

# HEADTEACHER APPLICATION PACK

## The Garden School



 THE GARDEN

**ACORN**

Always **A**mbitious  
Enhances **C**ommunication  
Provides **O**pportunities  
Builds **R**esilience  
Meets **N**eeds

Working for every child

 **Hackney**



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# WELCOME

## Dear Applicant,

Welcome to The Garden School and thank you for your interest in applying to become our new Headteacher. We are a maintained special school for 200 pupils with autism and severe learning difficulties, aged 4 to 19 years, operating across two sites in the London Borough of Hackney.

In our 2024 graded Ofsted inspection we achieved good in all areas. As a governing body, our ambition now is to support the school and a new Headteacher to consolidate and assure good and better practice, and to move rapidly to great and outstanding education for all our pupils.

We are seeking an ambitious Headteacher who believes in, and can lead us to realise, the full learning and life potential of our pupils. If you are the right candidate, you will understand the relationship between Positive Behaviour Support, self-regulation and readiness for learning, and the key role enhancing communication plays in the educational achievement and life chances of our pupils. You will be capable of building and maintaining positive relationships with parents, and relish the opportunity to treat them as partners in the education of their children.

As Headteacher, you will demand and support excellence in the classroom, effectiveness in the senior leadership team, and high quality and efficiency in all aspects of school business and administration. You will be capable of operating at a strategic level in relation to finance and resources, and account to governors for all school business, including safeguarding and compliance. You will reap the benefit for our pupils of working in partnership with a range of professionals and local people, including Hackney Education, health and social services, special schools and the wider community.

If you feel that I am describing you, please apply. I can promise you in return that, if you are successful, you will be supported and challenged to excel by a passionately committed and highly skilled governing body.

Jo Clare

Chair of Governors

## WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR IN OUR NEW HEADTEACHER

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The vacancy for a Headteacher has arisen further to a period of interim leadership and highly focused school improvement. We are looking for a motivational and experienced leader to embed the gains we have made in key aspects of school life - attendance, safeguarding, behaviour, communication, curriculum, transitions - and ensure their combined effectiveness leads to greater pupil progress, academic achievement and better life chances for all our pupils.

We are also looking for a Headteacher who recognises and values everyone involved in the smooth running of a school and who is key to maintaining a calm, positive and productive culture for: pupils and their parents and carers; operational staff and office staff; teachers and teaching assistants; Positive Behaviour Support coaches, Enrichment tutors, and visiting professionals (SALT, OTs) and everyone involved in family liaison, safeguarding and child protection.

We are looking for a leader who can think and act strategically and motivate, command and support effective leadership and management across all school activities and functions, including finance and human resources.

Finally, we need our new Head to relish working in a supportive and accountable partnership with governors and, who can work collaboratively and strategically with Hackney Education and other special school leaders in meeting the financial and capacity challenges facing the SEND sector.

# MISSION AND SHARED VALUES

Enhanced by our ambitious new ACORN curriculum, our mission is to ensure that all of our pupils and students, whatever their starting point can learn safely, make exceptional progress and develop into capable, creative and confident young citizens.

## We will achieve our mission by:

- setting high expectations for all pupils students, teachers and staff
- taking a safeguarding first approach
- providing a stimulating, safe and supportive environment in which every member of the school feels valued and can flourish
- training and developing all staff so that they can grow and develop
- working as a team, adopting a can-do culture and partnership with parents and families, to achieve the best for our pupils
- providing a curriculum and teaching that responds to needs, inspires and motivates.



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## OUR VALUES:

- **Integrity** - we are honest, open, and value reflective practice.
- **Respect** - everyone is a valued and unique person, treated with dignity and kindness, and encouraged to become empowered, confident, independent members of our community and beyond.
- **Ambition** - we are tenacious and ambitious in our work, seeking to perform well and deliver the highest quality educational experience.
- **Perseverance** - we show resilience and a tireless pursuit of excellence in all we do. We are unwavering in our effort to harness all opportunities the children, young people, and families deserve.
- **Collaboration** - we partner effectively to seek the very best outcomes for all our pupils, families, and stakeholders.
- We value research to develop our expertise and share and embed innovative and effective practice. We are outward looking and growing influence in our local area and beyond.

## OUR FAMILIES

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The school values the relationship with parents and carers and recognises their voice when making decisions around the needs of their child. We aspire to good communications at all times with our pupils and students' parents and carers and our partners, Hackney Education, occupational health, the SEND service, our local authority, and with the other schools in the borough.

Our next Headteacher will share this passion and, through the senior team, build a programme of accessible and meaningful engagement activities throughout the year for parents and children and the school.

## OUR SCHOOL SITES

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The Garden School has two buildings, the main site and the Pavilion, which caters for Post-16. The two parts provide caring and well-equipped learning environments. They are tailored and include highly structured and low arousal classroom spaces and a total communication approach, with facilities that cater for the educational development and therapeutic needs of pupils with autism.

The main site, Wordsworth Road, London N16 8BZ, is a state-of-the-art learning space awarded the 2014 RIBA architectural prize for Best Educational and Community Building in London.

The Pavilion, 28 Ickburgh Road, London E5 8AD, opened in 2022, and offers our Post-16 and Key Stage 4 provision. Across both sites there is student-centred ethos, large classrooms, wide corridors, an abundance of natural light, and well-maintained multi-purpose facilities. Interactive whiteboards and technology is used extensively to support learning.

There are smaller group rooms, sensory spaces for therapeutic sessions and soft play areas. The Garden has a Drama and Dance Studio and both sites have a Gym built for a range of sports; a café run by students to foster work-related learning and gain vital life skills; a residential flat equipped with kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom to help develop independence and skills for adult life; and parent areas for reviews, meetings, and training services provided by the school.

### **The Garden School**

[www.the-garden.org.uk/](http://www.the-garden.org.uk/)

## PRIORITIES AND FUTURE PLANS

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Priorities for 2025/26 are drawn from our graded Ofsted inspection in December 2024, Hackney Education school improvement reviews and internal self-assessment:

- Embed our new ACORN curriculum, securing consistency and ensuring pupil progress across all phases
- Fully embed early reading through the Little Wandle phonics scheme and combine with a school/home partnership which supports learning
- Increase opportunities for pupils to communicate more during lessons in line with the SCERTS model.
- Ensure consistency in the delivery of teaching by developing more robust career development structures and professional learning processes, including targeted continuing professional development (CPD), and improved performance management and appraisal systems
- Develop partnership with leaders in local special schools to share innovation and models of good practice
- Lead at a strategic level with the School Business Manager, and governors, on longer term strategies for securing financial sustainability and best value
- Work with the chair and governors to improve the scrutiny, accountability and effectiveness of governance
- Develop strategic partnership with Hackney Education and local special school leaders in meeting the financial

and capacity challenges facing the local SEND sector.

### **We offer you the following:**

- The opportunity to lead and further develop a well-equipped school, with a dedicated, skilled and multi-disciplinary workforce.
- “... a nurturing school .... pupils and their families have access to a range of knowledgeable and caring professional support” - Ofsted, March 2023
- High expectations for the development of pupils’ life skills, a significant part of their preparation for adulthood and life beyond school - Ofsted, March 2023
- A shared services operation, that efficiently filters the day to day business, enabling the Headteacher to focus on running their school.
- A dedicated parent community, committed in moving the school forward.
- A supportive and forward looking governing body.

# JOB DESCRIPTION





**POST**

Headteacher of The Garden School

**RESPONSIBLE TO**

The Board of Governors of the school

**SALARY**

H06 21 – 35 £90,856 - £122,945

The postholder will be subject to the conditions of service for headteachers as set out in the schoolteachers pay and conditions document, The Burgundy Book, local conditions of service as they apply, and any local terms of employment agreed by the Governing Board.

**MAIN PURPOSE**

- The core purpose is to provide professional leadership and management of the school, always serving the best interests of pupils.
- At the front and centre of your work will be safeguarding and ensuring that pupils receive a planned, sequenced and ambitious curriculum in a safe, calm and well-ordered environment.
- This means vision, effective leadership and partnership with the governors and local authority in developing the school and its influence on the local community.

**SUMMARY OF KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Being an outstanding role model, working with the Board of Governors, to lead a compelling and collaborative vision, which embraces excellence, inclusion, clear educational pathways and ambitious outcomes for young people with SEND.

- Uphold the values and vision of the school, translating the latter into a shared plan with agreed objectives.
- Have regard for headteachers' standards and demonstrate principled and professional conduct within and outside school.
- Take a safeguarding first approach and ensure students are well prepared for effective learning and adulthood.
- Hold staff to account.
- Manage human and financial resources astutely, developing a highly skilled and motivated workforce.
- Maintain and enhance the building and facilities, and use of technologies, learning and sensory resources to create a stimulating and enriching environment.
- Develop and sustain effective relationships to ensure effective governance.
- Build/develop and maintain effective relationships with parents.
- Develop good relationships with our local authority, utilising its support and resources.
- Advocate effectively for all the young people at The Garden School.

# HEADTEACHERS' STANDARDS (DfE 2020)

## 1. SCHOOL CULTURE

- Establish and sustain the school's ethos and strategic direction in partnership with governors and through consultation with the school community.
- Create a culture where students experience a positive and enriching school life.
- Uphold ambitious educational standards which prepare students from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life.
- Promote positive and respectful relationships across the school community.
- Foster an open, transparent and equitable culture, including high staff professionalism.

## 2. TEACHING

- Ensure high-quality, expert teaching across all subjects and phases, including the "Pathways for Adulthood" framework.
- Ensure teaching is underpinned by high levels of expertise and approaches which respect the distinct nature of subject disciplines or specialist domains.
- Ensure effective formative assessment.

## 3. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

- Ensure a broad, structured and coherent curriculum entitlement which sets out the knowledge, skills and values to be taught.
- Establish effective curricular leadership, developing subject leaders with high levels of relevant expertise with access to professional networks and communities.
- Ensure that all pupils are taught to read through the provision of evidence-informed approaches to reading, particularly the use of systematic synthetic phonics in schools that teach early reading.
- Ensure valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.

## 4. BEHAVIOUR

- Establish and sustain high expectations of behaviour for all pupils, built upon relationships, rules and routines, which are understood clearly by all staff and pupils.
- Ensure high standards of pupil behaviour and courteous conduct in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
- Implement consistent, fair and respectful approaches to managing behaviour.
- Ensure that adults within the school model and teach the behaviour of a good citizen.

## 5. ADDITIONAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

- Ensure the school holds ambitious expectations for all pupils with additional and special educational needs and disabilities.
- Establish and sustain culture and practices that enable pupils to access the curriculum and learn effectively.
- Ensure the school works effectively in partnership with parents, carers and professionals, to identify the additional needs, special educational needs, and disabilities of pupils, providing support and adaptation where appropriate.
- Ensure the school fulfills its statutory duties with regard to the SEND code of practice.

## 6. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Ensure staff have access to high-quality, sustained professional development opportunities, aligned to balance the priorities of whole-school improvement, team and individual needs.
- Prioritise the professional development of staff, ensuring effective planning, delivery and evaluation which is consistent with the approaches laid out in the standard for teachers' professional development.
- Ensure that professional development opportunities draw on expert provision from beyond the school, as well as within it, including nationally recognised career and professional frameworks and programmes to build capacity and support succession planning.

## 7. ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT

- Ensure the protection and safety of pupils and staff through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of the duty of care.
- Prioritise and allocate financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds.
- Ensure staff are deployed and managed well with due attention paid to workload.
- Establish and oversee systems, processes and policies that enable the school to operate effectively and efficiently.
- Ensure rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk

## 8. CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- Make use of effective and proportional processes of evaluation to identify and analyse complex or persistent problems and barriers which limit school effectiveness, and identify priority areas for improvement.
- Develop appropriate evidence-informed strategies for improvement as part of well-targeted plans which are realistic, timely, appropriately sequenced and suited to the school's context.
- Ensure careful and effective implementation of improvement strategies, which lead to sustained school improvement over time.



## 9. WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- Forge constructive relationships beyond the school, working in partnership with parents, carers and the local community.
- Commit their school to work successfully with other schools and organisations in a climate of mutual challenge and support.
- Establish and maintain working relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues across other public services to improve educational outcomes for all pupils.

## 10. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Understand and welcome the role of effective governance, upholding their obligation to give account and accept responsibility.
- Establish and sustain professional working relationships with those responsible for governance.
- Ensure that staff know and understand their professional responsibilities and are held to account.
- Ensure the school effectively and efficiently operates within the required regulatory frameworks and meets all statutory duties.

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

## THE FORMAL SPECIFICATION AND YOUR APPLICATION

This outlines the key skills and experience we are looking for in our next headteacher.

Please ensure when completing your application that you address the relevant criteria as indicated in the application form columns below.

Your responses should include the actions,

and decisions you took and the outcome or impact of your involvement.

The supporting statement should be no longer than four A4 pages long and a font size no less than Arial 11 point or equivalent. Please do not include a CV as they are not accepted.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE

Degree and Qualified Teacher Status.	<b>E A</b>
Evidence of appropriate professional career development for the role of Headteacher such as the National Professional Qualification for Headship. (Must be willing to study for if not currently held).	<b>E A / R</b>
Master's Degree/Post Graduate qualification in Education/Leadership/SEND.	<b>A D</b>
Three or more years successful leadership in a special school context, in particular, serving the needs of an autistic roll and managing a diverse group of experienced staff.	<b>E A / R / I</b>
Ability to teach at a consistently high level.	<b>E A / I</b>
An understanding of current national policies, curriculum developments and the statutory and legal framework within which a school operates, including Ofsted.	<b>D A / I</b>
In-depth knowledge and experience of Child Protection, Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment procedures.	<b>E A / I</b>
An understanding of how to lead a team of diverse people.	<b>E A / I</b>

**E** - Essential

**D** - Desirable

**A** - Application

**R** - Reference

**I** - Interview

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE - SKILLS

Ability to set a vision, create purpose and unity, leading by example, strategy and process to ensure ownership, consistency and excellence.	E A / I
Successful track record in building and nurturing a strong, highly professional and collaborative team culture that delivers planned, continuous improvement.	E A / I
Strategic thinking and planning and leadership of whole school improvement initiatives that have had a sustained impact on the quality of education, particularly student attainment, raising aspirations and standards.	E A / I
Equity, diversity and inclusion throughout the school community and beyond.	E A / I
Effective management and accountability of a diverse group of staff to create strong and proactive engagement in whole-school priorities.	E I
In-depth understanding of what constitutes high-quality teaching and the ability to model this to support others to improve. Ability to give effective feedback to challenge and advance good practice.	E A / I
Understand the national curriculum and its application to pupils with autism.	E A / I
Understanding of the needs of students whose behavior presents a risk of harm and how these can be effectively managed.	E A / I
Ensure systematic and rigorous self-evaluation is in place, including the use of assessment data and other information to evaluate achievement and offer accountability for student learning, progress, and attainment.	E A / I
Successful record of developing effective distributive leadership.	E A / I
Proven good interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills that motivates, empowers and grows a diverse group of staff.	E
Has presence and the ability to make points clearly, to listen, understand and respond in a variety of situations.	E
Experience of leading change, resolving conflict and difference, and delivering impact under challenging and pressured circumstances	D A / I
Promoting health and safety and wellbeing of students and staff.	E A / I
Successful experience in analysing key data to develop evidence-informed strategies for school improvement.	D A / I
Experience of deploying and managing staff to deliver effective outcomes, utilising strengths and supporting areas for improvement.	E A / I
Experience of whole school policy development and implementation.	D A / I
Successful experience of working with governors to develop strategy and deliver the vision in order to ensure the best outcomes.	E A / I
Commitment to build and maintain effective relationships with parents, carers, governors, commissioners, other organisations and the wider community to support and enhance the education of all students.	E A / I
Experience of managing school finances effectively, understanding their contribution to school development and student outcomes.	D A / I

## PERSONAL QUALITIES

Upholds the Nolan principles – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.	<b>E</b>
Relate appropriately to inspire commitment, enthusiasm and confidence from staff, pupils, governors, and parents in promoting the values, ethos and standards of the school.	<b>E</b>
Passion for special education, coupled with ability and enthusiasm to see all children and young people reach their potential.	<b>E A / I</b>
Demonstrates optimistic personal behaviour and uses interpersonal skills to build and maintain positive and productive relationships.	<b>E A / I</b>
Visible – adaptive, responsive and nuanced leadership approaches, ‘hands on’ when required, knows when to delegate, support/coach and direct.	<b>E A / I</b>
High levels of emotional resilience and composure, able to work well under pressure and take a dynamic approach to the changing needs of the school population whilst maintaining high levels of organisation and consideration.	<b>E A / I</b>
Reflective, is able to accept criticism and put ‘the team’ above self.	<b>E A / I</b>
Thrives on challenge, with the necessary drive and determination to get a job done and win over the hearts and minds of others.	<b>E A / I</b>

**E** - Essential

**D** - Desirable

**A** - Application

**R** - Reference

**I** - Interview

## SAFER RECRUITMENT

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The Garden School and Hackney Council are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment. All successful candidates will be subject to disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks along with other relevant employment checks.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and we expect all staff to share this commitment. For this post pre-employment checks will be carried out, references will be sought and successful candidates will need to undertake an enhanced DBS check.

We welcome applications from all sections of the community, regardless of gender, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, age or any protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. .

## HOW TO APPLY

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The governors look forward to working in partnership with the successful applicant to continue the journey of development and improvement of our school. We ask that you please ensure the items set out in the Person Specification are addressed within your application, providing evidence of impact from your existing or previous positions, paying particular attention to the key focus areas and to the impact of your work.

If you are interested in applying, we would be delighted for you to visit our school in advance of your application.

Dates available are 12th, 13th, 18th, 19th February 2025. Please call Maria Theophilou to arrange your visit in advance.

Further details will be sent to those candidates called for interview. All applicants will be required to complete an Equality Monitoring form.





# HOW TO APPLY



**Salary:**

H06 21 – 35 £90,856 - £122,945

**Start date:**

September 2025 or earlier

**Application closing date:**

9am, 26th February 2025

**School Visits:**

12th or 13th February 2025

18th or 19th February 2025

**Shortlisting:**

4th March 2025

**Interviews:**

18th and 19th March 2025

1. Please read this application pack carefully.

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2. When completing your personal statement, you must address the job description and person specification, and give the impact of your work.

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3. We highly recommend that you visit our school before applying.

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4. To arrange a visit please call Maria Theophilou on 020 7254 8096

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5. Should you have any queries on the application process, please contact Junaid Khan, Human Resources Adviser, on 07543 5160301

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6. Send completed applications to [junaid.khan@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:junaid.khan@hackney.gov.uk)

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7. References will be sought for shortlisted candidates prior to the interview date.

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8. The successful candidate will be required to complete an enhanced DBS check.

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# ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

If you require this document in a different format, please email

[junaid.khan@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:junaid.khan@hackney.gov.uk)

We will consider your request and get back to you in the next five working days.

HDS18692



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