



Northern
Lights
LEARNING TRUST

HEAD OF SCHOOL DAME DOROTHY PRIMARY SCHOOL



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.



We provide Initial Teacher Training, a school-based learning opportunity where you will train in a highly personal, supportive and creative environment, with purpose and challenge at the heart of it all.

OUR SCHOOLS



Benedict Biscop CE Academy
Sunderland



Dame Dorothy Primary School
Sunderland



Firthmoor Primary School
Darlington



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 an 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 Head of School at Dame Dorothy Primary School within Northern Lights Learning Trust.

We are a growing Multi-Academy Trust that is currently made up of 3 secondaries and 8 primaries across Wearside and Teesside, with our central offices based in Seaham. We educate over 4200 pupils and employ over 600 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 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

Head of School

As a Trust we have a wide range of experience and expertise that we use to support each other. As a member of the team 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.

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.

Head of School

Permanent position required as soon as possible
Salary available upon request.

Teachers' Pay and Conditions

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

Do you value professional development of all staff?

Can you lead a school to be the best it can be, in partnership with the Associate Head Teacher?

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?

Do you...

- Have Senior leadership experience in a Deputy or Assistant Head role within a primary school ?
- Successful experience of improving teaching and learning?
- Successful experience of school management?
- 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?

If so, we would really welcome your application

In return you will receive:

- 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
- A range of Trust initiatives that improve wellbeing. Current initiatives include an annual wellbeing day.
- National Terms and Conditions of Employment
- Teachers' Pension Scheme/ Local Government Pension Scheme

Employee welfare and benefits package 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
- Cycle to work scheme

Details of the school can be found on the school website <https://www.damedorothy.org.uk/>

For further information about the role, please contact Katy Hill, Director of Education,
katy.hill@nllt.co.uk

Visits to the school are welcomed and available:

28th January 2026 at 4pm

3rd February 2026 at 2pm

3rd February 2026 at 4:15pm

To book a place for a visit, please contact Natalie Rippon (HR Advisor) 0191 594 7033 (option 2)
or natalie.rippon@nllt.co.uk

CLOSING DATE:

Applications must be received by: Monday 9th February 2026

Short Listing will take place on: Thursday 12th February 2026

Interviews will take place on: Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th February 2026

HOW TO APPLY:

Letters of application should be returned, along with a Northern Lights Learning Trust application form, to recruitment@nllt.co.uk or by post to Northern Lights Learning Trust, Spectrum Business Park, Lighthouse View, Building 2, Seaham, SR7 7PR

Applications will only be considered on receipt of an application form, CV's and other forms of application will not be accepted.

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST: Head of School at Dame Dorothy Primary School.

RESPONSIBLE TO: Board of Northern Lights Learning Trust, CEO, and Local Governing Body.

RESPONSIBLE FOR: All staff and resources. Operational management of the school.

SALARY BAND: available upon request

START DATE: ASAP

KEY PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:

To 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 , Executive Directors or Associate Headteacher in consultation with the post holder to reflect or anticipate changes in the job.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

LEADERSHIP

To assist the Associate Headteacher in:

- 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 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.

Head of School

- 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 or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead role.
- 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 with the Associate Headteacher 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
- 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 work collaboratively with the Teaching School Hub and contribute to the Teaching School Hub role
- The successful candidate may have the opportunity to provide leadership beyond their own school, contributing to strategic development and school-to-school improvement of a core subject(s) across the Trust. (An enhanced salary will be offered in recognition of the trust-wide remit of this role)

OTHER DUTIES:

- Carry out any other duties commensurate with the role that the Associate Headteacher may direct from time to time.
- Participate in the Performance Management system for the appraisal of own performance.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES- THE POST HOLDER 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.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

HEAD OF SCHOOL

CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
APPLICATION	1. Well-presented and complete application form.		1. Application form
QUALIFICATIONS	2. Qualified Teacher Status – degree or equivalent 3. Evidence of continued and relevant professional development	4. Higher degree/diploma 5. NPQH or further professional development	2,3,4,5. Application Form and Certificates
EXPERIENCE	6. Ability to plan strategically, analyse, interpret and act upon relevant school improvement information and data. 7. Knowledge of school improvement strategies and an ability to support the Associate Headteacher in managing and enhancing the performance of all staff, including use of coaching/mentoring 8. Successful experience of monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of education through substantial curriculum knowledge 9. Experience of leading professional development 10. Thorough understanding of safeguarding	12. Experience of managing an aspect of the delegated budget and the principles of best value	6, 10. Interview 7, 8, 9, 12. Application/Interview 11. Application

	11. Recent senior leadership and management responsibility in a school at Deputy/Assistant Head level.		
SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE	13. Proven ability to lead and manage staff and develop high performing teams. 14. Ability to work in partnership with Governing Body. 15. Experience of leading on aspects of school improvement identified through the school's self-evaluation process. 16. Successful teaching experience across primary age range. 17. Experience of meeting the needs of children of varying abilities including vulnerable pupils and those with SEND. 18. Excellent oral and written communication skills. 19. Demonstrate organisational skills, work under pressure and determine priorities to meet tight deadlines.	20. Recent varied experience of teaching across the primary age range.	13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19. Application/Interview 16, 20. Application
PERSONAL QUALITIES	21. High expectation of children's achievements and behaviour. 22. Ability to empathise with children across the age range and to be firm, fair and consistent.		21-25. Interview

	<p>23. Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to motivate and inspire others.</p> <p>24. Ability to sustain effective relationships with the school community.</p> <p>25. Ability to be reflective and self-critical.</p>		
	<p>26. Clear and articulate vision for the development of primary education.</p> <p>27. Commitment to promoting equal opportunities and meeting the educational, social and emotional needs of all children.</p> <p>28. Commitment to high standards and continuous improvement</p>		26-28. Interview
OTHER	<p>29. Satisfactory References</p> <p>30. Satisfactory Enhanced DBS</p>		<p>References</p> <p>DBS Certificate</p>

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.

Artificial Intelligence and Recruitment at Northern Lights Learning Trust

Northern Lights Learning Trust is committed to embracing innovation while maintaining fairness and integrity in our recruitment processes. We recognise that candidates may choose to use AI tools to support the preparation of their applications. While this is acceptable, we expect all submissions to reflect the applicant's own experiences, values, and suitability for the role and it is essential that AI is used appropriately.

AI must not be used to:

- provide misleading or false information at any stage of the application journey
- inflate or invent qualifications, skills or experience
- complete assessments as part of the recruitment process
- create generic responses and copy them into your application

If you have any questions about the use of AI in your recruitment process with us, please contact hradmin@nllt.co.uk