Principal of Arbour Vale School



Candidate Information Pack

November 2026

Working together to transform lives

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Orchard Hill College Academy Trust

Arbour Vale School

Introduction

Orchard Hill College Academy Trust is seeking to appoint a Principal at Arbour Vale School. This pack sets out background information regarding Arbour Vale School, the organisation it is part of, key responsibilities of the role, the personal qualities, skills, experience and qualifications required to undertake the role and the application process.

Location: **Arbour Vale School, Farnham Road, Slough, Berks SL2 3AE**

Starting: **April 2027**

Salary: **Fringe Leadership PayScale L36 – L43 - £128,065 – £150,301**

Welcome Message

Thank you for your interest in the role of Principal at Arbour Vale School. I hope the information we have provided gives you a valuable insight into the school, its community, and the exciting leadership opportunity this role presents.

As Chief Executive Officer Designate of Orchard Hill College Academy Trust, I am delighted to be recruiting for this important position. Arbour Vale School has a strong reputation for providing exceptional education and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and we are looking for a Principal who can build on these strengths whilst leading the school into its next phase of development.

At Arbour Vale School, learners are at the heart of everything we do. We are ambitious for every learner and committed to ensuring they receive the highest quality education, support and opportunities to thrive. We believe that every learner has the potential to achieve, and we are committed to creating an environment where learners feel safe, valued, challenged and empowered to succeed.

The school benefits from a highly skilled and dedicated staff team, who work collaboratively with families and other professionals to support learners' education, wellbeing and personal development. As Principal, you will have the opportunity to lead and inspire this talented team while shaping the future direction of the school.

Across OHCAT, we are united by a shared commitment to transforming lives through education. As a values-led organisation, our decisions, relationships and ambitions are guided by a clear set of values that underpin everything we do. We work together to champion children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), combining expertise, collaboration and innovation to secure the very best outcomes for those we serve.

This is an exciting opportunity to lead a highly regarded school within a supportive and ambitious Trust. As we work towards the ambitions set out in our OHCAT Strategy to 2030, we are seeking a values-led leader who shares our commitment to excellence, can inspire others through a clear and compelling vision, and is passionate about making a lasting difference to the lives of learners and their families.

I look forward to welcoming a leader who will inspire excellence, champion inclusion and help transform the lives of learners for years to come.

Jared Nehra,
Chief Executive Officer Designate
Orchard Hill College Academy Trust

A message from the Serving Principal

Your challenge is to walk through the foyer and not fall in love with a school community that gives back so much.

The very recent Ofsted report highlights the achievements of a school that has made sustained progress achieving Strong Standard across all eight categories. This has involved a commitment from all involved in delivering high-quality learning, ensuring our truly amazing young people succeed. The learners' enthusiasm for the school is infectious and the genuine pride in their work is self-evident. The mantra for all staff is 'Teams within Teams' and ensures that all colleagues are supported in their work by accessing extensive professional development. The parental engagement and support for the school has made Arbour Vale a school of choice a partnership endorsed by The Leading Parent Partnership accolade. This is a school that does not stand still: Arbour Vale School is ready for the next stage of the journey. If this is a school that excites you in terms of even greater potential, make sure you get your application ready.

Neil Sykes
Principal of Arbour Vale School

Ofsted report

"Pupils are respectful and increasingly resilient. Just as pupils enter the school site smiling, they leave content and proud of what they have achieved."

"Leaders provide thoughtfully crafted professional development so that staff can best support pupils. This enables staff to have high-quality interactions with pupils to build their communication skills. Pupils are therefore able to communicate their needs and wants clearly."

Our School

Arbour Vale School caters for learners from 2 to 19 years old with a range of educational needs including learners with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties with profound and multiple needs as well as learners with Autism.

In addition to the main site, the Arbour Vale Satellite Centre opened in April 2026 on a site that has been extensively refurbished to meet the needs of the cohort, adjacent to the Our Lady of Peace Catholic Primary School on Derwent Road in Slough. This site offers up to 80 additional Early Years/Primary places in a phased build up over 2-3 years.

Working alongside a range of professionals, we endeavour to meet the individual needs of all our learners. We offer a broad, balanced and vibrant curriculum, with high expectations for all learners and staff. Strong links with the local community, mainstream schools and colleges of further education enrich the educational opportunities available to our learners.



Ethos and Values

Learning Together - Our aim is to enable every learner to fulfil their full potential. We recognise that every learner has unique and special needs that require individualisation, imagination and enthusiasm to ensure success.

We work together with our learners the best ways to develop the skills, knowledge and attributes they will need as young adults. We recognise that many of our learners need a specialised approach to their education and development and this is encompassed in the personalised approach we adopt for every learner. The development of good practice and professional development has extended our expertise to meet the needs of a broad range of learners.

A Year 9 learner summarised our approach to education as:

- *Flexible – lots of ways to do things*
- *Friendly and understanding – they help us in the best way they can*
- *A better chance to learn*
- *More trust and lots of opportunities*
- *You get to do a wide range of different, fun things*

Our aim is to provide an inclusive vibrant school where learners can fulfil their potential, grow in confidence and above all, be happy.

We are very proud of the successes of our learners and of our involvement in local and national events.



Job Description
Principal - Arbour Vale School

The Principal at Arbour Vale School will lead the school in providing a supportive, high-quality education for learners with a range of educational needs including learners with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties with profound and multiple needs as well as learners with Autism. They will foster an inclusive environment where learners can achieve academic success, build resilience, and develop life skills, while working closely with staff, families, and the community to ensure each learner reaches their full potential.

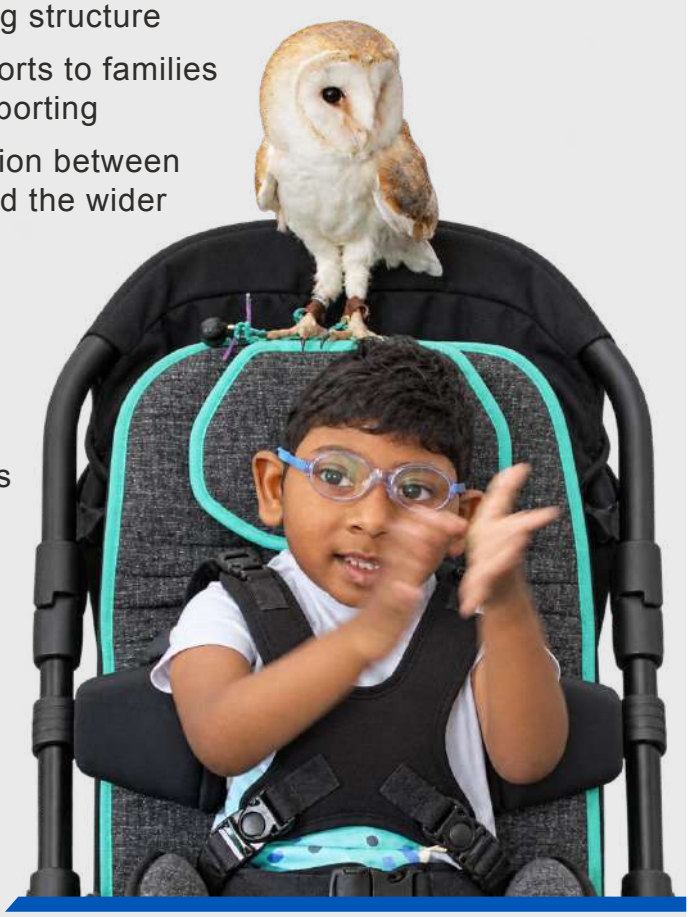
The Principal will report to a member of ESLT.

The Principal will

- Maintain a high-quality educational environment for learners with a range of educational needs including learners with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties with profound and multiple needs as well as learners with Autism.
- Ensure the continued development of the school and make a significant contribution to high-quality organisation, leadership and management
- Play a full and active role in supporting and promoting every aspect of the school
- Attend Local Governing Body meetings
- Accept the collective responsibility of the SLT and respect its confidentiality when this is agreed to be necessary
- Provide strategic leadership for safeguarding and child protection
- Ensure that the school meets its statutory duties as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice
- Keep abreast of developments within education and the special sector at local, national and international level
- Represent the school on local authority forums
- Management and control of risks, organisation, leadership and management
- Uphold the aims and objectives of the school and ensure implementation, monitoring, development and review of policies to support these aims
- Work closely with the Local Governing Body, and OHCAT ESLT on strategic school improvement planning and school self-evaluation
- Work closely with the OHCAT Finance team to manage the school's budget and ensure effective financial planning, efficient use of resources and best value for money



The Principal will...continued



- Develop and maintain an appropriate staffing structure
- Oversee the quality of annual and other reports to families to ensure a consistently high standard of reporting
- Develop and maintain effective communication between children, staff, parents/carers, governors and the wider community
- Assist in identifying advice and support for parents/carers and families
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in line with OHCAT policies
- Ensure equality of opportunity and of access for all members of the school community
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of Health and Safety procedures and assist the premises team in ensuring that the health and safety needs of learners and staff are met as far as is practicable and that health and safety policy guidelines are adhered to
- Lead on the creation, implementation and evaluation of the school's development plans and self-evaluation documentation
- Assist with the wider improvement of community partnerships and the further development of extended service provision
- Promote professional development for all staff and support the delivery of a whole school programme of INSET in line with current improvement priorities and performance management targets, as well as targeted INSET for groups and individuals
- Lead INSET as appropriate and manage budget allocation
- Act as an appraiser for teachers and members of the senior and middle leadership team
- Be responsible for overseeing the induction programmes for all new staff
- Liaise regularly with administrative staff in monitoring learner attendance, and implement school policy in order to minimise learner absence
- Ensure that class and school timetables run efficiently and that there is appropriate balance of subjects across key stages
- Be the key link for multi-agency colleagues including medical, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, drama therapy and music therapy in order to effect best outcomes for children and their families
- To support colleagues with the development of a programme of integration and inclusion in line with other partner schools

Management of Teaching and Learning

- Assume a shared responsibility for assessment, recording and reporting of learners' progress, both quantitative and qualitative, ensuring progression and continuity and sending relevant information on learners' attainment to the LA/DfE
- Ensure effective long, medium and short term planning and development of the curriculum
- Ensure that all learners have quality of access to the whole curriculum, maintaining a stimulating, relevant and effective learning environment in which the individual needs of learners are met
- Share responsibility for all monitoring and quality assurance activity and play an integral role in developing staff and raising standards and in other provisions within the OHCAT family
- Offer consistent pastoral support for learners and provide expert guidance on the management and positive support of behaviours that challenge
- Promote effective collaboration between staff within and between departments, to ensure coherent planning, consistency of educational opportunities for learners and high standards of teaching and learning
- Ensure that the planning and delivery of the curriculum is tightly focused (including the National Curriculum as appropriate) and tailored to meet learners' individual needs across the school
- Oversee the quality of structured programmes of work-related learning and work experience, including careers information, advice and guidance, for learners and families
- Plan for the development of the curriculum



The Self-improving School System

- Create an outward-facing provision which works with other schools and organisations in a climate of mutual trust and challenge - to champion best practice and secure excellent achievements for all learners
- Develop effective relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues in other public services, to improve academic and social outcomes for all learners
- Challenge educational orthodoxies in the best interests of achieving excellence, harnessing the findings of well evidenced research to frame self-regulating and self-improving schools
- Shape the current and future quality of the teaching provision through high quality training and sustained professional development for all staff
- Model entrepreneurial and innovative approaches to service improvement, leadership and governance, confident of the vital contribution of internal and external accountability
- Inspire and influence others - within and beyond schools - to believe in the fundamental importance of education in young people's lives and to promote the value of education

Management of People

- Lead on the recruitment and selection of teaching and support staff
- Be responsible for overseeing the induction programmes for all new staff
- Develop and maintain excellent working relationships with and between all staff, including multi-agency colleagues
- Maintain a positive team ethos through effective communication and shared discussion and training
- Work with other SLT members to oversee timetables, assembly and duty rotas and weekly information lists to ensure the smooth operation of the school
- Have corporate responsibility for day-to-day management of staff, including arranging cover for staff absence
- Monitor staff attendance with HR and address these issues effectively as they arise





Other

- Ensure the Health and Safety of learners and staff and visitors in keeping with OHCAT's Health and Safety policy
- Participate in appropriate continuing professional development and staff training opportunities to update or develop new skills
- Ensure personal and corporate currency with regard to national and local policy developments, initiatives and legislation
- Promote compliance with policies adopted by OHCAT, e.g. Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults, Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety
- Undertake such other duties of a similar nature as required by the ESLT

Skills and Abilities

To demonstrate the skills and understanding of high-quality teaching, including ability to coach and mentor others to:

- Interest, encourage and engage learners
- Provide appropriate levels of challenge, so that learners make good progress
- Use relevant and meaningful curricula, and methods and resources that enable all learners to learn effectively
- Use assessment information effectively to plan next steps in learner's learning
- Make effective use of time
- Secure high standards of behaviour and outstanding attitudes to learning
- Be able to create rigorous monitoring systems with deputy and middle leaders
- Make effective use of teaching assistants and other support staff
- Enable learners to acquire new knowledge and skills
- Enable learners to develop the skills to work independently and collaboratively
- Enable learners to develop self-esteem and respect for others
- Create a well-organised, stimulating learning environment in line with the school's policies
- Work with new technologies

Additional notes

- Job Descriptions are to be reviewed annually
- The responsibilities listed above are the essentials of the post; it is always open to the postholder to propose ways of extending these responsibilities
- This job description is not exhaustive and you may be asked to carry out other duties commensurate with the role.



Person Specification

QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING	
Qualified to degree level and above	Essential
Qualified to teach in the UK	Essential
Right to work in the UK	Essential
Recent and relevant professional development	Essential
Evidence of budget management skills and resource planning	Essential
A further post-graduate qualification relevant to the post	Desirable
EXPERIENCE	
Experience of effective and impactful leadership in an educational setting	Essential
Evidence of significant recent experience of responsibility for staff management and deployment	Essential
A proven track record of recent and successful teaching of SEND learners	Essential
Evidence of effective financial planning, efficient use of resources and obtaining best value for money	Essential
Evidence of the ability to scrutinise a range of data and make recommendations about school improvement following the analysis of the same	Essential
Evidence of supporting strategic school improvement planning and school self-evaluation	Essential
Recent evidence of using effective strategies to raise achievement for SEND learners	Essential
Experience of effective and impactful senior leadership within a specialist provision	Desirable
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING RELEVANT TO THE POST	
Excellent understanding of current developments and best practice in teaching and learning, particularly as it relates to achieving high rates of progress for SEND learners	Essential
Have a commitment to all SEND pathways	Essential
Experience of working with learners with a range of educational needs including learners with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties with profound and multiple needs as well as learners with Autism.	Essential
Broad subject knowledge of core curriculum and foundation subjects	Essential
Understanding of effective strategies for maintaining high quality attitudes to learning and conduct behaviour within the classroom and wider school and community context	Essential
A deep understanding of equality of opportunity issues and how they can be successfully addressed within a special school context	Essential
Knowledge and understanding of current best practice and statutory guidelines as it relates to child protection and safeguarding	Essential
Recent evidence of using effective strategies to raise achievement for SEND learners	Essential
Experience of effective and impactful senior leadership within a specialist provision	Desirable
Evidence of leadership qualities including ability to lead, motivate and enthuse others	Essential
Excellent people skills delivered with emotional intelligence	Essential
Evidence of the ability to plan, implement and evaluate at a strategic and high level	Essential

Person Specification...continued

Ability to use analytical skills to translate high-level vision and planning into meaningful action	Essential
Ability to provide a model of best practice within the classroom and other learning settings across the school	Essential
Ability to take a leading role in the promotion of a school ethos, culture, vision and mission that promotes high achievement and standards and high aspirations for learners	Essential
Excellent communication skills, both orally and written, including with learners, parents/carers, other staff and external agencies	Essential
Ability to be a person-centered practitioner	Essential
Evidence of the ability to lead high quality in-service training. To be flexible, accessible and approachable	Essential
Evidence of the ability to provide leadership to a team in planning, implementing and evaluating the curriculum and raising achievement	Essential
A commitment to furthering own professional development and to the principle of continuous improvement	Essential
Confident and competent with a range of IT.	Essential
Excellent attendance record	Essential

Benefits of working at Orchard Hill College Academy Trust:

Why join OHCAT?

OHCAT is an exciting, forward-thinking organisation, and we offer many benefits to attract and keep our staff, contributing towards maintaining and improving wellbeing, and encouraging our required behaviours, achievements, values, and skills.

Here are just a few reasons to join OHCAT:

- Pathways for progression within the trust, ensuring you can grow and thrive in a supportive and inclusive environment
- Pension Scheme - you will be enrolled in either the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) or the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), both offering life cover and financial protection for your family
- Salary Sacrifice Schemes (Cycle Scheme, Employee Car Lease Scheme and Home Electronics Scheme)
- Employee Wellbeing - We support employee wellbeing with access to counselling, mental health support, generous leave, flexible working, and enhanced parental leave including Employee Assistance Programme, MyGym Discounts, Corporate Eyecare Scheme and Free Virtual GP Appointments
- Employee Discounts (Blue Light Card, Costco Membership, Discounts for Teachers, and more)
- Other (Season Ticket Loan and Employee Referral Scheme)

The Appointment Process

For an informal discussion about the role,
candidates are invited to contact
Beverley Davidson
on **0345 402 0453**
BDavidson@ohcat.org
to arrange a time to speak to
Jared Nehra
Chief Executive Officer

To apply for the role please use the
'Fast Apply' button on ETeach.

If you have any queries, please contact
jobs@orchardhill.ac.uk

Please note that CV applications will not be considered

Orchard Hill College Academy Trust is proud to be a Disability Confident Employer, committed to creating an inclusive and supportive workplace for all.

Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust endeavour to make any necessary reasonable adjustments to the job and the working environment to enable access to employment opportunities for disabled job applicants or continued employment for any employee who develops a disabling condition.

This **Job Description** and **Person Specification** is current but will be reviewed on an annual basis and following consultation with you, may be changed to reflect or anticipate changes in job requirements which are commensurate with the job title and grade in line with the school's changing needs.

In line with the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education, the Trust reserves the right to request and review references **prior to interview** as part of our safer recruitment process. Any concerns raised will be followed up with the applicant before a recruitment decision is made.

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