provision, 'The Nest', which supports a small number of pupils with significant additional needs. These pupils access mainstream lessons while also receiving targeted support within The Nest to ensure they are able to succeed and thrive.

Our School Community

Watlington Primary School has a staff team who are enthusiastic, inspirational, dedicated and hardworking, planning exciting learning experiences for all children. Teachers work closely in year groups and within Key Stages and are very supportive of each other across the entire school.

As a result of our team work and dedication, our children achieve high academic standards, which are reflected in our results. Our EYFS, KS1 and KS2 data matches, or surpasses, local and national outcomes for reading, writing and maths.

At Watlington, each individual child's social, emotional, moral and cultural development is as highly valued as the development of their academic, sporting, musical or artistic skills. This prepares the children well for life in secondary school and beyond. We celebrate the successes and achievements of our children both academically and socially.



We value the positive relationships with our pupils' families and encourage collaboration between home and school. Furthermore, our school maintains positive links to the local community, participating in numerous local and national events.

The Governing Body

Our Governors are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds with a variety of skills and experience, which they offer generously.

Governors are active in the development of the school and are committed to a culture of continuous improvement, understanding that the school's aims for improvement are just as important to our community as the need to meet any external requirements and standards.

Parents

The school enjoys strong parental and community support. Parents are encouraged to visit the school through events such as family assemblies, whole school open mornings and subject-specific 'WOW' events which provide opportunities for parents to get involved with the work their children are doing in school. We are fortunate to have a number of regular volunteers, who support our library, allotment, pond and clubs.



The PTA

The school PTA provides much-needed funding to enhance provision in our school including contributing to payments for laptops, music tuition, outdoor equipment and supporting trips and visits for vulnerable families. In addition, they have an innovative approach to fundraising events over the year, including 21-day challenges, colour runs and an upcoming circus planned for October.

Finance

Like many primary schools, the school faces increasing budgetary pressures, but the school is in a good financial position.

Progress and Attainment

Children at Watlington make strong starts in Early Years and we build on this as they move through the school, closely monitoring their progress.

We pride ourselves on consistently performing in-line with or above the national average for both progress and attainment throughout statutory assessment points.

Our current whole school focus on Oracy has improved children's achievements across the curriculum. We are also working on developing our mastery approaches within mathematics.



Our last Ofsted Inspection took place in 2024 and resulted in a strong outcome including two outstanding judgements for behaviour and attitudes and our Early Years provision.

"Pupils have a strong shared understanding of the school's values of 'be respectful, be resilient and be responsible. As a result, pupils treat each other very well. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong because staff know them well."

"The school has high ambition for all pupils. Staff have a detailed understanding of how to develop every pupil to be successful in their education."



What Children Say About Watlington School

Watlington Primary School is an exciting place to start your education, as a result of the engaging lessons, activities, visits and after school clubs that the teachers plan. The children are offered a wide-ranging, stimulating and nurturing environment in which to grow, as demonstrated in their comments:

“Our teachers encourage us to talk aloud, share their ideas and push our learning forwards.” (Year 6 Pupil)

“We know that we will come to school and will have a really fun day.”
(Year 3 Pupil)

“Everyone has a fair opportunity to participate in everything.”
(Year 6 Pupil)

“I like how you can be yourself and share your personality.”
(Year 5 Pupil)

“There are always lots of exciting things going on.”
(Year 2 Pupil)



About Acer Trust

Watlington Primary School is part of a strong and supportive Trust. Acer Trust is a multi-academy Trust rooted in the belief that excellent education and genuine personal development go hand-in-hand. Acer Trust currently has 9 schools (4 secondary and 5 primary) and is founded on excellent collaborative partnership. We believe that, by working together with a common collective purpose of improving learning for all, we can ensure a better education for all the learners in our Trust.

Watlington is part of the South Hub in the Trust which comprises one secondary and three primaries. These schools share central finance, business management and HR support and work together on numerous other curricular and extra-curricular initiatives. We believe that, by working together with a common collective purpose of improving learning for all, we can ensure a better education for all the learners in our Trust.



Our Vision

'Working together to provide exceptional learning experiences and opportunities, empowering everyone to realise exciting futures'

We seek to create a positive and ambitious learning environment in every one of our schools, through which young people are prepared for success now and for lives of purpose, fulfilment and contribution in the future.

We are committed to being a 'family of schools', working in genuine partnership, sharing expertise, challenge and support, so that each school, and every learner within it, thrives.

Our Core Values

Our values underpin everything that we do, guiding how we work, lead and learn, and strongly shaping our culture. They are:

Collaboration: We contribute collectively, sharing responsibility for the Trust's success and ensuring all thrive within it.

Big-heartedness: We are committed to interacting with kindness, warmth and consideration, recognising the value of every individual.

Trust: We collaborate openly and honestly, prioritising the best interests of all students and staff.

Ambition: We are ambitious for all, guiding students and staff to discover a world of opportunities, building resilience, and pushing their limits to achieve excellence.

Acer Ways of Working

As a Headteacher within an Acer Trust school, you will join a strong community of experienced Headteachers and leaders committed not only to academic excellence, but to cultivating character, purpose and inclusivity. You will be part of a Trust where your school's voice matters, where collaboration across schools is valued, and where innovation and shared learning are encouraged.

As a leader, you will be part of the Trust Executive Group (TEG) who, with the CEO, shape the strategic direction of the Trust. This way of working means you are would have an active part in key decision making that affects your school.

Acer Trust has a strong school improvement process of whole school and subject reviews which are well established in an annual cycle. As well as numerous networks for DSLs, Early Years etc., the Trust has eight strategic groups in which leaders from across the Trust collaborate with each other to drive, research and implement change.



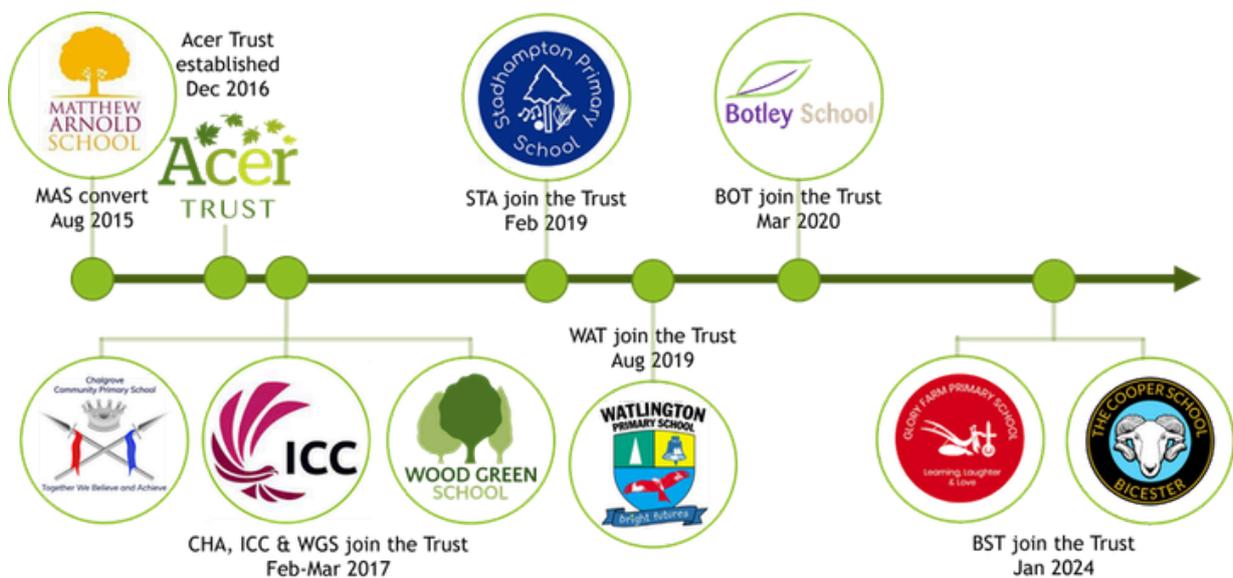
At Acer, you will have the opportunity to lead your school within a framework that supports strong strategic vision and development, while remaining grounded in clear values of trust, big-heartedness, collaboration and ambition.

In short, you will be joining an organisation that believes excellence in education is achieved through partnership, purpose and shared commitment; we look forward to the contribution you will bring.

A Brief History of Acer Trust

The Acer Trust was formed in early 2017, grounded in the principle that schools working together in partnership can drive better outcomes than working in isolation. It was created by schools who believed that a true partnership is one in which all Trust schools have a voice in the running of the Trust and a responsibility for contributing to the improvement of all partner schools and their communities.

Since its formation, the Trust has grown steadily. It now comprises both primary and secondary schools across Oxfordshire, educating approximately 5,700 pupils and students. The founding ethos was to maintain the individuality of each school while benefiting from the strength and shared vision of the group.



Headteacher Job Description

Post Title: Headteacher of Watlington School, Oxfordshire

Permanent/Temporary: Permanent

Leadership Scale: L14–L20 (£71,330 - £82,654)

Responsibilities: Day to day leadership and operational management of the School

Start Date: September 2026

Reporting to: The Headteacher is accountable to the CEO of Acer Trust and the Board of Governors.

Job Purpose

The Headteacher will provide strong, strategic and values-led leadership to ensure Watlington School provides an ambitious, inclusive and high-quality education for all students. The Headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day leadership and management of the school, the quality of education provided, the safety and wellbeing of students and staff, and the school's long-term continued improvement and sustainability.

The Headteacher will work collaboratively as part of the Acer Trust, contributing to Trust-wide leadership, school improvement and professional development, while ensuring Watlington retains its identity as a community-focused school.

Key Responsibilities

1. Strategic Leadership and Vision

Articulate and embed a clear vision and shared values that place students at the centre of all decisions. Lead the strategic development of the school, setting ambitious priorities that sustain high standards and continuous improvement. Translate national and Trust priorities into a coherent school strategy that is understood and enacted by staff and students.

2. Quality of Education

Ensure a broad, balanced and aspirational curriculum that meets the needs of all learners. Secure consistently high standards of teaching, learning and assessment across all subjects and phases. Use accurate and timely data to monitor progress, address underachievement and ensure strong outcomes for all groups of students.

3. Inclusion, Safeguarding and Student Development

Provide strategic leadership of inclusion, ensuring the needs of students with SEND and those who are disadvantaged are met effectively. Be the lead professional responsible for safeguarding culture and statutory compliance, ensuring safer recruitment and robust safeguarding practice. Promote excellent behaviour, attendance, and personal development in line with the school's values and ethos.

4. Leadership and Management of Staff

Build and sustain a culture of collaboration, professionalism and high expectations. Lead staff performance, development and appraisal, challenging underperformance and recognising excellence. Foster staff wellbeing, retention and workload sustainability. Ensure effective workforce planning, including talent development and succession planning.

5. Working in Partnership

Work closely with the CEO, Trust leaders and Headteachers across Acer Trust to share expertise and contribute to Trust-wide improvement. Engage positively with parents and carers as partners in their children's education. Strengthen links with local community organisations, businesses, and agencies to broaden opportunities for students.

6. Governance, Finance and Resource Management

Work with the Local Governing Board and Trust to ensure effective governance, reporting and accountability. Oversee financial planning, staffing and resource deployment to secure long-term sustainability and value for money. Ensure compliance with statutory duties, Trust policies and regulatory requirements.

Additional Duties

Ensure a safe, healthy and well-ordered environment for students, staff and visitors. Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of school life. Act as the public face of the school, representing its values with professionalism and integrity.

Safeguarding Statement

Acer Trust and Watlington School are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The Headteacher will require an enhanced DBS check and must demonstrate a deep commitment to safeguarding culture, practice and continuous vigilance.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) • Degree-level qualification • Evidence of sustained professional development relevant to senior leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPQH or equivalent leadership qualification
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful senior leadership experience in a primary school as Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher • Substantial and successful teaching experience in the primary phase • Experience of leading school self-evaluation and improvement planning • Proven impact in raising standards of teaching and learning • Experience of improving outcomes for SEND and disadvantaged learners • Successful line management, staff development and team-building experience • Experience leading safeguarding systems and safer recruitment • Successful management of change and school improvement initiatives • Experience working constructively with governors/trustees and external partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience as a Headteacher • Leadership experience in more than one school
Curriculum, Teaching & Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong understanding of curriculum design and implementation • Ability to lead high-quality teaching, learning and assessment • Ability to use data to inform improvement planning and evaluate performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of leading curriculum innovation and evaluating impact

<p>Inclusion, Safeguarding & Student Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong understanding of statutory safeguarding responsibilities and KCSiE • Ability to promote a safeguarding culture of vigilance • Commitment to inclusive education and equality for all learners • Understanding of effective SEND and Pupil Premium strategies • Ability to promote high standards of behaviour, attendance and personal development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience leading strategic SEND and/or inclusion at whole-school level
<p>Leadership & Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to articulate and deliver a clear, compelling vision for the school • Ability to motivate, empower and inspire staff and students • Ability to build a positive, collaborative and professional culture that supports wellbeing and workload sustainability • Ability to manage performance effectively, including challenging underperformance • Effective financial and resource management • Ability to work collaboratively as part of a multi-academy trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience contributing to Trust-wide strategy or cross-school leadership development
<p>Community & Partnership Working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work positively with parents, carers and the local community • Ability to act as an effective and confident ambassador for the school • Ability to develop partnerships that broaden opportunities for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of developing community, business or local authority partnerships
<p>Personal Qualities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values-led approach rooted in integrity, fairness and respect • Resilient and emotionally intelligent, able to remain calm under pressure • Reflective and committed to continuous improvement • High expectations of self, colleagues and students • Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion 	
<p>Other Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to safeguarding children and young people • Successful enhanced DBS check • Awareness of Health and Safety responsibilities 	

How to Apply

Applications should be submitted via our online platform, MyNewTerm. You can access this [HERE](#)

Closing date: 20 April 2026

Interview Date(s): TBC

Job Start Date: September 2026

When submitting your application, you will have the opportunity to provide a detailed personal statement outlining your leadership experience, strategic vision, and suitability for the role.

We strongly encourage prospective applicants to arrange a visit to the school, as tours are warmly welcomed and offer valuable insight into the school's ethos and environment.

Nathan Thomas, CEO, would be delighted to talk to any prospective candidates in a virtual or in-person meeting. For further information or to arrange a visit, please contact Sariga Mathew on 01865 519215 Ext 810 or email smathew@acertrust.org.uk

Please be advised that references may be requested on receipt of your application. Please state if you wish this to be delayed until shortlisting/interviews have taken place.

Watlington School and the Acer Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and preventing extremism; all staff must ensure that the highest priority is given to following the guidance and regulations to safeguard children and young people. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and obtain any other statutorily required clearance. Employment will also be conditional on the receipt of at least two acceptable references (one from current/last employer) and evidence of the formal qualifications required for the role.

About Watlington

Watlington is a unique market town which nestles at the foot of the Chilterns below the white mark, carved out over 250 years ago.

The town boasts a strong link to history: a front line in the English Civil War and the earlier battle between the Vikings and the Saxons, as shown in the recently discovered Watlington Hoard.

In summer, the swifts flit across from rooftops, some of which stretch back to Tudor times, and all year-round red kites circle the town and surrounding countryside.

Watlington proudly hosts a variety of independent shops - it is a great destination for shopping and offers a wide range of speciality foods and goods, from cheese, to gifts and antiques. Every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, the Town Hall Undercroft is home to a thriving Fruit and Vegetable Market - showcasing local products, plants and dried flowers. In addition there are a number of cafes, pubs and restaurants to choose from in Watlington where you can relax and enjoy excellent food and drink.

Watlington is proud of its 'state of the art' playground and skate bowl at the Rec which includes something for all the family. If you prefer a tranquil place to sit, the Paddock is the place to picnic and admire the landscaped gardens. There is also a play area for younger children here. With over 60 community organisations based in the town, there is always something going on and plenty to get involved with. Watlington is also home to many colourful events throughout the year, it really offers something for everyone.

Despite the rural feel Watlington is easily accessible from Junction 6 of the M40, London is only 35 miles away, and teachers travel both locally and from Oxford, Aylesbury, Reading, Bicester, and Banbury to work.



About Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire is a good place to live. The city of Oxford lies at its heart and is deservedly seen as a major European cultural gem, with several world-class museums and a thriving art scene. It also offers all the restaurants, shopping, cinemas and theatres and live music that you could hope to find. It's easily accessible via train and bus.

Oxfordshire is characterised by charming market towns, including Wallingford, Thame, Witney, Abingdon and Banbury, which have successfully retained a traditional local distinctiveness whilst also adapting to today's needs.

Oxfordshire is described as being the most rural of the Home Counties, with many open spaces focusing on conservation and environmental protection. There are plenty of country walks – and pubs to finish them in. Sailing, angling and other water sports are available at several locations. Cycling is a very popular sport along its winding lanes.



Acer

