



United Learning
The best in everyone™

Briefing Pack for Applicants

Reading Mentor

May 2026

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Section 1 - Post Advertisement

Job title:	Reading Mentor
Location:	Fir Vale Academy, Owler Lane, Sheffield, S4 8GB
Salary:	FTE £28,800 gross per annum pro rata (actual £24,851)
Contract:	Full-time, permanent
Hours of work:	37.5 hours per week, Monday to Friday 08:00 – 16:00, 39 working weeks per annum
Start date:	As soon as possible / 1 st September 2026

Fir Vale Academy is seeking to appoint a Reading Mentor to join its established team. The academy is part of United Learning, a national group of schools and academies. Fir Vale Academy is an 11–16 secondary school located in the north of Sheffield. As part of United Learning, our aim is to bring out the Best in Everyone, and we continuously strive to ensure that students and staff have every opportunity to succeed, with their potential developed to the fullest extent.

The post-holder will work closely with identified students to improve literacy, reading fluency, comprehension and engagement with reading across the Academy. Through tailored interventions, one-to-one support and small-group sessions, the Reading Mentor will help students develop confidence and independence in reading, enabling them to access the wider curriculum successfully.

The successful candidate will play a key role in promoting a culture of reading and supporting students who require additional literacy intervention. Working collaboratively with teaching staff, pastoral teams and families, they will monitor progress, identify barriers to learning and implement strategies that support students in making sustained progress.

The role will also contribute to the Academy's wider literacy strategy and support students in developing the knowledge, vocabulary and reading skills needed to thrive both in education and beyond.

The academy is part of United Learning, a national group of schools and academies. United Learning is one of the largest and most successful Trusts in the country who offers unrivalled Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and training, including opportunities for nationwide networking.

The city of Sheffield itself is a vibrant place to live and work with two universities and a range of entertainment opportunities alongside the access to the beautiful Peak District within a 20-minute commute. Quality of life is routinely ranked highly, and it is one of the greenest cities in Europe: [Welcome to Sheffield](#)

We are looking for someone who:

- Is reliable, highly motivated and self-driven
- Shares our moral purpose of ensuring that all our young people receive the best education possible in a supportive environment from people who care about them
- Someone who is resilient, dynamic, and passionate about improving the life chances of all children in our community but also displays humility and a reflective approach to improvement
- A team player with strong communication skills

We will offer you:

- Highly competitive salary
- Excellent facilities and resources
- Access to an outstanding professional development programme

- Polite, respectful and dedicated students who want to learn and fulfil their potential
- A respectful working environment
- Colleagues who are supportive, friendly and who are committed to each other's professional development
- A chance to become part of one of the largest groups of academies in the country
- Opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues in other schools within the Yorkshire cluster and across United Learning
- Excellent employee benefits which include a highly sought-after pension scheme with high employer contributions
- Access to training through the Apprenticeship Levy
- Westfield benefits platform
- We are open to requests for flexible or part-time working; and we encourage open and regular conversations about work-life balance

If you possess these qualities and share the academy's vision, then we will be delighted to hear from you. Please refer to the job description and person specification for further details.

To apply, please click the 'Apply Now' button at the top of the advert on our website using the following link to our vacancies page: <https://www.firvale.com/our-school/vacancies/> and complete our online application form. Please note that CVs are not accepted.

The closing date for this post is midnight Sunday 21st June 2026. Interviews will take place soon after.

If you would like to discuss this exciting opportunity, please contact hr@unitedlearningyorks.org.uk

United Learning is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Employees will, in accordance with statutory guidance, be subject to a comprehensive checking process including references from current and previous employers, health, right to work in the UK, an Enhanced DBS check and a further check against the appropriate barred list.

Section 2 – United Learning

Fir Vale Academy is part of United Learning which is a large and growing group of schools aiming to offer a life changing education to children and young people across England.

Our schools work as a team and achieve more by sharing than any single school could. Our Subject Specialists, Group-wide Intranet, our own curriculum and online learning portal all help us share knowledge and resource, which supports simplifying work processes and managing workloads for an improved work-life balance.

As a Group we can reward our staff better, we provide good career opportunities, better pay, employee benefits and ultimately, the satisfaction of helping children to succeed. We invest in our staff wellbeing. Our academies each have at least eight INSET/training days per year (with three of those solely dedicated to planning) and an ongoing group-wide wellbeing programme. It is an ethos we call ‘the Best in Everyone’.

We are working hard to become a more diverse organisation, which is key to our commitment to bringing out ‘the Best in Everyone’. We welcome applications from everyone committed to this ethos and would particularly welcome applications from black and minority ethnic candidates who are currently under-represented in the Group as a whole. We always appoint on merit. We are open to discussing flexible working options.

<https://unitedlearning.org.uk/>

Section 3 – Letter from the Regional Director

Dear Candidate

Thank you very much for your interest in the role within the Yorkshire United Learning Cluster. The cluster itself is a close-knit group of four Secondary Academies: Fir Vale Academy, Barnsley Academy, Sheffield Park Academy and Sheffield Springs Academy, who work alongside a number of local Primary Academies; all from within the United Learning Trust.

The cluster is well-established and has excellent support from locally based cluster central services. These cover Business Management, Finance, HR, IT and Site/Estate Facilities. They are led by an Executive Business Manager. This provides our Academies with excellent trained advice and support in these areas; this benefits the leadership and wider staff of every Academy.

United Learning Trust is a national organisation serving Primary and Secondary Academies, all-through Academies and Independent Schools. Our ethos is, “the Best in Everyone”. This is a useful phrase that sums up the work and focus of the organisation. Every decision taken is done with this aim in mind: for staff, for students and for the community. The Trust values of Respect, Determination and Ambition are driven through the Character Programme, which each Academy has carefully interpreted in their own way. The Trust attributes of Creativity, Confidence and Enthusiasm are demonstrated at every level.

United Learning, and Academies within the Yorkshire Cluster, demonstrate a strong commitment to staff CPD and staff wellbeing. If you join our schools you will be inducted, supported and developed in a deliberate way from before you even take up post. Our status as an Academy Trust enables highly competitive rates of pay progression and our employee schemes, such as Perkbox, are an attractive feature of employment.

Above everything, we put young people first and seek to recruit adults who share this view. We work with students, parents and families to provide a structured, supportive experience that enables them to achieve as well as they possibly can and become excellent scholars and rounded individuals. We insist on classrooms and corridors that are respectful, orderly places where everyone is expected to display positive and mature attitudes.

Applying for a new job is a huge investment of time and emotional energy. The recruitment decision has to be right for employee and employer. I would encourage you to seek out any information you need in order to make the important decision to apply and we welcome visits to our schools in advance of applications wherever this might be helpful.

I do wish you the very best with your application and thank you again for considering us.

Best wishes,

Laura Moore
Regional Director
United Learning

Section 4 – Letter from the Principal of Fir Vale Academy



Dear Candidate,

This is an exciting and important time for our Academy. We are on a significant journey of transformation, with high ambitions for our students, our staff and the community we serve. As part of United Learning, one of the country's leading education groups, we are working at pace to build a culture and curriculum that delivers exceptional opportunities for every child.

Fir Vale Academy is a proudly diverse and inclusive 11–16 school in the heart of Sheffield. Our community is one of our greatest strengths and we are deeply committed to ensuring that every student experiences success, belonging and aspiration during their time with us.

Over the last year, we have strengthened routines, raised expectations and driven towards an environment where students and staff can thrive.

We are looking for colleagues who are values-driven, resilient and committed to making a genuine difference. In return, you will join a supportive and ambitious team, with access to the extensive professional development, collaboration and career opportunities that United Learning provides.

I hope this application pack gives you a flavour of both our journey and our ambition. If you would like to learn more about the role or visit the Academy, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Thank you again for considering Fir Vale Academy as the next step in your career.

Warm regards,

Danny Bullock
Principal

Section 5 – Job Description



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Job Description

Post title	Reading Mentor
Salary	Band 2
Responsible to	Assistant Principal
Responsible for	No Line Management responsibility
Role purpose	The post-holder will support a caseload of students, providing tailored literacy and reading interventions to improve reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary development and overall engagement with learning. The role aims to remove barriers to learning by developing students' confidence and enjoyment of reading, enabling them to access the wider curriculum successfully and make sustained academic progress.
Relevant qualifications	GCSE English and Mathematics at Grade C/4 or above (or equivalent).

The postholder must, at all times, carry out their duties and responsibilities within the spirit of United Learning Trust and academy policies and procedures, and within the legislative framework applicable to academies.

Role Summary

The role aims to strengthen students' literacy skills and engagement with reading, supporting them to make sustained progress across the curriculum. Through targeted intervention, mentoring and collaboration with staff and families, the Reading Mentor will help students develop the confidence, fluency and comprehension skills required to access learning successfully and achieve their potential.

Key Responsibilities

Key Accountabilities:

Reporting to the Assistant Principal – Literacy and EAL (or relevant line manager), this post holder will be accountable for:

Culture:

- Contribute to the calm and effective running of the Academy by promoting positive attitudes towards reading and learning.
- Support the Academy's culture of high expectations by encouraging engagement, resilience and independence in students.
- Build positive and professional relationships with students, families and colleagues.
- Act as a positive role model, reinforcing Academy values and expectations.
- Promote reading for pleasure and contribute to wider literacy initiatives across the academy.

Reading Intervention and Student Support:

- Deliver targeted one-to-one and small-group reading interventions for identified students.
- Support students in improving reading fluency, comprehension and vocabulary development.
- Monitor and track student progress using reading assessments and intervention data.
- Identify barriers to reading and implement strategies to support engagement and improvement.
- Support students in developing confidence and positive attitudes towards reading.

Communication and Partnership:

- Work closely with teaching staff, pastoral teams, SEND and safeguarding colleagues to coordinate support for students.
- Liaise with parents/carers where appropriate to strengthen support between home and school.
- Maintain accurate records of interventions, outcomes and student progress.

General

- Develop excellent working relationships with colleagues internally, centrally and externally.
- Be an effective and flexible member of the team.
- Ensure any documentation produced is to a high standard and is in line with the in-house style.
- Participate in training and other learning activities as required.
- Participate in the Performance Management process.
- Provide appropriate guidance and supervision and assist in the training and development of staff as appropriate.
- To represent the academy at events as appropriate.

- To support and promote the academy and United Learning’s ethos, playing a part in strengthening relationships between academies within the cluster and between the academy and central office.
- To be aware of, and comply with, United Learning’s policies and procedures relating to child protection, health, safety and security, confidentiality and data protection, reporting all concerns to an appropriate person.
- To actively participate in continuous professional development and act as a positive role model across the academy and Trust.
- 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 Principal and Human Resources.
- This job description will be kept under review and may be amended via consultation with the individual, Principal and Human Resources as required.

Information

This post may require the post-holder to have a degree of flexibility and willingness to work outside of normal working hours.

The information contained above is to help staff understand and appreciate the work content of their post and the role they are to play in the organisation. However, it should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to outline all the duties and responsibilities of the post, a document such as this does not permit every item to be specified in detail. Broad headings have therefore, been used in which case all the usual associated duties are included in this job description.

This job description will be reviewed annually as part of the performance management process and may be subject to amendment or modification at any time after consultation with the post-holder.

Elements of this job description and changes to it may be negotiated at the request of either the post-holder or the incumbent of the post.

I accept my job description and job title as detailed above.

Name (print)	
Sign	
Date	

Section 6 – Person Specification



Person Specification

Post title	Reading Mentor		
Salary	Band 2		
Education and Qualifications	Essential	Desirable	
Level 3 qualifications in English and Maths.	Y		
Basic understanding of safeguarding principles and a willingness to undertake mandatory training.	Y		
Training or qualifications in behaviour support, youth work, mental health or mentoring.		Y	
Experience	Essential	Desirable	
Working with children or young people in an educational, pastoral, youth or community setting.	Y		
Building positive, supportive relationships with children or young people with behavioural, engagement or attendance needs	Y		
Delivering targeted interventions		Y	
Working in an alternative provision or specialist SEMH environment		Y	
Experience communicating with parents/carers and/or professionals in a supportive context.		Y	
Conducting assessments such as reading or numeracy tests		Y	
Knowledge and Skills	Essential	Desirable	
Ability to build trusting, respectful relationships with vulnerable students	Y		
Strong communication skills and the ability to work collaboratively with staff, families and external partners	Y		
Demonstrates vigilance and confidence in reporting safeguarding concerns promptly and accurately, following procedures	Y		
Organised, reliable and able to manage priorities within a small caseload	Y		
Confidence in operating in a fast-paced environment	Y		
Calm, consistent and solution-focused approach with the ability to de-escalate situations when needed	Y		
Demonstrates integrity, vigilance and a strong sense of responsibility when working with vulnerable young people	Y		
Familiarity with interventions, reintegration support or behaviour frameworks		Y	
Shows a willingness to continue professional development, including but not exclusive to the areas of inclusion, including SEND and Pastoral support		Y	
Teamwork	Essential	Desirable	
Recognises the contribution and achievement of colleagues.	Y		
Keeps colleagues, stakeholders and/or customers informed of progress.	Y		
Treats others fairly, openly and consistently.	Y		

Expresses disagreement or challenges views calmly, constructively and tactfully.	Y	
Supports and co-operates with colleagues.	Y	
Personal Attributes	Essential	Desirable
Maintains confidentiality and discretion	Y	
Able to make connection between their work and the benefits to students	Y	
Good written and verbal communication skills	Y	
Ability to prioritise and manage workload while maintaining a flexible response to urgent requests	Y	
Good interpersonal skills and ability to work with staff and stakeholders at all levels	Y	
Organised and good attention to detail	Y	
High expectations of self	Y	
The ability to act on advice and be open to coaching	Y	
A commitment to extra-curricular activities	Y	
A continued interest in developments in teaching and learning	Y	
The ability to motivate others	Y	
The ability to establish effective working relationships with individuals, groups and organisations	Y	
The ability to remain calm and diffuse situations	Y	
The demonstration of a concern for excellence in one's professional work and the achievement of students	Y	
A commitment to support the school's aims, vision and ethos	Y	
Adaptability and resilience, with the ability to cope with periods of work pressure with good humour and a sense of proportion	Y	
Energy and commitment to professional responsibilities and to the betterment of all students	Y	
A willingness to contribute to the wider life of the school	Y	

Section 7 – The Appointment Process

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

The Application Form

The application form is accessible via the 'Apply' link on the job advertisement. Please complete the application form neatly, fully and accurately, including exact dates. You are requested to submit a concise application. CVs are not accepted.

Education and Training

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

Present Appointment

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

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.

Referees

Suitable referees are people who have direct, recent experience of your work and who are in responsible positions. Reference will be taken if the candidate is successfully short-listed for interview. We may need to contact them at short notice so please be specific with regard to contact addresses including e-mail and telephone numbers.

The Supporting Statement

The supporting statement is regarded as a very important part of your application. You should make statements that demonstrate how your qualifications and experience match the post.

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 support staff posts. We would ask that all shortlisted applicants read the safeguarding information on the school website/s prior to attending the interview.

The Interview

Candidates will be invited to interview at the school during which time they will have the opportunity to meet staff and students and see the school at work.

Feedback

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

Section 8 – Visitors/Contacts for Fir Vale Academy



Fir Vale Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Fir Vale Academy
Owler Lane
S4 8BG

Website: <https://www.firvale.com>

Email: enquiries@firvale.com

Telephone: 0114 2439391

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