



# Specialist Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship

## Level 5

Funded through the Apprenticeship Levy



## Welcome to the Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant apprenticeship

Develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to provide specialist support to pupils in your setting via this Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant apprenticeship.

This is a prime opportunity to upskill, progress your career and build specialist knowledge.


Expanding on your previous experience as a Teaching Assistant (TA), Learning Support Assistant (LSA) or Classroom Assistant, you'll plan, implement, and adapt activities in order to advance learning.

In addition to covering a set of core competencies, such as overcoming barriers to learning, planning, teaching and assessment, communication, and professionalism, you'll choose from four specialist options.

### At a glance:

 **Duration:** 18 months

 **Study method:** Blended learning

 **Qualifications:** Specialist Teaching Assistant qualification  
Optional HLTA status is available  
ELSA status is gained via the Social and Emotional Wellbeing specialism  
Elkan's Level 3 qualification in Speech and Language Support is gained via the Language and Literacy specialism

 **Delivery:** Delivered by Educational and Sporting Futures

**SEND specialist:** Learn how to provide specialist support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in order to promote inclusion and advance learning and progression.

**Social and Emotional Wellbeing specialist:** Learn how to positively contribute to your pupils' social and emotional wellbeing, to support inclusion and advance learning. This specialism also includes training to become an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA).

**Literacy specialist:** Learn how to plan, prepare, deliver and evaluate learning and assessment activities and interventions to support individual, small group and whole class literacy learning.

**Language and Literacy specialist:** Feel more confident in supporting all children and young people with their communication and language skills, including those with identified speech and language difficulties.

It is also possible to gain HLTA status through this programme. See page 15 'Interested in gaining HLTA status?' for further information.

### Exclusive invitations to SEND masterclasses

Available to all specialisms, these virtual masterclasses will develop your knowledge and understanding of supporting children with SEND. Topics include:

- Dyslexia & practical tips to support pupils
- Trauma
- Communication needs
- Autism Spectrum Conditions
- Behaviour and barriers to learning - including mental health
- Understanding and supporting learners with sensory and visual needs
- Challenges related to accessing maths
- Supporting and understanding attachment disorder
- Executive functioning and concentration difficulties (including ADHD)
- Speech and language delay

Attendance of the SEND masterclasses is optional, and recordings will be made available if you're unable to attend the live sessions.



## Who we are

Educational and Sporting Futures are an innovative Ofsted 'Outstanding' apprenticeship training provider, that creates opportunities and raises aspirations through apprenticeship pathways. Founded in 2011, we have deep roots within education and partner with schools, Multi-Academy Trusts and colleges to help build successful and effective teams.



SEND and SEMH experts from our sister company Real Training have co-developed this programme with us, bringing together the very best of our collective expertise.



## Programme content

Specialist Teaching Assistant apprentices will benefit from a diverse programme, spread over five core themes:

- Regulation and Guidance
- Advancing Learning
- Planning, Teaching and Assessment
- Professionalism
- Communication

You will also have the opportunity to elevate knowledge of your chosen specialism: (SEND, Social and Emotional Wellbeing or Literacy)



## Why choose the Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant apprenticeship?

Embark on this apprenticeship to unlock a wealth of benefits for your career and personal growth. Through this comprehensive programme, you will gain:

Specialist knowledge, critical understanding and practical teaching skills to plan, implement, evaluate and adapt activities to advance learning, for example, scaffolding.



A deep understanding of policies, practices, and procedures relevant to your role.



The experience to create an inclusive and supportive environment in which learning outcomes are improved.



Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) status, if studying on the Social and Emotional Wellbeing pathway, or Elkan's Level 3 qualification in Speech and Language Support is gained via the Language and Literacy specialism



Specialist training in SEND, Social and Emotional Wellbeing or Literacy, with training and support from experienced professionals and your apprenticeship tutor.



The ability to collaborate more effectively with colleagues and other professionals, and support the development of effective practices in team members, for example through mentoring and coaching.



Optional HLTA status and a clear route for career progression.



## Your apprenticeship programme

### How will I study?

Throughout your programme, you will receive support from your dedicated apprenticeship tutor.

Additional support will be provided by your in-school mentor who will join your apprenticeship tutor to review your progress on six occasions throughout the programme.

You will engage in a variety of learning activities, enabling you to learn and apply your new knowledge and skills through practical activities and projects. This includes:



#### Asynchronous Online Learning

Supported learning using our bespoke learning platform at a time and place that suits you



#### Online Personal Progress Reviews

One 60-minute review per term with your apprenticeship tutor and in-school mentor



#### Synchronous Learning

18 two-hour live online workshops and webinars with your apprenticeship tutor and peers



#### Networking

Opportunities to network and share good practice with other TAs



#### Self-directed project work

Apply new knowledge, skills and behaviours through practical projects and research in your setting



#### Exclusive invitations

To our series of SEND masterclasses, hosted by experts



We are given so much support that really helps us along the way. No question is too silly and that really helps in building your confidence.

...I'm really starting to like [the online learning]. Having everything saved in one online place is brilliant – especially the library of extra resources.

Tina – Primary TA, Fernhurst Primary School



# The learning journey

## Theme 1: Regulation and Guidance

- Understand the essential regulations, policies, and procedures relevant to your educational settings
- Learn how to maintain the health, safety, and wellbeing of all learners, with a focus on safeguarding and data protection
- Reflect on the importance of understanding and implementing statutory and non-statutory guidance, promoting a safe and supportive learning environment for everyone
- Explore the principles of sustainability within the education context
- Examine the principles of equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion and why these are important

## Theme 3: Planning, Teaching and Assessment

- Develop a deep understanding of the principles and purposes of assessment, including formative, summative, and individual needs-based assessments
- Learn how to effectively plan and implement assessment strategies to monitor learner progress and inform future teaching
- Gain skills in analysing and interpreting assessment data to identify individual learning needs and adjust instructional approaches accordingly
- Enhance your ability to provide constructive feedback to learners, fostering their growth and development
- Learn how to effectively record and report assessment outcomes to relevant stakeholders

## Theme 5: Professionalism

- Understand the importance of professionalism, ethical behaviour, and maintaining confidentiality
- Develop skills in resilience, adaptability, self-reflection and continuous professional development
- Learn strategies for managing workload and maintaining wellbeing, recognising the importance of personal capacity
- Embrace feedback and constructive criticism, showing a willingness to learn and grow as a practitioner
- Model ethical, fair, consistent, and impartial behaviours, valuing inclusion, equity, equality, and diversity
- Engage in ongoing self-reflection, actively seeking and responding to feedback, and taking ownership of your own professional development

## Theme 2: Advancing Learning

- Understand the theories of learning and child development and recognise the individual differences and social-cultural factors that influence learning
- Gain insights on different teaching and assessment methods, and how to use them effectively to advance learning and support social and emotional well-being
- Learn how to identify and overcome barriers to learning, ensuring all students have equal access to education
- Develop skills in planning, implementing and adapting activities that promote learning and development
- Consider the safe and effective use of equipment, resources, and technology to enhance the learning experience and how to identify and mitigate potential hazards by conducting dynamic risk assessments

## Theme 4: Communication

- Develop effective communication skills to interact with students, colleagues, and other stakeholders
- Learn how to adapt communication styles to suit different audiences and situations
- Understand the importance of active listening and responding appropriately
- Enhance your ability to provide clear and constructive feedback
- Gain skills in using various communication methods, including verbal, written, and non-verbal communication
- Build the skills and professional behaviors to be an effective advocate for learners

- Gateway Meeting and End Point Assessment
- Option to gain HLTA status

Throughout the programme, join a series of optional SEND Masterclasses - See page 2 for more information



## SEND specialism

By gaining expertise in supporting and advancing the learning of pupils with SEND, you'll ensure full compliance with SEND regulations and implement best practices for inclusive education.

You'll also gain the skills to confidently address diverse learning needs, provide individualised support for pupils, foster a supportive environment and provide capacity for early identification of SEND.

- **Enhanced knowledge of SEND policies and procedures:** Gain a deep understanding of national and local SEND policies, practices, processes, and procedures
- **Improved understanding of SEND:** Understand the theoretical background of a range of SEND, such as autism, attachment, trauma, and dyslexia
- **Early identification and assessment skills:** Develop skills in the early identification and assessment of SEND, using appropriate tools and techniques
- **Deliver effective support for pupils with SEND:** Learn how to adapt provision and practices to effectively support pupils with SEND and promote their learning and development
- **Creation of an inclusive learning environment:** Implement strategies to create an inclusive learning environment where every pupil, including those with SEND, can thrive

## Literacy specialism

In your role as a literacy specialist, you will develop and implement effective literacy lessons and interventions tailored to pupil needs.

You'll enhance understanding of literacy assessment and its integration into lesson planning, proactively identifying and supporting pupils with early signs of literacy-related difficulties. You'll also gain the skills to monitor and evaluate the impact of literacy interventions and lessons through informal assessment.

- **Enhanced knowledge of literacy policies and procedures:** Gain a deep understanding of national and local literacy curriculum policies, practices, processes, and procedures
- **Improved understanding of literacy acquisition and progression:** Develop an understanding of the theoretical foundations of literacy acquisition and progression
- **Effective use of literacy assessment tools:** Acquire skills in selecting and using appropriate literacy assessment tools to inform teaching and learning
- **Skill development in using assessment tools to advance literacy learning:** Demonstrate skills in using assessment tools within literacy to advance learning
- **Improved understanding of impact:** Understand the impact of literacy on pupils' overall development and academic success
- **Effective literacy strategies:** Gain the ability to implement effective strategies and interventions to promote literacy skills



## Language and Literacy specialism

(including Elklan qualification - Primary settings only)



In your role as a Literacy and Language specialist in a primary setting you'll gain the skills to develop and implement effective literacy lessons and interventions tailored to student needs. You'll also proactively identify and support students with early signs of literacy-related difficulties and evaluate the impact of literacy interventions.

This specialism integrates key elements of Elklan's highly respected training, focusing on areas such as:

- **Understanding your role:** Understanding the importance of your role in developing children and young people's communication
- **Identifying needs:** Identifying children and young people with speech, language and communication needs
- **Implementing strategies:** Implementing effective strategies to support children with diverse SLCN, including those with developmental language disorder, autism spectrum disorder, and speech sound difficulties
- **Vocabulary Skills:** Developing vocabulary learning skills for 5-11 year olds through practice adjustments and the use of different strategies
- **Talking to parents:** Becoming more confident in talking to parents about a child or young person's speech, language and communication
- **Sharing a common language:** Being able to share a common language with your local Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) service and so understand what they are being asked to do in order to provide effective support

### Release Time:

You'll attend one live session per month run by an accredited Elklan tutor, for up to ten months of the apprenticeship. In addition, you'll also attend one live session per month run by your apprenticeship tutor throughout the duration of your apprenticeship.



On completion, you will achieve a Level 3 Elklan Speech and Language Support for 5-11s qualification, equipping you with the practical tools and knowledge to make a real impact in the classroom.

## Social and Emotional Wellbeing specialism

Building on the core programme content, you'll study knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) which specifically focus on Social and Emotional Wellbeing. You will gain:

- **Enhanced knowledge of social and emotional wellbeing policies and procedures:** Gain a deep understanding of national and local policies, practices, processes, and procedures related to social and emotional wellbeing
- **Improved understanding of the theoretical background of social and emotional wellbeing:** Understand the theoretical background of supporting social and emotional wellbeing in educational contexts
- **Knowledge of approaches to promoting social and emotional wellbeing:** Learn the principles and approaches to promoting social and emotional wellbeing in educational contexts
- **Skills in using tools to promote social and emotional wellbeing:** Develop skills in using appropriate tools to promote social and emotional wellbeing and advance learning
- **Improved understanding of impact:** Understand the impact of social and emotional wellbeing on pupil development and learning
- **Implementing effective strategies:** Implement effective strategies to advance social and emotional wellbeing in learning and assessment contexts

By choosing this specialism, in addition to becoming a specialist TA, you will also become a qualified Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA).

By becoming an ELSA, you'll be able to identify and address social and emotional needs, guide pupils in managing their emotions and building positive relationships in order to foster pupil well-being and create a positive and supportive school community.

# Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs)

An Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) is a specialist teaching assistant who supports children and young people to develop essential emotional literacy and social skills.

By working closely with pupils, ELSAs help foster a sense of safety and happiness in school, while equipping them with the tools to understand and manage their emotions effectively. They work with pupils either individually or in small groups, and can help with a range of issues, including:

- Anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Anger management
- Loss and bereavement
- Friendship issues
- Relationships
- Behaviour
- Conflict

ELSAs receive specialised training from Educational Psychologists (EPs) and benefit from ongoing supervision, ensuring they provide high-quality support.

The ELSA curriculum covers:

- What is Emotional Literacy and how do we improve it?
- Building resilience
- Emotional regulation, including anger management and cognitive behavioural techniques
- Social and friendship skills
- Loss, bereavement and family break-up
- Therapeutic stories and social stories
- Active listening and reflective conversations
- Neurodiversity and emotions

## Time commitment

Beyond the apprenticeship, ELSA qualification requires extra dedicated release time (equivalent to 6 days).

In addition, there will be regular group supervision sessions for you to attend with your ELSA coach and other specialist TAs on the programme, which will provide you with the opportunity to ask questions, reinforce and reflect on your learning and understand how to embed best practice.



## Important considerations when choosing the Social and Emotional Wellbeing specialism:

- One day of the ELSA training must be delivered face-to-face. The location for this is TBC, however it may be in London and attendance is mandatory.
- There is an ongoing time commitment to being an ELSA. There is an expectation that you will have 2-5 hours per week available for planning, delivery and review.
- In order for you to remain an ELSA once the programme has concluded, you will need to continue attending supervision sessions with an Educational Psychologist. This is sometimes offered through your Local Authority or other organisations. Please visit [realtraining.co.uk/elsa-supervision-package](https://realtraining.co.uk/elsa-supervision-package) to find out about the package we offer for ongoing supervision.

## What if I'm already working as an ELSA?

If you are already a trained ELSA, but wish to continue developing your practical skills in social and emotional wellbeing, don't worry – you can still join the programme and choose this specialism. In fact, you can bring your ELSA qualification in as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), meaning that your setting can access the apprenticeship with a reduced apprenticeship levy contribution.

ELSA training is a core part of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing specialism. This means all participants will need to attend the ELSA sessions. If you are already a qualified ELSA, you'll have the opportunity to refresh your knowledge and practice your skills, whilst developing new expertise from the apprenticeship curriculum.

I'm very excited to be on this journey to Specialist TA. I have chosen the Social and Emotional Wellbeing pathway. I love to explore different growth mindset practices and alternative methods to create impact and achieve our desired goals.

Kelly - Primary TA, Manor Fields Primary School



## Assessment

You will have termly progress reviews in which you'll celebrate your growth and successes and discuss challenges you have been facing. These will be scheduled with your mentor and apprenticeship tutor at a time that is convenient.

The final progress review is combined with a Gateway Meeting. Once you have completed this, you'll then undertake the End-Point Assessment (EPA).

The EPA for this programme involves:

- Observation with questions – the assessor will observe you teaching and interacting with learners (90 minutes plus 30 minutes of questions)
- Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence (60 minutes)

Throughout the apprenticeship you'll be working on projects and activities, supported by your tutor, which will make up your portfolio.

Apprentices are required to pass both components. The results from these assessments are then combined to form your overall apprenticeship grade (fail, pass, merit or distinction).

Whilst nerves are always to be expected when being assessed, your apprenticeship tutor is on-hand to support you in the run up to the End-Point Assessment. We'll ensure that you have everything you need to approach it with confidence!



## Meet the Curriculum Lead and Course Tutor

### Sarah Small

Specialist Teaching Assistant  
Curriculum Lead and Tutor

Sarah Small is the Specialist TA Apprenticeship Curriculum Lead and a dedicated course tutor. With 18 years of experience as a Class Teacher and Assistant Head, Sarah brings a deep understanding of the classroom and the day-to-day realities faced by school staff.



Having recently transitioned from teaching into the apprenticeship sector, she now uses her wealth of knowledge to support and guide future Specialist Teaching Assistants. Sarah's passion lies in making a meaningful impact through high-quality training that reflects the real challenges and opportunities within education today.

It's been a pleasure to witness TAs developing expertise, especially in SEND and SEMH, which translates into more effective, evidence-based interventions with pupils. They go far beyond supporting class teachers; they're leading small groups, planning bespoke activities, and even mentoring their peers.

Both the ESF tutoring team and the in-school mentors have seen a huge rise in confidence among TAs studying the programme. These TAs aren't keeping new skills to themselves, they're sharing them across their school, with some even leading whole-school staff meetings to introduce their colleagues to specialist strategies and resources.

The insights into theory leading into practice really adds value to their apprenticeship experience. As well as written evidence tasks, they're networking with experienced TA's around the country, sharing experience in the whole range of settings from small SEND hubs to large independent secondary settings - a joy to see!



## Interested in gaining HLTA status?

Gaining HLTA status is an optional add-on.

Upon completion of your apprenticeship, you will be able to proceed with an assessment only route to the award of HLTA status.

This will involve:

- A review of the work completed during the apprenticeship (your portfolio of evidence). It will be cross referenced to ensure that it meets the requirements of the HLTA standards
- You will then attend a discussion between yourself, the assessor and a nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team. This will confirm that you are able to advance learning when working with whole classes without the designated teacher present and that you are able to contribute to the planning, delivery and assessment of learning activities with individuals, groups and whole classes
- You'll share your experience of managing these activities to ensure all pupils are able to access the learning and make appropriate progress

You will not be required to undertake a preparation route or to complete any additional written work in order to gain HLTA status via this route.

Please note that there is an additional cost of £350 for gaining HLTA status alongside your apprenticeship. This cannot be funded by the Apprenticeship Levy.

To be eligible for HLTA status, you will need to demonstrate proficiency in literacy and numeracy by providing evidence of having achieved a minimum GCSE English at Grade 4 (Grade C) or above, or hold an equivalent Level 2 Functional Skills qualification.

## Apprenticeship levy funding

The Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant apprenticeship is eligible for full funding through the Apprenticeship Levy. The programme has a funding band of £12,000 (subject to reductions based on recognition of prior learning and experience).

### How does the funding work?

- If your employer (school, nursery, MAT, or local authority) has a salary bill of over £3 million, they will be a levy-paying organisation, which means 100% of the cost of the programme can be funded from the employer's levy pot. Levy paying employers can access their funds through the central Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS).
- Local Authority schools contribute to a large levy, known as a shared levy pot. Funding can be accessed even if your school's payroll is below the £3 million levy threshold and this can be requested via the Local Authority's Apprenticeship Levy Manager.
- Where a maintained school sits within a Local Authority levy arrangement, Educational and Sporting Futures can work with the Local Authority to explore procurement processes.
- Non-levy paying employers (i.e. with a salary bill of under £3 million) are required to contribute 5% to the cost of the programme - this is £600. Where this is the case, Educational and Sporting Futures can work with your employer to seek support from a levy transfer partner with the aim of alleviating the fees, however this cannot be guaranteed.

For further information about funding this programme (including frequently asked questions), please scan this QR code to visit our dedicated webpage.



## Off-the-job training

Off-the-job training is a key part of your development. This means dedicated time during your normal working hours to focus on learning and applying new skills related to your apprenticeship.

Think of it as your chance to dive deeper, expand your knowledge, and grow professionally.

All of the required learning during the programme (asynchronous learning, workshops, webinars and progress reviews) count towards your Off-the-job time.

It can however also include a variety of other activities, such as:

- Reading relevant articles or publications and staying up-to-date on education trends and developments

- Applying your knowledge to real-world projects, solidifying your skills and confidence
- Networking with peers and colleagues
- Spending time learning from colleagues and leaders across your setting
- Setting personal and career objectives and reflecting on progress
- Research and revision
- Coaching and mentoring with both your apprenticeship tutor and your in-school mentor

This dedicated learning time is crucial for your success and will help you become a skilled and competent educator.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for this programme you will need to:

- Have worked as a Teaching Assistant (TA), Learning Support Assistant (LSA) or equivalent role for at least a year (full-time equivalent)
- Have the right to work in the UK
- Be employed for a minimum of 16 hours per week in England
- Have achieved a minimum of GCSE English at Grade 4 (Grade C) or above, or hold an equivalent Level 2 Functional Skills qualification.

Your employer must agree to your participation in the programme and to appoint a workplace mentor who will attend your termly progress reviews.

If choosing the Social and Emotional Wellbeing specialism, your workplace mentor should be part of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). As well as termly reviews, they will need to attend a 1-hour induction session at the start of the ELSA programme.

## How to apply

1

**Please register at:** [learn.esfapprenticeships.co.uk/forms/apply](https://learn.esfapprenticeships.co.uk/forms/apply)

Programme: Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant

Pathway: Choose your preferred specialism

Cohort: Choose your preferred start date

- You'll need to enter your personal details.
- You'll then receive an email from ESF Learn with your username and password so that you can continue your application

2

**Complete your Applicant registration form**

- Enter your personal details, contacts, tell us about your role and confirm your eligibility for the programme
- Upload Photo ID
- Share your reasons for choosing this programme

3

**Complete your Employer registration form**

- Enter school address and details for key contacts
- Confirm whether your school is a levy or non-levy organisation
- Let us know a convenient date and time for your enrolment meeting

It's best to complete this form with and/or share the link with your employer

Our online dashboard will guide you through each step of the process.



## Frequently asked questions

### 01. Can I complete an apprenticeship as a part-time member of staff?

You need to be employed for a minimum of 16 hours per week to undertake the apprenticeship. It is likely that the duration of the apprenticeship will be extended so that you have longer to complete the evidence tasks and asynchronous learning.

### 02. How do I know if my school pays into the apprenticeship levy?

If your employer (school, nursery, MAT, or local authority) has a salary bill of over £3 million, they will be a levy-paying organisation, which means 100% of the cost of the programme can be funded from the employer's levy pot.

Non-levy paying employers (i.e. with a salary bill of under £3 million) are required to contribute 5% to the cost of the programme - this is £600. Where this is the case, we can work with your employer to seek support from a levy transfer partner with the aim of alleviating the fees, however this cannot be guaranteed.

Speak to your Business or Finance Manager for clarity around the Levy.

### 03. What if my school is a local authority school and doesn't have a payroll of £3 million?

Local Authority schools contribute to a large levy, known as a shared levy pot. Funding can be accessed even if your school payroll is below the £3 million levy threshold and this can be requested via the Local Authority's Apprenticeship Levy Manager.

Most Local Authorities have a list of the apprenticeship providers they work with. If you let us know which local authority you fall under and we can check whether we are already on their list or work with your Local Authority to explore procurement processes.

### 04. What commitment do I need to make during my time at work in order to fulfil the requirements of the apprenticeship? Do I need to be 'off the job' 1 day per week?

Off-the-job training is dedicated time, during your normal working hours, in which you focus on learning and applying new skills related to your apprenticeship.

All of the required learning during the programme (asynchronous learning, workshops, webinars, and progress reviews) count towards your Off-the-job time.

Additional activities such as project work, shadowing colleagues, wider reading and research all count. Via our online platform, ESF Learn, we're able to sign-post a number of opportunities which count as Off-the-job. During your enrolment meeting we can discuss how this can work alongside a busy job role!

### 05. If I move school halfway through the apprenticeship, is it transferrable to my new employer?

Yes, it is possible to change schools and continue on the apprenticeship. You'll need to speak to your apprenticeship tutor if this situation occurs so that we can ensure your new employer is suitable.

### 06. How can I apply for this programme?


Please see the 'How to Apply' page for a breakdown of the application steps. These will be completed online. You will be required to upload photo ID - you might like to locate this early on in the application process.



Apprenticeships by  
Sporting Futures Training UK Ltd.

Contact us:

 01784 222300

 [info@esfapprenticeships.co.uk](mailto:info@esfapprenticeships.co.uk)