





School overview

Blackthorns is a happy, inclusive and creative school located in the beautiful village of Lindfield, close to Haywards Heath in West Sussex. As a small and supportive community, we value all children and adults as individuals with their own strengths and talents. Through our core school values of kindness, respect, independence, teamwork and determination, we work hard to support the children to grow academically, socially and emotionally, so that they leave us as confident young people, ready for their next stage of education.

We are fortunate to be surrounded by a talented and hardworking group of staff, who are fully committed to enabling the children to become the very best they can be. They invest time and effort in getting to know the

children and building strong and trusting relationships so that there is a deep sense of belonging to our school and community.

We are fortunate to benefit from a large school site with two playgrounds, a large school field and woodland area, which all enhance the learning experiences.

Having become an academy in 2015, we are now looking forward to the many benefits of being part the Hurst Education Trust (HET), which we joined in summer 2026.

We would very much like to welcome you to Blackthorns for a tour and to find out a bit more about our school and community.

Metric	Blackthorns
Pupils (Capacity)	210 (206 currently on roll)
SEN	11.3%
EHCP	2.5%
EAL	7%
FSM	3%
Ofsted	Outstanding – 2018 Ungraded inspection – 2025
Attainment KS2 (2025 data)	Combined: 77% Reading: 93% Writing: 77% Maths: 93% EYFS GLD: 73% Year 1 phonics screening: 87%



Vision & Values

At Blackthorns, our focus is on the development of every child as an individual, with their own strengths and talents, as well as areas for further development. Every child is known and understood for the unique qualities and skills that they bring to our community.

We work hard to develop this approach through the promotion and demonstration of our core school values of:

- Respect
- Kindness
- Determination
- Teamwork
- Independence

At Blackthorns we show...



These values are threaded through our approach and our curriculum, with many opportunities to celebrate the children that demonstrate these core school values. Each Friday, we have a Celebration Assembly and one child from each class is celebrated for demonstrating the Golden Value of the week. It is through this positive approach that we support the children to develop into well-rounded and respectful young people.



Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

Salary:

MPS/UPS + SEN allowance

Reporting to:

Headteacher

Responsible to:

Hurst Education Trust
and Local Governing Body

Main purpose

The SENCO, under the direction of the Headteacher, will:

- Determine the strategic development of special educational needs (SEN) policy and provision in the school in liaison with HET.
- 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 carers, and other agencies
- The SENCO will also have a timetabled teaching commitment of 50%.



Duties and Responsibilities

Strategic development of SEN policy and provision

- Have a strategic overview of provision for pupils with SEN or a disability across the school, monitoring and reviewing the quality of provision
- Contribute to school self-evaluation, particularly with respect to provision for pupils with SEN or a disability
- Make sure the SEN policy is put into practice, and its objectives are reflected in the school improvement plan (SIP)

- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of national and local initiatives that may affect the school's policy and practice in liaison with HET
- Evaluate whether funding is being used effectively, and suggest changes to make use of funding more effective

Operation of the SEN policy and co-ordination of provision

- Maintain an accurate SEND register and provision map
- Provide guidance to colleagues on teaching pupils with SEN or a disability, and advise on the graduated approach to SEN support
- Advise colleagues on applying differentiated teaching strategies tailored for individual pupils with SEN

- Advise on the use of the school's budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively, including staff deployment
- Be aware of the provision in the local offer
- Work with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals and other external agencies
- Be a key point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority (LA)
- Analyse assessment data for pupils with SEN or a disability
- Implement and lead intervention groups for pupils with SEN, and evaluate their effectiveness



Support for pupils with SEN or a disability

- Identify a pupil's SEN
- Co-ordinate provision that meets the pupil's needs, and monitor its effectiveness
- Secure relevant services for the pupil
- Ensure records are maintained and kept up to date
- Review the education, health and care (EHC) plan with parents/carers and the pupil
- Communicate regularly with parents/carers
- Ensure that if the pupil transfers to another school, all relevant information is conveyed to that school, and support a smooth transition for the pupil

- Promote the pupil's inclusion in the school community and access to the curriculum, facilities and extra-curricular activities
- Work with the designated teacher for looked-after children (LAC), where a looked-after pupil has SEN or a disability

Leadership and management

- Play an active role within the senior leadership team (SLT), by working alongside the headteacher and governors to ensure the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 in terms of reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Prepare and review information the governing board is required to publish
- Contribute to the SIP and whole-school policy

- Identify training needs for staff and how to meet these needs
- Lead INSET training for staff
- Share procedural information, such as the school's SEN policy
- Promote an ethos and culture that supports the school's SEN policy and promotes good outcomes for pupils with SEN or a disability
- Lead and manage teaching assistants (TAs) working with pupils with SEN or a disability

Safeguarding

- Liaise and collaborate with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) on matters of safeguarding and welfare for pupils with SEN
- Remain alert to the fact that pupils with SEN may be more vulnerable to safeguarding challenges



Person specification

Qualifications and training

- Qualified teacher status
- National professional qualification (NPQ) for SENCOs, or a willingness to complete it within 3 years of appointment
- Degree

Experience

- Teaching experience
- Experience of working at a whole-school level
- Experience of working with children with a range

of SEN

- Involvement in self-evaluation and development planning
- Experience of conducting training/leading INSET

Skills and knowledge

- Sound knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice
- Understanding of what makes 'quality first' teaching, and of effective intervention strategies
- Ability to plan and evaluate interventions
- Data analysis skills and the ability to use data to inform provision planning
- Effective communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to build effective working relationships
- Ability to influence and negotiate

- Good record-keeping skills
- Add any other skills or knowledge needed

Personal qualities

- Commitment to getting the best outcomes for pupils and promoting the ethos and values of the school
- Commitment to equal opportunities and securing good outcomes for pupils with SEN or a disability
- Ability to work under pressure and prioritise effectively
- Commitment to maintaining confidentiality at all times
- Commitment to safeguarding and equality



Hurst Education Trust

The Hurst Education Trust (HET) is a Multi-Academy Trust set up by Hurstpierpoint College in collaboration with the Diocese of Chichester. It exists to provide a unique offer to local schools in the Mid Sussex area.

Academic excellence is the foundation of a HET education, because we believe it opens doors to the future. Therefore every child is challenged and supported along the way in our friendly and warm community.

We are ambitious for each of our pupils and who they can become and we encourage each pupil to engage and enjoy all aspects of school life.

We want our pupils to learn the importance of certain values: a sense of duty, an awareness of right and wrong and a respect for others. We want pupils to be ambitious with a clear sense of purpose, to acquire a balanced view of life and develop into independent, mature individuals.

Schools who are part of the Hurst Education Trust receive a high quality education support package focused on the “Good to Outstanding” journey and access to Hurst College’s facilities, including sports and academic provision together with specialist facilities including the theatre, farm and chapel. Importantly, schools retain their individuality, including their name, uniform and curriculum.

The Trust and its schools are open, welcoming and inclusive, embracing pupils of all faiths and none, committed to the flourishing of all of its pupils.

Diversity will be celebrated and equal opportunities available to all. It is our belief that there are core common values universally recognised across faith boundaries, dignity, compassion, the removal of disadvantage and discrimination, empathy and encouragement which help foster and create a positive school environment in which all individuals can thrive and grow.

As ever

Tim Manly

CEO Hurst Education Trust

www.hurst.education



Apply

The application process

Prospective candidates are encouraged to make contact to discuss the role.

To arrange a visit to the school please contact the school office on **01444 454866** or email:

office@blackthornsprimaryacademy.org.uk

For an informal discussion about the role, please contact: Emma Saunders, Headteacher

em.saunders@blackthornsprimaryacademy.org.uk

Interested candidates should submit a covering letter and completed application form to:

Emma Saunders, Headteacher

em.saunders@blackthornsprimaryacademy.org.uk

The closing date for applications is **Wednesday 14 October 2026**

Interviews will be held on **Tuesday 20 October 2026**

Safeguarding and equal opportunities

Blackthorns Community Primary Academy is an equal opportunities employer, and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, expecting all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. There will be a need for the successful applicant to undertake a criminal record check via the DBS.

Hurst Education Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of employment will be subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure, the receipt of satisfactory references,

the pre-employment medical questionnaire, relevant original ID documentation and examination certificates. The Trust understands that a robust, fair and transparent recruitment and selection policy plays a central role in achieving this aim.

Terms and conditions

National School Teachers' Pay and Conditions apply.

Blackthorns

Blackthorns Close, Lindfield, West Sussex, RH16 2UA

Hurst Education Trust

College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9JS



BLACKTHORNS COMMUNITY PRIMARY ACADEMY

Blackthorns Community Primary Academy
Blackthorns Close, Lindfield, West Sussex, RH16 2UA

01444 454866

office@blackthornsprimaryacademy.org.uk

www.blackthornsprimaryacademy.org.uk
www.hurst.education

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

