

Principal of The Skills Hub

August 2025
Candidate Information Pack



Working together to transform lives

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Introduction

Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust is seeking to appoint a Principal at The Skills Hub a co-educational Alternative Provision in the London Borough of Hillingdon. This pack sets out background information regarding The Skills Hub, 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: The Skills Hub, Falling Lane, West Drayton, UB7 8AB

Salary: Outer London Leadership Pay Scale L21- L27 (£85,396 - £98,280)

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of Principal at The Skills Hub. I very much hope the information we have provided gives you an insight into our school, the organisation that the school is part of and what we are looking for in this Principal post holder.

Every child is important, and we are ambitious for their education. We aim to guide and support their learning, enabling them to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that recognise and fill gaps in understanding and move learners forward. The foundations set for life-long learning prepare our children and young people well for a positive future.

The Skills Hub is part of an established family of specialist academies that make up Orchard Hill College Academy Trust, which is currently comprised of 14 academies across London, Surrey, Sussex and Berkshire. The Trust was established in 2013 by Orchard Hill College and together Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust (OHC&AT) provide for over 2500 students. Students within the OHC&AT family have a wide range of learning abilities and additional needs including complex autism; speech, language and communication difficulties; social, emotional and mental health; and physical disabilities including multi-sensory impairment and complex health needs.

Academic learning is complimented through a joint educational and therapeutic model of support. The school has its own

therapy team who work towards helping young people overcome their barriers, so they are in a place to learn continuously and make the most of opportunities offered.

As a team we strive for excellence in all areas, working to be the best that we can be for our children and young people who deserve the absolute best we can offer.

Working together to transform lives is what we do and across the whole organisation we have a range of experts and practitioners who advocate for children and young people with SEND to ensure they receive the best possible opportunities to achieve their full potential.

It is an exciting time to be Principal of The Skills Hub and part of OHC&AT, and we look forward to receiving your application.

Laurie Cornwell
Deputy CEO, OHC&AT

OHC&AT is an exciting and forward-thinking organisation, to read about the benefits of embarking on a career with us visit: ohcat.org/work-for-us

Our School

The Skills Hub is a co-educational Alternative Provision in the London Borough of Hillingdon, that supports students who are unable to attend mainstream school for various reasons. Rated 'Good' by Ofsted in March 2025, The Skills Hub currently offers placements for students aged 5–19, many of whom have faced, or are at risk of facing permanent exclusion.

The Skills Hub achieved the Trauma Informed and Mentally Healthy Aware Award following an inspection visit at the end of 2023. A trauma informed school is one that is able to support children and teenagers who suffer with trauma or mental health problems and whose troubled behaviour acts as a barrier to learning.

We are proud to be based in a brand new, purpose-built school, offering a fresh, supportive environment tailored to meet the diverse needs of our students and help them thrive as well as providing excellent spaces for staff.

Staff at The Skills Hub take great pride in working with young people, helping them either reintegrate into mainstream schools or prepare for the world of work, further education, or training.

A message from the Principal

Looking for a new challenge and wondering whether The Skills Hub might be your next step?

At The Skills Hub, we believe every young person deserves a future defined by their potential—not their past. That belief is at the heart of our blended provision, which prepares students for adulthood across five key areas: education, employment, independent living, health, and community engagement.

But The Skills Hub is more than just a school. It's a community built on compassion, integrity, and hope. Our exceptional staff team brings not only deep professional expertise but also profound humanity to their work. They lead with care, adapt with creativity, and show up every day with an unwavering belief in the potential of our young people.

This is a trauma-informed setting, but more importantly, it's a safe place. Here, relationships aren't a by-product of the work they are the work. Staff create spaces where young people feel safe enough to lower their guard, express themselves freely, and take meaningful steps toward healing and growth. Every interaction is grounded in patience, curiosity, and a shared determination to meet students where they are.

Our strength lies in authentic connection. Together, we co-create individualised pathways that reflect each young person's needs and aspirations—whether that's re-engaging with learning, building life skills, or finding a sense of belonging and purpose.

This is a school where colleagues champion one another, where no achievement is too small to celebrate, and where resilience is built quietly but powerfully through mutual support and shared purpose. Many of our students arrive carrying heavy emotional burdens but they leave with renewed confidence, meaningful direction, and the sense that they truly belong.

If you're drawn to a workplace where relationships drive progress, where your expertise will be valued, and where leadership is grounded in empathy and vision, I encourage you to do what I did many years ago: take a closer look.

I'm ready to pass the torch, bright and burning and I look forward to meeting the person ready to carry it forward with care, conviction, and a belief in every young person's right to a brighter future.

Paul Chambers

Principal of The Skills Hub

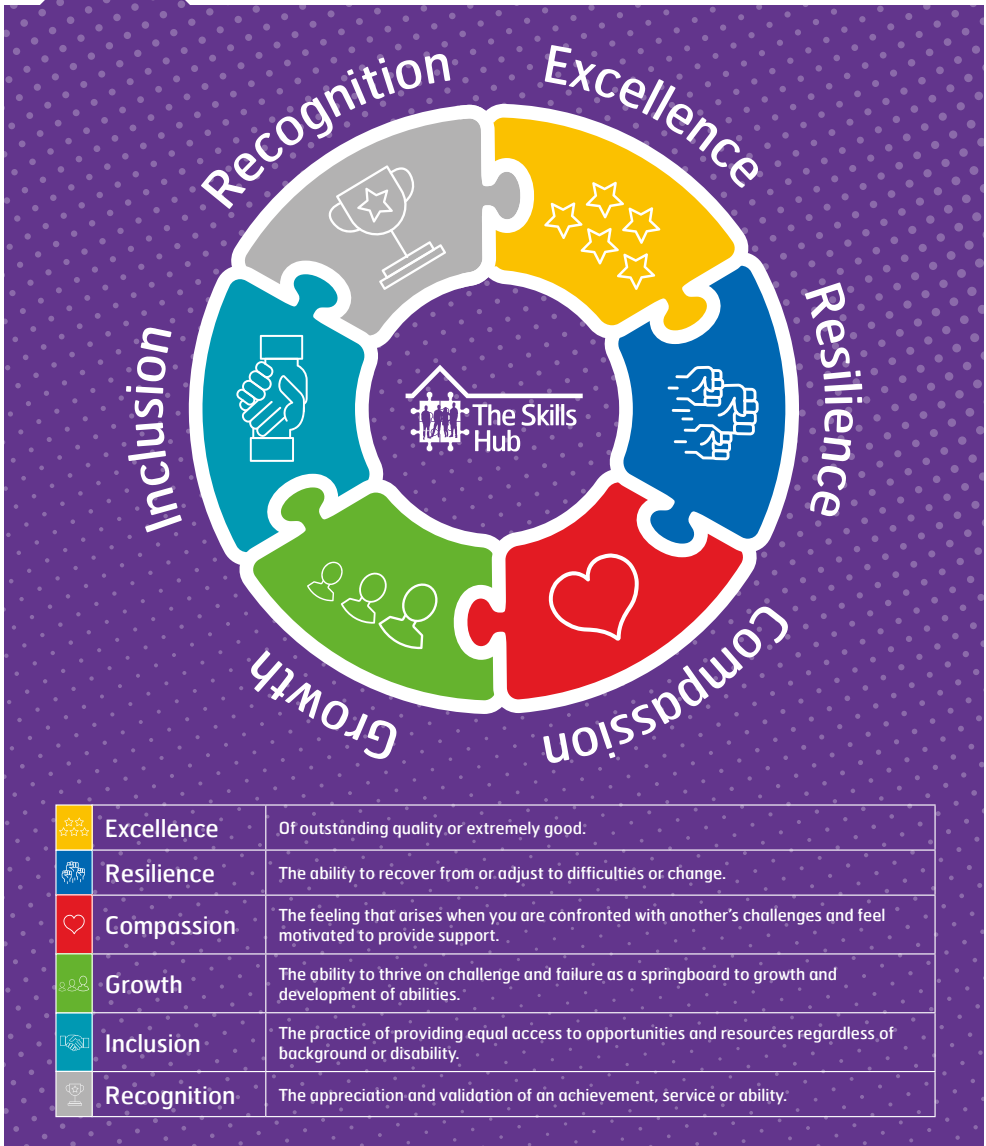


Our Vision

The Skills Hub aims to be a safe, compassionate and inclusive learning community that recognises the uniqueness of its learners and celebrates their success. We are dedicated to helping our young people develop

the knowledge and skills that reflects the best of their abilities, that will enable them to sustain healthy relationships, become gainfully employed and lead enriched lives.

Our core values:



Within our community that recognises and celebrates the achievements of students and staff we are committed to:

- working with our students to build confidence in their abilities to succeed
- teaching our students to keep themselves healthy and safe
- providing quality education that meets individual needs
- helping our students, learn to understand and regulate themselves
- providing help for parents and carers to support and nurture their children
- empower our students to courageously take their next steps
- work collaboratively with schools across our borough where students are experiencing behavioural, emotional or social difficulties.



Working together to transform lives

Ethos

As a community of learners, families and colleagues OHC&AT believes that by working collaboratively, with energy and ambition we can always effect positive change. At the core of our ethos is the conviction that there should be no limit placed on what is possible and that everyone has the ability to be the very best they can be.

Vision

OHC&AT will be the leading provider of innovative special education, delivering positive life-enhancing and life changing outcomes for children and young people.

Mission

OHC&AT exists to support, enable and champion the talents, skills and rights of the most complex and vulnerable people in our society in order that we can release their potential, promote their wellbeing and transform their lives.

Values

As an organisation, we adhere to the seven principles of public life to drive our behaviours and provide a framework for our actions. These are: leadership, openness, objectivity, selflessness, honesty, integrity and accountability. Within this framework, we have defined our own set of core values and behaviours based around the word 'create'.

Confident **R**espectful **E**quitable **A**dvocacy **T**eamworking **E**nabling

Key Strategic Priorities for 2025-2030

Quality, Standards and Reputation



Every OHC&AT pupil and student benefits from exceptional provision that effects life changing outcomes.

Innovation and Specialism



Creative and evidence-led approaches are distributed across the organisation to maximise opportunities.

Development and Growth



We are responsive to local and regional need and have a clear moral purpose that impels us to generate a positive impact where we believe we can do so.

System Leadership



The collective thoughts and experiences at all levels of the organisation are harnessed to enable and drive positive change.

Nurturing Talent



Investing in our staff, governance and volunteers to promote and liberate their talent, grow expertise, attend to their wellbeing and enable them to make the difference.

Job Description

Principal – The Skills Hub

Purpose of the post

The Principal at The Skills Hub will lead the school in providing a supportive, high-quality education for students within the co-educational Alternative Provision. They will foster an inclusive environment where students can achieve academic success, build

resilience, and develop life skills, while working closely with staff, families, and the community to ensure each student reaches their full potential.

The Principal will report to a member of the Executive Senior Leadership Team.

The Principal will

- Maintain a high-quality educational environment for students within the co-educational Alternative Provision
- 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
- Strategic leadership of 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 OHC&AT ESLT on strategic school improvement planning and school self-evaluation



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 OHC&AT 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 students 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 schools' 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 student attendance, and implement school policy in order to minimise student 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 students' progress, both quantitative and qualitative, ensuring progression and continuity and sending relevant information on students' attainment to the LA/DfE
- Ensure effective long, medium and short term planning and development of the curriculum
- Ensure that all students have quality of access to the whole curriculum, maintaining a stimulating, relevant and effective learning environment in which the individual needs of students 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 OHC&AT family
- Offer consistent pastoral support for students 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 students 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 students' individual needs across the school
- Oversee the quality of structured programmes of work-related learning and work experience, including careers and information advice and guidance, for students 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 students
- Develop effective relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues in other public services, to improve academic and social outcomes for all students
- 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 students and staff and visitors in keeping with OHC&AT'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 OHC&AT, 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

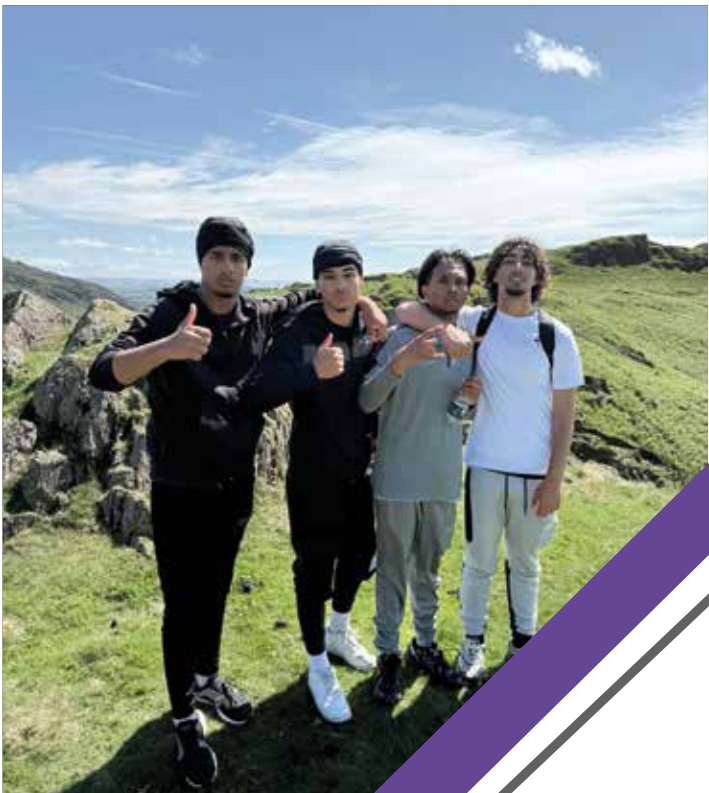
To demonstrate the skills and understanding of high-quality teaching, including ability to coach and mentor others to:

- Interest, encourage and engage students
- Provide appropriate levels of challenge, so that students make good progress
- Use relevant and meaningful curricula, and methods and resources that enable all students to learn effectively
- Use assessment information effectively to plan next steps in children'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 students to acquire new knowledge and skills
- Enable students to develop the skills to work independently and collaboratively
- Enable students to develop self-esteem and respect for others
- Create a well organised, stimulating learning environment in line with the school policies
- Work with new technologies



The job description is subject to review and change in consultation with the post holder.

Person Specification	
QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING	ESSENTIAL/ DESIRABLE
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
A further post-graduate qualification relevant to the post	Desirable
EXPERIENCE	ESSENTIAL/ DESIRABLE
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 within an Alternative Provision	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 within an Alternative Provision	Essential
Experience of effective and impactful senior leadership within a specialist provision	Desirable



KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING RELEVANT TO THE POST	ESSENTIAL/ DESIRABLE
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
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
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 students	Essential
Excellent communication skills, both orally and written, including with students, parents/carers, other staff and external agencies	Essential
Ability to be a person-centred 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. Excellent attendance record	Essential

The Appointment Process

For an informal discussion about the role,
candidates are invited to contact:

Beverley Davidson

on **0203 897 7001**

bdavidson@orchardhill.ac.uk

to arrange a time to speak to our
Deputy CEO, **Laurie Cornwell**

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

The Skills Hub and Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment



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