



Job Title:	Art Therapist
Salary:	£32,000- £38,000
Location:	Manchester, UK
Hours of Work:	8:15am-4:00pm Monday - Friday – Term Time
Line Manager:	Head of Inclusion
How to apply:	Request an application pack from <a href="mailto:recruitment@fstmanagement.uk">recruitment@fstmanagement.uk</a>
Contact Details:	0330 118 0974

### **Role Purpose**

The Art Therapist will support the Head of Inclusion within First Steps Together to promote the emotional wellbeing, regulation, and engagement of pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Through specialist art therapy approaches, the role will enable children to communicate their experiences, process emotions, and develop the skills needed to access learning and build positive relationships.

Working within a highly supportive, trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming environment, the Art Therapist will deliver targeted and bespoke therapeutic interventions that meet the complex needs of pupils. The role will contribute to creating a safe, structured, and nurturing provision where children feel understood and supported to thrive.

In partnership with the Head of Inclusion, wider staff team, families, and external professionals, the Art Therapist will play a key role in identifying barriers to inclusion, supporting emotional regulation strategies, and embedding therapeutic approaches across the setting to enhance outcomes for all pupils.

### **Safeguarding**

Here at First Steps Together, we are committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and promoting that commitment. We expect all our staff and volunteers to share in it, too, which is why, as part of the selection process, we will conduct all the necessary checks to ensure you do not pose any risk of harm in your role here. Join us and you will be expected to actively contribute to our safeguarding commitment and promote child welfare in line with the school's Child Protection Policy.

If ever there is a concern or issue, you will be ready to report it to your Designated Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, any Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

### **Key Responsibilities**

#### **1. Therapeutic Practice & Pupil Support**

- Plan and deliver high-quality, child-centred art therapy interventions in line with pupils' Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and individual emotional and developmental needs.
- Create a safe, consistent, and nurturing therapeutic environment that supports pupils with SEMH and ASD to explore, express, and regulate their emotions.
- Use a range of art therapy techniques to support communication, emotional processing, and social development, particularly for pupils with communication differences or trauma-related needs.
- Adapt therapeutic approaches to meet individual sensory profiles, regulation needs, and

levels of engagement.

- Monitor and review pupil progress, maintaining clear therapeutic records and providing meaningful feedback to the Head of Inclusion, staff, and parents/carers where appropriate.

## **2. Leadership & Coordination**

- Work closely with the Head of Inclusion to support the strategic development of therapeutic provision within First Steps Together.
- Contribute to the planning and coordination of therapeutic interventions as part of a wider, integrated inclusion approach.
- Provide guidance and support to staff in embedding therapeutic and trauma-informed practice within daily provision.
- Model effective therapeutic strategies and approaches to support consistency across the team.

## **3. Quality Assurance**

- Ensure all therapeutic work is delivered in line with professional standards, ethical frameworks, and organisational expectations.
- Maintain high-quality documentation, including session notes, reports, and impact evidence.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and contribute to ongoing development of the provision.
- Support the identification of needs and contribute to planning appropriate interventions and support strategies.

## **4. Safeguarding & Welfare**

- Follow all safeguarding and child protection policies, reporting concerns promptly and accurately in line with procedures.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding practices, particularly in relation to vulnerable pupils with SEMH and ASD.
- Work collaboratively with families, carers, and external professionals (e.g. social workers, CAMHS, SEN teams) to support pupils' wellbeing.
- Promote a culture of safety, trust, and emotional wellbeing across the provision.

## **5. Administration & Compliance**

- Maintain accurate and confidential records of therapeutic interventions, progress, and outcomes.
- Contribute to EHCP reviews, multi-agency meetings, and internal planning discussions.
- Produce written reports and summaries to support monitoring, evaluation, and communication with stakeholders.
- Ensure compliance with relevant professional standards, data protection requirements, and organisational policies.

## **Person Specification**

### **Essential**

Recognised Art Therapy qualification (e.g. Level 6/7 master's degree in art therapy or equivalent).

- Registered or eligible for registration with a relevant professional body (e.g. BACP, HCPC, or equivalent).
- Level 2 or above in English and Maths.
- Evidence of recent CPD in SEND, safeguarding, trauma-informed practice, or emotional wellbeing.

## **Desirable**

- Additional specialist training in ASD, SEMH, attachment, trauma-informed practice, or neurodiversity-affirming approaches.
- Safeguarding training or willingness to undertake.
- Qualifications or training in mentoring, coaching, or supporting staff development.

## **Experience**

### **Essential**

- Experience delivering art therapy or therapeutic interventions to children with ASD and/or SEMH needs.
- Demonstrable impact in supporting children's emotional regulation, communication, and social development.
- Experience working with children who are highly anxious, disengaged, or have experienced trauma or EBSA.
- Experience of maintaining therapeutic records, writing reports, and contributing to multi-agency working.
- Experience working collaboratively with families, school staff, and external professionals.

### **Desirable**

- Experience working within specialist provisions, alternative provision, or inclusion settings.
- Experience contributing to whole-setting therapeutic or trauma-informed approaches.
- Experience supporting or advising staff in implementing therapeutic strategies.
- Experience delivering staff training or modelling best practice approaches.

## **Skills**

### **Essential**

- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to build trusting relationships with vulnerable children.
- Ability to create safe, structured, and engaging therapeutic environments.
- Skilled in adapting therapeutic approaches to meet a wide range of sensory, communication, and emotional needs.
- Effective observation, assessment, and reflective practice skills.
- Strong organisational skills, including maintaining accurate records and managing caseloads.
- Ability to work collaboratively and provide supportive guidance to staff and families.

### **Desirable**

- Ability to coach or support staff in applying therapeutic strategies within the classroom or provision.
- Creative and flexible approaches to engaging children with complex needs.
- Ability to contribute to staff development, supervision, or reflective practice sessions.

## **Knowledge**

### **Essential**

- Strong understanding of ASD, SEMH, attachment, and trauma-informed practice.
- Knowledge of child development, art therapy principles, and emotional regulation strategies.
- Understanding of SEND legislation, EHCP processes, and inclusive practice.
- Knowledge of safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- Awareness of the barriers faced by children with complex emotional and developmental needs.

**Desirable**

- Knowledge of multi-agency working and integrated support approaches.
- Familiarity with approaches such as relational practice, emotion coaching, or sensory integration.
- Understanding of whole-setting therapeutic models and inclusive provision development.

**Personal Qualities****Essential**

- Empathetic, patient, and emotionally resilient, with a calm and nurturing approach.
- Reflective practitioner, open to feedback and continuous professional development.
- Child-centred and committed to inclusive, strengths-based practice.
- Professional, reliable, and able to work with autonomy and initiative.
- Committed to maintaining confidentiality and ethical practice.

**Desirable**

- Creative, flexible, and engaging approach to supporting children with complex needs.
- Positive and collaborative team member who contributes to a supportive culture.
- Passionate about inclusion and improving outcomes for vulnerable learners.

**What We Offer**

- Competitive salary and holiday pay.
- Term-time working pattern with potential for additional hours supporting school trips
- Comprehensive induction and ongoing training in SEN awareness, first aid, and safeguarding
- A supportive team culture driven by shared purpose and continuous improvement
- Opportunities for career progression within our expanding SEN transport and care network

**Review**

The nature of this role means that this job description will be subject to an annual review with the potential for amendment or modification at any time after consultation directly with you. It by no means acts as a comprehensive statement of procedures and is just a way of setting out all the main expectations we'll have of you, here in the role as you deliver an impassioned and truly caring experience to our young people.

**Acknowledgement**

Employee Signature:	
Print Name:	
Date Signed:	
Manager's Signature:	
Print Name:	
Date Signed:	