



Northern  
Lights

LEARNING TRUST

HEADTEACHER  
ST AIDAN'S C E ACADEMY

APPLICATION PACK



# Northern Lights



We are a Multi-Academy Trust currently comprising ten schools – primary and secondary – and over 4,200 children and young people in an area stretching from Teesside through to Wearside.



We are a Teaching School Hub, one of 87 DfE centres of excellence for teacher training and development, focused on some of the best schools and multi-academy trusts in the country.



We are an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub, set up by the DfE to provide advice, share good practice and offer evidence-based professional development for early years practitioners.

## OUR SCHOOLS



**Benedict Biscop CE Academy**  
Sunderland



**Dame Dorothy Primary School**  
Sunderland



**Grange Primary School**  
Hartlepool



**Hart Primary School**  
Hartlepool



**Holley Park Academy**  
Washington, Sunderland



**Ian Ramsey CE Academy**  
Stockton-on-Tees



**St Aidan's CE Academy**  
Darlington



**St. Helen's Primary School**  
Hartlepool



**St. Peter's Elwick CE Primary School,**  
Hartlepool



**Venerable Bede CE Academy**  
Sunderland

Every Northern Lights school has its own values and its own vision and that's really important to us because all of our schools are there to serve our community but equally, our Trust is there to serve each other.

We do that with humility and with an openness because at Northern Lights it's not all about the academic – that is really important to us – but we know, as a Trust, we are successful if we have ensured that in a holistic way our children and young people have had every opportunity to experience, to flourish, to thrive, to understand the wonder and the joy of the world around them.

– Jo Heaton OBE, Chief Executive, Northern Lights Learning Trust

## Welcome from the CEO



Thank you for your interest in the position of Headteacher at St Aidan's within Northern Lights Learning Trust.

We are a growing Multi-Academy Trust that is currently made up of 3 secondaries and 7 primaries across Wearside and Teesside, with our central offices based in Seaham. We educate over 4200 pupils and employ over 550 members of staff and serve a diverse range of schools and communities. Each of our schools have their own individual ethos, values and vision, which sit together as part of our Northern Lights vision of 'Shining Together and Stronger Together'. As a CofE MAT, our schools are a mixture of Church and non-Church schools that range in size and levels of disadvantage. We see this diversity as a real strength to learn from and work with each other.

As a Multi-Academy Trust, we are at the heart of the current educational landscape, as a designated DfE Centre of Excellence as a Teaching School Hub and DfE Early Years Hub, responsible for teacher development across all ages and phases of education, working with over 300 schools. We are collaborative in our approach and value professional development highly in all we do.

We seek to be an employer of choice, with 100% of staff satisfaction in our latest survey, *'I am proud to work for a forward-thinking Trust who put people development at the heart'*. We seek to support our staff to develop and thrive.

We are looking for someone whose values align with us as a Trust and has the drive and ambition to work collaboratively to provide the best opportunities and outcomes for our young people.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Yours faithfully

Jo Heaton  
Chief Executive Officer

## Meet some of the team:

As a Trust we have a wide range of experience and expertise that we use to support each other. As a Headteacher in Northern Lights you will be able to work collaboratively to develop staff and impact on pupils by working with our team. Our full Northern Lights team can be found on our website, but four key roles you will work alongside are the Director of education, Director of standards, Director of leadership and inclusion and the senior school improvement leader.

### Director of Education, Katy Hill

Katy is passionate about ensuring children receiving quality education and has a love for the North East of England. As a foster carer and previous SENDCO, she has a passion for equity for all. Katy has worked in education over 23 years and has been an assistant headteacher, deputy headteacher, head of school and headteacher.



Her drive to support the delivery of quality education and belief in the power of collaboration to ensure school improvement, has influenced Katy's roles as an SLE, English advisor for the local authority, lead moderator, as well as delivering the NPQSL and NPQH and supporting schools as a member of a National Support School.

### Director of Leadership and Inclusion, Carole Bradley

Carole has been a part of the education sector for 25 years, holding various roles and responsibilities, with the last 16 years in senior leadership positions: deputy head, head of school and headteacher.



She also holds roles such as vice-chair of School Forum, is safeguarding lead across the trust and is co-chair of the headteacher group within Hartlepool.

### Director of Standards, Michael Wardle

Michael has worked in education for over 25 years having previously been advisor in a local authority and headteacher of a large 11-18 school in Durham. He brings a wide range of expertise and knowledge to Northern Lights and works across all of the schools in the trust. He was previously a senior HMI and has experience of working with a wide range of primary, secondary and specialist settings, along with Initial Teacher Education.



### Senior School Improvement Leader, Donna Park

Donna has been part of the secondary education sector for over 20 years. Initially qualifying as a PE teacher, she has since held a number of senior leadership positions including deputy head, associate head and headteacher, across schools in the north-east of England.



Donna is passionate about making a difference to children's' lives; in ensuring the positive experiences they have whilst at school support them to get the best opportunities and outcomes in the future.

## Our Values

Our values underpin what we do, but equally importantly, we seek to make decisions that ensure that our Trust can achieve those values.

**Voice of the child** This value has great importance for us – We want our children's voices to be heard in all aspects of the work we do in our schools.

**Community** We place schools at the heart of their communities – including respecting the individuality of the school communities and understanding that the school communities bring a wealth of local understanding and knowledge.

**Support** We support all pupils and staff to grow, develop and 'be the best they can be'. We also support others in the system including our initial teacher training and our DfE Teaching School Hub.

**Integrity** This is central to our actions and decisions. We act with integrity in all decisions that we make.

**Pride** We are extremely proud of our pupils, staff and communities.



## About the Role - Headteacher



**St Aidan's C of E Academy**  
Hunden's Lane, Darlington, DL1 1LL

**Salary:** Headteacher: L20-L26  
**(Salary starting point negotiable, depending on experience)**

**Job Term:** Permanent

**Closing Date:** Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 9am

**Interviews Process:** Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025  
Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**Start Date:** September 2025

Visits to the school are advised. Candidates to arrange via [recruitment@nllt.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@nllt.co.uk)

Northern Lights Learning Trust are looking for an enthusiastic Headteacher to lead St Aidan's CE Academy, part of Northern Lights Learning Trust. We will welcome applications from existing Headteachers and those looking for their first Headship post.

Do you have the motivation to ensure the best outcomes for pupils?

Do you value the professional development of all staff?

Can you lead a school to be the best it can be?

Do you want to work in partnership across local schools and wider within a Trust that puts children at the heart of all it does?

### **The successful candidate will:**

- Have Senior leadership experience in a Headship or Deputy Head role.
- Have successful experience of improving teaching and learning.
- Have successful experience of school management.
- Have evidence of impact on whole school improvement.
- Believe in holistic, inclusive education for all children.
- Place children at the heart of your decision making.
- Lead by example and believe in the importance of relationships.
- Understand Church school values and leadership.

### **We can offer:**

- A supportive working environment that puts people at the heart of the organisation
- The opportunity to work as part of a growing Trust and shape this role
- Continuous professional development
- National Terms and Conditions of Employment
- Teachers' Pension Scheme

### **Employee welfare package through Education Mutual including:**

- 24-hour GP access
- Nurse support service
- Mental health services, including stress management, mental health first aid training and bereavement support
- Free Flu vaccinations
- Counselling Services
- Physiotherapy
- Financial wellbeing coaching
- Maternity and Paternity support
- Menopause support
- Access to useful wellbeing resources

**Employee benefits package through Vivup including:**

- Cycle to work scheme
- Lifestyle savings including discounts on shops, food and drink and days out

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of our pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Appointments will be subject to an enhanced DBS and two references, at least one being from your current employer.

Details of the school can be found on the school website:

<https://www.staidansacademy.co.uk/>



## Northern Lights Learning Trust



## Job Description

<b>Post:</b>	Headteacher
<b>Salary:</b>	L20-L26 ( <b>Salary starting point negotiable, depending on experience</b> )
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Board of Northern Lights Learning Trust, CEO, Executive
<b>Start Date:</b>	September 2025
<b>Contract:</b>	Permanent / Full Time

### Main Purpose:

The Headteacher will provide vision and leadership for the life and work of the Trust, so that the designated school's aims are implemented in accordance with the policies of Northern Lights Learning Trust and the local governing body.

The duties outlined within this job description are in addition to those covered by the latest School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. It may be modified by the CEO, in consultation with the post holder to reflect or anticipate changes in the job.

### Key Responsibilities

#### Leadership

- The Leadership of the school, sharing the vision and transferring the vision into reality.
- Uphold the Culture and Ethos of the school which is based on the school values and the Trust values
- To lead and embed distinctive Christian Vision and Christian values across the school, set in the context of the Church of England's vision for education.
- To work in close partnership with the Trust and Local Governing Body, stakeholders and Diocese to ensure the vision for the school is delivered.
- To work as part of the leadership team across the school and the wider Trust to ensure best outcomes for pupils.
- To raise standards across the school with particular reference to academic performance.
- To develop, inspire and motivate effective teams in order to raise standards across the school.



- Ensure equality of opportunity for all, through careful strategic planning and curriculum design.
- Developing, implementing and monitoring management structures and procedures so as to ensure that the school achieves its curriculum and pastoral aims through the attainment of the school development plan.
- Advising the local governing body on the formulation of policy and its implementation so as to ensure the enhancement of the quality of learning in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
- Ensuring that the statutory requirements for the curriculum are met and curriculum provision is appropriate and relevant to the needs of all children.
- Managing the performance of the school's staff through the provision of appropriate procedures of appointment, induction, performance management so as to maximise effective learning.
- Promoting effective relationships through networking with internal Trust colleagues, external bodies, notably parents, other schools and the wider community which promotes a positive image of the school.
- Monitoring and evaluating standards of teaching, learning, resource usage and management effectiveness and implementing appropriate change strategies where required working alongside staff using a coaching approach, to achieve success.
- Managing pastoral and welfare systems for all members of the school community so as to create a positive and caring ethos.
- Carry out a Designated Safeguarding Lead role, where appropriate.
- Creating a vibrant learning environment across the school to scaffold learning and celebrate achievements.
- Analyse and interpret school data to improve performance and have a thorough understanding of assessment procedures.
- To undertake self-evaluation across the school, identifying school improvement areas, writing subsequent action plans and Self Evaluation Forms.
- Work collaboratively with the Trust Central Education Team
- Work in partnership effectively with all schools in the Trust
- Play an active role as a member of the Executive Leadership Team of the Trust
- Lead the whole school curriculum development and be accountable for improvement.
- Plan for and support Early Career Teachers and staff at all stages of their career, supporting and holding staff accountable for their performance.
- Develop inspirational leadership within Northern Lights Learning Trust.
- Develop a knowledge of risk management and produce and manage risk assessments across the school working with support staff.
- Support the development of the school through seeking external funding and accreditation.
- Planning, delivering and reviewing lessons which are appropriate to the age and ability of the children so as to facilitate progression in children's learning.
- Setting and assessing appropriate work and recording results in accordance with the school's assessment and marking policies so as to provide regular feedback and monitoring of progress.
- Managing the school environment so as to create a positive learning environment which makes effective use of available resources.
- To support other schools as identified by the Central Education Team.
- To work collaboratively with the Teaching School Hub and contribute to the Teaching School Hub role.

### Other duties

- Carry out any other duties commensurate with the role that the CEO may direct from time to time.
- Participate in the Performance Management system for the appraisal of own performance.
- Participate in school- to- school support as required.

**Additional responsibilities - the postholder must:**

- Demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, staff and volunteers;
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of safeguarding and safer recruitment policies and procedures, and their application within an educational setting/environment;
- Act in compliance with data protection principles in respecting the privacy of personal information held by the Trust;
- Comply with the principles of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in relation to the management of Trust records and information;
- Carry out their duties with full regard to the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy, Code of Conduct - Staff Behaviour Policy, Child Protection Policy and all other Trust Policies;
- Comply with the Trust Health and Safety rules and regulations and with Health and Safety legislation.



Northern Lights Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff to share this commitment. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centered. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

Please note, that this is not a comprehensive list of all tasks that the Headteacher will carry out in their role. The post-holder may be required to do other duties appropriate to the level of the role as required by the CEO. This job description may be amended at any time in consultation with the post-holder.

## Person Specification

**Job title:** Headteacher

**Grade:** L20-26 (Salary starting point negotiable, depending on experience)

The information listed as essential (shaded) is used as part of the job evaluation process. The requirements identified as desirable are used for recruitment purposes only.

*Codes: AF = Application Form, I = Interview, CQ = Certificate of Qualification, R = References (should only be used for posts requiring DBSs), T = Test/Assessment, P = Presentation*

1.	Application	Essential	Desirable	Codes
	Well-presented and complete application form	X		AF
2.	Qualifications	Essential	Desirable	Codes
	Qualified teacher status- degree or equivalent	X		AF/CQ
	Evidence of continued and relevant professional development	X		AF/CQ
	Higher degree/diploma		X	AF/CQ
	NPQH or further professional development		X	AF/CQ
3.	Relevant Experience	Essential	Desirable	Codes
	Ability to plan strategically, analyse, interpret and act upon relevant school improvement information and data.	X		I
	Knowledge of school improvement strategies and an ability to manage and enhance the performance of all staff, including use of coaching/mentoring	X		AF/I
	Successful experience of monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning through substantial curriculum knowledge	X		AF/I
	Experience of leading professional development	X		AF/I
	Thorough understanding of safeguarding	X		I
	Experience of managing an aspect of the delegated budget and the principles of best value		X	AF/I
4.	Skills and Knowledge	Essential	Desirable	Codes
	Senior leadership and management responsibility in a secondary school at Headship or Deputy Head level.	X		AF
	Proven ability to lead and manage staff and develop high performing teams.	X		AF/I
	Ability to work in partnership with Governing Body.	X		AF/I
	Experience of leading on aspects of school improvement identified through the school's self-evaluation process.	X		AF/I
	Successful teaching experience in the secondary age range.	X		AF
	Experience of meeting the needs of children of varying abilities including vulnerable pupils and those with SEND.	X		AF/I
	Excellent oral and written communication skills.	X		AF/I
	Demonstrate organisational skills, work under pressure and determine priorities to meet tight deadlines	X		AF/I
	Experience of teaching in more than one setting.		X	AF

	Recent varied experience of teaching across the secondary age range.		X	AF
	Knowledge of the National Curriculum, Ofsted and SIAMS frameworks.		X	AF/I
	Experience of supporting and embedding the Christian Vision and Core Christian Values of the school.		X	
5.	<b>Personal Qualities</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Codes</b>
	High expectation of children's achievements and behaviour.	X		I
	Ability to empathise with children across the age range and to be firm, fair and consistent.	X		I
	Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to motivate and inspire others.	X		I
	Ability to sustain effective relationships with the school community.	X		I
	Ability to be reflective and self-critical.	X		I
6.	<b>Professional Philosophy and Commitment</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Codes</b>
	Clear and articulate vision for the development of secondary education in a Church school.	X		I
	Commitment to promoting equal opportunities and meeting the educational, social and emotional needs of all children.	X		I
	Commitment to high standards and continuous improvement.	X		I
	<b>Other</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Codes</b>
	Satisfactory References	X		R
	Satisfactory enhanced DBS	X		DBS



## How to apply

Letters of application should be returned with application forms to [recruitment@nllt.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@nllt.co.uk) or by post to Emily Sanger, HR Advisor, Northern Lights Learning Trust, Spectrum Business Park, Lighthouse View, Building 2, Seaham, SR7 7PR.

Applications will only be considered on receipt of a completed application form, CVs and other forms will not be accepted.

For further information, please contact [recruitment@nllt.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@nllt.co.uk) or 01915947033 (Option 2)

If you are interested in the post and would like to arrange a time to visit the school, please contact [recruitment@nllt.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@nllt.co.uk)

We have the following dates (1-hour appointments) available to look around the school, please email to confirm your preferred date and time. If you are unable to make these times, please contact us for an opportunity to speak to someone.

- 25<sup>th</sup> April – 4.00pm – 6.00pm
- 28<sup>th</sup> April – 2.00pm - 4.00pm
- 1<sup>st</sup> April – 4.00pm - 5.00pm



Northern Lights Learning Trust is an exempt charity. Registered in England and Wales. Registered Office  
Address: Northern Lights Learning Trust, Benedict Biscop CE Academy, Marcross Drive, Sunderland, SR3 2RE.  
Company Number: 07909140

Tel: 01915947033 (Option 2).

**References:**

References will be requested prior to interview, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and the applicant does not give consent to do so on the application form. Please contact us to discuss further if you do not consent.

**DBS:**

Northern Lights Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An application for a DBS certificate will be submitted for all candidates once they have been offered the position. For posts in regulated activity, the DBS check will include a barred list check. During the recruitment process, any offences, or other matters relevant to the position will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Any offer of employment will be subject to receipt of a satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure.**

**Safeguarding:**

Northern Lights Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

**Pre-employment occupational health:**

Pre-employment occupational health checks are an essential part of the selection and recruitment process to assess if any reasonable adjustments are required. In some circumstances, an appointment with Occupational Health may be required to assess fitness for the role.

**Equal opportunities:**

Northern Lights Learning Trust are an equal opportunity employer. We want to develop a more diverse workforce and we positively welcome applicants from all sections of the community. Applicants with disabilities will be granted an interview if the essential job criteria are met.