

Stone Soup Academy



Principal Candidate Brochure

Stone Soup Academy

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Key Facts & Statistics

Type of School:	Alternative Provision Free School
Age range:	11 - 19
Location:	Nottingham, Nottinghamshire
Co-educational or single Sex:	Co-educational
Number on roll:	57
Number of teaching staff:	29
% of children with pupil premium	40.35%
% English as an additional language:	3.51%

Stone Soup Academy

Welcome Message

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in leading our school. In 2012 my colleagues and I successfully created one of the first five Alternative Provision Free Schools in the country. We were a group of individuals passionate about Alternative Education and the possibilities it opened up for some of the most disadvantaged young people in our local area.

As a new school we had many challenges to overcome, but the hard work and efforts of the school team paid off and in 2014 we were awarded 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. For a school that had only been in existence for 3 years, this was a fantastic achievement and one that we were all immensely proud of.

A key component of this early success was the exceptional leadership we were fortunate to have, taking the school forward and inspiring both staff and students to do more and to do better. Now as we step into a new chapter of our history we look outwards to find the next leaders who can take this school forward and build on the legacy we have created.

The school itself is a remarkable achievement, it shatters many preconceived notions about what Alternative Provision is and what the young people we work with are capable of. We have a dedicated team of teachers leading our education complimented by a behaviour team offering support and guidance to students and teachers. Our training programmes continually recruit and train the next generation of staff who specialise in working with our young people.

We see innovation in all aspects of the schools delivery, from use of technology in classrooms to the design of physical spaces. Many of our approaches are rooted in an understanding of the psychology of the young people we work with and we have embedded a culture of continuous questioning, evaluation and improvement. Looking forward we are building a research and development culture to seek out new models and methods of engagement and learning.

To take this school forward requires an exceptional individual, someone who can inspire, motivate and increase the learning of disengaged students; as well as lead and develop the staff team. Use of data collection and analysis is an essential part of our school culture, we need to demonstrate the impact and effect we have, not just to commissioners and regulators, but also to the young people themselves and their families. This role requires an adept skill in balancing the requirements of Ofsted and regulatory bodies with the need to be innovative and daring in the educational approach.

The right candidate will not only have a rigorous background in education but a keen business acumen and understanding of the role and requirements of the Accountable Officer in an Academy structure. Partnership is key to the future success of the school, all students enrolled at the school are referred from other schools or PRU's and as a fee charging school it will require leadership that understands the economic factors in the educational ecosystem as well as the political.

The work we do changes lives, the nature of our Governing Body and Academy structure enables us to innovate and push the boundaries of what education is. We have a hunger to take on the big challenges and focus not only on achieving fantastic educational outcomes, but preparing our young people for adulthood and giving them a competitive advantage in the jobs market.

For the right person this is a once in a lifetime opportunity, if you think it could be you, we would love to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

Aftab Hussain
Chair of Governors

Stone Soup Academy

About the Academy

Our Mission

“Our mission is to give students the support they need to develop the skills necessary to re-engage with education and make significant progress in their personal and academic development.”

Stone Soup Academy is an alternative provision free school in the centre of Nottingham, serving students outside mainstream education in an environment that encourages their academic and personal development. We are committed to the education and welfare of our students, with the goal of preparing them for reintegration into mainstream education.

The foundation of our work is the ambition to create systems that equip young people who would otherwise be left behind. All too frequently, students who are deemed to be difficult or disruptive are faced with a future of unemployment or social disadvantage.

The Academy holds at the heart of its work the ambition to create an environment that fully equips students for their personal and academic development. Our goal is to empower each individual student to achieve in practical, functional, and long-lasting ways.

With this in mind, we aim to:

- provide a supportive environment that aids the learning and personal development of all students;
- prepare students, where appropriate, for reintegration into mainstream education;
- improve the behaviour and attitude of each student with both adults and their peers;
- reinforce each student’s self-esteem and integrity;
- instil an understanding of fundamental values for citizenship.

The curriculum offered here focuses on achieving these goals through a wide range of courses to ensure continued student engagement and attendance.

We believe that a diverse curriculum encourages students to develop integrated skills that will more truly prepare them for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. As an alternative provision academy, a creative outlet increases focus and guides learning. Here at Stone Soup we combine Functional Skills qualifications and core GCSEs in Maths and English with classes in creative subjects such as joinery, music technology, and creative arts. All of these are aimed at growing the skills and confidence of students as well as teaching them new crafts that could potentially turn into a career.

Students also have classes in PSHE which explore a wide range of topics aimed at equipping them for citizenship and ensuring they understand fundamental British values including democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith. While these are specifically addressed in form time and PSHE, these values are additionally embedded in the curriculum and environment of the Academy.

Alongside the academics offered, we also have a system that ensures the welfare of our students by providing services to students and their families. Most importantly, our policy is to tailor the learning career of each student to their particular needs, and cross-reference initial assessment with future progress to maintain a positive learning experience.

Individual pastoral support is also available to our students, as well as both individual and group sessions with educational specialists. We maintain regular contact with parents/caregivers and outside agencies involved in each student’s welfare to provide the best possible level of support and protection for all-round development, in keeping with our mission as an organisation.

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Our History

Over a decade ago, Stone Soup started as a small community project in Nottingham. Having recognised a gaping need in the community, the Project began by offering an alternative provision for students through music. Initially only operating in a small studio and within schools, the project quickly grew to require additional space. This took the form of an alternative provision centre, with facilities for 50 students in part-time music and construction courses.

With the opportunity to apply as a Free School, Stone Soup seized upon this chance for progression and was accepted. In September 2012, a temporary school opened in St. Ann's, Nottingham, and began working with local schools to provide a wider set of educational opportunities for students. During this time, a project to refurbish the new facility was underway which operated as a training programme with apprentices undertaking much of the work.

Stone Soup Academy opened its new premises in April 2013, now located in the heart of Nottingham city centre in the historic Lace market area. Immersing the students in an area that is itself inspiring and professional was a priority for the governing body, offering the city centre itself as an extended classroom.

An assessment by Ofsted in 2014 found the Academy 'outstanding', an accomplishment of which we are incredibly proud. However, we have not allowed it to make us complacent and have continued developing our facilities and services. The school has taken on additional students, developing a variety of avenues for working with learners who need specialised attention beyond an alternative provision. We have supplemented this by working closely with families to provide evening schools, as well as electronic learning for students who may have complications from home or hospital.

We have an ambitious set of plans for the future which are constantly in the process of being developed and realised. These include an expansion of opportunities for off-site learning, immersing students into a working business environment to foster self-reliance, ambition, and practical skills. In preparation for employment, we are looking to provide our students with supported work experience in retail, catering, creative industries and enterprise.

Vision Statement

We believe that every young person has the opportunity to succeed by being motivated and inspired, rather than contained. Our school aims to develop young people into unique, responsible, receptive, discerning human beings with a sense of their own value. Our school is structured to nurture the social development of all the young people we work with, most of whom experience significant disadvantages which compromise their ability to learn. We facilitate young people's learning, removing the barriers to their learning through a holistic, multi-agency approach and developing their ability to maintain good relationships with each other and with the members of staff, caring for and promoting the school and their community.

Our vision for Stone Soup Academy is to offer a broad and balanced curriculum within a family environment using a pedagogic approach rooted in learning by doing, inspiring and motivating, where learning naturally involves exploration, curiosity, failing and learning from mistakes, and a host of associated affective responses. Our curriculum allows young people to develop their vocational skills, and be given the opportunity to work in real businesses, learning not just the skills associated with their vocational choices, but the long term life skills that are required for the workplace. It is our intention that all young people attending our free school will leave with the skills and motivation to become fully independent, contributing members of society.

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Ethos

The school is underpinned by 7 key principles:

High expectations – Young people excluded from school generally have low expectations for themselves, and this has been reinforced by negative experiences at school. Our ethos is to inspire and raise these expectations, and channel this into high achievement

Respect – Good behaviour and high achievement starts with mutual respect. Our learners should be treated like young adults, and staff expect the same respect. Respect leads to trusting relationships which in turn improve pupil behaviour and achievement.

Individual Learning – No two young people are the same. Challenging behaviour often manifests itself when an assignment is pitched at the wrong level. High levels of differentiation in teaching allow each young person to progress at a pace that is suitable for them. Teaching is inspirational and enjoyable.

A different approach – Traditional school has not worked for many of these young people, so we approach their education differently. An integral part of learning is failure, learning how to recover, and evaluating what went wrong and how to do it differently. We believe in learning by doing, and supporting the students in developing skills in how to learn for themselves. Projects need to be real, and skills set into contexts showing why it is important that these skills are learnt.

Flattened Hierarchy – The school is small so that all staff know all students. The school will have the feeling of a family, and this will be bolstered by high parental and community involvement.

Preparation for Independent Living – Our school will be preparation for life. Financial education, work skills and work experience will be core aspects of teaching. Progression to further learning and into employment will be a key principle of the school.

Personal Development – Our school aims to not only improve educational attainment, but to develop young people's life skills and to have an understanding of the world in which they live. Challenging a young person's misconceptions of their immediate society is as important as basic skills achievement.

These key principles can be measured through the following outcomes:

- Improved sense of direction and self, including changes in self-esteem, confidence, motivation, and health awareness
- School attendance
- Reductions in disruptive and/or violent behaviours and exclusions, suspensions, or referrals
- Academic attainment and increase in numbers of learners receiving awards for their performance
- Positive progression routes and reductions in those not in Employment, Education or Training.
- Improvement in developing and sustaining relationships (with family, project staff, peers) including changes in the ability to communicate, cope with authority, and work with others

Provision for Key Stages 3, 4 and 5

We currently work with students predominantly in Key Stage 4, moving into Key Stage 5, and so intend to continue to work with these age profiles. However, we regularly receive requests to accept young people in Years 8 and 9 – Key Stage 3 – and are confident that our provision and approach is also highly relevant to them.

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Principal – Job Description

Job Title: Principal

Responsible to: The Board of Governors of the school

Salary: £65,000—£75,000— with potential for enhancement for exceptional candidate

Job Start: September 2018

Closing Date: 12 noon — Monday 5th March 2018

Shortlisting: 7th March 2018

Interviews: 12th & 13th March

Stone Soup Alternative Provision (AP) Free School is a unique, innovative and exciting mixed 11-19 alternative provision school, taking referrals from local authorities and schools. We were very proud to be judged as an outstanding AP school in our first OFSTED inspection in May 2014.

Main purpose of this post

The core purpose of this role is to provide professional leadership and management of the school which will build upon the secure foundations already created from which to achieve the planned growth of student numbers at SSA Free School and outstanding performance in all areas of the school's work.

To achieve success, the Principal will:

- Be a leader of the highest quality, with proven outstanding success in a related area.
- Have clear, evidenced and accountable success in managing and promoting vocational working across a broad range of learning
- Be skilled in partnership working which is a key element of our vision
- Provide outstanding leadership and direction
- Be dedicated to providing high quality, accredited alternative learning provision
- Integrate SSA's work with other parts of the Stone Soup social enterprise
- Effectively lead and manage teaching and learning to secure the highest possible levels of progress and attainment across KS3/4/5
- Promote excellence, equality and high expectations of all students
- Effectively and efficiently deploy resources to achieve our school's aims
- Evaluate school performance and identify priorities for continuous improvement
- Secure the commitment of the wider community, and encourage the involvement of parents and carers
- Create a stimulating, nurturing, happy, safe and productive learning environment that is engaging and fulfilling for all students

Key responsibility and accountability areas

- Learning and teaching
- Strategic leadership and management
- Leadership and management of pupils' attainment and progress
- Leadership and management of staff
- Leadership and management of the curriculum
- Financial leadership and management
- Management of resources and premises
- Leadership and management of the Free School within its community

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Strategic Development – Shaping the future

The Principal will:

- Develop and communicate a clear strategic vision of how to develop on the outstanding foundations already created
- Motivate and empower others to carry this vision forward
- Model the values and vision of SSA Free School
- Be responsible for the management, development and resourcing policies of SSA Free School
- Recruit students and staff, ensure the statutory requirements, the decisions of the Governing Body and the needs of the students, their parents and the community are met
- Manage a complex organisation effectively and ensure the successful implementation of radical change
- Work in harmony with the Governors, local schools, other Academies and other partners as appropriate, both in Nottingham City, Nottingham County and other neighbouring authorities as applicable

Teaching and Learning

The Principal will:

- Deliver an innovative vocationally based curriculum in line with the SSA Free School vision, based on excellence for 11-19 personalised learning, where all students reach their full potential
- Meet (and aim to exceed) statutory requirements; thus ensuring that the curriculum delivered matches the needs of all students and is supported by teaching of the highest quality
- Drive forward SSA's 'Foundation Learning Model', continuously pushing the boundaries for student achievement at Levels 1-3
- Promote and 'actively demonstrate to all, the 7 key principles of SSA's vision – high expectations, respect, individual learning, a different approach, flattened hierarchy, preparation for independent living and personal development
- Drive up 'threshold achievement' and maintain a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on students' achievement, using data and benchmarks to monitor progress in every student's learning to achieve outstanding progress as measured by internal monitoring and external Ofsted judgements
- Ensure the 6 key SSA learning outcomes are met – improved student sense of direction and motivation, improved attendance, reductions in disruptive behaviours, increased academic attainment, positive progression routes and NEET reductions and finally, improvements in developing and sustaining relationships
- Further develop SSA's 'learning by doing' approach, to create a culture and ethos of challenge and support where all students achieve success and become engaged in their learning
- Ensure students feel valued, happy, safe, and supported; and have all barriers to their learning and progress addressed/removed
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- Demonstrate and articulate high expectations and set stretching targets for the whole school community
- Involve students in the decision-making processes in the SSA Free School by developing policies and practices that treat students as partners in the learning process
- Manage pastoral care, student welfare and anti-bullying procedures effectively – building on SSA's successes in 'Reinforcing and Rewarding the Positive'
- Maintain effective assessment, building on SSA's current successful practices (ILP's, Running Records, Internal assessment processes and verifications and student tracking systems) for capturing student's progress

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Leading and managing staff

The Principal will:

- Advise the Governing Body on the recruitment and selection of teaching and support staff
- Develop and embed an organisational structure (incorporating SSA's 'flattened hierarchy') that reflects the school's values and ethos, and enables management processes to work effectively in line with legal requirements
- Develop, implement and monitor clear, evidenced-based improvement plans and policies for the development of the school and its facilities
- Ensure that (within an autonomous culture) policies and practices take account of national and local circumstances, policies and initiatives
- Recruit, retain and deploy staff appropriately and assist in managing their workload to achieve the school's vision and goals
- Lead and motivate others and generate effective working relationships at all levels
- Maximise the contribution of all staff to improve the quality of education provided and standards achieved
- Manage the effective deployment and performance of all staff and ensure their professional development through effective systems for the management of staff performance
- Consider staff performance when recommending pay awards (**which will not be automatic**) to the Governing Body
- Provide effective induction, continuing professional development and performance management in line with SSA Free School's strategic plans

Financial and resource management

The Principal, assisted by the Finance Manager, will:

- Plan and manage SSA Free School's finances and resources to ensure maximum benefit for students
- Be responsible for the SSA Free School's buildings, equipment and grounds
- Provide advice to SSA Governing Body on the formulation of the annual and projected yearly budgets in order that SSA secures its objectives
- Make a contribution to the specification of any new buildings so that they will best support the objectives set out in the educational vision for SSA Free School
- Plan, manage and monitor the curriculum within the agreed budget, setting appropriate priorities for expenditure, allocating funds and ensuring effective administration and control
- Manage and organise accommodation efficiently and effectively to ensure that it meets the needs of the curriculum and health and safety requirements
- Ensure that the allocation and use of accommodation provides a positive learning environment that promotes the highest achievement for all
- Monitor and evaluate overall provision for value for money

Partnerships and community links

The Principal will:

- Ensure learning experiences for all students are integrated with the wider community, and that where possible they are community-based

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- Continue to build on successful partnership working with Nottingham City and County Councils, Derbyshire County Council, South Nottinghamshire College, other Nottingham schools, industry and business partners and local creative professionals – **using all the SSA network to act as a 'Quality Assurance' mechanism**
- Seek opportunities to invite parents and carers, community figures, businesses and other organisations into the school to enrich the school and its value to the wider community
- Secure strong links with other key partners who are supporting SSA Free School's development
- Collaborate with Nottingham City Council (other LAs as relevant) and other agencies to promote the academic, spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural well-being of pupils and their families
- Represent the SSA Free School on the Nottingham City Headteachers group and be an integral part of the strategic development of the Nottingham City partnership
- Create a culture where parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in their child(ren)'s education, by promoting positive strategies which encourage parents and carers to support the school and their children's learning
- Work collaboratively with other schools in order to share expertise and bring positive benefits to our school and other schools
- Promote a world view by developing links with partner schools in different continents

Responsible to:

- The Principal will be responsible to the Free School Proposers, the Trust and the Governing Body
- The Principal will act as the Accounting Officer for the Academy as defined in the ESFA's Academies Financial Handbook.



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Person Specification

The Person

In choosing our Principal, the Governors will be looking for the following minimum requirements:

- A leader of the highest quality, with proven outstanding success in a related area (be it social enterprise, education or other relevant setting)
- A person with clear, evidenced and accountable success in managing and promoting vocational working across a broad range of learning
- A highly skilled and successful practitioner in partnership working, which is a key element of our vision
- A person who is committed to outstanding leadership and direction, who will strive to maintain SSA as an outstanding school using Ofsted criteria
- A practitioner dedicated to providing high quality, accredited alternative learning provision

The successful candidate will be strongly committed to building a community with a strong belief that young people's lives can be transformed for the better. We are looking for an inspirational leader, committed to the highest achievements for all. The successful candidate will take up the post as soon as possible (and by September 2018 at the latest)

Assessment of criteria

The panel will use the following assessment tools:

- Application Form and Letter (A)
- Interview and assessment activities (this may involve an 'away day activity') (I)
- References, CRBs and employment checks (R)

Criteria & Competence	Desirable qualities	How measured
Knowledge & experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior management experience within 11-19 age range school/academy or related setting• Have clear, evidenced and accountable success in managing and promoting vocational working across a broad range of learning• Be skilled in multi-agency partnership working which is a key element of our vision• Experience of successfully managing negative and challenging behaviour and helping young people to grow in confidence with a positive vision for the future	A/I/R

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Knowledge & Experience cont'd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of inspiring and motivating staff to see beyond the challenges of the present to the possibilities of the future • Experience of human and financial resources management at a senior level aligned with the skills to identify and develop top quality staff • Experience of successfully establishing links with the local community • In-depth knowledge and understanding of national education priorities/developments to include the 11-19 curriculum, raising attainment, assessment for learning, Every Child Matters 	A/I/R
Education & qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree or equivalent • Evidence of recent and relevant CPD appropriate to this post 	A
Strategic Direction and Shaping the Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to think strategically, and to build and communicate a coherent vision for an outstanding school • Ability to inspire, challenge, motivate and empower others to carry the vision forward 	A/I/R
Leadership & management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track record of providing inspirational and strong leadership to staff in an organisation evidenced as being outstanding • Track record of developing, empowering and supporting individuals and teams • Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours and attitudes to the use of authority and maintaining discipline • Ability to understand, analyse and make effective use of data • Evidence of good interpersonal and communication skills (including written, oral and presentation skills) • Ability to successfully lead and manage change 	A/I/R
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to recognise and take account of the diversity and strengths of the school community • To be able to evidence a track record in building and maintaining effective relationships and communication with parents, carers, partners, and the community that enhance pupil education • Ability to work collaboratively with local and regional partners/schools/businesses 	A/I

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Finance & resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven track record of managing aspect of a school/ college or other relevant facility effectively on a day-to-day basis 	<p>A/I</p>
Personal attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to develop and maintain good relationships with staff, parents, students, governors and the community • Ability to deal sensitively with people and achieve positive outcomes • Adaptable to changing circumstances and new ideas • Approachable, reliable, has presence and is highly visible to students, parents/carers and the wider community 	<p>A/I/R</p>



Stone Soup Academy



If you would like further information, or to arrange a school visit, please contact Kate Wright at Academicis on:

Switchboard: 01223 907979

DDI: 01223 907973 M: 07901 585959 E: kwright@academicis.co.uk

All applications are to be sent to
Kate Wright no later than
12 noon on Monday 5th March January 2018.

We reserve the right to research applicants on social media platforms and the internet, and the Board of Governors may take this information into consideration during the recruitment process.

Stone Soup Academy is committed to Equal Opportunities and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be subject to satisfactory employment checks, references and an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.