

Lower Meadow Primary Academy

Principal Candidate Pack



Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Principal position at Lower Meadow Primary Academy.

Lower Meadow is a vibrant 3–11 Academy located in South Sheffield, close to the Derbyshire border. Since joining Astrea Academy Trust in July 2016, the school has continued to grow and strengthen, driven by a dedicated team focused on continuous improvement and the highest aspirations for every child. Our journey over the past six years has been one of transformation, culminating in our “Good” Ofsted judgement in 2025—an achievement of which we are immensely proud.

We are now seeking an exceptional leader to build on this strong foundation and guide the Academy into its next phase. The successful candidate will be a talented, knowledgeable, and committed professional with a deep belief in the potential of all children. You will bring the ambition, determination, and resilience needed to lead a school where high-quality teaching and learning are at the heart of everything we do.

At Lower Meadow, we are passionate about developing children as confident learners who aspire, achieve, and thrive. Our curriculum, culture, and use of the Astrea Values are designed to support children not only academically but in developing the life skills they need for future success. Our pupils behave well, enjoy coming to school, and benefit from a warm, caring environment where every member of staff is dedicated to providing the very best for them.

Teamwork is a defining feature of our Academy. You will be joining a supportive and collaborative staff body, as well as a wider Astrea professional community committed to excellence.

We are keen to welcome a Principal who places children firmly at the centre of all decisions, who is committed to their own professional growth, and who will lead with clarity, compassion, and high expectations.

If you feel you can champion our ethos and lead Lower Meadow with ambition and integrity, we would be delighted to receive your application.

I encourage you to read the pack carefully, including the job description and role profile. If you are considering an application, I strongly recommend arranging a conversation prior to the interview date. To set up a telephone or Teams call, please contact Russell.Gray@astreaacademytrust.org

With very best wishes

Jo Leishman
Director of Primary Education



About Lower Meadow

Lower Meadow Primary Academy is a complex community, and as a result an incredibly rewarding one. The stable staff team strive to achieve against the odds on each family's behalf.

Housing Sheffield City Council's Level 5 Hearing Impairment Unit in an estate setting with multiple deprivation factors, Lower Meadow needs a Principal who can actively and proactively steer the whole school community towards success with confidence, vision and conviction.

Candidates will notice that the advertised salary band is enhanced for the size of the school; this is in direct recognition of the strength of leadership that the school requires. Astrea's financial planning model also recognises the challenge, with SEND funding provided as "actual" not "notional" in addition to the significant pupil-led SEND funding secured from the Local Authority.

This currently supports a full-time non-teaching Assistant Principal SENDCO position, full-time specialist non-teaching DSL, a TLR Assistant SENDCO position and generous leadership release time capacity for the SLT.

Lower Meadow Primary Academy is currently educating 255 pupils plus a Nursery cohort. The academy has a strong inclusive profile, with 44 pupils holding EHCPs and a further 65 identified as SEND K, over half of whom have Speech, Language and Communication as their primary need.

The school reflects rich linguistic diversity, with 30% of learners speaking English as an Additional Language and representing 32 different languages, including British Sign Language. Alongside this, 69% of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium, and the school experiences over 20% cohort mobility, shaping a dynamic and constantly evolving learning environment.



Being an Astrea Principal

Working together, Astrea schools tackle head-on, the barriers that stand in the way of children's success. We will do this through a relentless commitment to a brilliant education, a focus on inclusion for all, and by delivering on our promise of broad opportunities and supporting and sustaining thriving communities.

The power to unlock our 'Learn, Thrive, Succeed' tag line is driven by quality in the classroom. The primary approach brings this North Star to life by focusing on two key intentions. The Trust primarily works with its schools to ensure that:

1. Every classroom will be led by a great teacher.

In practice, this means that every teacher will deliver a high-quality academic and character education through excellent pedagogical approaches.

2. Every school will be led by a principal who champions the Trust strategy and enacts the approach.

In practice, this means that every principal will focus on developing teachers to elevate pedagogical excellence to unlock true academic potential and learner character.

Every school's culture is built by the principal leading to our North Star, Intentions and shared values of scholarship, tenacity and curiosity. Our leaders act with integrity and shared purpose, guided by the Astrea values, placing children at the heart of decision-making and promote a culture of excellence, feedback, and lifelong learning.

Astrea's primary principals receive significant support and challenge to ensure that their schools are highly effective. Monthly principal training days focus on aspects of CPD which enable our leaders to translate the cutting edge thinking of the Academy Trust Strategy to their own schools.

Fortnightly visits from the Regional Director focus on driving school improvement from within. Support for NPQ and masters level qualifications is offered through our Astrea Talent Programme whilst experienced leaders are invited to contribute to NPQ delivery within and beyond the Trust.

As an Astrea Academy Trust school, Lower Meadow Primary benefits from centralised curriculum and leadership support. This includes resourcing of Read Write Inc, Literacy Tree, Ark Maths Mastery, Get Set 4 PE, Charanga Music - all with dedicated central specialist support matched to school needs and requirements. Trust-wide partnerships are in place with RE Today, Primary Languages Network, NCCE and the PKC curriculum team for other foundation subjects.

Astrea Principals have at their disposal a specialist central team whose expertise can be deployed to secure strength and improvement in school leadership (at all levels) ranging from Phonics to Music, Maths to PESSPA, Early Years to Pedagogy and more besides.

For more information about Lower Meadow Primary Academy, please visit our website:

www.astrealowermeadow.org

We highly encourage all prospective applicants to arrange an informal conversation. This discussion will provide valuable insight into the academy, the expectations of the role, and its strategic priorities.

To schedule this conversation, please contact

Russell Gray at
russell.gray@astreacademytrust.org



Russell Gray - Regional Director of Schools

We nurture empathy,

helping children understand

and care for others in a

diverse and inclusive environment.



About the role

Role Title	Principal
Responsible to	Primary Regional Director
Salary	LS15-21 £74,562 - £86,391

PURPOSE

The Principal is the strategic and operational leader of the Academy, responsible for ensuring the highest standards of education, safeguarding, and personal development for all pupils. The postholder will provide inspirational leadership, cultivating a culture of excellence, ambition, and inclusion in line with Astrea Academy Trust values.

The Principal will lead the continued improvement of teaching, learning, and curriculum provision; develop and empower staff; and ensure that every child can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. They will be accountable for the effective management of resources, the embedding of strong systems and structures, and the delivery of outstanding outcomes across the Academy.

Working in partnership with the Trust, families, and the local community, the Principal will champion a child-centred approach, maintain a safe and supportive environment, and drive the Academy's strategic direction to secure long-term success and sustained school improvement.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Leadership across the academy and its staff, in order to achieve extremely high standards of teaching and learning, behaviour and attainment.
- Implementation and coordination of the vision, ethos and strategy for the Academy
- Leadership of effective external relationships, including the local community and other stakeholders
- Contribute to a culture of professional growth supported by Astrea's Leadership Academy and Trust-wide development programmes.
- Recruit, develop, motivate, and performance-manage staff in alignment with the Trust's strong focus on collaboration, professional expertise, and leadership development.

About the role

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES CONT.

- Install an ethos of high expectations for achievement and behaviour for all pupils
- Lead the development of the academy curriculum and culture
- Maintain strong working relationships with the community, agencies and stakeholders including parents and local governance committee members
- Oversee staffing allocation, including support staff across the academy
- Ensure robust operational systems are in place that support the academy's efficient functioning
- Collaborate with colleagues working in behaviour, attendance and SEND.
- Working with finance and estates teams to over the academy finances, facilities, catering and resources
- Collaborate with others in Astrea Academy Trust to develop good practice and share innovation
- Uphold the Trust's commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity, and safeguarding.
- Help shape or lead education initiatives across Astrea
- Undertake any other responsibilities as directed by the Regional Director

Operational success

relies fundamentally

on **the success**
of our people 

Person Specification

QUALIFICATIONS

- Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)
- NPQH
- Evidence of continuous INSET and commitment to further professional development

EXPERIENCE

- Resilience and motivation to lead the academy through day-to-day challenges while maintaining a clear strategic vision and direction
- Leading improvement with positive impact on outcomes for pupils with SEND
- Exceptional knowledge in school leadership
- Experience of leading in a school with consistently high-quality teaching, learning, and pupil outcomes.

KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING

- Knowledge of the national curriculum and age related expectations for pupils within the primary and Early Years phase
- Understanding of how learning happens through an understanding of theories such as cognitive load theory
- Impactful development of teaching and non-teaching staff

PERSONAL SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES

- Promote the Trust's aims positively, and use effective strategies to lead and manage
- Effective management style that encourages participation, innovation and confidence
- The ability to be able to communicate effectively in a range of situations and be able to adapt style and approach where necessary to achieve the desired outcome
- Develop good personal relationships within a team
- High level personal IT skills and the ability to use these effectively in a range of situations
- Ability to work under pressure and to deadlines
- High expectation of self and others
- Lead and manage highly effective teams
- Establish and develop close relationships with parents, trustees, trust senior staff, governors and the community
- Confident, enthusiastic and motivated with a passion for education
- Strong relationship building skills with the ability to work as part of a team understanding Trust roles and responsibilities and own position within these
- Genuine passion and a belief in the potential of every student
- Commitment to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

How to apply



Your application

If you like what you've read so far and think you can see yourself as a key member of the Astrea team, it's time to fill in your application.

Applications are welcomed from experienced school leaders looking to further develop their existing skills and to make an outstanding impact on a complex school community.

Applications from deputy headteachers / vice principals with significant experience of leading in larger primary schools serving challenging catchments and with strong knowledge of very varied SEND, safeguarding and staff development and will also be viewed positively.

All applications must be submitted through My New Term - the link to our careers page is:
[Astrea Academy Trust Careers Page Link](#)

Tips for a great application

- Check out the person specification - this highlights the key aspects we're looking for.
- Be yourself. Your personality, values and vision are the most important to us - you must be a great fit!
- Be sure to read this pack and our policies thoroughly to ensure you are fully aligned to our ways of working. If so - tell us about it!
- Make sure you tell us what skills you have that make you perfect for this role. Tell us the impact of your work, don't just list the tasks that you have completed.
- List any formal qualifications on your application. We'll need to see the certificates for your qualifications at interview stage.
- Make sure you include paid work, unpaid work and any work experience in your employment history. Start with your current employment, or if you are currently unemployed, your most recent employment. If there are any gaps in your employment, you must tell us why for safer recruitment purposes.
- At least one of your referees should be your current employer. If you are not currently employed, provide your most recent employer. If you don't have any employment history, think about professional referee's who would best describe your strengths for the role and your suitability to work with children.

How to apply



Astrea Academy Trust are an equal opportunities employer, committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful applicants are subject to an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service check and satisfactory employment references.

As well as verification of identity, we ask all successful candidates to undertake an enhanced DBS disclosure. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance, we may also conduct an online search about any shortlisted candidates as part of our due diligence to identify any matters that might relate directly to our legal duty to meet safeguarding duties.

DISABILITY CONFIDENT EMPLOYER

Astrea Academy Trust is delighted to be part of such an important movement, which will ensure we have the guidance to challenge attitudes towards disability, tap into wider talent pools and help all individuals across the Trust fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations. As a Disability confident employer, we have pledged to promote a culture that ensures there are no barriers to the development and progression of disabled staff.



Candidate Charter

We want every candidate to have an informed, engaging, and positive experience, and to support this we've created our Candidate Charter which outlines our commitment to you.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

- Transparency – we will treat you with respect, honesty and fairness.
- Protecting your privacy – we'll ensure your information is secure and handled sensitively.
- Understanding – you will be given everything you need to make informed decisions.
- Showcasing talent – we will provide a good opportunity for you to share your skills, experience and potential.
- Feedback – we will provide constructive feedback professionally and promptly.
- Listening – we welcome feedback and we'll act on what you have to share.
- Inclusivity – our hiring decisions align with our commitment to create a high quality, diverse workforce.

WE WILL:

- Provide you with clear, accurate and timely information.
- Give you the opportunity to ask questions – and we'll ensure you get the answers you need.
- Respond to enquiries promptly and usually within 24 hours during the working week.
- Adopt a fair and consistent assessment process.
- Make sure you have all the documentation and details you need for an interview, well in advance.
- Provide you with real insight about what it's like to be part of our team.
- Ensure all offers are fair and equitable.
- Seek feedback on your experience at every opportunity, so we can continue to improve.

IN RETURN WE ASK THAT YOU:

- Be honest and upfront about your experience, aspirations and motivations.
- Provide open and accurate information when submitting an application.
- Always give yourself the best opportunity to succeed – research who we are and how we work.
- Let us know if situations change in relation to your interest and help us understand why.
- Prepare yourself for interview and let us know how we can support you.

About the Trust

The trust has 26 academies across South Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire

We are committed to ensuring that all children in the trust have accelerated opportunities that enable them to learn, thrive, and lead successful lives. Our ambition is to tackle historical educational disadvantage and to play our part in the social regeneration of areas that have experienced poor education opportunities.

The trust has grown rapidly since its creation and now educates around 15,000 students in 26 academies. In Cambridgeshire, the trust comprises four secondary schools and one SEMH special school. In South Yorkshire, the trust works through seventeen primary academies, one all-through school, and three secondary schools.

The trust's Executive Team is led by Rowena Hackwood as Chief Executive Officer. A wider central team supports the work of individual academies in core areas such as academic support, inclusion, governance, finance, HR, estates, and IT. With a 2030 strategy in place, we are clear and specific about our vision for behaviour, curriculum and teaching quality.

All our academies are rated **GOOD** by Ofsted.



Astrea in Numbers

26
ACADEMIES

2,000
MEMBERS
OF
STAFF



£115m
TOTAL
INCOME

100%
RATED 'GOOD'

14,000 PUPILS

£3.9m
REINVESTED
INTO SCHOOLS
TO IMPROVE
FACILITIES AND
INFRASTRUCTURE



Our Vision and Values

Our future success is underpinned by a strong set of shared values. These values are important because they support the vision, shape the culture, and make a statement about what we hold dear.



SCHOLARSHIP:

We are informed by the best of academic and organisational thinking and research, using this where we can and expanding it where possible.



CURIOSITY:

We ask searching questions, not taking things at face value, seeking out the best of what is known and engaging in appreciative enquiry.



TENACITY:

We deliver on our promises and see things through to completion. We embody pace, urgency and determination in our focus on improving outcomes for children and on our own performance.

Our Academies

PRIMARY



SECONDARY



ALL-THROUGH



SPECIAL



Any questions

Who do I contact if I have any questions about the role?

We highly encourage all prospective applicants to arrange an informal conversation. This discussion will provide valuable insight into the academy, the expectations of the role, and its strategic priorities.

To schedule a conversation, contact **Russell Gray** - russell.gray@astreacademytrust.org

Who should I contact if I have any special requirements?

If you're unable to complete our online application form and need some support, and/or you need our documents in an alternative format, for example, large print, please contact our recruitment team Recruitment@astreacademytrust.org.

How long will it take for you to decide if I've got an interview?

This can vary depending on the number of applications we receive for each vacancy. Generally speaking, we do try our best to make or decision and contact applicants invited for interview within a week of the closing date.

Will I be notified if my application is unsuccessful and will I receive feedback?

We know how much time and effort goes into an application and we really appreciate the time you've taken to apply for a job with us. During the shortlisting stage, your application status will be updated on MyNewTerm & you will receive an automated email from the system. Due to the volume of applications we receive, we're unable to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates at the shortlisting stage.





LOWER MEADOW PRIMARY ACADEMY

Astrea Academy Trust

LEARN, THRIVE, SUCCEED

Please visit our website to
learn more

www.astrealowermeadow.org