



## Job Description and Person Specification

### TEACHING ASSISTANT LEVEL 3 - COMPLEX SEND

|                       |                                                                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Location:</b>      | School-Based                                                            |
| <b>Hours of Work:</b> | Monday to Friday, 08:15 to 16:00<br>Term Time plus Staff Directive Days |
| <b>Salary:</b>        | £23,800 (Actual)                                                        |
| <b>Line Manager:</b>  | HLTA/Senior Leadership Team                                             |

First Steps Together Group is a growing and ambitious group of independent specialist schools committed to transforming outcomes for children and young people through exceptional education, highly personalised SEND provision and consistently high expectations.

Our schools support pupils with SEND, with a particular focus on children and young people with complex learning difficulties and multiple barriers to learning. Pupils may require highly individualised teaching, communication support, sensory and emotional regulation strategies, close supervision and carefully adapted approaches throughout the school day. We are committed to understanding each pupil as an individual and providing the structure, consistency and specialist support they need to participate, communicate, develop independence and make meaningful progress.

We are seeking a highly skilled, resilient and proactive Teaching Assistant Level 3 with the calibre, judgement and commitment required to work effectively with pupils who have complex SEND and learning difficulties. Working under the direction of teachers and senior leaders, you will provide consistent, high-quality support and will be expected to understand individual needs, anticipate barriers, adapt your approach and contribute actively to each pupil's learning, communication, regulation, independence and wellbeing.

This is a specialist role for someone who combines strong classroom practice with patience, emotional resilience, sound professional judgement and a genuine understanding of complex SEND. The successful candidate will be confident delivering personalised learning and targeted interventions, following detailed support and risk-management plans, responding calmly to behaviours that may communicate unmet need, and maintaining high expectations for pupils whose progress may be highly individual and achieved in small but significant steps.

### Role Overview

The Teaching Assistant Level 3 is a key specialist practitioner who provides high-quality, personalised learning, communication, regulation and pastoral support for pupils with SEND, particularly those with complex learning difficulties and multiple or overlapping needs.

The postholder will take a proactive role in planning, delivering and evaluating highly personalised learning activities and targeted interventions. They will adapt teaching approaches, communication methods, resources and the learning environment in response to individual profiles and will contribute to the consistent implementation of EHCP outcomes, individual learning plans, communication and regulation strategies, behaviour support plans and risk assessments.

Working closely with teachers, senior leaders and the wider multidisciplinary team, the Teaching Assistant Level 3 will observe, monitor and record meaningful pupil progress, recognise subtle changes in engagement or presentation, provide detailed feedback and use their knowledge of the individual pupil to promote communication, regulation, participation, independence and readiness to learn.

### Core Purpose of the Role

To provide skilled, consistent and highly individualised support that enables pupils with complex SEND and learning difficulties to access learning, communicate needs and choices, develop regulation and independence, and make meaningful progress towards their personalised outcomes.

The role combines specialist classroom support with one-to-one and small-group work, personalised learning, communication and regulation strategies, progress monitoring, safe behaviour support and close attention to individual risk and wellbeing. The postholder must be able to remain calm, observant and professionally curious, recognising that behaviour, communication and engagement can look different for every pupil.

## Key Responsibilities

### Supporting Pupils

- Build secure, professional and trusting relationships with pupils with complex SEND, using consistency, attunement and clear boundaries to support learning, communication, emotional wellbeing and participation.
- Understand and consistently implement personalised provision, including EHCP outcomes, individual learning plans, communication strategies, sensory or regulation plans, behaviour support plans and risk assessments.
- Recognise that behaviour may communicate distress, sensory need, anxiety, frustration or difficulty with communication; use agreed proactive, low-arousal and de-escalation approaches safely and consistently.
- Plan, deliver and evaluate highly personalised one-to-one and small-group learning and interventions, breaking learning into achievable steps and responding to pupils' individual developmental profiles.
- Adapt language, pace, task structure, resources, communication methods and the environment to reduce barriers and enable pupils with complex learning difficulties to participate meaningfully.
- Support the development of communication, self-regulation, resilience, independence and functional skills through structured routines, modelling, repetition and consistent approaches.
- Observe and record progress carefully, including small or incremental gains, changes in engagement and responses to strategies, and provide precise feedback to teachers and other professionals.
- Use agreed specialist approaches and resources, including visual supports, communication aids, sensory or regulation strategies and digital resources where appropriate to the individual pupil.
- Provide safe, attentive support across classrooms, transitions, social times and activities beyond the classroom, responding appropriately to changes in presentation, risk, regulation or wellbeing.

### Supporting Teaching & Learning

- Work collaboratively with teachers to plan and adapt highly differentiated learning, using knowledge of individual SEND profiles to identify barriers and implement effective strategies.
- Lead structured one-to-one and small-group learning, interventions and programmes with confidence, consistency and clear understanding of intended outcomes.
- Help create a calm, predictable, communication-rich and inclusive learning environment in which pupils with complex needs feel safe, understood and ready to engage.
- Support transitions and changes in routine through preparation, structure and individualised strategies, recognising that these can be particularly challenging for pupils with complex SEND.
- Design, adapt and prepare accessible resources matched to pupils' communication, sensory, cognitive and learning needs.
- Monitor, assess and record individual progress accurately, recognising that progress for pupils with complex learning difficulties may be non-linear, highly personalised and demonstrated in small steps.
- Maintain clear, factual and timely records of incidents, presentation, engagement and relevant observations, identifying patterns and sharing information appropriately.
- Model calm, consistent and respectful practice, maintaining agreed approaches even in challenging situations and supporting colleagues to do the same.

### Supporting the School

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils in line with statutory guidance and school policies, acting on concerns appropriately.
- Actively contribute to staff meetings, professional development and training, applying learning to improve practice.
- Maintain confidentiality and uphold school policies, procedures and professional standards.
- Supervise pupils at key times, taking responsibility for ensuring a safe and structured environment.
- Accompany pupils on trips, visits and off-site activities, supporting planning and risk awareness where appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues, families and relevant external professionals to ensure that pupils experience consistent, joined-up support across their education and care.
- Contribute to wider school development by sharing expertise and supporting colleagues where appropriate.
- Undertake other reasonable duties commensurate with the grade of the post as directed by the Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team.

### General Responsibilities

- Uphold First Steps Together's values and expected standards of professional conduct at all times.
- Promote and uphold safeguarding responsibilities, remaining alert to concerns and reporting or escalating them promptly in accordance with Group procedures.
- Comply with all relevant policies, procedures, statutory and regulatory requirements, including health and safety, confidentiality and data protection.
- Promote equality, diversity, inclusion and respectful professional relationships.
- Complete required training and maintain the knowledge and competence necessary for the role.

- Maintain accurate records and information as required.
- Undertake other duties reasonably required and commensurate with the nature and level of the role.

## Success Criteria

A successful Teaching Assistant will contribute to the following outcomes:

- Pupils are safe, understood and consistently supported to access highly personalised learning and participate meaningfully in school life.
- Learning and interventions are carefully matched to individual developmental needs, delivered consistently and evaluated against personalised outcomes.
- EHCP outcomes, communication and regulation strategies, behaviour support plans and risk assessments are understood and implemented reliably.
- Progress, including small but meaningful steps, is accurately observed, recorded and communicated to inform teaching and next steps.
- Pupils are supported to develop communication, regulation, independence, confidence and positive engagement in ways appropriate to their individual profiles.
- Learning environments and activities are adapted effectively to reduce cognitive, communication, sensory, emotional and other barriers to participation.
- Distress and behaviours of concern are responded to safely, calmly and consistently using proactive, person-centred and agreed de-escalation strategies.
- Relationships with pupils, families, colleagues and external professionals are respectful, consistent and centred on each pupil's individual needs and outcomes.

## Person Specification

| Criteria                                                                                                                                                           | Essential | Desirable |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Good standard of general education, including GCSE (or equivalent) in English and Maths                                                                            | ✓         |           |
| Relevant Level 3 qualification (e.g. Supporting Teaching and Learning) or equivalent experience                                                                    | ✓         |           |
| Evidence of continued professional development relevant to the role                                                                                                | ✓         |           |
| Significant experience of working with children or young people in a specialist educational, SEND or similarly complex support setting                             | ✓         |           |
| Substantial experience supporting pupils with SEND, including pupils with complex learning difficulties, multiple needs and significant barriers to learning       | ✓         |           |
| Experience planning, delivering, reviewing and adapting highly personalised learning or targeted interventions                                                     | ✓         |           |
| Experience working as part of a multidisciplinary team to support learning, communication, regulation and wellbeing                                                | ✓         |           |
| Strong understanding of child development, complex SEND, barriers to learning and highly differentiated or personalised practice                                   | ✓         |           |
| Strong understanding of behaviour as communication, including proactive, trauma-informed, low-arousal and de-escalation approaches                                 | ✓         |           |
| Understanding of assessment for learning and how to recognise, monitor and evidence small-step or highly individualised progress                                   | ✓         |           |
| Secure understanding of safeguarding responsibilities, confidentiality and professional boundaries                                                                 | ✓         |           |
| Proven ability to build positive professional relationships with pupils with complex needs, including pupils who may communicate non-verbally or through behaviour | ✓         |           |
| Ability to plan, deliver and evaluate highly personalised one-to-one and small-group learning and interventions                                                    | ✓         |           |
| Ability to adapt communication, learning activities, resources and environments to meet complex individual needs                                                   | ✓         |           |
| Strong behaviour support and de-escalation skills, with the ability to remain calm and follow agreed approaches in challenging situations                          | ✓         |           |
| Strong observation, written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to record accurately and work independently and collaboratively                      | ✓         |           |
| Relevant specialist training in SEND, communication, sensory/regulation needs, behaviour support or de-escalation strategies                                       |           | ✓         |
| Experience contributing to and implementing EHCP outcomes, communication plans, behaviour support plans, risk assessments or personalised learning plans           |           | ✓         |
| Experience delivering structured specialist programmes or highly differentiated learning for pupils with complex needs                                             |           | ✓         |
| Experience tracking, monitoring and evaluating personalised or small-step pupil progress                                                                           |           | ✓         |
| Experience liaising effectively with parents/carers and multidisciplinary or external professionals                                                                |           | ✓         |

| Criteria                                                                                                                                                                | Essential | Desirable |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Knowledge of specialist SEND approaches, for example visual communication systems, sensory regulation, intensive interaction, Zones of Regulation or nurture principles |           | ✓         |
| Secure understanding of EHCP processes and the importance of translating statutory outcomes into consistent day-to-day provision                                        |           | ✓         |
| Ability to model high-quality specialist SEND practice and support colleagues to maintain consistent approaches                                                         |           | ✓         |

### Personal Attributes

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- A calm, patient and emotionally resilient approach, with the ability to build trust with pupils whose communication, engagement or behaviour may be complex.
- A strong commitment to specialist SEND practice, dignity, inclusion and ambitious but realistic expectations for every learner.
- Excellent professional judgement, reliability and boundaries, including the ability to follow detailed plans consistently and raise concerns appropriately.
- Flexibility and adaptability, while recognising the importance of predictable and consistent approaches for pupils with complex needs.
- A reflective, observant and solution-focused approach, with the ability to learn from pupil responses and adjust practice appropriately.
- A collaborative approach to multidisciplinary working, with the confidence to share observations, receive feedback and contribute constructively to consistent provision.
- A strong commitment to safeguarding, dignity, pupil voice and positive quality-of-life and educational outcomes for children and young people with complex SEND.

### What We Offer

- A rewarding specialist role supporting children and young people with complex SEND and learning difficulties.
- Competitive salary and term-time working.
- Comprehensive induction and ongoing support.
- Ongoing specialist training and professional development in SEND, communication, regulation, safeguarding, behaviour support and inclusive practice.
- Supportive leadership and a collaborative SEND and Inclusion Team.
- Opportunities for continued professional development and career progression.
- The opportunity to make a sustained and meaningful difference to pupils with complex learning difficulties through skilled, consistent and personalised support.

### Safeguarding Commitment

First Steps Together Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All appointments are subject to pre-employment checks including an Enhanced DBS, satisfactory references, online checks and overseas police checks (where required).

The successful candidate will be expected to demonstrate a strong commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and the wellbeing of children and young people at all times.