

THE DUCHESS'S COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

**Building relationships,
inspiring success**

Where children want to be, where staff
want to work, where community works.



DCHS-ALNWICK.ORG

WELCOME FROM THE CO-HEADS



We are thrilled that you are interested in joining the team here at DCHS.

We took over as Co-Heads in January 2021 with an aim of DCHS being an educational centre of excellence based on the principle that effective relationships are the key to positive outcomes. We believe that first and foremost we as teachers are here to provide high quality teaching and support to students within our care, and in doing so we will create a place where students want to be.

We are looking for a team player who has a student centred approach as well as a desire to be part of a robust teacher education programme. We have a considerate approach to staff workload and are committed to investing in staff to help them progress through their own career, and in doing so create a place where staff want to work.

We are passionate that the term 'community' within our title is significant and cannot be undersold or underplayed.

We believe that every member of staff at DCHS should leave the community in a better position than the point they arrived here and ask that, if you are to join us, you share this belief. We believe that at DCHS, community works.

We have included everything we feel is important to share in this pack and we welcome requests from anyone interested in this position to contact us to visit in person, meet over a video call or chat on the phone about this opportunity.

ALAN ROGERS & JAMES WILSON



UNIQUE SINCE 1808

Founded in 1808 by the Duchess of Northumberland, DCHS was established on the principle of providing quality education for the children of Alnwick. Whereas the original school provided for around 20 students, the current school has a capacity of 1500. However the principle remains the same: providing quality education for the surrounding area.

The catchment of the school has also changed somewhat from the original school with a catchment larger than Greater London, we serve

students from the hills of the Cheviots to the shores of the North Sea. We are proud to serve a diverse and unique catchment.

It is not just the catchment that has changed; in 2017 we moved into a new building just off the A1, which provides our community with outstanding facilities as well as access to the city centre of Newcastle in 30 minutes. It really is closer than you think! We have staff that travel from as far north as Berwick, as far south as Durham, and as far west as Hexham.



MISSION & VISION

We serve a uniquely Northumbrian community, and we are proud to do so. Through a values-led culture and a commitment to supporting our students to excel, we help students develop the ambition, resilience, character, and confidence to thrive in school and beyond it.

OUR MISSION

At The Duchess's Community High School, our mission is simple:

To open doors through....

- excellent teaching that is consistent, no matter which classroom you are in.
- opportunities outside of the classroom for every student to participate in.
- high expectations for all students in our school in all facets of school life.

OUR VISION

Our vision is for DCHS to create a school culture founded on shared values.

We aim to raise ambition, achieve excellence, provide equality of opportunity, and shape lives so that students, from every background, can achieve exceptionally well.



OUR VALUES



Ambition

We aim high and make opportunities count



Integrity

We do what's right, even when no one is watching



Care

We look after ourselves and others



Trust

We are honest and reliable



Community

We support one another and take pride in our place



Optimism

We always look for the best in people/situations



Resilience

We bounce back stronger

These values are the framework of a DCHS education - **simple, strong, and lasting.**

We are proudly North Northumbrian, rooted in a landscape and community like no other. That pride shapes everything we do.

SCHOOL PRIORITIES

An educational centre of excellence based on the principle that effective relationships are the key to positive outcomes

OUR 3 BROAD AIMS



Where children want to be



Where staff want to work



Where community works

OUR 6 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Community

We recognise the unique nature of our catchment and surrounding communities and actively seek to forge effective relationships that allow for community growth.

Relationships

All stakeholders work to build strong relationships that encourage positive behaviour and attitudes throughout the organisation.

Priority students

Priority students are first in all that we do. This ensures that the gap is not widened and that over time it can be diminished completely.

Curriculum

We constantly review the curriculum in place to ensure that it is meeting the intent statement aims of creating cultural capital, healthy democracy and allowing students to access all in the world.

Impact

Students are 'better off' for having spent time at DCHS. We ensure students are prepared holistically for this step as well as academically.

Teaching

The DCHS teaching principles allow us to ensure quality first teaching. Teacher Education sessions provide opportunities for all staff to enhance their own skill set and lead to effective outcomes.

WORKLOAD CHARTER



SYSTEMS AND PROCESS MATTER

Toolkits:

We create 'toolkits' for all procedures in school in order to free staff from the planning of key operational matters.

Cycles:

We publish a full terms 'cycle' in advance so staff can plan their time and know when deadlines are approaching.

Centralised detentions:

All detentions are centralised.

Avoiding roll-over:

The school does not roll over its timetable during the Summer term. Instead, this time is used on core priorities and providing staff with extra training time.

Open door approach:

All leaders in school have an open door approach whereby anyone can seek support and/or catch-up.



TIME MATTERS

Email embargo:

No emails are sent from Friday 5 pm until a Monday morning, no emails in school holidays, and not past 6 pm on weekday evenings. The only exceptions are for serious safeguarding matters.

Whole School Emails policy:

No longer to be used. The staff bulletin should contain all key messages.

A rational approach to data:

We have three data drops per year. All of the data is analysed for staff, freeing staff time and thinking to consider key actions. No meetings will take place during a data drop window.

A rationalised approach to marking:

Staff are expected to mark according to dept policy.

School Building:

Closes at 6pm each night, we encourage staff to find a worklife balance.

Directed time:

Directed time is built with staff at the forefront of planning.





SCHOOL PRIORITIES MATTERS

Clear SLT messages:

These seek to prevent ill communication and repetitive emails.

Effective use of briefings:

Briefings focus on training staff and sharing important key/important messages.

Working with unions:

SLT meets regularly with Union representatives within the school.

Resisting fads:

DCHS seeks to keep things simple and focussed. Everything should come back to the School Priorities and the DCHS teaching principles.

Being flexible:

Where possible we aim to meet the needs of family life, ensuring emotional and well-being are supported.

Nothing for Ofsted:

We do nothing for Ofsted. Any inspection will catch DCHS in its daily form. We are Ofsted ready, not Ofsted compliant.



CPD MATTERS

Department Time:

This has been calendered more frequently. Departments are allowed to dictate the agenda for faculty time. It is very much for the middle leader to dictate the agenda, with a view that the meeting should focus on sharing subject expertise and enhancing subject knowledge.

Sensible use of Twilghted Time:

We operate a training model whereby we work to a set number of twilights and trade this time to gain days off in lieu. During the twilight training, there is normally a short presentation then the remainder of the time is given to training.

Continuation of Virtual CPD:

During lockdown we found accessing material online easier and often more engaging. We will continue to provide online CPD links.

CPD for all:

CPD is not just about 'teacher education' we target specific CPD for those that request it during PD conversations. CPD is relevant and never to tick a box.





CULTURE AND ETHOS MATTERS

Lesson Objectives:

We do not use lesson objectives as a school. They waste invaluable time and dampen expectations. Lessons focus on big questions. The big question is the objective and the focus of the lesson.

Pedagogical approach:

We emphasise that there is no preferred learning style, but traditional teaching methods; retrieval practice; the use of workbooks; co-planning; magenta principles are to be embraced.

Rationalising Revision:

We hold a belief that the Autumn term is for teaching not revision sessions after school.

Open and Honest approach:

We believe that sharing the issues that face the school in an open and honest way is beneficial to the end goal.

Staff wellbeing:

We offer variety of 'wellbeing' tools including: access to specialist support, staff events, pastry briefings and the workload charter itself.

Staff recognition:

We seek out opportunities to praise in person and have a process for staff to highlight the contribution of others.

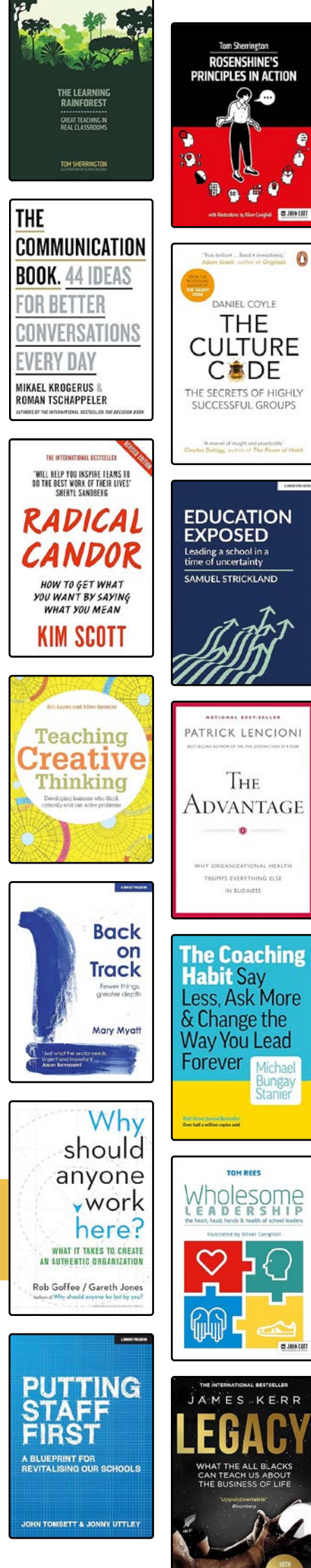


SCHOOL CULTURAL FIT

Working in a school where you are not aligned with the culture is a miserable experience. So...we both need to have alignment if you work here:

- We work in a school where team members feel safe
- We believe in mutual trust and respect
- We believe that risks can be taken
- Team members 'get things done'
- We have clear roles and clear expectations
- We all learn (everywhere, all of the time)
- We actively support staff in using goal setting and coaching in order to surpass expectations
- Team members are aligned with school ethos
- Work has personal meaning, with clear and regular job satisfaction
- Team members feel they make a difference
- We care personally and challenge directly
- We believe that you cannot just wish teachers and students to be better – you have to create the conditions for them to grow
- No role in school is 'beneath' anyone. A mindset of seeking simple ways to serve the team.

These are the 14 books that have helped shape our strategy





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