



Castle EAST School

Recruitment Pack Headteacher

Employment Status	Full-time
Employment Location	Castle EAST School, Suffolk
Application Closing Date	Monday 28 September 2026 at 12pm
Interview Date	Week beginning Monday 12 October 2026

Aspire and Achieve



www.castleeastschool.co.uk



admin@castleeastschool.co.uk



@CastleEast1



01986 808651



EAST
EAST ANGLIAN SCHOOLS TRUST



ABOUT CASTLE EAST SCHOOL

Castle EAST School provides specialist education for pupils with significant communication and social interaction needs, many of whom have a diagnosis of autism. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan and follow a personalised curriculum designed to maximise engagement, achievement and preparation for adulthood.

Since opening, the school has established a strong reputation for delivering highly personalised provision, developing positive relationships with families and securing strong outcomes for pupils.

Our vision is built upon:

- Aspiration and achievement for every pupil.
- Equality, respect and belonging.
- Personalised provision that meets individual needs.
- Strong partnerships with families.
- Development of resilience, independence and self-belief.
- Preparation for successful adulthood.





HEADTEACHER

At Castle EAST School, we believe that every child deserves a place where they feel understood, valued and able to thrive.

We are seeking an exceptional Headteacher to lead the next chapter in the development of our transformational specialist school. This is a unique opportunity to build on the success of a school that was judged Outstanding in its first Ofsted inspection following opening, whilst shaping the future of one of Suffolk's most distinctive educational communities.

Castle EAST School is a specialist provision for pupils aged 9-16 with autism and communication and interaction needs. At the heart of our work is a commitment to personalised learning, high aspirations, meaningful relationships and preparing young people for successful adult lives.

As part of EAST, you will join a family of schools committed to excellence, inclusion and collaboration. You will lead a dedicated staff team, work closely with families and governors, and help ensure that every pupil receives the education, support and opportunities they deserve.

The Opportunity

This is far more than a traditional headship. We are looking for a leader who combines strategic vision with compassion, high expectations with humanity, and ambition with a deep commitment to inclusion.

As Headteacher, you will work closely with the Trust's Director of SEND to build upon Castle EAST's strong foundations, ensuring that the school remains ambitious, innovative and responsive to the changing needs of pupils, families and the wider SEND landscape. This close partnership provides a distinctive opportunity to combine school-based leadership with Trust-wide SEND expertise and system-level influence.

As Headteacher, you will:

- Provide inspirational leadership for the school community.
- Continue to develop a culture of excellence, inclusion and belonging.
- Ensure strong outcomes for pupils academically, socially and emotionally.
- Lead and develop a talented and committed staff team.
- Work in partnership with families, governors, the Director of SEND and external agencies.
- Champion the needs and aspirations of autistic children and young people.
- Drive continual improvement and innovation whilst preserving the values and ethos that make Castle EAST special.
- Play a key role within the wider EAST Trust family and contribute to Trust-wide developments in SEND and inclusion.



Who We Are Looking For

We are seeking an ambitious and values-led leader who:

- Has a successful track record of senior leadership within education.
- Demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusive practice and improving outcomes for vulnerable learners.
- Understands the challenges and opportunities associated with specialist SEND provision.
- Has the ability to inspire, develop and empower others.
- Builds strong relationships based on trust, integrity and respect.
- Is an excellent communicator who can work effectively with pupils, families, staff, governors, the Trust and external partners.
- Possesses resilience, emotional intelligence and a solution-focused approach.
- Shares our belief that every child can achieve, thrive and succeed.

Applications are welcomed from experienced Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers and other exceptional leaders who can demonstrate the skills, values and vision required to lead a specialist setting.

Why Join EAST?

Joining Castle EAST means becoming part of EAST, a thriving and ambitious Multi-Academy Trust committed to delivering exceptional educational experiences for children and young people.

As Headteacher, you will work in close partnership with the Trust's Director of SEND, who provides strategic oversight of SEND and specialist provision across EAST. This unique relationship offers the successful candidate access to specialist expertise, strategic support and opportunities to influence Trust-wide developments in SEND and inclusion.

We offer:

- Strong governance and Trust support.
- A close, collaborative working relationship with the Director of SEND.
- Opportunities to collaborate with school leaders across the Trust.
- High-quality professional development.
- Access to specialist expertise and networks.
- A commitment to staff wellbeing and development.
- The opportunity to influence inclusion and SEND practice beyond a single school.

Come and See What Makes Castle EAST Special

We strongly encourage prospective applicants to visit the school and experience first-hand the warmth, ambition and dedication that define our community.

This is a remarkable opportunity to lead a school that changes lives every day.

To arrange an informal conversation or school visit, please contact Anna Mears, via Ashley Elder on 01986 808 651 or aelder@castleeastschool.co.uk

Castle EAST School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All appointments are subject to satisfactory references, enhanced DBS clearance and relevant safeguarding checks.

JOB DESCRIPTION

SALARY:

Leadership Range L18 - L24

CONTRACT:

Full time, Permanent

RESPONSIBLE TO:

Chief Executive Officer - working in close strategic partnership with the Director of SEND

Job Title

Headteacher, Castle EAST School

Responsible To

Chief Executive Officer working in close strategic partnership with the Director of SEND.

Job Purpose

To provide exceptional professional leadership and management for Castle EAST School, securing its continued success and ensuring the highest standards of educational provision, safeguarding, pupil wellbeing and organisational effectiveness.

The Headteacher will work closely with the Director of SEND to lead the strategic development of the school, ensuring provision remains ambitious, innovative and responsive to the needs of pupils with autism and communication and interaction needs. Together, they will contribute to the Trust's wider vision for inclusive and specialist education and support the development of SEND practice across EAST.

Strategic Leadership

- Provide clear vision, direction and leadership for the school.
- Lead the development and implementation of the school's strategic priorities.
- Promote a culture of high expectations, continuous improvement and excellence.
- Preserve and strengthen the ethos and values of Castle EAST School.
- Work closely with the Director of SEND to shape the strategic direction of Castle EAST School and contribute to Trust-wide SEND priorities.
- Contribute to the wider strategic leadership of EAST.

Quality of Education

- Ensure an ambitious, engaging and appropriately personalised curriculum for all pupils.
- Promote high standards of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Ensure pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points.
- Monitor and evaluate educational outcomes to drive school improvement.
- Support staff in developing highly effective classroom practice.

Inclusion and SEND

- Champion inclusive practice across all aspects of school life.
- Ensure all provision meets statutory responsibilities for pupils with EHCPs.
- Maintain high-quality specialist provision for pupils with communication and interaction needs.
- Work collaboratively with the Director of SEND, families, Local Authorities and external agencies.
- Promote preparation for adulthood and positive destinations for all pupils.
- Contribute to the development and sharing of specialist expertise across EAST schools.

Leadership and Management of Staff

- Lead, develop and inspire all staff.
- Establish a culture of accountability, support and professional growth.
- Ensure effective performance management systems are in place.
- Promote staff wellbeing and workload management.
- Recruit, retain and develop high-quality staff.

Safeguarding and Pupil Welfare

- Promote a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school.
- Ensure statutory safeguarding duties are fully met.
- Maintain a safe, nurturing and supportive environment for pupils and staff.
- Lead on behaviour, attendance, wellbeing and personal development strategies.
- Ensure that all pupils feel valued, respected and able to succeed.

Partnership Working

- Develop strong relationships with families and carers.
- Work effectively with governors, Trust leaders and the Director of SEND.
- Represent the school positively within the community.
- Foster productive relationships with partner schools, Local Authorities and agencies.
- Promote the school and strengthen its reputation locally and regionally.

Financial and Operational Leadership

- Ensure resources are used effectively to deliver the best outcomes for pupils.
- Oversee financial planning and budget management.
- Ensure compliance with all statutory, regulatory and Trust requirements.
- Lead the effective management of premises, health and safety and operational systems.
- Ensure the school remains sustainable and well positioned for the future.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The criteria below will be used to shortlist and appoint the successful candidate. Applicants should use their application to demonstrate how they meet the essential criteria and, where relevant, the desirable criteria.

Qualifications

Essential

- Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
- Degree or equivalent qualification.
- Evidence of relevant leadership and management professional development.
- Commitment to ongoing professional learning and development.

Desirable

- National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), or equivalent.
- Additional qualifications related to SEND, autism or school leadership.

Experience

Essential

- Successful experience of senior leadership within a school.
- Evidence of leading whole-school improvement.
- Experience of improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Experience of strategic planning, self-evaluation and quality assurance.
- Experience of leading and developing staff.
- Experience of performance management and accountability.
- Experience of working effectively with parents, governors and external agencies.
- Experience of managing change and implementing improvement initiatives.
- Experience of working with pupils with complex communication and interaction needs.

Desirable

- Experience within specialist SEND provision.
- Experience as a Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- Experience within a Multi-Academy Trust.
- Experience of supporting wider school improvement beyond a single setting.

Professional Knowledge

Essential

- Secure understanding of effective teaching, learning and curriculum leadership.
- Excellent knowledge of safeguarding legislation and best practice.
- Secure understanding of SEND legislation, the SEND Code of Practice and statutory responsibilities.
- Understanding of school improvement planning and evaluation.
- Understanding of accountability frameworks and inspection requirements.
- Knowledge of budget management and effective resource deployment.
- Detailed understanding of autism and communication and interaction needs.
- Knowledge of specialist provision and inclusive education model

Desirable

- Understanding of preparation for adulthood pathways and outcomes.

Leadership and Strategic Vision

Essential

- Ability to articulate and deliver a compelling vision for the future of Castle EAST School.
- Ability to inspire confidence and ambition across the school community.
- Commitment to achieving excellent outcomes for all pupils.
- Ability to translate strategic vision into measurable impact.
- Evidence of successful leadership through periods of change and development.
- Commitment to evidence-informed practice and continuous improvement.

Desirable

- Experience of contributing to Trust-wide strategy or system leadership initiatives.

Partnership with the Director of SEND and Trust Leadership

Essential

- Commitment to working collaboratively with the Trust's Director of SEND.
- Ability to contribute to wider Trust priorities and strategic developments.
- Ability to work effectively within a distributed leadership model.
- Commitment to sharing expertise and supporting inclusion across the wider Trust.
- Understanding of the role specialist provision plays within an inclusive education system.

Desirable

- Experience of working alongside executive leaders or specialist advisers.
- Experience of contributing to SEND developments beyond a single school.

Leadership and Management of People

Essential

- Ability to motivate, inspire and develop others.
- Ability to build and sustain high-performing teams.
- Commitment to staff wellbeing and professional development.
- Ability to hold others to account whilst maintaining positive relationships.
- Excellent organisational and decision-making skills.
- Ability to manage competing priorities effectively.

Desirable

- Experience of talent development and succession planning.

Communication and Partnership Working

Essential

- Exemplary interpersonal and communication skills.
- Ability to build trusted relationships with pupils, families and staff.
- Ability to work effectively with governors, Trust leaders and external partners.
- Ability to communicate confidently with a range of audiences.
- Skilled in managing challenging conversations with professionalism and sensitivity.
- Commitment to genuine partnership with families.

Desirable

- Experience of representing a school externally and promoting its work within the wider community.

Personal Qualities

Essential

- Passion for improving the lives of children and young people with SEND.
- An unwavering commitment to inclusion.
- Integrity, honesty and professionalism.
- Compassion, empathy and emotional intelligence.
- Resilience and positivity.
- High expectations of self and others.
- A visible, approachable and relational leadership style.
- Commitment to the values and ethos of Castle EAST School.
- A strong moral purpose and belief that every child can succeed.

Desirable

- A strong commitment to shaping the future of specialist and inclusive education beyond a single school.

What Will Make an Excellent Candidate?

We would particularly welcome applications from leaders who:

- Are excited by the opportunity to build upon the school's highly effective foundations.
- Have a strong commitment to specialist education and inclusion.
- Value collaboration and partnership working.
- Are motivated by the opportunity to work closely with the Director of SEND and contribute to Trust-wide developments.
- Can balance strategic leadership with compassion, humility and authenticity.
- Share our belief that exceptional education transforms lives.

What Success Will Look Like

Within the first three years, the successful Headteacher will have:

- Strengthened Castle EAST's reputation as a centre of excellence for specialist education.
- Built upon the school's innovative foundations and secured consistently strong outcomes for pupils.
- Maintained a culture where pupils feel safe, valued and able to achieve.
- Developed and retained a highly skilled and motivated staff team.
- Built strong partnerships with families, governors, the Director of SEND and wider stakeholders.
- Contributed meaningfully to the development of inclusive education across EAST.





OUR CULTURE AND ETHOS

At Castle EAST School our GROW Ethos underpins our approach to everything we say and everything we do.

GUIDE AND LISTEN: PROMOTE A LEARNING ORGANISATION WITH EXCELLENT AND ASPIRATIONAL LEARNING FOR ALL

RAISE THE ROOF OF RESILIENCE: NURTURE OUR COMMUNITY AND CULTURE THROUGH EFFECTIVE CARE, SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

OPENLY CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENT: PROMOTING SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUALS, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

WORK TOGETHER: ENHANCE AND RECOGNISE THE ROLE THAT LEADERSHIP PLAYS FOR ALL MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY

At Castle EAST School we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and that learning should be an engaging, rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be purposeful. Through our teaching, we equip pupils with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives.

Through our teaching pupils are encouraged to:

- Listen to each other
- Try new things
- Volunteer thoughts and opinions
- Respect the thoughts, ideas and contributions of others
- Work hard.

To encourage all pupils to contribute to lessons, teachers:

- Recognise engagement and participation
- Use a range of techniques to support pupils' sensory needs
- Adapt teaching to meet the needs of all pupils
- Allow sufficient thinking time between questions to allow pupils to consider their responses
- Plan time in their lessons for pupils to discuss their learning, ask and answer questions promoting pupil talk.
- Have positive regard for every child and demonstrate this through a nurturing approach.

We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help pupils to lead happy and rewarding lives. All pupils at Castle EAST School have a communication and interaction difficulty, so we believe that innovative and creative teaching is essential to enable pupils to achieve their potential from individual starting points.

Who are EAST?

EAST was established on 1 September 2019. At its inception, three secondary academies were formally partnered together: Bungay, Farlingaye and Kesgrave High Schools. In 2020, we applied to establish a Free Special School in Bungay, for children with interaction and communication needs. Demonstrating our commitment to local, inclusive education, Castle EAST School is opened in 2021. In November 2023, we welcomed Aldeburgh, Easton, Leiston, Saxmundham and Wickham Market Primary Schools from the Avocet Academy Trust. Avocet was an established and successful primary multi academy trust with a rich history of success and innovative school improvement. Our merger represented the next phase of development for both Trusts. Since we have had Holbrook Academy join us in April 2025 and Kyson Primary School in September 2025.

Establishing EAST SCITT has been a core strategy for improving the flow of teachers into the local area. Our 'School Centred Initial Teacher Training' is an accredited Provider offering secondary (11-16) and primary (5-11) school-based initial teacher training awarding Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). We see EAST SCITT as the most effective way to find and develop future teachers to work in this vibrant county. We are delighted with its popularity and quality.

We are very confident that EAST will create a stronger future for our schools and continue to improve outcomes for our pupils. It is through a genuine and transparent commitment to working together that we will continue to collectively and individually achieve great things, providing a first-class educational experience in which all our students can excel.

We are determined that every pupil/student experience a fantastic education helping them to develop and achieve their aspirations.

Our Vision: Where everyone can achieve

We measure our **success** through a combination of **performance, growth and happiness**, as individuals and collectively.

Our **cornerstones** are the foundations of our vision; they underpin all that we do and shape the way we work with everyone in our trust and our extended educational community; from parents & carers to partners, suppliers and local government.



#1 Learning

We will continually strive to deliver the best possible experience for quality learning and personal development for everyone at EAST through our curriculum, engaging teaching, the resources & support we have available and the quality of the physical environment in which we work.

#3 Opportunity

We exist to enable everyone in our schools to realise their true potential through an academic or professional experience within our schools that achieves the outcomes they seek. We do not believe there is a one-size-fits-all for success and achievement and will always do our best to support the aims and ambition of the individual.

#2 Inclusivity

We believe a great quality education, opportunities for personal development and participation should be available to everyone regardless of their personal circumstances. That's why our schools today already cater for many specialist needs and our trust is committed to developing the teachers of the future.

#4 Community

We are a significant contributor to our local communities, we understand the role we play and will always seek to enable everyone at EAST to be considered, active, positive citizens of the world around them. Our sense of community begins in our schools and we nurture a respectful, supportive culture.

ABOUT CASTLE EAST SCHOOL IN BUNGAY, SUFFOLK



Our Location

Serving Suffolk's northern and Lowestoft areas, Castle EAST School is located in Bungay, at an existing school site (previously the Middle School and then Sixth Form Centre) which has been significantly refurbished. The accommodation and resources available are of an extremely high quality and fully support the delivery of excellent educational opportunities. Bungay is situated in a pleasant rural area, 20 miles from Norwich and 15 miles from the delightful heritage coast.