

Assistant Principal Polam Hall School

RECRUITMENT INFORMATION PACK



Welcome from the Principal

Thank you for considering an application to our school. Polam is a very special place to work – a genuine community of staff, students and families. It is a quirky school, with a unique story and heritage and it doesn't quite fit into any of the usual boxes. We have an independent past and much of that ethos remains. And yet we are a truly comprehensive school with over 30% of our students receiving Pupil Premium. We have a very clear mission – to develop flourishing young people with ambition and integrity who are equipped intellectually, morally and socially to live fulfilling lives and make positive contributions to their communities. In practice this is about educating the whole child: a commitment to nurturing the talents of our students – academic and beyond - and developing them into confident young people.

We are also a school that takes our staff seriously. We want to employ committed and passionate people who are great at what they do and always have the students at the heart of their work. We aim for excellence in all we do – and are always driving to improve our practice and our school. But we also know that our staff are human beings with families and lives beyond school. We try very hard to apply common sense to our work!

If you would like to know more about our school or the role, please do come and visit us and see for yourself what makes Polam a great school to work in.

Kate Reid, Principal

Our School

Polam Hall School is a 4 – 16 all-through academy and is part of Woodard Academies Trust. We have approximately 850 pupils on roll, with one and a half forms of entry in our Primary Phase and four forms in each cohort in the Secondary Phase. A school with a unique and long history, Polam Hall is today proud to be a fully comprehensive school serving all the young people of Darlington. Our mission is to educate the whole child, developing leadership, compassion, character and academic ambition, through the combination of our Academic and Concordia Crescimus curricula.

The school is located in the centre of Darlington, easily accessible by car and public transport. Darlington station is about a 15 minute walk from our campus. We are part of the DfE Schools Rebuilding Programme which will provide us with modern, state of the art facilities, alongside a full refurbishment of our historic buildings, by 2030.

Outcomes for our children and young people are strong. We have consistently positive outcomes on all measures in our Primary phase, from Early Years onwards. At GCSE pupils make good progress from their starting points which enable them to access the Post 16 destinations of their choice. But we also recognise that there is more to be done to achieve truly excellent outcomes for every pupil – especially for our disadvantaged cohort. Ofsted last visited us in November 2025, when we volunteered for inspection at the start of the new framework. In a rigorous inspection we were pleased that the strength of our Concordia Crescimus curriculum was recognised and that all areas of our school were judged to be at least at the Expected standard.

Polam Hall is a community where staff and students work together for common goals. We make every effort to develop our staff team, offering professional development opportunities and the chance to be part of a wider Trust, yet retaining the friendly and supportive atmosphere of a small school. We are looking for energetic and enthusiastic people to join our team, who have children at the heart of their practice and who will help us to drive forward our aim: to deliver an outstanding education to every single one of our pupils.

Woodard Academies Trust is a national MAT with six schools across England from East Sussex to North Tyneside. The Trust's vision is to support strong schools to deliver great outcomes, opening minds, raising expectations, and transforming lives.

The roles

One of our current Vice Principals is leaving us for a promoted post elsewhere and this has led to a re-structure of our Senior Leadership Team, to better reflect our current priorities. Therefore, we are seeking two Assistant Principals to join the senior team. Both roles will work throughout our school, in both Junior and Senior Schools. We know that applicants are unlikely to have worked in both phases of education and we would want to see a willingness to learn about the phase that is less familiar to you.

Assistant Principal: Inclusion

We are looking for someone with a passion for inclusive education and also the practical skills and knowledge to make inclusion work. The postholder will act as our strategic SENCO and must either hold or be prepared to work towards a NASENCO or NPQSENCO qualification. The day-to-day operation of our SEND provision is led by our SEND Manager, who will be line managed by the Assistant Principal: Inclusion. Working with the wider SLT, this role will also manage the new Inclusive Mainstream Funding and will steer our response to the White Paper.

The remit of this role is inclusion in its widest sense, however, and the postholder will also be accountable for improving provision and outcomes for our disadvantaged students (including oversight of the Pupil Premium Strategy), those with English as an Additional Language and our Most Able students. There are leads for EAL and for More Able whose work in these areas will be overseen by the successful candidate.

Assistant Principal: Teaching and Curriculum

We seek an excellent classroom practitioner, who has the skills, knowledge, experience and drive to lead teaching and curriculum across the school. Our strong middle leadership team has worked to develop curriculum at subject and phase level. This role will bring oversight of curriculum, seeking to reduce in-school variation in curriculum quality and ensuring excellence whilst still enabling domain and phase specific autonomy. One of our priorities for development is a progressive and age appropriate revision curriculum.

We are a Steplab school and are committed to the coaching programme which we have just begun to introduce. Excellent teaching is the key to improving outcomes and we look for a leader who can help us build a culture where all staff are keen to develop their practice and see themselves as part of a learning community. The successful candidate would also have responsibility for staff CPD as a whole.

More information about both roles can be found in the job descriptions. Visits to the school are welcome. Contact information@phs.woodard.co.uk to arrange.

Please note applicants should use the supporting statement section of the application form to clearly evidence their ability to meet the requirements outlined in the person specification. The information in this section will be used to shortlist applicants for the role and therefore it is important that enough detail is provided to give a full picture of skills and experience and what can be contributed to teaching and learning at Polam Hall.

Polam Hall School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Safer recruitment practice and pre-employment checks will be undertaken before any appointment is confirmed. This post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

