Assistant Headteacher (Teaching & Learning) with DSL and SENCO Responsibilities

Reference	LATAHT2627v2
Location	The Damara School, The Maltings, Raymond Street, Thetford, IP24 2EA
Salary	LATL £51,773.00 - £53,069.00
Working hours per week	Full-time = 37.5 hours per week (8.10 -16.20 M-Th; 8.10 - 16.25 F) which includes an unpaid 30-minute break per day)
Working weeks per year	Full-time = 52 weeks per year
Contract type	Full time, permanent
Start date	January 2027 or sooner
The employer	The Lotus Academy Trust
The school	The Damara School
Contact	office@lotustrust.org.uk / 01842 773673 (for an application pack, informal chat, to book a visit)

An Opportunity for aspiring Senior Leaders

Are you a middle leader ready to take the next step in your career?

This is an excellent opportunity for an ambitious middle leader to develop into a senior leadership role within our small, supportive SEMH setting. You'll gain hands-on experience across all aspects of school leadership while maintaining a small teaching commitment and receiving structured mentoring and professional development.

Job Description
Main Purpose of the Role:

- Progress into senior leadership through a structured development pathway with mentoring and CPD support
- Uphold and model the trust's values and ethos at all times
- Lead and develop high-quality teaching and learning across the school including assessment, curriculum development, intervention, and pupil progress
- Serve as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with full training and support provided
- Fulfil the role of Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) with full training and support provided
- Maintain a regular classroom teaching timetable (proportion to be confirmed)
- Line-manage middle leaders and support continuing professional development (CPD) for all staff
- Work collaboratively with the CEO, deputy headteacher, trustees, and external agencies to raise standards across the school
- Share operational leadership of the school with structured support to develop your strategic leadership skills

Key Responsibilities:
Teaching and Learning Leadership:

- Develop and lead high-quality teaching and learning across the school
- Ensure effective implementation of the curriculum and assessment procedures

- Fulfill a regular teaching commitment (proportion to be confirmed)
- Monitor and analyse pupil data, ensuring effective interventions for progress

Safeguarding and SEN:

- Lead safeguarding, child protection, and multi-agency working as part of the DSL role with comprehensive training and ongoing support
- Undertake the role of SENCO with access to National SENCO Award training if required

Staff Development and Leadership:

- Line-manage and support middle leaders, providing coaching and performance management
- Share leadership of staff training, CPD, and restorative behaviour approaches
- Develop your own leadership skills through structured mentoring from the CEO and deputy headteacher

Strategic Leadership:

- Contribute to whole-school strategic planning and policy development
- Represent the school in meetings with external agencies and stakeholders
- Gain experience in all aspects of senior leadership to prepare for headship

Person Specification
Qualifications and training
Essential:

- Qualified teacher status (QTS)
- Middle leadership experience (e.g., subject leader, phase leader, pastoral lead, or similar)
- Evidence of relevant professional development
- Willingness to undertake DSL training (we will provide this)
- Willingness to undertake National SENCO Award if not already held (we will provide this)

Desirable:

- Existing DSL qualification
- National SENCO Award or equivalent
- NPQML (National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership) or working towards NPQSL/NPQH

Experience
Essential:

- Proven success in a middle leadership role (e.g., leading a subject, phase, or pastoral area)
- Demonstrable impact on teaching and learning in your area of responsibility
- Experience of working with children with special and additional needs
- Experience in leading CPD, staff training, or supporting colleagues
- Understanding of safeguarding principles and procedures

Desirable:

- Experience in SEMH or similar specialist settings
- Experience in restorative behaviour approaches and multi-agency working
- Experience in strategic planning and policy development
- Experience of performance management or line management

Skills and knowledge
Essential:

- Exceptional classroom practitioner with a record of improving outcomes

- Strong understanding of assessment and using data to inform practice
- Ability to coach and develop staff
- Effective communication and interpersonal skills
- Ambition and readiness to step up into senior leadership
- Capacity to work collaboratively with colleagues, trustees, and external professionals

Desirable:

- Knowledge of statutory guidance for SEN and safeguarding (full training provided)
- Data analysis and intervention planning skills
- Understanding of whole-school strategic planning

Personal qualities

Essential:

- Ambitious and motivated to develop into a senior leader
- Positive educational role model
- High expectations for all pupils and staff
- Commitment to inclusive education and safeguarding
- Resilient, proactive, and solution-focused
- Strong organisational and time-management skills
- Ability to work under pressure and prioritise effectively
- Commitment to upholding trust values and promoting diversity
- Willingness to learn, reflect and develop professionally
- Open to feedback, coaching and mentoring

What We Offer to Support Your Development

- Structured mentoring from the CEO and deputy headteacher
- Comprehensive induction programme covering all aspects of senior leadership
- Funded training including DSL, National SENCO Award (if required), and leadership qualifications
- Access to NPQ programmes (NPQSL or NPQH)
- Opportunities to shadow and learn from experienced senior leaders
- Regular coaching and professional development tailored to your career goals
- A supportive, collaborative leadership team committed to your success
- Manageable school size (32 pupils) allowing you to develop strategic leadership skills in a supportive environment
- Clear pathway to headship within our trust or beyond