



Outdoor Learning Practitioner (Specialist Teaching Assistant)

Cedars Academy Low Fell · Job description and person specification · 2026/27

About the role

We are looking for a passionate and creative Outdoor Learning Practitioner to lead and develop outdoor learning in our woodland. You will help children and young people with complex SEND experience the outdoors in ways that are meaningful, motivating and right for them.

You will work with pupils from early years to Key Stage 4, planning sensory-rich sessions that build communication, emotional regulation, confidence and independence. The role suits someone with experience of working with children or young people, who combines strong outdoor skills with empathy, imagination and curiosity about how children with complex needs learn.

Cedars is a warm school community where staff shape their own development and contribute to our shared improvement. No one is ever the finished article, and that is how we like it.

If you hold a Level 3 qualification and want to develop, we can support you to complete the Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant apprenticeship while you work with us, with time to study and a mentor to support you.

Post details

Job title	Specialist Teaching Assistant: Outdoor Learning
Location	Cedars Academy Low Fell, Ivy Lane, Gateshead NE9 6QD
Contract	Permanent
Hours	Full time, term time only (37 hours per week, 195 days)
Reporting to	Curriculum Lead and Deputy Headteacher / Headteacher
Start date	November 2026, or as soon as possible
Closing date	Friday 6 November 2026, 12 noon
Interview	Wednesday 18 November 2026

Salary and benefits

Grade F, SCP 14–19 (£26,492 – £28,752 per annum, term time only, at rates from 1 April 2026) for candidates with a Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant qualification, HLTA status or equivalent experience. All posts also receive the Special School Allowance of £1,590 per annum (pro rata to term time only).

We will also consider appointing the right candidate with a Level 3 TA qualification at Grade E, SCP 8–11 (£24,056 – £25,238 per annum), with our support to complete the Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant apprenticeship or HLTA accreditation.

- Local Government Pension Scheme
- Induction, training and mentoring from experienced colleagues
- Cycle to Work scheme and Salary Extras discounts
- An extra paid Wellbeing Day each year
- Free eye test through our Specsavers scheme
- Access to the gym at High Heworth

Job description

Purpose of the role

Working under the direction of, and within an agreed system of supervision from, a qualified teacher or member of the extended leadership team, you will lead outdoor learning for pupils with complex SEND, model Cedars' values, and promote inclusion, positive behaviour and safeguarding in every setting.

Leading outdoor learning

- Lead and develop a safe, inclusive and inspiring outdoor learning programme across the school
- Plan and deliver engaging, progressive sessions in our woodland classroom, adapting them for a wide range of physical, sensory, cognitive and emotional needs
- Write, review and implement risk assessments for sites, tools, fires and activities
- Maintain equipment, manage the fire circle safely and model sustainable woodland practice
- Work with the extended leadership team, teachers and therapists to develop a responsive curriculum that reflects pupils' developmental, communication and sensory needs
- Champion outdoor learning across the curriculum and with families and local partners

Supporting pupils

- Promote the best possible outcomes for pupils one to one, in small groups and in whole classes
- Record and share progress against EHCP outcomes and Personal Learning Plans, with good quality photographs, annotations and evidence in Evidence for Learning
- Use Total Communication approaches and assistive technology, with training provided

- Apply positive, relationship-centred approaches that create a calm, nurturing climate
- Work with teachers, teaching assistants, therapists, families and external professionals
- Mentor and support teaching assistants, modelling good practice outdoors

Contributing to the wider Academy

- Uphold Academy policies on safeguarding, health and safety, data protection and equality
- Support extracurricular clubs and cross-curricular outdoor learning
- Take part in professional development and school improvement
- Undertake other reasonable duties appropriate to the role and grade

Person specification

Qualifications

Essential	Desirable	How assessed
• A recognised qualification in outdoor activities, with knowledge of flora and fauna • Outdoor First Aid certificate. The Academy will fund this if you do not hold one • Level 3 Teaching Assistant qualification or equivalent experience, and willingness to complete the Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant apprenticeship if not already held • Willingness to work towards Level 3 Forest School Leadership, if not already held • Good literacy and numeracy for the role	• Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant qualification or HLTA status • Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Leadership • Level 2 English and maths (GCSE 4/C or Functional Skills)	• Application form • Interview • Certificates

Experience

Essential	Desirable	How assessed
• Practical experience of leading outdoor learning with children or young people	• Experience with children or young people with SEND or complex needs • Experience of Forest School practice • Experience of mentoring or supporting colleagues	• Application form • Interview • Outdoor task • References

Skills and knowledge

Essential	Desirable	How assessed
- Creates an inclusive, safe and inspiring outdoor environment in all weathers - Confident assessing risk and keeping high standards of safeguarding, health and safety and environmental care - Organised, able to manage resources, risk assessments and records - Communicates well with pupils, colleagues, families and professionals - Confident with ICT for assessment and communication (for example Evidence for Learning, Reach More Parents) - Willing to learn about child development, relational practice and supporting regulation	Experience of Total Communication and assistive technology	- Application form - Interview - Outdoor task - References

Personal qualities

Essential	Desirable	How assessed
- Empathetic and relationship-centred, curious about how children with complex needs learn - Reflective and resilient, calm and creative when plans change - Works collaboratively and contributes to a supportive learning culture - Reliable and conscientious, with high standards - Shares our commitment to inclusive education	Enthusiasm for clubs and wider school life	- Application form - Interview - References

Other requirements

Essential	Desirable	How assessed
• Able to work on uneven terrain and outdoors for long periods in all weathers, and to handle equipment (reasonable adjustments considered) • Satisfactory pre-employment checks (see Keeping children safe)		• Interview • Enhanced DBS • Right to work • Health questionnaire • References

Keeping children safe

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and we expect all staff to share that commitment. Any offer is subject to an enhanced DBS check, right-to-work checks, satisfactory references and a health questionnaire. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, we will carry out online searches on shortlisted candidates.

Cedars is an equal opportunities and Disability Confident employer. We welcome applications from everyone and will make reasonable adjustments throughout the process.

How to apply

Please apply online through the vacancy listing on our recruitment page, where you can complete your application and upload any supporting documents. Applications must be in by the closing date shown above. We reserve the right to close the vacancy early if we receive a high volume of applications, so please apply early.

We would love you to see our school before you apply. To arrange a visit or a chat about the role, please email Joanne Carr, Deputy Headteacher (joanne.carr@cedarstrust.org.uk) or Gareth Kyle, Academy Business Leader (gareth.kyle@cedarstrust.org.uk) to arrange.