



Job Description and Person Specification

ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

Location:	School-Based
Hours of Work:	Monday to Friday, 08:15 to 16:00 Term Time plus Staff Directive Days
Salary:	£34,068 to £38,400
Line Manager:	Headteacher/School Leadership Team

First Steps Together Group is a growing and ambitious group of independent schools committed to transforming outcomes for children and young people through exceptional education, relational practice and high expectations.

Our schools provide highly supportive, inclusive and aspirational learning environments for pupils with a range of additional needs, including SEND, SEMH and complex presentations. We are committed to creating safe, consistent and nurturing environments where pupils are supported to overcome barriers to learning, develop confidence and independence, and achieve their full potential.

We are seeking an experienced, committed and values-driven Assistant Head of School to join the school's leadership team, supporting the Headteacher/Head of School in providing effective day-to-day leadership and ensuring consistently high standards across teaching and learning, behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and pupil outcomes.

This is an exciting opportunity for an aspiring or established school leader to play a key role in the continued development and improvement of a specialist education setting, supporting staff, pupils and families while helping to create a positive and ambitious culture across the school.

Role Overview

The Assistant Head of School is a key leadership position within the school, responsible for supporting the Headteacher/Head of School in the effective day-to-day leadership, management and continuous improvement of the provision.

Working as part of the school's leadership team, the postholder will support the implementation, monitoring and continuous improvement of systems and practice relating to:

- Teaching, learning and assessment
- Behaviour, attendance and pupil engagement
- Safeguarding and pastoral support
- Staff development, deployment and performance
- School improvement and quality assurance

The role requires an effective and visible leader who can combine strong operational leadership with a clear focus on improving the quality of education and outcomes for pupils.

The successful candidate will work closely with the Headteacher/Head of School, teaching and support staff, pupils, families and external professionals to ensure high expectations are consistently maintained and barriers to learning are identified and addressed. They will also act as a point of leadership in the absence of the Head of School and may undertake the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL, where appropriately trained and appointed.

Core Purpose of the Role

To support the Head of School in providing effective leadership and management of the school, ensuring consistently high standards of education, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and pastoral support.

The role will contribute to school improvement, strengthen the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, develop staff practice and help ensure every pupil receives the support, challenge and opportunities they need to achieve positive outcomes.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership & Organisational Development

- Support the Headteacher/Head of School in implementing the School Improvement Plan and agreed strategic priorities.
- Ensure the curriculum and learning experiences remain inclusive, ambitious and responsive to pupil needs.
- Contribute to maintaining and embedding a strong, consistent vision, ethos and values across the school setting.
- Participate in evaluation activities (learning walks, book looks, pupil voice) and help identify actions that raise standards and outcomes.

Leading Teaching & Learning

- Support monitoring of teaching and learning through agreed drop-ins/observations, offering constructive feedback and coaching.
- Work with teachers to identify individual pupil needs and ensure support strategies are implemented effectively and promptly.
- Assist in the development, implementation and review of assessments, ILPs, behaviour plans and risk assessments.
- Promote consistent routines and high expectations in all learning environments.
- Maintain a positive, approachable presence and model high professional standards to support staff wellbeing.

Behaviour, Attendance & Pastoral Leadership

- Support the Headteacher/Head of School in maintaining a positive, respectful culture for pupils, staff and visitors.
- Help oversee behaviour systems, including restorative conversations and accurate use of recording platforms.
- Support staff in applying and reviewing behaviour plans, ensuring updates are completed and communicated termly.
- Contribute to attendance monitoring, including family liaison, phone calls and strategies to remove barriers to attendance.
- Lead or assist with pastoral interventions, reward programmes and initiatives that improve engagement and motivation.

Staff Support, Development & Deployment

- Line manage staff as directed by the Headteacher/Head of School.
- Assist with daily organisation, supervision and effective deployment of support staff throughout the school day.
- Help induct new staff, ensure safeguarding, routines, expectations and procedures are clearly understood.
- Contribute to staff briefings, assemblies and training activities.
- Support the appraisal process by gathering evidence, offering coaching and signposting staff to relevant CPD.
- Promote strong communication and collaborative practice across teaching, support and specialist staff teams.

Relationships with Parents & External Agencies

- Strengthen home-school relationships through regular, positive and constructive communication with parents and carers.
- Attend parent evenings, multi-agency meetings and contribute to formal reporting cycles.
- Liaise with external agencies and previous settings to support smooth, well-informed transitions for new pupils.
- Support multi-agency work relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and learning.

Resources, Organisation and Enrichment

- Assist the Headteacher/Head of School in organising and ensuring the safe, effective use of resources within the setting.
- Support the planning and delivery of enrichment activities and off-site learning opportunities each term.
- Contribute to the implementation of incentive and reward systems that reinforce positive behaviour and engagement.

Senior Leadership Contribution

- Support the Headteacher/Head of School in leading the school setting and contribute actively to leadership meetings.
- Share good practice, ideas and strategies that improve staff performance and student outcomes.
- Act as a point of contact in the absence of the Headteacher/Head of School, ensuring safe and smooth day-to-day operation.

Safeguarding

- Actively promote and uphold the school's safeguarding policies and statutory responsibilities.
- Report any safeguarding concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.
- If trained/appointed, operate as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL, as required.

Success Criteria

- High standards of teaching, learning and pupil engagement are consistently maintained.
- Pupil outcomes and progress improve, with data used effectively to identify trends, gaps and priorities for action.
- Behaviour systems and expectations are applied consistently and effectively across the school.
- Attendance and engagement improve, with data used to identify concerns and evaluate the impact of interventions.
- Safeguarding practice is robust, compliant and embedded in everyday school practice.
- School Improvement Plan priorities are effectively implemented, with clear evidence of progress and impact.
- Staff receive effective support, coaching and challenge that improves the quality and consistency of practice.
- Pupils with SEND and additional needs receive appropriate support that enables them to make progress and achieve positive outcomes.
- Strong relationships are maintained with pupils, families and external professionals.
- The postholder provides a visible, accountable and effective leadership presence, contributing to the safe and successful operation of the school.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Experience of teaching or supporting learning within an education setting	✓	
Experience supporting colleagues, mentoring staff or leading an area of school practice	✓	
Experience contributing to school improvement and quality assurance processes	✓	
Strong understanding of effective teaching, learning and assessment	✓	
Experience working effectively with pupils with SEND, SEMH and behavioural needs	✓	
Strong understanding of effective behaviour management and positive behaviour for learning	✓	
Understanding of attendance, pupil engagement and strategies to remove barriers to education	✓	
Ability to analyse pupil, attendance, behaviour and performance data and use it to drive improvement	✓	
Strong understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and child protection practice	✓	
Excellent leadership, communication and organisational skills	✓	
Ability to support, motivate and appropriately challenge staff to improve practice	✓	
Ability to build effective relationships with pupils, families and external professionals	✓	
Ability to remain calm, organised and make effective decisions in a busy environment	✓	
Experience within a specialist, SEND, alternative provision or similar setting		✓
QTS or equivalent teaching qualification		✓
Leadership qualification (NPQML/NPQSL or equivalent)		✓
DDSL experience or advanced safeguarding training		✓
Experience leading assemblies, staff briefings or professional development		✓

Personal Attributes

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- Strong integrity and professionalism
- A visible, positive and child-centred leadership approach
- Resilience and emotional intelligence
- High levels of accountability and initiative
- A calm, organised and solution-focused approach
- The ability to support, challenge and motivate others
- Commitment to continuous improvement and high expectations
- Commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and positive outcomes for every pupil

What We Offer

- A key leadership role within a growing specialist education organisation
- The opportunity to contribute directly to school improvement and pupil outcomes
- A supportive and collaborative school leadership team
- Ongoing professional development and leadership opportunities
- Opportunities for progression as First Steps Together continues to grow
- Term-time working
- Competitive salary and benefits package
- The opportunity to make a meaningful difference to the lives of children and young people

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.