



Woodend Farm school
Kindness comes in many forms

Job Description

Complex Needs (MLD/SLD Teacher

(Holly Pathway)

Job Title: Complex needs Teacher – Holly Pathway

Salary: MPS/UPS

Contract: Full-time, Permanent

Location: Woodend Farm School – Great Baddow Site

Please Note: We have two sites, one in Witham and one in Great Baddow, you may be required to work at either site

Purpose of the Role

The Complex needs Teacher on the Holly Pathway will lead high-quality learning for pupils working within informal and semi-formal stages who have Severe Learning Difficulties, ASD, communication differences, sensory processing needs, and complex profiles.

This role requires deep understanding of sensory-based, relational, trauma-informed and communication-rich practice. The teacher will create a safe, predictable, nurturing learning environment where pupils experience **connection, regulation, joy, and success**, and where education progresses at a pace that honours their individual developmental and cognitive profiles.

The Holly Pathway prioritises:

- Emotional regulation
- Functional communication
- Independence

- Lifelong learning skills
- Sensory-attuned teaching
- Predictable routines that reduce cognitive load
- Repetition, overlearning and generalisation

The SLD Teacher ensures all learning reflects these principles.

Key Responsibilities

1. Teaching, Learning & Curriculum Delivery

- Plan and deliver personalised learning rooted in the Holly Pathway's **sensory-based, relational and developmental approach**.
- Teach through **short, structured bursts**, sensory exploration and hands-on functional tasks matched to pupils' readiness.
- Lead learning across both **informal** (play-based, sensory-led) and **semi-formal** (short adult-led sessions with increased structure) stages.
- Create predictable routines using visuals, schedules, objects of reference and sensory supports to reduce overwhelm.
- Embed EHCP outcomes, therapy targets and communication aims into daily learning.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop:
 - Functional communication (AAC, Makaton, symbols)
 - Emotional regulation and co-regulation
 - Independence and life skills
 - Engagement, shared attention and participation
 - Early literacy, numeracy and cognitive skills through sensory and functional approaches

2. Communication & Total Communication Approach

- Embed a **total communication environment**, incorporating AAC, Makaton, symbols, photographs, objects of reference, gesture and personalised supports.
 - Work closely with SaLT to implement communication plans.
 - Understand and track pupils' Natural Language Acquisition (NLA) stages, valuing echolalia, scripts and emerging combinations as meaningful communication.
 - Ensure every pupil has a voice and is able to express preferences, needs, and emotions.
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3. Sensory & Emotional Regulation Support

- Use trauma-informed, low-arousal and relational approaches that honour pupils' sensory and emotional profiles.
 - Plan regular sensory breaks and embed sensory regulation strategies throughout the day.
 - Co-regulate with pupils to support engagement and reduce anxiety.
 - Work with OT and therapy teams to implement sensory diets and personalised regulation plans.
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4. Assessment & Progress Tracking

- Assess pupils holistically using **daily observation**, relational measures and developmental frameworks.
 - Monitor progress in:
 - Emotional regulation
 - Engagement and shared attention
 - Communication (including NLA)
 - Functional participation
 - Independence
 - Record progress through work samples, photos, observational notes, videos, and staff reflections.
 - Contribute high-quality input to EHCP Reviews, Annual Reviews and multi-agency meetings.
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5. Behaviour, Relationships & Safety

- Build secure, trusting relationships that support emotional safety and reduce barriers to learning.
 - Use co-regulation, attunement and gentle prompting rather than behavioural compliance approaches.
 - Contribute to behaviour, regulation and risk assessments that reflect pupils' sensory, cognitive and emotional needs.
 - Promote positive interaction, early play skills and social development within a safe, accepting environment.
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6. Leadership of Support Staff

- Lead and support Teaching Assistants and Interventions Mentors within the pathway.
 - Model sensory-attuned, relational practice at all times.
 - Ensure consistency in communication systems, routines, and regulatory approaches.
 - Provide coaching, daily feedback and clear direction.
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7. Safeguarding & Professional Responsibilities

- Uphold the school's safeguarding policy and report concerns immediately.
 - Maintain accurate records of learning, communication progress, and regulation-related observations.
 - Engage in reflective practice, professional supervision and CPD relevant to complex needs.
 - Contribute to wider school development and the culture of relational, therapeutic education.
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Person Specification (Optional – full version available on request)

Essential

- QTS and experience teaching pupils with SLD/ASD/complex needs
- Understanding of:
 - Sensory processing
 - Trauma-informed practice
 - Total communication approaches
 - Developmental/holistic assessment
- Ability to create structured, predictable, low-demand learning environments
- Calm, patient, relational, reflective practice

Desirable

- Experience with AAC, Makaton, NLA, sensory integration
- Experience in a special school or therapeutic setting
- Training in Thrive, Attention Autism, TEACCH, or similar