



## **SEVERNDALE SPECIALIST ACADEMY**

### **An overview for applicants for the post of Principal**

**Dr. Gill Eatough, CEO – Learning Community Trust**

**April 2021**

The post of Principal has become available as the current Principal, Mrs Sabrina Hobbs is moving to her second Headship in another Trust located in a different region.

We are seeking to appoint an outstanding Principal who is highly committed to working in our Special School and has the knowledge and expertise to support children and young people who have a wide range of Special Needs.

### **Learning Community Trust**

Our mission is very simple: we are driven to be an outstanding MAT for our community with a clear vision to provide the best possible education for all the children and young people in our Trust, helping them to be successful in all they do both now and in the future.

The Learning Community Trust was established in June 2017 following agreement with the DfE/RSC to establish a MAT in this community. Not only were we approved as a MAT but we are also an academy sponsor. I was appointed CEO of LCT for September 2017 and relinquished my previous role of Principal of Hadley Learning Community, a post I had held since January 2005.

Following our approvals we spent considerable time with Directors and Trustees setting up our Governance model, Schemes of Delegation, Financial Regulations and all the policies and procedures required to comply with DfE/EFSA legislation. Alongside this we embarked upon our first academy conversions. By the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 our first three schools joined LCT and we became truly operational. Our first academies were HLC Secondary, HLC Primary and Queensway Special School.

Ercall Wood Academy took the decision to join LCT and the school converted to an academy and joined us in July 2018.

We also sponsored Charlton Secondary School and they became part of LCT in December 2018; Wrekin View Primary School joined us in December 2019 bringing the total to six academies.

In January 2021, Crudginton Primary joined us and Severndale Specialist Academy in February 2021, bringing the total to eight schools.

Our MAT spans education from 2 year olds in our nurseries through primary, secondary and special education.

All our schools are in close proximity to each other and we can quickly move between sites as can our staff and students. We believe that children and young people should attend their local school because it is a good school and that they are the first choice for parents in our area; this is already the case. All our schools are full and many oversubscribed.

We keep our aims at the forefront of all we do; they represent our values as well as our intentions:

- To focus, across our schools, on **excellence** by achieving the best possible educational outcomes for our children and students by engaging and inspiring them, building their resilience and preparing them for work and adult life.
- To drive a **collaborative culture** across our schools which drives and supports improvement and develops all our staff as leading professionals
- To provide the highest levels of **care and support** for our children so they can succeed, including those that are the most disadvantaged, vulnerable or with special needs in our community
- To ensure our schools are at the heart of the community they serve and are truly **inclusive** organisations with equality for all across our community
- To engage positively with our families and the wider **community**, building partnerships and programmes that develop opportunities beyond the school sector

We have four strategic objectives which drive our work:

1. Our learners are engaged and successful
2. We have high quality staff across our Trust
3. We have a culture of continuous improvement
4. Our leadership and Governance is exemplary

The Trust currently has over 5000 students, over 1000 staff and we operate a budget of over £32 million; this makes us a very viable Trust and a significant provider of education in Telford and Shropshire.

In addition to myself there is a superb central executive team of, COO, Head of Finance, Operation Managers and a finance team who support estates, HR, ICT, and deal with school's finance on a day to day basis.

The Trust is strong with plenty of capacity and has secured considerable additional funding for our schools over the last two years. It is well established and has a great local and regional reputation. We will continue to grow steadily over the next two-three years but have no intention of becoming a very large MAT and will manage growth carefully and ensure we have the capacity to support and challenge our schools.

## **Severndale Specialist Academy**

We are very proud to have Severndale in our Trust. We became involved in the school in summer 2021. LCT undertook due diligence processes in Autumn 2021 for the academy to transfer to LCT and our Board of Trustees voted unanimously to agree the transfer. Previously, Severndale had been a Single Academy Trust (SAT) and they joined LCT officially on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021. The school has a "Good" judgment from Ofsted (2016) but in July 2021 a poor safeguarding review, which was when we became involved. I am delighted to say that the school has worked unstintingly to address the issues and safeguarding is now very well led and managed.

Severndale is a large organisation of about 400 children and students with a staff team of about 280 teaching and support staff. There is a wide range of Special Needs at Severndale as this is one of only two Special schools in Shropshire; the other is significantly smaller and focussed on SEMH and not part of LCT.

At Severndale the children and students, aged from 2 -19, have a range of learning difficulties including moderate, severe, complex, and profound learning difficulties.

The school is oversubscribed and works in partnership with Shropshire Council who commission places at the school.

Severndale is located on 3 separate sites: -

- **Monkmoor Campus** – an excellent purpose-built campus for about 350 of the children from EYFS to 6<sup>th</sup> form
- **Severndale@Mary Webb** – has 30 secondary age students with MLD who attend a provision linked to Mary Webb School and Science College in Pontesbury, just outside Shrewsbury.
- **Futures** – located in a provision on the Shrewsbury College site for young people aged 16-19. Severndale has an agreement with the ESFA to be able to deliver a 19-25 sub-contract for Shrewsbury colleges group.

The School is organised into 3 diversity groups who follow 3 different curriculum pathways – Pre-formal, Semi-formal and Formal.

The school organisation is as follows:-

1. The pre-formal department caters for pupils primarily with PMLD and CLDD SEND needs.
2. The semi-formal department caters primarily for pupils with SLD SEND needs.
3. The formal department caters for children primarily with MLD and higher ability SLD needs
4. The EYFS has a mixture of all diversity groups within it.
5. The 6<sup>th</sup> Form caters for young people 16-19 who have followed a Semi Formal/ Pre-Formal curriculum pathway.
6. Futures caters for young people 16-19 and Shrewsbury College students who have followed a Formal curriculum pathway.
7. Severndale@Mary Webb, based at the secondary school site (Mary Webb School & Science College) are made up of a selected cohort of secondary aged pupils who are part of the Formal department.
8. Class groups are varied with the maximum class size being 15 in the Formal department, with a staff/pupil ratio that reflects pupil diversity groups, age, and individual needs.
9. Our curriculum focuses on developing life skills that enrich the lives of our young people in order to build towards their future as active citizens.
10. A small number of our students in the formal curriculum are able enough to access a small number of GCSE and Entry Level Certificates in identified subject areas, including English, Maths, and Science.

There is an experienced Senior Leadership Team consisting of 5 Assistant Principals all who have specific roles and responsibilities. There are Department Leads for the Pre-Formal, Semi-Formal and Formal Departments, and they each have TLR post holders as curriculum leads.

EYFS and 6<sup>th</sup> form have Department Co-ordinators and TLR post holders as curriculum leads.

There are teams of teaching staff and support staff in each Department area as well as other staff with TLR responsibilities for subjects, forest schools, pupil premium and behaviour management. There is also a Nursing Team on site each day.

Severndale has a very good Administration Team including Business Manager, Finance, HR, ICT, and site teams.

Outstanding communications are critical at Severndale, as the school works with a wide range of staff, professionals and agencies. Parents really support the school and importantly need to have confidence in the education and support the staff provide each day.

The children and young people receive transport, provided by Shropshire Council and the majority arrive and leave school by minibus. Some parents do bring their child to school.

The Trust has established a new Local Governing Body in line with our Governance model and has appointed a highly experienced Chair and a group of highly committed Governors.

You will join a Trust steeped in a culture of wanting the very best for our children, which is very ambitious for its schools. We support and challenge our Headteachers and give them autonomy to lead their own organisation, but we all work collaboratively sharing best practice and focussing on creative and innovative practice that provides our children with a great education and prepares them for the next steps in their lives.

Gill Eatough  
CEO LCT  
April 2021