



Job Title: Head Teacher – Special Needs School (SEMH)

Location: Abinger, Surrey, RH5 6HZ

Salary: Minimum £70,000 (Merrywood Pay Scale)

Contract Type: Full-time, Permanent

Start Date: January 2026, however, start date may be earlier to incorporate setting up the new school site

About the School

We are a highly respected, trauma-informed special school with an Outstanding Ofsted rating, dedicated to supporting children and young people aged 5 to 16 with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Our school is a nurturing, inclusive environment where every pupil is valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.

The Role

We are seeking an inspirational and experienced Head Teacher to lead our school into its next chapter of excellence. The successful candidate will be a visionary leader with a progressive ethos, committed to trauma-informed practice and inclusive education. You will be responsible for the strategic direction, operational management, and continued development of a school that transforms lives.

Key Responsibilities

- Provide strategic leadership and clear vision aligned with the school's values and trauma-informed approach.
- Ensure the highest standards of teaching, learning, and care for pupils with SEMH needs.
- Lead and inspire a dedicated team of staff, promoting a culture of collaboration, innovation, and professional growth.
- Maintain and build upon the school's Outstanding Ofsted rating through rigorous self-evaluation and continuous improvement.
- Champion a trauma-informed, inclusive culture that supports the emotional wellbeing and academic progress of all pupils.
- Oversee the design and delivery of a broad, balanced, and engaging curriculum tailored to the needs of SEMH learners.
- Ensure robust safeguarding and child protection procedures are in place and adhered to at all times.
- Lead on Safer Recruitment practices, ensuring all staff and volunteers are appropriately vetted and trained.



- Develop and implement effective school improvement plans, using data and evidence-based strategies.
- Build strong partnerships with parents, carers, governors, local authorities, and external agencies.
- Manage the school's budget and resources effectively to ensure sustainability and value for money.
- Promote staff wellbeing and retention through supportive leadership and professional development opportunities.
- Represent the school at local and national forums, advocating for the needs of SEMH pupils.

Essential Criteria

- Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
- Substantial leadership experience in a special school or SEMH setting.
- A relevant National Professional Qualification (NPQ) such as NPQH, NPQEL, or NPQSL.
- Proven track record of raising standards and improving outcomes for pupils with complex needs.
- Deep understanding of trauma-informed practice and its application in an educational setting.
- Strong knowledge of SEND legislation, safeguarding, and inclusive education.
- Experience in Safer Recruitment and maintaining a safe, compliant school environment.
- Exceptional communication, interpersonal, and organisational skills.
- A progressive, child-centred ethos with a commitment to equity and inclusion.

Desirable

- Experience working in a school with an Outstanding Ofsted rating.
- Experience in whole-school development, curriculum innovation, and staff development.
- Familiarity with therapeutic approaches and multi-agency working.

Why Join Us?

Be part of a high-performing, values-driven school that makes a real difference.

Work with a passionate, skilled team in a supportive and collaborative environment.

Access to ongoing professional development and leadership training.

Opportunity to shape the future of a school that is a beacon of excellence in SEMH education.



How to Apply

Please submit your CV and a covering letter outlining your suitability for the role to [Insert Application Email/Link]. Visits to the school are warmly welcomed and encouraged.

Performance Expectations

The successful candidate will be expected to demonstrate impact across the following key areas:

Leadership and Vision

- Establish and communicate a clear, ambitious vision for the school aligned with trauma-informed and inclusive values.
- Lead by example, modelling integrity, resilience, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Pupil Outcomes

- Ensure sustained progress and achievement for all pupils, particularly those with complex SEMH needs.
- Use data effectively to monitor, evaluate, and improve pupil outcomes across academic, social, and emotional domains.

Quality of Education

- Maintain and enhance the quality of teaching and learning through robust performance management and professional development.
- Drive curriculum innovation that meets the diverse needs of learners and prepares them for life beyond school.

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

- Uphold the highest standards of safeguarding and child protection, ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for all.
- Promote a whole-school culture of wellbeing for pupils and staff, underpinned by trauma-informed practice.

Staff Development and Retention

- Build a high-performing, motivated team through effective recruitment, coaching, and succession planning.
- Foster a culture of collaboration, reflection, and professional growth.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Develop strong, trusting relationships with parents, carers, governors, and external partners.
- Represent the school positively within the wider community and contribute to local and national networks.



Operational and Financial Management

- Ensure efficient use of resources and sound financial planning aligned with school priorities.
- Maintain compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements, including health and safety and safer recruitment.

Website:

[Merrywood Education](#)

Ofsted Report:

[10307378-Merrywood-House-Independent-Special-School-147600-Final-PDF.pdf](#)

Trauma Informed Accreditation:

[TISUK-Award-Visit-Report-Merrywood-Education .pdf](#)

School Evaluation:

[MW ValuesPoster A4](#)

School Prospectus:

[AllinghamRoadCampus_RADocument 20](#)