

BRIEFING FOR APPLICANTS

Teaching Assistant (maternity cover post)

Start date: As soon as possible

Grade 7, point 8-11 (£19,954 - £21,888 actual salary)

5 days - 31 hours 50 minutes per week, term time only

An introduction to our school

Our school is an 11-16 mixed, community, comprehensive school of around 950 students. We are lucky to be based in a relatively new building, with great facilities, on a beautiful site at the edge of the Peak District market town of Chapel-en-le-Frith. The Peak District National Park is quite literally on the school's doorstep and provides endless opportunities for walkers, cyclists, mountain bikers, climbers, cavers and other outdoor enthusiasts.

The nearest big towns to the school are Buxton and Stockport but good transport links mean that the school's staff travel from a wide area with many commuting from Manchester, Sheffield, Chesterfield and the towns of East Cheshire. A sizable contingent of staff live in the villages of the Peak District. For anyone considering relocating it is a wonderful area in which to live, with a good mix of housing, decent schools, easy commutes and a good quality of life.

Chapel-en-le-Frith is a rural Peak District market town. The biggest employers in the area are however industrial, mainly manufacturing and quarrying. The school takes students from a wide rural area beyond the town with some students travelling for up to an hour by bus to reach school. There is considerable socio-economic variation across the school's catchment.

We believe that our school is unusual in several ways; perhaps the most obvious of these is structural. The current school was formed by merging, in a new building, the local area special school with the existing high school. The special school became the current 50 place enhanced resourced SEND provision, always referred to simply as 'Learning Support' in school. To meet the moderate to severe special educational needs of its cohort, Learning Support operates as a 'school within a school' with a full independent curriculum with significant dedicated SEND trained staffing, including 7 teachers of SEND. Students based in Learning Support study an independent curriculum appropriate to their needs. The curriculum is highly adapted to the social and academic needs of the individual, with a strong focus on independent living, interpersonal and employability skills. The aim is always that a student's school life should be as 'normal' as possible. Almost all students based in Learning Support attend mainstream tutor groups and assemblies.

All can integrate at breaks and lunchtimes and share social and eating facilities. Many students attend at least one mainstream subject and some will progress to take several mainstream subjects including GCSEs. These arrangements make for a wonderfully inclusive school with young people who are very accepting of difference.

Our inclusive approach spreads more widely too and we often buck local and national trends by being positive about accepting students with difficult and complex backgrounds. We have, for example, an unusually high number of looked after children in school, and we often take students who have been permanently excluded from other schools.

Raising aspirations is of critical importance to us, as many students in this isolated rural area are not naturally exposed to the wider opportunities that an urban area might offer. Significant resources are devoted to bridging this gap, we have good links with further education providers and, despite being an 11 to 16 school engage with a number of universities including Oxford and Cambridge. As a result of this work, and despite being in an area with few local post 16 provisions, the school maintains superb progression rates to successful post-16 education. Students in a typical year may transition to over 20 different post-16 institutions.

We think that we are different in other ways too. Our governors value the arts and creative subjects, and we retain high uptake in these areas. We aren't a top-down organisation; we are a team, and we work together to do the best we can for the young people in our care. Perhaps most importantly, we recognise that happy, committed staff make for a successful school. We work really hard to look after and develop our staff.

Visitors to our school notice these differences. People frequently comment on the sense of community, the calm atmosphere, and the fact that our staff smile, joke and enjoy what they do. At the start of one of our Ofsted inspections the lead inspector commented, after meeting the staff in briefing, that he had never met such a welcoming, smiley and relaxed staff team at the start of an inspection. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that we are always fully staffed and are often 'cold called' by people wanting to work here.

We are in the minority of secondary schools that remain local authority run. This is by choice after careful research and consideration and is regularly reviewed by governors. We are not however an isolated school, we benefit from support from Derbyshire County Council, we're a member of the Peak Edge Group of schools (PEGS) a local grouping of rural primary and secondary schools, and we have good links with local employers, universities and teaching schools.

Like most schools, we have our strengths and weaknesses. We are proud of the work we have done recently on curriculum development, on teaching and learning and on behaviour. We believe in research-based practice and many staff are now engaged with research and further professional qualifications. Our exam results are consistently strong with subjects attaining above national averages. Our challenges remain those of many rural schools; further improving our results requires that we better engage disadvantaged students, the increasingly complex SEN needs that face us require constant adaptations to practice in Learning Support, and while we've always set balanced budgets, and are proud that we've never had to make staff redundant, finances remain tight. Running one of Derbyshire's largest SEND provisions means that we're at the sharp end of the current national issues around SEND education.

This is a brilliant place to work. The school is in a good position with a strong Ofsted inspection in October 2024, above average progress 8, oversubscribed for the last 13 years, and consistently above average progression figures.

Being a teaching assistant in our school

As explained above, we are an unusual school. As well as being a 'normal' comprehensive school we run one of the largest provisions for students with moderate to severe special needs in Derbyshire. This provision, which we call learning support, currently caters for around 50 students.

We also pride ourselves on trying to succeed with students with other complex needs, for example behavioural needs and emotional needs. Many of these students with additional needs benefit from the support of our brilliant teaching assistant team.

Unlike many primary schools we do not insist on applicants having a teaching assistant qualification, we believe that the most important thing is to find the right person, you can gain training and experience once you are in the job.

People come to the role of teaching assistant for a variety of reasons. It is a very rewarding job that allows you to make a huge difference to young people's lives. Students will often remember the teaching assistants that helped them many years after leaving school. It is also a job though in which you can gain experience and training and become a specialist in a particular area.

The basic job remains supporting students in the classroom. This can range from supporting students learning to read, to helping students aiming for top GCSE grades in maths or history.

There are however, opportunities to become involved in much more. Some of these roles bring with them an increase in pay grade. We have teaching assistants who:

- Are skilled in dealing with students who struggle to behave appropriately in school.
- Work to support students with mental health challenges to keep them in school.
- Are trained to support student develop their emotional literacy.
- Plan and run reading, spelling and other literacy programmes to students.
- Deliver specialist speech and language, motor skills or physiotherapy interventions in school.

We are also seeing increasing numbers of students in school with complex physical needs, many of these students use electric wheelchairs. Some members of our TA team are training to provide personal care for these students, this involves training in the use of hoists.

In summary, this is perhaps not one job, it is a range of jobs. No one does all of these jobs, but we're looking for a colleague able to help in various areas.

The job description provided is for the basic job, this would be amended for various specialist roles.

We have teaching assistants who have happily done the job all of their working lives, and we have others who come to us for a year to gain experience before going into teaching or social work. We're very happy to support either of these approaches.

Above all this is a hardworking and happy team who really make a difference to young people's lives.

Job Description

Teaching Assistant

Grade 7

Job purpose:

- To support teaching and learning within mainstream lessons and in the Enhanced Resource Provision to ensure that all students with SEND make progress
- Promote the inclusion of all students within the classroom and school.
- Establish constructive relationships and communicate with other relevant professionals, in liaison with the teacher, to support students' learning and progress
- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of students is maintained at all times
- Promote social and emotional development of students
- Establish and promote productive relationships with students, acting as a role model and setting high expectations.

Accountability:

- Head of department learning support/SENCo
- Headteacher, SLG, HoDs, teachers, other teaching assistants, external agencies, parents, governors

Key tasks:

Supporting learning

- To enable students to make good progress
- To work under the guidance of the class teacher supporting the learning of all students
- To work with individual or small groups of students ensuring that they understand lesson content and are able to engage positively with learning
- To undertake work with small groups of students or individual students out of lessons under the direction of the class teacher
- To enable students to work with independence
- To encourage students to interact and work co-operatively with others
- To assist in developing students' resilience, confidence and self-esteem
- To assist students in developing the ability to self-regulate and manage difficulties
- To respond knowledgeably to any questions from students
- To use effective questioning to enable students to develop their knowledge and understanding
- To undertake some routine marking of students work in lessons and give feedback to students, addressing misconceptions
- To establish constructive relationships with students and interact with them according to individual needs.
- To differentiate or adapt materials, lesson content and tasks in liaison with the class teacher such that all students are able to access learning
- To assist with the supervision of students out of lesson times, including before and after school and at lunchtime as directed by the CLM Learning Support
- With the class teacher, to play a full role in maintaining good discipline in the classroom and ensure that all students are able to learn
- To safeguard the wellbeing, health and safety of students at all times

General

- To contribute to the aims and ethos of the school
- To support and implement school policies and procedures
- To access relevant student information and implement recommended strategies to support learning
- To take responsibility for developing personal SEND knowledge and expertise
- To participate in training and professional development opportunities
- To accompany teaching staff and students on visits and support out of school activities as required
- To assist the teacher in managing classroom resources

- To undertake administrative duties relevant to the post and maintain or contribute to accurate record keeping as required
- To be aware of and comply with policies and procedures relating to child protection, health, safety and security, confidentiality and data protection, reporting all concerns to the appropriate person
- To establish constructive relationships and communicate with school staff and other relevant professionals to support students' learning and progress
- To attend and contribute to meetings with parents and other professionals and contribute to the annual review process for students with Education, Health and Care Plans
- To actively contribute to the support staff appraisal process

Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task may not be identified. Colleagues will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from a manager to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in this job description.

Person Specification
Teaching Assistant

Essential:

- ✓ Experience of working with a wide range of people
- ✓ Excellent communication skills
- ✓ Ability to work flexibly and be approachable
- ✓ Commitment to working as a member of a team
- ✓ Sense of humour and sense of perspective
- ✓ Ability to explain students' needs and advocate possible solutions to a range of colleagues
- ✓ Good numeracy and literacy skills
- ✓ Basic ICT skills in order to support learning and perform effectively in role
- ✓ Ability to self-evaluate learning needs and actively seek learning opportunities
- ✓ Ability to develop and share good practice
- ✓ Ability to relate well to children and adults
- ✓ Work constructively as part of a team
- ✓ Ability to maintain confidentiality

Desirable:

- ✓ Experience of working with young people
- ✓ Experience of working with people with learning difficulties
- ✓ Experience of working with young people with challenging behaviour
- ✓ Work in a school environment
- ✓ Understanding of a range of special educational needs and disabilities
- ✓ General understanding of barriers to learning
- ✓ General understanding of 11-16 curriculum demands
- ✓ Interest in further professional development in the field of SEND

Safer recruitment and our values

The school uses robust safer recruitment procedures that meet the requirements of [Keeping children safe in education](#) . These processes are designed to deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment or volunteering opportunities in the school.

Our safer recruitment processes form a vital part of our whole school approach to safeguarding and are an essential part of creating a safe environment for our learners. Further details on the safer recruitment of staff in school can be found in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy which is on the school's website.

When you apply for a job in our school you will be asked to disclose any previous criminal convictions. You will be asked to provide a full employment history and the names of two referees. One of these referees must be your most recent employer and, if the employer is a school, must be the headteacher. We will follow up on any issues raised by your references at interview and we may contact your referees to verify their identity or for further information.

Everyone who works in the school, including volunteers will have appropriate Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks.

For teachers, qualified teacher status will be checked. Appointment to a post will be subject to satisfactory references, satisfactory DBS checks, the checking of qualified teacher status (for teachers), checking of the right to work in the UK, and health clearance.

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School is committed to creating an inclusive workplace which promotes and values diversity in age, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability and ethnicity. We expect our staff and volunteers to share these values