

An overview for applicants for the post of Headteacher

Dr. Gill Eatough, CEO – Learning Community Trust
January 2020

The post of Headteacher

This position has become available due to the decision of the previous Headteacher to relinquish his responsibilities from the 31st December 2019 after 10 years of service to the school.

Following this, the Trust has appointed Paul Roberts to lead Ercall Wood Academy (EWA), from 1st January 2020, as Executive Principal on an interim basis for two terms. Paul is performing this role together with his substantive post as Principal of Hadley Learning Community (HLC). The work he is undertaking will ensure the school has really excellent foundations for the new HT to carry forward this school to the next level.

We therefore wish to make an appointment of an inspiring school leader to continue the work started by Paul. They will be well supported by Paul and myself as CEO, as they take up their new post. If the successful candidate is able to, by negotiation with their school, join us before September we would be delighted to discuss this.

The Trust is highly committed to supporting EWA. The new Headteacher will have significant support and resources to focus on rapid school improvements in key areas, which is a major priority of the Trust.

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, we are also an academy sponsor. I was appointed CEO of LCT for September 2017 and relinquished my previous role of Principal of HLC, 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 1st March 2018 our first three schools joined LCT and we became truly operational. Our first academies were:-

- HLC Secondary
- HLC Primary
- 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 sponsor Charlton Secondary School which became part of LCT in December 2018. A second primary school, Wrekin View, joined us in December 2019, bringing the total to six academies.

Our MAT spans education from 2-year olds in our nurseries through primary and secondary education as well as specialist provision for autism and SEMH in our Special School. In addition, we have established a great partnership with Telford College and work with them on post-16 transition and curriculum.

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

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 wider community, building partnerships and programmes that develop opportunities beyond the school sector

We have four strategic objectives which drive our work:

- Our learners are engaged and successful
- We have high quality staff across our Trust
- We have a culture of continuous improvement
- Our leadership and Governance is exemplary

The Trust currently has over 4000 students, over 600 staff and we operate a budget of over £23 million. This makes us a very viable Trust and a significant provider of education in Telford and Wrekin.

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

The Trust is strong, with 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 working beyond our Telford community. We already have some other projects we are considering but we will manage growth carefully and ensure we have the capacity to support and challenge our schools.

Ercall Wood Academy – overview

Ercall Wood Academy is an 11-16 comprehensive secondary school located in Wellington, Telford. It was rebuilt under BSF, about 5 years ago, and now occupies a fantastic modern building set in lovely grounds in a great location near the Ercall and Wrekin Hills, which are local landmarks.

There are currently just under 900 students on role. The PAN is 900 and numbers for September are extremely positive: Year 7 will be full with 180 students. The majority of students live within the catchment and the intake is diverse but broadly comprehensive but with an above high percentage of SEND students with EHCPs and EAL students.

The teaching day comprises five one-hour lessons and year groups are organised into six or more teaching groups depending on the Key Stage and Options groups. The curriculum is currently under review and a number of decisions will need to be made over the next few months. The new Headteacher will be closely involved in these discussions.

The senior leadership team is fairly standard with two Deputies and three Assistant Headteachers who all have clear roles and responsibilities. They have all been in post since the last inspection apart from a newly appointed AHT. The school is fully staffed and recruited well last summer appointing seven new staff reflecting growth in student numbers. Students are happy at school and generally behaviour is good. Attendance is just above national and fixed term exclusions are well below national.

The Trust has made some changes to Governance over the autumn term and appointed a new Chair, Mr David James who is a highly experienced Trustee and non-executive HR Director of LCT. We have attached Professor David Woods, also a Trustee with significant experience in school improvement, to support the Governors. The Governing Body is absolutely focused on a very specific Raising Achievement Plan which has been in place since November and has a committed set of Governors.

Currently, the school has an Ofsted grading of “Requires Improvement” and was last inspected in January 2016. The conversion to academy status has postponed inspections but the academy will be in an Ofsted window from July 2020. The Trust is determined to secure a “Good” judgement but recognises that current outcomes will be a significant issue in the next inspection.

Further information is on the websites www.ercallwood.co.uk and www.learningcommunitytrust.co.uk

Outcomes - Attainment 8 and Progress 8 (2018 and 2019)

A8 2019	National 2019	A8 2018	National 2018	P8 2019	National 2019	P8 2018	National 2018
39.2	46.5	41.50	46.5	-0.32	-0.03	-0.31	-0.02

% 4+ English (2018)	% 5+ English	A8	P8	% 4+ Maths	% 5+ Maths	A8	P8	% 4 + English & Maths	% 4+ E & M 2019 National	% 5+ English & Maths	%5+ E & M 2019 National
60 (59)	38 (36)	8.12	-0.5	49 (60)	28 (39)	6.95	-0.5	44 (46)	64.2	22 (29)	43

EBacc P8	EBacc A8	Open A8	Open P8	E Bacc APS
-0.09	11.77	12.68	-0.2	3.11 (National 4.06)

The CEO, Executive Principal, SLT and Governors have an absolute focus on improving standards particularly in English, Maths and other subjects. Science performs well compared to many areas but the data clearly demonstrates there is significant work to do to improve outcomes. Results in 2019 were very disappointing and well below predictions from the staff. These results have promoted the level of intervention now in place within the school.

Next steps for Ercall Wood

Ercall Wood Academy is a "sleeping giant". It has the capacity with the right leader to be a great school and perform as well as our other academies. The school is not broken but requires great leadership to inspire confidence and drive a culture of high expectations from students and staff. It is a fantastic opportunity for an experienced Deputy or for a second Headship.

You will join a Trust steeped in a culture of wanting the very best for our children and 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.

If this challenge is of interest to you, and you have the skills, qualities and commitment required to take the school forward, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes

Gill Eatough
CEO LCT