

Cockermouth School

Candidate Information Pack

AN EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR ALL
aspire • enjoy • include • respect • community



Welcome to Cockermouth School



We are proud to be a high-performing, truly comprehensive school where excellent teaching, high expectations and a strong commitment to personal development underpin everything we do. Building on our established success and reputation, we see ourselves as a “restless” school – one that continually reflects, evaluates and evolves to ensure the very best experience for our students and staff alike.

Our students achieve outstanding academic outcomes, and we believe this is rooted in high-quality teaching across a broad and balanced curriculum. While success in core subjects is vital in opening doors for young people, we are equally committed to providing a rich educational experience that includes the arts, languages, sport and technology. We want every student to discover their strengths and passions, and we know that inspirational teachers make this possible.

Life at Cockermouth School extends well beyond the classroom. A wide range of enrichment opportunities, combined with a dedicated and skilled pastoral team, ensures that students are supported to thrive both academically and personally. Our core values – aspire, enjoy, include, respect and community – shape our culture and relationships, creating a school where diversity is celebrated, individuals are valued, and learning is both purposeful and enjoyable.



Our Sixth Form is a vibrant and ambitious part of our school community. With consistently strong academic outcomes that place us among the top-performing providers nationally, we are proud of the culture of scholarship, independence and aspiration that defines these final years. Students benefit from expert teaching, strong pastoral guidance and a wealth of opportunities beyond their studies, preparing them well for higher education, apprenticeships and employment.

For our staff, Cockermouth School is a supportive and forward-thinking professional environment. We are committed to collaboration, professional growth and the continuous development of teaching and learning. We value colleagues who share our ambition, creativity and belief that education transforms lives.

If you are passionate about making a difference, have high aspirations for all pupils, and excited by the opportunity to contribute to a thriving and reflective school community, we very much look forward meeting you.

Mr R J King
Headteacher



About Cockermouth School

Vision

At Cockermouth School, our vision is to inspire and empower every learner to achieve their full potential within a supportive, inclusive and ambitious environment. We aim to create a community where students develop confidence, resilience and curiosity, enabling them to achieve highly and develop a lifelong love of learning. Alongside academic success, we are committed to nurturing compassionate, responsible young people who are well prepared to contribute positively to society. Our staff play a vital role in shaping this environment, and we are proud of the strong culture of collaboration, care and ambition that defines our school community.

Values

Our values underpin everything we do at Cockermouth School and guide the way we learn, work and interact with one another.

Aspire

We encourage every member of our community to aim high and challenge themselves. By fostering ambition, determination and resilience, we support students to realise their potential and achieve their goals.

Enjoy

We believe learning should be engaging, stimulating and rewarding. By nurturing curiosity and enthusiasm in the classroom, we create an environment where students enjoy learning and develop both academically and personally.

Include

Inclusion is central to our ethos. We celebrate diversity and ensure that every student feels valued, supported and respected. Our culture is one where differences are embraced and all students have the opportunity to succeed.

Respect

Respect is fundamental to our school culture. We promote positive relationships between students, staff and the wider community, creating a safe and nurturing environment where everyone is treated with kindness and consideration.

Community

We believe that strong relationships are essential for success. By working closely with parents, carers, local organisations and one another, we create a supportive community that enriches the experience of every learner.

Headteacher's PA

We are seeking to appoint a highly organised, proactive and professional administrator to join Cockermouth School as our Headteacher's PA. This is a pivotal role at the heart of the school, providing high-level administrative and organisational support to the Headteacher and senior leaders while ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of the Headteacher's office. The successful candidate will manage a busy diary and inbox, coordinate communication across departments and with external partners, liaise with students, parents, staff and governors, and deal with confidential and sensitive matters with discretion and efficiency. This is an excellent opportunity for someone who thrives in a fast-paced environment, has exceptional attention to detail and wants to make a meaningful contribution within a supportive and ambitious school community.

The Learning for Life Trust

Cockermouth School is part of The Learning for Life Trust, a network of Cumbrian schools committed to providing outstanding education for young people.

The Trust works to strengthen collaboration between schools, share expertise and create opportunities for both staff and students to grow and succeed. Together, we are dedicated to serving our communities and ensuring that every young person receives the highest quality educational experience.

Academic Achievement

Cockermouth School is proud of the consistently high outcomes achieved by our students at both GCSE and A Level. Our results place us among the highest performing schools in the region.

The school has been recognised as the highest performing school in Cumberland and ranked among the top ten comprehensive schools in the North West in The Sunday Times Parent Power Guide.

GCSE Results 2025

Our 2025 GCSE results demonstrate the continued strength of teaching and learning at Cockermouth School.

- 57.4% of students achieved grade 5 or above in English and Maths, significantly higher than the national average of 41.5% and the Cumberland average of 36.4%.
- Our Attainment 8 score was 51.8, well above the national average of 43.7 and Cumberland's average of 42.2.
- 53.4% of students were entered for the EBacc, with an average point score of 4.78, again exceeding both national and local averages.

Many of our students continue their education in our thriving Sixth Form, while others progress to local colleges, apprenticeships and a wide range of high-quality post-16 opportunities.

A Level Results 2025

In 2025, our students achieved the strongest A Level results in the school's history, continuing our trend of consistency in academic excellence.

- Average points score: 41.25, well above the national average of 34.85, placing the school in the top 15% nationally
- 39% of students achieved AAB or higher, compared with 17.2% nationally
- 26 students achieved all A/A grades* across their subjects
- 10 students achieved A grades in every subject studied*
- 7 students achieved four A grades*

The majority of students secured places at their first-choice universities, while others successfully progressed to competitive apprenticeships, employment, the armed forces, or chose to take a gap year before beginning the next stage of their journey.

The Future – A Brand New School

An exciting new chapter lies ahead for Cockermouth School with the development of a new state-of-the-art school building, with work on site due to start this year.

Extensive feasibility work has been completed to ensure the site is fully prepared for development. The new building will be a net-zero school, incorporating modern, sustainable and environmentally responsible design.

Outstanding Facilities - The new school will include:

- A four-court sports hall and enhanced outdoor sports facilities
- A new astro pitch
- Dedicated bus and student pick-up areas
- A three-storey horseshoe-shaped building surrounding a central courtyard
- A secure design allowing community access to sports facilities outside school hours

Modern Learning Spaces - The building will also feature:

- A large multi-purpose assembly and dining hall with retractable theatre seating
- A flexible activity studio for dance, sport and enrichment activities
- Modern science laboratories with central preparation facilities
- A larger library and ICT-rich classrooms
- Specialist teaching spaces for Art, Design Technology, Food, Music and Drama
- Enhanced staff workspaces and collaborative areas

This exciting development will provide exceptional facilities for teaching and learning and reflects our ambition to continue delivering an exceptional educational experience for generations of students to come.

Job Description

Post Title:	Headteacher's PA
Responsible To:	Headteacher
Grade:	Grade 8 Scale pt (19/20) £32061-£32597 (pay award pending) Working Hours: 37 hours per week - 40 weeks per year, plus annual leave

Job Purpose:

To provide high-quality, confidential and proactive support to the Headteacher and Executive Team, enabling effective leadership and school operations. The post holder will manage diaries, correspondence and communications; coordinate senior leadership and governance meetings; maintain key records and systems to ensure information is accurate and audit-ready; and support statutory and compliance processes. The role acts as a professional point of contact for internal and external stakeholders and contributes to an organised, responsive and effective school environment.

The main expectations of the role are as follows:

Headteacher & Executive Team Support

- Manage the Headteacher's diary, ensuring priorities are effectively scheduled and protected.
- Manage the Headteacher's correspondence, including drafting, filtering, and prioritising responses.
- Support the Headteacher by anticipating upcoming demands, deadlines and risks, highlighting priority actions and ensuring key matters are addressed proactively.
- Exercise professional judgement in managing issues within agreed parameters, escalating matters appropriately to the Headteacher or Executive Team where required.
- Deal with emails and telephone calls on behalf of the Headteacher, triaging appropriately and escalating where required.
- Act as a professional point of contact for internal and external stakeholders, managing relationships sensitively and representing the school and Headteacher appropriately.
- Produce high-quality documents in support of the Headteacher and Executive Team.
- Provide administrative and organisational support for inspection, audit and trust accountability processes, including the collation and preparation of required documentation.
- Collate information and produce reports and summaries for the Headteacher and Executive Team.
- Maintain the highest standards of confidentiality, discretion and data protection at all times, ensuring compliance with GDPR and school information governance requirements.

Meetings & Executive Team Coordination

- Coordinate SLT meetings, including:
 - Managing agendas, papers, and accurate minutes
 - Ensuring timely distribution of documentation
- Set up and maintain the SLT SharePoint and MS Teams sites, to ensure effective access to key documents.
- Arrange and prepare for meetings, including room bookings, refreshments, and logistics.
- Undertake minute taking for Executive meetings when required.

Governance and Policy Administration

- Liaise with the Trust's Governance Professional to ensure LGB and committee meetings are effectively serviced.
- Track school policies, liaising with colleagues to coordinate review cycles, formatting, and preparation for approval.
- Track governor meeting papers, format documents, submit to the Headteacher for approval, and distribute as required.

Complaints and Statutory Processes

- Administer and track all school concerns and complaints processes.
- Administer Fixed Period Suspension and Permanent Exclusion (PEX) processes, in line with statutory requirements and under the direction of the Headteacher and Governors.
- Maintain accurate pupil records and specific student status information on the school MIS relating to Headteacher-led cases.
- As appropriate work with colleagues to respond to FOIs and SARs in line with UK GDPR.

Compliance, Communication, Records and School Operations

- Communicate effectively with staff, Governors, stakeholders, visitors, pupils and their families.
- Maintain organised and accurate digital records and systems to ensure information is easily accessible, up to date and audit-ready.
- Use technology and software effectively to increase the team's efficiency and effectiveness.
- Ensure SLT are aware of and have access to school duty rotas.
- Record, maintain, and securely store:
 - Training certificates
 - Appraisal documentation
- Access the school portal, download relevant documentation, and distribute as appropriate.
- Provide administrative support on ad hoc operational matters (e.g. events support, redaction, data entry).
- Manage the internal process of the checking and approval of external letters and communications.
- Support with updates to the school website when appropriate.
- Support effective procedures with regards to fire and lockdown protocols and similar unforeseen situations in support of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.

Recruitment and Interview Coordination

- Liaise with the Finance Manager to ensure recruitment processes are well organised and compliant.
- Coordinate interview arrangements, ensuring:
 - Clear interview schedules
 - Rooms, tasks, and materials are prepared
 - Recruiting managers are fully supported throughout the process
- Produce interview materials under the guidance of the recruiting manager and oversee logistics on interview days.

GCSE grade 4 or equivalent in English and Maths is a requirement for this role.

As this is a newly defined role, specific roles and responsibilities will be reviewed and developed with the post holder.

Responsibilities Statement

Leadership (Self and Team)
Planning, organising and prioritising own work
Contributing to team planning
Contributing to teamworking
Assisting in allocating and checking work of colleagues in the same work area
Supporting and guiding less experienced staff, if required, including overseeing colleagues
Challenge poor performance in others
Delivering Results
Planning and leading projects in own work area
Participating in projects outside own service area
Preparing a full spectrum of information and reports
Interpreting data and providing relevant recommendations for action
Maintaining a high level of service delivery
Checking service delivery and processes are in line with legislative developments and quality requirements
Interpreting non-standard situations and applying appropriate policy and precedent
Making real-time service decisions in response to operational issues, in line with local procedures and established guidance.
Ensuring compliance with performance indicators
Undertaking fire warden duties for the building including arranging for regular inspection of the equipment and organising / overseeing practice and emergency evacuation procedures where necessary.
Sensitive to impact of decisions
Service Improvement
Identifying potential business opportunities and monitoring contracts
Meeting with students to review service delivery and resolve problems
Making recommendations for improvement
Cooperating with change.
Express ideas effectively and question the traditional way of doing things

Managing Resources
Monitoring budgets and ensuring budgetary information is up to date Handling or processing money
Operating and maintaining general office equipment and other facilities where appropriate
Methodical, accurate and well-organised and prioritise own work schedules.
Customer and Community Focussed
Resolving escalated and difficult issues from students/parents/staff involving direct contact with challenging people.
Responding to enquiries and operational issues raised by students/parents/staff and partnership organisations.
Qualifications, Knowledge, Experience and Expertise
NVQ level 3 or 4 or equivalent and/or experienced in the work area
GCSE grade 4 or equivalent in English and Maths is a requirement for this role.

Whether you already live locally or are looking to relocate, Cumbria is an amazing place to live...

What's so special about Cumbria?



Unrivalled Natural Beauty & Outdoor Lifestyle: Home to England's highest mountain (Scafell Pike), deepest lake (Wastwater), and longest lake (Windermere), it is a paradise for hiking, climbing, cycling, and water sports.



Unique Food & Drink: Renowned for local delicacies such as Cumberland sausage, Kendal Mint Cake, and world-class dining, including Michelin-starred restaurants.



Rich Culture & History: Features Hadrian's Wall (UNESCO World Heritage Site), The home of William Wordsworth, historic market towns like Cockermouth, Keswick and Kendal, and a vibrant arts scene



Affordable Housing & Cost of Living: Housing, particularly outside the immediate tourist hotspots, is often more affordable than the national average.



Safety & Community: With low crime rates, it is considered one of the safest and most family-friendly counties in England.



Connectivity: Despite its rural charm, Cumbria is connected by the M6 corridor, offering good road and rail links to major cities like Carlisle, Newcastle, and London.



For those seeking a blend of scenic solitude and vibrant, close-knit communities, Cumbria offers an ideal, picturesque, and peaceful environment.

Cockermouth School

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Cockermouth School is part of the Learning for Life Trust
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