



BISHOPSWOOD
SCHOOL

Part of The *Propeller* Academy Trust



Candidate pack

Assistant Headteacher

Full time, Permanent



bishopswoodschool.co.uk



Sonning Common
South Oxfordshire, RG4 9RH



01189 724311

About Bishopswood School

Bishopswood is a community special school in South Oxfordshire that provides specialist education for children aged 4 – 16 years with severe (SLD) or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and complex needs, including those children with ASD. We are a school that prides itself in providing innovative learning techniques to meet the wide-ranging needs of our pupils.

With an inclusive ethos Bishopswood endeavours to provide specialist provision alongside its co-located mainstream partners on two sites; our main primary department which is co-located with Sonning Common primary school and Bishopswood's secondary provision at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge School, Sonning Common.

As a small but strong community of people we are committed to providing outstanding teaching and learning for our pupils which is achieved by working in close partnership with our families, professionals, governors and the wider community to deliver a tailored and inclusive education for every pupil.

“

I wanted to find out how my skills could be used within a different setting and learn new ways of teaching. I knew that Bishopswood had a child-centred approach and took the care and safety of the children extremely seriously - all things that were important to me.

”

Admin assistant (EHCP)

A message from the Headteacher

I am incredibly proud to lead a team of dedicated professionals who are deeply committed to improving the lives of children and young people with additional needs. Together, we create a nurturing and inclusive environment where every pupil is supported to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

We are seeking an Assistant Headteacher to join the senior leadership team, with a strong focus on teaching and learning. Working closely with the Headteacher and senior leaders, the Assistant Headteacher will play a key role in supporting high-quality classroom practice, coaching and mentoring staff, and promoting innovative and inclusive approaches to teaching across the school.

The successful candidate will contribute to the development and delivery of the school's vision and improvement priorities, particularly through strengthening pedagogy and curriculum implementation for pupils with complex SEND. This will include supporting teachers to adapt practice effectively, using assessment and evidence to inform teaching, and helping to embed consistent, high-quality approaches across classrooms. As part of the senior leadership team, the Assistant Headteacher will contribute to a positive and collaborative staff culture, support aspects of professional development and performance management, and work in partnership with leaders, parents, and governors to ensure clear communication and shared purpose. The role will also include responsibility as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, working closely with the DSL to safeguard pupils, liaise with external agencies, and promote equality, inclusion, and positive relationships within the school community.

Thank you for your interest in the role of Assistant Headteacher. I wish you every success in your application.



BISHOPSWOOD
SCHOOL

Priya Bhagrath, Headteacher at Bishopswood School



About The Propeller Academy Trust

At The Propeller Academy Trust, we are dedicated to supporting young people with special educational needs, fostering an environment where every student progresses along their own unique path. Our passion for inclusion and innovation drives us to create exceptional opportunities for students to thrive, achieve their full potential, and embrace their individuality.

When you join our team, you'll become part of a supportive and collaborative community, united by a shared mission to make a real difference every day. Whether you're an experienced professional or starting your journey in education, we offer a nurturing workplace where your talents, skills, and ambitions can flourish.

Our staff benefit from extensive Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes, secondment opportunities across our Trust sites, and a vast range of discounts available to those working in education. We also prioritise staff wellbeing, offering initiatives such as wellbeing days, because we believe that supporting our staff is as important as supporting our students.

Our Schools



Our Vision and Principles

VISION

We believe our gifted and dedicated staff offer extraordinary learning and developmental experiences for the children and young people in our schools. We want to offer these opportunities to more children and young people.



Vision

**To extend high quality
SEN education to as
many children and
young people as we can.**

PRINCIPLES

- Keep children and young people at the heart of every decision.
- Provide an innovative and developmental academic curriculum, which ultimately gives children and young people a strong foundation for long-term community cohesion and positive mental health and well-being.
- Maintain the distinctive identities of each school in our Trust and seek recognition nationally and locally for the quality and diversity of our provision.
- Share the benefits of best practice, collaboration and new initiatives equally across all our schools.
- Support local communities and broader SEN needs within the community.
- Nurture a culture of health and safety and improvement which welcomes learning, challenge and assurance.
- Provide opportunities for staff to develop and progress, within a supportive and positive environment.
- Work collaboratively and inclusively with internal and external stakeholders; including staff, parents, carers and our partners.
- Protect and use all our resources efficiently in pursuit of our Vision.
- Keep our governance structures streamlined to enable our teachers to focus on teaching.
- Accord everyone associated with the trust, respect and dignity they deserve.

Benefits

At Propeller, we recognise the importance of supporting our staff as much as our students. That's why we offer full-time employees a wellbeing day off each term, a rare benefit in education.

We also offer a generous recruitment bonus for staff who successfully refer applicants who are recruited. Our staff benefit from access to GP advice and self-referral services through an online health platform, ensuring support is always at your fingertips. There are also a whole host of discounts and offers we will ensure you're aware of, once you are working in education.

Professional growth is at the heart of what we do. We provide full inductions and ongoing development opportunities to help you excel in your role. For those looking to broaden their horizons, secondment opportunities across our trust sites support both personal and professional development.



A trust-wide commitment to wellbeing, including paid wellbeing days



Fully funded CPD, mentoring & coaching



Flexible working options



Free on-site parking



Teachers' Pension Scheme



Access to an employee assistance programme



Highly resourced classrooms, small class sizes and access to multidisciplinary teams



Employee referral scheme (earn up to £500 for successful referrals)



A strong safeguarding and therapeutic culture



Job Description - Assistant Headteacher

Reports to: Headteacher

Line management: Office team, site team

Job Purpose

The Assistant Headteacher will have distinct leadership responsibilities and hold up to a 40% teaching commitment complying with the Teachers' Standards and modelling best practice for others. They will contribute to shaping the school's aims, objectives and long-term strategy; lead and manage daily operations, staff and resources; work collaboratively with colleagues to strengthen teaching, learning and curriculum development.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

Leadership & Management

- Support development of the school's systems, organisation, and processes, so they are well considered, efficient and fit for purpose, upholding the principles of transparency and integrity
- Monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of the school policies and procedures
- Be responsible for the effective use and monitoring of budgets as directed by the Headteacher
- Actively support the governing board by liaising and reporting to Governors on specific areas
- Demonstrate optimistic personal behaviour, positive relationships and attitudes towards all pupils, staff, parents, governors, and local community members
- Lead by example - with integrity, creativity, resilience, and clarity - drawing on own scholarship, expertise, and skills and those around them
- Sustain wide, current knowledge and understanding of education and school systems, locally, nationally, and globally, and pursue continuous professional development
- Liaise with parents and key professionals as part of a multi-disciplinary team working to support pupil outcomes
- Undertake in the absence of the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher and to the extent required by the Governing Body, the professional duties of the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, including the deployment of staff to ensure their effective contribution to pupil learning

School Culture & Behaviour

- Create a culture where pupils experience a positive and enriching school life
- Uphold educational standards in order to prepare pupils from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life
- Ensure a culture of staff professionalism
- Encourage high standards of behaviour from pupils, built on rules and routines that are understood by staff and pupils and clearly demonstrated by all adults in school
- Use consistent and fair approaches to managing behaviour, in line with the school's behaviour policy

Teaching, Curriculum & Assessment

- Have ambitious expectations for all pupils with SEN and disabilities
- Establish and sustain high-quality teaching across subjects and phases, based on evidence
- Ensure the teaching of a broad, structured and coherent curriculum
- Establish curriculum leadership, including subject leaders with relevant expertise and access to professional networks and communities
- Use valid, reliable and proportionate approaches to assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum
- To hold a teaching responsibility as required (minimum 40%)

Governance, accountability & working in partnership

- Work with the governing board as appropriate
- Ensure the school effectively and efficiently operates within the required regulatory frameworks and meets all statutory duties
- Work successfully with other schools and organisations
- Maintain working relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues to improve educational outcomes for all pupils

Safeguarding

- Provide a safe, calm, and well-ordered environment for all pupils and staff, focused on safeguarding pupils and developing their exemplary behaviour in school and in the wider society
- Ensure the welfare and safeguarding of pupils across the whole school through rigorous application of the school child protection, behaviour management and pupil welfare policies
- Support safeguarding across the school as a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Contribute to the safety and welfare of our pupils, staff and parents and work collaboratively with other agencies to protect children and share information where appropriate

Other duties

- Promote equal opportunities throughout the school and ensure the application of the school equal opportunities policy
- Promote an ethos of inclusion and opportunity for all
- To be the link to SALT, Physio and OT
- Please note that the Propeller Academy Trust is based over a number of sites in and around the area and you may be required to work from different sites, as directed by the Headteacher or CEO.

The post holder may be required to perform duties other than those given in the job description. The duties and responsibilities attached to posts may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and would not themselves justify the re-valuation of a post.

The Headteacher, CEO and LGB retains the right to implement changes to this job description to reflect changes in the demands of the post and this will be done in consultation with the post holder.

“

I would highly recommend working at Bishopswood School. We truly operate as one big family, and the atmosphere is warm and welcoming. Every member of staff is supportive, and there are many opportunities for professional growth. Working with the school and the Propeller Academy Trust has been a wonderful and rewarding experience.

”

School Business Manager



Person specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications & Training		
Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)	✓	
Degree or equivalent professional qualification	✓	
Evidence of sustained professional development relevant to senior leadership in specialist SEND	✓	
Strong knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice (2015), with specific understanding of MLD, SLD and PMLD needs	✓	
Understanding of safeguarding legislation including KCSIE, with particular awareness of vulnerabilities for pupils with severe/profound needs	✓	
Training or knowledge relevant to sensory regulation, communication needs (e.g., AAC, PECS)	✓	
National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL) or equivalent		✓
National Award for SEN Coordination (NASENCO), or willingness to complete		✓
Training in positive behaviour support, trauma-informed practice or restrictive practice reduction (e.g., Team Teach)		✓
Training in intensive interaction, MOVE, sensory integration or other specialist approaches		✓
DSL or DDSL training		✓
Mental Health First Aid qualification		✓



Person specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Experience		
Leadership & management experience in a special school or specialist provision	✓	
Experience leading or contributing significantly to behaviour, attendance and pastoral systems	✓	
Successful teaching experience with pupils with MLD, SLD and/or PMLD, including those with complex medical, sensory and communication needs	✓	
Experience developing personalised curricula, learning pathways and alternative accreditation routes	✓	
Evidence of raising outcomes for pupils with complex needs through adaptive, individualised approaches	✓	
Experience writing and evaluating EHCP outcomes and leading annual reviews	✓	
Line management experience including coaching, performance management and staff development	✓	
Experience working with healthcare professionals (e.g., physiotherapists, occupational therapists, SALT, nursing teams)	✓	
Experience supporting vulnerable families, multi-agency collaboration, safeguarding meetings and Early Help processes	✓	
Experience leading whole-school provision in behaviour, safeguarding, personal development, curriculum or assessment		✓
Experience overseeing attendance monitoring, home visits, attendance improvement plans or working with local authority attendance teams		✓
Experience in moving and handling, medical needs coordination or development of risk assessments for complex pupils		✓
Experience implementing sensory-based provision, engagement models or pre-formal/semi-formal learning approaches		✓
Experience working with non-verbal pupils, using AAC or communication-rich pedagogy		✓

Person specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Skills and Knowledge		
Deep knowledge of MLD, SLD and PMLD pedagogy, including pre-formal, semi-formal and formal learning pathways	✓	
Understanding of engagement models, sensory profiles and multi-disciplinary approaches to learning	✓	
Ability to lead behaviour culture with empathy, consistency and high expectations, tailored to pupils with significant learning and communication needs	✓	
Strong understanding of attendance legislation and strategies to improve attendance for pupils with high health, mobility or anxiety-related barriers	✓	
Strong data analysis skills, including experience with behaviour, safeguarding and attendance data to inform strategic decisions	✓	
Ability to communicate effectively with pupils who have limited or non-verbal communication, and to support staff to use appropriate communication systems	✓	
Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including working sensitively with families experiencing complex circumstances	✓	
Confidence in leading risk assessments for behaviour, mobility, medical needs, intimate care and personal safety	✓	
Strong understanding of safeguarding for pupils with severe/profound needs, including managing significant vulnerabilities such as non-verbal status, personal care, and dependency on adults	✓	
Knowledge of a range of specialist frameworks e.g., Intensive Interaction, SCERTS, PECS, TEACCH, sensory integration approaches, MOVE programme		✓
Understanding of medical protocols (e.g., epilepsy management, gastrostomy feeding, respiratory plans)		✓
Knowledge of post-16 pathways, supported internships, life skills and independence curricula		✓
Ability to design and deliver staff CPD on behaviour, sensory needs, communication and personal development		✓

How to apply

To apply for this rewarding opportunity, please

[Apply now](#)

Early applications are strongly encouraged. To arrange a visit or to find out more, please contact the School Business Manager on recruitment@bishopswoodschool.co.uk or 01189 724311.

Closing date: 2nd of March 2026

Interview Date: 4th of March 2026



Getting here

By car

The B478 is the main road through the village connecting to the A4 at the Charvil roundabout. Other significant roads include the B4446 running north from the A4 to the village, and the A4155 which runs between Henley and Reading and is a major route to the area.

By train and bus

You can travel to Sonning by bus, with regular services from Reading, Wokingham, and Henley or by train to the nearest stations, Twyford and Reading. Twyford is on the Great Western Railway line, and Reading is the major station served by several rail lines, including the Elizabeth line. From Reading, there are frequent bus services directly into Sonning.



Scan the QR link to find
Bishopswood School on
Google maps



The Propeller Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All staff and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.

This role involves a high level of contact with children or vulnerable adults and is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All appointments are subject to an enhanced DBS check (including Barred List where applicable) and online searches for publicly available information.

We value diversity and welcome applications from all backgrounds, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, marital status or pregnancy/maternity.

Please note: Applicants will be required to undergo a DBS check as part of the recruitment process.