

 REQUIRED FROM JANUARY 2027

Head Teacher

Ponteland High School



*Strong outcomes. A remarkable building. A school
ready for its next chapter.*

REQUIRED FROM
January 2027

CLOSING DATE
12pm (midday)
Thursday 17 September 2026

LOCATION
Ponteland, Northumberland



A LETTER FROM

Kieran McGrane

Chief Executive Officer · Pele Trust

Dear prospective candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the headship of Ponteland High School.

I should declare an interest straight away. I was Headteacher here for ten years before moving to the role of Chief Executive Officer, so I am not a detached observer. I know the building, the staff and the families this school serves. I also know that whoever leads it next must be free to lead it their way. My role is to offer support and challenge in equal measure. It is not to sit alongside you with a second steering wheel.

Ponteland High School is in a strong position. Outcomes this summer were excellent at both GCSE and A level. The staff team is talented and genuinely committed to the school. The students are, without exaggeration, a pleasure to teach. Families here are invested in their children's education and expect a great deal, which is exactly as it should be. Since 2020 the school has occupied a building that most school leaders would envy.

What the school needs now is a leader who will set the standard and then hold it. Schools of this size depend on expectations being clear, understood and applied consistently, every day, by everyone. The next Headteacher will set and communicate those expectations, model them personally, and make certain that colleagues, and pupils, are upholding them. This is not glamorous work but, as you probably already know, it is work that makes everything else possible, and doing it well in a school that already achieves at this level is a genuinely rare opportunity.

As part of Pele Trust you would join thirteen other schools, and a SCITT, and a group of headteachers who work together rather than in parallel. The partnership between feeder primary schools and Ponteland High School are particularly strong and well developed. You will have the support of a central team that takes the operational load seriously so that you can concentrate on leading your school.

I would be glad to speak to anyone considering this post, in confidence and without obligation. Please contact me directly at k.mcgrane@peletrust.org.uk. I would also strongly encourage you to visit.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kieran McGrane

Chief Executive Officer, Pele Trust



“

I led this school for ten years. I know precisely what I am asking of the person who takes it on, and I know what it gives back.”

KIERAN MCGRANE · CEO



Ponteland High School is a popular and heavily oversubscribed 11 to 18 school serving Ponteland and the surrounding villages, with a large and successful sixth form. The school became an 11 to 18 school in 2019, growing from around 1,100 students to approximately 1,600, and in 2020 moved into a purpose-built £46 million campus shared with a primary school and a new leisure centre in the centre of Ponteland. The facilities are among the best in the region.

The school's aims are deliberately simple. Students should be happy, should feel safe and secure, and should achieve exceptionally well. Everything else follows from those three things.

Summer 2026 Outcomes

PROVISIONAL RESULTS, SUBJECT TO VALIDATION

80%

of students achieved grade 4 or above in English and maths

63%

achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths

23%

of A level grades awarded were A* or A

51%

of A level grades awarded were A* to B

WHAT THE SCHOOL IS KNOWN FOR

A curriculum with breadth

A broad and academically demanding curriculum, with a longstanding commitment to modern languages and a strong international dimension, including visits and exchanges in Europe and beyond.

A committed staff team

Teachers who want the best for their students, who work collaboratively, and who take professional learning seriously.

Families who care

A community that values education highly, engages actively with the school, and holds it to a high standard.

A building that matches the ambition

State of the art teaching, sporting and performance facilities, opened in 2020 and co-located with community leisure provision.

THE LEADERSHIP TASK

What we are asking the next Headteacher to do

Ponteland High School achieves well. The task now is to make certain that the school's daily standards match the quality of its outcomes, and that every part of the school operates to the same high expectation. This is the opportunity in this post: the academic foundation is already strong, so the improvement work is about culture, consistency and ambition.

01**Expectations, lived daily**

Set out clearly what is expected of every student in behaviour, conduct, appearance and attitude to learning, and ensure those expectations are understood and applied consistently in every corridor and every conversation.

02**SEND as a strength**

Strengthen provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities so that it becomes a recognised strength of the school, with every student well known, well supported and well served.

03**Systems that work**

Ensure that agreed processes are followed reliably, so that students, staff and families consistently experience the school as organised, responsive and fair.

04**Teaching and outcomes**

Build on strong results at GCSE and A level by securing high-quality teaching in every classroom and sustaining ambition for every student, including the most able and the most vulnerable.

05**Presence and visibility**

Lead through daily presence. In a school of this size, what the Headteacher notices, praises and insists upon becomes what the school values.

This is a school with the results, the staff and the facilities to be truly great. What it needs is a leader who will define the standard, model it personally, and hold to it even when holding to it is difficult.

PONTELAND AND THE COMMUNITY

Ponteland sits a short distance north-west of Newcastle upon Tyne, close enough for the city to be within easy reach and far enough out to feel rural in character. The school draws from the town and from neighbouring villages, and it matters a great deal to the families it serves. Northumberland offers some of the finest countryside and coastline in England, and Newcastle International Airport, the A1 and the East Coast Main Line are all close by.

THE ROLE

Headteacher

Ponteland High School · A Pele Trust school

SALARY

Leadership Scale L31 to L37

£111,990 to £129,733 (Headteacher Group 8).
Appointment within the range will reflect experience.

ROLE

Headteacher

START DATE

January 2027

CONTRACT

Permanent, full time

SCHOOL PHASE

Secondary · Ages 11 to 18, with sixth form

RESPONSIBLE TO Chief Executive Officer

THE ROLE WILL INVOLVE

- Setting and delivering an ambitious vision for the school, and translating it into consistent daily practice
- Establishing and sustaining high expectations of behaviour, conduct and attitude to learning across the school
- Securing high-quality teaching in every subject and every classroom, and sustaining strong outcomes at GCSE and A level
- Strengthening provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities
- Leading, developing and holding to account a large and experienced staff team
- Managing a significant budget and estate with efficiency and probity
- Working in partnership with families, primary colleagues and the wider community
- Working with the Academy Committee, and contributing to the strategic leadership of Pele Trust

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

This post will suit a serving Headteacher looking for a second headship, or a leader whose experience is equivalent to that: an experienced Deputy or Associate Headteacher who has already carried substantial whole-school accountability and is ready to lead. We are interested in the strength of your track record rather than the title on your current contract, and we would encourage anyone who believes they can do this job well to apply and to talk to us first.

- A record of improving outcomes and raising standards in a secondary school
- The ability to set expectations clearly and hold to them consistently, including when that is difficult
- Credibility with staff and students, built through visibility and daily presence rather than assertion
- Sound judgement on curriculum, teaching and assessment, grounded in evidence
- A serious commitment to inclusion and to students with additional needs
- A deep commitment to safeguarding and student welfare
- Values that align with those of Pele Trust, and the willingness to contribute beyond one school

HOW TO APPLY

Ponteland High School · Headteacher · January 2027

CLOSING DATE

**12:00 noon,
Thursday 17
September 2026**

Shortlisting takes place on Friday 18 September 2026 and shortlisted candidates will be contacted the same day

INTERVIEW DATES

**Thursday 24 and
Friday 25
September 2026**

APPLICATION
DETAILS

Please submit a completed application form, which you can find on our website at www.peletrust.org.uk, together with a covering letter of no more than two sides of A4, properly formatted in Arial 11, setting out clearly why you are the right person for this post. Applications to Claire Leightley, Chief Operating Officer: c.leightley@peletrust.org.uk

VISITS TO THE
SCHOOL

Visits are strongly encouraged. This school is best understood in person. To arrange a visit please contact Clare Barker, PA to the Headteacher and CEO: c.barker@ponthigh.org.uk

INFORMAL
CONVERSATIONS

Kieran McGrane, Chief Executive Officer, is happy to speak to prospective candidates in confidence and without obligation: k.mcgrane@peletrust.org.uk

WEBSITE

www.ponthigh.org.uk

Safeguarding and pre-employment checks

Ponteland High School and Pele Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All appointments are subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check and other pre-employment checks as required by Keeping Children Safe in Education. This post is not subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. References for shortlisted candidates will be sought in advance of interview, so please ensure your referees are aware that requests may be made.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Headteacher - Ponteland High School

JOB TITLE Headteacher	GRADE L31 to L37	RESPONSIBLE TO Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	RESPONSIBLE FOR Teachers and Professional Support Staff
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MAIN PURPOSE OF ROLE

To provide highly effective strategic and operational leadership to secure high standards of teaching and learning leading to exceptional outcomes for all students.

To actively contribute to the strategic leadership of Pele Trust.

GENERAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

These are covered under the domains as set out in the Headteachers' Standards 2020, namely:

1 Culture and ethos

school culture, behaviour, professional development

2 Curriculum and teaching

teaching, curriculum and assessment, additional and special educational needs

3 Organisational effectiveness

organisational management, school improvement, working in partnership

These are underpinned by demonstrating consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct as outlined in the Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles). Both within and outside school, the headteacher must:

- Build relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observe proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position
- Show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others, recognising differences and respecting cultural diversity within contemporary Britain
- Uphold fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways that exploit their position, pupils' vulnerability or might lead pupils to break the law

As leader of our school community, the headteacher must:

- Serve in the best interests of the school's pupils
- Conduct themselves in a manner compatible with their influential position in society by behaving ethically, fulfilling their professional responsibilities and modelling the behaviour of a good citizen
- Uphold their obligation to give account and accept responsibility
- Know, understand and act within the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities
- Take responsibility for their own continued professional development, engaging critically with educational research
- Make a positive contribution to the wider education system

SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1 SCHOOL CULTURE

- Sustain the school's ethos and strategic direction in partnership with the Academy Committee and CEO, and through consultation with the school community
- Create a culture where pupils experience a positive and enriching school life
- Uphold ambitious educational standards which prepare pupils from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life
- Promote positive and respectful relationships across the school community and a safe, orderly and inclusive environment
- Ensure a culture of high staff professionalism

2 TEACHING

- Establish and sustain high-quality, expert teaching across all subjects and phases, built on an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how pupils learn
- Ensure teaching is underpinned by high levels of subject expertise and approaches which respect the distinct nature of subject disciplines or specialist domains
- Ensure effective use is made of all forms of assessment

3 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

- Ensure a broad, structured and coherent curriculum entitlement that sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills that will be taught
- Establish and sustain effective curricular leadership, developing subject leaders with high levels of relevant expertise with access to professional networks and communities
- Ensure that all pupils are taught to read through the provision of evidence-informed approaches to reading, particularly supporting weak readers so that they can catch up and keep up with their peers
- Ensure valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum

4 BEHAVIOUR

- Establish and sustain high expectations of behaviour for all pupils, built upon relationships, rules and routines, which are understood clearly by all staff and pupils
- Ensure high standards of pupil behaviour and courteous conduct in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
- Implement consistent, fair and respectful approaches to managing behaviour
- Ensure those adults within the school model and teach the behaviour of a responsible and respectful citizen

5 ADDITIONAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

- Ensure the school holds ambitious expectations for all pupils with additional and special educational needs and disabilities
- Establish and sustain culture and practices that enable pupils to access the curriculum and learn effectively
- Ensure the school works effectively in partnership with parents, carers and professionals, to identify the additional needs and special educational needs and disabilities of pupils, providing support and adaptation where appropriate
- Ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties with regard to the SEND code of practice

SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (CONTINUED)

6 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Ensure staff have access to high-quality, sustained professional development opportunities, aligned to balance the priorities of whole-school improvement, team and individual needs
- Prioritise the professional development of staff, ensuring effective planning, delivery and evaluation which is consistent with the approaches laid out in the standard for teachers' professional development
- Ensure that professional development opportunities draw on expert provision from beyond the school, as well as within it, including nationally recognised career and professional frameworks and programmes to build capacity and support succession planning

7 ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT

- Ensure the protection and safety of pupils and staff through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of the duty of care
- Prioritise and allocate financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds
- Ensure staff are deployed and managed well with due attention paid to workload
- Establish and oversee systems, processes and policies that enable the school to operate effectively and efficiently
- Ensure rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk

8 CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- Make use of effective and proportional processes of evaluation to identify and analyse complex or persistent problems and barriers that limit school effectiveness, and identify priority areas for improvement
- Develop appropriate evidence-informed strategies for improvement as part of well-targeted plans which are realistic, timely, appropriately sequenced and suited to the school's context
- Ensure careful and effective implementation of improvement strategies, which lead to sustained school improvement over time

9 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- Forge constructive relationships beyond the school, working in partnership with parents, carers and the local community
- Commit the school to work successfully with other schools in Pele Trust and those organisations outside of the Trust in a climate of mutual challenge and support
- Establish and maintain working relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues across other public services to improve educational outcomes for all pupils

10 GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Understand and welcome the role of effective governance, upholding your obligation to give account and accept responsibility
- Establish and sustain a professional working relationship with those responsible for governance
- Ensure that staff know and understand their professional responsibilities and are held to account
- Ensure the school effectively and efficiently operates within the required regulatory frameworks and meets all statutory duties

Please note that successful applicants will be required to comply with all trust policies. The successful applicant will be subject to full enhanced disclosure checks and these will be subject to rechecking as appropriate.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Headteacher

Ponteland High School · January 2027

ATTRIBUTE	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
QUALIFICATIONS	- Qualified Teacher Status - A good honours degree - Evidence of significant and continuing professional development	- NPQH, NPQEL or equivalent senior leadership qualification - A further or higher degree
EXPERIENCE	- Substantial senior leadership experience in a secondary school at Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or equivalent level - A proven record of improving outcomes - Experience of leading whole-school improvement - Experience of leading behaviour and culture across a school - Experience of managing a significant budget and staffing structure - Deep understanding of safeguarding practice and principles	- Current or previous headship - Experience of an 11 to 18 school with a sixth form - Experience of working within a multi-academy trust - Experience as a Designated Safeguarding Lead - Experience of leading or commissioning SEND provision
PROFESSIONAL SKILLS	- Ability to set, communicate and sustain high expectations across a large school - Ability to hold others to account fairly, consistently and without flinching - Ability to analyse data and implement improvement strategies that deliver - Ability to recruit, develop and retain excellent staff - Excellent written and verbal communication - Sound financial and organisational judgement	- Experience of leading a significant change programme - Experience of estates management or a major capital project - Experience of leading recruitment and retention in a competitive market
KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING	- Curriculum and assessment requirements at KS3, KS4 and KS5, including accurate use of data (the school has a sixth form) - Principles of effective teaching, learning and assessment - The SEND Code of Practice and the school's statutory duties - The current Ofsted framework and effective self-evaluation - Keeping Children Safe in Education - The statutory and regulatory framework within which an academy operates, including governance	- Post-16 curriculum, funding and progression pathways - The education context of Northumberland and the north-east
LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT	- Ability to set an ambitious vision and translate it into practical plans and consistent daily practice - Visible, present leadership - Ability to build, lead and develop a senior team, including succession planning - Ability to work productively with an Academy Committee and with the CEO - Capacity to contribute to the strategic leadership of a multi-academy trust	- A record of contributing beyond a single school - Experience of system leadership, peer review or school-to-school support
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	- Integrity, resilience, optimism and a well-developed sense of proportion - High personal standards and the willingness to model them every day - The courage to hold the line when it is difficult - Ability to relate to young people positively and inspire them - Commitment to the wider school community and to collaborative working - Commitment to Pele Trust values	An ambassadorial presence in the local and regional community

Contra indicators: this post is not subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. An enhanced DBS check is required.

ABOUT PELE TRUST

A multi-academy trust in Northumberland and North Tyneside

Pele Trust was formed in February 2019 and brings together fourteen schools, eleven primary and three secondary, serving pupils aged 3 to 18 across Northumberland and North Tyneside. We came together through a shared belief that schools are stronger when they work together, and through a common wish to provide the best possible education for the young people in our care.

OUR PURPOSE

To build a learning community, brought together by choice, that enables our schools to support and challenge each other to provide consistently outstanding education, whilst offering a more certain and stable pathway for students, parents and staff.

To have an influential voice contributing to the development and enrichment of education across the north-east of England.

OUR AMBITION

To be a learning community where everyone is happy to be, learns and improves, is known well and valued for who they are, has a place, is fulfilled, consistently experiences a rich and stimulating learning environment, and treats others with respect, dignity and courtesy at all times.

WHAT THAT MEANS FOR A HEADTEACHER HERE

You would lead your school, not a branch office. Academy Committees are active and locally rooted, and each school retains its own identity. What the Trust adds is a group of headteachers who talk to each other honestly, peer review that is genuinely useful, a leadership development programme, and a central team that carries the operational and compliance load so that school leaders can concentrate on education. You would sit on the Executive Leadership Team and have a real voice in the direction of the Trust.

Directors intend to grow the Trust further, increasing our reach and our ability to speak with authority across the north-east. Joining now means contributing to that.

PELE TRUST VALUES

Excellence

Integrity

Openness

Collaboration

Compassion and Kindness

Optimism

Humility and Service

Accountability

**Headteacher · Ponteland
High School**