

Briefing Pack for Applicants Play leader



Whittington Moor

Nursery and Infant Academy

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

The school will undertake stringent and rigorous checks of identity and qualifications to ensure that we maintain the very highest standards of child protection for our students.

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May we take this opportunity to thank you in anticipation of your application. If, however, you have not heard from us by the proposed date for the interview you should assume that on this occasion your application has not been successful. In that event we wish you every success in any future applications you make.

Section 1: Post Advertisement

Post:	Play leader (2 positions)
Location:	Whittington Moor Nursery and Infant Academy
Pay scale:	NJC Grade 1 Point 3 currently £24,796 gross per annum
Contract:	Permanent, part time, 6.25 hours per week x 38 weeks
Actual salary	£3,510.31 (Under 5 Years Service)
Start date:	September 2026

Minerva Learning Trust is a growing multi-academy trust committed to providing an outstanding education for students from a wide variety of backgrounds across Sheffield and Derbyshire. Founded in 2014, Minerva Learning Trust has expanded to a thriving family of schools, including primary, secondary, sixth form, and a unique post-16 provision. We have a strong track record of school improvement, successfully transforming schools from Ofsted ratings of RI and Inadequate to GOOD.

Whittington Moor Nursery and Infant Academy joined Minerva Learning Trust in December 2024 and is committed to ensuring an inclusive education for our youngest children. The school prides itself in supporting all children to achieve regardless of their ability and create a sense of awe and wonder through playful learning opportunities.

Candidates are encouraged to visit the school or have an informal discussion about the role with Joanne Mappin-Headteacher. Arrangements for this can be made by contacting Julie Houlding-Support Services Officer-via e-mail Jhouding@whittingtonmoor-mlt.co.uk

The closing date is Sunday 13th September 2026 and interviews will take place on Week commencing 21st September 2026.

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment, further information can be found in our child protection and safeguarding policy on our statutory information page on our website [Statutory Information - Minerva Learning Trust](#). The successful candidate will be required to complete an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. In line with KCSIE, the trust/school will be carrying out online searches on shortlisted candidates as part of their due diligence.

Further information is available by contacting Joanne Mappin -Headteacher via e-mail: jmappin@whittingtonmoor-mlt.co.uk

Please ensure that you do not fill in a Local Authority application form in respect of this vacancy, ONLY MINERVA LEARNING TRUST APPLICATION FORMS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Please provide telephone numbers and email addresses for yourself and referees.

Section 2: Letter from the Chief Executive – Bev Matthews

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in this role within Minerva Learning Trust. Minerva Learning Trust was established in October 2014 with the vision of providing outstanding education for pupils who are from a wide variety of backgrounds. As a Trust our mission, vision and values are central to our work and are the driving force behind all that we do. Our vision of Outstanding Together, Working Together and Learning Together is underpinned by our core values of Inclusion, Independence, Respect and Success.

Through our values we foster an ethos of collegiality, we ensure inclusion is at the heart of all we do and we work hard to ensure that every child succeeds, no matter what their background or circumstance. We resolutely believe that we are stronger together and that each school within the MAT has individual strengths and we celebrate the diverse and unique qualities of each particular school.

We recognise that the commitment and care shown by all our staff is fundamental to the success of our young people. As such, we work hard to ensure that staff are supported, encouraged, developed, respected and listened to within an enjoyable and rewarding working environment. Our culture is one of professional trust, respect, honesty and integrity and we want our staff and students to work and learn within an environment that enables them to flourish and to work at their best.

The professional development of staff, including opportunities for research, is a key priority of Minerva Learning Trust. As such, we seek to enrich employee capability and maximise the strength and contribution of each individual who works with us. The Trust believes in investing in the learning and development of its employees through a range of opportunities which are aligned to the needs of the organisation and its young people.

This is an exciting opportunity and time to join our Trust. If you choose to apply you will be choosing to work alongside a team of dedicated professionals who passionately believe in the power of education to change the life chances of young people.



Bev Matthews
Chief Executive Officer

Section 3: Letter from the Headteacher

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the post of Play Leader at Whittington Moor Nursery and Infant Academy. We are proud to be part of Minerva Learning Trust since December 2024.

I have had the pleasure of leading the school since 2019 and since that time we have established ourselves to be a leader of Early Years Education.

As a small school we pride ourselves on working together to ensure the highest possible outcomes for all our children, acknowledging and nurturing all talents and ensuring opportunity for all.

At the heart of our school is the unwavering commitment to staff development and ensuring all our children have the skills to be able to be successful in each stage of their education. We believe that through investing in our staff, we can support all children to blossom.

At Whittington Moor we believe it is important to provide a curriculum which is engaging, exciting and provides a sense of awe and wonder especially for our youngest children.

Most importantly we want our children to be happy, safe and achieve during their time at Whittington Moor.

If you believe you have the commitment, determination and drive to continue our vision of "We Nurture, We Thrive, We Blossom", then we look forward to receiving your application.

Joanne Mappin
Headteacher



Our Mission, Vision and Values

History and Work Academy			
OUR MISSION All children will have the opportunity and ability to become independent, successful learners through a nurturing environment, empowering them to aspire and achieve.			
OUR VISION Our vision is based upon the principle of "We Nurture, We Thrive, We Blossom"			
WE NURTURE Children's personal, social and emotional development is prioritised to enable them all to feel safe, secure and valued.	WE THRIVE We all share a passion for the development of each individual child by providing an enabling environment and ensuring the highest standard of teaching and learning.	WE BLOSSOM We envisage that given the right support at the right time all children can succeed, enabling them to develop lifelong love of learning.	
OUR VALUES Our values underpin all that we do as a school and are brought to life in all areas of our organisation.			
GROWTH of every child Our children's achievements and special talents will be recognised, encouraged and nurtured.	RESPECT By learning from one another Our children will develop respectful and caring relationships with all members of the school community.	OPPORTUNITY For all Regardless of a child's experiences, all children will have the opportunity to be the best they can be.	WONDER AND CURIOSITY All children will experience awe and wonder through playful, child centred learning which enables the development of key life skills.
OUR BELIEFS • We believe in fostering strong relationships with children, parents and colleagues • We are committed to the continuous learning and development of our staff and children • We embrace innovation • We are relentless in the pursuit of excellence • We believe excellence is achieved through high expectations and leading by example • We believe every child has the ability to succeed • We recognise each individual's strengths and we are determined to promote an inclusive ethos			

Section 4: About Whittington Moor Nursery and Infant Academy

ABOUT US

Whittington Moor Infant and Nursery School is a small Infant school just off Whittington Moor roundabout. We pride ourselves on being an inclusive school for all. We regard all staff and pupils as part of our family and whilst we have really high expectations of everyone, we maintain a caring and supportive ethos. We strongly believe in work life balance and we work with our staff to actively promote and improve wellbeing.

We look forward to your application and thank you for your interest in our school.

Further information about the school including access to the full Ofsted Report can be found on our website: www.whittingtonmoor.academy

Section 5: Job Description



Minerva Learning Trust Job Description



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

POST TITLE	Play Leader
GRADE/SALARY	NJC Grade 1 Point 2 £24,413 FTE
HOURS/WEEKS	6.25hrs 38 Weeks
LOCATION	Whittington Moor Nursery and Infant Academy
RESPONSIBLE TO	Joanne Mappin-Headteacher
RESPONSIBLE FOR	Supervision of children when engaging in recreational activities during lunchtime
PURPOSE OF THE JOB	To deliver play care in a safe and caring environment
RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS	

SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The post-holder, must at all times, carry out his/her duties and responsibilities within the spirit of Minerva Learning Trust and School policies and within the legislative framework applicable to academies.

MAIN DUTIES

- The delivery of creative play opportunities in a safe and caring environment
- Supervise children during preparation for lunch eg toilet, handwashing, lining up
- Supervise children in the dining hall and on the playground during the lunchtime period
- Complete accident forms for parents if appropriate
- Assist in the preparation of appropriate play activities promoting a safe and secure environment at all times
- Setting out, clearing away and maintaining materials and equipment required by the children
- Administering basic first aid as appropriate
- Support the behaviour policies
- Carry out all responsibilities and activities within an equal opportunities framework.
- Attend relevant meetings as required
- Work as part of a team
- Maintain confidentiality and observe data protection and associated guidelines where appropriate
- Participate in training and other learning activities and performance development as required including First Aid training
- Any other related duties and responsibilities as may arise but which do not change the character of the post
- Any other duties and responsibilities appropriate to the grade and role

SAFEGUARDING

- To be aware of and work in accordance with the school's child protection policies and procedures in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and to raise any concerns relating to such procedures which may be noted during the course of duty.

OTHER SPECIFIC DUTIES

- To play a full part in the life of the school community, to support it's mission and ethos and to encourage staff and students to follow this example.
- To actively promote the school and Trust's policies.
- To be courteous and provide a welcoming environment.

GENERAL

1. To be aware of, and comply with, Trust and school policies and procedures relating to child protection, health, safety and security, confidentiality and data protection, reporting all concerns to an appropriate person.
2. The above duties are not exhaustive and the post-holder may be required to undertake tasks, roles and responsibilities as may be reasonably assigned to them by the Headteacher and Local Governing Body.
3. This job description will be kept under review and may be amended via consultation with the individual, Headteacher and Local Governing Body as required. Trade Union representatives will be welcome in any such discussions.

Section 6: Person Specification

 Minerva Learning Trust Person Specification		
Post title: Play Leader		
Minimum Essential Requirements	Method	of Assessment
QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING		
Right to Work in the UK	AF/I	
Evidence of working with children and/or young children in an educational or other setting (paid or voluntary)	AF/I	
Paediatric first aid trained or willingness to attend training	AF/I	
KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE		
Ability to motivate and engage children in practical play activities	AF/I	
Well Organised with effective behaviour management skills	AF/I	
Committed to high standards of pupil engagement and behaviour	AF/I	
Knowledge of safeguarding	AF/I	
Use initiative and create and adapt activities to meet the needs of all children	AF/I	
Use positive language and behaviour strategies	AF/I	
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT		
To be willing to engage in professional development opportunities across the school and Trust.	AF/I	
SKILLS		
Work well in a team and provide support to others to maximise the potential for teaching and learning opportunities across school	AF/I	
Ability to plan effectively and work on own initiative	AF/I	
Be diplomatic and tactful, understanding the need for confidentiality in all matters relating to school.	AF/I	
Excellent Communication skills	AF/I	
QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES		
Willingness to share ideas and contribute to the development of the school	AF/I	
To be adaptable and flexible in order to meet the needs of the school	AF/I	
Demonstrate a caring attitude towards pupils, parents and staff and contribute to the positive ethos in school	AF/I	

Key: AA = Assessed activity
 AF = Application form
 I = Interview
 R = Reference

Section 7: The Appointment Process

These notes are intended to guide you when making an application.

1. The Application Form

You must complete the standard Minerva Learning Trust job application form neatly, fully and accurately, including exact dates. The form may be typed or handwritten but if you do write it by hand please make sure that it is legible and that you use black ink. Indicate clearly on the front page the post you are applying for. You are requested to submit a concise application.

2. Education and Training

State your qualifications and any training you have undertaken relevant to the post.

3. Present Appointment

Make it clear what your present post is, which establishment you work in and who your employer is.

4. Previous Appointment

When completing this section, it is important that you offer a continuous record, or an explanation of any gaps to allow full account to be taken of your experience, for example, child raising, voluntary work.

5. Referees

If you are currently working, or have worked before, your first reference must be your present or most recent employer.

- Your second reference should, where possible, be from your second most recent employer or, if that employment was not working with children but you have worked with children in the past, your most recent child-centred employment.
- Employment references must be from a senior person who knew you in a management capacity. If your reference is from an education establishment, the referee must be the Headteacher or equivalent.
- If you are an ECT, your first reference should be the Headteacher of the school in which you completed your main placement; the second should be your ITT provider.
- If you have not previously been employed, then Headteachers, College Lecturers, or other persons who are able to comment authoritatively on your educational background and/or personal qualities, are acceptable as referees.
- Wherever possible, the email addresses given for your referees should be their work email (or equivalent), not their personal email address.

Suitable referees are people who have direct, recent experience of your work and who are in responsible positions. We may need to contact them at short notice so please be specific with regard to contact addresses including e-mail and telephone numbers.

6. The Supporting Statement/Letter of Application

The supporting statement or letter is regarded as a very important part of your application. You should make statements that demonstrate how your qualifications and experience match the post. You should take particular care to demonstrate how you meet the person specification included as part of these details. **Please limit your supporting statement to two sides of A4 in size 11 font.**

7. Arrangements for Interview

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted as soon as possible after the closing date. Referees are contacted prior to the interview stage for teaching and some support staff posts. We would ask that all shortlisted applicants read the safeguarding information on the school website prior to attending the interview. All shortlisted applicants will be asked to complete and return a criminal records self-disclosure form before interview. You must disclose all convictions, cautions, reprimands, final warnings, binding over or other orders, pending prosecution or criminal investigations that are not 'protected'. This should be returned prior to interview, via email to the Headteacher's PA (jholding@whittingtonmoor-mlt.co.uk)

8. The Interview

Candidates will be invited to spend a day visiting the school during which time they will have the opportunity to meet staff and students and see the school at work. Interviews are likely to take place in the afternoon.

9. Feedback

Feedback is offered to those candidates who are shortlisted and not recommended for appointment. It is hoped that this information will help you with future applications.

10. Selection for Appointment

Selection is made conditional upon the successful candidate meeting the Trust's requirements for health, physical capacity and conduct.

11. Arrangements for Applications

When you have completed your application, the completed form and covering letter should be e-mailed to jholding@whittingtonmoor-mlt.co.uk by the closing date.

Section 8: Visitors to Whittington Moor Nursery and Infant Academy

Please use Google Maps for the most up to date travel directions.

Please contact the school directly for any visits

Whittington Moor Nursery and Infant Academy
Scarsdale Road,
Whittington Moor
Chesterfield
S41 8NF