




The **GALLERY TRUST**



A community of special schools



Orion
Academy

Teaching Assistant – Maternity Cover (9
months)

Candidate Information
April 2026

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of Teaching Assistant, at Orion Academy.

Orion Academy currently offers places to 74 students, and the roll of the school will rise steadily over the next two years to cater for 108 students, aged from 10 to 18 years: Students attend from throughout the county, and transfer from our SEND feeder school, Northern House Academy, and from mainstream primary and secondary schools. The Academy moved into new, state of the art buildings in September 2021. Our facilities offer a wide range of exciting curriculum and vocational opportunities to learners, and a fantastic working environment.

All students who attend Orion Academy have an Education, Health and Care Plan, which describes their special needs and drives their educational provision.

Students are taught through a differentiated and bespoke curriculum designed to enhance their personal and social development and academic achievement. We have a strong intent to ensure our students leave with the personal characteristics to thrive in their communities. Classes are taught in stages, not necessarily age, allowing innovation and creative approaches to teaching and learning. The Academy provides support for our students with social and emotional needs through our Academy Community Learning Team, which consists of youth workers, therapeutic and pastoral workers.

Thank you for your interest in Orion Academy. This is an exciting time to join our school and we look forward to receiving your application.



Jessie Shakespeare
Co. Headteacher



Hannah Shuker
Co. Headteacher

The Gallery Trust is a Multi Academy Trust which is dedicated to improving outcomes for SEND learners in Oxfordshire. The aim of the Trust is to provide outstanding education and support for young people with special needs and disabilities, enabled through:

- Commitment to special education – striving to provide the best specialist learning experience for all students
- Opportunities for all to learn – ensuring that students and staff have access to learning pathways which enhance their lives
- Genuine respect and value – creating relationships which promote trust, confidence and respect within environments which are safe and secure

The Trust is on a continuing journey of expansion, growing from a Multi Academy Trust based on a single academy in 2013, to its position as the largest Special Trust in Oxfordshire.

The schools in the Trust are:

- Bardwell School, Bicester
- Bloxham Grove Academy
- A Free Special School in South Oxfordshire, opening date to be confirmed
- Iffley Academy, Oxford
- Mabel Prichard School, Oxford
- Northern House Academy, Oxford
- Orion Academy, Oxford
- Springfield School, Witney

The Trust's vision is to continue to expand over the next five years, supporting a community of converter academies, free schools and sponsored academies. All member academies have the opportunity to share SEND expertise and to work with peers who share common aims and goals.

The Trust is committed to investment in learning, developing system leadership, working in partnership and through a shared vision, enabling all students to reach their full potential.

Teaching Assistant – Maternity cover (9 months from June 2026)

Grade: 7

Actual Annual Salary: £20,445 to £21,823

Full Time Equivalent: £29,064 to £30,519

Work Pattern: 30 hours per week, 39 weeks per year (Term time + 5 inset days)

Orion Academy is currently seeking a Teaching Assistant to assist and support our Co-Head Teachers and teaching staff in providing high standards of teaching, learning and pastoral care to students.

All aspects of the role and responsibilities are focused on providing positive experiences for students, supporting their education and pastoral care, and liaising with families to get the best possible outcomes.

The role includes:

- Supporting teachers and colleagues to deliver highly personalised and bespoke lessons
- Working restoratively to enhance the learning of experience of pupils
- Working closely with other professionals and families
- Supporting the creation of a climate for success for students with special educational needs and disabilities
- Promoting high standards in class teams

The role requires an individual who has strong communication and interpersonal skills, and is able to foster, and maintain, relationships with students, staff and families. The ability to remain positive and calm when under pressure is essential. You must have a commitment to enriching and improving the lives of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and to working with students who have Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. Resilience and the ability to work flexibly are key to ensure success in this role.

If you share our passion for making a real difference to the lives of children and young people with special needs, we would love to hear from you. Previous special school experience is not necessary, but it is essential you fully share our values, which can be found on The Gallery Trust website.

Benefits of working at Orion Academy, part of The Gallery Trust

Career Progression

- Be a key member of a friendly and supportive staff team who are dedicated to achieving the best for every one of our pupils

- Participate in high quality professional development opportunities which are tailored to your needs and to your career aspirations
- Develop your career in The Gallery Trust, an expanding and successful organisation which offers opportunities for progression, secondments and collaborative working with colleagues across our schools

Financial

- Competitive salaries for teaching and support staff based on School Teacher Pay and Conditions Document and the NJC Green Book
- Access to LGPS pension linked to salary life assurance
- Contribution towards glasses and eye tests for DSE use
- Salary sacrifice schemes, including cycle to work

Wellbeing

- 24/7 access to a free Employee Assistance Programme to provide confidential advice and guidance
- Excellent induction processes, and strong line management structures to promote your wellbeing at work
- A culture which is open to employee ideas and encourages open dialogue
- Regular staff surveys to gain feedback on wellbeing and to drive improvements
- The opportunity to join colleagues for social events
- Family friendly policies, which promote your wellbeing
- The opportunity to work in a new, purpose-built school building, which offers an exciting environment in which to teach and learn, located just a short drive from Oxford's ring road
- Free car parking and cycle storage
- On-site catering

Application process

To apply for this post please submit an application form via the MyNewTerm portal.

The deadline for applications is **Friday 1st May** Interviews are provisionally scheduled to take place on **Wednesday 6th May**.

Please ensure you detail any gaps in employment and use the selection criteria which is contained in the job pack when you prepare your application, as shortlisting for interview will be based on how closely you demonstrate your ability to fulfil the essential criteria.

We are committed to ensuring that everyone feels welcome, respected, and supported throughout our recruitment process. If you have a disability, are neurodivergent, or have any additional needs that may require adjustments at any stage of your application or interview, please let us know via recruitment@orionacademy.co.uk

We do not accept CVs. If you are shortlisted, we will take up written references before your interview so please provide permission for this and provide accurate phone and email contact details for your referees. One of your referees must be your current or last employer, and if you are employed in a school, must include your current Head Teacher. If you have previously worked in a school, your referees must include your most recent Head Teacher

Orion Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and expects all staff to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check, Occupational Health check and a probationary period of 6 months. The Orion Academy is an equal opportunities employer and we welcome applications from a range of ethnic backgrounds to represent diversity in line with our school community.

The Gallery Trust is a Special Multi Academy Trust which is dedicated to improving outcomes for SEND learners in Oxfordshire. We strive to provide the best possible specialist learning experience for all pupils.

Our Strategic Aims

- **Places where innovation drives learning** – our schools have a clear purpose, they educate the whole child and prepare them for adulthood. Everything we do, from our curriculum offer to our pastoral care, is meaningful and driven by the needs of learners.
- **Places where relationships drive engagement and achievement** – our schools are built around exceptional relationships. We provide excellent experiences, growth, and opportunities for pupils and staff, and specialist working environments and resources.
- **Places which provide exceptional knowledge and support** – our schools are supported by a skilled and experienced central team which provides high quality school improvement and central support services.
- **Places which inspire and influence** – our schools are committed to collaborating with our local and national partners and communities to ensure that children and young people with SEND receive the education and opportunities they deserve.

As we enter the next phase of our development and build on our many successes, we want to embrace future challenges and opportunities. The Trust is on a continuing journey of expansion, growing from a Multi Academy Trust based on a single academy in 2013, to its position as the largest Special Trust in Oxfordshire. There are currently six special academies in the Trust located throughout Oxfordshire, with an additional academy opening in January 2024, and a further academy scheduled to open in 2026. The Trust's vision is to continue to expand over the next five years, supporting a community of converter academies, free schools and sponsored academies, and providing outreach and other opportunities. All academies collaborate to share SEND expertise and best practice, and work in partnership with peers who are committed to common aims and goals.

The Board of Trustees believes that by providing the support of highly experienced and specialised school improvement and business teams, school leaders are empowered to focus on the standards of teaching and learning, and in meeting the operational and strategic demands of running their schools.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Teaching Assistant

Job Purpose:

To assist and support the Co-Headteachers and teaching staff in providing high standards of teaching and learning across the curriculum and to promote the academy's vision and ethos.

Introduction:

This job description describes in general terms the normal duties which the postholder will be expected to undertake. However, the job or duties described may vary or be amended from time to time without changing the level of responsibility associated with the post. The performance of all duties and responsibilities shown below will be under the reasonable direction of the Co-Headteachers. The Co-Headteachers will be mindful of her/his duty to ensure that the employee has a reasonable workload and sufficient support to carry out the duties of the post. This job description will be reviewed at least annually and any changes will be subject to consultation. The academy's grievance procedure will be used to resolve any disagreement arising out of the job description.

The job description involves:

Teaching and Learning

- Assist in the educational and social development of students under the direction and guidance of the Co-Headteachers, SENCO and class teachers
- Assist in the implementation of Individual Education Plans and Individual Behaviour Plans for students and help monitor their progress
- Provide support for individual students inside and outside the classroom to enable them to fully participate in activities
- Work with other professionals, such as speech therapists and occupational therapists, as necessary
- Assist class teachers with maintaining student records
- Support students with emotional and behavioural needs and help develop their social and independence skills
- Contribute, wherever appropriate, to the display, presentation and celebration of students' work

Administrative duties:

- Support class teachers in photocopying, proof reading and other administrative tasks in order to support teaching
- Undertake other duties from time to time as the Associate Head Teacher and Head of School requires

Standards and quality assurance:

- Support the aims and ethos of the Academy
- Set a good example in terms of dress, punctuality and attendance
- Attend team and staff meetings
- Be proactive in matters relating to health and safety
- Participate positively in training and professional development
- Taking a share of supervisory duties as part of the weekly routine and as necessary
- Take part in Performance Management and appraisal
- Meet deadlines

Specific responsibilities agreed between the Co-Headteachers and the teaching assistant

In addition to the duties outlined, you may be responsible for the following:

- Support in the delivery of specific key stage interventions
- One to one support for a student with specific medical needs
- Meeting the medical and first aid needs of students including the administration of medicines by mouth or other medical procedures providing appropriate training has been received
- Help with feeding of students at lunch time
- Supporting students with their personal hygiene and personal care
- The physical management (restrictive physical interventions) of students, following appropriate training
- Driving and supporting students in school vehicles
- Supporting students on a range of offsite educational visits

General Responsibilities:

- Taking appropriate responsibility for one's own health, safety and welfare and the health, safety and welfare of students, visitors and work colleagues in accordance with the requirements of legislation and locally-adopted policies; including taking responsibility for raising any concerns with an appropriate manager and for reporting accidents and incidents appropriately
- To carry out other duties as may be reasonably assigned by the Co-Headteachers

**Selection Criteria
Teaching Assistant, Orion Academy**

	Essential	Desirable
Professional Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade 4 at GCSE in Maths and English or equivalent in mathematics and English, or suitable equivalent experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NVQ 2 for Teaching Assistants or equivalent Other relevant qualifications linked to young people or school work.
Experience		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous experience working in a school environment Previous experience working with SEND Experience of working with or caring for children of relevant age
Professional Knowledge & Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of child development and learning Ability to self-evaluate learning needs and actively seek learning opportunities Ability to work flexibly, throughout the whole school, meeting the needs of students in a range of contexts Willingness and ability to undertake physical management of students, following appropriate training Willingness to undertake First Aid training and to attend to the medical, first aid and personal needs of students. Ability to take an active role in the support of PE lessons Effective use of ICT to support learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Teach trained Understanding of relevant policies/codes of practice and awareness of relevant legislation General understanding of National Curriculum First aid trained
Personal Skills and Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with students, colleagues and parents Good organisational skills Good communication skills Ability to remain positive and enthusiastic, including when under pressure Commitment to raising standards Commitment to Safeguarding and the wellbeing and welfare of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full driving license

Your application should clearly demonstrate how well you meet the above key criteria.

Aims

At Orion Academy we believe our children and young people are unique individuals and as such we have designed our school curriculum with their learning and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs at the heart of all we do.

Our nurturing approach seeks to extend our work out into the community; actively supporting, listening and engaging with our families and carers to deliver the best possible environment for our children and young people, thus enabling them to learn effectively, become active and responsible citizens who are well prepared for life after school.

We are committed to delivering this through:-

Our **nurturing approach** that will provide an environment to thrive –

- Where every child or young person is treated as an individual in a safe and nurturing environment that understands that all students can achieve but will require differentiated approaches based on their individual needs.
- With a school-wide family ethos demonstrating our values of empathy, acceptance and mutual respect, so each member of the school community feels valued and supported.

Our focus on **personal development** is designed to –

- Enable our children and young people to become more socially aware and of their responsibilities with a focus on trust and choice.
- Ensure we support our children and young people to make better decisions, coach them how to regulate frustrations, and reflect on their experiences through our restorative practices.
- Help our children and young people to make sense of the changing world and of the importance of diversity and equality of opportunity.
- Enable them to make informed choices and develop the confidence to be successful in their adult lives through our embedded personal, social and health education programme.

Our focus on **celebration and recognition of success** is designed to –

- Encourage and celebrate each student's talents, skills and attributes.
- Develop the confidence and self-belief of the individual – a culture of 'I can' or 'I can't... yet' is ingrained across our school.
- Provide opportunities for our children and young people to be successful and support them in both developing and promoting their individual resilience as well as celebrating the achievements of others.

Our **ambitious curriculum** offer that is designed to –

- Create the capacity to learn and enjoy learning by broadening our students' horizons and extending learning beyond the classroom.
- Use real-world examples and first-hand experience; develop curiosity and a desire to challenge their understanding and deepen learning.
- Prepare our children and young people for their future through our broad and balanced curriculum, providing them with knowledge, core literacy and numeracy skills and experiences as well as a range of qualification pathways.
- Embed key learning and understanding through careful and thoughtful revisiting and reinforcing, whilst increasing student independence.

Our **personalised provision** that –

- Is responsive to the needs of each student but is uncompromising in expectation. We will be relentless in our support for our children and young people to achieve beyond their expectations.
- Understands that whilst a student's needs are recognized and met, they are not confined by them; we do not define a future based on a child or young person's past and we are unapologetic in our approach in wanting our students to continue to push the boundaries of their potential.

Our commitment to **working in partnerships with our parents and carers** which demonstrates that –

- We believe our children and young people will achieve their best when families and our school work together in a partnership.
- Effective working relationships are characterized by open and honest communication in order to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Our **specialist and expert workforce** who –

- Are passionate and committed to working in special education and will know each student as an individual, recognising their unique talents, skills and interests.
- Have developed strong and positive relationships with our children and young people in order to support them effectively.
- Have expertise, specialist knowledge and an understanding of a child or young person's needs that embraces the most recent and evidence-based research will result in the best possible outcomes for students
- Are committed to working with therapeutic specialists and external agencies to enhance our provision for our students and their families.
- Support children and young people to recognise and value their own learning journey.

April 2026