**BRIEFING FOR APPLICANTS**

**Teaching Assistant**

**1 x Permanent contract**

**1 x maternity leave contract**

**Start date: As soon as possible**

Grade 7, point 8-11 (£18,385 - £19,795)

5 days - 31 hours 50 minutes per week, term time only

There may be the opportunity to take on extra responsibility as a teaching assistant, for example for personal care, which brings with it an increase in salary. This will be discussed at interview.

**An introduction to our school**

Our school is an 11-16 mixed, community, comprehensive school of around 950 students. We are lucky to be based in a relatively new building, with great facilities, on a beautiful site at the edge of the Peak District market town of Chapel-en-le-Frith. The Peak District National Park is quite literally on the school’s doorstep and provides endless opportunities for walkers, cyclists, mountain bikers, climbers, cavers and other outdoor enthusiasts.

The nearest big towns to the school are Buxton and Stockport but good transport links mean that the school’s staff travel from a wide area with many commuting from Manchester, Sheffield, Chesterfield and the towns of East Cheshire. A sizable contingent of staff live in the villages of the Peak District. For anyone considering relocating it is a wonderful area in which to live, with a good mix of housing, decent schools, easy commutes and a good quality of life.

We believe that our school is unusual in many ways. Perhaps the most obvious of these, which may even make us unique, is structural. The current school was formed by merging, in a new building, the local area special school with the existing high school. The special school became the current 35 place enhanced resourced SEND provision, always referred to simply as ‘Learning Support’ in school. To meet the moderate to severe special educational needs of its cohort, Learning Support operates as a ‘school within a school’. The Learning Support department runs a full independent curriculum with significant dedicated SEND trained staffing. Whilst Learning Support can provide an independent, tailored, learning experience for students, in every other way this cohort is fully integrated into the life of the school. This arrangement makes for a wonderfully inclusive school with young people who are very accepting of difference. Our inclusive approach spreads more widely too and we often buck local and national trends by accepting students with difficult and complex backgrounds.

This inclusivity does however make the school’s published data rather tricky to interpret. The DfE data effectively merges the results of an average sized comprehensive school with that of a special school. In short, though we think our 2022 performance table outcomes look quite respectable, we are rather better than the raw numbers make us look. Some years ago, we set ourselves a challenge; “*to* *achieve results ranking alongside the best schools nationally; whilst remaining a highly inclusive, friendly, community school”*. We have not achieved this yet, but it is a mantra that has guided us since. Undoubtedly, the balance between inclusivity and excellence is a difficult one, but both governors and staff are fully committed to making it work, despite its undoubted challenges in the current educational environment.

We think that we are different in other ways too. Our governors value the arts and creative subjects and we retain high uptake in these areas. We are not a top-down organisation; we are a team, and we work together to do the best we can for the young people in our care. If you join us, you can become involved in developing the future of our school community. Perhaps most importantly, we recognise that happy, committed staff make for a successful school; we work really hard to look after and develop our staff.

Visitors to our school notice these differences. People frequently comment on the sense of community, the calm atmosphere, and the fact that our staff smile, joke and enjoy what they do. At the start of our most recent Ofsted inspection the lead inspector commented, after meeting the staff in briefing, that he had never met such a welcoming, smiley and relaxed staff team at the start of an inspection. The report from that inspection, in May 2019, gives a very good picture of the organisation that we are.

Like most schools, we have our strengths and weaknesses. We are proud of the work we have done recently on curriculum development, on teaching and learning and on research-based practice, with many staff now engaged with research and further professional qualifications. Our challenges remain those of many rural schools, getting our results to be clearly above average requires that we better engage disadvantaged students and that we raise aspirations of some boys in particular.

We are in the minority of secondary schools that remain local authority run. This is by choice after careful research and consideration. We are not, however, an isolated school. We have good links with other local schools, with local further education providers and with universities. We are a member of the Peak Edge Group of local primary and secondary schools.

**Being a teaching assistant in our school**

We are an unusual school. As well as being a ‘normal’ comprehensive school we run one of the largest provisions for students with moderate to severe special needs in Derbyshire. This provision, which we call learning support, currently caters for around 45 students.

We also pride ourselves on trying to succeed with students with other complex needs, for example behavioural needs and emotional needs. Many of these students with additional needs benefit from the support of our brilliant teaching assistant team.

Unlike many primary schools we do not insist on applicants having a teaching assistant qualification, we believe that the most important thing is to find the right person, you can gain training and experience once you are in the job.

People come to the role of teaching assistant for a variety of reasons. It is a very rewarding job that allows you to make a huge difference to young people’s lives. Students will often remember the teaching assistants that helped them many years after leaving school. It is also a job though in which you can gain experience and training and become a specialist in a particular area.

The basic job remains supporting students in the classroom. This can range from supporting students learning to read, to helping students aiming for top GCSE grades in math’s or history.

There are however, opportunities to become involved in much more. Some of these roles bring with them an increase in pay grade. We have teaching assistants who:

* Are skilled in dealing with students who struggle to behave appropriately in school.
* Work to support students with mental health challenges to keep them in school.
* Are trained to support student develop their emotional literacy.
* Plan and run reading, spelling and other literacy programmes to students.
* Deliver specialist speech and language, motor skills or physiotherapy interventions in school.

We are also seeing increasing numbers of students in school with complex physical needs, many of these students use electric wheelchairs. Some members of our TA team are training to provide personal care for these students, this involves training in the use of hoists.

In summary, this is perhaps not one job, it is a range of jobs. No one does all of these jobs, but we’re looking for people able to help in various areas.

The job description provided is for the basic job, this would be amended for various specialist roles.

We have teaching assistants who have happily done the job all of their working lives, and we have others who come to us for a year to gain experience before going into teaching or social work. We’re very happy to support either of these approaches.

Above all this is a hardworking and happy team who really make a difference to young people’s lives.

**Safer recruitment and our values**

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The school uses robust safer recruitment procedures that meet the requirements of [Keeping children safe in education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2) . These processes are designed to deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment or volunteering opportunities in the school.

Our safer recruitment processes form a vital part of our whole school approach to safeguarding and are an essential part of creating a safe environment for our learners. Further details on the safer recruitment of staff in school can be found in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy which is linked [here](http://www.chapelhigh.org.uk/internet_assets/documents/parents/policies/2024/Mar/Safeguarding%20Child%20Protection%20Policy%202023.pdf)

When you apply for a job in our school you will be asked to disclose any previous criminal convictions. You will be asked to provide a full employment history and the names of two referees. One of these referees must be your most recent employer and, if the employer is a school, must be the headteacher. We will follow up on any issues raised by your references at interview and we may contact your referees to verify their identity or for further information.

Everyone who works in the school, including volunteers will have appropriate Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks. For teachers, qualified teacher status will be checked. Appointment to a post will be subject to satisfactory references, satisfactory DBS checks, the checking of qualified teacher status (for teachers), checking of the right to work in the UK, and health clearance.

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School is committed to creating an inclusive workplace which promotes and values diversity in age, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability and ethnicity. We expect our staff and volunteers to share these values.

**Job Description**

**Teaching Assistant** **Grade 7**

**Job purpose:**

* To support teaching and learning within mainstream lessons and in the Enhanced Resource Provision to ensure that all students with SEND make progress
* Promote the inclusion of all students within the classroom and school.
* Establish constructive relationships and communicate with other relevant professionals, in liaison with the teacher, to support students’ learning and progress
* Ensure the health, safety and welfare of students is maintained at all times
* Promote social and emotional development of students
* Establish and promote productive relationships with students, acting as a role model and setting high expectations.

**Accountability:**

* Head of department learning support/SENCo
* Headteacher, SLG, HoDs, teachers, other teaching assistants, external agencies, parents, governors

**Key tasks:**

Supporting learning

* To enable students to make good progress
* To work under the guidance of the class teacher supporting the learning of all students
* To work with individual or small groups of students ensuring that they understand lesson content and are able to engage positively with learning
* To undertake work with small groups of students or individual students out of lessons under the direction of the class teacher
* To enable students to work with independence
* To encourage students to interact and work co-operatively with others
* To assist in developing students’ resilience, confidence and self-esteem
* To assist students in developing the ability to self-regulate and manage difficulties
* To respond knowledgeably to any questions from students
* To use effective questioning to enable students to develop their knowledge and understanding
* To undertake some routine marking of students work in lessons and give feedback to students, addressing misconceptions
* To establish constructive relationships with students and interact with them according to individual needs.
* To differentiate or adapt materials, lesson content and tasks in liaison with the class teacher such that all students are able to access learning
* To assist with the supervision of students out of lesson times, including before and after school and at lunchtime as directed by the CLM Learning Support
* With the class teacher, to play a full role in maintaining good discipline in the classroom and ensure that all students are able to learn
* To safeguard the wellbeing, health and safety of students at all times

General

* To contribute to the aims and ethos of the school
* To support and implement school policies and procedures
* To access relevant student information and implement recommended strategies to support learning
* To take responsibility for developing personal SEND knowledge and expertise
* To participate in training and professional development opportunities
* To accompany teaching staff and students on visits and support out of school activities as required
* To assist the teacher in managing classroom resources
* To undertake administrative duties relevant to the post and maintain or contribute to accurate record keeping as required
* To 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
* To establish constructive relationships and communicate with school staff and other relevant professionals to support students’ learning and progress
* To attend and contribute to meetings with parents and other professionals and contribute to the annual review process for students with Education, Health and Care Plans

Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task may not be identified. Colleagues will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from a manager to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in this job description.

**Person Specification**

**Teaching Assistant**

**Essential:**

* Experience of working with a wide range of people
* Excellent communication skills
* Ability to work flexibly and be approachable
* Commitment to working as a member of a team
* Sense of humour and sense of perspective
* Ability to explain students’ needs and advocate possible solutions to a range of colleagues
* Good numeracy and literacy skills
* Basic ICT skills in order to support learning and perform effectively in role
* Ability to self-evaluate learning needs and actively seek learning opportunities
* Ability to develop and share good practice
* Ability to relate well to children and adults
* Work constructively as part of a team
* Ability to maintain confidentiality

**Desirable:**

* Experience of working with young people
* Experience of working with people with learning difficulties
* Experience of working with young people with challenging behaviour
* Work in a school environment
* Understanding of a range of special educational needs and disabilities
* General understanding of barriers to learning
* General understanding of 11-16 curriculum demands
* Interest in further professional development in the field of SEND

**Notes on Applying**

Applying for any job is time consuming and difficult, these notes aim to make it easier.

**Please note: we do not use the Derbyshire County Council online application process. You need to either complete a paper application and post it or word process the application and e-mail it to us. An electronic version of the application form, as well as details of this post, can be downloaded from our website** www.chapelhigh.org.uk.

**The Application Form**

Please complete the 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 use black ink. Indicate clearly on the front page the post you are applying for.

From a safeguarding point of view, we are required to ensure that there are no unaccounted-for gaps in your employment or educational history. Please explain any gaps that do appear; notes like “gap year” or “bringing up children” are really helpful.

**Referees**

Please use referees 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 over addresses and contact details, e-mail addresses are very useful. One referee must be your current or most recent employer; if you are working in a school, it should be your headteacher. References will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends.

**The Supporting Statement or Letter of Application**

The supporting statement or letter is probably the most important part of your application. You should make statements which demonstrate how your qualifications, personal qualities and experience match the post, focus on the impact of any work you have done. You should take particular care to demonstrate how you meet the person specification included as part of these details.

**CVs**

We do not accept CVs. Please do not waste your time by submitting a CV.

**Arrangements for Interview**

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted as soon as possible after the closing date. For teaching posts referees are contacted prior to the interview stage. If you are shortlisted, any relevant issues arising from your references will be taken up at interview.

**Appointments**

Appointments are made conditional upon the successful candidate meeting the Local Authority’s requirements for health; satisfactory references; satisfactory DBS checks; qualification checks and (for teachers) checking of Qualified Teacher Status.

**Submitting your application**

When you have completed your application, the completed form and covering letter should be posted to the school, addressed to the headteacher, to arrive before the closing date. You may e-mail applications to dhibbert@chapelhigh.org.uk