



DURHAM JOHNSTON
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL
DARE TO BE WISE



Assistant SENCO

MPS/UPS plus TLR2b

Start date - September 2026

Permanent

Crossgate Moor, Durham, DH1 4SU

www.durhamjohnston.org.uk

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Letter of Introduction

Rosslyn McFadden
Headteacher



Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the position of Assistant SENCO.

Durham Johnston Comprehensive School is a happy, successful and dynamic community. We have a national reputation for academic excellence and are well respected in our local community, something of which we are very proud. Teachers often stay at Durham Johnston for a significant period of time as we highly value staff well-being and allow a significant amount of professional autonomy.

We are looking to recruit an Assistant SENCO to support our experienced Inclusion Assistant Headteacher/SENCO. We need someone with initiative who is well-organised, resilient, adaptive, caring, good-humoured and enjoys working with young people and families. The successful candidate will work alongside our Inclusion Assistant Headteacher/SENCO and inclusion team to meet the needs of students with SEND and support them to ensure their attainment and achievement.

It is important to note that our intake is fully comprehensive. We have many students joining us in Year 7 with the potential to achieve outstanding success academically alongside students who can find accessing education challenging for a variety of reasons. It is truly important to us that all these students benefit from their time here. Our staff have a genuine commitment to social justice and ethical leadership and it is important that anyone joining Durham Johnston shares these values.

We are seeking a strong practitioner who can support students across the ability range from a wide range of backgrounds and work collaboratively with their families and external agencies. They should be a talented professional with a passion for supporting students with SEND. We encourage colleagues at any stage in their career to apply to work in our school. We will always appoint the best person for our school community regardless of age or experience and welcome applications from secondary colleagues of any specialism and colleagues from other contexts. The successful candidate will have a light teaching load to ensure they have the time to complete the role effectively.

Informal visits to the school are welcome. If you would like to visit the school, please email school@durhamjohnston.org.uk marked for the attention of Helen Davies (Assistant Headteacher Inclusion) to book a time.

In addition to completing the application form we would like you to outline, in no more than two sides of A4 paper, why your experience and personal qualities make you a strong candidate for this post, especially in relation to the job description and person specification.

The closing date is **9.00am on Thursday 7th May 2026**. If you are returning your application by email please use the following address: recruitment@durhamjohnston.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R McFadden', written in a cursive style.

Rosslyn McFadden

Headteacher

Core Values

Assistant SENCO MPS/UPS plus TLR2b
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At Durham Johnston Comprehensive School all members of our school community are expected to exemplify the school's core values.

- 1. Academic Excellence;** a belief in progress for all.
- 2. Acquiring Knowledge;** the importance of being an educated person and knowing things.
- 3. Social Justice;** providing opportunities for all, regardless of background.
- 4. Public Service;** the importance of making a contribution to the school community and wider society.
- 5. Diverse Opportunities;** a rounded education that 'opens doors' regardless of location or specialism.

In their time with us we want all of our students to make excellent academic progress based upon their starting points, to acquire knowledge, to access opportunities regardless of previous experiences or circumstance, to support others within and beyond our community and to leave us for further success as adults. We are a big and busy comprehensive school, and all teaching and support staff are united in wanting the best for our students. We work hard, and look for ways to adapt, improve, and create new opportunities for our young people. We don't always get things right and sometimes encounter issues and circumstances for which there aren't easy solutions, but we are honest about that and seek to work collaboratively with parents and carers.

We believe firmly in social justice and equality of opportunity for all; when students cross our threshold each morning, they have access to the same opportunities. As a school we believe in education in its widest sense; students can learn a huge amount both in and beyond the classroom, and, of equal importance, by interacting and working with others. The personal development of each student is key to their future success, and we offer a diverse range of extracurricular opportunities, as well as encouraging participation in public service, particularly through our well established House System.

Job Description

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At Durham Johnston Comprehensive School everyone's first responsibility is to ensure our work remains aligned with our school's core values and ethos and contributes to our long-term strategic vision. Whilst job descriptions vary, our common commitment to the welfare and success of our young people does not.

At Durham Johnston Comprehensive School everyone's first responsibility is to work towards the fulfilment of the school plan. While job descriptions vary, our common commitment to the welfare and success of our young people does not.

General Responsibilities

- To fulfil all duties in line with the Teachers' Standards and the professional expectations of the school.
- To provide successful teaching and learning opportunities for all students so that everyone is able to achieve academic excellence and acquire essential knowledge and prepare them for global opportunities.
- To be committed to improving the quality of your teaching in pursuit of academic excellence for all and to take a full and active part in CPD to this end.
- To be a committed and supportive member of your department, cohort team and the whole school community, working collaboratively to ensure the best outcomes for every member of our school community in the name of both social justice and public service.
- To fulfil the role of the form tutor as an essential part of a student's day and their educational experience. The form tutor is in a unique and privileged position, able to see a fuller picture of a student's life and able to support them in being successful.
- To promote good order and discipline in school by maintaining and supporting whole school routines and performing duties as instructed.
- To celebrate and encourage the achievements of all students.
- To promote the aims of the school plan as appropriate to the professional role of a teacher.
- To participate in appropriate meetings with colleagues and parents.
- To take part in the appraisal and professional development system.
- To follow staff procedures and the procedures and instructions of the LEA and the governing body.
- To work at the reasonable direction of the Headteacher.

General Assistant SENCO Responsibilities

To take joint responsibility with the Inclusion Assistant Head to:

- lead the provision for SEND within school
- manage appropriate resources for SEND and ensure that they are used efficiently, effectively and safely.

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- monitor the learning of students with SEND in liaison with Year Leaders.
- monitor the attendance of students with SEND in liaison with the attendance champion.
- manage and maintain provision maps and student SEND plans/One Page Profiles in conjunction with the SEND administrator and members of the Learning Support team.
- Ensure appropriate provision is in place for student in all exams

Specific Assistant SENCO Responsibilities

- To support the provision of SEND, including the allocation of support time and the writing and reviewing of SEND support plans and One Page Profiles.
- To work with the Inclusion AHT in overseeing the provision of EHCPs.
- To hold annual reviews for students with EHCPs, as required by Assistant head teacher.
- To liaise with relevant outside agencies to ensure that individual student needs are met effectively and that the requirements of EHCPs are fully met.
- To ensure that accurate and detailed records are kept of meetings and discussions with parents and outside agencies.
- To follow the school safeguarding protocols.
- To ensure that staff are kept informed of students' needs and advise on areas to develop and support.
- To work with the Inclusion AHT and other staff to ensure that SEND plans are used to set subject-specific targets and personalised SEND targets.
- To work with the Inclusion AHT to promote an inclusive curriculum.
- To meet with parents termly to review student progress as part of the assess- plan- do-review cycle.
- To communicate with parents in all areas of SEND.
- To monitor the progress of students and advise the SENCO.
- To be responsible for the assessment and applications for access arrangements in liaison with the Examinations Officer.
- To deputise for the Inclusion AHT in matters relating to SEND, as and when appropriate.
- To oversee the daily running of the Learning Support department, including the daily timetable of LSAs.
- To monitor the impact and review all student SEND interventions provided by the Learning Support team.
- To teach a small number of lessons either within the main timetable or as a small group intervention.

Person Specification

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This job description is current and was reviewed on 2nd April 2026, but following consultation with you, may be altered to reflect or anticipate changes in the job which are commensurate with the salary and job title. All posts will be reviewed annually.

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate Honours Degree • Qualified Teacher status • To have completed or be working towards a SENCO qualification • Qualifications to administer access arrangements assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of further study and/or further professional qualifications
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of being an effective classroom practitioner • Experience of working successfully and collaboratively to improve outcomes for all students, especially those who need additional support • Experience of supporting students with additional needs • Experience of communicating with parents and other stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working collaboratively with middle leaders • Experience working with pastoral colleagues
Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to create a strong culture of inclusion • Ability to work collaboratively and strategically • Ability to build, forge and sustain partnerships • Ability to inspire, challenge, and support students • Awareness of inclusion, equity, and diversity in lesson planning • Strong analytical and problem-solving skills • Ability to use ICT proficiently and digital media software • Strong understanding of safeguarding and child protection procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to use data and other information to self-evaluate and improve your own practice • Experience of leading and managing colleagues including teaching assistants

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Personal Attributes

- Commitment to the school's ethos, core values, and strategic vision
- Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Commitment to continuous professional development
- Commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion
- System orientated, extremely well organised and able to solve problems
- High expectations of self, colleagues, and students
- Ability to model professional standards, integrity and behaviours articulating clear values and moral purpose
- Ability to communicate effectively
- Ability to build effective working relationships with staff at all levels
- Ability to engage with and motivate students who may find school challenging
- Passionate about supporting young people
- Calm, approachable, and emotionally resilient
- Reflective and open to feedback
- Kind, tolerant and considerate with a sense of community and a commitment to public service
- Considerate to the wellbeing of colleagues and students

Department Overview

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Inclusion Department at Durham Johnston Comprehensive School

As a fully inclusive school we strive to ensure that all students achieve their potential, personally, socially, emotionally, physically and educationally. The principle that all students should receive a broad and balanced curriculum, relevant to their individual needs, is embedded within our school community. We know when we are successful if all students feel welcomed and comfortable in our classrooms and are supported throughout their education. The Inclusion centre (Lydia) is an integral part of this aim and is located at the heart of the school building where we can ensure that the values of the department are met.

The Inclusion Department consists of:

- AHT Inclusion/SENCO
- Assistant SENCO (new position)
- One enhanced LSA/SENCO support
- Nine LSAs
- One well-being mentor
- SEND administrator

The team offers 1:1 support to students with EHCPs within classrooms, 1:1 support outside of the classroom and to small groups of students at varying times throughout the day.

Interventions which are delivered to students focus predominately on the core subjects of Maths, English and Science. We also support students through social communication and wellbeing groups. The team support students from Years 7-13 and they know each student as an individual.

The aim of all support is to promote independence, resilience and access to the curriculum, and we are very proud of the support and guidance given to the students in our care.

The current numbers of students with SEND in our school are shown below:

Year Group	SEND support	EHCP	Total numbers
7	47	6	53
8	29	7	36
9	18	8	26
10	17	9	25
11	20	6	26
12	2	0	2
13	2	1	3
Totals	134	37	171

Additionally, a number of students in each year group are supported through One Page Profiles within classroom lessons.

Context of Durham Johnston Comprehensive School



Comprehensive Nature

Durham Johnston Comprehensive School is a truly comprehensive school that genuinely serves a social cross-section. We strongly believe that all students regardless of background or ability should have access to a knowledge rich curriculum and are unique in our commitment to both academic rigour and social inclusivity. We have high ambitions for all our students, and we are determined to ensure that every child, no matter where they grow up, whatever their personal circumstances, whatever life has given or denied them, has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and to be happy. For many colleagues, it is this unique opportunity to teach across the ability and social spectrum that is one of the main draws of the school.

Leadership

Durham Johnston is a local authority school and has no plans to join or form a Multi Academy Trust. This allows the school to have its own unique identity and ensures that leadership decisions are made for the benefit of our students and our community. The school is led in a way that seeks to maximise the autonomy of individual classroom teachers and departments, as we recognise that highly dedicated, educated and trained professionals are the people best placed to determine how to teach their subject to the individuals in their classroom. The leadership of the school look to ensure that departments and classroom teachers are supported in a way that allows them to focus on this as much as possible; we keep good order and let our teachers teach.

At a leadership level we are committed to the values of ethical leadership. As a leadership team we listen and respond to staff concerns and our staff are able to raise problems and tough issues when necessary. In a recent staff survey, an overwhelming majority of our staff said they felt well supported by the school's senior leadership team.

Staff Wellbeing

The wellbeing of our staff is central to the ethos of Durham Johnston Comprehensive School and this is evidenced in our exceptionally high staff retention. Leaders are very conscious that our staff are what makes Durham Johnston special; we value them and look after them. We have a strong sense of community within our school and our staff work very hard as a team to support one another. We welcome opportunities to come together as a staff and these can range from tea and scones in the staff room, to the highly competitive end of term departmental quizzes. Many staff socialise both inside and outside of school and in school run sessions such as sport and fitness clubs and wellbeing sessions. Our staff like each other and enjoy spending time together.

Pastoral Care

Students at Durham Johnston benefit from exceptional pastoral care. One of the greatest strengths of the school is the strong, caring relationships between staff and students and the warm, harmonious ethos is regularly commented on by external visitors. We are incredibly proud of our students and who display a positive attitude to their studies and demonstrate a consistently strong desire to learn - we have an unusual culture where it is "cool to be clever". Behaviour in lessons and around school is consistently calm and purposeful due to effective systems built on strong relationships. Our strong pastoral systems help to ensure that every child feels valued and cared for and we offer a bespoke range of support where needed. Our pupils and parents and carers report that bullying is rare but, when it happens, it is dealt with highly effectively. Attendance at our school is very high.

Context of Durham Johnston Comprehensive School



Sixth Form

Our sixth form has a national reputation for excellence and is a specialist A-Level centre. We have over 350 students who join us from a wide geographical area and a range of schools. We offer 25 traditional A-Level subjects and our results consistently place us as one of the highest performing state schools nationally. The vast majority of our students go on to study at Russell Group universities and around 15% of our students each year typically secure places at Oxford, Cambridge, or for Medicine/Veterinary courses. Pastoral support in the Sixth Form is highly specialised and our expert staff and our students receive excellent guidance on transition, UCAS applications, personal statements as well as support on mental wellbeing and building resilience and good habits.

In addition, we offer an exceptional super curricular programme to develop our students beyond the exam syllabus. Our Sixth Formers are remarkable young people and they engage in a wide range of enrichment and leadership opportunities. This includes student led societies ranging from the very academic (quantum computing) through to those that are more social (the Taylor Swift society). Our House leads organise and run house events and competitions, as well as charity fundraising events. Other activities they engage in include: Debate, MedSoc group, Oxbridge group, Year 11 mentoring, Year 7 paired reading, Library leads, Mental health ambassadors, Subject ambassadors, Sports and Music.

Extra-Curricular

We are proud of the range of sports our young people can take part in and the school has regularly been recognised in the top 1% of sport schools nationally by School Sport magazine. This reflects both the range of sports offered, as well as the high standards that many of our students achieve. Our music department lead a series of highly popular orchestras and choirs and we are excited about our upcoming musical. However, it is not just in these two areas that children can access a wide range of opportunities, our offer extends from coding to gardening; from film club to Ancient Greek. There are clubs for everyone and our young people always meet students with a shared interest. We actively seek to ensure that all children find something they can enjoy during their time at Durham Johnston. We were chosen as The Sunday Times National Comprehensive School of the Year for 2019/20 and we are very proud that the award was based upon a wide range of factors, including the opportunities that we provide for students regardless of their backgrounds or personal circumstances. We regularly receive regional awards for academic excellence.

Living in the North East

Living in the North East is an attractive proposition. Many of our staff live within our catchment area and house prices in the region mean that it is ideal both for those seeking to establish themselves on the property ladder, or for families in need of more space. As well as the historic city of Durham, the surrounding area offers much in the way of natural beauty for people to enjoy, whether walking in the Wear valley, visiting the Borders or North York Moors, or surfing in the North Sea on the Northumberland Coast. Equally close is the vibrant city of Newcastle upon Tyne. Well served by transport links, the school is close to both Durham train station, a key stop on the East Coast Mainline, and the A1 (M), allowing easy access to Newcastle, York and London.