



Ponteland High School **Prospectus 2025**





Welcome

Our overriding aim is to build a school where all of our students are happy, feel safe and achieve exceptionally well.

We are proud of our school and believe we offer an excellent environment in which to support your son or daughter as they approach a crucial stage in their education.

Please do come and look around the school during a normal school day as I am sure

you will be impressed with the calm and purposeful atmosphere that pervades all areas. We are delighted to have converted to an 11-18 secondary school in September 2019 and moved into our state of the art building in November 2020. We know that our students will benefit greatly from being within our school from Year 7 and this will support them in achieving exceptionally well as they progress to GCSE and beyond.

Stefan McElwee,
Headteacher



Our aims

Our school exists for the benefit of our students and our aims reflect this; we are driven by a desire to ensure that our students are happy, feel safe and secure, and achieve exceptionally well.

In order to achieve our aims we focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning within lessons and raising educational outcomes for students. In addition, we strive to offer a rich and diverse menu of enrichment and extracurricular activities to enhance the curriculum and extend learning beyond the confines of the classroom.

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Leaders have focused on the right priorities at the right time. This has led to sustained improvements in the quality of education and behaviour at the school. There is absolute commitment from leaders at all levels to make the school the best that it can be.

Ofsted

We want our students to get the very best GCSE and A level results they can, and in the process understand what it takes to be a highly effective learner; knowing when to be dependent, independent and interdependent. Our belief is that achieving excellent outcomes will enable our students to move smoothly and successfully on to the next stage of life, whether that may be in training, employment or higher education. Students who come here can expect to be taken out of their comfort zone; we want them to be stretched and challenged so that they make rapid progress and make the most of their unique gifts, talents and abilities.





In 2022-23 we welcomed Ofsted. The inspection confirmed the high quality of provision within Ponteland High School. Below is a selection of statements from the May 2023 report.

Pupils understand that they are expected to give their best every day. Pupils reflect these expectations in their positive attitudes to learning and excellent conduct.

High-quality pastoral and academic support are available to all. Pupils know there is someone they can speak to if something worries them. They feel safe in school and appreciate the excellent facilities available. As a result, many pupils participate widely in extra-curricular activities. These include several musical groups, sports teams of all abilities and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Curriculum leaders are ambitious in the choices they make about what pupils will learn. They have carefully considered the important knowledge that will best prepare pupils for future education and employment. Pupils excel because staff have high expectations of them.

Students in the sixth form are equally well supported in the classroom because staff clearly understand the demands of post-16 education. A wide variety of courses meet students' needs well.

Leaders have ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in classrooms. Staff understand how to support pupils with a range of needs. Plans to support pupils with SEND are precise. They include the specific strategies that will benefit each pupil the most.

Pupils' wider development is a priority for leaders. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum has been well considered.

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We are again delighted with the results achieved by our Year 13 students this year, building on the high achievement of our students in 2023. Almost 30% of all grades achieved were at A*-A, our best ever results. This is extremely pleasing and is a suitable reward for our students and staff.

Stefan McElwee,
Headteacher

Achievement

We pride ourselves on consistently achieving excellent results however we are not complacent. Our aim is to ensure that everybody in our school achieves as highly as they can, and in most cases better than they think they can.

GCSE results 2025

Measure	2023	2024	2025
Attainment 8	50.2	56.0	53.4
%9-5+ in English & Maths	52%	62%	56%
%9-4+ in English & Maths	71%	82%	78%
English Baccalaureate 5+	22%	40%	30%
English Baccalaureate 4+	39%	50%	42%

Please note:

1. Attainment 8 is a government performance measure for English secondary schools that calculates a pupil's average score across their best 8 GCSE or equivalent qualifications.
2. For more information on school performance including national data, go to compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk

Purpose and ambition

Our school aims underpin our core purpose, which is to ensure that we create a great school environment where students and staff can flourish. This enables us to develop excellence in teaching and learning resulting in outstanding student outcomes.

Our ambition is to provide an environment where students are known and valued as the unique individuals they are, and where they are supported to push themselves to excel. We want them to commit fully to their studies and learn to cope with both success and failure, in the process strengthening their resilience and resolve.

To support our purpose and ambition we have an excellent body of staff and they make all the difference. Our teachers are focused on their students and want the best for them. This means having consistently high expectations; insisting on politeness, good manners and excellent behaviour; creating an atmosphere where students are respected and where lessons are challenging.

In order to be as effective as possible, our teachers know that there is always room for improvement. As such, we are committed to ongoing training and professional learning so

that we have staff that are effective, creative and open to new ideas. We promote a culture and approach that emphasises sharing good practice and strong collaboration. The school curriculum is broad and balanced, yet academically challenging. There is a strong international dimension to life at Ponteland High and students are encouraged to understand their role as a responsible member of the local, regional and global community.

Our standards are high and our student targets challenging because we want to push them beyond what they believe they can achieve. Success and achievement in all their forms are celebrated across our school community. Praise, encouragement and tolerance permeate everything we do.

We believe that every child and adult matters. It is the commitment of our staff, students and families that makes Ponteland High School special.

Curriculum

We see the curriculum as a key element within our school as it sets out what we want our students to know, understand and be able to do in each subject area during their time with us.

We aim to build on the knowledge, understanding and skills of students at each stage by planning progressively ensuring that the building blocks are in place for future learning.

Our Key Stage 3 (Y7-9) curriculum enables all of our students to benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum in line with the expectations as set out in the National Curriculum. This involves the study of a range of subjects including English, Maths, Science, two Languages (from Y8), Food and Workshop Technology, ICT, Geography, History, Art, Music, RE and PE.

Towards the end of Y9, students choose a modern foreign language and an additional three GCSE/vocational option subjects they wish to study in years 10 and 11. We believe that learning a foreign language adds an important dimension to our curriculum and that our students benefit from studying at least one language to GCSE. We have a wide range of courses from which to select, some that will not have been studied previously, therefore parents and students are provided

with ongoing help and advice from teachers and tutors to support individual decisions. We are only too aware that learning does not just take place in the classroom and therefore we have a wide and varied enrichment and extra-curricular programme, and encourage all students to get involved.



Respect and responsibility

Respect and responsibility are the foundations on which our expectations and code of conduct are built. We believe this is supported by a small number of clear and unambiguous classroom rules.

These are summarised below:



Do as you are asked by an adult, without question or comment.



Listen in silence when someone is talking.

Adhering to these expectations enables everyone to focus on learning successfully in each and every classroom.



Character development

We believe that success in school and beyond depends not only on what students know, but also on who they are becoming. That's why character development is central to our mission.

We focus on cultivating five key character strengths that we believe support lifelong success:

Dedication – Working hard and staying committed to goals.

Resilience – Learning from failure, overcoming setbacks, and continuing with courage.

Involvement – Taking part actively in lessons and wider school life as well as contributing positively to the community.

Respect – Treating others with respect, dignity and good manners.

Compassion – Acting with kindness, empathy and care towards others.

Together, these strengths support the three core aims of our school: for every student to be happy, to feel safe and secure, and to achieve exceptionally well. These aims create the best possible conditions for young people to thrive in the classroom, as well as in their future studies, workplaces, relationships, and communities.

At Ponteland High, character is not left to chance. It is nurtured deliberately through school life.



Dedication



Resilience



Involvement



Respect



Compassion

Sixth Form

We have a vibrant, popular and thriving 6th form due to the fact that the majority of our students choose to continue their education with us at the end of Year 11. Our curriculum offer is wide with a range of popular courses for students to opt for.

The purpose of our 6th form is to ensure that students achieve outstanding results as this enables them to pursue excellent opportunities at university, high level apprenticeships, training and/or employment. In order to be successful we encourage our students to focus on three elements of their student life:



School life

Attend every day, make the most of lessons, revisit notes regularly, carry out additional reading, ask questions and extend knowledge and understanding.



Super-curricular

Become an expert in the subject that you want to study at university or pursue for a career, consider studying this as part of an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).



Extra-curricular

Develop areas of excellence, engage in work experience or volunteering, identify skills, team working, decision-making, taking responsibility, using initiative and building resilience.

We pride ourselves on the support we provide for our students and this has aided us in building a strong track record of placing many of them in top universities including Oxford, Cambridge and other Russell Group universities. University is not the choice for everyone and so we ensure that all students get the same level of support regardless of their preferred destination.



Support

Most able

We expect teachers to extend and challenge all of our students and this particularly applies to our most able individuals.

Additional challenge may come in the form of extension activities, more challenging homework or research activities designed to stretch an individual's knowledge and understanding.

Special educational needs

Students with a special educational need, including those with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP), are encouraged to work to their full potential and are taught in mainstream classes by qualified teachers.

We have a dedicated team of Curriculum Support Assistants working across the full range of subjects, supporting students to make excellent progress.

If you have a child with special educational needs, you are welcome to discuss any concerns with our Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and/or Pastoral Leader/Manager before transfer to the school, during termly reviews, or at any other time throughout your child's time at our school.





Open to ideas

Student views

The views of our students are important to us.

We involve them in reviews of departments, as an integral part of all staff appointment processes and a random selection meets with the Headteacher each month to discuss their views of the school.

We are seeking to build a strong sense of identity with the school and to support our students in engaging with us co-operatively to make the school even better.

Parents' views

Each year we conduct an online parental survey. The results of this are shared with staff and governors.

We would encourage all parents to complete this to ensure that we are building on the views of parents.

Parents are also encouraged to contact school in the event of any concern or issue - please don't assume things will just get better. The sooner we know of an issue the quicker we can work together to resolve it.

Commitment to languages

Ponteland High was one of the first state schools to become a Language College in 1995. Despite the demise of the specialist schools movement and the reduction in numbers of students studying languages nationally we have retained our commitment to studying a language to GCSE.

Language skills are extremely important in this shrinking world, where business is increasingly international in nature, and there are more and more opportunities to follow a career in other countries.

At the heart of our international approach is a belief that we can learn much about ourselves by looking at and visiting the wider world.

Understanding others' points of view and experiencing different cultures are just some of the benefits students gain from foreign travel.

...the vast majority of our students study a Modern Foreign Language, with 62% of the cohort achieving a Grade 5 or better and over 77% achieving a Grade 4 or better.

GCSE and vocational results, August 2025





The school day

We follow a two-week timetable, which means that lesson patterns may change slightly every other week, e.g. Period 1, week one on a Monday might be English, but in week two it might be Science.

Students can check which week's timetable is in operation. This information is displayed on the plasma TV screen at main reception, on our website and also on our Weekly Bulletin, which is emailed to parents each Friday afternoon.

The school day begins at **8.55am**.

There is a morning break from **11.15am to 11.35am**.
All students must stay in school.

Lunch time is from **1.35pm to 2.15pm**.

In the dining hall, students can choose either a full school meal or a snack-type lunch from food prepared in our own kitchen. Packed lunches can be eaten in one of the designated areas. Fresh drinking water is available from the water machine in the dining hall, free of charge. Students can bring their own bottled water.

The school day ends at **3.25pm**.



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We believe the information in this prospectus to be correct at the time of printing. However, we are constantly seeking ways in which to improve, so please contact school for the latest information on our policies and practices.

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be part of
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