Shrewsbury Academy

part of the Marches Academy Trust

SPECIALIST INCLUSION BASE SENIOR LEADER (HEAD OF THE GATEWAY)

RECRUITMENT PACK

November 2026

Meet our Co-Headteachers



Amy Chevin-Dooley and Natalie Rock
Co-Headteachers, Shrewsbury Academy

Welcome to Shrewsbury Academy.

We are delighted to be leading our school at such an important and exciting point in its journey. We share an unwavering belief that every child deserves an exceptional education, a genuine sense of belonging and the opportunity to achieve more than they ever imagined possible.

Our ambition is simple: *A school where every child belongs and learning is at the heart of everything we do so that children can achieve more than they imagined possible.*

A school that our children, families, staff and wider community are proud to call their own.

Our values, **Be kind. Aim high. Embrace learning.**, shape the culture we are building. We believe that kindness and high expectations go hand in hand. Every child should be known, understood, supported and challenged. We will never lower our ambitions for young people, but we recognise our responsibility to provide the teaching, care and support that enable every child to succeed.

We are placing learning firmly at the centre of school life, with a renewed focus on strong foundations in reading, writing, communication, mathematics and knowledge. We want our children to become confident, articulate and curious learners who think critically, embrace challenges and develop a lifelong love of learning. Alongside academic achievement, we are committed to providing rich experiences, broadening horizons and opening doors to exciting futures.

We are equally ambitious for our staff. We are building a school characterised by strong relationships, professional trust, collaboration and a shared commitment to excellence. We want colleagues who believe in the potential of every child, who are passionate about their craft and who want to help shape something truly special.

Above all, we believe a great school is a pillar of its community. Our vision is to create a place of connection, opportunity and pride, where families feel welcome, children flourish and staff are proud of the difference they make.

This is a significant opportunity to be part of our school's next chapter. We are looking for people who share our ambition, embrace the challenge of improvement and want to make a lasting difference to the lives of our young people.

We look forward to welcoming you and sharing our vision for the future.

Job description



Post title
Specialist Inclusion Base Senior Leader (Head of The Gateway)

Salary
L11 – 15

Hours of work
1.0 FTE

Post status
Permanent

We offer

- An enriching curriculum and learning experience for our young people.
- Excellent professional learning and support at every stage in your career, with opportunity for continued personal development through our Talent Pathway Career development opportunities including funded NPQ qualifications.
- An enthusiastic and supportive team of staff, parents and governors.
- A core belief in staff wellbeing and work life balance for all, evidenced in policy and practice.
- Benefits including funded counselling, physiotherapy, assess to GP consultations and other medical support.
- Laptop for work and personal use.

Purpose

Help shape a school where every child belongs and learning is at the heart of everything we do.

As Specialist Inclusion Base Senior Leader (Head of The Gateway), you will design and lead a coherent, ambitious and highly personalised education for pupils whose SEND, social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, and associated barriers to engagement, require a specialist pathway within the school.

Why this role above others?

- A supportive environment with an experienced team where you will be invested in and valued.
- A varied and exciting role – building relationships with a range of colleagues across the Multi-Academy Trust.
- A varied day with different experiences and challenges.

Any questions in regard to the role can be raised with, Sarah Downward on sarah.downward@shr.mmat.co.uk ahead of the closing date: 07.12.2026

Responsible to:

Deputy Headteacher

Outline of role:

To lead The Gateway, the school's specialist inclusion base, with delegated responsibility for its educational quality, daily operation, culture, staffing, inclusion, safety, safeguarding implementation and pupil outcomes. The postholder will design and lead a coherent, ambitious and highly personalised education for pupils whose SEND, social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, and associated barriers to engagement, require a specialist pathway within the school. They will secure strong foundations in literacy, communication, mathematics and wider knowledge while creating meaningful routes into subject learning, qualifications, vocational experiences, independence, reintegration and future destinations. There must be no ceiling on pupils' achievement: the pathway adapts to the learner, rather than limiting what the learner may aspire to achieve.

Main Duties

Strategic Leadership Of The Gateway

- Take overall delegated accountability for the quality, safety, organisation, culture, educational experience and outcomes of The Gateway as a specialist provision within the school.
- Create, implement and evaluate the provision's vision, operational model, development plan and graduated pathways, aligned with whole-school improvement priorities and the Learning for Life framework.
- Lead the design of individual pupil pathways, ensuring decisions about placement, access and review are evidence-led, time-bound and made with relevant school leaders, the SENDCO, families and external partners.
- Oversee staffing, timetables, routines, resources, specialist spaces, pupil oversight and escalation arrangements, ensuring a calm, highly structured and purposeful environment.

Curriculum, Pathways And Aspirational Outcomes

- Design and quality assure a personalised, sequenced curriculum built from accurate assessment of each pupil's starting points, learning gaps, interests, strengths, aspirations and identified needs.
- Secure deliberate teaching of reading, writing, oracy, vocabulary, numeracy, communication and learning-to-learn skills alongside rich subject knowledge and personal development.
- Develop flexible academic, practical and vocational pathways, including appropriate GCSE, functional skills, entry-level or vocational accreditation, without restricting ambitious learners to lower-level routes.
- Work with subject and phase leaders to secure access to specialist teaching, a broad and balanced curriculum and high-quality adaptive teaching, including blended learning where appropriate.
- Build progressive opportunities for careers education, work-related learning, employability, independence and preparation for adulthood, ensuring safe and purposeful partnerships with providers.
- Ensure each pupil has an individual learning and progression plan, with clear curriculum entitlement, qualification goals, next steps and planned review points.

Specialist Inclusion, SEND And SEMH

- Lead coherent, needs-led provision for pupils with complex SEND and SEMH profiles, including those whose distress or dysregulation may present through outward-facing or high-risk behaviours.
- Work closely with the SENDCO to ensure that reasonable adjustments, EHCP Section F provision, specialist advice and statutory review arrangements are accurately translated into daily practice.
- Use person-centred assessment and graduated support to identify underlying barriers, plan precise interventions and evaluate their impact on learning, wellbeing and participation.

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- Coordinate input from educational psychology, therapeutic professionals, social care, health services, MATi and other specialist partners as appropriate, without substituting interventions for pupils' educational entitlement.
- Ensure the Gateway is a route to increased opportunity, including supported access to mainstream classes or reintegration when appropriate, rather than an isolated or permanent destination by default.

Behaviour, Culture, Safety And Critical Incidents

- Establish an emotionally safe, respectful culture that combines relational practice, consistently high expectations, explicit routines, boundaries and proportionate responses to behaviour, based on the window of social discipline.
- Lead staff confidently through episodes of serious dysregulation, aggression or crisis, exercising calm professional judgement, directing safe and lawful responses and protecting pupils and colleagues.
- Ensure effective individual risk assessments, positive behaviour support plans, dynamic risk management, de-escalation strategies and properly authorised physical intervention practices where applicable.
- Oversee timely incident recording, safeguarding escalation, family communication, restorative or repair processes, return-to-learning plans and post-incident review.
- Challenge unsafe, inconsistent or low-expectation practice, coach staff in effective responses and develop their competence to meet complex needs without normalising disruption or exclusion.

Attendance, Engagement And Access To Learning

- Lead daily systems that account for every pupil in the provision, track punctuality, attendance, lesson presence, learning engagement and safe movement across the site.
- Agree individual engagement goals and planned transitions, evaluating whether pupils are spending more time learning, accessing wider curriculum opportunities and successfully sustaining positive routines.



- Work with attendance, behaviour and safeguarding leads to provide timely, coordinated responses to persistent absence, internal truancy, suspension risk and disengagement.
- Oversee transition into, within and out of The Gateway, including handovers, graduated access to mainstream lessons, receiving-staff preparation and continuing support.

Quality Assurance, Assessment And Accountability

- Establish baselines and review measures for academic progress, foundational skills, qualifications, attendance, lesson access, safety, personal development and sustained engagement.

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- Lead regular provision review, lesson visits, pupil work scrutiny, staff coaching and pupil and family voice to evaluate the quality of education and the impact of interventions.
- Use pupil-level information and cohort trends to identify ineffective provision, target resources, amend pathways promptly and report accurately to the Deputy Headteacher and senior leaders.
- Contribute evidence and evaluation to school self-evaluation, improvement planning, external scrutiny and governance reporting.

Leading People And Securing Consistent Practice

- Line manage, deploy, coach, appraise and develop designated teachers, specialist practitioners and support staff, providing clear direction, constructive challenge and accountability.
- Lead professional learning in specialist curriculum delivery, SEND, SEMH, restorative practice, behaviour support and safeguarding, modelling high-quality interaction with pupils.
- Establish clear roles, decision rights, supervision, communication routines and contingency arrangements, including safe cover for staff absence or critical incidents.
- Contribute to recruitment, staff wellbeing, performance management and efficient use of delegated budgets and resources.

Families, Partnerships And Whole-school Inclusion

- Build purposeful, honest and constructive partnerships with families, including when relationships are strained or pupils' circumstances are complex.
- Coordinate timely multi-agency communication and professional challenge with the local authority, children's social care, health, specialist providers and careers services as required.
- Advise and support school leaders and subject teams to strengthen mainstream inclusive practice, share specialist expertise and reduce avoidable referrals or withdrawal.
- Provide clear, regular communication about each pupil's learning, wellbeing, progress, attendance, next steps and future destinations.

Teaching And Wider Leadership Responsibilities

- Undertake an agreed teaching commitment, modelling effective, ambitious and adaptive practice with pupils who have complex learning and SEMH needs.
- Contribute to school senior leadership activity, policy development, professional learning, school improvement and Trust collaboration as required.
- Exercise sound professional judgement and delegated leadership responsibility consistent with the seniority of the post, under the direction of the Deputy Headteacher.

Safeguarding

All staff share responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The postholder must comply with Trust policies, statutory guidance and safer working practices, act promptly on concerns and maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Other Information

This job description outlines the principal duties of the role and may be reviewed in response to school and Trust priorities. It does not form part of the contract of employment. Appointment is subject to relevant safer recruitment and pre-employment checks, including an enhanced DBS check.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and training 	• Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and evidence of relevant, sustained professional development.	• NASENCO, NPQSEND or another recognised SENDCO qualification. • NPQSL, NPQH, specialist SEND/SEMH or relevant postgraduate leadership qualification. • Relevant training in positive behaviour support, de-escalation or authorised physical intervention.
Experience 	• Substantial successful teaching experience, including pupils with SEND and/or significant SEMH needs and outward-facing behavioural presentations. • Experience of leading a phase, specialist provision, inclusion team or significant school-improvement priority, with demonstrable impact on pupils' experiences and outcomes. • Experience of leading and developing other professionals and working constructively with families and multi-agency partners.	• Experience of establishing or leading a specialist inclusion base, resourced provision or alternative education pathway.
Knowledge 	• Strong understanding of SEND, SEMH, inclusive practice, the SEND Code of Practice, EHCP provision, reasonable adjustments, safeguarding and the responsibilities of mainstream schools. • Secure knowledge of attachment, emotional regulation, relational approaches, risk assessment and evidence-informed responses to behaviours that challenge. • Knowledge of curriculum sequencing, assessment and adaptive teaching, with particular expertise in securing reading, writing, oracy, numeracy and prerequisite knowledge. • Understanding of differentiated academic and vocational routes, qualification pathways and preparation for adulthood, while maintaining ambitious curriculum entitlement and progression. • Understanding of attendance, suspension, exclusion, child protection, multi-agency working and safe operation of specialist provision.	• Knowledge of commissioning, coordinating and quality assuring specialist or off-site provision and vocational partners. • Experience of qualifications such as GCSE, Functional Skills, Entry Level or vocational awards, and progression to post-16 pathways. • Knowledge of Arbor, CPOMS or comparable attendance, assessment and safeguarding systems.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Skills	• Leadership and Professional Skills Ability to take delegated strategic and operational accountability for the curriculum, staffing, safety, culture, organisation and outcomes of a complex specialist inclusion base. • Design and evaluate bespoke academic, foundational and vocational pathways without imposing an artificial ceiling on achievement. • Proven ability to establish safe routines and consistently high expectations, direct staff through serious behavioural incidents and make sound, proportionate decisions under pressure. • Ability to lead, coach, supervise, appraise and challenge staff, including addressing inconsistent or ineffective practice. • Ability to coordinate specialist provision with SENDCOs, subject and phase leaders, therapists, external agencies and families, while maintaining clear accountability for learning. • Strong analytical skills to establish baselines, identify need, assess progress and demonstrate impact through pupil-level data and direct evidence. • Ability to communicate sensitively and assertively with pupils and families in challenging circumstances and develop trusting professional relationships.	• Experience of leading significant provision redesign or organisational transformation. • Experience of developing vocational/employer partnerships, quality assurance or specialist curriculum accreditation. • Experience managing budgets, resources and staffing.
Personal Attributes	• Credible, ambitious, resilient and emotionally intelligent leader with the professional courage and composure to manage high-pressure situations. • Unwavering commitment to safeguarding, inclusion, belonging, achievement and pupils' dignity, particularly when behaviour is complex or confrontational. • Belief that every pupil can learn, improve and progress, with no ceiling placed on well-engaged learners because of their pathway, history or identified needs. • Ability to combine care and positive relationships with firm, consistent boundaries, high expectations and decisive action. • Reflective, collaborative, solution-focused and willing to challenge assumptions and improve provision.	• Experience of developing a distinctive specialist provision identity within a mainstream school.

Safer Recruitment And Safeguarding

In addition to candidates' ability to perform the duties of the post, selection will explore motivation to work with children and young people; the ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and professional boundaries; emotional resilience when managing serious behavioural challenges; safe use of authority and proportionate responses; and commitment to safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare.

Welcome from the CEO



This is a high achieving Trust that is imaginative and creative in its approach to teaching and learning and is keen to look for continued sustained improvement.

Our vision ‘Achievement through Caring’ is central to all that we do at The Marches Academy Trust. Our schools are, innovative and striving to ensure that young people make the very most of their learning adventure and are equipped with the skills required to prosper in the modern world.

We are immensely proud of the Alliance of Leading Learning who provide a wide range of professional development opportunities across our Trust, nationally and internationally.

Sarah Finch

CEO
The Marches Academy Trust

Our family of schools currently includes:

- The Marches School and Sixth Form in Oswestry
- Sir John Talbot’s School and Sixth Form in Whitchurch
- Tilstock CE Primary School and Nursery in Whitchurch
- The Grove School and Sixth Form in Market Drayton
- Lower Heath CE Primary School and Nursery in Lower Heath
- Shrewsbury Academy in Shrewsbury
- Longlands Primary School and Nursery in Market Drayton
- Grange Primary School and Nursery in Shrewsbury
- Oakmeadow CE Primary School and Nursery in Shrewsbury
- Woodlands School in Wem
- Idsall School and Sixth Form in Shifnal
- Cockshutt CE Primary School and Nursery in Ellesmere
- Criftins CE Primary School and Nursery in Ellesmere
- Selattyn CE Primary School in Oswestry
- West Felton CE Primary School and Nursery in Oswestry
- Weston Lullingfields CE Primary School and Nursery nr Shrewsbury
- St Andrew’s CE Primary School and Nursery nr Shrewsbury
- Kinnerley CE Primary School and Nursery in Oswestry

Who we are



Welcome to the Marches Academy Trust!

We are a multi-academy sponsor based in Shropshire, currently comprising five secondary schools, five primary schools and one special school.

Across our Trust we have a wealth of experience to inspire and motivate children, young people and staff to be the very best they can.

Achievement Through Caring drives our Trust, and our values are shared throughout our family of schools; we work together on embedding them in everything we do.

Our Trust prides itself on delivering high quality education and connecting with our children and young people to inspire and enthuse them to learn, achieve and to be happy.





Check out our video:

https://youtu.be/Ej3JREWUyrA

Interested? Here's how to apply:

Complete the Online Application Form

The closing date for applications is:

9AM Monday 7th December 2026

Interviews will be held:
Thursday 10th December 2026 or
Friday 11th December 2026

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in our care and expect all staff to share this commitment.

A core belief in staff wellbeing and work life balance evidenced in policy and practice

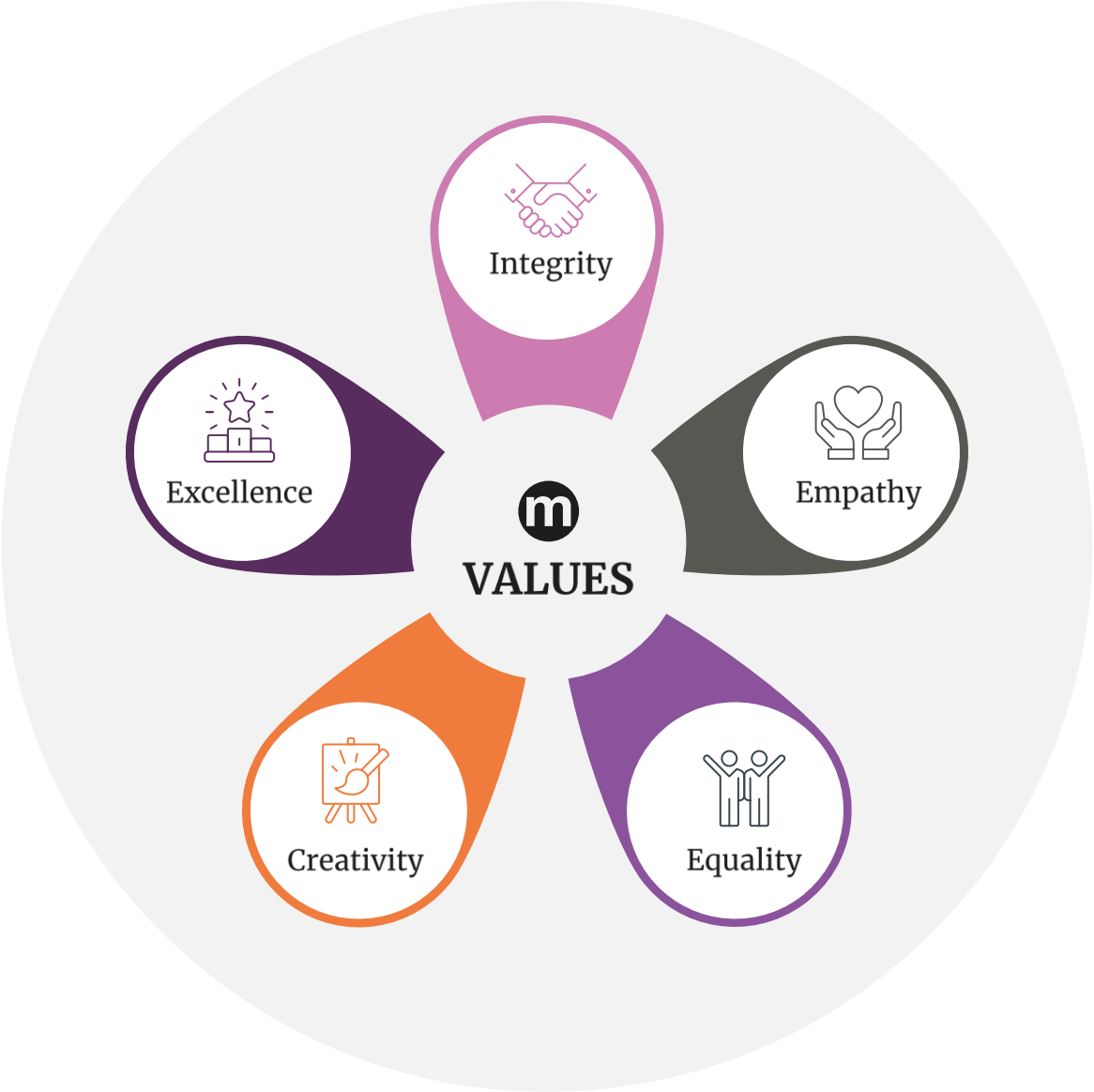
Our Trust Vision Statement and Values

Our Vision

Achievement through caring

Mission Statement

As a Trust, it's our mission to empower everyone in our Trust and our communities to live and breathe our values and Achievement Through Caring, to reach their full potential.



Our investment in you

Talent Spotting our Future Leaders

Our Talent Pathway supports the professional development of staff within the trust. We identify leadership talent and leadership needs for future succession planning – ensuring relevant and practical leadership development opportunities for staff.

Our talent management programme and our Career Development Pathways provide a framework for the discussion of your leadership journey and the professional learning you can access along the way.

Talent Contract

The Talent contract is a promise; a covenant between yourself and the trust that the Trust will do it's very best to support and develop you professionally. The Contract describes a variety of Professional development opportunities and encourages you to identify and pursue your training needs.

We believe successful creative lifelong learners participate in a journey of self-discovery. They know how to learn, acquire skills and feel safe to take risks with confidence and courage.



Our investment in you

We really care about employee wellbeing and our commitment is set out in our Wellbeing Policy and Charter. This commitment is underpinned by our four pillars of wellbeing;

Emotional

Some examples include a robust induction programme, Trust newsletter, professional performance reviews(appraisal) and line manager check-in meeting. We have clear policies and procedures relating to all aspects of your employment and we carry out an annual well-being survey to gauge the health of our staff.

Physical

We are blessed that our schools are located in beautiful Shropshire market towns and /or rural locations. We can offer discounted local gyms and onsite facilities in our secondary schools.

Financial

We offer membership to two great pension schemes; Local government pension scheme and Teachers' pension scheme. Our terms and conditions are aligned to Burgundy Book & School Teachers Pay & Conditions Document (teachers) and NJC Green Book (associate staff). We also recognise continuous service for sickness, maternity and annual leave entitlements for those transferring under the Redundancy payments (local government) Modification Order (RPMO).

Social

Encouragement of great working relationships and sense of belonging through team building events, PD days, end of term events and Trust Awards evening.

Generous non-contact time for staff

Wellbeing Offer

We are delighted that our wellbeing offer includes access to a free confidential medical and wellbeing service with School's Advisory Service (SAS) for all staff. Services available include counselling, bereavement counselling, physiotherapy, menopause support and stress awareness sessions. We encourage staff to utilize SAS in seeking out preventative and early intervention by making support easily accessible for all!



ALL
Alliance of Leading Learning

We are a school led inclusive partnership representing all phases and school contexts nationally and internationally. Our core team at The Marches Academy Trust have trained over 400 ITT and over 150 School Direct students; we have also led the professional learning of over 5,000 educational leaders and governors.

We deliver the DfE National Professional Qualifications, and we actively encourage our staff to complete an NPQ programme at their earliest opportunity.

We also talent spot, from within our Trust team, colleagues who want to share their expertise and enhance their experiences by becoming an Improvement Consultant.

Supporting schools, departments and individuals across the Trust and also external schools.

Embracing all our work is the unique Professional Learning Conference we host each year which continues to inspire school colleagues nationally.

In joining The Marches Academy Trust you have direct access to an outward facing large group of outstanding schools across the West Midlands and beyond.

Quite simply we want to ensure the right expertise exists to enhance a self-improving system and impact learners, leaders and schools to drive continuous improvement.

You will be part of this success story as a member of our team; and on starting your new post you will also be starting your learning journey - with all the benefits of being part of a large and successful Trust with exemplary partnerships nationally and internationally.



We hold true to delivering current, inspirational training that has real impact back in the workplace. Most importantly our participants confirm in countless testimonials that we invest in their leadership journey.

Cavelle Priestley-Bird, Executive Director
of People and Development)

Bits you need to know

The Marches Academy Trust values each person equally. We are committed to building a diverse team and embedding a welcoming, inclusive culture that encourages diversity and authenticity. We believe this will encourage creative ways of thinking – ensuring we collaborate more effectively and achieve better outcomes. We welcome applicants from all qualified candidates who share this commitment.

Everyone within our Academy Trust shares the objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn in an education setting and identifying those who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, taking appropriate action with the aim of ensuring they are kept safe both at home and within the education setting and we expect all staff to share this commitment. Shortlisted applicants will be asked to declare any criminal convictions and will be subject to online checks. The successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

“This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and as such all applicants who are appointed to this post will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau before the appointment is confirmed. This check will include details of cautions, reprimands or warnings, as well as convictions and non-conviction information. Once provisionally appointed, the successful applicant may also be required to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure at predetermined intervals during the course of their employment whilst in this post.”



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