

## Little Heath School: Job Description/ Person Specification

### Occupational Therapist



**Job Title:** Occupational Therapist

**Hours:** 36 hours, 44.26 Weeks

**Salary:** LBR 10-14 ((£39,185 - £48,513 Actual Salary) depending on experience

**Location:** Little Heath School /Sixth Form

**Reports to:** Deputy Head Teacher

#### Professional Accountability

The post holder will maintain professional accountability to the relevant Occupational Therapy professional standards and regulatory requirements.

#### 1. Job Purpose

The Occupational Therapist (OT) will provide a high-quality occupational therapy service within the school, supporting pupils with complex learning, physical, sensory, communication, emotional and developmental needs to maximise their participation, independence, wellbeing and access to education.

The post holder will work as an integral member of the school's multidisciplinary team, working closely with teachers, teaching assistants, families, health professionals and other external agencies.

The OT will assess pupils' functional needs, identify barriers to participation and develop practical strategies and interventions that enable pupils to engage as fully as possible in learning, personal care, social activities, physical activities and wider school life.

The post holder will contribute to the implementation and review of outcomes identified within pupils' Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), ensuring that occupational therapy recommendations are translated into meaningful day-to-day practice.

A key element of the role will be to develop the knowledge and confidence of school staff so that appropriate occupational therapy strategies are embedded consistently throughout the school day.

#### 2. Main Responsibilities

##### A. Assessment and Identification of Need

The post holder will:

- Undertake occupational therapy assessments of pupils in relation to their functional, sensory, physical and developmental needs.
- Assess pupils' ability to participate in learning and everyday school activities.
- Identify barriers affecting pupils' independence, participation and access to the curriculum.
- Assess areas including, but not limited to:
  - fine and gross motor skills;
  - handwriting and recording;
  - sensory processing;
  - visual-motor and perceptual skills;

- coordination and motor planning;
- functional mobility;
- posture and positioning;
- self-care and personal independence;
- eating and drinking where within professional competence;
- dressing and toileting;
- classroom participation;
- play and leisure;
- functional communication where relevant to occupational performance;
- emotional regulation and regulation strategies;
- access to equipment and the physical environment.
- Use appropriate professional assessment tools and observational methods.
- Gather information from pupils, parents/carers, school staff and other professionals.
- Consider the pupil's strengths, preferences, communication style and aspirations when undertaking assessments.
- Ensure assessments consider the whole child and the environments in which the pupil functions.

## **B. Intervention and Support**

The post holder will:

- Develop individualised occupational therapy programmes based on assessment findings.
- Deliver direct occupational therapy interventions where clinically appropriate.
- Provide indirect intervention through school staff, parents/carers and other professionals.
- Develop practical strategies that can be incorporated into the pupil's normal school routine.
- Support pupils to develop independence and functional life skills.
- Promote participation rather than focusing solely on impairment.
- Develop strategies to support sensory regulation and engagement.
- Support pupils to access learning and school activities safely and meaningfully.
- Review interventions regularly and modify them in response to pupil progress.
- Ensure that interventions are evidence-informed and appropriate to the pupil's age, developmental level and individual needs.

## **3. EHCP and Educational Contribution**

The OT will play an active role in the school's EHCP process.

Responsibilities will include:

- Contributing to assessments and reviews of pupils with occupational therapy needs.

- Providing professional advice to inform EHCP outcomes and provision.
- Ensuring occupational therapy recommendations are linked to meaningful educational and functional outcomes.
- Contributing to annual reviews and other relevant multi-agency meetings.
- Providing reports and professional advice where required.
- Supporting the school to demonstrate how occupational therapy provision is being implemented.
- Reviewing whether recommended strategies are having the intended impact.
- Working with teaching staff to ensure OT recommendations are reflected in classroom practice.
- Supporting preparation for transition between classes, phases, schools and post-16 provision where appropriate.

#### **4. Sensory Processing and Regulation**

The post holder will:

- Assess sensory needs where appropriate and within professional competence.
- Develop individualised sensory strategies.
- Advise staff on environmental adaptations that may improve pupils' regulation and participation.
- Support the development and appropriate use of sensory spaces and equipment.
- Provide advice regarding sensory diets/programmes where clinically appropriate.
- Train staff in recognising sensory needs and implementing agreed strategies.
- Monitor the effectiveness and appropriateness of sensory interventions.
- Ensure sensory strategies are purposeful and linked to functional outcomes rather than being implemented as isolated activities.

#### **5. Independence and Life Skills**

The OT will promote pupils' independence in everyday activities.

This may include supporting pupils with:

- dressing and undressing;
- toileting;
- personal hygiene;
- eating and drinking;
- preparing food;
- accessing the school environment;
- organising personal belongings;
- using classroom equipment;

- developing fine motor skills;
- functional handwriting or alternative recording methods;
- practical and vocational activities;
- travel and community skills;
- preparation for adulthood.

The OT will work with staff to ensure that pupils are supported to **do as much for themselves as possible**, while recognising individual levels of need and safety.

## **6. Equipment, Adaptations and Environment**

The post holder will:

- Identify appropriate equipment and environmental adaptations.
- Advise on seating, positioning and access to learning environments.
- Support assessment and appropriate use of specialist equipment.
- Liaise with relevant health and equipment services where necessary.
- Monitor the effectiveness and safe use of equipment.
- Ensure staff are appropriately trained in the use of specialist equipment where required.
- Contribute to risk assessments relating to pupils' functional and physical needs.
- Advise on accessibility and reasonable environmental adaptations.
- Ensure equipment recommendations are proportionate, evidence-informed and linked to identified need.

## **7. Staff Training and Capacity Building**

A significant responsibility of the role will be to develop the school's ability to support pupils' occupational needs.

The OT will:

- Provide training and advice to teachers, teaching assistants and other staff.
- Develop practical guidance and resources for staff.
- Model strategies within classrooms and other school environments.
- Support staff to understand the functional impact of pupils' needs.
- Promote consistent implementation of agreed OT strategies.
- Provide advice during team meetings and professional development sessions.
- Support staff to recognise when a pupil's needs may require further assessment or professional intervention.
- Evaluate the impact of staff training and support.

## **8. Multi-Disciplinary Working**

The post holder will work collaboratively with:

- teachers and senior leaders;
- teaching assistants;
- families and carers;
- school nurses;
- physiotherapists;
- speech and language therapists;
- psychologists;
- paediatricians;
- social care professionals;
- behaviour and mental health professionals;
- local authority services;
- equipment and specialist services;
- other relevant health and education professionals.

The OT will contribute professional expertise while recognising and respecting the roles of other professionals.

## **9. Safeguarding and Pupil Safety**

The post holder will:

- Promote and safeguard the welfare of all pupils.
- Follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- Report safeguarding concerns promptly and appropriately.
- Contribute to risk assessments where occupational, physical, sensory or environmental factors create potential risks.
- Ensure that interventions and equipment are implemented safely.
- Recognise that pupils with complex needs may be particularly vulnerable and require enhanced safeguarding consideration.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times.
- Participate in safeguarding training and other mandatory training as required.

## **10. Communication with Parents and Carers**

The OT will:

- Develop positive and professional relationships with parents/carers.
- Explain assessment findings and recommendations in accessible language.
- Involve families in the development and review of appropriate strategies.
- Take account of parental knowledge and aspirations.

- Provide appropriate advice to support consistency between school and home where appropriate.
- Communicate concerns or changes in need promptly.
- Respect confidentiality and information-sharing requirements.

### **11. Record Keeping and Professional Documentation**

The post holder will:

- Maintain accurate and timely occupational therapy records.
- Record assessments, interventions, outcomes and reviews.
- Produce professional reports where required.
- Ensure documentation complies with relevant professional, legal and organisational requirements.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Contribute relevant information to the school's systems for recording pupil progress and provision.
- Ensure recommendations are clearly communicated and can be understood and implemented by school staff.

### **12. Monitoring Outcomes and Impact**

The OT will ensure that interventions are outcome-focused.

This will include:

- establishing clear functional outcomes;
- measuring pupil progress;
- reviewing the effectiveness of interventions;
- identifying when an intervention is no longer required;
- adapting provision in response to changing need;
- evidencing the impact of occupational therapy on participation and independence;
- contributing to service evaluation and quality improvement.

The focus should be on **what the pupil is able to do as a result of intervention**, rather than simply recording the activities delivered.

### **13. Professional Responsibilities**

The post holder will:

- Maintain professional registration and comply with relevant professional requirements.
- Maintain appropriate continuing professional development (CPD).
- Keep knowledge and practice up to date.
- Work within professional scope of practice.

- Seek advice or refer to other professionals when a pupil's needs fall outside the OT's area of expertise.
- Follow relevant legislation, statutory guidance, school policies and professional standards.
- Participate in supervision, appraisal and professional development.
- Contribute to service development and quality improvement.

#### **14. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

The post holder will:

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Recognise and respect individual differences.
- Ensure occupational therapy provision is accessible and responsive to pupils' individual needs.
- Promote dignity, choice and independence.
- Ensure pupils' voices, preferences and aspirations are considered when planning interventions.

#### **15. Person Specification**

##### **Essential**

##### **Qualifications**

- Degree or recognised qualification in Occupational Therapy.
- Current professional registration with the relevant regulatory body.
- Evidence of continuing professional development.

##### **Knowledge and Experience**

- Experience of working with children and/or young people with additional needs.
- Knowledge of occupational therapy assessment and intervention.
- Understanding of sensory processing and functional participation.
- Understanding of child development and functional independence.
- Understanding of multidisciplinary working.
- Knowledge of safeguarding requirements.
- Ability to translate professional assessment into practical strategies for school staff.

##### **Skills**

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to communicate complex professional information clearly to non-specialists.
- Ability to assess, analyse and identify functional needs.
- Ability to develop practical, achievable interventions.
- Ability to work collaboratively with education and health professionals.
- Ability to organise workload and prioritise competing demands.

- Good report-writing and record-keeping skills.
- Ability to monitor and demonstrate outcomes.

### **Personal Qualities**

- Warm, approachable and child-centred.
- Patient and empathetic.
- Professional and accountable.
- Flexible and solution-focused.
- Committed to inclusion and independence.
- Able to work positively as part of a multidisciplinary team.
- Committed to safeguarding and pupil wellbeing.

### **Desirable**

- Experience of working within a special school or specialist education setting.
- Experience of working with pupils with complex physical, sensory, learning or communication needs.
- Experience of supporting pupils with EHCPs.
- Experience of staff training and coaching.
- Experience of assistive technology and alternative methods of recording.
- Experience of postural management and specialist equipment.
- Experience of supporting transition and preparation for adulthood.
- Experience of working with pupils with behaviours that may challenge.
- Experience of contributing to whole-school sensory and environmental approaches.

## **16. Key Performance Outcomes**

Success in this role will be demonstrated through:

1. Pupils experiencing improved access to learning and school activities.
2. Increased pupil independence in functional and daily living activities.
3. Appropriate sensory and environmental strategies being consistently implemented.
4. Staff confidence and competence in supporting pupils' occupational needs.
5. Effective contribution to EHCP outcomes and annual reviews.
6. Effective multidisciplinary and family working.
7. Appropriate and safe use of specialist equipment and adaptations.
8. Clear evidence of the impact of occupational therapy intervention.
9. High-quality professional records and reports.

10. Positive contribution to the school's wider approach to inclusion, independence and preparation for adulthood.

## **17. General**

This job description is intended to provide a clear framework for the role but is not exhaustive. The post holder may be required to undertake other duties commensurate with the level and nature of the post.

The school reserves the right to review and amend the job description in consultation with the post holder to reflect changes in legislation, professional practice, pupil need and school priorities.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### Occupational Therapist – Special School

#### 1. Qualifications and Professional Registration

| Criteria                                                                                  | Essential | Desirable |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Recognised degree or equivalent qualification in Occupational Therapy                     | ✓         |           |
| Current registration with the relevant professional regulatory body                       | ✓         |           |
| Evidence of continuing professional development relevant to occupational therapy practice | ✓         |           |
| Additional training in paediatric occupational therapy                                    |           | ✓         |
| Training or qualification relating to sensory processing                                  |           | ✓         |
| Training in moving and handling / postural management                                     |           | ✓         |
| Training or experience in specialist equipment and environmental adaptations              |           | ✓         |
| Relevant safeguarding training                                                            |           | ✓         |

#### 2. Professional Knowledge and Experience

| Criteria                                                                                                         | Essential | Desirable |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Experience of working as an Occupational Therapist with children and/or young people                             | ✓         |           |
| Knowledge of child and adolescent development                                                                    | ✓         |           |
| Knowledge of occupational therapy assessment and intervention                                                    | ✓         |           |
| Understanding of sensory processing and sensory regulation                                                       | ✓         |           |
| Understanding of functional independence and participation                                                       | ✓         |           |
| Understanding of the impact of physical, sensory, developmental and learning needs on participation in education | ✓         |           |
| Experience of working with children and young people with complex additional needs                               | ✓         |           |
| Experience of working within a special school or specialist educational setting                                  |           | ✓         |
| Experience of working with pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)                                  |           | ✓         |
| Experience of contributing to annual reviews and multidisciplinary assessments                                   |           | ✓         |

| Criteria                                                                            | Essential | Desirable |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Experience of working with pupils with complex physical needs                       |           | ✓         |
| Experience of supporting pupils with behaviours that may challenge                  |           | ✓         |
| Experience of supporting preparation for adulthood and functional life skills       |           | ✓         |
| Experience of working with assistive technology or alternative methods of recording |           | ✓         |

### 3. Assessment and Clinical Skills

The candidate should demonstrate:

| Criteria                                                                        | Essential | Desirable |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Ability to undertake appropriate occupational therapy assessments               | ✓         |           |
| Ability to analyse assessment information and identify functional needs         | ✓         |           |
| Ability to develop individualised intervention programmes                       | ✓         |           |
| Ability to establish meaningful and measurable outcomes                         | ✓         |           |
| Ability to review and adapt interventions in response to progress               | ✓         |           |
| Ability to assess barriers to participation in learning and everyday activities | ✓         |           |
| Ability to identify appropriate environmental adaptations                       | ✓         |           |
| Ability to advise on equipment and resources to support independence            | ✓         |           |
| Ability to assess and support fine and gross motor development                  | ✓         |           |
| Ability to develop practical sensory strategies                                 | ✓         |           |
| Ability to support development of self-care and independence skills             | ✓         |           |
| Knowledge of postural management and positioning                                |           | ✓         |
| Knowledge of specialist seating and mobility equipment                          |           | ✓         |
| Knowledge of assistive technology and alternative access methods                |           | ✓         |

### 4. Educational Practice

The successful candidate will demonstrate an understanding that occupational therapy within a special school is focused on enabling pupils to **participate in education and develop functional independence**.

| Criteria                                                                                      | Essential | Desirable |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Understanding of how occupational therapy can support access to learning                      | ✓         |           |
| Ability to translate professional recommendations into practical classroom strategies         | ✓         |           |
| Ability to work collaboratively with teachers and teaching assistants                         | ✓         |           |
| Understanding of the importance of embedding interventions within the school day              | ✓         |           |
| Understanding of person-centred approaches to education and support                           | ✓         |           |
| Understanding of EHCP outcomes and provision                                                  |           | ✓         |
| Experience of contributing to educational planning and review                                 |           | ✓         |
| Experience of developing whole-school approaches to sensory regulation or independence        |           | ✓         |
| Experience of supporting transition between educational settings or preparation for adulthood |           | ✓         |

## 5. Communication and Partnership Working

| Criteria                                                                                    | Essential | Desirable |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Excellent verbal and written communication skills                                           | ✓         |           |
| Ability to communicate professional information clearly to non-clinical staff               | ✓         |           |
| Ability to build positive relationships with children and young people                      | ✓         |           |
| Ability to communicate effectively with parents and carers                                  | ✓         |           |
| Ability to work collaboratively with a multidisciplinary team                               | ✓         |           |
| Ability to provide advice, guidance and constructive challenge to colleagues                | ✓         |           |
| Ability to deliver staff training and professional development                              | ✓         |           |
| Experience of working collaboratively with NHS, local authority and other external services |           | ✓         |
| Experience of delivering training to education staff                                        |           | ✓         |

## 6. Safeguarding and Professional Responsibility

| Criteria                                                                                      | Essential | Desirable |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people             | ✓         |           |
| Understanding of safeguarding responsibilities within a school environment                    | ✓         |           |
| Ability to recognise and appropriately report safeguarding concerns                           | ✓         |           |
| Understanding of confidentiality and appropriate information sharing                          | ✓         |           |
| Understanding of professional boundaries                                                      | ✓         |           |
| Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion                                               | ✓         |           |
| Ability to contribute to risk assessments relating to pupils' functional and physical needs   | ✓         |           |
| Understanding of the additional vulnerability of children and young people with complex needs | ✓         |           |

## 7. Organisation and Professional Practice

| Criteria                                                                    | Essential | Desirable |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Ability to manage and prioritise a varied caseload                          | ✓         |           |
| Ability to work independently and use professional judgement                | ✓         |           |
| Ability to recognise when further specialist advice or referral is required | ✓         |           |
| Ability to maintain accurate and timely professional records                | ✓         |           |
| Ability to produce clear, concise and professional reports                  | ✓         |           |
| Ability to manage competing priorities and deadlines                        | ✓         |           |
| Commitment to evidence-informed practice                                    | ✓         |           |
| Commitment to continuing professional development                           | ✓         |           |
| Experience of service evaluation or quality improvement                     |           | ✓         |
| Experience of developing systems or processes to improve therapy provision  |           | ✓         |

## 8. Personal Qualities and Values

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

| Criteria                                                                                    | Essential | Desirable |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| A child-centred approach                                                                    | ✓         |           |
| Warmth, empathy and patience                                                                | ✓         |           |
| Respect for the dignity, individuality and choices of pupils                                | ✓         |           |
| Commitment to promoting independence rather than creating dependency                        | ✓         |           |
| Positive and solution-focused approach                                                      | ✓         |           |
| Ability to remain calm and professional in challenging situations                           | ✓         |           |
| Flexibility and willingness to adapt practice to individual pupil needs                     | ✓         |           |
| Ability to work effectively as part of a team                                               | ✓         |           |
| Confidence to contribute professional expertise and challenge appropriately                 | ✓         |           |
| Commitment to inclusion and removing barriers to participation                              | ✓         |           |
| Commitment to achieving positive outcomes for children and young people                     | ✓         |           |
| Resilience and ability to manage the demands of working in a complex specialist environment | ✓         |           |

## 9. Digital and Administrative Skills

| Criteria                                                                               | Essential | Desirable |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Competent use of standard IT systems                                                   | ✓         |           |
| Ability to maintain electronic professional records                                    | ✓         |           |
| Ability to produce professional reports and written documentation                      | ✓         |           |
| Ability to use digital resources to support assessment, intervention and communication | ✓         |           |
| Experience of using school-based information systems                                   |           | ✓         |

## 10. Physical and Practical Requirements

The successful candidate must be able to undertake the practical requirements of the role, with reasonable adjustments made where appropriate.

| Criteria                                                             | Essential | Desirable |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Able to work effectively within a busy specialist school environment | ✓         |           |

| Criteria                                                                                     | Essential | Desirable |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Able to undertake observation and assessment within classrooms and other school environments | ✓         |           |
| Able to demonstrate and model appropriate occupational therapy strategies                    | ✓         |           |
| Able to participate in relevant moving and handling procedures where appropriately trained   | ✓         |           |
| Able to work across different areas of the school site                                       | ✓         |           |
| Able to support the safe implementation of equipment and environmental adaptations           | ✓         |           |

## 11. Equality, Inclusion and Pupil Voice

The candidate will demonstrate:

- A commitment to treating every pupil with dignity and respect.
- An understanding that pupils with complex needs should be supported to exercise choice and control wherever possible.
- A commitment to listening to and responding to pupils' communication, preferences and aspirations.
- An understanding of the importance of adapting communication and intervention to individual needs.
- A commitment to removing barriers to participation.
- An understanding of the importance of culturally responsive and inclusive practice.
- A commitment to promoting independence, confidence and preparation for adulthood.

## 12. Evidence Required at Shortlisting and Interview

Candidates should be able to provide evidence demonstrating their ability to:

1. Assess a child or young person's occupational needs.
2. Identify barriers to participation.
3. Develop practical and achievable intervention strategies.
4. Work effectively with teaching staff to embed recommendations.
5. Communicate professionally with parents and carers.
6. Contribute effectively to multidisciplinary working.
7. Demonstrate measurable outcomes from occupational therapy intervention.
8. Respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.
9. Manage competing priorities within a school environment.

10. Adapt professional practice to meet the needs of pupils with complex and diverse needs.

### **Safeguarding**

Little Heath School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All staff are expected to share this commitment and to comply with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

The successful candidate will be subject to appropriate pre-employment checks, including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, satisfactory references and other checks required for employment in a school.

The postholder is expected to maintain confidentiality and comply with the school's policies relating to safeguarding, data protection, health and safety, equality and diversity.

### **General**

This job description is not exhaustive and may be reviewed and amended from time to time in consultation with the postholder to reflect the changing needs and priorities of Little Heath School.

The postholder may be required to undertake other reasonable duties appropriate to the level of the role.