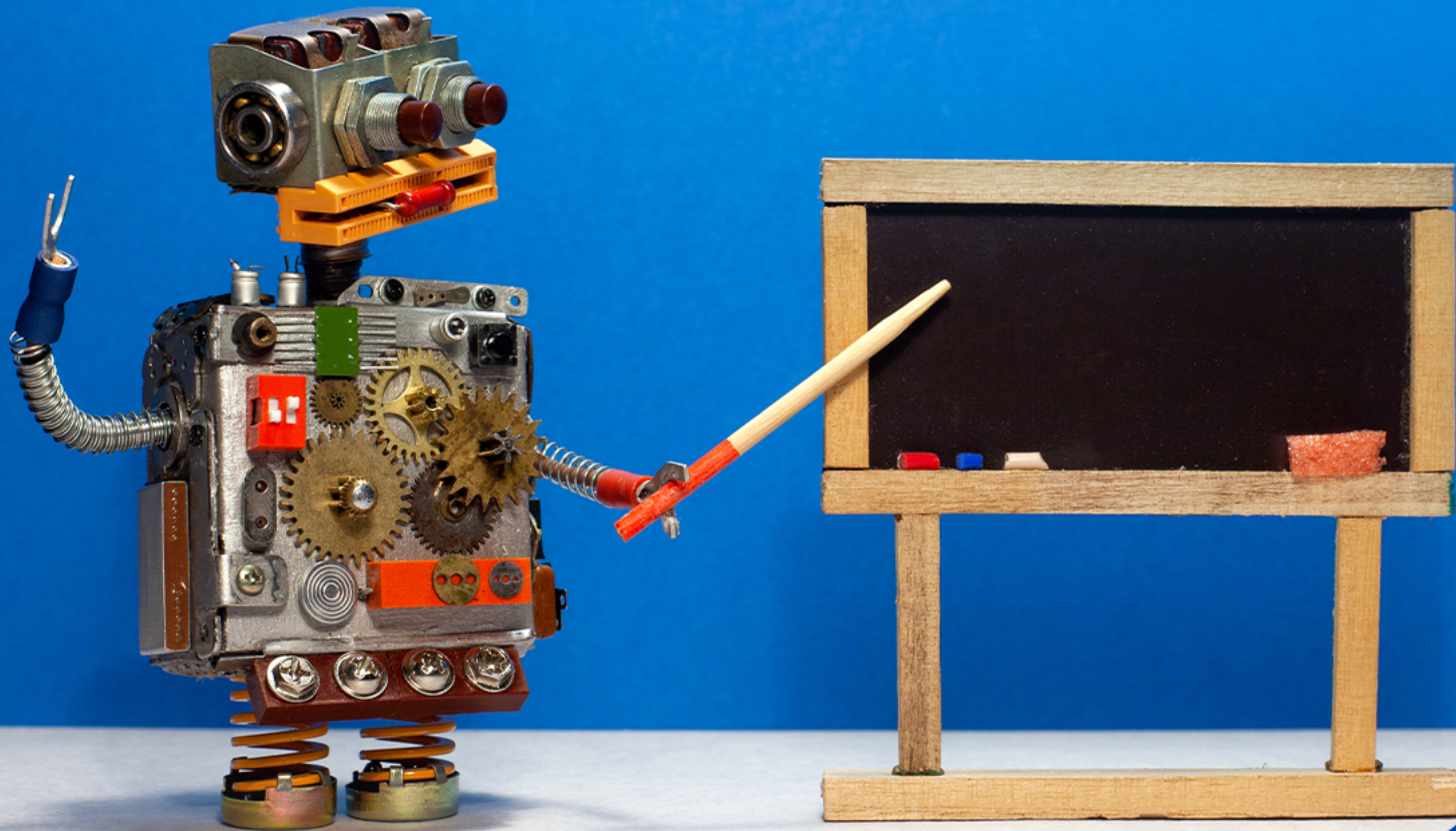


 Class of 2020



**EAST OF ENGLAND
APPRENTICESHIPS**

JOB ROLE

Learning Support
Assistant

COMPANY

Lonsdale School

COMPANY SIZE

51 - 250 employees

APPRENTICESHIP

Teaching Assistant
Standard



■ INTRODUCING JOANNE ANDREWS

After spending 13 years as a childminder, primarily with children under 5, Joanne was considering a further challenge in her career and was seeking something that aligned with her experience to date. As she has a child with special needs that attended Lonsdale school for after school club — when a learning support assistant position became available she jumped at the chance. Joanne had seen the positive impact that attending the school had had on her daughter and felt she would enjoy being part of a programme that didn't overlook children with disabilities.

Lonsdale is a physical, neurological and impairment disability school that specialises in helping children aged 3-18. Joanne was slightly hesitant as she was running a successful business and had some concerns that the role would be a backwards step, but in hindsight she admits to being really happy she decided to go ahead with the role and doesn't regret her decision in the slightest. Although she had no prior experience of working with children with severe physical disabilities, this was an area she was keen to develop her knowledge around too.





The apprenticeship programme delivered by Sporting Futures Training provided the basis of learning around schooling and policies, with a focus on individual development and how to create achievable targets and help children work towards them. There was also training around the schools resources, which helped Joanne apply the theoretical knowledge she was learning in her new work setting.

She really enjoyed being based within the school, as her prior learning (Joanne also achieved a degree in Early Years development prior to the apprenticeship) had included material within a school setting. She found that her experience on the programme underpinned the knowledge she had previously developed and cemented why certain procedures and processes take place. She learned how to develop targets for children and found it really interesting to learn how these varied for each individual child.

Joanne feels that the confidence the programme has given her in her abilities is the main perk. She now has a good level of knowledge and a clear understanding of how to apply this in a school setting, e.g. safeguarding and other policies. She is now not scared to communicate when she feels things could be done differently. Overall, she says the course was really thorough and covered all of the areas that she hoped it would. Additionally, Joanne feels that she is much more effective in working as part of a team and is comfortable taking the lead when required.

Joanne was required to complete her functional skills in Maths as part of the apprenticeship and passing these assessments were a huge milestone for her personally. Although nervous about taking the exams initially, she found that receiving her grades again boosted her confidence in her own ability. So much so, that she has gone on to take her GCSE qualification in Maths. Other 'stand out' elements of the programme include sections on autism and speech therapy — the knowledge Joanne gained on these elements allow her to support the children more effectively in the classroom and make the crossover between theoretical knowledge and practical application very evident. One challenging aspect for Joanne was an assignment around goal setting, as the complications around aligning the national curriculum with P scales was tricky to say the least. She leaned on support from the class teacher to complete this and found it gave her a great rounded knowledge on the topic.

Most of the assessment was essay based, which played to Joanne's strengths as she enjoys writing and finds it helpful to communicate her understanding of different elements. In addition to this, there was a professional discussion element during her end-point assessment which was carried out via a Zoom call due to the implications of Covid-19. As nervous as she was for this, she felt that the assessment went really smoothly and Joanne found it easy to talk about the skills she had learned. Where she would have normally been assessed in a classroom environment, she wrote about dealing with certain situations and this was signed off by staff members that she works with.



Although her role hasn't changed significantly since completing the apprenticeship, Joanne is now much more confident in her ability and has gained some additional responsibility, moving up a grade since completing her apprenticeship. She has a great working relationship with the class teacher and is entrusted with setting goals and working on observation sheets for the children. The programme also inspired her to push forward with her learning, taking a GCSE in Maths and she is currently debating a further degree in teaching. She cites the apprenticeship programme as having given her the belief to continue her learning and development.

Her key advice for anybody considering an apprenticeship is to listen to others and take as much knowledge from the people around you as possible. She had a great team around her, and the support staff through to the class teachers were extremely helpful. She says, be willing to ask questions from the get-go, as she credits this as being one of the main reasons she learned so much. She stated that "the only way to work through an apprenticeship of this nature is to be open about what you need to learn so you can get the support that you need".

"THE ONLY WAY TO WORK THROUGH AN APPRENTICESHIP OF THIS NATURE IS TO BE OPEN ABOUT WHAT YOU NEED TO LEARN SO YOU CAN GET THE SUPPORT THAT YOU NEED"





Class of 2020

CELEBRATING APPRENTICESHIPS

CELEBRATING APPRENTICESHIPS

FIND OUT MORE TODAY
EASTOFENGLAND.AAN.CO.UK