

LEAD PRACTITIONER – COGNITION & LEARNING

RECRUITMENT PACK

December 2025



Meet our Headteacher



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Essinger".

Headteacher

Welcome to our Woodlands family! I am thrilled that you are considering joining us to work alongside our dedicated staff and wonderful pupils. Let me tell you about Woodlands and our story so far.

Woodlands is a specialist provision catering for children and young people aged nine to sixteen who have Special Educational Needs (SEN), specifically Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). We provide education for up to 84 children and young people with EHC plans on a non-residential basis.

"This is a happy school where staff and pupils get along well and staff want the very best outcomes for pupils." This is what Ofsted found when they recently inspected us and we are so proud that our report reflects our commitment to our children and young people, and to their families. This is a great place to work where the words "life changing" really apply to what we do. Staff are well supported, and wellbeing is not a buzzword but a meaningful outcome we want for all our staff.

There is a thread that runs through our history of being a school that supports vulnerable pupils who have often experienced trauma in their backgrounds, be that adverse childhood experiences or educational trauma before they found their way to us. In the 1940s this building was a school for Jewish Kindertransport refugees. Anna Essinger, who brought a whole school here from Nazi Germany, created a place where children felt safe and accepted and were able to learn. We want the same for our pupils today.

We believe in this approach, where high expectations are

combined with high support and a "we know you can, and we will help you" attitude, will help our children and young people achieve what we know they are capable of. As a result, Ofsted judged our Behaviour and Attitudes as "good" as well as our Personal development, testament to the bespoke support we give to each of our children and young people who consequently feel understood and valued by the adults who support them.

Our curriculum is broad, balanced and ambitious. We provide a strong academic curriculum to GCSE / Level 2 and additionally a bespoke approach through our 'Oaks' provision, which includes elements of the academic curriculum and also vocational learning both in school and off-site. The curriculum is centred around the needs of the child or young person set out in their Education, Health and Care Plan and is reviewed frequently.

Our ultimate aim at Woodlands is to prepare our young people for adulthood and enable them to take their next steps knowing they have the skills for independent living and the knowledge and understanding to become healthy adults who can access employment and engage positively with their communities.

More than this even, we want them to feel loved and cared for and replace their feelings of educational failure with the experience of what success feels like, knowing that they are unique and valued and can take that belief out into the world with them when they leave us.

Job description



Post title

Lead Practitioner – Cognition & Learning

Salary

**Grade 8 point 19 - 22
 (£32,062 -£33,699) pro rata**

Hours of work

32.5 hours per week

Post status

Permanent

We offer

- ❑ A supportive environment with an experienced team where you will be invested in and valued
- ❑ A varied and exciting role – building relationships with a range of colleagues across the Multi-Academy Trust
- ❑ A varied day with different experiences and challenges
- ❑ A Talent Pathway that offers you continued professional development and learning for you as an individual

Why this role above others?

Come and make a difference to the life chances of our young people.

Woodlands is a special school for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. We are proud of the high expectations and aspirations we set for every child and young person, providing an inspiring environment where everyone can learn and achieve.

We provide ambitious and exciting opportunities through well-designed and individualised curriculum packages.

You will be part of a highly effective, supportive team who readily share best practice amongst the team.

You will have the opportunity to work collaboratively with individual children, young people and their parents. You will find each day rewarding, making the difference, and providing support and nurture for children and parents alike.

You will join us in celebrating success and encouraging all our young people to develop broader life skills, investing in them as a whole child.

We are incredibly proud of the achievements of all our pupils and trust that you will feel the same as we work together to ensure the successful future for them.

Any questions in regards to the role can be raised with Lisa Dugmore ahead of the closing date:

Lisa.Dugmore@wdl.mmat.co.uk

JOB PURPOSE

To provide high-quality support for pupils aged 9–16 with SEMH and cognition and learning needs. The Lead Practitioner will lead targeted interventions, assist in curriculum delivery, and contribute to the holistic development of pupils, ensuring progress in academic, social, and emotional domains.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

The post holder will be responsible to the Deputy Headteacher / Assistant Headteacher and will have contact with pupils, teaching staff, parents, carers and relevant outside agencies.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

Teaching and Learning

Plan, prepare, and deliver structured learning activities for individuals and small groups under teacher guidance.

Adapt teaching materials to meet diverse learning needs, including literacy, numeracy, and functional skills.

Support pupils in accessing the curriculum through differentiated strategies and scaffolding.

Deliver evidence-based interventions for cognition and learning difficulties (e.g., dyslexia, working memory challenges).

Assessment and Monitoring

Track and record pupil progress against targets, providing feedback to teachers and SENCO.

Contribute to the development and review of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and EHCP outcomes.

Use formative assessment strategies to inform intervention planning.

Behaviour and Emotional Support

Implement positive behaviour strategies aligned with SEMH best practice.

Support pupils in developing emotional regulation and resilience.

Respond calmly and effectively to challenging behaviour, following school policy.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

Maintain a vigilant approach to safeguarding and child protection at all times.

Report any concerns regarding pupil welfare immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with school policy.

Ensure all interventions and activities comply with safeguarding procedures, including supervision and safe use of resources.

Promote a safe and supportive environment where pupils feel secure and respected.

Attend regular safeguarding training and keep up to date with statutory guidance (e.g., Keeping Children Safe in Education).

Maintain confidentiality and handle sensitive information appropriately.

Collaboration and Communication

Work closely with teachers, therapists, and external professionals to ensure coordinated support.

Communicate effectively with parents/carers regarding pupil progress and strategies.

Professional Standards

Engage in professional development and training relevant to SEMH and cognition/learning needs.

Contribute to whole-school initiatives and attend staff meetings as required.

Supporting colleagues/being part of a team

- To assist colleagues in the development of a suitable programme of support for pupils across the school, and at all age ranges.
- To work with colleagues in selecting and preparing resources that meet pupils' needs and interests.
- To assist in the creation of a safe environment for pupils within and outside the classroom and comply with the appropriate policies and procedures, reporting all concerns to the appropriate person
- To contribute to the maintenance of the student's progress records as in their person-centred plan (PCP).
- To participate in the target setting evaluation and review of the person centred plan (PCP) and one page profile (1PP).
- To take responsibility for creating a purposeful and attractive learning environment.

Supporting the school

- To support the aims and ethos of the school
- To liaise and consult with other professionals supporting pupils.
- To attend relevant in-service training and meetings.
- To undertake medical training and provide medical cover if required
- To undertake any other reasonable duties which might from time to time be requested by the Headteacher or any person delegated by them.
- To follow the school policy documents and schemes of work and keep updated with school and national curriculum documentation.
- To attend and participate in regular meetings and participate in training and other learning activities (performance management) as required.

- 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.
- Be aware of and support difference and ensure that pupils have equal access to opportunities to learn and develop
- Assist with the supervision of pupils at lunchtimes
- Accompany teaching staff and pupils, as appropriate, on visits, trips and out of school activities, and take responsibility for a group under the supervision of a teacher.

SAFEGUARDING

Everyone within our Academy Trust shares the objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn in an education setting and identifying those who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, taking appropriate action with the aim of ensuring they are kept safe both at home and within the education setting

The duties may be varied to meet the changing demands of the school at the reasonable discretion of the Head Teacher. This job description does not form part of the contract of employment. It describes the way the post holder is expected and required to perform and complete the particular duties as set out above.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Developing self and leading others:

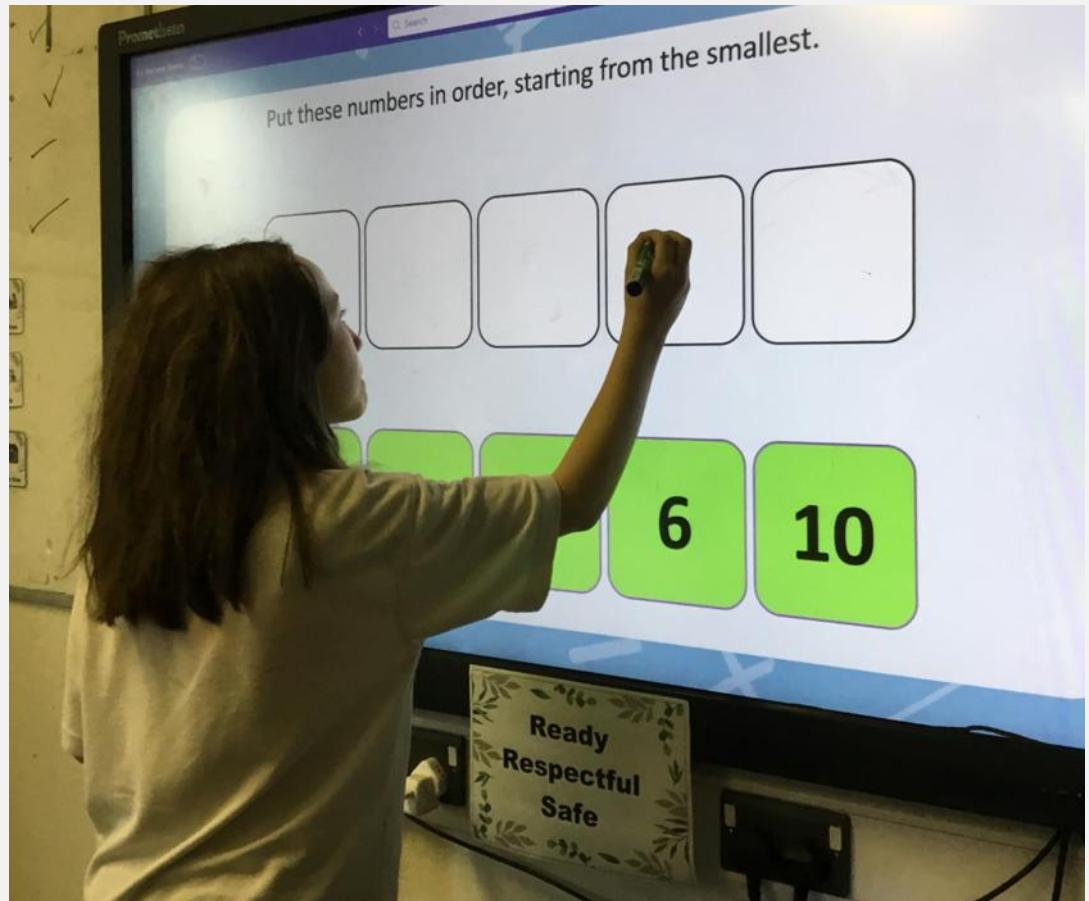
- Take responsibility for own professional development including maintaining an up to date knowledge of developments and related legislation including engaging fully in performance management of self and other staff (if applicable)
- Contribute to effective staff induction and professional development

Community responsibilities:

- Effective dialogue with parents in accordance with school policies.
- Attend and support community events as required.

In addition to the above all Marches Academy Trust staff are required to:

- Adhere to policies and procedures, including Equality and Diversity and Health and Safety.
- Respect confidentiality: all confidential information should be kept in confidence and not released to unauthorised persons.
- Undertake appropriate training and development as required.
- Participate in the Performance Review Cycle.
- Demonstrate excellent Customer Care in dealing with all customers.
- Ensure positive effective working relationships with the school teams, stakeholders and partners.



Objectives and outcomes:

- To be agreed with the successful post-holder once appointed.
- The duties may be varied to meet the changing demands of the school at the reasonable discretion of the Headteacher.
- The post holder may have opportunities to work in other schools within The Marches Academy Trust.

Person specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCSE English & Maths or equivalent HLTA status or equivalent qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid qualification. (training will be given) Qualifications and training in Sen/SEMH
Experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proven experience supporting pupils with SEMH and cognition/learning needs (essential). Experience delivering small-group or 1:1 interventions (essential). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience working in a school, or with children in an equivalent role. Industry based training experience Experience of working with children with a range of additional needs. Experience of working with a range of external support services and providers. Community volunteering / charity work Working with parents or carers
Knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong understanding of SEMH and its impact on learning. Knowledge of strategies for supporting cognition and learning difficulties (e.g., dyslexia, dyscalculia). Ability to differentiate and adapt resources for individual needs. Skilled in behaviour management and de-escalation techniques. Competent in using ICT to support learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of the importance of relevant policies/codes of practice. Good understanding of child development, neurodiversity and psychology. Knowledge of the range of external support services and providers that may be present in a young person's life. Knowledge of the importance of Safeguarding/health and safety, confidentiality and data protection

Person specification

	Essential	Desirable
Personal Qualities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A desire to make a difference• Ability to relate well to pupils and adults• Ability to work well in a team• Flexibilty and reliability• Ability to maintain confidentiality• Sense of humour• A caring nature• To be passionate about sharing your skills with our young people• Patience• The drive to continue your own learning• Resilience and calmness	
Skills & Characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Willingness to participate in training and development opportunities.• Ability to persuade, negotiate and influence.• Ability to self evaluate learning needs and actively seek opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to support pupils with behaviours that challenge.

Person specification

	Essential	Desirable
Organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ability to plan effectivelyAbility to work under pressure.Ability to prioritise	
Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Approachable and professional manner when interacting with adults and pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understanding of how to communicate with children who are dysregulated or in crisis.

In addition to candidates' ability to perform the duties of the post, the interview will also explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including:

- Motivation to work with children and young people
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people
- Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviour, and
- Attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline

Welcome from the CEO



This is a high achieving Trust that is imaginative and creative in its approach to teaching and learning and is keen to look for continued sustained improvement.

Our vision 'Achievement through Caring' is central to all that we do at The Marches Academy Trust. Our schools are, innovative and striving to ensure that young people make the very most of their learning adventure and are equipped with the skills required to prosper in the modern world.

We are immensely proud of the Alliance of Leading Learning who provide a wide range of professional development opportunities across our Trust, nationally and internationally.

Sarah Finch

CEO

The Marches Academy Trust

Our family of schools currently includes:

- The Marches School and Sixth Form in Oswestry
- Sir John Talbot's School and Sixth Form in Whitchurch
- Tilstock CE Primary School and Nursery in Whitchurch
- The Grove School and Sixth Form in Market Drayton
- Lower Heath CE Primary School and Nursery in Lower Heath
- Shrewsbury Academy in Shrewsbury
- Longlands Primary School and Nursery in Market Drayton
- Grange Primary School and Nursery in Shrewsbury
- Oakmeadow CE Primary School and Nursery in Shrewsbury
- Woodlands School in Wem
- Idsall School and Sixth Form in Shifnal
- Cockshutt CE Primary School and Nursery in Ellesmere
- Criftins CE Primary School and Nursery in Ellesmere
- Selattyn CE Primary School in Oswestry
- West Felton CE Primary School and Nursery in Oswestry
- Weston Lullingfields CE Primary School and Nursery nr Shrewsbury
- St Andrew's CE Primary School and Nursery nr Shrewsbury
- Kinnerley CE Primary School and Nursery in Oswestry

Meet our Chair of Trustees



Alex Fry

Chair of Trustees

Thank you for your interest in this role.

The Trust is looking to appoint an individual to build on our Trust's current strengths and achievements.

As a thriving Trust serving over 6,000 students and their families in Shropshire, this a pivotal role in driving continuous improvement across our schools and will contribute to our vision of 'achievement through caring'.

Collaborative working with other schools in our Trust offers many benefits for students and staff; sharing best practice in teaching and learning, curriculum collaboration, extracurricular opportunities, staff development, finance and human resources, legal services, school improvement structures and governance arrangements.

We hope that the opportunity to shape the work of our schools and their staff to harness their professional expertise, with the goal of securing excellent outcomes, is one you would relish.

The prospect of this role goes beyond the immediate job description. The successful candidate will influence and help shape the strategy of the Trust, have the opportunity to support our ITT provision, support leadership development and career paths as well as drive efficiencies across our schools.

For the right individual, this is an exceptional opportunity. The right candidate will have no better chance of working with wonderful students, super staff and shaping our Trust into the future.

Who we are



Welcome to the Marches Academy Trust!

We are a multi-academy sponsor based in Shropshire, currently comprising five secondary schools, five primary schools and one special school.

Across our Trust we have a wealth of experience to inspire and motivate children, young people and staff to be the very best they can.

Achievement Through Caring drives our Trust, and our values are shared throughout our family of schools; we work together on embedding them in everything we do.

Our Trust prides itself on delivering high quality education and connecting with our children and young people to inspire and enthuse them to learn, achieve and to be happy.

Check out our video:

<https://youtu.be/RxuP4WDUM88>

Interested? Here's how to apply:

<https://themarchesacademytrust.face-ed.co.uk/vacancies>

The closing date for applications is: 30th January 2026

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in our care and expect all staff to share this commitment.

A core belief in staff wellbeing and work life balance evidenced in policy and practice

Our Trust Vision Statement and Values



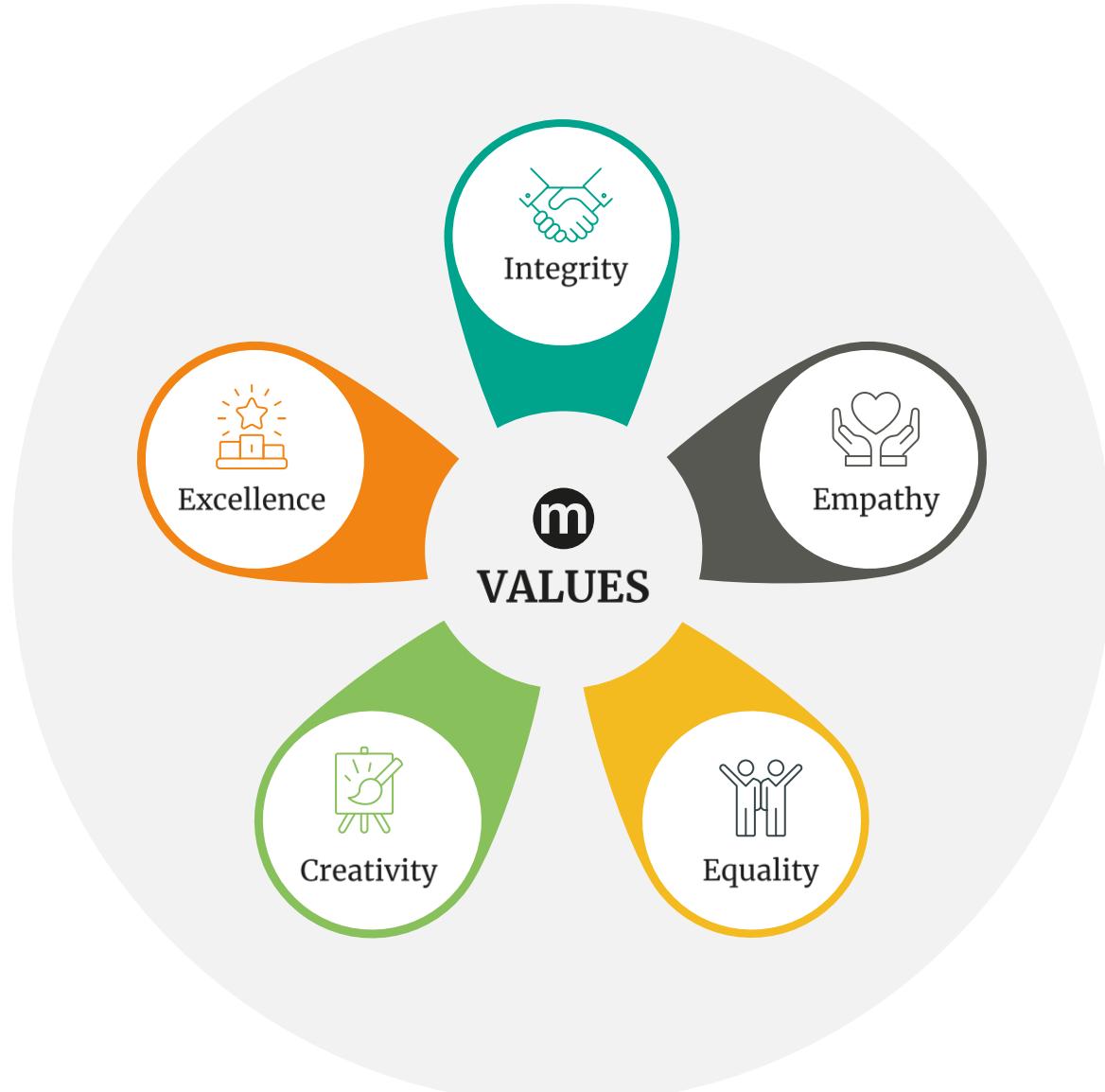
Our Vision

Achievement through caring



Mission Statement

As a Trust, it's our mission to empower everyone in our Trust and our communities to live and breathe our values and Achievement Through Caring, to reach their full potential.



Our investment in you

Talent Spotting our Future Leaders

Our Talent Pathway supports the professional development of staff within the trust. We identify leadership talent and leadership needs for future succession planning – ensuring relevant and practical leadership development opportunities for staff.

Our talent management programme and our Career Development Pathways provide a framework for the discussion of your leadership journey and the professional learning you can access along the way.

Talent Contract

The Talent contract is a promise; a covenant between yourself and the trust that the Trust will do its' very best to support and develop you professionally. The Contract describes a variety of Professional development opportunities and encourages you to identify and pursue your training needs.

We believe successful creative lifelong learners participate in a journey of self-discovery. They know how to learn, acquire skills and feel safe to take risks with confidence and courage.



Our investment in you

We really care about employee wellbeing and our commitment is set out in our Wellbeing Policy and Charter. This commitment is underpinned by our four pillars of wellbeing;

Emotional

Some examples include a robust induction programme, Trust newsletter, professional performance reviews (appraisal) and line manager check-in meeting. We have clear policies and procedures relating to all aspects of your employment and we carry out an annual well-being survey to gauge the health of our staff.

Physical

We are blessed that our schools are located in beautiful Shropshire market towns and /or rural locations. We can offer discounted local gyms and onsite facilities in our secondary schools.

Financial

We offer membership to two great pension schemes; Local government pension scheme and Teachers' pension scheme. Our terms and conditions are aligned to Burgundy Book & School Teachers Pay & Conditions Document (teachers) and NJC Green Book (associate staff). We also recognise continuous service for sickness, maternity and annual leave entitlements for those transferring under the Redundancy payments (local government) Modification Order (RPMO).

Social

Encouragement of great working relationships and sense of belonging through team building events, PD days, end of term events and Trust Awards evening.

Generous
non-contact
time for
staff

Wellbeing Offer

We are delighted that our wellbeing offer includes access to a free confidential medical and wellbeing service with School's Advisory Service (SAS) for all staff. Services available include counselling, bereavement counselling, physiotherapy, menopause support and stress awareness sessions. We encourage staff to utilize SAS in seeking out preventative and early intervention by making support easily accessible for all!



We are a school led inclusive partnership representing all phases and school contexts nationally and internationally. Our core team at The Marches Academy Trust have trained over 400 ITT and over 150 School Direct students; we have also led the professional learning of over 5,000 educational leaders and governors.

We deliver the DfE National Professional Qualifications, and we actively encourage our staff to complete an NPQ programme at their earliest opportunity.

We also talent spot, from within our Trust team, colleagues who want to share their expertise and enhance their experiences by becoming an Improvement Consultant.

Supporting schools, departments and individuals across the Trust and also external schools.

Embracing all our work is the unique Professional Learning Conference we host each year which continues to inspire school colleagues nationally.

In joining The Marches Academy Trust you have direct access to an outward facing large group of outstanding schools across the West Midlands and beyond.

Quite simply we want to ensure the right expertise exists to enhance a self-improving system and impact learners, leaders and schools to drive continuous improvement.

You will be part of this success story as a member of our team; and on starting your new post you will also be starting your learning journey - with all the benefits of being part of a large and successful Trust with exemplary partnerships nationally and internationally.



We hold true to delivering current, inspirational training that has real impact back in the workplace. Most importantly our participants confirm in countless testimonials that we invest in their leadership journey.

Cavelle Priestley-Bird, Executive Director of People and Development)

Bits you need to know

The Marches Academy Trust values each person equally. We are committed to building a diverse team and embedding a welcoming, inclusive culture that encourages diversity and authenticity. We believe this will encourage creative ways of thinking – ensuring we collaborate more effectively and achieve better outcomes. We welcome applicants from all qualified candidates who share this commitment.

Everyone within our Academy Trust shares the objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn in an education setting and identifying those who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, taking appropriate action with the aim of ensuring they are kept safe both at home and within the education setting and we expect all staff to share this commitment. Shortlisted applicants will be asked to declare any criminal convictions and will be subject to online checks. The successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

“This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and as such all applicants who are appointed to this post will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau before the appointment is confirmed. This check will include details of cautions, reprimands or warnings, as well as convictions and non-conviction information. Once provisionally appointed, the successful applicant may also be required to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure at predetermined intervals during the course of their employment whilst in this post.”



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WoodlandsShropshire