



Fir Vale Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Briefing Pack for Applicants

Vice Principal

November 2025

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Section 1 - Post Advertisement



Job title: Vice Principal
Location: Fir Vale Academy, Owler Lane, Sheffield, S4 8GB
Starting salary: Competitive Leadership Pay Range, United Learning Trust's Pay Policy Applies.
Hours of work: Permanent, Full-time
Start date: ASAP

Fir Vale Academy is seeking an exceptional leader to join our Senior Leadership Team as Vice Principal, with a strategic focus on driving the Quality of Education across the academy.

This is a pivotal role, responsible for shaping and delivering an outstanding educational experience for every student. The successful candidate will lead on learning, teaching, curriculum development, monitoring, and evaluation, ensuring that high standards are consistently achieved and sustained.

At Fir Vale, we pride ourselves on maintaining an inclusive ethos where every member of our community can aspire, grow, learn, and achieve together. As Vice Principal, you will play a key role in embedding this vision while raising expectations and outcomes.

What We're Looking For:

- A highly focused and organised individual with a proven ability to lead strategically.
- Passion for making a tangible difference to the lives of young people and the local community.
- Exceptional attention to detail and the ability to drive improvement at scale.
- A collaborative leader who inspires others and models excellence in all aspects of education.

This is a challenging and rewarding role that offers the opportunity to make a lasting impact on our academy and beyond.

We will offer you:

- Highly competitive pay above national average.
- 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 United Learning, 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.
- Free on-site parking.
- Access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

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.

We are looking for a Vice Principal who:

- Is a highly skilled and inspirational classroom practitioner who models effective pedagogical practice.
- Has strategic vision and proven ability to make things happen.
- Has a proven track record of raising standards within teaching and learning.
- Has the ability to lead and inspire others and work as part of a team.
- Has personal qualities to motivate, support and challenge others.
- Is committed to improving the life chances of our students and support them to become well rounded citizens.
- 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: [Fir Vale Academy Vacancies](#) and complete our online application form. Please note that CVs are not accepted. **The closing date for this post is 23:59 on Sunday 7th December 2025. 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, 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 Westfield, 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,

Thank you very much for your interest in joining Fir Vale Academy. I am delighted to introduce you to our school, and I hope this application pack gives you a clear sense of our values, our community, and the exciting opportunity this role presents.

Fir Vale Academy is a diverse and dynamic 11–16 secondary school, proudly serving the North of Sheffield. We are part of the United Learning family of schools, and we work closely with our cluster partners to share best practice and drive improvement. We fully subscribe to the ethos and values of United Learning, which align closely with our own commitment to ambition, opportunity, and determination for every student.

You are very welcome to contact me directly for an informal conversation prior to applying, and we would be pleased to arrange a visit so you can experience our school in action.

Thank you again for considering Fir Vale Academy as the next stage in your career. I wish you the very best of luck with your application.

Warm regards,

Danny Bullock
Principal

Section 5 – Job Description



Job Description

Post title	Vice Principal
Salary	Competitive Leadership Pay Range, United Learning Trust's Pay Policy Applies.
Responsible to	Principal
Responsible for	Designated Assistant Principals and Heads of Department
Role purpose	Promote an aspirational culture which motivates everyone to work collaboratively, share knowledge and deliver exceptional outcomes. Contribute to the overall leadership of Fir Vale Academy, taking a senior role within the Senior Leadership Team. Deputise for the Principal in their absence.
Relevant qualifications	• Qualified Teacher Status. • Degree or equivalent academic qualifications. • Evidence of further/higher studies.

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 of Vice Principal is crucial in ensuring the creation of an environment in which students and staff can learn and thrive together. As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Vice Principal is expected to work alongside the Principal in defining and articulating the vision and shared values for the academy and implement these through planning and good communication, ensuring the views and opinions of stakeholders are sought as appropriate.

The academy's aim is to ensure that leadership is developed at all levels with creativity, autonomy and innovation positively encouraged. It is expected that the post-holder demonstrates exceptional leadership as well as outstanding management skills by working with individuals and teams to develop policy and practise which will achieve positive outcomes.

Key Responsibilities

This serves as guidance only and is not definitive.

Main duties

- Embrace and lead by example the mission and values without exception.
- Deputise for the Principal in their absence.
- Be a highly visible, consistent and supportive presence in and around the academy; serve the staff and students.
- Promote an aspirational culture which motivates everyone to work collaboratively, share knowledge and deliver exceptional outcomes.
- Implement and model strategies that secure high standards of teaching, student behaviour and attendance.
- Strategically lead decision-making and contribute to consultation procedures.
- Ensure effective planning, allocation, support and evaluation of work undertaken by teams and individuals, ensuring clarity.
- Work to safeguard and protect children in collaboration with other agencies as appropriate.
- Create and maintain an effective partnership with students and families to support and improve students' achievement and personal development.
- Monitor, evaluate and review practice and promote improvement strategies.
- Contribute to the evaluation of the academy's performance and identify next steps.
- Build an effective team.
- Hold self and others to account.
- Manage own workload and that of others.
- Treat team members with equity and respect and be proactive in supporting all team members regardless of their need.
- Take time to listen to the views of team members.
- Endeavour to be able to deputise and backfill functions across the academy.
- Support students throughout the day by fulfilling pastoral responsibilities.
- Participate in, and lead, coaching, work in effective partnership with other leaders in the Group.

- Engage fully in the academy Performance Management Review process to fulfil personal potential and be able to participate effectively in the implementation of the academy's goals and improvement plan.
- Attend and lead meetings/training and carry out administrative tasks and duties as specified in the academy calendar.
- Consistently implement all academy and United Learning policies.

Strategic Management

- In consultation with staff and Local Governors, create and maintain the ethos, vision and aims of the academy including the drafting of relevant policies.
- Ensure academy systems and accountabilities are delivered according to the key principles of simplicity, efficiency, and effectiveness.
- Plan and deliver academy policy in key areas.
- Strategically lead on strategies and evidence the impact.
- Raise standards within every aspect of the academy and strive for rapid improvement where needed.

Accountability

- Advise and report to the Local Governing Body as required.
- Work in accordance with statutory policy.
- Liaise with Officers, Inspectors and other outside agencies.
- Develop relationships between the academy and local community.
- Contribute to the process and completion of self-evaluation processes.
- Be accountable for the delivery of key strategic objectives as determined in negotiation with the Principal.

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 academies at events as appropriate.
- To support and promote academy and United Learning's ethos, playing a part in strengthening relationships between academies and with 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 academies 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	Vice Principal		
Salary	Competitive Leadership Pay Range		
Education and Qualifications	Essential	Desirable	
Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) with significant experience of working with 11-16 age range students	X		
Degree or equivalent academic qualifications.	X		
Evidence of further/higher study.	X		
National Professional Qualification (NPQ) for Senior Leadership (NPQSL).		X	
Experience	Essential	Desirable	
Raising student achievement.	X		
Excellent teaching at Secondary level.	X		
Successful team leadership at least at senior level and team membership.	X		
Inspiring staff and students and establishing successful relationships.	X		
The ability and experience to develop a vision and put this into practice.	X		
Leading a range of initiatives and projects at a whole-school level.	X		
Establishing and maintaining high standards and expectations.	X		
Evidence of Continued Professional Development (CPD).	X		
Extensive knowledge, expertise and use of a range of data to drive improvement.	X		
Leading at a strategic level as part of a Senior Leadership Team	X		
Knowledge and Skills	Essential	Desirable	
Excellent skills in staff management and ability to undertake the support and supervision of staff.	X		
Ability to mentor and coach staff in order to develop and improve professional practice.	X		
Knowledge and understanding of current educational issues.	X		
Understand issues that may form barriers to learning and be able to initiate appropriate action to overcome underachievement.	X		
Excellent ICT skills and a knowledge of how the use of new technologies can enhance learning and the monitoring of student performance.	X		
Good organisational ability and time management skills.	X		
Ability to manage students firmly, fairly and effectively and to develop strong relationships.	X		
Excellent written and oral communication skills and the ability to communicate across a wide range of audiences.	X		
A willingness to go the 'extra distance'; being committed to give time and support when and how needed to improve the life chances of students.	X		
Implement strategies for raising achievement and achieving excellence for students, in particular disadvantaged students.	X		

Use appropriate models and principles of effective learning and assessment for learning.	X	
Use performance data effectively to ascertain in areas for improvement.	X	
Implement strategies for developing effective teachers to ensure the entitlement of all students to effective teaching and learning.	X	
Think strategically, by building, communicating and implementing a shared vision of excellence, equity and high standards for every student.	X	
Communicate and model vision and values both within and beyond the academy.	X	
Set and achieve ambitious, challenging goals and targets.	X	
Understand and practice educational inclusion so that all have the opportunity to be the best they can be.	X	
Develop positive interpersonal relationships.	X	
Promote individual and team development and sustain a learning community that impacts on academy improvement.	X	
Share leadership and accountability for goals and standards.	X	
Manage change, conflict and empower individuals and teams.	X	
Collaborate and network effectively with others within and beyond the academy.	X	
Give and receive effective feedback and act to improve personal performance.	X	
Management and Leadership	Essential	Desirable
Leads by example and acts as a role model for professional behaviour and good practice.	X	
Sets the pace for action and demonstrates commitment to achieving stretching goals.	X	
Translates broad strategies into clear objectives and practical action plans.	X	
Actively implements and encourages improvement processes.	X	
Teamwork	Essential	Desirable
Recognises the contribution and achievement of colleagues.	X	
Keeps colleagues, stakeholders and/or customers informed of progress.	X	
Treats others fairly, openly and consistently.	X	
Expresses disagreement or challenges views calmly, constructively and tactfully.	X	
Supports and co-operates with colleagues.	X	
Personal Attributes	Essential	Desirable
Maintains confidentiality and discretion	X	
Able to make connection between their work and the benefits to students.	X	
Good written and verbal communication skills.	X	
Ability to prioritise and manage workload while maintaining a flexible response to urgent requests.	X	
Good interpersonal skills and ability to work with staff and stakeholders at all levels.	X	
Organised and good attention to detail.	X	
High expectations of self.	X	
The ability to act on advice and be open to coaching.	X	
A commitment to extra-curricular activities.	X	
Ability and willingness to travel to locations within the Cluster, attend meetings off-site with agencies, etc.	X	
A continued interest in developments in teaching and learning.	X	
The ability to motivate others.	X	
The ability to remain calm and diffuse situations.	X	
Demonstration of a concern for excellence in one's professional work and the achievement of students.	X	

A commitment to support the academy's aims, vision and ethos.	X	
Adaptability and resilience, with the ability to cope with periods of work pressure with a sense of proportion.	X	
Energy and commitment to professional responsibilities and to the betterment of all students.	X	
A willingness to contribute to the wider life of the school.	X	

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

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 utmost.