



ASTRUM

Multi Academy Trust

PRINCIPAL
RECRUITMENT
PACK

“Empowering
Everyone,
Achieving
Together”



Contents



<u>Letter from the CEO</u>	3
<u>Letter from our Principal</u>	4
<u>About Astrum</u> <u>Multi Academy Trust</u>	5
<u>Vision Values</u>	6
<u>Person Specification</u>	7
<u>Staff Incentives</u>	8
<u>Guidance Notes</u>	9-11



Letter from the CEO



Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Founding Principal of our new all-through SEND school. I hope that the information within this application pack gives you a strong sense of both the unique opportunity this role presents and the ethos of Astrum Multi Academy Trust.

Astrum was formed in 2017, building on the outstanding provision and reputation of our founding school, Newbridge School. Our leaders recognised the growing demand for high-quality special school places and services and were committed to extending our reach so that more children and young people with SEND could access exceptional education and care. Since then, Astrum has grown thoughtfully and purposefully, expanding existing schools, opening new provisions, developing specialist support services and establishing post-16 opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

This new school represents the next and particularly exciting chapter in our journey. Opening in September 2027, it will offer all-through SEND provision to meet the needs of the local community. The appointment of our first Principal is therefore pivotal. This is a rare opportunity to shape a school from its inception, to establish a clear vision and ethos, build a strong and inclusive team, and work collaboratively with families, professionals and the wider community to create provision that enables pupils to thrive.

Astrum values are; belonging, collaboration, compassion, ambition and innovation. These values are not aspirational statements; they guide how we work every day and how we make decisions for children, families and staff. We believe deeply in the potential of every pupil and are uncompromising in our expectation that children and young people with SEND deserve the very best education, care and opportunities.

We also believe that our people are our greatest strength. We are committed to developing leaders at every level and to creating environments where staff feel supported, challenged and valued. Our central team provides expertise across finance, HR, operations, estates and governance, alongside access to specialist therapy services, enabling school leaders to focus on teaching, learning, wellbeing and school community life. I am a strong advocate for growing leadership from within; my own journey with Astrum began over 20 years ago as a teaching assistant, and that commitment to professional growth remains central to our trust.

We are seeking a Principal who is an experienced SEND leader, ambitious for pupils and colleagues, and excited by the opportunity to create something exceptional. You will be someone who leads with integrity, builds strong relationships and shares our belief that collaboration and innovation are essential to meeting the complex needs of the children and young people we serve.

We are immensely proud of the impact Astrum has within its communities and across the SEND sector. I hope you will consider joining us at this significant moment, to build on our strong foundations and help shape a school, and a future that will make a lasting difference.

Lara Parr
Chief Executive Officer
Astrum Multi Academy Trust

About Astrum Multi Academy Trust



Astrum Multi Academy Trust is a unique and vibrant community, created by forward-thinking leaders with a shared passion for ensuring that children and young people with SEND receive the very best specialist education, care and support.

Since our formation in 2017, we have grown significantly; expanding specialist school places, enhancing our specialist services, and establishing a dedicated SEND post-16 provision. Local demand continues to rise, and we remain committed to growing our high-quality, specialist offer so that more children and families can access the support they deserve.

Our vision is simple and powerful:

to provide an outstanding education for every student, shaped by empathy, warmth, ambition and a deep belief in their potential to thrive.

Our People

Our staff are at the heart of everything we do. Across our Trust, we are fortunate to have a team of committed, passionate professionals who work tirelessly to make a difference to students and their families each day.

We strongly believe in “growing our own” talent and providing clear pathways for professional development. Many of our leaders began their careers within our schools; our CEO started over twenty years ago as a teaching assistant, reflecting our commitment to nurturing and developing our people.

Our Central Team provides high-quality support across finance, HR and legal, administration, IT, estates and facilities management, and governance. Their work ensures that leaders and school-based colleagues can remain focused on what matters most: teaching, learning, and meaningful engagement with our students and their families.

Vision Values



Belonging

We create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected. We build strong partnerships with families, professionals across our schools and provisions, and the wider SEND community.



Compassion

We act with empathy and understanding, supporting each other through challenges. Our commitment is to ensure pupils leave us happy and with a smile on their face.



Collaboration

We work together, valuing every voice and building strong partnerships. We prioritise pupil voice, communication, and agency through rich relationships and by celebrating difference.



Innovation

We embrace creativity and seek new ways to improve and adapt. We are an innovative and inspirational organisation where new ideas are welcomed and best practice is shared with all.



Ambition

We set high standards and strive for excellence in everything we do. We promote high aspirations that empower our pupils to reach their full potential.

PRINCIPAL Job Description



PRINCIPAL

Balgores Academy

PAY GRADE/SCALE

Leadership Scale
(Outer London)
L33–L39, with
structured
progression
reflecting growth
through Group 8.

Full time,
Permanent

CORE JOB PURPOSE

The Academy Principal is accountable overall to the CEO and Astrum Multi Academy Trust Board (via the Schools' Committee of local governors) for ensuring the educational success of the pupils and school within the overall framework of the trust's strategic plan(s), relevant legislation, best practice and available resources.

The Academy Principal will ensure pupil and staff safety and welfare through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of a duty of care, will manage staff well with due attention to workload and will ensure rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk.

The Academy Principal will ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties regarding the SEND Code of Practice.

The Academy Principal will ensure the safe and successful operations of both school sites, overseeing and enabling the Deputy and Assistant Principals' roles and work.

PRINCIPAL Job Description



Strategic Leadership and Development of the School

- Work with the CEO, school leaders, staff and other stakeholders to develop and communicate a shared educational vision, which expresses the core values of the trust, is responsive to the needs of the pupils, their families and the local community and motivates and inspires others
- Embed a culture of high aspirations of pupils, their families and all staff, fostering self-belief in achievement and developing independence amongst all, regardless of pupil starting points
- Work closely and collaboratively with other schools/provisions within the trust and all key stakeholders to achieve this vision and secure commitment to its enactment
- Develop a strategic approach that focuses on progress to ensure sustainable school development and improvement, through consultation with the school community
- Aligned with the trust and school vision, implement agreed objectives, operational and business plans and develop appropriate mechanisms for regular monitoring and review to secure school development
- Inspire and influence others, across the school, trust and wider education community, championing best practice and promoting the value of special education
- Work with the trust framework for school development, including engagement with external school networks and trust-approved peer review programs
- Within the trust framework(s), establish and oversee systems, processes and policies so the school can operate effectively
- Allocate financial resources appropriately, efficiently and effectively

PRINCIPAL Job Description



Leading teaching and learning

- Promote excellence in teaching and learning, ensuring a continuous and consistent school-wide focus on pupils' achievement and development (moral, spiritual, personal, social and physical as well as academic)
- Create a stimulating climate which will encourage all pupils to fulfil their potential, in the widest sense and maintain a lifelong enthusiasm for learning and personal development
- Secure excellent teaching through an analytical understanding of how pupils learn and the core features of successful classroom practice and curriculum design, leading to rich curriculum opportunities and pupils' wellbeing
- Ensure a robust and sustainable focus on supporting pupils to make the best possible progress in all aspects of the curriculum, including wider engagement in enrichment opportunities, challenging underachievement and underperformance as/where necessary
- Ensure the development and consistent implementation of curricula that are informed by current knowledge and best practice to develop the potential of all pupils, promoting innovative strategies for those with protected characteristics and fostering a positive approach to managing pupils with profound/severe disabilities and behaviours associated with their special educational needs
- Ensure and further develop personalisation of the curriculum, supported by innovative use of specialist strategies and resources to promote pupils voice, communication and independence
- Promote a school culture of staff who are analytical about understanding pupil needs and behaviours and who use their knowledge to implement and ensure successful learning takes place for all pupils
- Ensure the development and consistent implementation of robust assessment, tracking and monitoring systems that accurately identify and evidence pupil progress, implementing specialist/personalised intervention where necessary
- Monitor, evaluate and review classroom practice; celebrate and promote excellence; challenge underperformance at all levels and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with trust policies and procedures
- Develop and implement strategies to ensure continuity of learning at all points of transition and promote consistency and continuity between trust schools, school sites, and (where appropriate) into alternative/further education, working with school leaders and the wider teaching staff to ensure that pupil transitions are well planned and implemented
- Provide a range of extra-curricular activities which will provide a broad and well-rounded education, support pupil development and ensure rich experiences and opportunities for all

PRINCIPAL Job Description



Performance and standards

- Be accountable for standards, across all aspects of the school
- To report to the CEO and governors/schools' committee (and if requested, the trust board), on school performance and the implementation of trust policies, thereby ensuring full involvement of the governors in strategic planning, business activities, monitoring and building relationships with the wider community
- Understand and welcome the role of effective governance, including accepting responsibility
- Engage positively in trust school improvement processes, including external moderations, such as peer support and review programmes across the trust, local school network, SEND networks and the local teaching school hub(s)
- Be ambitious for pupil outcomes, ensuring targets for academic performance are met
- Maintain a sharp focus on the achievement of both whole cohorts and pupil groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those with protected characteristics
- Ensure that data is accurate and both shared and analysed with impact, in line with the trust policies and frameworks
- Ensure intervention and raising achievement plans are detailed and effective, then implemented with rigour, ensuring impact on pupil progress and outcomes
- Ensure the school effectively and efficiently operates within the required regulatory frameworks and meets all statutory duties

PRINCIPAL Job Description



Leadership of self and others

- Provide dynamic and consistent leadership for the school and its staff, ensuring the successful delivery of the visions, ethos, aims and objectives of the school and trust
- Be a professional role model, setting high standards and expectations for personal, pupils and staff behaviours in support of the achievement of the school's intended outcomes
- Develop and maintain respect of all stakeholders, inspiring individuals to collaborate and contribute positively to share ideas and plans towards school development
- Implement performance management systems and processes for teaching and support staff to ensure the effective delivery of agreed outcomes for pupils and school development, within the trust framework and policies, holding all staff to account for their professional conduct and practice.
- Regularly review own practice, set personal targets and take responsibility for own continuous professional development
- Ensure that processes are in place to encourage all staff to motivate, empower and be similarly active in their personal and continuous professional development and promote the trust ethos of aspirational career progression
- Ensure that training and continuing professional development opportunities are thoughtfully planned, implemented and evaluated, in line with personal and school-wide objectives and draws upon expertise from both within the school/trust as well as beyond
- Take a proactive role in enabling and developing staff, planning for succession, through coaching and other innovative means of leadership and management, particularly for middle and senior leaders
- Have regard to the desirability of teachers and other staff being able to achieve a satisfactory balance between the time required to discharge their duties and the time required to pursue their personal interests outside work.
- Work collaboratively with local governors to encourage and support all to fulfil their governance responsibilities effectively, particularly in terms of holding the school to account and challenging the school to enable all pupils to make the best possible progress and achieve their full potential
- Keep abreast of educational developments (particularly with regards to the special education needs sector) and best leadership/management practice in order to introduce appropriate innovation, whilst building on the best of the trust ethos and vision
- Engage with relevant professional networks, maintaining an outward facing attitude and approach, supporting to uphold and advance the high standards and reputation of the school/trust

PRINCIPAL Job Description



Ethos and Community

- Create effective means of communication to ensure that all stakeholders of the school community (including families) are kept informed about, consulted on, and understand the aims of the school, its policies, procedures and future direction
- Create strong links and collaborative ways of working with all stakeholders, including the wider school community, trust schools/provisions/services, neighbouring schools and colleges, health and social care colleagues and the local community, ensuring that the school is at the heart of the community
- Work with other public and voluntary sector agencies, clubs and societies in the local community to develop and ensure extended services
- Work with the school/trust fundraising teams (such as the PFA), attending meetings and supporting with events and publicity to drive family and staff engagement and influence how funds are spent
- Work with the trust team, local authority and governors/trustees to support the achievement of locally determined educational and SEND priorities and initiatives
- Develop positive solutions to achieving the British values of diversity, dignity and equality in all aspects of service delivery and engagement with the broader community
- Foster a culture where all members of the school community respect others and their physical surroundings
- Provide appropriate systems of pastoral care to support the personal development of all pupils and uphold the school's caring climate in which self-confidence, independence, resilience, self-respect and social responsibility are encouraged.
- Develop amongst the teaching staff an outwards perspective and desire to contribute to the wider life of the school and trust

PRINCIPAL Job Description



Management of the organisation

- Ensure effective operational management for the delivery of education within the school's budget and in accordance with financial and organisational structures of the trust
- Work within the defined organisational structure of the trust/school, that enables effective and efficient ways of working and supports the achievement of the school's objectives
- Work with the CEO/Executive Headteacher to manage all educational resources within allocated budgets; actively seek opportunities for cost-improvements and ensure that 'value for money' is at the core of all financial activities
- Within the trust's policies and processes, be accountable for specialist funding grants (such as pupil premium, PE/Sports Grant), developing spending plans, seeking approval from CEO/governors and reporting on impact
- Within the school's strategic plan, recruit, deploy, develop and motivate a committed, effective and diverse education workforce who have a clear understanding of the schools/trust vision and of their personal role in enabling and promoting high quality teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils and their families
- Promote innovation in the use of appropriate existing and new technologies to achieve excellence
- Work with the trust Extended Schools and Pastoral Teams to support and ensure that opportunities for extended schools' provision (such as after-school/holiday clubs) are put into place and that their quality is monitored
- Work effectively with trust leaders, principals and governors/trustees to ensure that there are robust, reliable mechanisms for appropriate risk management in all school educational activities
- Act in accordance with the trust policies, procedures and legislation effecting the conduct of the school, particularly those governing health and safety, finance and HR/employment rights

PRINCIPAL Job Description



Supporting the wider work of the trust

- Develop strong, positive relationships with trust colleagues, particularly Principals/Senior Leaders and school/provision/service leaders; contribute to collaborative work across the trust schools/provisions/services and support other staff in trust work and projects
- Participate in trust and sector-wide activities in order to share best practice, contribute to the development of trust strategies and policies and promote the school/trust positively
- Promote the trust and trust development in a positive, supportive manner, engaging in shared use of facilities and staff expertise, providing training and development opportunities to staff across and beyond the trust
- Undertake any other reasonable duties deemed appropriate to the role, as discussed and agreed with the CEO

PRINCIPAL PERSON SPECIFICATION

QUALIFICATIONS

Essential

- Degree and Qualified Teacher Status (or equivalent)
- National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) or other post-graduate qualification, relevant to SEND/School Leadership
- Record of CPD relevant to Leadership/Headship
- Evidence of updating professional skills and knowledge, inc training in teaching and learning pedagogy relevant to supporting SEND pupils

EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Proven track record of successful leadership and management experience, at a senior level, within a specialist school setting
- Proven track record of successful teaching experience, preferably with SEND pupils or within a specialist setting
- Experience of successful strategies to monitor, evaluate & develop the quality of teaching and learning
- Experience of managing transition at the point of admission and into the next educational setting
- Involvement in school self-evaluation and school development planning
- Involvement in curriculum design and innovation reflecting the developmental needs of pupils & demonstrating sound awareness of neurotypical and other national expectations
- Demonstrable experience of successful people management & staff development
- A proven track record of commitment to promoting, implementing and monitoring the well-being, professional learning, equal opportunities and diversity for all
- Experience of budget planning and risk management (including facilities/estates)

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Desirable

- Sound understanding of what makes an excellent specialist school
- Excellent knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the curriculum and what constitutes highly effective teaching, learning and assessment for pupils with complex learning difficulties and a wide range of disabilities, including social/communication needs
- In-depth knowledge and understanding of relevant, current educational research and practice to inform school priorities and developments
- Excellent knowledge and understanding of how to support the holistic needs of pupils with complex disabilities and medical conditions and ability to work collaboratively with external professionals, including from across the health and social care sectors
- Knowledge of statutory and regulatory accountability frameworks, relevant to the role, including local/national safeguarding guidance, EYFS Framework/National Curriculum, Ofsted Inspection framework, SEND Code of Practice
- Understanding of school finances and financial management
- Understanding of school estates and resources management and relevant experience of risk management

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Essential

- The highest level of integrity and sense of moral purpose
- An understanding of, and empathy with, the lives of families living with learning difficulties and disabilities
- A vision for a 21st century learning environment, including the use of appropriate technology
- Approachable listener, with excellent interpersonal and 'people management' skills
- Ability to inspire and motivate staff to be aspirational for all pupils
- Clear, calm and effective communication skills
- Decisiveness and consistency, with a focus on solutions
- Ability to work autonomously whilst demonstrating loyalty and collaboration, within the wider accountability structure of the trust
- Good organisational skills in order to plan, lead and delegate effectively by valuing the contributions of all
- Resilience and the ability to support the school through effective change management
- Commitment to the school, community and the wider values and ethos of the trust

Why Astrum?



Generous Pension Schemes

Teachers' Pension and Local Government Pension Scheme – TPS 28.68% contribution rate and Redbridge LGPS 23.1% contribution rate.



Flexible Teacher PPA

PPA can be completed working from home.



Class Structure

Small class sizes, good staff ratios with additional specialist support.



Family-friendly working arrangements and leave of absence policies

our policies we strive to be family orientated to support work/life balance. This includes a policy to support emergency, weddings, religious events and special leave where required.



Schools Advisory Service Employee Well-being Assistant Programme

Counselling, Integrated GP service, Mindfulness, Nurse Support Physiotherapy, Weight management including online gym services and Slimming World.



Incremental Progression

Astrum MAT follows nationally agreed Teachers Pay & NJC pay scales for employees. Every April, subject to review, staff should expect their salary to increase by one spinal column point until they reach the top of their grade.



In-house Therapy Provision

We have a team of internally recruited SALT and OT therapy staff supporting SEND provision across our schools.



Flexible Working Opportunities

We are committed to supporting our support staff employees where possible and offer a flexible working request system in line with statutory guidance.



High Quality appraisal and personalised CPD programmes

Career progression routes into teaching, specialist support staff and central team roles.



Apprenticeship Programme

We pay into the Apprenticeship Levy, meaning that employees have access to apprenticeship courses for continuous professional development.



Long Service Recognition

After 5 years of continuous employment for support staff.



Refer a Friend Scheme

Earn up to £350 if you refer a friend of colleague who joins our team.



After-school cub/Holiday provision

a range of opportunities to support our pupil enrichment activities and supplement your income at the same time.



Free on-site parking

Employees have access to free car parking across all of our sites.



Free Tea & Coffee for staff



Local transport

Schools located close to TfL Elizabeth Line and TfL Central Line.



A comprehensive induction package

with well-planned and regular inset days.



Regular staff feedback

surveys to identify where we can improve things further.

Guidance Notes for Applicants



Your application is really important—it’s the only document we use to shortlist candidates and guide interviews. CVs aren’t accepted because we follow Safer Recruitment standards under Keeping Children Safe in Education. This ensures a fair process and helps protect children and young people

Before You Begin

- Read the job description and person specification carefully before completing your application form. These documents outline the role and the essential criteria you need to demonstrate.
- Complete every section fully.
- Draft your answers first, then review before submitting.
- Keep a copy for your records.

Completing the application form

1. **Job Details**
2. **All full-time Trust jobs** can be considered for job share unless otherwise stated in the advert. Just tick the box—you don’t need a partner lined up.
3. **Personal Details**
These sections are confidential and not seen by the interview panel. They help us complete pre-employment checks, which are part of safer recruitment.
4. **Employment History**
Include all roles—full-time, part-time, voluntary, self-employed—and explain any gaps (study, caring, career break, etc.). Continuous employment dates are important for safeguarding checks. If you have had any gaps in employment, you will be prompted to tell us why; e.g. career break, a period of studying, caring for children, unemployment, etc.
5. **Education & Qualifications**
List relevant qualifications only. Please bring proof if you are invited to interview. Overseas qualifications will be verified. Supporting Statement

This is the most important part of your application. Use the person specification as headings and give clear examples of how you meet each criterion. Tell us about your knowledge, skills, abilities and experience. Avoid vague statements like “I’m a good communicator.” Instead, show us what you’ve done.

Guidance Notes for Applicants



Example – Administrative Assistant

Criteria for an Administrative Assistant	Wrong ✘	Right ✔
Experience of communicating with staff at all levels	<p>I am a good communicator</p> <p>or</p> <p>I have good communication skills and relate well with others</p>	<p>I have worked in my current job for 2 years and deal with written and telephone enquiries from managers, finance assistants (working in other departments) and suppliers. I also deal with petty cash and process claims for staff within my section. I therefore deal with a range of people on a daily basis. Previously, I worked for 3 years in a small solicitor's practice and dealt with written and telephone enquiries from clients and other solicitors.</p>

Think broadly—skills can come from work, volunteering, education, hobbies, or community projects. If you don't show how you meet the essential criteria, you're unlikely to be shortlisted. References – Why They Matter & Who Can Be One.

References are vital for Safer Recruitment. They confirm your employment history, suitability for working with children, and check for safeguarding concerns.

- Provide two professional referees (personal references aren't accepted).
- If employed, one must be your current employer. If you work in education, this should be the Head Teacher.
- If unemployed, one should be your most recent employer.
- If in education or recently left, a teacher, lecturer, or course tutor is fine.
- If you've volunteered or trained recently, a supervisor or trainer can act as a referee.
- If you already work for Astrum MAT, we'll seek internal references (This cannot be anyone involved in the recruitment process for this role).
- Always check your referees are happy to be contacted.
- References will be requested during shortlisting, where you have indicated your permission.

Guidance Notes for Applicants



Safeguarding

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to actively share this commitment. All appointments will be subject to pre-employment checks, including an enhanced check with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS), as well as scrutiny of employment history, robust referencing and online searches, in line with Safer Recruitment guidance and the need to maintain a safe culture.

It is an offence to apply for a role if you are barred from engaging in regulated activity.

Our safeguarding culture is underpinned by policies and procedures which encourage and promote safe working practice across the Trust. On joining you will be required to undergo continuous professional development to maintain safe working practice and to safeguard our children and young people.

All job offers are subject to satisfactory checks under Safer Recruitment, including:

- Acceptance of the offer within 7 days
- Two satisfactory references
- Pre Employment Health Check: After interview, you'll complete a health questionnaire.
- Enhanced DBS check/Barred list check/Prohibition from Teacher check, and Section 128 check (where appropriate)
- Verification of identity, qualifications, and employment history
- Satisfactory online checks
- Satisfactory right to work in the UK
- Completion of mandatory training
- Passing the probationary period

These checks are required by Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Data Protection Act 2018.


Equality Monitoring – Why We Ask

Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a legal duty to treat everyone fairly and ensure our services meet the needs of all communities. We ask about age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, carers, and armed forces status. Your answers are confidential and anonymous—they help us improve services and comply with the law.

Current Vacancies | Astrum Multi Academy Trust



We actively promote positive action to ensure equality of opportunity for all. As a proud Disability Confident Employer, we are committed to removing barriers and supporting candidates with disabilities and learning differences throughout the recruitment process and beyond. As a multi-academy trust with extensive experience in supporting SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), we bring proven expertise in creating inclusive environments where every individual can thrive. We strongly encourage applications from individuals with disabilities and learning differences and will provide tailored adjustments to meet your needs. We guarantee an interview to all applicants declaring a disability and who meet the minimum criteria for the role, as part of our commitment to fair and inclusive recruitment.

 020 8590 7272

 www.astrum-mat.org @ admin@astrum-mat.org

 161 Gresham Drive, Chadwell Heath, Essex, RM6 4TR

