

Job Description: Teaching Assistant

About us

Hawthorn Academy is a new SEMH secondary school based in Bracknell Forest due to open in September 2025, providing specialist education for children aged 11 — 16 years with social, emotional, and mental health needs (SEMH), including children with ASD. The school will open with 10 places, growing to 50. The school will be sited at the College Hall campus in year 1, moving to a purpose-built school during year 2.

The school is part of The Propeller Academy Trust, a special school MAT comprising currently of 3 schools based in South Oxfordshire: Fitzwaryn, Kingfisher and Bishopswood. The Trust is due to welcome Woodeaton Manor School (an SEMH provision in Oxford) in June '25 following an academisation order, and Forest View School in Bracknell (estimated opening Sept '27) following a successful bid in wave 3.

The Trust has a successful outreach programme and supports over 70 local mainstream schools with outstanding feedback and outcomes.

Propeller is proud of its educational performance. Its curriculum is personalised and focuses on the destinations and long-term aspirations of its pupils and their families, linking directly with their communities including pupils moving directly into employment.

Main purpose

The teaching assistant (TA) will:

- Provide learning and care support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
- Work with the teacher to plan and deliver activities
- Support pupils with routines and transitions
- Support pupils to manage their own emotions

Duties and responsibilities

Supporting pupils

- Drawing on knowledge of normal child development and various forms of special needs, to develop an understanding of the special needs of the child/ren concerned
- To aid the child/ren to learn as effectively as possible both in group situations and on his/her own by, for example
 - clearly explaining instruction
 - ensuring child is able to use equipment and material provided
 - motivating and encouraging child
 - assisting in weak areas e.g., language, reading, spelling, handwriting
 - helping pupils to stay on task and finish work
 - meeting physical needs as required whilst encouraging independence
 - liaising with class teacher in devising learning activities

- To support with the child/ren's care by:
 - Helping with toileting and social skills
 - Where appropriate help with medical care
 - Help with feeding the children (this may include gastrostomy feeds) and the teaching of independent skills
 - Supervision of children indoors and outdoors including the implementation of safe practices in line with the H&S Policy
 - Encourage and support with teeth cleaning, washing, bathing or hair washing.
 - Washing of soiled or wet clothes, towels etc
- Support with swimming, outings, shopping, horse-riding, PE, swimming including teaching of appropriate behaviour
- To learn and consistently use signing and other communication systems to a level sufficient to meet the needs of pupils with whom you work.
- To be committed to working with pupils with special needs (3-19 years) with a wide range of learning difficulties including Autism, PMLD, sensory impairment and challenging behaviours.
- To develop methods of promoting/reinforcing child/ren's self-esteem
- To assist with the care of sick child/ren. After appropriate training, additional tasks may include:
 - administering medication or carrying out complex care procedures in line with shared care protocols
 - driving the Minibus and / or operating a tail-lift in the school minibus and use specialised fixings for wheelchairs and seat belts accordingly
 - Lifeguard duties

Supporting teaching and learning

- Monitor and maintain an accurate record of pupil attendance to support and complement the role of the teacher
- To assist, with class teacher (and other professionals as appropriate), in the development of a suitable programme for individuals or groups
- Be acquainted with and work towards the aims and objectives set for individual pupils e.g. IEP's, SALT / Physio / OT programmes, class, department, and school
- To follow the class timetable and the teacher's planning documentation
- To take groups/individuals for specific tasks, i.e. storytelling, music, art/craft, as directed by the teacher
- To supervise, in conjunction with the teacher, child/ren on school outings
- To be responsible for groups/individuals on activities within the community, e.g., shopping
- To take responsibility for the class due to the short-term absence of a teacher attending an annual review, parents meeting etc
- To support a supply teacher covering for the class
- To be responsible for continuing programmes of speech or physiotherapy instigated by the therapist in conjunction with the teacher
- To work as part of a team in managing pupil's behaviour by following and adhering to a child's behaviour Management Plan and school policies; this may include using Physical Intervention Techniques according to Team Teach
- To help in the development and keeping of pupil records
- To help develop clear lines of communication and opportunities for discussion with the class teacher

- To provide regular feedback about a child
- To participate in all aspects of evaluation within the class
- To ensure that materials and equipment are readily available for use and maintained and stored after use
- To help provide a suitably stimulating environment taking into account health & safety

Supporting the school

- To help with the writing of the home-school notebook
- To liaise, advise and consult with other members of the school who support a child
- To discharge all duties: early morning, break, dinner, and taxi duties as directed
- To be involved in general aspects of school: class displays, hall displays, school functions
- To contribute to the reviews of pupils' progress
- To attend parent meetings once a year
- To attend relevant staff meetings and in-service training after school or whole school inset days as and when required
- To maintain an up-to-date awareness of school policies and procedures
- Participate in training and other learning activities and performance development as required.
- To maintain confidentiality at all times
- To maintain a good working relationship and co-operate with parents, professionals, other agencies, colleagues and provide feedback as and when required
- Any other tasks as directed by the Headteacher which fall within the scope of the post
- Take appropriate responsibility for one's own health, safety and welfare and the health and safety of pupils, visitors and work colleagues in accordance with the requirements of legislation and locally adopted policies, including taking responsibility for raising concerns with an appropriate manager

Professional development

- To help keep their own knowledge and understanding relevant and up to date by reflecting on their own practice, liaising with school leaders, and identifying relevant professional development to improve personal effectiveness
- To take opportunities to build the appropriate skills, qualifications, and/or experience needed for the role, with support from the school
- To take part in the school's appraisal procedures

Other areas of responsibility

Safeguarding

- To work in line with statutory safeguarding guidance (e.g. Keeping Children Safe in Education, Prevent) and our safeguarding and child protection policies
- To promote the safeguarding of all pupils in the school

This job description sets out the main duties of the post at the date it was drawn up. However, it is not intended to be an exhaustive or definitive list. Such duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are

a common occurrence and cannot themselves justify a reconsideration of the grading of the post. You may be required to carry out other duties commensurate with your role.

The Propeller Academy Trust and its member schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people according to child protection and safeguarding guidelines. We expect all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment.

This post is classed as having a high degree of contact with children or vulnerable adults and is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All post holders are subject to the necessary pre-employment check, including a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check, including a Child/Adult's Barred List check (where applicable to the role in question). Additionally, shortlisted candidates will be subject to online searches for publicly available information.

Person specification

CRITERIA	QUALITIES
Qualifications and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCSE or equivalent level, including at least a Grade 4 (previously Grade C) in English and math's • First-aid training, or willingness to complete it
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working in a school environment or other educational setting • Experience working with children / young people / with EHCP's
Skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good literacy and numeracy skills • Good organisational skills • Ability to build effective working relationships with pupils and adults • Skills and expertise in understanding the needs of all pupils • Knowledge of how to help adapt and deliver support to meet individual needs • Subject and curriculum knowledge relevant to the role, and ability to apply this effectively in supporting teachers and pupils • Excellent verbal communication skills • Active listening skills • The ability to remain calm in stressful situations • Knowledge of guidance and requirements around safeguarding children • Good ICT skills, particularly using ICT to support learning • Understanding of roles and responsibilities within the classroom and whole school context

Personal qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyment of working with children • Sensitivity and understanding, to help build good relationships with pupils • A commitment to getting the best outcomes for all pupils, and promoting the ethos and values of the school • Commitment to maintaining confidentiality at all times • Commitment to safeguarding pupil's wellbeing and equality • Resilient, positive, forward looking and enthusiastic about making a difference • Capacity to inspire, motivate and challenge children and young people
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