



Executive Headteacher

Ashburton & Buckfastleigh
Primary Schools

Stronger Together...
Every Child in a Great School

Life-changing Learning



Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in our vacancy for Executive Headteacher at Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Primary Schools. WeST is a bright, vibrant and thriving cross phase Multi Academy Trust serving over 14,000 children and young people across Devon, Plymouth



Carl Atkinson
Chair of the Board of Trustees
Westcountry Schools

WeST has adopted a revised governance model centered on local engagement through Westcountry Community Councils (WCCs). Each school is part of a WCC, which provides a strong link between the Trust Board, individual schools, and their communities. You will work closely with your fellow Headteacher's within your WCC community, which meets termly to review school the remit and the Community Lived Experience. WCC Chairs and Vice-Chairs maintain direct communication with the Trust Board, ensuring local insight informs decision-making and strengthens accountability across the Trust.

Please find enclosed a range of information to assist you in preparing your application. For further information about both Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Primary Schools, please visit their website:

<https://www.ashburton-primary.devon.sch.uk/>

<https://www.buckfastleigh.devon.sch.uk/>

We would encourage visits to the school in support of research that will be facilitated by our School Improvement Lead, who will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

If you wish to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or you wish to have an informal discussion, please contact:

Admin@westst.org.uk and ask to speak with Nathan Kemp, School Improvement Lead.

Once again, thank you for your interest in WeST. We look forward to receiving your application.



From the Trust

This is a hugely exciting time for Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST). Our Trust now brings together 31 schools across South Devon, Plymouth and Cornwall, with a strong likelihood of further growth in the years ahead. Each school proudly retains its local identity, yet together we are united in one mission: Empowering ALL children to impact positively on society. Our vision is simple but powerful: Every child achieving in a great school.

We unashamedly strive for academic excellence. Our schools share this commitment, knowing that great outcomes create life chances and opportunities for young people. We are proud to place high expectations at the heart of our work, while ensuring that inclusivity remains central to everything we do. Our Trust is moving towards a clustering model, enabling schools to retain their autonomy and distinctiveness whilst benefiting from the collective.



Nat Parnell

CEO
Westcountry Schools

This interconnectedness forms the backbone of how we work. The best trusts run quietly in the background: you may not always notice them, but they provide essential support when it matters most. In WeST, what binds us together is not uniformity but a common set of shared values.

To collaboration, aspiration, integrity and compassion, we add a further hallmark of our community: Respect showing due consideration for the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of others.

We are deliberately large enough to sustain a high quality central school improvement team, so that colleagues at the chalk face are supported to achieve the very best for children. Our shared services also play a vital role, providing excellent professional support to busy schools and leadership teams. By lifting the heavy load of background activity, we can do what matters most: do everything we can to enable teachers to be really good in the classroom.

Collaboration across WeST offers a wealth of benefits: sharing best practice in teaching and learning, curriculum design, and staff development, as well as joint working in finance, HR estates, governance, and wider school improvement. Beyond our boundaries, WeST remains outward-looking and proudly works in partnership with the South West Regions Group Director, the Teaching School Hub Council, Higher Education Institutions, The Local Authority and employers.

The successful candidate will influence and shape the Trust's future direction, work alongside expert colleagues, and join a cross-phase family where the combined efforts of staff and schools are focused on giving children the very best start in life. There can be no greater privilege than to work with such wonderful pupils and super staff, whose commitment and passion drive everything we do.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

While all our schools retain their own identity, we are a united family who share a common Vision, Mission, and Values. We believe that by working collectively, we are stronger and can provide the very best education for our children.



Vision:

Every child achieving in a Great School



Mission:

Empowering children & young people to impact positively on Society.



Values:

Collaboration, Aspiration, Integrity, Compassion, Respect

Why work for the Trust

WeST is a close-knit family of schools with a common mission of giving children the best start in life, with a vibrant staff community who care passionately about each other and what they do.

“Staff want to come and work in WeST schools, they want to work because of the investment in them as a professional. They also want to come and work at WeST schools because of the ethos and principles that underpin the way that we work.”

Employee Benefits:

- A highly competitive salary
- An exciting career path with opportunities for further progression
- Teachers' Pension Scheme
- Cycle to Work and Tech Schemes
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Occupational Health Services
- Corporate Flu and eye care voucher schemes
- Staff discount schemes provided via Employee Benefits Choice and Discounts for Teachers

Trust Advantages:

- Expert central services for finance, HR, IT, facilities and business functions
- Innovative approaches to teacher recruitment and retention with our own ITT provision
- Substantial investment in cross-Trust initiatives to improve teaching and learning Close collaboration between senior leaders across the Trust
- Integration of primary and secondary approaches into all-through education
- Adequate scale to design and test new ideas

Key Principles

WeST is a Trust that consists of two major parts: people and culture. We believe that for our schools to be great, we need great people and a great culture. We know that to be great and deliver the blend of education in which we believe, we need to be resolute and uncompromising in our approach. When we make decisions, they are always based on the best evidence possible and focused on making sure the 'main thing is the main thing'.

At WeST, we are determined to recruit, develop and retain the best possible staff. We want our staff to hold a passion and enjoyment for what they do and the difference they make.

Primary School Improvement Model

The WeST School Improvement model fully recognises that schools in the trust are on a wide range of trajectories in terms of school improvement, experiences and outcomes. This is an exciting opportunity to work collaboratively with the trust's Director of Education (Primary) and School Improvement Leads (Primary) to ensure all children achieve and thrive. Executive Directors of Subject (EDoS) for English, Maths, Science, Geography, History and MFL, with a Lead Practitioner for RS/PSHE, work across all schools providing clear curriculum and subject specific pedagogical guidance and support from 2-19. Primary Lead Practitioners, Primary Phase Leaders and Subject Leaders seconded part-time to the central team to support, challenge and advise school colleagues. Our Inclusion Lead Practitioner, Specialist Inclusion Teacher and Secondary SEND lead work in collaboration with the Director of Education to ensure inclusive provision for pupils in all primary and secondary schools across the trust.

WeST Training Institute (WTI)

WeST Training Institute (WTI) The WeST Training Institute has seen remarkable growth over the past 12 months, establishing a strong 'Golden Thread' of teacher development that supports educators at every stage of their career. With over 200 Early Career Teachers (ECTs) benefitting from the Early Career Framework, WTI continues to provide an unparalleled foundation for professional growth. Our comprehensive suite of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) further cements our commitment to leadership and professional excellence in education. We are now thrilled to expand our impact by offering secondary teacher training as a delivery partner for Ambition Institute.

WTI is proud to be the sole provider of this transformative teacher training programme in the Southwest, reinforcing our role as a key hub for teacher education and development in the region.

The WTI has been positioned at the forefront of training and professional development, serving all staff within our family of schools and beyond. Our mission is to support the growth and development of every individual, fostering a culture of continuous improvement across all roles. Through a broad range of tailored programmes, workshops, and collaborative initiatives, we ensure that all staff have access to opportunities that enhance their skills, build confidence, and empower them to excel. By placing professional development at the heart of our schools, WTI is dedicated to creating a thriving, dynamic workforce that drives exceptional outcomes for our students and communities.

Advertisement

Who WeST are:

WeST is a tight-knit family of schools based around natural geographical proximity in the South West. Initially formed as a small multi-academy trust of only two schools in 2011, the Trust as we know it today was launched in 2017 and now comprises 31 schools, of which 8 are secondary and 23 primary. We are ambitious and hold high expectations for the children in our care. We strive consistently to perform in the top 20% nationally.

WeST holds a firm belief in giving each child every opportunity to learn and succeed in all that they do. Whilst we are a family of schools who share common values and beliefs, all our schools are unique and hold their own identity. We believe that by working collectively, sharing what works well and jointly developing best practice, we are stronger together and can provide the very best education for our children in our geographical area.

The Role:

The successful applicant will have a proven track record of success and school improvement with significant experience of working at whole school level. The ideal candidate will have the interpersonal skills to build confidence and excellent relationships and the drive and determination to secure successful outcomes for all students. If having read the job description and person specification, you believe you have the skills and attributes to successfully take on this exciting new role and make a real difference to the outcomes for our young people, then we warmly welcome your application.

The School:

WeST believes in promoting and supporting an appropriate balance between strong alignment and independence with schools. It is important for all our schools to maintain their own identity and celebrate their unique qualities. However, we believe that working collaboratively we will enable our children and staff to access the best resources and learning opportunities. We aim to identify the strengths of our collective practice and share them effectively across our schools such that all our children benefit from our professional expertise.

Duties:

The duties outlined in this job description are in addition to those covered by the latest School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. This job description is based on the National Standards for Headteachers together with the particular requirements for managing a primary school as part of Westcountry Schools Trust.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Closing

Further details about the Trust can be found on our website (www.westst.org.uk) and on My New Term (<https://mynewterm.com/trust/Westcountry-Schools-Trust/142688>)

Applications can be made through My New Term; the closing date is : 9am , 4th March 2026

The assessment process will take place on: w/c 16th March 2026



Job Description

Job Description:

Executive Headteacher

Location:

Across Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Primary Schools

Reports to:

Director of Education

Salary:

L14 - L20

Main Duties

Teaching and Learning

- Ensure teaching is consistently high-quality and evidence-based across both schools.
- Support staff to deliver an engaging and challenging curriculum for all pupils.
- Ensure effective assessment systems, data tracking, and target setting.
- Maintain relentless focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged and SEND pupils.
- Oversee preparation and follow-up for all Ofsted inspections.

Strategic Leadership

- Embed the shared vision and WeST's strategic priorities across both schools.
- Provide leadership to the cross-school Senior Leadership Team, modeling consistency, shared standards, and aligned practice.
- Ensure both schools use effective cycles of self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Promote a culture of collaboration where staff work across sites to reduce workload and increase capacity.

Managing the School

- Line-manage head/deputy/assistant heads, SENDCo, and middle leaders across both schools.
- Support professional development, recruitment, and performance management of staff.
- Ensure effective leadership of administration, operations, and support functions across both schools.
- Manage budgets efficiently to build sustainability across the shared model.
- Oversee safeguarding, wellbeing, pastoral systems, and staff workload monitoring.

Strengthening Community

- Build a strong, positive presence across both school communities.
- Ensure regular communication with families and wider stakeholders.
- Lead engagement with WCC Advisory Boards as required.
- Champion the school community within WeST and strengthen links with other Trust schools.

Key Accountabilities

- Uphold and promote WeST's values: Compassion, Aspiration, Integrity and Collaboration.
- Provide strong, visible, and strategic leadership across both schools, ensuring consistency of practice and expectations.
- Drive school improvement and hold senior leaders to account for high-quality provision.
- Ensure both schools deliver a broad, ambitious, and inclusive curriculum.
- Line-manage senior leaders across Ashburton and Buckfastleigh, ensuring their development and effectiveness.
- Promote collaborative planning and practice across both sites to maximise capacity and improve consistency.
- Lead effective financial and resource management across the two schools.
- Build positive relationships with parents, staff, Trust leaders, and wider community.
- Ensure safeguarding, welfare, and regulatory compliance across both schools.

Person Specification

E = Essential, D = Desirable, A= Application, I = Interview

Method of Assessment - The table indicates the possible methods by which the skills/knowledge/level of competence in each area will be assessed.	E or D	A	I			
VALUES-BASED BEHAVIOURS - It is important to us that your values align with ours:						
Compassion:						
Recognising need in others and acting with positive intention to promote well-being and improve outcomes	E		X			
Aspiration:						
Works to high expectations, modelling the delivery of high-quality outcomes	E		X			
Showing passion, persistence and resilience in seeking creative solutions to strive for continuous improvement and excellence	E		X			
Integrity:						
Acting always in the interests of children and young people,	E		X			
Acting with a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles	E		X			
Communicating with transparency and respect, creating a working environment based on trust and honesty	E		X			
Collaboration:						
Creating a shared vision and working effectively across boundaries in an equitable and inclusive way to skillfully influence and engage others	E		X			
Qualifications:						
Qualified teacher status	E	X				
Degree or equivalent	E	X				
NPQH	E	X				

Recent record of appropriate in-service training	E	X	
Experience:			
Demonstrable evidence of highly successful school leadership at headteacher level	E	X	X
Evidence of good student progress against targets at all levels and of positive leadership impact on school improvement	E	X	X
Significant successful teaching	E	X	X
Evidence of successful school self-evaluation and school improvement planning	E	X	X
Demonstrable experience of successful line management and staff development	E	X	X
Knowledge, skills and abilities:			
Data analysis skills, and the ability to use data to set targets to support improvements to attainment and progress	E	X	X
Knowledge of current educational issues, inc. awareness of recent developments in the National Curriculum	E	X	X
Understanding of high-quality teaching based on evidence, and the ability to model this for others and support others to improve	E	X	X
Have a clear understanding of what highly effective evidence-based pedagogy and practice looks like	E	X	X
Understanding of school finances and financial management	E	X	X
Exceptional communication and people skills	E	X	X
Ability to communicate a vision and inspire others	E	X	X
Ability to build effective working relationships	E	X	X
Ability to work under pressure and prioritise effectively	E	X	X
Further requirements:			
Strong commitment to safeguarding and equality	E	X	X

Additional Information

Westcountry Schools Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and we expect all staff to share this commitment. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974; pre-employment checks will be carried out, references will be sought and successful candidates will be subject to an enhanced DBS check and other relevant checks with statutory bodies.

Equal Opportunities

In fulfilling its aims and objectives, Westcountry Schools Trust actively seeks to achieve equality of opportunity and treatment for all members of the school community.

We will continuously strive to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Each person in our school will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential regardless of their gender, ethnicity, cultural and religious background, sexuality, disability or special educational needs and ability. The school works actively to promote equality and foster positive attitudes. WeST is committed to combatting all forms of discrimination by implementing positive policies and practices in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Procedures

All appointments are subject to pre-employment checks. That means:

- We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. A copy of our Child Protection Policy & Safeguarding Policy is available at: <https://www.westst.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=2525&type=pdf>
- Your identity will be confirmed by sight of original, official documents such as a Birth Certificate, Passport etc. in line with the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.
- Original documents relating to all the qualifications you have listed on your application form must be supplied.
- Your employment history will be thoroughly examined and clarification will be sought where there are gaps or other discrepancies arising from information provided either by you as the candidate or your referee.
- References will be used to check dates of employment and your relevant experience. A minimum of two written references will be taken up and these references will be requested before the interview.
- References should cover the last 3-5 years' work history, as minimum.
- An Online search of shortlisted candidates will be conducted in accordance with Part Three 'Safer Recruitment' of Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance.
- The identity of referees and information relating to disclosures will be verified.
- You will be required to provide details of any relevant unspent or spent convictions in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 1986.
- An enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be requested. This check will be cross referenced against the Protection of Vulnerable Adults list (PoVA), the Protection of Children Act (PoCA) list and List 99. These lists contain details of people deemed unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. Please note that it is an offence to apply, offer or accept to do any work with children (paid or unpaid) if disqualified from working with children. Applicants will be challenged where inconsistencies exist. Please be aware that a firm offer of appointment will only be made after receipt and verification of all satisfactory checks. Westcountry Schools Trust and the school will carry out these checks and should you fail these checks, our offer of employment will be withdrawn.



