

Durham High School



Assistant Head- Pastoral

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Welcome

I am delighted that you are considering joining Durham High School for the next stage of your career in education. Ours is a community where ambition flourishes, talents shine, and lifelong friendships are formed. We are the North East's leading independent schools for girls aged 3-18, and consistently achieve the highest GCSE and A Level results in COunty Durham. In December, we were honoured to be named The Sunday Times Independent Secondary School of the Year 2025—a testament to the exceptional education and care we provide. Our Christian ethos is at the heart of everything we do, shaping a school where kindness, respect, and integrity thrive. With outstanding facilities, a beautiful woodland setting, and a team of expert teachers and support staff, Durham High School is a stimulating and caring environment where our pupils grow in confidence and character.

The role of Assistant Head (Pastoral) is a new and exciting addition to our senior leadership team, offering the opportunity to further develop pastoral excellence at Durham High School. Our girls leave us as well-rounded, resilient, and confident individuals, ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

This position presents a fantastic opportunity to lead and inspire an enthusiastic and skilled team of Heads of Year and pastoral staff. You will have the chance to innovate, develop new initiatives, and shape the future of pastoral care at Durham High School.

Like many independent schools, we face challenges in the current climate. However, Durham High School has

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continually proven itself to be resilient, dynamic, and forward-thinking. Our recent strategic partnership with Galaxy Global Education, offers exciting opportunities for growth and international development. As we expand our senior leadership team, we are looking for a dedicated professional with strategic vision, innovative thinking, and the ability to inspire those around them.

If you have the skills, experience, and passion to take on this role, we would warmly encourage you to apply. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best Wishes
Michelle Hill
Headmistress



Our Heritage

The school was founded in 1884 by the Church Schools' Company and in 1910 the school's governing body took over and formed an independent school.

We were one of the first schools in the North East of England to take girls' education seriously and we are proud to continue that tradition today; we seek to develop the potential of every girl in all areas of life.

In the 1960s, Durham High School moved to our current site, its first purpose-built premises on the edge of the city adjacent to the new Durham University colleges.

Our Aims:

- To create a friendly, caring community based on Christian principles where every individual is valued
- To develop the potential of every girl in all areas of her life
- To encourage academic excellence and a life-long love of learning

We are keen to widen access as much as possible, with means-tested bursaries, and academic scholarships, to enable as many girls as possible to attend the school from a wide area.

Our Location

Durham High School is ideally located in the heart of Durham City in the North East of England, with excellent transport links.

The school is just minutes from Durham train station, providing direct rail connections to Newcastle, Edinburgh, and London. It is also easily accessible via the A1(M) motorway, connecting to major road networks across the region.

Newcastle International Airport is less than 30 minutes away, offering domestic and international flights.

Our Results

In 2024 82.6% of pupils achieved grades A*-B at A Level, which was significantly higher than national average. 63% of all grades were A*-A.

At GCSE, the proportion of top grades (9-7) was 67.8%, which is significantly higher than regional and national averages.



The Durham High Difference



At Durham High School, we are driven by a purpose that inspires:

- To create a friendly, caring community based on Christian principles where every individual is valued
- To develop the potential of every girl in all areas of her life
- To encourage academic excellence and a life-long love of learning

We do this through:

Exceptional Learning

Our curriculum is designed to ignite curiosity and inspire achievement. Every pupil benefits from a learning experience that's inclusive, innovative, and tailored to nurture their potential.

Outstanding Pastoral Care

At Durham High, every girl is seen, heard, known and valued.

People at the Heart

As an employer, Durham High School champions its Christian ethos by fostering a culture of respect, growth, and opportunity for all staff.

A Thriving Community

Durham High School is more than a place to learn; it's a dynamic community where students, families, and staff come together to create lasting connections. Together, we strengthen and grow the vibrant spirit that defines our school.



Leadership and Governance

Our Headmistress Michelle Hill joined the school in September 2021 as Pastoral Deputy Head. She was appointed Vice Principal 3-18 in September 2022 and Headmistress in October 2023.

Michelle leads the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) that will include the Director of Finance and Operations, Deputy Headmistress, Assistant Head Pastoral Head of Pre-Prep and Prep.

SLT reports to the school's Management Board, which is chaired by Mr Nick Grenfell-Marten.

"The Pupils at Durham High School are enthusiastic and ambitious learners with a genuine desire to succeed."

ISI Inspection Report Oct 22



The Role

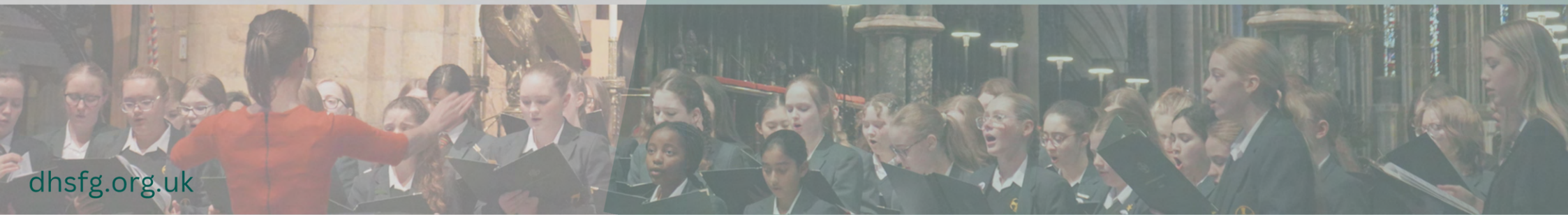
- Working under the direction of the Headmistress, the Assistant Headteacher will contribute effectively to the school's strategic development plan, providing leadership and direction to colleagues across Durham High School.
- In conjunction with the Headmistress, will be responsible for all Pastoral aspects of the day-to-day running of the school, whilst maintaining and developing the school's ethos and values.
- To work effectively with individuals at all levels and operate with purpose, integrity, enthusiasm and emotional intelligence.
- To be a credible ambassador for the school.

Responsible for:

- Heads of Year,
- Mental Health Leads,
- Deputy Safeguarding Leads,
- School Counsellor.

Remuneration:

This position will encompass a teaching responsibility of 50% and will be paid on the DHS Leadership Scale 14 (£64,908.09).



Job description



Policy / Strategic direction and development

- To assist the Headmistress to create and communicate a shared vision across Durham High School, which expresses the core values of the whole school, is responsive to local factors, and which motivates and inspires others.
- To play a significant role in setting aims and objectives for the pastoral life of the School and in formulating the School Improvement Plan along with the Management Board and Senior Leadership Team.
- To take responsibility for developing and monitoring policy and practice relating to the pastoral matters, as laid down in the School Improvement Plan, and in agreement with the Headmistress
- To assist the Headmistress in school self-review and evaluation and in the effective planning and management of resources to secure improvements within the Pastoral life of the school.
- Publicly supporting all decisions of the Headteacher and the Management Board.
- Contribute to whole school policy development in relation to the pastoral life of the School as required by the Headmistress.
- Contribute to Management Board Education Committee meetings, and the Safeguarding Committee meeting in relation to pastoral matters.

Job description



Leadership and Management

- Work with the Headmistress to lead, motivate, support, challenge and develop all staff to secure continual improvement including his/her own continual professional development.
- To be an exemplar of all school policies and practices.
- To support the Headmistress to lead in appraisal of the school counsellor, Mental Health Leads and to contribute to the HOYs appraisal.
- Work with the SLT to contribute to the programme of professional development for all staff in relation to pastoral and safeguarding.
- To assist the Head of Pre-Prep and Prep with pastoral support as required.
- Oversee the pastoral monitoring and tracking of pupils by HOYs and Head of Prep-Prep and Prep in relation to attendance, behaviour, including implementation of intervention strategies and support.
- In conjunction with the Deputy Headmistress, identify pupils who need support with academic underachievement due to SEMH or behavioural difficulties.
- In conjunction with the Headmistress, offer support for any colleague who is underperforming or who is struggling with any aspect of their pastoral role in Senior Department and Sixth Form.
- As a lead professional, regularly review own practice, set personal targets and take responsibility for own continuous professional development.
- Chair Heads of Year meetings and Mental Health Lead meetings to ensure that they are used effectively to review performance and that actions are recorded and implemented.

Job description



Specific Responsibilities

- Act as a Designated Safeguarding Lead (following a training year as Deputy Safeguarding Lead) to ensure quality of provision across school and effective safeguarding of pupils at all times.
- Contribute to a positive ethos for learning.
- Promote the values and achievements of the school to the community.
- To plan and deliver whole school assemblies as per the rota.
- Be part of the SLT late duty rota.
- Responsible for the Pupil Voice across Senior Department and Sixth Form leading School Council, Catering Committee and Diversity and Inclusion (including Diversity Week).
- Production of homework timetables for Senior Department.
- Liaise with the Head of Prep-Prep and Prep and Head of Year 7 regarding transition into Senior Department, including the allocation of pupils to tutor groups.
- Oversee Moving Up Evening and Welcome Day in conjunction with the Head of Year 7.
- Support the Head of Year 11 and Sixth Form with Social Events relating to Leavers/ Transition
- Responsibility as Head of Year or Head of Key Stage as required.
- To keep abreast of all relevant regulations , trends, educational initiatives and developments relating to pastoral care.
- Appreciate the Christian ethos of Durham High School and promote its values through the work of the whole school.

Job description

Pastoral Care

- To Support the Heads of Year and Head of Pre-Prep and Prep with Pastoral matters where required.
- Engage proactively with parents and families to build positive supportive relationships across the school community which enable pupils to flourish in their learning and development.
- Liaise with parents and staff over more serious pastoral issues and proving leadership over the provision of support and help to the School's most vulnerable pupils.
- In conjunction with SLT, ensure effective systems are in place to support the physical, mental and moral safety, wellbeing and welfare of all pupils (including before and after school provision).
- Consult with experts/agencies (internal and external) as appropriate and address any concerns with sensitivity and diplomacy, keeping the Headmistress informed as appropriate.



Teaching and learning

- Model excellence and innovation in teaching and learning, ensuring a continuous and consistent phase focus on pupils' achievement and development (moral, spiritual, physical and social, as well as academic).
- To work with all staff, including the SENDCo, to ensure the school is a diverse and inclusive environment, meeting the needs of all pupils.

Job description



Administration

- **Contribute to the annual compilation of the Staff Handbook in relation to Pastoral matters.**

In addition:

- **Have oversight of whole school registers and attendance.**
- **Keep up to date with ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate) regulations and prepare documentation for inspection in relation to pastoral matters.**
- **To complete paperwork relating to annual review for those who you line manage.**
- **To complete paperwork and meet with colleagues in Senior Department and Sixth Form who have been absent for whom you have line management responsibilities.**
- **To support the Deputy Headmistress welcoming pupils at the start of examinations during school examination week and the mock examinations.**

Marketing and external links, including public occasions

- **Working in consultation with the Headmistress and the School's marketing team, implement a range of robust and innovative marketing strategies across the whole school to ensure its attractiveness in the wider market and secure optimum pupil numbers.**
- **Develop amongst staff an outward perspective and personal commitment to promotion of the School.**
- **In collaboration with SLT, ensure the smooth running of Open Days to provide engaging activities and stimulating classroom environment for the positive promotion and marketing of the school.**

The Person



Educational Attainment and Qualifications

- Appropriate degree, with UK PGCE, or other teaching qualification giving QTS.
- Award of the National Professional Qualification or Headship or other relevant professional qualification. (desirable).
- Higher degree/ professional qualification in education/ leadership. (desirable).



The Person



Experience, Knowledge and Skills - Essential

- A commitment to teaching and living out the values of the school.
- Ability to create and articulate a visionary strategy and understand the mechanisms to deliver this.
- Outstanding interpersonal skills; high levels of emotional intelligence.
- Ability to inspire, challenge, motivate and empower colleagues.
- A demonstrable ability to develop a culture in which striving for exceptional pastoral care is at the heart of the school's culture and practice.
- Proven ability to effect change and take that through to a positive conclusion at departmental and whole school level.
- Able to articulate strategic thinking.
- Able to demonstrate high quality teaching.
- Evidence of having high expectations of staff, the ability to evaluate their performance, support their growth and to tackle any underperformance robustly.
- Knowledge of the ISI regulatory framework.



The Person

Experience, Knowledge and Skills - Desirable

- Experience of working in an all-through school.
- Experience of whole school senior leadership.
- A clear understanding of health and safety procedures in schools.
- An understanding of the commercial, economic and financial responsibilities relevant to the management of schools.
- Successful experience of whole school pastoral leadership.



Pre-Prep and Prep



We implement a curriculum which is fun and academically rigorous, but at the same time is supportive of individual progress, personal strengths and areas to develop. Our expert, professional team utilise the best of pedagogy and research into early childhood learning and our wonderful enabling environment to ensure your child has an exemplary foundation to their educational career.

The children's timetable consists of core subject teaching of Mathematics and English each morning, whilst the afternoon sessions offer the flexibility for further learning to take place within specific year groups, or to work across phase to enable the elements of the non-core subjects to be taught by experts through a thematic, connected approach. Teaching takes place in stimulating classrooms and a superb large outdoor provision area, including a woodland environment complete with tepee and a purposeful, heated and illuminated Outdoor Classroom.

Throughout the Pre-Prep department, indoor and outdoor areas of provision and challenge are established for all children to be able to work independently, increasing opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, to reinforce and extend prior learning and to be creative. We have mapped the Early Years Foundation Stage and KS1 National Curriculum, transforming it into a progressive and unique Pre-Prep curriculum. Open-ended challenges will be used for those with more advanced skills, where more emphasis is placed on leadership, application, presentation, and higher-level thinking skills.



"Children make rapid progress in relation to their starting points, thus reaching or surpassing national age-related expectations by the end of Reception." ISI Report, October 2022.

Senior Department



In Senior Department, a broad, balanced curriculum equips girls with the skills and academic excellence necessary for adult life in the 21st century. We believe that success is best achieved through enjoyment.

Durham High School's reputation for academic success is wholly justified: as experts in the teaching of girls, we know how girls learn and provide an environment in which they can flourish.

Our Senior staff are dynamic and enthusiastic, and are indefatigable in their efforts to secure the best possible outcome for our girls. Our lessons are engaging and stimulating, fostering curiosity and the determination to succeed. We encourage girls to be aspirational. Our pastoral care is also exemplary; each girl feels secure as part of a happy and compassionate community and knows she is valued as an individual.

To broaden and develop the interests of each girl, we offer an extensive extra-curricular programme with activities to suit all. There are opportunities in sport, drama and art, among others, and we regularly see pupil success locally, regionally and nationally in these areas. Our numerous clubs also include astronomy, dance, journalism, photography and practical science. Residential and day trips, as well as international trips, are offered to each age group, to help to broaden horizons to new experiences.

A key characteristic of Durham High School is a feeling of community and being part of a family in which every girl is known and valued by her teachers. We strive to ensure that not only are girls looked-after, but that they also look after each other, learning to respect difference.

Pupil voice is also incredibly important, with School Council, Eco Council, our Interact Charity group and various leadership opportunities throughout Senior Department ensuring that girls have the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the school and wider community.

Regular whole school events encourage all girls to be fully involved in the life of the school, as well as broadening their friendships to include girls in other year groups. We create opportunities both in the classroom and beyond for girls. While academic expectations are high and we are certainly proud of our results, careful and caring support from staff ensures that girls manage their work load while maintaining a healthy balance with their other activities.

Supporting and nurturing spiritual and moral values, and encouraging positive mental health and wellbeing is high on our agenda. Our Personal, Social Health, Careers, Citizenship and Economic Education (PSHCCE) programme enables girls to explore and debate the issues and challenges they will encounter in the modern world.

Sixth Form



We are proud of the vibrant, friendly community the Sixth Form at Durham High School provides, with its reputation for consistently outstanding achievement at A Level.

The caring, supportive environment ensures that all girls fulfil their academic potential, as well as developing the self-assurance, the moral framework and the leadership skills they will need in a challenging world.

The Sixth Form is sometimes taxing, but never dull, and will indubitably, be very rewarding and enjoyable. We are confident that studying in our Sixth Form provides two of the most enjoyable years of our pupils' school life, as well as the best possible preparation for university and beyond.

The Sixth Form is a close-knit community where girls can relax and enjoy the exclusive use of their common room, private study room and a diner. Each girl is assigned a Tutor who provides pastoral support and academic mentoring.

To complement their academic studies, our enrichment programme covers areas such as Democracy in Action, Astronomy and Life Skills. A programme of lectures is delivered by specialists in a range of fields.

Sixth Form



There is extensive provision for extra-curricular activities and many of our Sixth Form participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Many trips are on offer, both social and curriculum-based, with everything on offer from Christmas Shopping trips in a European city such as Paris, to a project-based expedition to a developing country such as Malawi or Vietnam.

Sixth Formers are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school and most undertake leadership roles or work with younger girls in the school, though After School Care or by supporting some of our many extra-curricular activities.

The learning environment is designed to enable girls to achieve their academic potential. Teaching groups are small and facilities are excellent. Our highly qualified teachers, who are all specialists in their subjects, are always available to offer individual advice and support. Our Sixth Form team work closely with girls to provide advice and support at every stage of the university application process. Practice interviews are arranged with relevant professionals and extra lessons are provided for those who need to sit additional admissions tests such as UCAT, STEP and LNAT.

At the end of their studies, the majority of our pupils head to their first choice university, with many taking up places at prestigious Russell Group universities, or at Oxbridge.

ISI Inspection

Durham High School was judged 'Excellent' across all areas by the latest inspection carried out by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) in October 2022.

The school succeeded in fulfilling every standard examined during the Regulatory Compliance Inspection, where each standard is simply 'met' or 'not met': there is no evaluative judgement in the report beyond this.

This inspection includes the standards of the quality of education; the suitability of staff and those in contact with our pupils; the welfare of our young people and their moral, social and cultural development. We also met every requirement relating to the premises and the provision of information.



The key findings in the Educational Quality Inspection were:

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils make excellent progress and achieve highly in both academic and other areas.
- Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are excellent across all areas of learning.
- Pupils of all ages are excellent communicators who listen well and express themselves articulately both orally and in writing.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent study skills. Their attitudes to learning are outstanding and underpin the high levels of achievement throughout the school.

The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils display an extremely strong moral awareness and have a clear understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils show outstanding levels of respect; they value diversity and demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance towards others.
- Pupils' social development is excellent; they collaborate extremely well in lessons and extracurricular activities.
- Pupils make an excellent contribution to the life of the school, the local community and the world beyond.

Additional Benefits



The successful applicant will benefit from:

- Being part of a fantastically vibrant and supportive community with the most amazing and enthusiastic pupils.
- Royal London Defined Contribution Pension Scheme.
- Free onsite parking.
- Lunch provided each day during term time
- 50% staff fee remission scheme from Reception to Sixth Form.
- Employee Assistance Programme (Education Support).
- Blue Light reward card.
- Access to in school counsellor.



How to Apply



Please complete the application form, available from the School's website, and submit as a pdf document, with a covering letter, of no more than 2 sides of A4 (pdf), outlining your reasons for applying and why you will be a good fit for our school community.

• Your application should be addressed for the attention of the Headmistress and sent by email to : enquiries@dhsfg.org.uk.

• Closing date for applications: Wednesday 12 March 2025, 9.00am

• Interviews will be held week commencing: 17 and 21 March

Safeguarding and Safer recruitment

Durham High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure and Prohibition from teaching and management check

In addition, as part of the shortlisting process, Durham High School will carry out an online search on the shortlisted candidates as part of its due diligence, as per The Governments 'Keeping Children Safe in Education ' document (September 2024)

Equal Opportunities

The School is committed to the principles of equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion. We are committed to attracting and retaining the very best staff and ensuring that our staff body reflects the diversity of our students and local community.



