



# Candidate Pack

Principal

Fir Vale School

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# Welcome

## Thank you very much for your interest in becoming Principal of Fir Vale School.

Fir Vale School is a large 11 to 16 school located to the northeast of Sheffield. It serves a vibrant and diverse community, with almost 1,000 pupils on roll. The school strives to provide every pupil with the opportunity to achieve the best possible outcomes and prepare them well for their future lives. The staffing body are fully committed to their pupils and have an in depth understanding of the communities they serve and want the best for them.

Leaders at the school have worked hard over recent years to improve the climate in the school and to develop a community that work in harmony with one another towards their core goal of improving outcomes and developing happy and healthy young people. The recent focus areas have included strategies to improve attendance and ensuring the learning environment is calm and focused to support all children to learn well. These areas continue to be core priorities, alongside consolidating a whole school approach to teaching and learning and professional development.

With the planned retirement of the current Headteacher at the end of this academic year, we are looking for a new leader with the skills and experience to drive school improvement with energy and rigour. They will need to have the vision to lead the school into a new chapter, building on the foundations already in place and challenging what is possible for the young people entrusted to us.

This is a particularly exciting time for the school as we will soon be joining United Learning, the largest Multi Academy Trust in the country. The school has been supported by the Trust since July 2024,

and is set to join formally before the end of the academic year. We believe this move will provide the incoming Principal with the support and infrastructure to accelerate school improvement. The Trust will provide support to the incoming Principal both personally and professionally, benefitting from the strength of a national group supporting your development and that of your staff and school.

For the right person, this is a career defining opportunity to make a real difference in a school that serves a diverse community of young people. You will need to work with staff, the student body and the community to further embed a school culture that is already inclusive, compassionate and inspiring, underpinned by a robust pastoral system, where every child is celebrated and nurtured.

This position will suit an energetic, committed, and collaborative leader with a passion for building and maintaining outstanding learning. We are committed to fairness, diversity and inclusion. Whoever you are, if you have a strong track record of improving young people's education and a drive to do more, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,

Tina Ball and Usma Saeed  
Co-Chairs of Governors

# The School

**Fir Vale School is a large, non-selective, mixed secondary school for pupils aged 11-16. The school is located in North East Sheffield with a catchment that includes the areas of Fir Vale, Page Hall, Grimsthorpe and Burngreave.**

At Fir Vale School, we offer the full national curriculum with opportunities for our pupils to engage in a broad range of additional activities in sports, music, the creative arts and hair and beauty. It is our aim to develop rounded individuals who are not only academically successful, but who also have opportunities to develop other key skills; such as leadership, teamwork and communication, which will give them the edge when it comes to future challenges. The school has a comprehensive careers offer and pupils receive useful career advice.

We have a large school site, with a wide range of facilities to deliver the full curriculum and access to an onsite leisure centre with a sports hall and 3G pitch. The school has good community links and offers a wide range of activities to its own pupils as well as for local primary school pupils, to give them a flavour of life in a busy secondary school. Transition is an important part of the school's approach, particularly for those in the community with English as an additional language.

The school has adopted a consistent trauma-informed approach which is used in conjunction with high standards, high expectations and clarity of the school rules. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere at Fir Val School, with good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupil voice is strong and proud of the school values of Togetherness, Kindness,

Respect, Achievement, Determination and Opportunity. There are good relationships with the community and with local primary and secondary schools. We are looking for a leader who can build on this foundation. Whilst leaders have worked hard to address the issues identified in more recent Ofsted inspections, there remains much to do to make Fir Vale School the beacon of education the community deserves. The new Principal will need to work with the senior leadership team and governors to further build the school's inclusive culture, ensure all children attend well and behave well, and that the school's curriculum effectively supports learning and enables teachers to deliver excellent lessons every day.

We are looking for a leader that is committed to the long-term success of the school and is determined to improve the lives of the children and young people in our community.

We fully recommend that you take the opportunity to make an informal visit prior to making your application, to see the school for yourself. If you would like to arrange a visit or require any further information please contact Neil Massie at our recruitment partner Academicis either by email [nmassie@academicis.co.uk](mailto:nmassie@academicis.co.uk) or phone **07818 875514**.



It is our aim to develop rounded individuals who are not only academically successful, but who also have the opportunities to develop other key skills



# Support from United Learning

In July 2024, United Learning began to provide educational support to the school. Our governors had been looking at the long term future of the school, and how to ensure the most effective support for pupils. We are pleased that the school will be joining United Learning before the end of the academic year (subject to the timeframes set by final legal negotiations).

In the interim, United Learning will support the Principal with the expertise of a Regional Director, as well as a highly effective team of subject advisers and central support for Finance, HR, Estates and other functions. The school already benefits from access to the United Learning knowledge-rich mastery curriculum which includes a package

of common assessments, enabling school leaders to gain a deeper understanding of their pupils by comparing their performance against the thousands of pupils.

Once the school has joined United Learning, Fir Vale School will form part of the Trust's Yorkshire cluster, along with Sheffield Park Academy, Sheffield Springs Academy and Barnsley Academy. The schools in the cluster benefit from close collaboration including joint CPD and professional development opportunities for staff, as well as support from an Executive Business Manager and a back office support team who provide a high-quality service to each school.



# About United Learning

**United Learning is a Group of schools which aims to provide excellent education to children and young people across the country. We seek to improve the life chances of all the children and young people we serve and make it our mission to bring out ‘the best in everyone’ – pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community. We uniquely comprise schools in both the state and the independent sectors.**

As a Group, we can offer more to both staff and young people than any single school could offer alone. The growing range of outstanding group-wide activities that we can provide will mean that more young people will have truly exceptional and inspiring experiences.

We believe that our Group contains the most developed relationships and practical interaction between independent and state schools in the country, creating benefits for all the schools involved.

United Learning comprises both United Church Schools Trust, which operates our fee-paying independent schools, and United Learning Trust, which operates our state-funded academies.

To find out more about United Learning, please visit the website [www.unitedlearning.org.uk](http://www.unitedlearning.org.uk)

As part of United Learning, Fir Vale School will share the objective of bringing out ‘the best in everyone’, enabling each student to become a balanced, happy and articulate person with intellectual freedom, confidence, compassion, integrity and a lifelong love of learning.



# Job Description

The Principal will lead and inspire excellence throughout the School. They will work with all staff to ensure success for all pupils at every stage of their education and provide them with the skills and confidence in their future life and work.

The Principal, together with the Governing Body will be responsible for establishing and implementing the vision and direction for all staff and pupils throughout the school. In leading the school, the Principal will ensure that the school's ethos and values are deeply embedded and visible, to all stakeholders.

Broadly, the responsibilities of the role are as detailed below:

## Educational Leadership and Management

- Ensuring excellent academic outcomes in both key stages;
- Developing outstanding teaching and learning for all pupils;
- Embedding an aspirational and innovative culture of learning;
- Implementing a rigorous system of monitoring to evaluate the work of the school;
- Securing and maintaining high standards across the whole school;
- Embedding a fulfilling and enriching curriculum for all children;
- Setting and achieving aspirational targets for all pupils that ensure rapid progress to become an outstanding school;
- Ensuring the welfare and safety of all pupils from all groups, including their safeguarding;
- Maintaining and developing a calm and focussed school environment, with excellent staff- pupil relationships.

## Strategic Leadership and Management

- Leading the school in partnership with the Governing Body;
- Defining and delivering the vision and objectives of the school and the School Strategic Plan as agreed with the Governing Body;
- Working collaboratively with United Learning, ensuring compliance and cooperation across the whole school;
- Developing and maintaining the values of the school;
- Developing an OFSTED strategy and securing excellent OFSTED outcomes.

# Job Description

## People Leadership and Management

- Leading on all staffing issues, including the appointment and development of staff;
- Ensuring a culture of working together to achieve high standards throughout the school;
- Promoting staff well-being;
- Managing performance and ensuring that staff receive appropriate support in order to achieve excellence;
- Leading reflective practice and inspirational professional development that enables all members of staff to flourish;
- Promoting equality and fairness for all staff;
- Taking responsibility for one's own professional development as the Principal.

## Financial and Business Management

- Working closely with the Business Manager and the Governing Body to ensure budgets are set and managed within guidelines agreed;
- Monitoring actual spending against budget;
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of funding to support the progress and achievement of priority groups including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those eligible for pupil premium funding;
- Ensuring that efficient administrative systems are implemented and managed;
- Managing, maintaining and utilising the site and facilities to their full value to the school and the community;
- Ensuring that health and safety and safeguarding policies are managed and implemented.

## Links with Community and Business

- Developing strong and effective partnerships with parents;
- Developing a thriving sense of school community to include present and past pupils and parents;
- Creating proactive, entrepreneurial and effective links with the wider community;
- Developing strong and effective partnerships with local primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities.

## Reporting

The Principal of Fir Vale School will report to the Co-Chairs of Governors. On joining United Learning, this will move to the Regional Director. The Regional Director reports to the National Director of Secondary Education of United Learning, who is responsible to the overarching Charity Board through the Chief Executive.

The Governing Body, and its Co-Chairs in particular, will continue to work closely with the Principal in relation to its responsibilities to act as a 'critical friend' to the school. This relationship with the Co-Chairs and the Governors will be key to driving the school forward and further developing local partnerships.

# Person Specification

## Education and Training

- Educational and professional qualifications appropriate for the role of Principal of the school. Such qualifications would normally include a degree from a recognised university, professional qualifications (for example PGCE) and ideally a further post graduate qualification;
- Evidence of professional development across career to date.

## Experience

- Demonstrable success in a leadership role in a comparable organisation and through significant periods of development at Deputy level or above;
- A proven track record of securing excellence in an educational establishment;
- A proven track record in rapidly raising pupils' achievements;
- Evidence of the ability to develop excellent relationships with staff, members of the local community, parents and pupils;
- Experience in leading and developing colleagues and effective teams;
- Experience of working effectively in a multi-racial context and with high levels of deprivation.

## Knowledge, Skills and Qualities

- An in-depth understanding of school leadership and school improvement needed to achieve outstanding pupil progress and personal development;
- The ability to create and implement effective management systems in which roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly articulated;
- An understanding of the importance of research in developing approaches to learning and curriculum design and the ability to put this into practice;
- An understanding of expectations of each phases of education, from Key Stage 3 through to Post-16;
- A thorough understanding of school markets, the analysis required to develop those and the skills to implement successful marketing strategies.

## Personal Qualities

- A clear understanding of and commitment to the development of the Fir Vale School's values,
- Belief in equality of opportunities for all pupils and staff regardless of culture, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religious identity;
- Clarity of vision with the ability to communicate it in a compelling and engaging way;
- An adaptable leadership style which encourages leadership from others and celebrates success;
- Determination and resilience;
- Sensitivity and wisdom in managing relationships with pupils, parents and staff;
- High level interpersonal and communication skills with the capacity to influence at all levels;
- High expectations of pupil achievement, conduct and behaviour;
- A commitment to collaborative working, both within the school and across the local community;
- Openness, sense of humour, energy and enthusiasm;
- Strong personal drive to engage with and develop the best in all children in the school.

# Terms & Conditions of Employment

**Employer**

Fir Vale School

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**Position**

Principal

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**Reporting Line**

Co-Chairs of Governors / Regional Director

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**Location**

Fir Vale School, Owler Lane, Sheffield, S4 8GB

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**Start Date**

September 2025 / January 2026

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**Starting Salary**

The salary will be commensurate with the significance and importance of the post and the experience of the successful candidate. Highly competitive.

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**Holidays**

You are entitled to take holidays during the normal school holidays except where your presence is required for proper execution of your duties as Principal. We would expect you would not have less than six weeks of the year without any work involvement.

**Teachers' Pension Scheme**

The Principal is eligible to be a member of the TPS.

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**Health Insurance**

The Principal is eligible for health insurance.

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**Relocation**

Relocation assistance may be given as a contribution to expenses incurred (up to £8000) if relocation is necessary. This assistance is discretionary.

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**Safeguarding**

Everyone at Fir Vale School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS (previously CRB) check is required for all successful applicants.

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# How to Apply

If you wish to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or would like to have an informal discussion please contact Neil Massie at our recruitment partner Academicis. Neil can be contacted by email on [nmassie@academicis.co.uk](mailto:nmassie@academicis.co.uk) or by phone on 07818 875514.

Visits to the school are warmly encouraged, please contact Neil at Academicis for further information.

All applications should be submitted via our recruitment partner Academicis. Further details can be found via [www.academicis.co.uk/apply/](http://www.academicis.co.uk/apply/)

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is 9am on Tuesday 6th May.

## The Selection Process

We will treat all enquiries, formal and informal, in confidence.

The selection process will be as follows:

All applications will be acknowledged by email. Shortlisting is scheduled to take place during the week commencing 6th May.

The selection process will take place on **Wednesday 14th** and **Tuesday 20th May** at Fir Vale School. You do need to be available for both dates.

Candidates will be offered full feedback on their application and/or interview.



