

Assistant Principal/SENCO

Location: Thames Valley School, Reading

Basis: Full time (Directed Hours: 35 hours/week, 39 weeks/year)

Salary: Leadership Scale L1 – L6 (c£49–56k), depending on experience



About Us

The Liberty Academy Trust is an education charity established in 2022. Our vision is to create a world that works for autistic children and young people, by providing an exceptional educational offer so that they achieve success now and are well-prepared for adulthood. We work towards this vision through our core values of courage, determination and teamwork.

We are currently a small Trust of three academies, but we have plans to grow so that our reach and impact can extend further. Committed to providing an excellent education for autistic children and young people, our approach is to support the whole child, offering a balance of personalised teaching and therapeutic support as standard.

Thames Valley School in Reading is an Autism Specific Specialist Free School, recently rated 'Good' by Ofsted. We provide education to 66 children and young people aged 4 to 16; helping autistic students build on their strengths, learning and enjoyment. Our aim is to respond to the needs of each of our students, helping them to grow in confidence and achieve.



Thank you for your interest in this role within Liberty Academy Trust. This is a hugely exciting time for our family of academies as we seek to grow and extend our reach so that we can make a real difference to the lives and life chances of children – and particularly those who are autistic – so that they receive the educational opportunity they deserve.

The Trust currently has three academies based in the local areas of Cheshire East, Reading and Lambeth; all of which are at different stages of development. As a Trust, we are clear about the importance of achieving long-term sustainability for our academies.

Our vision is to lead through moral purpose, whilst taking advantage of collaborative opportunities and partnership work, to secure an excellent educational offer for our children and young people. Employees within the Trust belong to a community of professionals and benefit from an increasingly wide range of networks and development opportunities across the Trust, which will increase further as we grow.

With high expectations for staff and pupils alike, those we recruit can demonstrate that they share our values, are highly motivated to work with colleagues to continuously develop their skills, pursue professional excellence, and are committed to providing the highest standards.

If you see yourself in that description, then we would be delighted to receive your application.

Dr Nic Crossley, Chief Executive



Thank you for your interest in this role at our Thames Valley school. As part of Liberty Academy Trust, we want to challenge any sense that, as a special school, children's aspirations are limited. Our values of courage, determination and teamwork are the key drivers to bring about positive change, so that all of our children and young people can be successful now and in their future lives.

At Thames Valley, you will discover a curriculum that builds upon a 'Quality of Life' framework, this is driven by a staff team of Keyworkers, Teachers, Learning Mentors, Therapists and Leaders, that are all champions for young people with specialist needs. The team inspire and create a safe, friendly and supportive environment for young people to thrive.

We believe this role is pivotal in helping to shape the academic success and personal growth of our students, and we are looking for a leader who can inspire both staff and students alike.

Jo Galloway, Director of Education

The Opportunity

Thames Valley School helps autistic students build on their strengths and learn with confidence, independence and enjoyment. Our aim is to respond to the needs of each of our students, helping them to grow in confidence, enjoy school and achieve success. We work to ensure access to learning that meets existing and future needs of all students and prepares them for college, work and adult life.

As Assistant Principal/SENCO, you will be responsible for the management of our pupils' special education needs and ensuring their needs listed within their Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP's) are considered.

You will support staff in all roles to provide highly specialist support. You will use your experience to advise, negotiate, advocate and champion the needs of our pupils. You will liaise with the Principal, Trans-Disciplinary Team Lead and school therapists to ensure support for pupils ensures progress against EHC plans.

You will also work with SENCOs in other schools and build partnerships and networks both inside and outside of the Trust. In this way, the post offers career progression and personal growth.

You will be an experienced, skilled and suitably qualified educationalist, who can demonstrate strong leadership qualities, including those of innovation and vision. You will be passionate about developing best practice in your school and be self-motivated to continually update your knowledge and ensure practice in the school is informed by evidence and research.

Our success depends on our skilled and dedicated staff. We offer a competitive salary and pension, as well as a range of benefits and a focus on staff wellbeing. More importantly, we offer the opportunity to play a part in highly rewarding work, as part of an ambitious and supportive team.

Job Description

Purpose

Under the direction of the Principal and in liaison with the Trust's wider team, the Assistant Principal/SENCO will:

- Play a key role in the strategic development of special educational needs (SEN) policy and provision in the school.
- Be responsible for day-to-day operation of the SEN policy and co-ordination of specific provision to support individual pupils with SEN or a disability.
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues, working closely with staff, parents and other agencies.
- Fulfil the responsibilities of a teacher, as set out in the STPCD.

Principal Accountabilities

Strategic Development of SEN Policy and Provision

- Have a strategic overview of provision for pupils with SEN or a disability across the school.
- Contribute to school self-evaluation.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of national and local initiatives that may affect the school's policy and practice.
- Promote an ethos and culture that supports the school's SEN policy and promotes good outcomes for all pupils.

Operation of the SEN Policy and Co-ordination of Provision

- Work collaboratively with the Principal and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes through an understanding of the needs of our pupils.
- Manage the Education, Health and Care review process for pupils within the school and co-ordinate the assessment and referrals process for new pupils.
- Support with the admissions and referrals process, including assessing pupil suitability and processing referral paperwork.
- Enable effective transition through careful planning, monitoring and identifying pathways for future education or employment.
- Undertake on-going coordination, monitoring and review of EHC plans and assessment processes to achieve stated objectives and outcomes in relation to the needs of pupils.
- Engage in partnership working to find ways of meeting the needs of pupils in a creative, outcome focused way.
- Maintain an accurate SEND register and provision map.
- Liaise with staff, parents, external agencies and other schools to co-ordinate their contribution, provide maximum support and ensure continuity of provision.

Advice and Support

- Work with the Principal and staff to develop effective ways of bridging barriers to learning through assessment of needs, target setting and measuring progress.
- Be a lead professional in SEN meetings and provide timely written and verbal feedback to relevant stakeholders.
- Disseminate good practice and provide training opportunities for staff within the school.

Other

- Effective line management of allocated staff where relevant, in line with the Trust's line management protocols.
- Contribute collaboratively to the wider management and development of the school.
- Contribute collaboratively to the wider development of SEN best practice across the Trust.
- Always comply with Trust policies and procedures; including, but not limited to, Safeguarding, Health and Safety and employment policies.
- Work within the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy to promote equality of opportunity for all students and staff, both current and prospective.
- Maintain high professional standards of attendance, punctuality, and conduct; and maintain positive, courteous relations with students, parents and colleagues.
- Engage actively in the appraisal and performance review process, and in relevant continuing professional development.
- Be willing to travel to the Trust's schools and other sites as needed.

Job descriptions only reflect 80% of a role and are not an exhaustive list of duties. You are expected to carry out other activities that are within the scope of the role. The job description will be kept under review and modified from time to time.

Person Specification

Essential

Qualifications, Training and Knowledge

1. Qualified teacher status.
2. National Award for SEN Co-ordination, or a willingness to complete it.
3. Knowledge of regulations around education and children with special educational needs, including SEND Regulations 2014 the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice.
4. A sound understanding of autism, its implications for education.
5. Knowledge of safeguarding responsibilities.

Skills and Experience

6. Teaching experience, coupled with experience at contributing at a whole school level.
7. Excellent organisational skills; self-motivated, highly responsive and able to manage a busy workload to a high standard.

8. Strong verbal communication and interpersonal skills; able to build relationships and work effectively with children, families, colleagues and external stakeholders.
9. Strong written communication skills and attention to detail; able to write effective policies, reports and guidance materials.
10. Ability to use common software applications; knowledge of best practices for protecting personal and organisation data; and an aptitude for adapting to emerging technologies.

Personal Qualities and Attributes

11. An understanding of and commitment to the aims, vision and values of the Liberty Academy Trust and the principles of public life.
12. Demonstrable leadership qualities.
13. Able to share and embed innovative solutions to supporting all pupils with SEND, but particularly those who are autistic.
14. A strong team player with excellent interpersonal skills, able to engage colleagues.
15. Enthusiasm and energy; stamina and resilience.
16. Able to remain calm when situations become challenging.
17. Self-discipline and self-motivation; highly responsive and able to work under pressure and to tight deadlines.
18. Able to act as a positive role model for other members of staff.
19. Able to promote high standards of education, care and behaviour, and present a positive image of the school.
20. A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
21. A demonstrable commitment to continuing professional development.

All members of the Liberty Academy Trust community are driven by the three core values of courage, determination, and teamwork.

Recruitment Process

Application deadline: Monday 29 April 2025 (5.00pm)

Interviews: Thursday 6 May 2025

Anticipated start date: September 2025 (or earlier where possible)

The Trust pays full regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance 2024. We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works for the Trust who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult including volunteers and staff employed by contractors.

Our safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking online checks and an Enhanced DBS check.

We are an equal opportunities employer. Applications for this job are sought from anyone who is suitably qualified and experienced for the role, including those with protected characteristics, and particularly welcome from neurodivergent individuals. We are very happy to discuss adjustments to the recruitment process for those that need it

Please note that we can only consider applicants who are legally entitled to work in the UK.

Further Information

About Thames Valley School

Opened in September 2013, Thames Valley School is an outward facing school, with inclusion and community engagement at its core. Our specialist school is designed to support students who are able to complete GCSEs and other qualifications, to thrive and achieve their aspirations.

Thames Valley School has a welcoming and safe environment for all students and stakeholders. We have a distinctive ethos and philosophy; from the moment a person enters the building they will know that this is a school where students are respected and can achieve beyond what is expected.

Students are empowered to make positive choices about their own lives and have rich and varied experiences. We engage students in learning through a flexible and challenging curriculum, which is supported by a wide range of extracurricular opportunities. We build on students' strengths and interests, focusing on what they can achieve, not what they can't.

Thames Valley School is an ambitious, forward-thinking specialist school, which seeks to advance thinking on what autistic people can achieve and how vital their place is in society.

We take enormous care to give our pupils the support they need to learn well and to develop their confidence and independence. Small classes committed and experienced specialist teachers, and a wonderful learning environment collectively make our school an exceptional place to be. We are encouraging and supportive and always celebrate achievement.

The school aligns significant emphasis on community-based learning. This provides our pupils with opportunities to practise everyday skills in real life settings, so they can feel part of their community. We also support young people as they transition into



adulthood, teaching them the necessary skills to live independently, to gain paid employment and to participate in their local community.

We believe that a highly effective Liberty Academy Trust academy is underpinned by the following key building blocks, which when successfully achieved guarantee a quality of educational experience to be proud of:

- An inclusive vision, values and culture
- A commitment to supporting people, learning and capacity
- A consistent approach to assessment, curriculum and pedagogy
- Clarity of quality assurance and accountability
- A commitment to developing as an inclusive learning organisation

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Courage (#ChallengeWelcome)

We are willing to try new things and work to the best of our ability, even when things are difficult.

Determination (#NeverGiveUp)

We never give up and are always ready.

Teamwork (#BetterTogether)

We work with others to share ideas, offer support and provide solutions to problems.
