



Higher Level Teaching Assistant - Communication and Language Development

We are proud of the fantastic learning culture at John Watson. The decisions we make are guided by SLICE. These 5 areas drive the work of the school. Our aim is to empower each child to ensure they can live as full and as independent lives as possible.



John Watson School is looking to appoint a Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA) with a passion for supporting pupil communication to join our existing vibrant and friendly team in our all age special school. We are looking for someone who is experienced in special education and is confident, committed and a problem solver.

The successful candidates will compliment the team at our school, demonstrate a commitment to learning, and enjoy working with children of all abilities and ages.

John Watson School is a Special School with sites in Wheatley and Holton. We cater for children with Special Educational Needs from the ages of 2 - 19 years. We aim to create a happy, healthy and secure learning environment in which the needs of all pupils are met, enabling each child to reach their individual potential. We offer pupils opportunities for integrated educational experiences with their peer groups in the primary and secondary schools whose sites we share. We support pupils in developing their independence, social and communication skills that can be used at school, at home and in the community.

Oxfordshire Schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post involves the type of work with children and young people that requires applicants to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check. The possession of a criminal record will not necessarily prevent an applicant from obtaining this post. All cases are considered confidentially and according to the nature of the role and information disclosed.

We are judged Good by Ofsted (October 2022) and we are ambitious in our vision for the future provision for our pupils. We offer small classes, typically less than 10 pupils per class, working within large teams of support staff and additional NHS therapists.

JOB DESCRIPTION - HIGHER LEVEL TEACHING ASSISTANT

32.25 hours per week, 39 weeks per year, term time only (includes inset days), as directed by Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

Salary: Grade 9 - Actual salary £25,531.10 - £27,641.48

Working Hours (to be agreed with successful applicants): 8.30am - 3.15pm (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday), 8.30am - 4.00pm (Tuesday)

Purpose

To complement the professional work of teachers and school leaders by taking responsibility for agreed learning activities and specialist support under an agreed system of supervision. The HLTA will plan, prepare and deliver learning activities for individuals, groups and, where appropriate, whole classes; monitor and assess pupils' progress; and record and report on achievement and development.

The role requires a high level of skill, initiative and independence. The HLTA will use specialist knowledge to support pupils with special educational needs, model effective practice for other staff and contribute to the consistent delivery of high-quality teaching and learning across the school.

This post is substantively linked to **Communication and Language**, with a key focus on developing pupils' communication skills across the school. In most cases, you will remain within this core focus. However, the Headteacher reserves the right to deploy any HLTA across wider responsibilities in response to the needs of the school.

Core Purpose Area: Communication and Language

Description

You will champion the development of pupils' communication and language skills across the school. This role is specifically linked to Communication and Language and requires a strong commitment to inclusive and accessible communication for pupils with special educational needs.

You will develop and extend your own skills and knowledge of how children and young people with SEN develop communication, including speech, language, interaction and alternative and augmentative communication (AAC). You will lead on the delivery of communication-focused interventions and provide specialist support to pupils.

The role will primarily involve direct work with pupils across the school, both individually and in small groups. You will also play a key role in:

- Modelling effective communication and language support within all classrooms
- Supporting and embedding a Total Communication approach across the school
- Developing, adapting and reviewing communication support for classes and individual pupils
- Working collaboratively with teachers, therapists and other professionals to support communication outcomes
- Advising and supporting staff in the use of communication strategies

This role requires initiative, flexibility and a strong commitment to improving outcomes for pupils with complex communication needs.

All roles may involve planning, preparing and delivering learning activities for individuals/groups, for short term, for whole classes, monitoring and assessing pupils, recording and reporting their achievement, progress and development.

Further Responsibilities:

Line Management Responsibilities (where appropriate):

Lead and support other teaching assistants and other staff new to the school

Liaise between the leadership team, teaching staff and teaching assistants

Support for pupils:

- Assess the needs of pupils and use detailed knowledge and specialist skills to support pupils' learning
- Establish productive working relationships with pupils, acting as a role model and setting high expectations
- Support the development and implementation of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and Pupil Support Plans as required
- Promote the inclusion and acceptance of all pupils within the classroom
- Support pupils consistently whilst recognising and responding to their individual needs
- Encourage pupils to interact and work cooperatively with others and engage all pupils in activities
- Promote independence and employ strategies to recognise and reward achievement of self-reliance
- Provide feedback to pupils in relation to progress and achievement

Support for teachers:

- Organise and manage appropriate learning environment and resources
- Within an agreed system of supervision, plan teaching and learning objectives to evaluate and adjust lessons/work plans as appropriate
- Monitor and evaluate pupil responses to learning activities through a range of assessment and monitoring strategies against predetermined learning objectives
- Provide objective and accurate feedback and reports as required on pupil achievement, progress and other matters, ensuring the availability of appropriate evidence
- Record progress and achievement in lessons/activities systematically and providing evidence of range and level of progress and attainment
- Track and analyse trends in behaviour to inform evaluating the effectiveness of Pupil Support Plans and update accordingly.
- Work within an established discipline policy to anticipate and manage pupil behaviour and emotions constructively, promoting self control and independence. Key to our approach is a focus on enabling pupils to regulate through firstly supported regulation, then co-regulation and finally self-regulation.
- Work within a developing Total Communication environment to ensure all pupils can understand and communicate as effectively as possible using strategies which are most appropriate to their individual needs
- Promote consistent development of communication by creating opportunities throughout the curriculum for each child to communicate to the best of their ability
- Supporting the role of parents/carers in pupils' learning and contributing to/lead meetings with parents/carers to provide constructive feedback on pupil progress/achievement
- Supporting the production of lesson plans, and learning activities

Support for the school:

- Support induction and continuing professional development for colleagues across the school
- Comply with and assist with the development of policies and procedures relating to child protection, health, safety and security, confidentiality and data protection, reporting concerns to an appropriate person
- Be aware of and support difference and ensure all pupils have equal access to opportunities to learn and develop
- Contribute to the overall ethos/work/aims of the school
- Establish constructive relationships and communicate with other agencies/professionals, in liaison with the teacher, to support achievement and progress of pupils
- Take the initiative as appropriate to develop appropriate multi-agency approaches to supporting pupils
- Recognise your own strengths and areas of specialist expertise and use these to lead, advise and support others
- Be open to the delivery of out of school learning activities within guidelines established by the school
- Contribute to the identification and execution of appropriate out of school learning activities, which consolidate and extend work carried out in class
- Support the wider operational needs of the school, for example during transitions at the start and end of the school day

Support for the curriculum:

- Deliver learning activities to pupils within agreed system of supervision, adjusting activities according to pupil responses/needs
- Deliver learning strategies to support a range of curriculum areas, e.g. literacy, numeracy, early years, PSHE/RSE, and make effective use of opportunities provided by other learning activities to support the development of pupils' skills
- Use ICT and technology to effectively support learning activities and develop pupils' competence and independence in its use
- Select and prepare resources necessary to lead learning activities, taking account of pupils' interests and language and cultural backgrounds
- Advise on appropriate deployment and use of specialist aid/resources/equipment

The post holder may be required to perform duties other than those given in the job description. The duties and responsibilities attached to posts may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and would not themselves justify the re-evaluation of a post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience working with children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities• Experience of supporting pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities to develop their communication and language skills, interpersonal and social skills and wider development• Experience of responding to behaviour that challenges and an understanding of the importance of a proactive, planned approach in line with school policy and values
Qualifications/Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet Higher Level Teaching Assistant standards or equivalent qualification or experience• Excellent numeracy/literacy skills – equivalent to NVQ Level 2 in English and Maths• Training in relevant learning strategies e.g. literacy• Specialist skills/training in curriculum or learning area e.g. bi-lingual, sign language, ICT, behaviour, total communication

Knowledge/Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can use ICT effectively to support learning • Full working knowledge of relevant policies/codes of practice/legislation • Working knowledge and experience of implementing national/foundation stage curriculum and other relevant learning programmes/strategies • Good understanding of child development and learning processes • Understanding of statutory frameworks relating to teaching • Ability to organise, lead and motivate a team • Constantly improve own practice/knowledge through self-evaluation and learning from others • Ability to relate well to children and adults • Work constructively as part of a team, understanding classroom roles and responsibilities and your own position within these
Personal qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong interpersonal skills and an effective team member • Excellent organisational and time keeping skills • Punctual • Able to prioritise tasks and work under pressure • Proactive and able to use initiative, whilst also knowing when to seek support

Please complete an application form, which can be found on our website and return by email to sbm@johnwatsonsschool.org.

Applications will be considered upon receipt and interviews arranged accordingly.

The deadline for applications is: Monday 9th February 2026 at 9am

Interviews: Thursday 12th February 2026

Please do not send CVs, applications will only be considered using the application provided. As part of our recruitment process we will require you to fill out an overseas check prior to interview.

Start date : March / April 2026 or sooner if possible