COMPASS
NEW DIRECTIONS
IN LEARNING

Teaching Assistant

Information for Applicants

Compass Learning Centre
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Tel: 01305 – 206530

Email: office@compass.dorset.sch.uk

www.compass.dorset.sch.uk

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the post of Teaching Assistant at Compass Learning Centre.

Compass Learning Centre is looking to appoint an enthusiastic and energetic Teaching Assistant to join our team supporting students across Key Stage 3 and 4. Starting as soon as possible, this post is intially fixed term until 31 August 2027, but could become permanent. Hours of work are available between 32 and 35 hours per week over 5 days, term time including INSET days.

The salary range for this post is Dorset Council Grades 5 - 6 dependent on experience, and we can offer a progression route through to Senior Teaching Assistant at Grade 7 for the right candidate.

This post would suit someone who enjoys working with young people, either in a professional or volunteer role, and who would like to make a difference to lives of young people with complex needs and challenging behaviour. Whether you are looking to gain experience during a gap year before going onto higher education, or an opportunity to build on existing skills or experience, this could be the perfect job for you.

This position is challenging but rewarding and will require you to work both alongside teachers and other education professionals as well as independently under teachers' direction, supporting the work of groups of children and individuals. Duties are varied, depending on the age and additional needs of the students concerned.

The successful candidate will:

- Have achieved a minimum of 5 GCSEs (or equivalent) at grade 4 / C or above, including English and Mathematics
- Ideally have experience working with young people with complex needs and challenging behaviours
- Promote the inclusion of all students
- Contribute to the safeguarding and protection of all students

The young people we educate have struggled to maintain a place in mainstream school and come to us with a variety of additional needs. Our challenge is to help them build the confidence, knowledge and skills to unlock their potential. This role will suit someone who is caring, understanding and can demonstrate energy and enthusiasm with a strong positive behaviour management ethos. Class sizes are small and all of our students need bespoke individualised learning.

If you are a good team player, who is motivated, patient, resilient, understanding and have the ability to establish a rapport with young people in a busy and lively setting, this may be the job for you. You will be joining an outstanding, hardworking and friendly team of staff.

If you are interested in this post or would like more information, please contact – Michelle Nokes, Heads PA – 01305 – 206530, email: m.nokes@compass.dorset.gov.uk. Come for a visit and see what we do!

The closing date for receipt of applications is **midnight on Sunday 15 November 2026.**

If you would like an informal telephone conversation or to visit the school please contact Michelle Nokes, Heads PA on 01305 206530 email: m.nokes@compass.dorset.sch.uk

Alison Glazier,
Headteacher,
Compass Learning Centre

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Information About Compass Learning Centre:

Compass Learning Centre is a 'good school' (Ofsted October 2024) and a successful Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), part of the Alternative Provision (AP) in education. It is fully supported by a committed Management Committee who work closely with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team. The Pupil Admission Number (PAN) is currently 67. The number of students on roll varies throughout the year dependent on the number of referrals from schools within the Weymouth and Portland area and from Dorset Council.

Students who attend Compass Learning Centre predominantly experience difficulties engaging in a mainstream school and come to us with a variety of additional needs. The centre caters for students who have been permanently excluded from a mainstream school, individuals with medical conditions that prevent attendance at mainstream schools and a few students without access to regular education. A number of students are admitted with an Education Health Care Plan, a few are in the care of the local authority and others attend for a fixed period of time on a Dual Registration basis. We serve the wider West Dorset community, however the majority of students who attend Compass come from the Weymouth and Portland area.

Some students follow short-term, work-related social development or resilience building courses at Rylands Farm, Dorset Trade Skills, Max Events, and Weymouth Sailing Academy. All students are offered full-time programmes. However, the time spent in school is tailored to meet individual students' needs.

Safeguarding:

Compass Learning Centre is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people; this is a commitment which we expect all staff and volunteers to share. The successful candidate will be required to have a Disclosure & Barring Service check in line with the Government's safer recruitment guidelines. We value the diversity of our workforce and welcome applications from all sectors of the community.

Please ensure that your application is completed in full, listing all qualifications from secondary school up to the most recent qualifications gained and a full employment history is stated from school until present day.

Compass Learning Centre will conduct a number of online searches of shortlisted candidates. Part of which will be a safeguarding check, and the search will purely be based on whether an individual is suitable to work with children. As care must be taken to avoid unconscious bias and any risk of discrimination a person who will not be on the appointment panel will conduct the search and will only share information if and when findings are relevant and of concern.

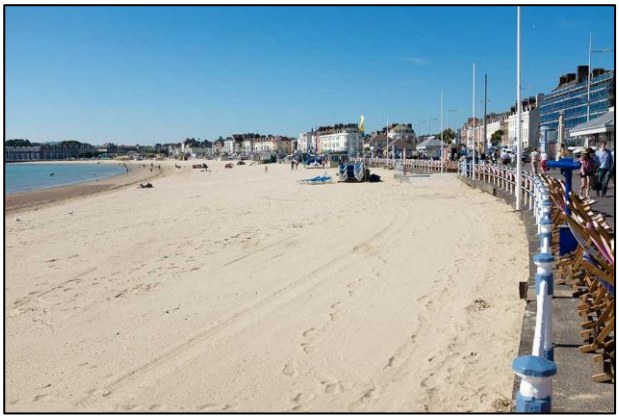
About the Local Area:

Compass Learning Centre is situated in the coastal town of Weymouth in the heart of the Jurassic Coast. The town has long been a popular holiday destination – holidaymakers have been flocking to this corner of Dorset since King George III was a regular visitor more than 200 years ago. Weymouth's central position also makes it a great base from which to visit the Jurassic Coast, with much of the coastline in both directions easily accessible.

There is plenty to keep everyone in family busy. Nearby Portland Harbour is home to the Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy, which was host to the sailing events of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, with water borne activities plentiful. The town has a football, rugby and cricket club, together with sports and leisure centres and a choice of golf clubs in the surrounding areas. There are plenty of opportunities to explore the great outdoors whether it's walking, hiking, cycling or just a gentle stroll along the Georgian Esplanade which forms the backdrop to Weymouth Beach.

There are plenty of restuarants, bars and entertainment venues within the town including the Weymouth Pavillions theatre. The town hosts many events throughout the year including the popular 'Seafest - Dorset Sea Food Festival'. If you want to travel a little further afield, the rolling hills of Exmoor and the market towns of Bridport, Axminster and Honiton are to the west, with Swanage, Bournemouth and Poole to the East.





What We Can Offer You:

Compass Learning Centre is a very special place to work and our staff have very special qualities. They are kind, caring and genuinely want our students to achieve their very best.

As a small school, our staff work very closely together and we set great store on positive professional relationships. Our staffing levels vary between 28 and 35 full and part-time members of both teaching and support staff dependent on our student numbers. Class numbers are small with each class having a dedicated Teaching Assistant.

We are committed to your professional development and there are opportunities to work in partnership with colleagues locally across the Weymouth and Portland area and with other Learning Centres in Dorset. To assist with the understanding of our students we offer specialist behaviour and classroom management CPD within a supportive environment with experienced professionals to guide practice.

In addition, Compass Learning Centre is serious about the wellbeing of its staff and operates in a culture of mutual respect, trust and compassion that recognises the importance of a work-life balance.

By joining Compass Learning Centre, you become part of a school which recognises the uniqueness of each and every learner and ensures they have access to opportunities that will offer a high quality, flexible alternative provision route, which leads to achievement and accreditation that enables them to successfully take their next steps in life.







Equality and Diversity:

Compass Learning Centre recognises that by valuing and promoting equal opportunities in employment for all employees and job applicants and avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and delivery of services, we will be able to deliver first class education.

We aim to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit. We also value diversity and recognise the varied contributions that a diverse workforce brings to an organisation; we are committed to drawing on different perspectives and experiences of individuals, which will add value to what we do.

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TEACHING ASSISTANT
JOB DESCRIPTION

Contracted Hours: **Full Time 1.0 (Term Time only)** **Job Reference:** **XS10.4**

This appointment is subject to the current conditions of employment contained in the A, P, T & C pay and Conditions Document, the Education Act of 1997, the required standards for teaching assistants.

Main Job Purpose

Responsible for working across a varied range of responsibilities.

The postholder will play an important role in supervising the activities of students during the teaching period and midday sessional break within the school, including both indoor and outdoors areas, ensuring a safe environment is maintained at all times.

To assist the Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team / SENCO to promote students' academic, social and emotional development, through the development and implementation of programmes of student work and support (individual and group) and in the provision of a stable, caring and supportive learning environment; to enable students to achieve their full learning potential and facilitate their personal, academic, social and moral development.

There may be a Special Needs input to support students in activities. Support is both on a one to one basis and in groups, to students with disability, learning difficulties or behavioural problems. This may include students with a high learning ability ('gifted/talented').

Main responsibilities and duties

To support the teaching and learning processes.

To assist the Senior Leadership Team / SENCO / SENCO Assistant (Principal TA) in developing, implementing and managing individual / group student learning strategies aimed at the

- management of student behaviour
- establishing and maintaining of relationships with individual students and groups in support of students in learning activities
- continuous review and development of the postholder's professional practice
- inclusivity of students with identified SEN needs

Under the guidance of direction of the Teacher / Senior Leadership Team / SENCO / SENCO Assistant:

- Develop, maintain and apply knowledge and understanding of students' general and specific learning needs. To ensure that support is given to them at an appropriate level.
- Teaching support is delivered individually and in groups through a range of tasks, mainly:
- Supporting and directing literacy and numeracy tasks, clarifying and explaining instructions
- Focus support in areas needing improvement both academic and social.

- To support the use of ICT in the classroom and work with and support students to ensure they are able to use ICT and other specialist equipment to enhance their learning.
- Motivate and encourage students to concentrate on and fulfil the tasks set.
- Undertake learning activities with students of varying abilities to ensure differentiation and access to the curriculum.
- Seek to ensure the promotion and reinforcement of students' self-esteem, appropriate levels of effort and behaviour and to guide students to become independent learners.
- Contribute to the assessment of students' learning, in particular with regard to Literacy, Numeracy, Science and ICT skills.
- Contribute to the implementation of the National and/or Foundation Curriculum and specific individual pupil targets and / or group targets.
- To promote students' academic, social and emotional development and assist teaching staff in the development of learning strategies, with the provision of teaching and learning resources and in the preparation and maintenance of a safe, secure and suitable learning environment.
- Assist in the development, monitoring and evaluation of programmes of work.
- To upkeep data files, catalogue resources, maintain inventories, photocopy, record TV programmes and use I.T. systems for administration and educational purposes.
- Contribute to and assist in the development and monitoring of systems for review and recording of students' progress, both academic and social.
- Assist in the preparation, organisation and maintenance of classrooms and their equipment, including assistance with and creation of displays, make basic visual aids, art and craft materials, mount and display students' work.
- Assist teachers in timetabling of lessons and curriculum as required.
- Assist in the preparation for educational visits, and where appropriate accompany/supervise students undertaking off-site activities.
- Attend and contribute to school staff meetings and in-service training within contracted hours or outside normal hours by agreement.
- Contribute to the process of school self review.
- To liaise with parents and other professional agencies in support of student's needs.
- To provide care and supervision of students within the classroom, within the school and outside of the school.
- Supervise students using cloakrooms, showers and toilet facilities. Supervise students in playgrounds and when entering and leaving using school transport.
- Escort students to school or parental transport, home or to hospital as necessary and / or support in the integration / re-integration of the pupil.
- Develop an understanding of and provide for students' specific personal needs to ensure a safe learning environment. This may include providing some direct personal care, support and assistance to the pupil in respect of toileting, eating, mobility and dispensing medication.
- To assume sole supervision of groups of students. This may include whole classes for short periods in the absence of the teacher.

Additionally, under the overall direction of teaching staff the job may include some or all of the following duties, depending on the needs of students:

- Where a current First Aid qualification is held, in the absence of other medical facilities:
    - Maintain First Aid equipment and materials, and dispense medicines in accordance with school policy.
    - Undertake First Aid
- Under the direction of Health Service professionals, undertake activities in support of occupational, physio and speech therapy.
- Under the direction of teaching staff and, where appropriate, to assist in the development of Individual Education Plans for students with special educational needs and contribute to IEPs.
- To undertake a key worker role when required.
- To work with pupil groups, using a range of strategies to gain acceptance and inclusion of students with special educational needs.
- Monitor and support students / students / volunteers placed within the school on work experience programmes.
- To assist in the supervision of Standard Assessment Tasks and tests / assessments as directed.
- To assist in the preparation and maintaining the learning environment.
- To contribute to the assessment by the teacher of student performance in maintaining records of pupil performance and achievement, noting areas of weakness and need for development and drawing to the teacher's attention areas requiring further review.
- To observe and comment upon pupil performance, conduct, behaviour and interaction with peer group and parents.
- To contribute to the planning and evaluation by the teacher of individual (and group) student's learning activities.
- To undertake continuous professional development.
- Promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

Knowledge and Skills

Essential:

- Experience of working with children in an educational setting is essential.
- Qualities required are resilience, discretion, loyalty, commitment, patience, flexibility, good personal organisation, firmness, to be numerate and literate, a team worker and to have good oral communication. Background knowledge of the Foundation and National Curriculum and School's procedures and policies.
- Knowledge of students' individual targets and, where appropriate may require more specialised knowledge in specific curriculum areas.

- Significant empathy with students who have additional or special educational needs. Where appropriate, to be prepared to undertake special skills training e.g. signing, to meet additional educational and communication needs.
- A willingness to attend courses as required to enhance the knowledge, understanding and skills to improve the level and quality of support given to students and teachers.
- Sound interpersonal and supervisory skills, supported by recognised training are required to assist in managing the resources available.
- Knowledge of legislation and regulations applicable to the support and care of students.
- They must have achieved a qualification in English / literacy and mathematics / numeracy, and ideally be working towards Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework
- A qualification for the post would be working towards NVQ 3 / BTEC in Learning Support or equivalent occupational national standard for teaching assistants.

Supervision and management

- Typically there will supervision available from the classroom teacher on a daily basis and regularly within the day. Additional support may be provided by the Senior Leadership Team / SENCO / SENCO Assistant or Supervisory TA within the team. The postholder may be required to support the induction and further training of classroom TAs.

Problem solving and creativity

- On a daily basis, within prescribed school guidelines and under the direction of the teacher, develop a range of strategies to engage individuals and groups of students, often with differing requirements, in the experience of learning and in their personal, social, health and moral education. For example, a reward system appropriate to an individual student.
- Use a variety of interpersonal techniques to establish supportive relationships with students, parents and carers.
- There will be occasional interruptions. Deadlines will relate and be appropriate to the timetable being followed.
- Additionally, creativity and innovation are needed to meet the special education and care needs of individual students, such as those with significant physical disability and emotional difficulties, including regular exhibitions of challenging behaviour and aggression.
- A creative approach to supervisory duties, training and in supporting staff is required.

Key contacts and relationships

- Contact with all staff in school to pass and receive information, advice, guidance, suggestions and ideas.
- Contact with Health Service professionals to provide daily support for the students with known medical conditions.

- Contact with parents / carers and other agency staff to provide support for students, such as giving feedback on students progress. Such communications can be of a delicate nature depending on a students particular needs.
- There will be regular contact with the Senior Leadership Team / SENCO / SENCO Assistant (Principal TA) relating to on-site supervision of TAs, deployment and cover arrangements.

Decision making

- Within the agreed school policies, guidelines and rules, decide on when and how to apply a range of strategies for the benefit of students in relation to their education activities behaviour and care. These decisions often need to be made immediately to deal with the situation presented.
- Guidance is normally readily available from teaching staff and more complex or controversial decisions will be referred to a teacher.
- There will be often a need to make immediate decisions, without initial referral to teachers, in relation to immediate care, control and safety of students with special educational needs.
- Decisions are made on the day to day deployment of TA staff and resources, under the overall direction of teaching staff.

Resources

- Books, stationery, writing equipment
- ICT and AVA equipment

Working Environment

- The range of areas, number of classrooms / halls etc will depend on the particular school.
- Most of the working day is spent standing, with periods of crouching / bending to engage students in activities.
- Occasionally, substantial physical effort may be required in providing assistance to students with significant physical disability. There may be an occasional need to physically lift students such as for safety or care needs and occasional unpleasant conditions relating to students' personal hygiene needs.
- There are often physical risks associated with intervention in incidents of challenging behaviour, including aggression, which are encountered with students.
- A normal school environment, although the job holder may be involved in external school activities, such as swimming and educational visits.
- Equipment used will include photocopiers, computers, medical / sport / science / art / technology / home economics equipment and in the case of special schools additionally plus hoists, wheelchairs and minibuses.
- While the level of student needs will vary from time to time, the job holder will be predominantly working with students who are especially difficult to engage in activities, may present more frequent behavioural problems and where the attention span presents greater challenges and a need for high levels of patience to attain students' individual targets.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Method of Evidence for each criteria: **1) Application** **2) Presentation of original Documents** **3) Testing through assessment process** **4) Interview** **5) References**

Job Title**: Teaching Assistant:** Location**: The Compass Learning Centre** Grade**: 5 - 6** Job Reference: XS 10.4

Criteria	Essential	Desirable	Assessment/Evidenced From: Application, References, Documents (originals) Selection task, Interview
Qualifications	• 5 GCSE's grade C and above with English & Maths • Ability to establish a rapport with students to develop their social and academic potentials • This post has a travel requirement and you are contractually required to have a vehicle (or transport deemed to be suitable by the County Council) available for use as required	• Relevant qualifications • To have a keen interest in working with young people with challenging needs, sport and out of centre activities	• Application • References • Interview
Knowledge	1. Knowledge of core curriculum subjects	A clear understanding of behaviour-related issues	• Application form • Interview • References
Experience	2. Working with young people	Working with young people in an education setting Experience of working within a team Working with young people exhibiting challenging behaviours	• Application form • Interview • References
Other Factors	3. Willingness to work with young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties 4. Ability to use own initiative 5. Willingness to work offsite as required		
Personal Qualities and Attribute	6. Rises to a challenge 7. Calm under pressure and resilient 8. Creative and inspirational 9. Friendly, hardworking and highly motivated 10. Willing to learn and progress own professional development 11. A good team player, part of a supportive team 12. Able to prioritise and meet deadlines 13. Able to solve problems creatively		• Application form • Interview • References

	14. Demonstrate high professional standards with high levels of credibility and respect 15. Enthusiastic, dynamic , passionate & innovative		
Safeguarding Children	16. Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people 17. Commitment to preventing radicalisation and to promoting British values		• Application form • Interview • References