



THE PORTSMOUTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

PGS JOB DESCRIPTION – HEAD OF LEARNING SUPPORT and SENCO

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Summary of the role

The Portsmouth Grammar School is a leading co-educational school located in the historic heart of Portsmouth. We are very much a family school known for excellent teaching, superb pastoral care and wide-ranging co-curricular opportunities and offer an education across the age range from Pre-School to Sixth Form.

The school seeks to appoint a well-qualified and experienced Head of Learning Support from April or September 2026. This is a full-time role and the successful candidate will have extensive experience of working with pupils with additional educational needs to support them in their learning with demonstrable impact on pupil outcomes.

Learning Support is a well-established Whole School department and an integral part of the school. Teaching within the department aims to build upon all pupils' neurodiverse strengths and develop their independent learning skills. Pupils attend one to one sessions with a Learning Support teacher or small group sessions with a Higher Level Teaching Assistant arranged on a termly basis. The focus of the support for individual pupils is dependent on their needs but could encompass literacy, numeracy, study skills, revision techniques, and curriculum support. Underpinning effective support is the early identification of pupils' strengths and weaknesses through a comprehensive group screening procedure for Year 2, Year 7 and all new entrants to the school, followed by further individual testing, where necessary.

The Head of Learning Support is responsible, with the support of the school's leadership team, for managing the provision for pupils with disabilities and/or additional educational needs, ensuring that the resources within the department are best allocated for the benefit of the pupils within the school. The Head of Learning Support is also responsible for the management of the provision for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL). The Head of Learning Support acts as the school's SENCO.

PGS is an all-through school from Pre-School to Sixth Form and this role will lead the Learning Support provision across all key stages and sectors of the school. The Head of Learning Support is line managed by the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning).

The school offers excellent training and support to teachers at all stages of their career. PGS teachers convey passion for their subject and seek to maximise progress by knowing their pupils well and adapting their teaching accordingly. We are always looking to develop new ideas and approaches to teaching and are keen to incorporate the particular interests of new members of staff into the overall curriculum scheme.

The successful applicant will be expected to contribute fully to the pastoral and co-curricular life of the school. It is an expectation that all teachers will have a tutor group or act as a co-tutor within the pastoral system.

How to apply

Candidates are asked to apply via the 'Apply' button linked to the related advert on the '[Work With Us](#)' page of our PGS website.

Any informal enquires about the role or how to apply are very welcome at recruitment@pgs.org.uk

The closing date will be midday on **Monday 12th January 2026** and interviews are planned to take place in the week commencing 19th January, with a planned interview date of **Tuesday 20th January 2026**. Shortlisted candidates are asked to allow a whole day for the interview process.

Line management responsibility	The role holder will have line management responsibility for the Learning Support Department which consists of three specialist teachers, two Higher Level Teaching Assistants, a 1:1 Learning Support Assistant and a part-time Administration Assistant.
Main duties and responsibilities	All staff are expected to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people for whom they are responsible and with whom they come into contact. The role of Head of Department as a Middle Leader at PGS is central to the success of the school because they ensure that their team works effectively to provide an excellent education for the pupils. They are highly valued for their professionalism, experience and determination to ensure that PGS maintains its position as one of the country's leading co-educational schools. They combine inspirational leadership and an expert knowledge of pedagogy and curriculum with strong good organisational skills. Specific Learning Support responsibilities • To champion pupils with AEND and neurodiversity thus supporting the school-wide positive attitude towards this group of pupils so they may achieve their full potential, and work as independently as possible within the school and are well-prepared for future opportunities • To maintain the school's AEND policy and EAL policy as well as contributing to the Accessibility Plan • To ensure that effective systems are in place to identify and meet the needs of pupils with AEND across the school • To facilitate and support best practice for other teachers in identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with AEND, through regular liaison, training and observation • To prepare information and, when required, present to the Senior Management Team and the Governing Body • To provide regular information to the Senior Management Team on the effectiveness of provision for pupils with AEND in order to inform policy and decision-making • To liaise with Heads of Department, Heads of Year and the Deputy Head (Pupil Progress) in the Senior School and Phase Leaders, the Teaching & Learning Coordinator (Pupil Progress) and the Deputy Head (Academic & Operations) in the Junior School to track the progress of pupils with AEND, including analysis by different types of AEND • To ensure Learning Support teachers and HLTAs set appropriate, measurable, and time-based targets for all of the pupils receiving support, and that these are communicated to parents • To ensure Learning Support teachers and HLTAs regularly review the progress of pupils, who receive help within the department, against their targets and that there is direct and regular liaison with the pupils' teachers

	• To support all teachers by ensuring that they have the information necessary to secure improvements in teaching and learning for pupils with AEND, disseminating good practice across the school • To develop, implement and evaluate formal and informal testing procedures for screening and monitoring pupils for specific learning difficulties on entry to the school and throughout their school career • To interpret relevant national and school data, including entrance exams, CEM data, and LS screening data, to inform AEND policy, to prioritise support and focus teaching methods • To work with all staff with responsibilities for pupils with AEND to ensure that appropriately high expectations of academic achievements and behaviour are set for every pupil with reference to all the available data • To maintain up to date Pupil Passports for pupils with AEND • To ensure that details of pupils' needs including access arrangements are regularly reviewed, updated and circulated to all staff • To disseminate information about reasonable adjustments to teaching approaches and resources in the classroom and, when requested, to monitor its effectiveness for target-setting to meet the needs of pupils with AEND in the classroom • To lead on the access arrangements process, liaising with the Deputy Head (Teaching & Learning), Head of Examinations and teaching staff • To ensure that approved access arrangements are in place for internal school tests, mock examinations and examinations, and monitoring pupils' need for and use of these arrangements • To ensure that all applications for exam access arrangements comply with relevant exam board regulations. • To ensure that at all times, and in all cases, the school is compliant with the relevant, current JCQ regulations, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments • To ensure that the legal requirements of the SEND Code of Practice are met • Advise the Careers department, providing relevant information, to support the university / careers applications of pupils with AEND • To judge when to make decisions and when to consult with others, including outside agencies, responding promptly and sensitively at all times • To have a pragmatic and flexible approach to all tasks to achieve the maximum benefit for pupils with AEND and/or EAL • To take responsibility for one's own professional development, regularly updating knowledge and understanding of reputable, relevant research into AEND and evaluating how to apply this to current practice within the school
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- To prioritise and manage one's own time effectively, balancing the demands made by each aspect of the role: administrative, teaching, and acting as a resource for colleagues and parents
- To facilitate effective liaison between external agencies and parents in order to provide appropriate support for pupils with AEND
- To make regular contact with the Educational Psychologists and other specialists who work with the school's pupils with AEND
- To establish links with other independent schools through attendance at Trinity Group meetings, HMC and HMCJ Cluster Group meetings, training courses, and conferences in order to share best practice

As an academic Head of Department at The Portsmouth Grammar School:

Leadership and Management

- Provide professional leadership and management to secure high-quality teaching, effective use of resources and improved learning and achievement for all pupils in an attractive physical environment
- Plan with the members of their department for the development of the department and to write an annual strategic development plan in consultation with the team and within the framework of the School's aims, strategic intentions and annual operational plan.
- Maintain appropriate links with, and report to, governors when requested.
- Take part in the appointment of staff to the department and other areas of the school if appropriate.
- Promote CPD and training opportunities for the department and give or arrange for other support that may be necessary to ensure core teaching standards are met and the career aspirations of departmental colleagues are supported.
- Monitor systematically the quality of teaching and learning in the department and give feedback that enables further improvement.
- Ensure effective induction of new departmental colleagues and initial teacher training and mentoring of ECTs as required.
- Appraise department members in a constructive manner on an annual (for professional development purposes) and triennial (for performance management) basis and complete the relevant documentation in partnership with the appraisee.
- Be prepared to be appraised biennially by their SMT line manager in accordance with school policy

	• Keep abreast of national and international trends and developments in education that are relevant to their subject and pedagogical initiatives, sharing these with departmental and other colleagues and using these to inform wider school policy as appropriate. • Produce a departmental handbook, or the separate key documents therein, according to school guidelines, review this annually and amend when required; make a copy available to department members and to SMT, governors and inspectors as required. Curriculum • Work collaboratively with the department to maintain and develop schemes of work within the framework and requirements of examination boards that reflect best teaching practice. • Arrange, in consultation with members of the department, the deployment of colleagues on the timetable to meet pupils' learning needs and the professional development of staff. • Ensure that lesson planning and delivery of all lessons take account of the needs of all pupils, effectively supporting the needs of the AEND pupils the department works with. • Ensure good practice from within and outside the department is shared so that lessons are engaging, varied and stimulating. • Review and share baseline and value-added data with department colleagues for all pupils and add subject data to maintain an up-to-date department record of pupil attainment and progress. • Ensure that assessment of pupils' work is regularly carried out and gives guidance to pupils on their level of performance and how to improve it, in accordance with department and school policies. • Ensure that curricular and assessment records are kept, work scrutiny undertaken, and reports written and sampled on an annual basis. Communication and Meetings • Run appropriate and regular meetings for the department, ensuring the provision of agendas and minutes. • Support effective communication by encouraging all members of the department to contribute to discussions and meetings and by forwarding minutes of meetings and any other documentation or memos to the relevant members of the department and to SMT.
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	• Consult and listen to department members over matters that impact on them and those they teach and represent their views with SMT. • Attend middle management and other meetings as appropriate (including but not limited to ARM and PRM). • Create and sustain opportunities to develop the profile of the department outside the school to encourage people to think highly of PGS, to learn about our work and be encouraged to visit the school • Promote liaison with other departments to create and maintain positive and creative cross-curricular links for the benefit of pupils and staff. Finance • Manage the department annual budget, monitor expenditure and keep an inventory of equipment, textbooks and all other resources. • Oversee the provision and maintenance of effective resources for learning, including textbooks, pupils' materials, equipment and rooms. Health and Safety • Ensure that effective safeguarding and child protection, and a zero tolerance of peer-on-peer abuse and bullying is at the forefront of departmental practice. • Ensure that safety procedures are reviewed regularly, including risk assessments for trips and of the department environment. • Ensure that staff working conditions are appropriate and meet Health and Safety guidelines. Co-curricular • Be responsible for promoting and developing appropriate co-curricular activities within their department. These may include, clubs and societies, participation in national competitions and trips.
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	Events • Attend PGS Professional Development Days, 11+ and 13+ Assessment days, annual Open Morning, Sixth Form Subject Forum, Year 12 Aspirations meeting and Open Afternoons in the Senior School and Open Mornings in the Junior School throughout the year, and other appropriate events • Attend GCSE and A Level results days or arrange, in consultation with Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning), for a department member to attend. • Be responsible and/or delegate responsibility for attractive departmental displays of pupil work in classrooms and communal areas throughout the year and to arrange activities for visitors during Open Morning or Open Afternoons as requested. The Head of Learning Support may be a dedicated Learning Support teacher or a teacher of another academic subject. In the case of the latter, the Head of Learning Support will remain a member of their teaching department and will continue to teach their own subject. The Head of Learning Support would report to the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) with regard to departmental matters for Learning Support and, in relevant cases, in all other respects would report to their Head of Department for their other academic subject.
Safeguarding responsibilities	• This role involves regulated activity with children. • Ensure that Learning Support staff attend all Professional Development Days and attend other essential staff training sessions throughout the year, as required by the Head or Bursar. • Ensure that all newly appointed departmental staff attend suitable staff induction, in liaison with the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning). • All teaching staff are involved in the pastoral life of the school. • All teaching staff are required to attend regular training in safeguarding and child protection.
Benefits	The Portsmouth Grammar School prides itself on being a caring employer and all staff are encouraged to discuss any aspects of their terms and conditions of employment initially with their line manager and, as necessary, with the Bursar who signs all contracts of employment on behalf of the Governing Body.

	The school is a strong supporter of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and its INSET programme of Professional Development Days provides staff with many personal development opportunities. Key financial benefits of employment at PGS include a generous salary structure supplemented by payment of an additional PGS Allowance. There are many opportunities to take on additional paid responsibilities to assist in the management and operation of the school. The school also has a generous fee concession for the children of teaching staff. Teachers joining PGS will be auto-enrolled into the school's defined contribution pension scheme with Aviva. We also have a non-contributory death-in-service policy calculated at 4 times annual salary. The school supports the Cycle to Work scheme and all members of staff have free use of the school's sports facilities which include a well-equipped Fitness Centre. The school provides a two course lunch during term time and offers an Employee Assistance Programme. The school is always looking for innovative ways to improve the working conditions and remuneration of its employees and welcomes suggestions from all staff.
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Person specification

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

	Essential	Desirable	Method of assessment
	These are qualities without which the Applicant could not be appointed	These are extra qualities which can be used to choose between applicants who meet all of the essential criteria	
Qualifications	<i>The professional, technical or academic qualifications that the Applicant must have to undertake the role or the training that they must have received</i> • Educated to degree level • Strong Learning Support related academic qualifications • A willingness to work towards the NPQ in SEN Coordination	<i>The professional, technical or academic qualifications that the Applicant would ideally have to undertake the role or the training that they should ideally have received</i> • the NPQ in SEN Coordination • QTS • Specific qualifications relevant to the role • Level 7 OCR diploma or equivalent	Production of the Applicant's certificates Discussion at interview Independent verification of qualifications if necessary

Experience	<i>The categories of work or organisations, types of achievements and activities required by the Applicant that would be likely to predict success in the role</i> • Experience supporting neurodiverse pupils and pupils with AEND across a range of difficulties (e.g., literacy, numeracy, study skills). • Proven experience of delivering one-to-one and small group support. • Experience of observing pupils in-class and using findings to inform interventions. • Experience contributing to or writing pupil reports and progress targets. • Experience advising teachers and parents on strategies for supporting pupils with AEND (Additional Educational Needs and Disabilities).	<i>The categories of work or organisations, types of achievements and activities that would be likely to contribute to success in the role</i> • Experience of supporting pupils with ASD or social communication difficulties. • Experience of teaching in both junior and senior sectors. • Familiarity with provision mapping and creating pupil profiles in co-production with stakeholders. • Involvement in screening processes	Contents of the application form Interview Professional references
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Skills	<i>The skills required by the Applicant to perform effectively in the role</i> • Experience developing or delivering staff CPD on AEND or neurodiversity. • Understanding of current developments in AEND and Learning Support provision. • Ability to lead an academic department • Strong understanding of the <i>SEND Code of Practice</i> and its classroom application • Ability to design multi-sensory work programmes tailored to individual pupil needs • Ability to contribute to the pastoral and co-curricular life of the school • A strong interest in education provision for pupils with	<i>The skills that would enable the Applicant to perform effectively in the role</i> • Experience interpreting reports from educational psychologists or other external specialists. • Experience using educational data systems and school MIS platforms	Contents of the application form Interview Observed lesson Professional references
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	AEND • An ability to build rapport and professional working relationships with children and colleagues • Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work collaboratively in a team environment • Ability to contribute to the pastoral and co-curricular life of the school • Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written • Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people		
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Knowledge	<i>The knowledge required by the Applicant to perform effectively in the role</i> • Knowledge of current issues in education and the teaching and learning of pupils with AEND • Knowledge and understanding of legislation relating to current guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education and other guidance issued by the Department for Education and ISSR • A willingness to develop knowledge and understanding of GDPR legislation • Detailed knowledge and understanding of JCQ and CAIE regulations for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments	<i>The knowledge that would enable the Applicant to perform effectively in the role</i> • Thorough understanding of the statutory requirement to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice, and how these inform inclusive classroom practice.	Contents of the application form Interview Professional references
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Personal competencies, qualities, attitude and behaviours	<i>The personal qualities, attitude and behaviours that the Applicant requires to perform effectively in the role and to ensure that the Applicant safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and young people</i> • motivation to work with children and young people • ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people • willingness to lead the sharing of ideas and best practice within the department • ability to play a key role in the co-curricular and super curricular activities of the department and to contribute to the wider co-curricular programme of the school • ability to contribute to the pastoral life of the school	<i>The personal qualities that would assist the Applicant to perform effectively in the role</i> • A reflective and flexible approach to teaching and support, with a commitment to continuous professional development • Emotional intelligence and the ability to empathise with pupils with a wide range of learning profiles and needs • A proactive, solution focused attitude to overcoming learning barriers • Excellent interpersonal and communication skills when engaging with pupils, colleagues, and parents • The ability to maintain a calm, positive, and patient manner under pressure • Commitment to promoting and celebrating neurodiversity within the school community	Contents of the application form Interview Professional references
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	• willingness to support the school's wider external partnerships • willingness to support the aims and ethos of the school	• Confidence in working both independently and collaboratively as part of a multidisciplinary team • Cultural sensitivity and awareness of how additional needs intersect with diverse backgrounds and experiences • A genuine enthusiasm for contributing to an inclusive, forward-thinking educational environment	
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