

PATHWAYS EDUCATION

CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR EVERY LEARNER TO FLOURISH

Lead Teacher

Candidate Application Pack
Churt, Surrey

Welcome from the Headteacher

Thank you for your interest in the role of Lead Teacher at Pathways Education.

Pathways Education exists for young people who have not always found a home in formal schooling. Many have experienced difficult educational journeys before they arrive with us. They are at the heart of everything we do, not simply the reason we exist, and we build their voice and agency into how we shape both their own learning and the school around them. Our whole community is built around three values: Wellbeing, Connection and Empowerment.

Human flourishing is becoming the model at the centre of everything we do here, not something we apply to one part of school life alone. Our curriculum is one expression of it, built on the project-based, trauma-informed approach that already sits at the heart of what we do. It also shapes how we support and develop our staff, and how we think about what excellent teaching actually looks like.

This is a teaching role, but probably not quite as you know it. Our curriculum brings together academic learning, essential transferable skills, project-based learning, preparation for adulthood, employer experiences, enterprise and community, and we need someone who can teach brilliantly within that model while also helping shape what excellent practice looks like for everyone else.

You won't simply be joining Pathways. You will be helping to build it.

If that excites you, we would love to hear from you.

Leeha Watney

Headteacher

At a glance

School	Pathways Education, Churt, Surrey
Learners	Young people aged 9-16 with SEMH as a primary need; all hold an EHCP
Our approach	Small, relational, trauma-informed, personalised and project-based
Our ambition	Meaningful adult lives, with a presumption of employment for every learner
The opportunity	To help shape what excellent Pathways teaching and learning looks like, as both a class teacher and a leader among your peers

Salary	Contract	Closing date	Start date
M6	Full-time, Permanent	22 September 2026	Autumn term, with flexibility to January for the right candidate

Pathways Community Trust

Pathways Education is one part of Pathways Community Trust, a registered education charity working to build connected pathways into long, happy and prosperous adulthoods for children and young people who may otherwise become disconnected from education, community and opportunity. Our ambition is bigger than any single school or service. We are developing place-based ecosystems in which education, families, employers and communities work together so that young people are known, supported, challenged and connected to meaningful futures.

STRONGER COMMUNITIES. BRIGHTER FUTURES.

Our integrated model

PATHWAYS EDUCATION

Small, trauma-informed specialist schools that act as community hubs, placing personalised education, families, employers and community at the heart of learning.

FUTURE PATHWAYS

Alternative Provision and real-world environments that re-engage learners, build confidence and develop skills through authentic enterprise, employer and community experiences.

PATHWAYS TOGETHER

Family and community support that builds confidence, strengthens understanding of systems and connects people to the right help, networks and opportunities.

What connects us

- Every child and young person deserves to belong.
- Families are experts in their own lives and are partners in the work.
- Communities already possess extraordinary strengths.
- Schools can become the natural heart of their communities.
- Employment should be designed into education from the very beginning.
- Sustainable change happens when services work together around families rather than expecting families to navigate fragmented systems.

Our schools therefore do not sit in isolation. Pathways Education is the specialist-school expression of a wider Trust model in which education, alternative provision, family support, employers and community are deliberately connected.

Why Pathways Education is different

We believe every learner can flourish when the right conditions are intentionally created around them. Our purpose is not simply to educate learners. It is to help them build the confidence, knowledge, relationships, identity, skills and opportunities that enable them to lead meaningful adult lives.

EMPLOYMENT IS NOT THE STARTING POINT. IT IS THE OUTCOME OF FLOURISHING.

A presumption of employment for everyone

Across Pathways Community Trust we start from a presumption of employment: we believe every learner can work and contribute. This is not a prediction about a particular job or a narrow employability programme. It is an expression of ambition. It means we do not wait until Key Stage 4 to begin preparing young people for adulthood. From the earliest point in a learner's journey, curriculum, relationships, projects, community experiences, employer encounters, independence and transition planning should be building the capabilities, confidence and social capital that make meaningful adult life possible.

Our ambition is that every learner encounters employers and workplaces, learns through authentic projects and real audiences, develops essential transferable skills, contributes to their community, experiences choice and leadership, and leaves with a credible destination plan and real opportunities.

Education delivered differently

Our learners often need something different from the education that has previously been available to them. We therefore organise learning around the young person rather than expecting the young person to fit a conventional system.

- Relationships before learning: every learner should be deeply known and have a trusted adult.
- Strengths before deficits: we identify potential, interests and aspirations alongside need.
- High expectations without losing safety, compassion or personalisation.
- Project-based learning and authentic, real-world contexts rather than learning that exists only for the classroom.
- Curriculum, EHCP outcomes, emotional wellbeing and preparation for adulthood treated as one connected journey.
- Family partnership, employer relationships and community connection built into the educational model.
- Skills for life, independence, contribution and employment developed throughout the learner journey.
- Learner voice and agency used as evidence that actively shapes provision.

About our Churt school

Set in the Surrey Hills near Churt and Farnham, Pathways Education is a specialist independent school for young people aged 9 to 16 with a primary need of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), all of whom hold an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Many of our learners are at risk of becoming NEET without the right support.

Our approach is trauma-informed and relational throughout. Learning is delivered through thematic, project-based units rather than a conventional subject timetable, giving pupils tangible outcomes to work towards and repeated, low-stakes opportunities to practise regulation, collaboration and communication alongside subject knowledge and skills.

Curriculum and EHCP are treated as one connected journey, with a shared graduated approach through Assess, Plan, Do and Review. Our young people have a genuine voice in shaping their learning, not only in how it is delivered to them.

Our Trust's alternative provision and enterprise ventures, including The Cookie Bar and The Bike Hub, are based locally rather than on the school site but are part of the connected Pathways offer. They create opportunities for genuine enterprise, employer engagement and real-world experience rather than simulated work-related activity.

Our values

WELLBEING

Young people and adults need to feel safe, supported and able to flourish.

CONNECTION

Relationships, belonging, family and community are fundamental to learning.

EMPOWERMENT

Voice, agency, high aspirations and opportunity shape meaningful futures.

The Pathways learner journey

Our aim is that every learner will follow a personalised pathway through a consistent methodology. The six stages are interconnected rather than a linear checklist; together they describe the experience we want every learner to have.

1. KNOW ME

We build trusting relationships and understand every learner as a whole person.

Flourishing Profile; vocational profile; learner voice; trusted adult

2. DESIGN WITH ME

We co-design an ambitious, personalised learning journey towards adulthood.

EHCP outcomes; personalised learning plan; goals; preparation for adulthood

3. GROW ME

We develop knowledge, skills, confidence and independence through high-quality teaching and coaching.

Academic learning; Skills Builder; emotional wellbeing; coaching; reflection

4. CHALLENGE ME

We learn through authentic experiences that build resilience and real-world skills.

Project-based learning; employer challenges; enterprise; community projects; outdoor learning; public exhibition

5. CONNECT ME

We build relationships, belonging and social capital that open doors.

Family partnership; careers education; mentoring; workplace encounters; community connection

6. BELIEVE IN MY FUTURE

We prepare for adulthood and help every learner transition with confidence and hope.

Destination planning; transition passport; supported employment; independence; celebration of learning

EVERY LEARNER WILL LEAVE WITH A DESTINATION PLAN, REAL OPPORTUNITIES AND THE BELIEF THAT THEY CAN SHAPE THEIR FUTURE.

What every learner should experience

We are working towards a model in which every young person can expect:

- A trusted adult who believes in them.
- A safe, nurturing and trauma-informed environment.
- High-quality, personalised education.
- Project-based learning and real-world experiences.
- Multiple encounters with employers and workplaces.
- Family partnership and learning that connects beyond the school day.
- Skills for life, independence and emotional resilience.
- Opportunities to contribute to their community.
- High aspirations from day one.
- A pathway to a meaningful adult life.

Excellent adult practice

Culture is created through adult behaviour. We expect our adults to model the practice we want learners to experience:

- Relational practice
- Trauma-informed practice
- Restorative practice
- High expectations
- Coaching before telling
- Inclusive practice
- Reflective practice
- Evidence-informed practice

These expectations are supported through professional standards, coaching, observation, professional development and a culture of continuous improvement.

The role: Lead Teacher

Responsible to: Headteacher

You will plan and deliver high-quality learning, understand where learners are starting from, assess and evidence progress and fulfil the professional responsibilities of a teacher. But at Pathways, learning doesn't begin and end with a lesson plan. Our curriculum brings together academic learning, essential transferable skills, project-based learning, preparation for adulthood, employer experiences, enterprise, community and the interests and aspirations of individual learners.

Curriculum matters enormously, but it is also the vehicle through which young people learn to communicate, collaborate, solve problems, make decisions, recover from setbacks, lead, create and understand themselves. Sometimes the most important learning opportunity won't be the one you planned, and we want you to be able to notice those moments, recognise the learning within them, and work out where they could lead.

You will create ambitious and highly personalised learning; design projects, inquiries, authentic experiences and real-world challenges; know individual learners deeply and use their strengths, interests, aspirations and voice to inform what happens next; and recognise and capture evidence of learning wherever it occurs.

YOU WON'T SIMPLY BE JOINING PATHWAYS. YOU WILL BE HELPING TO BUILD IT.

Teaching and learning

- Create ambitious and highly personalised learning that connects academic knowledge with essential transferable skills, projects, community and preparation for adulthood.
- Design projects, inquiries, authentic experiences and real-world challenges rather than learning that exists only for the classroom.
- Know individual learners deeply, using their strengths, interests, aspirations and voice to inform what happens next.
- Maintain high expectations while creating the individual conditions learners need to succeed, helping them experience challenge, make decisions, solve problems and recover from setbacks.
- Recognise and capture evidence of learning wherever it occurs, not only where it was planned.
- Help connect education with the world beyond school, building opportunities through employers, enterprise and community, and working alongside families and other professionals as partners around each learner.

Leadership responsibility

As Lead Teacher, you will play an active role in turning our educational model into consistently excellent everyday practice. Working alongside the Headteacher and colleagues, you will help shape and develop curriculum, teaching and learning and contribute to the continued development of the Pathways model.

This will include taking ownership of agreed areas of school improvement; supporting the planning and development of high-quality curriculum and project-based learning; modelling strong practice; contributing to professional learning, coaching and reflective practice across the team; using learner experience, progress and evidence to identify where practice can be strengthened; and ensuring agreed developments move from ideas into effective implementation.

Leadership at Pathways is not defined simply by hierarchy. We expect our Lead Teacher to create the conditions in which others can contribute, think and develop their practice, while also being prepared to provide appropriate professional challenge and maintain high expectations. You will work closely with the Headteacher, contribute to wider school decision-making and, where appropriate, represent Pathways Education with families, partners, employers and the wider Pathways Community Trust.

As our model continues to develop, this role provides a genuine opportunity to influence what excellent Pathways education looks like, both within the school today and as PCT develops its work more widely.

Culture and professional practice

Pathways Education is intentionally small and relational, creating a community in which staff know learners well and take shared responsibility for the quality of their experience. We expect every member of the team to contribute to the wider life of the school and to recognise that learning, relationships and personal development extend beyond individual lessons, subjects or defined areas of responsibility.

We also believe that the expectations we place on learners must be reflected in ourselves. If we expect young people to be curious, try unfamiliar things, accept feedback, recover when something doesn't work, repair relationships and continue developing, we must be prepared to do the same. We are deliberately building an open learning culture where people can talk about what worked, what didn't and what they would do differently without that becoming about blame.

Our educational model is developing and will continue to develop. We don't want someone who simply wants to receive the finished handbook and deliver it; we want someone who is excited by the opportunity to contribute their own experience, thinking and ideas and help us make it better.

Safeguarding and professional conduct

- Take ownership within our small school community and maintain the highest standards of safeguarding, professional conduct and appropriate professional relationships.
- Uphold all safeguarding responsibilities in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and school policy.
- Bring a practical understanding of contextual safeguarding, recognising that risk to our learners can sit outside the school gates as much as within them.
- Contribute to a learning culture in which challenges and mistakes are surfaced, understood and used to improve practice.

Person specification

We have deliberately kept our person specification focused. We are less interested in a long list of attributes than in understanding how you think about the role we have described, what you believe it requires, and what your own experience tells us about what you could bring to it.

Area	Essential	Desirable
Safeguarding	A strong, practical understanding of safeguarding, including contextual safeguarding, recognising that risk to our learners can sit outside the school gates as much as within them.	KCSIE-aligned training beyond the statutory minimum; experience as a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or equivalent.
Qualifications	Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), or an appropriate recognised teaching qualification.	Experience or training relevant to curriculum or staff leadership.
Experience	Successful experience teaching or facilitating learning with children or young people; strong professional practice and a commitment to improving outcomes for learners.	Experience with project-based learning; experience working with learners with SEMH needs and/or EHCPs; experience supporting or coaching colleagues.
Knowledge and understanding	Understanding of the professional responsibilities involved in working with children and young people.	Understanding of trauma-informed practice; knowledge of Skills Builder or similar essential-skills frameworks.
Skills and abilities	Ability to plan and deliver high-quality, personalised learning; ability to commit to the purpose, educational approach and presumption of employment described in this pack.	Ability to model strong practice and contribute to the professional development of colleagues; experience influencing curriculum or school-wide practice.
Personal qualities	A genuine belief that every young person can flourish and contribute; reflective practice and openness to feedback; willingness to contribute ideas and help shape a developing model, not simply deliver a finished one.	Comfort providing professional challenge to peers while maintaining collaborative relationships.

Applying differently: Apply with Bloom

It wouldn't make much sense for us to talk about doing education differently and then recruit you using a traditional tick-box process.

On receipt of your expression of interest, together with your CV and supporting statement, we will send you a link to complete Apply with Bloom. Rather than publishing an exhaustive list of personal skills and attributes, Bloom will ask you to consider the role and environment we've described and tell us what you think someone needs to draw upon to do this job exceptionally well. We will then explore the experiences and evidence behind your answer.

In line with safer recruitment practice, you will also be sent a safeguarding declaration to complete and return as part of your application.

During the recruitment process, we may also give you situations you could genuinely encounter at Pathways. There won't always be one textbook answer. We're interested in what you notice, the questions you ask, what matters to you and what you decide to do next.

Belonging at Pathways

Belonging is central to what we want for our learners, and it matters just as much for the adults who work with us.

WE WANT OUR WORKFORCE TO REFLECT THE DIVERSITY OF THE COMMUNITIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE WE SERVE.

Pathways Education and Pathways Community Trust are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and particularly encourage applications from groups that are under-represented in education.

We welcome applications regardless of age, disability, sex, gender identity or gender reassignment, race, ethnicity or nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, caring responsibilities, socio-economic background or any other aspect of a person's identity or lived experience.

We are committed to making our recruitment process accessible and inclusive. If you require reasonable adjustments at any stage of the application or interview process, please let us know. Requests for adjustments will be treated respectfully and will not disadvantage your application.

We select candidates on the basis of their skills, experience, values and ability to fulfil the requirements of the role. Our commitment to inclusion sits alongside our unwavering commitment to safeguarding children and young people.

Safeguarding

Pathways Education is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Our recruitment process follows safer recruitment practice throughout. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check, satisfactory references, identity and right-to-work checks, and all other pre-employment checks required in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Independent School Standards.

How to apply

To apply, please send:

- A full CV, including a complete record of your career history.
- A personal statement in place of a conventional covering letter.

Tell us about you

Your professional journey might look different from that of a traditional classroom teacher, and we're genuinely interested in what you've learned from it and what you could bring to our learners.

We're not simply looking for someone who can teach. We're looking for someone who wants to help create an education in which every young person can discover what they are capable of, and build a future from it.

We want to hear your voice, not a template. Tell us in the way that feels most authentic to you.

Applications to	Email	Closing date	Interviews
Leeha Watney, Headteacher	leeha.watney@pathways- ed.org	22 September 2026	Early October 2026

FLOURISHING LEARNERS. STRONGER COMMUNITIES. BETTER FUTURES.

Opportunities for all. Ambition without limits.