



# Cockermouth School

## Recruitment Information Pack

## Contents

1	Welcome .....	3
2	Ethos .....	3
3	The Curriculum .....	4
4	Standards and Outcomes .....	5
5	Teaching and Learning .....	6
6	Summary .....	7
7	The Selection Process .....	8
8	How to Find Us .....	9
9	Contact Details.....	10



## 1 | Welcome

Cockermouth School is a high-performing, co-educational 11-18 comprehensive school that converted to academy status on 1 September 2015. We are a large school, having approximately 1350 students on roll, including over 200 in the Sixth Form. We are the only secondary school serving the market town of Cockermouth and have a large rural catchment area. Most of our students join us from one of our nine feeder primary schools but we currently take children from over 30 different primaries due to our popularity with parents in the area. Our Published Admission Number (PAN) for each year group is 220, but we are close to or over PAN in nearly all year groups and have been significantly oversubscribed for the past three years.

At Cockermouth School, we are proud to be a truly inclusive, comprehensive school and see it as a real strength of ours that we cater for a wide range of abilities and interests. Integrated into our school is a Strategically Resourced Provision (SRP) for Autism that supports students from all over West Cumbria. This SRP is oversubscribed and contains 30 students with varying educational needs, all of whom are predominantly educated and integrated into our main school. This may have an impact on our levels of attainment and achievement but we are fiercely proud of this facility and fully committed to its inclusive nature.



## 2 | Ethos

At Cockermouth School, we believe that success in education is a shared commitment to high expectations; this commitment is a partnership between dedicated staff, motivated students and supportive parents. We offer all of our students a first-rate education based on the twin pillars of high-quality teaching and an expectation that students will work hard. However, we adopt a 'restless' approach to everything we do; critically evaluating the impact of our policies, procedures and lessons to ensure that we offer the very best to our students. We're happy to build on what we do well and change things that need improving and we're always interested in evaluating new ideas. All students know that high standards of academic and personal achievement are expected of them including impeccable behaviour. We expect our students in Years 7-11 to wear our school uniform smartly and with pride and our Sixth Form students to dress for work and to be

role models for younger students. Our core values of aspire, enjoy, include, respect and community underpin everything that we do.

Cockermouth School is well known locally for being a caring and supportive school. Our pastoral system, and the support we give our students, is outstanding. Whether it is through the formal pastoral system of Form Tutor and Head of Year, or through support in the classroom by Teaching Assistants, our students are encouraged to be the very best they can be. It is important to us that students enjoy school and feel cared for and safe and we believe that a large part of our success is down to ensuring that every student feels respected and confident in their abilities.

### 3 | The Curriculum

We believe that the high quality teaching of a broad curriculum is fundamental to students' success, both in school and afterwards. We have maintained a traditional three-year Key Stage 3 ensuring that we retain the breadth of students' experience for as long as possible. This allows our students to develop as learners and make the most informed choices possible for their examination subjects. At Key Stages 4 and 5, we offer a wide range of courses and pathways to meet the needs of all of our learners, catering for those who prefer to follow a more vocational path through to our most academic students who pursue their careers at the very top universities. Through a careful and tailored advice and guidance process, many of our students choose to study the EBacc suite of qualifications, although this is not compulsory. Our students' success in these subject areas is amongst the best in the county.

We passionately believe that success at school is measured by what is achieved both inside and outside the classroom and we offer a wide range of educational experiences that challenge and inspire our students. In addition to a huge number of sporting activities, clubs and trips, we have a full British Council International School Award. Through this, and other mechanisms, we have active educational programs and exchanges with schools in many parts of Europe, in Taiwan and in Sri Lanka. These allow our students the opportunity to visit and work with people and cultures around the world. We maintain a healthy Duke of Edinburgh programme and have offered World Challenge trips for many years; the most recent being to Vietnam and Cambodia. In addition, we send students on research trips to the Amazon rainforest in Peru through Operation Wallacea and to the glaciers of Iceland. Closer to home, we are delighted to have been recognised for our work on encouraging diversity through our achievement of a Stonewall Silver Award (currently working towards Gold) and have been named Cumbria Public Sector Diversity Champions for our work with students.



## 4 | Standards & Outcomes

As mentioned earlier, we are a high-performing, fully inclusive comprehensive school. In 2017, 72% of Year 11 students achieved 5 or more A\*-C (or 9-4 for English and mathematics) grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. Nearly 80% of our students gained grades 9-4 in English and mathematics and nearly a third gained the EBacc suite of qualifications at a grade 5/C or better. Our Progress 8 of +0.05 means that we perform very well in the Cumbrian league tables; however, with outliers removed, including the small number of students on a vocational pathway and those who received significant multi-agency support, this figure increases to +0.20. Staff and governors recognise that outcomes for students can always be improved and work closely together to develop action plans to improve results; in recent years, these action plans have improved performance in subjects by approximately 10%.

At Key Stage 5, results continue to improve year on year. In 2017, 60% of students achieved all A\*-B grades at A Level and 82% achieved all A\*-C. Students make exceptional progress in their A Level studies at Cockermouth School and in 2017, we achieved an Alps score that puts us in the top 10% of schools in the country for progress. We support our students into a wide range of future careers, whether this is in apprenticeships, employment or to university. The overwhelming majority of our students (83%) progress to Higher Education with over 40% of our students going on to study at Russell group and top 20 universities. We run a dedicated Oxbridge programme with considerable success; in the last two years, half of all students from Cumbria that have gone to study at Oxford or Cambridge have come from Cockermouth School.

As a result of our high performance at both GCSE and A Level, in 2017 we were selected to be in the Sunday Times Parent Power list of the top 500 secondary schools in the country. We were delighted to be identified as being in the top 10% of all secondary schools and to be the top performing non-selective secondary school in Cumbria.



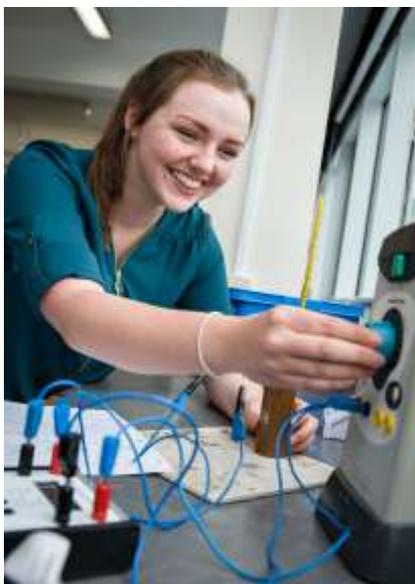
## 5 | Teaching and Learning

Improving the quality and consistency of teaching and learning is a central focus for all staff at Cockermouth School. Indeed, that simple statement is the basis and sole focus of our School Improvement Plan for this year and the next few years. We have removed all other distractions to the point that our School Improvement Plan for 2017/18 is a single side of A4, focusing on just this aspect. At Cockermouth School, we passionately believe that improving the quality and consistency of teaching and learning is the single most important factor in improving the experience and outcomes for students, and we believe that teachers should be given the time and support to focus on this.

To help staff understand how this looks on a day-to-day basis, a Teaching and Learning Policy has been developed. This was produced with input from many staff and was introduced as a source of advice and guidance (not prescription) in September 2017. Alongside this, each department has produced a Teaching and Learning Development Plan which enables them to evaluate their performance in six key areas of teaching and learning and outline improvement processes within each of these. These development plans focus on the same key areas as the Teaching and Learning Policy and are: Leadership of the department; Marking and written feedback; Informed lesson planning; Responsive teaching; Effective behaviour management and Meaningful homework. To ensure that departments have the time to work collaboratively on these areas, departmental INSET time has been doubled for 2017/18.

Underpinning this further is our approach to teacher development and appraisal. Our appraisal process focuses on each teacher's Personal Professional Development (PPD), each cycle of which runs from September until July so that the focus isn't purely on academic results. We believe that a culture of collaborative, reflective, continuous improvement results in professional teachers who are committed to raising outcomes for students. To that end, we do not grade individual lessons at Cockermouth School as we understand that improvement is a long-term goal; we trust our teachers to work as professionals in their own classrooms. In our PPD cycle, staff reflect on their teaching from the previous year and use this information to identify one or two areas in their teaching practice that they wish to develop; this should be linked to one of the broad areas within their departmental Teaching and Learning Development Plan. Using a research-based methodology, teachers are given time to reflect on their practice, to experiment with new approaches and to evaluate the impact of these on the learning of students.

Within a wider context, staff are encouraged to work closely with colleagues from other schools, both locally and nationally. We are a strategic partner in two local Teaching School Alliances which ensure that we receive an influx of trainee teachers every year and opportunities for professional development in other schools. Subject leaders and staff come together regularly across schools to collaborate on planning and to discuss the latest developments in their subjects and at a more senior level, deputy heads and headteachers meet with colleagues from all schools in the area on a half-termly basis.





## 6 | Summary

Cockermouth School is a very successful school, located in one of the most beautiful parts of the country, surrounded by a supportive local community. We are fortunate to be blessed with committed, hard-working staff and friendly, engaging, well-behaved students. This is reinforced by a governing body that offers an excellent balance of support and challenge and a parent body that is genuinely interested in working with the school to achieve the best for their child.

Our ethos is one of continuous improvement and therefore we don't play games with children's education or jump on the latest bandwagon. Instead, we critically evaluate what we do, building upon our successes and working hard to improve where we need to. We don't chase Ofsted grades; we believe in being the best school that we can be for all of our students.

At Cockermouth School, we have an exciting future ahead of us. We would love to hear from you if you would like to be part of the next stage of our journey.

**Dr Rob Petrie BSc PhD**  
**Headteacher**



## 7 | The Selection Process

Applicants will be shortlisted equally against the requirements of the Person Specification. In all cases of those who are applying for paid employment, the same selection panel will both short-list and interview applicants.

Those whose application forms provide information that best meets the criteria of the Job Description, Person Specification, experience and qualifications will be invited for interview.

A satisfactory explanation for any concerns will be obtained from the applicant during the interview process.

You will be tested on your suitability to work with children and young people. This will include specific safeguarding questions during the interview. Cockermouth School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people.

Cockermouth School is committed to ensuring that throughout the recruitment process, no applicant is disadvantaged or discriminated against because of their age, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity status.



## 8 | How to Find Us

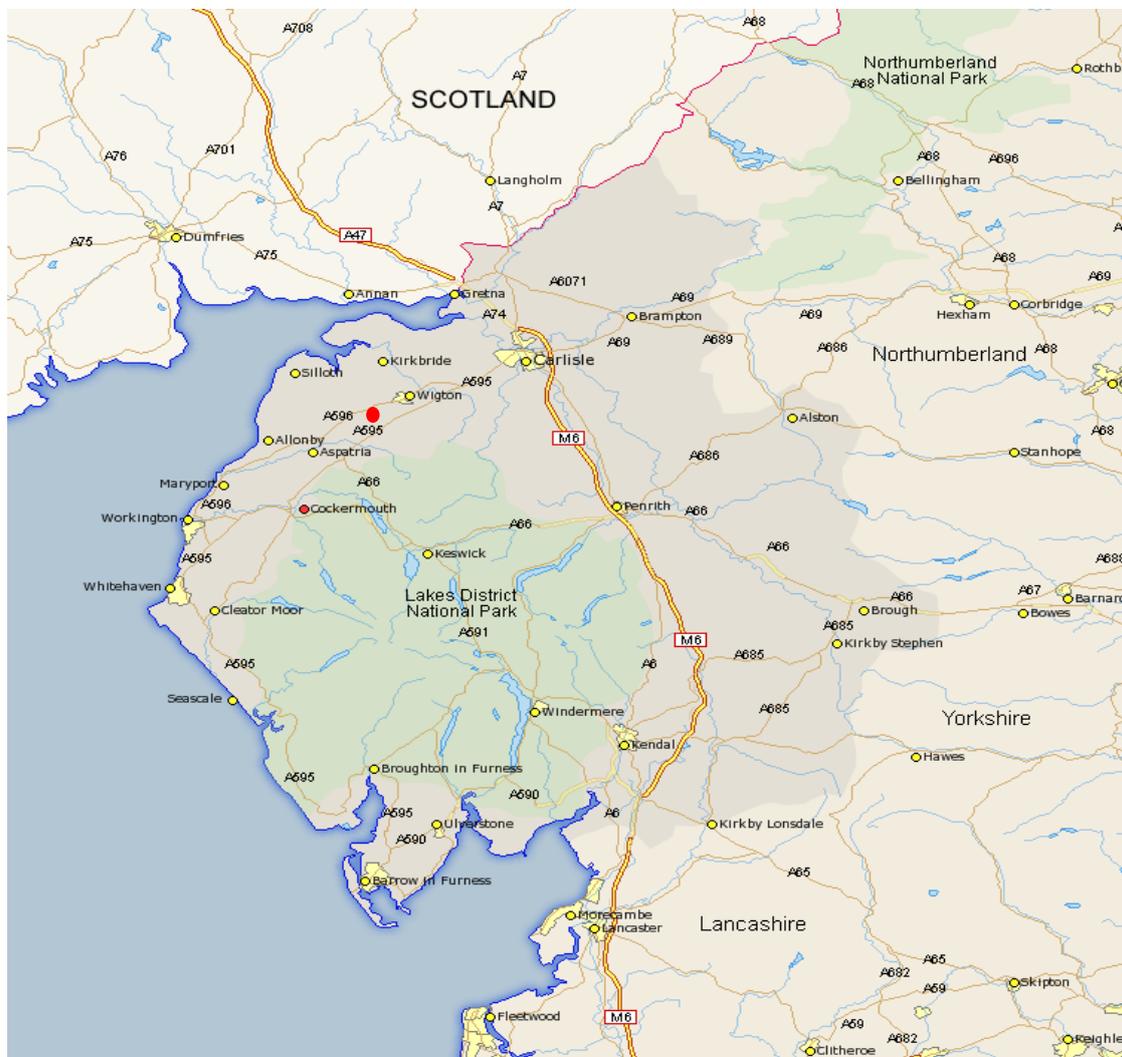
**By road:** From the M6 leave at Junction 40 (Penrith) and follow the A66 towards Cockermouth. Turn right at Embleton then follow the road into Cockermouth. Cockermouth School is the first building on the right hand side.

**By rail:** Nearest main line station is Penrith.

**By air:** Newcastle International (2 hours)

Manchester International (2 hours 30 mins)

Glasgow International (2 hours 30 mins)



**Headteacher:**  
Dr R P Petrie BSc PhD

**Chair of Governors:**  
Mr Paul Moody

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