



JOHN F KENNEDY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

INSPIRE • ACHIEVE • SERVE



Teaching Assistant for Visually Impaired (fixed term)

Information for applicants



Diocese of Westminster

Headteacher Mr Paul Neves BSc (Hons), MA, PGCE, NPQH
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Job Title: Teaching Assistant for Visually Impaired
Responsible to: SENDCo
Grade: H3 (SCP 5-6, £13,729 - £13,952)
Hours: 25 hours per week, term time only
Date: ASAP

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in this exciting post at John F Kennedy Catholic School (JFK).

The Governors and I are seeking to appoint an enthusiastic and hardworking individual with excellent personal skills to join our busy support team, providing in class support to a visually impaired student to enable them to achieve their full potential at school. This contract is fixed term as the post is linked to a named student. The contract will end on an agreed expiry date, or earlier should the named student leave the school, or funding is removed.

This position offers an exciting opportunity to play a significant role in the growth of the whole child. You would be part of a team who work to ensure the happiness and safety of each individual, giving them every chance to thrive and succeed both academically and personally in their time with us.

John F Kennedy Catholic School

JFK is a mixed 11-18 comprehensive, part of All Saints Catholic Academy Trust, located in the suburban environment of Hemel Hempstead. It is a voluntary academy with approximately 1100 students on roll. The school enjoys an excellent reputation and is always over-subscribed; for the 2024-25 intake of 180 places there were 530 applicants, with 206 putting JFK as first choice. The intake has, in recent years, been almost entirely Catholic - currently 83% of students. JFK serves the Catholic communities of Hemel Hempstead and a very wide surrounding area, including parts of Hertfordshire, Luton and Bedfordshire; in addition to seven main feeder primary schools, it regularly takes children from over twenty other schools. Unsurprisingly, its students come from a diverse socio-economic background, ranging from a very affluent commuter town to an area with high social deprivation. Overall, however, the school deprivation factor is just below the national average. Currently 15% of students are eligible for Free School Meals. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased over the past ten years and is now above the national average. The prior attainment of students is significantly higher than the national average. Additionally the profile of current cohorts is generally skewed towards the 'middle' and 'high' prior attainment categories. The local parish church, St Mark's, is on the school site and the Parish Priest of the Hemel West Parish supports the liturgical life of the school.

JFK's most recent inspections were: Section 8 in March 2017 and Section 48 in February 2024. The headline outcomes for these inspections were all judgements of 'good'. In terms of results our most recent Progress 8 scores were: 0.09 in 2017, 0.25 in 2018, 0.05 in 2019, 0.01 in 2022, 0.15 in 2023 and 0.15 in 2024.

At A level, our results have been stable in recent years, and have been broadly average compared with national figures. Our most recent L3VA scores were -0.05 in 2017, -0.17 in 2018, -0.07 in 2019, -0.69 in 2023 and -0.27 in 2024.

Visitors to the school frequently comment on the ethos and atmosphere they sense as they come to the school for the first time. This friendliness and sense of community is part of something wider; it is rooted in the fact that we are a Catholic school. As such, everything that we do is based on our Mission Statement, summarised by words: Inspire • Achieve • Serve. We are an inclusive school that values the uniqueness of each member of our community. In this way we uphold the Gospel values and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Outside the formal curriculum there have always been numerous opportunities for students to take part in a very wide range of activities. These include drama, sport, music, retreats, trips at home and abroad and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. All the opportunities offered for students' personal development are summarised by the 'JFK Journey' that is displayed throughout the school.

JFK, now and in the future: ASCAT

JFK was opened in 1967, so it is over 50 years old. There is a great tradition here of several generations from families attending the school. Many teachers and support staff over the years were students at the school and currently one of the students in the first intake is working on the support staff. I believe there are many features that make JFK a great school but I also recognise there are areas needing development. We must never be complacent and we must embrace new ideas that will benefit the educational opportunities of the students in our care. We made a bold decision seven years ago to become a 'Google school', introducing Chromebooks for use in and out of school. This has been phased in, one year at a time, and is complete in the main school - all students in Years 7 to 11 have their own device. Google Classroom has been embraced by staff as well as students and is now an integral part of school life.

JFK joined All Saints Catholic Academy Trust (ASCAT) on 1st June 2023. The trust currently comprises 11 schools and JFK is one of only two secondary school members. Within the trust, JFK sits in a regional hub, with other Dacorum Catholic schools: 'St Mark's Hub'. Joining ASCAT has opened up many opportunities for cross-school and cross-phase developments, making this a very exciting time for JFK's future development.

Next steps

I hope that having read this letter and the information about the school that you will choose to apply to. To do so, you are asked to complete the application form in full but instead of a supporting statement please write a letter of application which relates your experience to the job description and person specification. In your letter you should also outline your personal educational philosophy, your vision and the contribution that you can make to John F Kennedy Catholic School, in particular when working with a student with a visual impairment.

Please post your application or submit it to Ms Eva Final by email to: efinal@jfk.herts.sch.uk

I am always happy to welcome visitors to the school and I would strongly encourage you to come and visit us to see the school for yourself. If you would like more information about the school please visit our website www.jfk.herts.sch.uk where you will find our online prospectus and other information. If you would like to know more about the post itself or to arrange a visit, please do not hesitate to contact my PA, Ms Eva Final (email: efinal@jfk.herts.sch.uk), who will be very happy to help you.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Paul Neves
Headteacher



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Main Responsibilities

Supporting a student or group of students

- To adapt lesson materials to enable a student with a visual impairment to be able to access them successfully
- To assist a student or group of students to access all areas of the curriculum as effectively as possible
- To act as a skilled supporter to enable effective learning by following the scaffolding framework and encouraging independent learning
- To provide support and challenge to enable learning within group and individual learning situations
- To establish a positive working relationship with students
- To encourage inclusion and acceptance of all students and their individual needs
- To provide praise and promote the development of a student's self esteem
- To facilitate and actively encourage independent communication with other students
- To encourage the development of independence and self-reliance
- To act as a 'mentor' for named students, as appropriate and agreed
- To work as a key worker for identified students

Supporting the Teacher

- To build a positive working relationship with the teacher and play a complementary role
- To work closely with the teacher providing feedback and advice to help the students to learn as effectively as possible
- To work together with teaching staff and/or other professionals to contribute to a system for recording progress (discussion)
- To contribute to the maintenance of the students' progress records in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice (verbally)

Supporting the School

- To liaise with and consult with teaching staff and other professionals supporting the students
- To attend relevant in-service training
- To be aware of school policies
- To cover colleagues as required
- To accompany teaching staff and students on visits, trips and out of school activities as required and take responsibility for a group under the supervision of the teacher
- To carry out any other task as requested by the line manager or Headteacher
- To perform the role of invigilator during exam periods as required

Person Specification

Personal Characteristics

- Excellent interpersonal skills with adults and students
- Desire to make a difference in the life of the students in our school community
- Flexible, highly organised and able to multi-task and prioritise work to meet deadlines
- Helpful, approachable with positive nature
- Able to stay calm and diplomatic under pressure
- Able to take ownership of tasks and work with minimal supervision
- Have exacting standards and a keen eye for detail
- Willing to learn and develop own skills
- Able to exercise sound judgement, especially relating to confidentiality and discretion

Professional Standards

- To support the aims of the school
- To be a role model in terms of professional dress and appearance, punctuality and attendance
- To use the performance appraisal process for support staff to take responsibility for own personal and professional development
- To share the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- To be aware of and comply with all relevant policies and procedures within the school
- To participate in training and other learning activities commensurate with the post
- To attend and participate in meetings as required

Specific Skills

- Excellent administrative and organisational skills
- Excellent written and oral skills
- Willing and able to learn and operate new IT systems and databases as appropriate, in particular for visual impairments
- Able to prioritise and meet deadlines

Other

- Commitment to equality of opportunity and the safeguarding and welfare of all students
- This post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check
- Previous experience of working with a student with a visual impairment desirable