



Watererton
Academy Trust

Application Pack

Playworker
Newstead Academy & Watererton
Assessment Centre



Job Title	Playworker
Salary & Grade	Grade 3 actual £15,374-£15,615 (FTE £24,796-£25,185)
Contract	Permanent 27 hours 30 minutes per week, Term time only
Reporting to	Head of Specialist Provisions
Start Date	September 2026

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in the role of Playworker.

We are delighted to be looking to appoint 2 committed and experienced Playworkers to join the staff team at our Newstead and Cudworth provision.

To join on us on this exciting journey, we are seeking practitioners with expertise in supporting children, or a willingness to develop within this area, with a range of additional and complex needs, particularly those with ASD and social communication/interaction difficulties. We are seeking applicants with experience of working with a range of communication interaction strategies and communication systems such as Pictorial Exchange Communication Systems (PECS) and Makaton signing systems and experience of working with bespoke/personalised curriculums to meet individual need.

The whole staff team work in a positive and collaborative environment where the needs of the children are at the heart of all best practice and decision-making. This is an exciting opportunity to be part of a strong and dedicated team who are committed to high standards and creating an inclusive learning environment for all children.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Warm Regards,

Laura Thresh

Head of SEND and Inclusion

About Us

Waterton Academy Trust is a thriving and values-led partnership of schools committed to giving every child the best possible start in life.

Established in 2014 with Walton Primary Academy as its founding member, the Trust has grown steadily and strategically, guided by a strong moral purpose and a deep understanding of the communities we serve. We believe that **success is a shared experience** – every learner, every member of staff, and every school should flourish, together.

By the end of 2026, we expect to support more than 4,000 pupils across our schools, with a dedicated team of over 600 staff and an annual turnover approaching £28 million.

Our growth has not been about size alone - it reflects the strength of our educational offer, the diversity of our provision, and the depth of our partnerships.

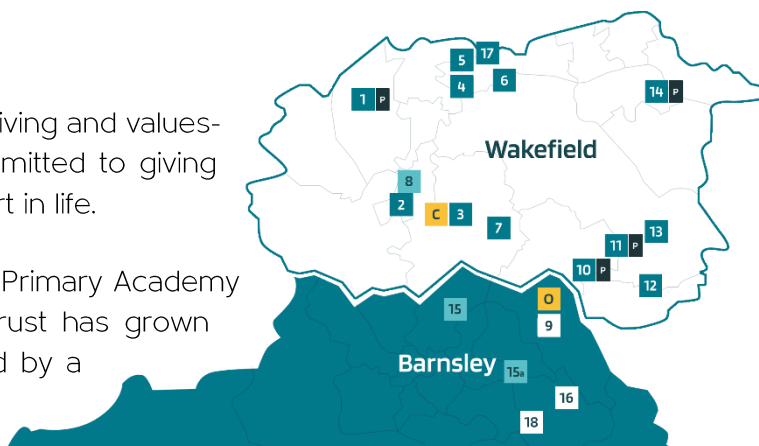
We work across two key regions - Wakefield and Barnsley - and are proud to be seen as a trusted and collaborative presence within the wider education system. All our schools are primary-phase, and collaboration sits at the heart of how we work.

In response to local need, our first independent special academy – Newstead Academy opened in Barnsley in 2023 and has already grown to include a satellite site based at Hunningley. Building on this success, we have opened a new specialist setting - Hammer Lane Academy - in Wakefield in September 2025. These developments are a testament to our commitment to inclusive education and our ability to work alongside local partners to meet the needs of all learners.



We also know that a great start in education begins early. That's why we've expanded our offer to include four pre-school settings, with plans for further growth.

If you share our belief that all children deserve the highest-quality education and want to be part of a forward-thinking, people-centred organisation, we'd love to hear from you.



Our Locations

Waterton Offices

- C - Centre for Excellence
- O - Operations Office

Waterton Schools

- 1 - Wrenthorpe Academy
- 1p - Wrenthorpe Pre-School
- 2 - Sharlston Community School
- 3 - Walton Primary Academy
- 4 - Normanton Junior Academy
- 5 - Lee Brigg Infant and Nursery School
- 6 - Normanton Common Primary Academy
- 7 - Crofton Infant's School
- 8 - Hammer Lane Academy
- 9 - Churchfield Primary School
- 10 - King's Meadow Academy
- 10p - The Meadow Pre-School
- 11 - West End Academy
- 11p - The Woodland Pre-School
- 12 - South Kirkby Academy
- 13 - Ackworth Mill Dam School
- 14 - Cherry Tree Academy
- 14p - Cherry Blossom Pre-School
- 15 - Newstead Academy
- 15a - Hunningley Academy
- 16 - Kings Oak Primary
- 17 - Alfton Junior Academy
- 18 - Jump Primary Academy

Our Vision and Values

The Trust is proud of its shared vision and values, which are embedded across all aspects of our work.

This vision—centred on collaboration, aspiration, enjoyment, and equity—guides our actions and unites our schools in a common purpose. We aim to create a culture where success is a shared experience, every child enjoys a rich and relevant curriculum, and all pupils are supported to achieve their full potential, regardless of background.

Candidates interested in joining the Trust are encouraged to explore our vision and values to ensure they align with their own ethos and long-term aspirations.



About The Provision

Thank you for taking the time to read this pack in considering if this is the role for you.

We are a welcoming, personalised specialist setting and pride ourselves on the provision we offer all children through a highly-inclusive ethos, engaging curriculum and creative approach to education. Our setting accommodates pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) with an adapted and specialised approach at the core of what we aim to deliver. We are proud of our bespoke 'offer' and this is something that can only be experienced in person, so visits to meet our incredible children are always welcome!

As a Playworker you will work alongside our Lead Teacher, HLTA and Teaching Assistants and be part of our learning environment in our successful and exciting provision, based at Newstead Academy, you will also have the support of the Executive Headteacher, Head of Specialist Provisions, Deputy Head of Specialist Provisions and the Trust's Central Team.

We value **Aspiration and Achievement for All**; however, it's not just our children that aspire and achieve, but our staff too! We offer a wealth of development opportunities and support all of our staff to ensure that the Waterton Assessment Centre (WAC) is the best place to learn and work. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is extremely important to us and ensures that our staff feel empowered to deliver the best possible provision to all pupils.

We aim to ensure that we are a forward-thinking and reflective setting; always looking for ways to further develop and improve our offer for our children. We passionately believe that every single child has the ability to achieve great things, and it is our job, and professional & moral responsibility to nurture all children in our school to reach their potential and achieve more than they ever believe they could. An essential part of this belief is a commitment to working with parents, our community and other agencies - education is a partnership, and we all have a duty to our children. We foster these relationships and hold pupil voice at the heart of all that we do.

This is all underpinned by a highly-inclusive approach, high standards of behaviour & attendance and an unwavering commitment to the personal development of our children. Our school aims are based on the fundamental belief that we will provide the very highest level of education, and provide a school experience that will open the door to lifelong learning.

As part of the Waterton Academy Trust family of schools, we are supported by a fantastic organisation that shares our values. We have an exceptional rate of staff retention, so an available position is a rarity. If you would like to know anymore, or see more of the school, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Sharon Wainwright

S Wainwright

Head of Specialist Provisions

Our Pupils

Waterton Academy Trust serves communities with some of the highest levels of deprivation in the region, and in the country. In response, we place children's well-being, voice, and enrichment at the very heart of our work. We believe that every pupil, regardless of background, should feel the full benefit of belonging to a trust that puts their experience of school first.

Pupil voice is not just encouraged - it's embedded in our decision-making. Our elected Children's Parliament meets regularly with the CEO and Headteachers, sharing their views and shaping priorities for improvement. Their efforts were recognised nationally, receiving a letter of commendation from former Prime Minister Theresa May.

Beyond the classroom, we create rich and joyful experiences that promote creativity, confidence, and healthy living. Our roaming art gallery, Waterton's Got Talent, and Waterton Young Chef of the Year celebrate the diverse talents of our pupils, while our annual MATlympics and extensive sports offer promote inclusion, teamwork, and well-being.

These experiences are not just events; they are integral to our mission—ensuring that every child in a Waterton school is heard, celebrated, and empowered to thrive.

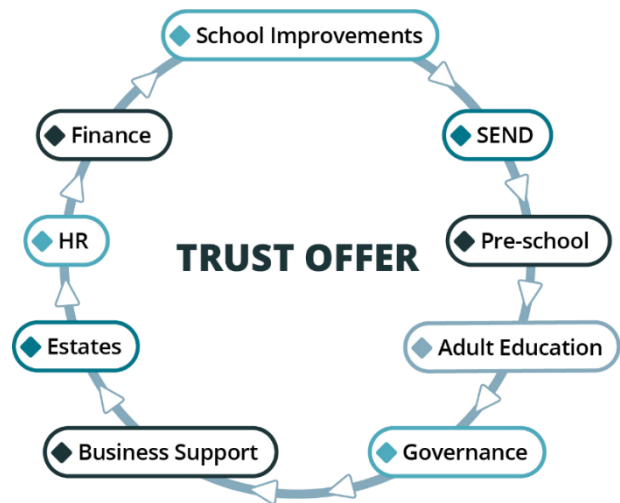


Trust Offer

At Waterton Academy Trust, we are proud to provide a consistent, high-quality offer that enables every school - regardless of size, Ofsted rating, or context - to thrive. Our Trust Offer ensures that all academies benefit from the same comprehensive package of educational and operational support, tailored to meet individual school needs while remaining accessible to all.

This offer is underpinned by our belief that school leaders should be able to focus their time and energy on what matters most: delivering excellent teaching and learning. By reducing operational burdens and providing high-quality, evidence-informed school improvement support, we create the conditions in which pupils and staff can flourish.

Our investment in a strong and expert central team means that every school can draw upon specialist support in areas such as safeguarding, governance, curriculum, finance, HR, IT, estates, marketing, and data protection. This support is complemented by access to legal advice and professional development, including high-impact CPD, leadership development, and coaching.



The Trust Offer is more than a service package - it's a reflection of our values. It supports excellence, equity, and collaboration across all Waterton schools, enabling leaders to deliver the very best for their pupils, every day.

To read about impact in 2025, please read our annual report to stakeholders on the Trust website.

<https://www.watertonacademytrust.org/academies/trust-performance/>

Job Description – Playworker

Job Title	Playworker
Reporting to	Head of Specialist Provisions
Grade	Grade 3

Main Purpose	To work with colleagues to provide a stimulating, educational and varied programme of activity and play whilst ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children in line with the policies of the provision which enables all children to develop to their full potential.
Additional Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full working knowledge and compliance with policies and procedures relating to child protection, health, safety and security, confidentiality, HR and data protection, reporting all concerns to an appropriate person. • Be aware of and support difference and ensure equal opportunities for all • Working knowledge of SEND and EYFS/KS1 • Contribute to the overall ethos/work/aims of the setting • Appreciate and support the role of other professionals • Attend and participate in relevant meetings as required • Participate in training and other learning activities and performance development as required
Expectations of All Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent and promote Waterton Academy Trust values internally and externally • Ensure that all stakeholders receive an excellent customer service experience in all dealings with you and with Waterton Academy Trust • Deliver your day-to-day duties consistently with the agreed service level • Actively promote and act, at all times, in accordance with Trust policies, e.g. Code of Conduct, Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding • Make a commitment and contribution to the overall ethos and values of the trust, upholding these in all activities connected with the role • Undertake other duties commensurate with the job level • Promote high standards of personal professional conduct in accordance with the Trust Employee Code of Conduct
Additional Information	The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Job Specification are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level, scope of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.
Working Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous provision/early years/KS1 classroom and outdoor learning environment. • The post holder may be subject to some exposure to adverse weather conditions. • The post involves contact with people which through their circumstances or behaviour occasionally places emotional demands on post holder.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nature of the post may involve periodic requirements for considerable physical effort, e.g. lifting or carrying of children or resources.
<p>Characteristics of the Post</p>	<p>Employees are encouraged to participate in training activities in order to enhance their own personal development.</p> <p>The employment checks are required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of entitlement to work in the U.K. Evidence of essential qualifications – see job specification Two satisfactory references Confirmation of medical fitness for employment Registration with appropriate bodies (where applicable) <p>The following employment checks are required for those positions which are based in a school or working with vulnerable young people and adults: Evidence of a satisfactory safeguarding check e.g. DBS check at the relevant level.</p>

Person Specification – Playworker

AF: Application Form

OT: Occupational Task

CQ: Certificates/Qualifications

I: Presentation

I: Interview

R: Reference

Qualifications	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
Level 3 qualification in early years childcare or child development		X	AF/CQ
Level 2 qualification in early years childcare or child development		X	AF/CQ
Safeguarding training		X	AF/CQ
Food Hygiene qualification / training		X	AF/CQ
Evidence of further relevant qualifications in relation to SEND and Inclusion		X	AF/CQ
Experience	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
Experience in an early years or relevant setting		X	AF/I/R
Experience of working with SEND		X	AF/I/R
General Data Protection Regulation awareness		X	AF/I/R
Experience of report writing		X	AF/I/R
Successful implementation and working within the EYFS statutory framework		X	AF/I/R
Skills, Knowledge and Understanding	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
Current knowledge of approaches to meeting the SEND needs of all learners within a setting (primary/ specialist)	X		AF/I/R
Thorough knowledge of safeguarding procedures		X	AF/I/R
Knowledge of particular health and safety issues relevant to age range		X	AF/I/R
Sound understanding of child development and meeting children's needs		X	AF/I/R
Experience of working in partnership with parents and stakeholders		X	AF/I/R
Creative in designing a programme of engaging activities to enhance learning		X	AF/I/R
Ability to be organised and diligent	X		AF/I/R
Knowledge of Ofsted expectations and framework		X	AF/I/R
General administrative skills and a range of IT skills		X	AF/I/R
Personal Attributes	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
Friendly, patient and enthusiastic in nature	X		AF/I
Ability to communicate effectively and relate well to children and adults	X		AF/I
Professional approach	X		AF/I

Committed to professional development in connection with the post	X		AF/I
Work in accordance with our core values and behaviours	X		AF/I
A commitment to equality/diversity in the workplace and the wide community	X		AF/I
A commitment to safeguarding and promoting welfare for all	X		AF/I
Suitability to work with children and young people	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
Satisfactory DBS disclosure and standard Trust pre-secondment checks	X		AF, R, I
Ability to work in a way that promotes the safety and well-being of learners	X		AF, R, I

Next Steps

For further information about the opportunity please contact Sharon Wainwright on 01924 967610, or email Newstead NewsteadSEND.Office@watertonacademytrust.org

To Apply

Please submit applications via My New Term.

Selection Timeline

Closing Date: Friday 10th July 2026 - midday

Shortlisting: Friday 10th July 2026

Interviews: Thursday 16th July 2026

Start Date: September 2026

Waterton Academy Trust is wholly committed to ensuring children and young people are fully supported and safe. We are dedicated to the safeguarding of all children and young people whilst promoting their welfare and expect all staff and volunteers to share this responsibility. An enhanced DBS check is required for the successful candidate, this process is completed by an online third party company. The position is also subject to two satisfactory references. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to provide details of any unspent convictions and those that would not be filtered, prior to the date of interview. We are committed to treating all applicants fairly and have a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders which is available to applicants on request. Waterton Academy Trust is wholly committed in ensuring that all employees, future employees and applicants are treated equally regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

It is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.