



RECRUITMENT PACK

Specialist Occupational Therapist

Abbey School
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Welcome from the Principal

Welcome and thank you for your interest in Abbey School.

Our Independent Special School provides a unique environment of high-quality, evidence-informed education, nurture and care to young people aged 4-19 with autism whom may have additional learning difficulties and behaviours that challenge. We offer a comprehensive programme of support which ensures that all of our pupils' individual needs are met through highly personalised learning.

We are privileged to benefit from a truly wonderful location. Our school is housed in stunning Grade II* listed buildings, part of historic Abbey Square in the heart of the beautiful city of Chester. Our fantastic team of architects have designed a well-equipped and high-tech learning environment for us, whilst maintaining the beauty of the buildings and surroundings for our pupils to enjoy. We make full use of our environment and location with a creatively designed curriculum that includes focused learning and enrichment activities that support wellbeing. This enables all of our young people to experience growth, development and success.

Our highly skilled and specialist staff team includes teachers, learning and behaviour specialists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists. This trans-disciplinary focus ensures that each pupil's individual needs are understood, accurately planned for and closely monitored as part of day-to-day school practice.

I am extremely proud to be the Principal of Abbey School, a place where pupil-centred practice is the norm and where the voice of the young people we support and their families is central to all that we do. It really is a very special place to work and learn.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Katy Lee



About our School

Abbey School is an Independent Special School for young people aged 4-19 years with autism whom may have additional learning difficulties and behaviours that challenge. We provide high-quality education and care in our beautiful Grade II* listed buildings in the heart of Chester. All young people attending Abbey School have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with school places commissioned and funded via local authorities. We work in close partnership with families and carers with support, information sharing and workshop opportunities available throughout the academic year.

Abbey School is aspirational for all of the young people that we support. This aspiration is captured in our vision, mission and values which are central to all that we do at Abbey School.

Vision

Our vision is that all children with exceptional needs receive a meaningful and fulfilling education that enables them to make their own choices about the direction of their adult lives.

Mission

Abbey School exists to provide the best education possible for young people with exceptional needs.

- Every pupil is a unique individual with potential
- Special educational needs and/or disability should not be a barrier to a valued lifestyle
- All children and young people without exception are entitled to access the best education and support available
- Best practices in education are evidence-based
- Teaching and learning decisions should be evidence-driven
- Clear goals make data-based decisions more numerous and effective
- Education is for everyone and for the whole of a person's life
- Learning is enabling, empowering and extends the boundaries of autonomy
- If a pupil is not learning, it is the teaching that needs to change – the learner is always right
- Pupil voice should be heard and respected

Values

Our whole school approach brings together everything that is known from special education research and best practice to maximise pupil learning and wellbeing. We are an innovative learning organisation. Our day-to-day working practices routinely inform research, evaluation and development. We have a bespoke curriculum, designed by us, specifically to meet the needs of our pupils.



Each pupil's journey through the curriculum is personalised. Approaches to teaching and learning are individualised, goal-based and precisely assessed. The curriculum is delivered by transdisciplinary teams who benefit from a high level and intensive internal training programme.

Our unique APPs support staff in planning and monitoring each pupil's learning journey on a moment-to-moment basis. We are centrally located in the heart of the city which provides many opportunities for community-based learning, live skills development and supported work placements as young people get older.

Every decision we make is framed in the context of the Abbey School BAGS model:

B – Belonging and connection – being part of a community and having a network of valued relationships.

A – Autonomy and control – having influence over day-to-day and life defining matters.

G – Gifts and talents – doing even better the things that are done really well, and learning to do things that are important but may not be done at all.

S – Speaking, listening and a sense of self – communicating effectively in a variety of ways not just speech, and having an identity that defines who I really want to be.



Job Description

Job Title	Specialist Occupational Therapist	Team	Abbey School
Starting Salary	salary from: Point 28 (£36,445) to Point 35 (£43,959) Dependant on number of years post qualification experience	Reporting to	Assistant Principal (Behaviour, Development and Welfare)
Working Hours	Full Time	Responsible for	Therapy assistants, students and/or volunteers

This role is not suitable for newly qualified Occupational Therapists. This role would be suitable for candidates with knowledge and experience in line with agenda for change Band 6, or Developing Band 6 post.

Role Purpose

- To provide occupational therapy support to children and young people aged 4-19 with complex autism, learning difficulties and behaviours that challenge, within a Special School setting.
- Work as part of a trans-disciplinary team ensuring each pupil's needs are understood, accurately planned for and closely monitored.
- Advise members of the teaching team in relation to pupils' development to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
- Provide both direct and indirect therapy for individuals and groups of pupils.

Main Responsibilities

Pupils

- Contribute to the planning and implementation of appropriate therapeutic sessions and interventions for all pupils on your caseload. This may include contributing to the planning of individual, paired, group or community-based learning.



- Assessing, planning and implementing appropriate occupational therapy interventions for pupils, individually or in small groups, with a wide range of fine, gross motor and sensory needs. Focused on supporting pupil's independence and daily living skills.
- Work in close liaison with teaching teams to ensure that occupational therapy support is embedded within each pupil's personalised curriculum.
- Support the development and maintenance of universal level occupational therapy support across the school.
- Assess and evaluate intervention outcomes regularly and report findings as required and in line with school policies.
- Work in close liaison with behaviour analysts and class teachers to ensure that occupational therapy needs are considered and promoted throughout the curriculum.
- Responsible for conducting and analysing occupational therapy assessments at a frequency required by the school's assessment framework and individual needs.
- Responsible for the planning and development of occupational therapy plans and interventions, monitoring the effectiveness of plans through development of robust data collection systems and analysis of the data.
- To assess pupil's need for and use of evidence-based occupational therapy resources/aids.
- Collaborate and contribute to the development of positive behaviour support plans, working closely with behaviour analysts, the class teacher and other relevant team members.
- Regularly review occupational therapy targets and interventions used to support pupils on your caseload for contextual fit, long term outcomes and to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum including events and educational visits.
- Contribute to annual review and EHCP reporting.
- Contribute to baseline assessments, end of term assessments and Abbey School's annual assessment cycle.
- Contribute to the development of detailed transition plans as part of a trans-disciplinary team using information identified in admissions assessments for pupils transitioning into and out of Abbey School.
- Be responsible for meeting the occupational therapy needs for individual pupils based on their EHCP provision and on internal referral and assessment.
- Demonstrate clinical effectiveness by use of evidence-based practice and appropriate outcome measures.
- Maintain up to date and accurate case notes in line with professional standards and school policies.
- To attend termly and annual review meetings where required.



- Contribute to the development of autonomy and voice of the young people on your caseload, supporting and ensuring appropriate means of assessing pupil's autonomy, voice and choices are used.
- Establish productive working relationships with children and young people, acting as a role model, and setting high expectations.
- To consistently model outstanding occupational therapy support in own practice, which includes direct work with pupils.

School-Wide

- To assess the needs for materials and equipment to enhance pupil's learning and to support teaching teams in the preparation and organisation of such materials.
- Act as a key advisor to the class teaching team, embedding an understanding of fine motor, gross motor and sensory needs and the evidence-informed practices that underpin this for the children and young people on your caseload.
- Provide advice and support for pupils in Abbey Green where required.
- Contribute to admissions assessments where required.
- To contribute to the development and delivery of a competency-based training programme for school staff.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of parent information and support sessions.
- Provide occupational therapy advice and support to class staff via regular class observations and coaching sessions with staff.
- Maintain objective and accurate records and reports on achievement, progress and other matters, collating appropriate evidence and entering data into the school systems accurately and in a timely manner.
- Maintain clinical notes and documentation in keeping with Health and Care Professionals Council (HPC) and Royal College of Occupational Therapy (RCOT) professional standards.
- Prepare for Person Centred Reviews, termly meetings and class team meetings where required and contribute to them to ensure that achievements are celebrated and key issues raised, discussed and actions agreed.
- Through ongoing monitoring and evaluation of pupil's progress identify where pupils are not making expected progress and take action to address this.
- Participate in whole-school staffing requirements such as break and lunchtime supervisions.

Partnership Working

- Support parents to contribute to their child's learning and progress by sharing information with them in meetings or through written communication, and by taking account of their views in planning and teaching as per school policies and procedures, this may include taking part in home visits.



- Communicate with pupils and families in a way that respects their views, autonomy and culture.
- Liaise effectively with other professionals, through partnership and team working through a trans-disciplinary approach to design and implement occupational therapy programmes for individuals that are functional and meaningful.
- Make referrals to other professionals where appropriate in discussion with the Principal.
- Contribute to liaison and collaborative working with external agencies such as CAMHS, social services or transport where required. Ensuring continuity and cohesion of provision.
- Represent the school at external meetings as requested by the Principal.
- Work collaboratively on your caseload to ensure that strategies are seamlessly supportive for learners. This may involve flexible working hours on occasion.
- Contribute to Abbey School's commitment to generating practice-based evidence via a programme of research collaborations.

Professional Standards and Professional Development

- Commitment to developing a clear knowledge of the Abbey School Model (ASM) and the evidence-based approaches that underpin it.
- Take a full and active part in professional development activities.
- Adhere to HCPC standards and RCOT regulations
- Keep up to date and integrate relevant new initiatives and clinical guidelines from NICE, RCOT and other relevant organisations, ensuring that practice is evidence based, informed and current, where appropriate.
- Actively engage in continuing professional development related to autism and other associated needs of the pupils or wider school practice.
- Be a reflective practitioner.
- Take an active part in in-house training and other development opportunities and apply what is learnt to improve teaching and learning.
- Participate in Abbey School's Appraisal process.
- Participate and engage with clinical supervision.
- Contribute to training and development for colleagues, including supporting members of the team to complete external and internal CPD, including accredited courses.
- Contribute to reviewing and improving the curriculum.
- To contribute to the development of school policies related to area of expertise.

Common Accountabilities and Dimensions within all Roles



- Demonstrate the vision and values of Abbey School in everyday practice, upholding the schools' ethos at all times.
- Actively contribute to the culture of Abbey School as a learning organisation.
- Be responsible for ensuring that your own practice is consistent with Abbey School policies and procedures.
- Be responsible for your own effective professional communication, orally and in writing, to the right people at the right time.
- Be responsible for ensuring that your own responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined and understood and for managing your work and working proactively with your manager to that end.
- Uphold Abbey School policies to protect and safeguard pupils and vulnerable adults in order to secure their health, safety and wellbeing.
- Support pupils with intimate care (such as toileting, nappy changing, dressing and feeding), provide support to pupils with medical conditions and the administration of medicine as required by the needs of the pupils.
- Ensure that any personal care offered to pupils maintains their dignity, promotes their independence and account of all relevant policies.
- Be responsible for ensuring that personal use of resources is efficient and effective and actively upholds Abbey School's policies.
- Be responsible for the health and safety of others using proactive and reactive approaches. This may include using positive handling techniques such as Team-Teach.
- Commitment to promoting equality and diversity through assuming personal responsibility for implementing the school's policy on Equal Opportunities and inclusion for all staff and pupils.
- Support the Principal and Senior Leadership Team in managing and organising the school efficiently and effectively to ensure it meets the needs of all site users, including pupils, staff, parents and visitors and supports effective teaching, learning and support.

General

- To undertake any reasonable task in line with requirements of the role under the direction of the Principal.
- This role involves regulated activity with children and adults and so an Enhanced DBS with Children and Adult Barred List Checks is required.



Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognised Occupational Therapy qualification • Registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) • Professional membership of the Royal College of Occupational Therapy (ROCT) • Postgraduate training in Sensory Integration or willing to undertake training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate training or CPD in the area of Autism • Post-graduate training in feeding programmes such as the SOS feeding programme • Postgraduate training in Sensory Integration (Level 2 or above)
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of undertaking specialist assessments of fine/ gross motor skills and sensory needs • Formulation and implementation of appropriate interventions/ strategies e.g. self care/ productivity/ leisure • Interest in the use of occupational therapy within special educational needs education and a commitment to evidence-based practice • Experience of working within a trans-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary team • Experience and confidence in liaising with a number of audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in working directly with young people who have motor and sensory difficulties related to their primary diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder and complex learning difficulties • Experience in developing and delivering sensory diet programmes • Training and experience working with children and young people with behaviours that challenge

	including parents and professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of evidence-based approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of delivering training and coaching to a range of audiences
Skills & Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication and interpersonal skills • Ability to communicate a vision and inspire others • Ability to build effective working relationships • Demonstrable experience of understanding and a personal commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people • Proven ability to translate evidence informed practices into practical programmes of support for fine motor, gross motor and sensory needs • Ability to actively use data to inform clinical decision making • Working knowledge of Microsoft Office applications (Word, Excel and PowerPoint) • Ability to write accurate but concise reports for a variety of audiences such as parents or commissioners • Able to deliver and present staff training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of emotional regulation programmes such as; The Alert Programme, Zones of Regulation and interoceptive curriculum • Trauma – informed practice • Knowledge of legislation and guidance governing schools • Familiarity with PBS values and approaches
Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds high aspirations for children and young people with complex needs and is passionate about providing learning opportunities for them which prepare them well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good appreciation of health and safety in the workplace, data protection principles and equal opportunities

	<p>for an adulthood which includes employment, independence, good health, choice and valued community roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to gaining a clear knowledge of the Abbey School Model and the evidence-based approaches that underpin it • Commitment to working in partnership with other professionals and parents • Ability to work under pressure and prioritise effectively • Commitment to maintaining confidentiality at all times • Resilient in challenging situations • Physically fit and active to meet the demands of the role • Absolute commitment to all aspects of safeguarding • Commitment to excellence • Reflective practitioner 	
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Benefits

- Competitive salary
- Aligned to Education annual leave entitlement.
- Multidisciplinary team working supporting job satisfaction.
- Tailored caseloads to promote meaningful engagement and effective delivery of objectives for therapists, fostering a supportive and balanced work environment.
- Full suite of staff benefits
- Company pension scheme
- Technology appropriate for your job
- Comprehensive staff training programme – supporting CDP
- Access to WeCare which is a 24/7 online GP, mental health support service, get fit programme and much more.
- Access to MediCash program for wellbeing benefits
- Refer-a-friend scheme bonus
- The opportunity to shape and improve the life chances of pupils with a disability, and in so doing, extend the prospect of an improved quality of life for family members and others.



How to Apply

If you feel like you have the right qualities to join our exciting, innovative and exceptional school then please complete the school application form with a covering letter addressed to the Assistant Principal, Mrs Keyburn. Please ensure that you provide details of your skills and experience necessary for this particular position in your letter or personal statement. Application forms and letters can be emailed to recruitment@abbeyschool.com or sent by post to Abbey School, 12 Abbey Square, Chester, CH1 2HU.

Deadline

Please complete an application form at your earliest convenience.

Interviews

Selection methods will be objective, promote equality of opportunity and guard against bias in line with the Equality and Diversity policy. The School will shortlist applicants based on the relevance and applicability of their professional attributes and personal qualities specified by the role. Essential and desirable qualities are published in the Person Specification for this role.

The School will complete an online search for all shortlisted candidates. If any incidents or issues have happened that are publicly available online, the school may wish to explore this at interview.

The interview will consist of a formal panel interview, and a 75-minute timed in-tray exercise. You will also have a tour of the School.

Start Date

September 2025

Safeguarding Statement

Abbey School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of all pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Child safer recruitment procedures operate and the post is subject to references and an Enhanced DBS disclosure with barred list checks.

The post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the School is therefore permitted to ask job applicants to declare all convictions and cautions (including those which are 'spent' unless 'protected' under the DBS filtering rules) in order to assess their suitability to work with children.

Equal Opportunities Statement

We are an equal opportunities employer and welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marriage/civil partnerships, religion/belief, or sexual orientation.



Working in Chester

Abbey School is situated in the beautiful surroundings of Abbey Square, located in the heart of historic Chester.

Chester has often been ranked as one of the best places to live in the UK with many good schools, thriving suburbs, a vibrant independent restaurant scene and new, award-winning cultural centre Storyhouse. It has good rail and motorway connections to major cities and the coast.

Chester is suitable for families and singles or couples with a good choice of city-centre accommodation and villages or suburbs within close commuting distance. To find an Estate Agent for sales or lettings in Chester visit [Best Estate Agent Guide](#) .For further information about living in Chester, please visit the [Tourist Information website](#) .

How to Find Us

We are located in [Abbey Square](#) next to Chester Cathedral, off Northgate Street.

By Public Transport

We promote sustainable travel and recommend that public transport is used where possible. Chester train station is a 5-10 minute walk away and is served by the following rail companies [Merseyrail](#), [Avanti West Coast](#), [Transport for Wales](#) and [Northern Rail](#). For Park and Ride information visit the [Cheshire West and Chester council](#) information page.

Parking

Visit the [tourist information site](#) for details of city centre car parks.

