



**Ambitious
about Autism**

**Executive
Head
at St John's School
and College
Candidate Pack**

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Welcome from the Director of Education



Thank you for your interest in the role of Executive Head at Ambitious about Autism. I hope that you will find our mission and this opportunity exciting and compelling and will consider joining our team. If you are ambitious and forward thinking this is a role for you. It offers a unique opportunity to join a thoroughly values driven organisation.

Ambitious about Autism has achieved and developed so much since it was founded in 1997. Our education services continue to grow and develop to support the increasing and changing needs of autistic children and young people. Our outstanding TreeHouse School continues to be innovative in meeting the needs of autistic children and young people with learning disabilities. The Rise School opened in 2014 as the first special free school in our multi-academy trust. It is co-located with Springwest Academy. Ambitious College opened in the same year and was London's first autism-specific registered day college serving autistic young people with learning disabilities, aged 16 to 25 years. It now has two permanent campuses co-located and developed in partnership with mainstream further education colleges and a Supported Internship programme with the Whittington Trust. Both new services achieved a 'Good' Ofsted rating in 2017. Through these services we educate and support over 300 autistic children and young people and thousands more through our national policy and practice influencing work. In September 2023 we will be opening Spring School in Kingston, as part of our Trust.

In September 2023 Ambitious about Autism will merge with St John's, a Brighton based charity serving a similar cohort. This is a very exciting point in our history. We are now looking to recruit a highly successful Executive Head to join our education leadership team to oversee the school and college in Brighton. The successful candidate will bring with them established strategic leadership experience, credibility and expertise in SEND education. Above all, we are looking for someone who will share an absolute commitment to our mission and values. We are searching for an honest, approachable, adaptable, resilient, patient, motivated, knowledgeable and excellent communicator who can demonstrate that they work with integrity and respect for all.

This challenge is both exciting and significant and I hope very much that you will consider this opportunity to contribute to our future and the lives of autistic children and young people.

Viv Berkeley, Director of Education

Working together



The Boards of Trustees of Ambitious about Autism and St. John's School and College have approved the merger of the two charities taking effect on Friday 1 September 2023.

Ambitious about Autism is the national charity standing with autistic children and young people. It runs two specialist schools and a specialist college in London, supporting autistic children and young people aged 3-25. Its academy trust is in the process of setting up a new special free school in Kingston due to open in September 2023. The charity also runs national youth and employment programmes, offers training and consultancy, and campaigns nationally to ensure autistic children and young people can be themselves and realise their ambitions.

St. John's School and College, established in 1886 and based in Brighton and Seaford, is a charity that provides education, care and therapy for children and young people with complex behaviours aged 7- 25. Its services include a specialist college and special school, which are day and residential.

Ambitious about Autism and St. John's School and College are well-established charities with shared values and a commitment to supporting autistic children and young people to achieve positive outcomes.

The aim of bringing the two charities together is to provide high quality education for more autistic children and young people and to share best practice and resources.

Our combined experience will enable us to develop even further a robust, evidence-based model of education for autistic children, young people and young adults that leads to better life-long outcomes and influences policy and practice nationally.

Following a consultation process, St. John's School and College staff and services will be joining Ambitious about Autism on Friday 1 September 2023.

We look forward to working together to create better opportunities and life outcomes for autistic children and young people.

Best wishes,

Neil Goulden
Chair of Trustees, Ambitious about Autism

Simon Smith
Chair of Trustees, St. John's School and College

Our Story



Ambitious about Autism is the national charity standing with autistic children and young people. We believe every autistic child and young person has the right to be themselves and realise their ambitions. We started as one school and have become a movement for change. We champion rights, campaign for change and create opportunities.

We are proud of our pioneering approach, which started in 1997 when a group of parents set up the TreeHouse Trust to enable autistic children and young people to access the education they need and deserve. Since then, we have increased our reach and impact across the UK.

Despite our many successes, the sad fact is that autistic children and young people still face a lack of understanding of their needs and the right support. Their worlds have been turned upside down by the Coronavirus pandemic, and they need our support now more than ever.

Our priority over the next 12 months will be to support autistic children and young people and their families to manage the impact of this pandemic.

We want to help even more autistic children and young people to improve their quality of life and secure a fulfilling and rewarding future.

About autism

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects 1 person in 100 in the UK. Autism affects the way a person communicates and how they experience the world around them.

It is described as a spectrum condition because while autistic people share certain characteristics, they have individual interests, needs and preferences.

Autistic children and young people face enormous challenges due to a lack of understanding of their needs.

Some autistic people can live independent lives, but others may have additional needs, including learning disabilities. Early intervention, education and support are critical if autistic children and young people are to learn, thrive, achieve and lead fulfilling lives.



Our Schools and Colleges



TreeHouse School

TreeHouse School is dedicated to educating and supporting pupils with autism and learning difficulties aged 4-19 from across London and the home counties. We're proud to have maintained our Outstanding Ofsted rating since 2011.

Pupils at TreeHouse School receive individual and personalised learning and support suited to their needs, talents and interests. Our curriculum is creative and flexible, using our natural environment to extend pupils' learning. You are as likely to see maths being practised in the shop, the community or the garden, as you are in the classroom.

Ambitious College

Ambitious College provides specialist and integrated further education and support to young people from across London and the Home Counties. Ambitious College's two campuses are co-located within mainstream further education colleges: The College of Haringey, Enfield and north east London (CONEL) and West Thames College. This enables young people to access learning, social, employment and leisure opportunities alongside their mainstream peers, whilst receiving the specialist support they need.

The college is dedicated to enabling learners to gain vocational, life and employability skills, as well as work experience. Its curriculum is framed around the four themes in the Preparing for Adulthood agenda:

- employment
- independent living
- better health
- friends, relationships and community

Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust

The Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust was established as a Multi-Academy Trust to develop new free schools. The Trust shares Ambitious about Autism's vision and mission. Through the Trust, we intend to develop more schools to reach the autistic children and young people who need our specialist support.

In 2014 the Trust set up our first special free school, The Rise School, in west London, dedicated to educating pupils with autism aged 4-19. In 2019 we opened The Rise School Sixth Form in partnership with, and co-located at, West Thames College. Pupils at The Rise School access the national curriculum at approximately the same level as their neuro-typical peers.

All pupils are given the support and challenge they need to learn and succeed in the world beyond school – their quality of life is key. Our aim for all our pupils is that they lead their lives as independently as possible, and are prepared for a promising future in the community of their choice.

In 2020 the trust was chosen to build a new special free school for autistic children and young people in Kingston, London. Spring School will open in September 2023 and will support 90 autistic pupils aged 4-19.

We welcome opportunities and partnerships to achieve our aim of ensuring more autistic children and young people can access high-quality education and make outstanding progress.



About St. John's School



St. John's offers an inclusive environment for young people, with a diagnosis of autism and other needs, whose learning, social, emotional and/or communication difficulties are often too complex for many mainstream educational settings to support.

Many children and young people at St. John's have complex diagnoses and their needs do not always fit into a single or simple diagnosis, Therefore, all children and young people are assessed and their programmes, individually designed to meet their specific needs.

St. John's supports a wide range of young people with additional and specific needs, such as Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA Society website) and other complex needs.

In particular, we support young people 7-19 years who may:

- find communication and interaction difficult
- have complex behaviours
- struggle with their social and emotional functioning
- require personalised community-based programmes of study
- struggle with issues around identity.

The aims of St. John's School are to:

- Maximise each pupil's potential to be as independent as possible in their lives
- Ensure all children and young people can engage, progress and achieve in their learning
- Enable all children and young people to develop their knowledge and skills in: Maths, Science, English, technological, human & social, physical, aesthetic & creative learning opportunities
- Promote the intellectual, personal, spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development of all children and young people at the school
- Promote their sense of citizenship and their place within the school, the wider community and reflect British values.

Our Seaford Campus

- Playing fields & grounds for outdoor learning
- Horticulture area, polytunnels & flower garden
- Sensory garden
- Harmonies café
- IT hub and project space
- Sports hall
- Tennis courts/basketball
- Sensory room
- Music studio
- Art room



About St. John's College

Situated in Brighton, St. John's offers an inclusive environment for young people whose learning, social, emotional and/or communication difficulties are sometimes too complex for many mainstream educational settings to support.

Many children and young people at St. John's have complex diagnoses – their needs do not always fit into a single or simple diagnosis. Therefore, all children & young people are individually assessed, and their programmes individually designed to meet their specific needs. We support a wide range of young people with additional and specific needs.

We support young people from 19-25 who:

- find communication and interaction difficult
- have complex behaviours
- struggle with their social and emotional functioning
- may require personalised community-based programmes of study.

In addition, some of our young people are also managing issues around gender and sexual identity and we have considerable experience in supporting them to understand these issues.

Alongside autism, some have a hearing and/or visual impairment.

Some require residential provision up to, and including, 52-week provision.



Job Description



Job title	Executive Headteacher	Team	Education Directorate
Salary	Circa 100k (Depending on skills and experience) plus teachers' pension	Reporting to	Director of Education
Hours	37.5 hours per week	Line manages	Head of School, Head of College, Head of Care

Role purpose

Autistic children and young people are at the heart of everything that we do. We work in partnership with autistic children and young people and their families. We do this so we can make sure we reflect their lived experience when developing our work. We believe that inclusion is not simply about identifying what autistic people might contribute to their family, school, community or workplace, but about their fundamental right to a life of their choosing and equal access to the resources and networks needed to achieve this.

The role of the Executive Headteacher is to:

- Provide effective leadership and management to the school and college.
- Drive improvement priorities, particularly at the school.
- Ensure that the school/college are delivering high-quality provision and securing the best outcomes for our pupils/learners.
- Promote a culture of unity and collaboration with the other schools/college in our group.

Key accountabilities and dimensions

Strategic leadership:

- Embed our shared vision across the school and college, ensuring that it is understood by staff and parents.
- Develop and review the strategic plan, ensuring that key objectives are used to develop school/college improvement plans.
- Be accountable, and hold others to account, for performance in terms of good systems, processes and learner outcomes to meet the regulatory inspections of Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC).
- Line manage the school and college leadership, as well as residential Head of Care ensuring that the implementation of strategic plans are delivered effectively towards the highest quality education and care.
- Ensure that outstanding teaching and care are the primary objectives for all staff through demanding and modelling ambitious standards via strong accountability.
- Review and monitor progress of school /college improvement plans and self-evaluation forms, providing necessary challenge in order to achieve a sustained focus on the strategic objectives.

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- Build positive and respectful relationships with stakeholders and the wider community, ensuring that there is a culture of working together to achieve high-standards and acceptance of reflective challenge as part of that culture.

Managing the organisation:

- Review and implement staffing structures to ensure efficiency and effectiveness to support a good quality of education, health, therapy and care.
- Review and adhere to any health and safety standards.
- Line manage senior leaders across education, health and care. Provide effective support and challenge to help them secure best outcomes for our pupils/learners.
- Carry out performance management in line with the organisational procedures.
- Allocate financial resources appropriately, efficiently and effectively to support the school/college to budget and manage human and physical resources.
- Support with developing and implementing organisation wide policies.
- Develop and retain high-quality staff through effective professional development and performance management.
- Establish clear and open lines of communication with all stakeholders.
- Monitor staff wellbeing and workload and implement strategies to promote a healthy working environment.
- Ensure the school and college operate within the required regulatory frameworks and meet all statutory duties.
- Ensure staff and pupils' safety and welfare through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of a duty of care.
- Maintain effective relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues to improve educational outcomes for all pupils.
- Ensure that there are relevant 'on-call' rotas and clearly defined duties for members of the Senior Leadership.
- Ensure that transitions and admissions are well managed to support financial sustainability.

Teaching and learning:

- Ensure there is an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum that meets the relevant statutory requirements and supports towards identified EHCP outcomes.
- Ensure there is high-quality teaching across all subjects and phases, based on evidence and a transdisciplinary approach.
- Ensure that there is a clearly defined, integrated approach to the curriculum implementation that retains personalised learning experiences for students.
- Ensure that there is a 24-hour, waking day curriculum approach across the residential college.
- Ensure there is an effective Careers' programme for all our pupils/learners and supports across a range of likely destinations.

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- Have ambitious expectations for all pupils/learners and promote an inclusive culture that enables all pupils/learners to access their education, health, therapy and care.
- Establish curriculum leadership, including ensuring there are subject leaders who draw on relevant internal and external expertise and access to professional networks and communities thereby promoting a culture that encourages collaboration and where best practice is shared in order to secure the best outcomes for pupils/learners.
- Ensure that there are valid, reliable and proportionate approaches to assess and measure the impact of education, health, therapy and care.
- Ensure that there are purposeful, age respectful activities and extra-curricular programmes which promote meaningful social development and prepare the pupils/learners for life in the wider community.
- Ensure that statutory duties for pupils/learners with SEND and for those who are Looked After Children are appropriately met.

Safeguarding and Safety:

- Maintain up to date knowledge and skills in safeguarding
- Safeguarding incidents; medication errors; other incidents and accidents errors are appropriately responded to and reported
- Accurately record personal data and maintain integrity of those records in line with data protection
- Follow safe and effective processes and procedures for the involvement of autistic young people.

Working with stakeholders:

- Ensure that pupils/learners EHCP provisions are met for education, health, therapy and care and that the right provisions are available to pupils/learners.
- Actively seek and plan ways to engage parents and carers of pupils/learners who are residential.
- Actively seek and plan ways to ensure pupil/learner voice, participation and co-production are culturally part of practice.
- Actively support the school and college to be outward facing, developing and working in partnerships with other schools and colleges.
- Actively seek to develop positive connections with referrers / commissioners through a variety of means.
- Actively develop and lead / manage relevant communications to stakeholders to inform them of progress against the school's post inspection action plan.

Governance:

- Be a Governor on both School and College Governing Bodies.
- Analyse, and plan for the future needs of the Governing Body.
- Put in place an effective governance schedule.

Job Description



Other duties:

- Demonstrate a continual commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- Demonstrate a continual commitment to the promotion of diversity initiatives and the sharing of best practice in line with Ambitious about Autisms Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy and procedures
- Ensure the highest degree of confidentiality and data protection of all materials
- Demonstrate the vision and values of Ambitious about Autism in everyday work and practice.
- Any other duties commensurate with the role.

Please note that this is illustrative of the general nature and level of responsibility of the role. It is not a comprehensive list of all tasks that the Executive Headteacher will carry out. The postholder may be required to do other duties appropriate to the level of the role.



Person Description

Role and band competencies	Essential
Specific knowledge, experience and technical skills	
Educated to degree level, or equivalent written and analytical skills.	x
Qualified teacher.	x
NPQH - National Professional Qualification for Headship.	x
Education leadership or post-graduate qualification.	x
Working knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy, practice and regulatory issues affecting the education of children and young people with autism and their families. • Commissioning and service delivery for these children and their families. • Supporting children and young people with SEND, including autism in education. 	x
Proven experience as a Headteacher.	x
Proven experience of leading a school with specific specialist provision for children with SEND, from either mainstream or a special schools background.	x
Proven track record of strategic planning.	x
Proven experience of developing and managing an income and expenditure budget of £5m+.	x
Proven track record of developing strategic partnerships with commissioners, agencies and providers.	x
Proven track record of working with service users to co-produce services.	x
Track record of working as part of an executive team and working with a broad/governing body.	x
Proven experience of leading and managing complex projects.	x
Knowledge of the Third Sector.	x

Person Description

Role and band competencies	Essential
Personal attributes	
Ambitious about Autism is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.	x
Strong commercial acumen and financially literate.	x
Entrepreneurial with a flair for innovation.	x
Strong leadership skills and the ability to inspire people.	x
Interpersonal skills and the ability to lead and build effective partnerships with individuals and organisations.	x
Ability to plan, manage and deliver work to agreed deadlines.	x
Excellent communication and presentation skills.	x
Highly resilient and able to work on own initiative and as part of a team.	x
Good appreciation of health and safety in the workplace, data protection principles and equal opportunities.	x
Computer literate with working knowledge of all Word, Excel and PowerPoint.	x
Ability to travel across Ambitious about Autism's sites and to external meetings.	x



How to apply

If you would like to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or you wish to have an informal discussion, please contact our retained consultant at Academicis, Caroline Olsen: colsen@academicis.co.uk or 01223 907979 / 07500 889504

Please email your application to:
colsen@academicis.co.uk

Closing date: Tuesday 6th June 2023 at noon

Shortlisting date: Thursday 8th June 2023

Stakeholder day: Tuesday 13th June 2023

Interviews: Friday 16th June 2023

Equal opportunities monitoring

Ambitious about Autism is fully committed to equality of opportunity and diversity and we warmly welcome applications from all suitably-qualified candidates. We welcome applications regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, disability, or age. All applications will be considered solely on merit.

Ambitious about Autism is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and successful candidates will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check.

The Pears National Centre for Autism Education
Woodside Avenue, London N10 3JA