Head of School

Job Description

JOB PURPOSE

The Head of School will provide visible, ambitious and compassionate day-to-day leadership of the Alternative Provision school, under the strategic direction and line management of the Executive Headteacher and Director of Inclusion.

The post-holder will ensure pupils receive a safe, high-quality, personalised education that supports strong progress, improved engagement, positive behaviour, wellbeing and successful next steps. They will promote a trauma-informed, relational and inclusive culture while maintaining clear expectations for learning, safety and conduct.

Operating at Deputy Headteacher level, the Head of School will lead the daily organisation and continuous improvement of the provision, translating Trust and school strategy into consistent practice.

The Executive Headteacher retains executive and strategic accountability, with responsibilities delegated to the Head of School through agreed Trust governance, policies and schemes of delegation.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Leadership, strategy and school improvement**

- Provide highly visible day-to-day leadership and sustain a calm, purposeful and inclusive school culture.
- Implement the strategic vision, priorities and improvement plans agreed with the Executive Headteacher.
- Lead robust self-evaluation and quality assurance, using evidence to identify strengths, priorities, risks and required action.
- Monitor progress against the school development plan and report clearly to the Executive Headteacher and, when required, Trust leaders and governance.
- Contribute to inspection readiness, external review and Trust-wide improvement activity.
- Promote equality, inclusion and high expectations, challenging practice that creates barriers for pupils or staff.

2. Quality of education and curriculum

- Lead the consistent implementation of an ambitious, broad and personalised curriculum that reflects pupils’ starting points, needs and destinations.

- Monitor teaching, assessment, intervention and curriculum implementation through proportionate quality assurance, including learning visits, work scrutiny, pupil voice and analysis of progress information.
- Ensure appropriate academic, vocational, therapeutic, enrichment and personal development pathways are available and evaluated for impact.
- Secure effective baseline assessment, target setting, progress tracking, accreditation, transition, reintegration and destination planning.
- Support and challenge curriculum and subject leaders to improve the quality and consistency of provision.
- Promote literacy, numeracy, digital confidence, careers education and preparation for adulthood across the curriculum.

3. Safeguarding, SEND and pupil welfare

- Promote a vigilant safeguarding culture in which pupils are heard, concerns are acted upon and staff understand their responsibilities.
- Undertake the designated safeguarding role where appointed and ensure safeguarding systems, records, referrals and multi-agency responses are effective.
- Ensure SEND needs and Education, Health and Care Plans are understood, delivered, reviewed and reflected in classroom practice and individual support.
- Oversee effective risk assessment, positive handling arrangements, medical needs and individual safety, support or reintegration plans.
- Embed trauma-informed, relational, restorative and therapeutic approaches without lowering expectations for safety, conduct or learning.
- Escalate complex or high-risk safeguarding, welfare or placement concerns to the Executive Headteacher without delay.

4. Behaviour, attendance and engagement

- Lead a consistent culture of positive behaviour, respectful relationships, clear routines and purposeful learning.
- Use attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and engagement information to identify patterns and coordinate timely intervention.
- Lead strategies that improve attendance, punctuality, engagement and sustained participation in education.
- Ensure sanctions, suspensions and any recommendations concerning exclusion are lawful, proportionate, accurately recorded and considered alongside preventative support and the Executive Headteacher’s authority.
- Promote meaningful pupil voice, leadership and participation in decisions affecting school life.
- Work with families and partners to remove barriers to attendance, learning and successful transition.

5. People leadership and professional culture

- Provide delegated line management for identified staff and lead through clear expectations, regular communication and accountable follow-up.
- Lead effective induction, appraisal, coaching and continuing professional development, aligned with school and Trust priorities.
- Deploy staff effectively to meet pupil needs and maintain safe, sustainable and responsive provision.

- Promote staff wellbeing and psychologically informed practice while addressing conduct, capability or performance concerns fairly and promptly in liaison with the Executive Headteacher and HR.
- Contribute to safer recruitment, workforce planning, talent development and succession planning.
- Model Oak Learning Partnership's values through respectful, visible, consistent and solution-focused leadership.

6. Operations, resources and compliance

- Lead the effective daily organisation of the school, ensuring routines, staffing, timetables, pupil movement and communication support safe and efficient operation.
- Manage delegated resources and budget responsibilities within agreed limits, ensuring value for money and educational impact.
- Work closely with Trust central services on finance, HR, estates, IT, governance, compliance, communications, data protection and risk management.
- Ensure the premises are safe, secure, accessible and suitable, and that health and safety, business continuity and emergency arrangements are understood and tested.
- Maintain accurate records relating to pupils, placements, staffing, incidents, interventions and statutory or commissioning requirements.
- Identify and escalate operational or compliance risks, providing clear proposed actions and following through agreed decisions.

7. Partnerships, commissioning and community

- Build effective professional relationships with parents and carers, referring schools, local authorities, social care, health, police and other agencies.
- Provide clear information to commissioners and partners concerning placement suitability, progress, review, transition and emerging risk.
- Support pathways for reintegration to mainstream or specialist settings and progression to further education, training or employment.
- Represent the school and Trust professionally and contribute to confidence in the quality, safety and impact of the provision.
- Contribute to outreach, early intervention and Trust-wide inclusion work as agreed with the Executive Headteacher.

8. Leadership arrangements and deputising

- Work within delegated authority and maintain regular, open communication with the Executive Headteacher.
- Provide the Executive Headteacher with accurate assurance on performance, safeguarding, staffing, operations and improvement activity.
- Take operational decisions within the scope of the role and refer reserved, high-risk or strategic matters appropriately.
- Deputise for the Executive Headteacher where requested, recognising that executive, statutory and Trust-level accountability remains subject to formal governance and delegation arrangements.
- Undertake a teaching commitment or direct work with pupils where this is specified for the role.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Undertake other duties appropriate to the level and nature of the role and work flexibly across the Trust where reasonably required.
- Maintain confidentiality, professional boundaries and high standards of conduct at all times.
- Comply with Trust policies, the staff code of conduct and all relevant statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Participate in appraisal, professional development and role-related training.
- This job description may be reviewed to reflect changing organisational, statutory or operational requirements following appropriate consultation.

Person Specification

CRITERIA	**Experience, Qualifications and Training:** On their application form, candidates will demonstrate that they have the following training, qualifications and school experience:
ESSENTIAL	**DESIRABLE**
• Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). • Degree or equivalent qualification. • Evidence of sustained and relevant professional development in leadership, safeguarding, SEND, SEMH, inclusion or alternative provision. • Successful senior leadership experience in a school or education setting. • Evidence of leading measurable improvement in teaching, curriculum, behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, inclusion or pupil outcomes. • Experience of leading teams, managing performance and implementing organisational change. • Experience of whole-school responsibility and providing assurance to senior leaders. • Experience of working effectively with families and multi-agency partners.	• NPQSL, NPQH or equivalent leadership qualification. • Further qualification relating to SEND, SEMH, safeguarding, trauma-informed practice or alternative provision. • Designated safeguarding lead training. • Leadership experience within alternative provision, special education or an SEMH setting. • Experience at Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher or Head of School level. • Experience of inspection, external review or Trust quality assurance. • Experience of developing or expanding specialist or alternative provision.

CRITERIA	**Ability, Skills and Knowledge:** In their statement of suitability and during the selection process, candidates will demonstrate that they have the following ability, skills and knowledge:
ESSENTIAL	
• Strong understanding of safeguarding, safer working practice and the needs of vulnerable learners. • Strong understanding of curriculum, effective teaching, assessment and school improvement.	

- Knowledge of SEND, EHCPs, behaviour, attendance and inclusive practice.
- Understanding of trauma-informed, relational and restorative approaches.
- Understanding of school operations, HR, health and safety, data protection, resource management and organisational risk.
- Understanding of professional accountability, delegated leadership and appropriate escalation.
- Ability to translate strategic priorities into clear operational plans and consistent daily practice.
- Ability to analyse complex information, evaluate impact, identify risk and take timely decisions.
- Ability to lead, motivate and develop staff, combining support with clear accountability.
- Excellent communication, influencing and relationship-building skills.
- Ability to manage competing priorities and sensitive situations calmly and professionally.
- Ability to engage pupils and families whose previous experience of education may have been difficult.
- Ability to write accurate reports and present clear assurance to senior leaders.

CRITERIA	**Personal style and behaviour:** In their statement of suitability and during the selection process, candidates will explain how they have they demonstrate their personal style and behaviour:

ESSENTIAL

- Unwavering commitment to safeguarding, equality and the best interests of pupils.
- High levels of integrity, resilience, emotional intelligence and professional credibility.
- Compassionately rigorous, combining warmth and respect with high expectations.
- Visible, approachable, reflective and solution-focused.
- Able to inspire trust, collaboration and confidence across the school community.
- Commitment to Oak Learning Partnership’s values and inclusive mission.

Oak Learning Partnership is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in their care and expects everybody working for the organisation to share this commitment. To this end any offer of employment will be subject to safer recruitment checks and clearances.