



**Headteacher
Black Firs Primary School
Headteacher Pay Scale + Pension Scheme (TPS)**

For a confidential discussion about this post with the Headteacher, more information, or to arrange a visit, please contact the school on

01260 272935 or office@black-firs.co.uk

All completed application forms and written statements need to be submitted by Tuesday 31st January 2023.

Shortlisted candidates will be contacted and invited interview during the week commencing Monday 5th February 2023.



THE LEARNING ALLIANCE

Welcome to The Learning Alliance

The Learning Alliance is a new multi-academy trust formed on 1st September 2020 as a merger between Congleton Multi-Academy Trust and Knutsford Multi-Academy Trust. The trust consists of nine schools, three of which are primary schools, five are secondary schools and a university technical college, all based across Cheshire and north Staffordshire. CEO of the Trust is Mike Cladingbowl, a former headteacher, and national director for OfStEd. Mike was CEO of Knutsford Multi-Academy Trust prior to the merger.

The trust believes in allowing each school to retain its distinctive and successful ethos whilst also being able to support the ambition of individual schools, help children to reach their potential and benefit from the greater resources that partnership within the trust brings.

Our vision and values are:

We are ambitious for all children - our schools share a commitment to providing world-class education while inspiring children to realise their full potential

Our schools reflect their communities - each school has the freedom to determine its own ethos within overarching trust goals

Together we can achieve more - we know that collaboration and working in partnership enriches us all

Our family of Schools



Congleton High School, key stage 3 & 4, plus Sixth Form



Based on the Knutsford Academy site, for key stage 4 and Sixth Form



Key stage 3 & 4, plus a Sixth Form



Based in Crewe for key stage 3 & 4



Based in Crewe, for key stage 3 & 4



Based in Crewe, key stage 4 and Sixth Form



Primary school in Mow Cop



Primary school in Congleton



Egerton Primary School

Primary School in Knutsford



Dear applicant,

A warm welcome to our family of schools

Our exciting new Trust formed on 1 September 2020 following a merger of two smaller, successful Trusts. We are a group of nine primary and secondary schools, including a UTC, in Congleton, Knutsford, Crewe and North Staffordshire.

We want enthusiastic, lively and talented staff who share our belief that all children deserve the best possible care and education.

- ★ We are ambitious for children - our schools share a commitment to providing world-class education while inspiring children to realise their full potential
- ★ Our schools reflect their communities - each school has the freedom to determine its own ethos within overarching trust goals
- ★ Together we can achieve more - we know that collaboration and working in partnership enriches us all

It is busy but very rewarding work. If you want to speak about this do not hesitate to get in touch with me, Janet Robinson, HR Director or the Headteacher of the school.

Whatever post you are applying for, and in whatever school, you will get a very warm welcome, meet some great colleagues and have plenty of opportunities to develop your career.

Lastly, I really hope that you are interested in applying for this position. We look forward to receiving your application.

With very best wishes,

Mike Cladingbowl
Chief Executive



Dear Applicant

Thank you for your expression of interest in the post of Headteacher at Black Firs Primary School.

Our current Headteacher is retiring after twenty-five years at our School. We are seeking candidates who will enjoy the challenge of continuing Black Firs' successful journey. We have an experienced team of teachers who team-teach in an open and collegiate style; a process that values and, in turn, develops the skills of each member. At this time of continual change in education, the successful candidate will demonstrate the interpersonal skills, enthusiasm, flexibility and an ability to rework their experiences to successfully lead our school and enhance the opportunities available for our children.

Black Firs has an excellent reputation based on delivery of a high-quality stimulating, practical and holistic curriculum with an emphasis on reading at its core. We have been shown to have maintained high standards despite the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic wrought on the education of our children. The school places a significant emphasis on the place of arts to stimulate the creative dimension of children's learning and provide ample opportunities for our children to take part in adventure and competitive sporting activities. The success of school is supported by our outstanding [team-teaching](#) delivery via our four dept teams and a strong senior leadership team. The result of this is a happy school that allows children to thrive and achieve their best by focussing on the critical relationship between school, parents and children.

Your letter of application might include a brief outline of:

- Your personal philosophy of leadership in education
- Your previous range of experiences and responsibilities relevant to this post
- What you consider to be 'quality work' by staff and children
- Your personal and professional qualities, knowledge and skills
- Examples of your good practice and strengths
- Examples of how you could play a full role in the life of our School

Interested candidates are encouraged to visit School, by appointment only, between Monday 9th January and Friday 27th January please telephone. Candidates, who are selected to our short-list, will be contacted and invited to interview during the week commencing Monday 5th February 2023.

We look forward to welcoming you to our school and working together to deliver the next chapter in our children's journey at Black Firs Primary School.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Horrocks
Chair of Governors

About Black Firs School



Black Firs is a 3-11yr old school, very popular and over-subscribed. Our 1½ form entry urban primary school is located within its own grounds serving a catchment area of predominantly owner-occupied homes around West Heath on the outskirts of Congleton Town. The school was opened in 1971 and recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. We are currently completing a three-classroom extension for our upper junior children.

We have a semi-open plan design which is happy and thriving with 311 children on roll and a 35-place sessional Preschool with 50 children on the register. Our teaching team is settled and experienced. Parents work in close partnership with the teachers, many give their time supporting events and helping within School.

School is well resourced and furnished. Educational standards are high but we constantly strive to be better. We became an academy in June 2014 and amalgamated in to a new MAT, The Learning Alliance in September 2020. We have an active engagement with Cheshire East Council, Cheshire Primary Headteacher association and are a part of The Education Community Partnership, ECP; our local Town schools' partnership charity. Our last OfStEd inspection was October 2022 when we were rated Good.

We believe in learning for life. Learning is a journey which will start at Black Firs, with us providing children with the skills to become independent learners for life. Our unique holistic [curriculum](#) offer is national curriculum plus. We regard literacy, numeracy and computing as our cornerstone, building upon these basics to provide a broad and relevant curriculum, via our [studywork](#) approach leading from a shared class book. This enhances children's self-esteem and stimulates in them a growth mind-set. We are fully inclusive in our philosophy and welcome all the children in our community. We aim for high quality in every aspect of our 'learning community'.

We are forward thinking; our aim is to prepare children to value and embrace their future. We endeavour to create a purposeful and friendly environment in which everyone is assured of individual care and attention. We motivate children with praise for a task well done and encouragement to keep on striving to be better. Black Firs is a place where it is safe to make mistakes; it is safe to succeed; it is safe to be yourself.

We believe that strong relationships are at the heart of our success, this includes a close partnership with parents, which are essential so that children develop the habit of a love of learning and for life. As a child-centred School, a Black Firs member of staff is seen as the decisive element in the classroom. We are the adults, the professionals; at Black Firs we adapt to suit the child. This is modelled in our [team-teaching](#) delivery via four department teams across school.

A key aspect of financing the close educational staffing support at Black Firs is to be entrepreneurial and income generating. We have three commercial trading elements school-meals, out-of-school club and Preschool. Income generated, plus our GAG, allow us to deliver a first-class high-quality education. The successful candidate will be expected to lead and manage these commercial enterprises day-to-day.

Along with the staff and governors, parents and families are pro-active in striving to achieve the best for each child encouraging them to build a life-long love of learning where children will become successful, contented and fulfilled young people. All stakeholders' contributions are valued and respected to achieve continued improvement for the children, staff and the school.

The emotional well-being of the children and staff is a priority for the school. A leadership team, including a Mental Health Lead, oversees this. Each of the four teaching-teams is supported by three Teaching Assistants. They are highly qualified with different skill-sets than our teachers. They support and deliver learning throughout the school as active members of the teaching teams. Special Educational Needs provision is fully supported in our inclusive school. Our SENDCo has developed a SEND dept delivery model through our teaching-teams, each team has a TA qualified to deliver a range of SEND interventions; this is a significant strength.

Extra-curricular activities are popular and varied [including clubs](#). Black Firs has a reputation for being very successful in competitive sports locally and regionally. Our squads are coached and managed by Black Firs staff. School staff run our out-of-school wrap around care for families and this includes a Holiday Club which is managed by BusyBees.

Black Firs is a 3-11yr old school; we run Black Firs Pre-School which operates within our Early Years Team. The majority of children receive their pre-School experience in our setting before starting school in our Reception class. Transition is a natural next step in their education.

The school grounds are spacious, attractive and have scope for significant outdoor learning. We have an all-weather field, netball courts, cricket nets and athletics facilities. We also have a small woodland on-site where we deliver Forest School activities. Currently, we have links with local house-builders who are currently assisting the school in the further development of the school grounds.

The School's PTA is extremely supportive, enthusiastic and pro-active. Parents are supportive of the school and are keen to be involved, being generous with their contributions in all aspects. Annual events such as Christmas and Summer Fairs are highlights which attract the whole school community as well as extended family and local residents. Parents reported to OfStEd that everybody is made to feel welcome. Parents and carers speak highly of the school. They are appreciative of the approachable nature of school staff.

We look forward to welcoming you to our School. Prospective candidates are invited to visit our School, by prior arrangement, and to visit our website at www.black-firs.co.uk for further information. All completed application forms and written statements need to be submitted by Tuesday 31st January 2023. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted and invited to attend a 2-day interview during the week commencing Monday 5th February 2023. The interview process will involve a series of panel interviews, leadership tasks and presentations. There will also be an opportunity for shortlisted candidates to meet staff and children during the interview days.



Headteacher Black Firs Primary School

We are looking for a new headteacher for our happy and popular 3-11 school. Our current Headteacher is retiring after twenty-five years at Black Firs. We are seeking candidates who will enjoy the challenge of continuing Black Firs very successful journey with our experienced team of teachers.

Black Firs School is an over-subscribed, 1½ form entry, urban primary school located on the outskirts of the Cheshire town Congleton. We have 350 children on roll from 3-11yrs old. Recently recognised by Ofsted that “Children love coming to the welcoming and nurturing environment of Black Firs. They are helped to develop their personal qualities through the four school values of generosity, belonging, independence and mastery. Children are great friends to one another.”

We believe that strong relationships are at the heart of our success, this includes a close partnership with parents, which are essential so that children develop the habit of a love of learning and for life. As a child-centred School, a Black Firs teacher is seen as the decisive element in the classroom. Our personal approach creates the climate. It’s our mood that makes the weather. As teachers we possess the power to make a child’s life joyous or miserable; a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. We can humour or humiliate, hurt or heal. In all situations it is our response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated; a child humanised or de-humanised. We are the adults, the professionals; at Black Firs we adapt to suit the child.

The school is part of The Learning Alliance¹, a growing and flourishing family of schools. As the new headteacher, you will enjoy unstinting support and care from an experienced and approachable local governing board as well as advice and help from an experienced Chief Executive. The role includes day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the school, providing a great education for all and ensuring the wellbeing of our whole school community.

We are looking for a highly effective leader, who is used to working in a collegiate style with experienced staff who teach in teams which value the skills of each member. A leader with a growth mindset, who inspires staff and children alike, utilising an adaptive style to best meet the needs of the whole school community. We are proud of our school and are looking for someone who will uphold our excellent

¹ The Learning Alliance is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All staff appointments are subject to satisfactory references and enhanced checks with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).

In line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 The Learning Alliance does not request attendance or medical information on candidates for posts prior to appointment. We will, however, seek a post-appointment reference for successful candidates, which will include questions relating to attendance records. Appointments will be made subject to this reference and the Trust may, in some circumstances, withdraw the offer of appointment on the basis of information received, again having full regard to the requirements of the Equality Act.

The Learning Alliance is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination; all applicants should note that they will be considered on the basis of suitability regardless of disability, gender, race, religion, age, sexual orientation and marital status or any other discrimination which is unfair or unreasonable. We are proud to be an employer that holds Disability Committed and Menopause Friendly status. The Trust supports CIPD’s #FlexFrom1st campaign and is ‘happy to talk flexible working’

reputation and nurture our existing strong positive relationships with children, staff, parents and families to improve outcomes for all.

As our new Headteacher, you will demonstrate your commitment to excellence inside and outside the classroom. You will also have a proven track record of high expectations and outstanding achievement along with a passion for all children and their education.

We encourage all prospective candidates to visit and meet with us. You can contact us to make an appointment by phoning the school 01260 272935 or by emailing the school business manager, Chloe Holloway: office@black-firs.co.uk

We offer an attractive salary and a competitive benefits package. The Learning Alliance supports its family of schools with specialist central services, extensive professional development and career opportunities and a wide network of curriculum and other links.

Black Firs School is fully committed to safer recruitment practice. Pre-employment checks will always be undertaken and requested before the appointment is confirmed. All prospective employees are subjected to enhanced DBS disclosure. We are an equal opportunities employer.

Applications via TES website <https://www.tes.com/jobs/vacancy/headteacher-cheshire-east-1750956>
Job Description and Person Specification can be downloaded from the school website www.black-firs.co.uk or email the school office office@black-firs.co.uk but must be returned via TES website only.

All completed application forms and written statements need to be submitted by Tuesday 31st January 2023. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted and invited to attend a 2-day interview during the week commencing Monday 5th February 2023. The interview process will involve a series of panel interviews, leadership tasks and presentations. There will also be an opportunity for shortlisted candidates to meet staff and children during the interview days.

Job Description and Person Specification

JOB PURPOSE

To provide exemplary leadership for a primary school in line with national [Headteachers' standards](#).
Responsible to Chief Executive.

MAIN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

- To deliver a high-quality curriculum, reflecting the school's unique characteristics, with very high standards of teaching and learning, behaviour and attendance, including by fostering innovation to achieve excellence in all areas of school life.
- To provide advice to local governing boards and trust about the strategic direction, operation and impact of the school's work in relation to the quality of education, safeguarding and welfare.
- To ensure the effective safeguarding and wellbeing of all children and staff.
- To review the performance of the school regularly, and their staff, and take any action as may be necessary to bring about improvement.
- To promote and celebrate any unique characteristics of the school.
- To act as a positive role model to all staff and children, identifying emerging talents and aspiring leaders to help ensure effective succession planning.
- To advocate the school to parents/carers so they are well informed about opportunities provided and the progress made by children and so that there is full recruitment to the relevant planned admission limit.
- To foster positive relationships with key stakeholders, including local communities, schools, business partners, local authority and employers.
- To lead and manage delivery of preschool provision for the school ensuring it's financially self-funding and income generating for the wider benefit of the whole school.
- To lead and manage the delivery of the school meals service ensuring lunch-time provision is financially self-funding and income generating for the wider benefit of the whole school.
- To lead and manage the delivery of out-of-school provision ensuring it's financially self-funding and income generating for the wider benefit of the whole school.
- To work within agreed scheme of delegation and implement all policies agreed by The Learning Alliance, including by carrying out all equalities duties, fostering diversity and inclusion, and adhering to all human resources, health & safety and financial procedures.
- To promote The Learning Alliance and its values, working cooperatively across all its schools.
- To undertake any other such duties such as are commensurate with this post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ATTRIBUTES	LETTER	INTERVIEW
• Passion for education as a way of improving all children's life chances	✓	✓
• Determination that all children achieve well	✓	✓
• Commitment to working with families	✓	✓
• Understanding of primary education	✓	✓
• Suitable qualifications and experience, including NPQH	✓	✓
• Experience of working in schools in different contexts	✓	✓
• Commitment to safeguarding	✓	✓
• Ability to manage change effectively	✓	✓
• Effective written and oral communication	✓	✓
• Ability to set direction	✓	✓
• Ability to influence others	✓	✓
• Understanding of research-led practice		✓
• Commitment to staff development		✓
• Ability to manage a wide range of stakeholders and commitment to collaborative approaches		✓
• Commitment to meeting SEND and vulnerable children's needs	✓	✓
• Proven lead professional in teaching and learning	✓	✓
• Excellent inter-personal skills, including managing & resolving conflict and decision making	✓	✓
• Understanding of current educational environment	✓	✓
• Effective delegation skills		✓
• Ability to prioritise under pressure		✓
• Sound understanding of financial planning		✓
• Ability to recognise and manage relevant commercial trading provision for income generation		✓
• Experience and understanding of working effectively with LGBs		✓
• Commitment to own development, including preparedness to undergo training and access support for any less well-developed areas		✓



Staff Benefits

In addition to competitive salaries, subscription to the Teachers' Pension Scheme and for Support Staff the Local Government Pension Scheme, Black Firs School has a great deal to offer staff at the school.

Over the last few years, the school has shown commitment to improving staff well-being and implemented strategies to address workload issues.

What can we offer you?

1. Teachers are provided with Friday afternoons for PPA time so they can assess and plan together in their teaching-teams.
2. Non-contact time for senior teachers, middle leaders weekly and for subject coordinators on an annual rolling plan.
3. Encouragement to engage in NPQs and Leadership Programmes as well as opportunities for staff to complete leadership training through The Learning Alliance.
4. Staff work spaces in staffroom.
5. Free refreshments to all staff via our school meals provision.

As a school we have implemented a range of strategies to promote well-being and address workload.

1. Reduced the amount of time inputting data.
2. Provide staff with analysed data so that they can focus on using data effectively.
3. Senior staff provided a centralised system for ordering consumables.
4. Provided training for staff on managing stress, building resilience and developing well-being & happiness.
5. Free lunches for staff who join the two-week rolling lunch-time supervision rota.
6. Changed the email culture so that parents and outside agencies are aware of the expectations of responding to emails at weekends and holidays.
7. Implemented a Flexible Working Policy.
8. Mental Health Lead and First Aid trained staff.
9. Developed a well-being working group to work in conjunction with the Trust's wellbeing working group, upholding the principles of the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter.

Staff Benefits Platform

From September 2022, The Learning Alliance has partnered with Sodexo to introduce a wide range of 'TLA Perks' to employees in all our trust schools.

1. Employee Assistance Programme (Care First)
2. Cycle2Work (Halfords)
3. Sustainable Car scheme (Tusker)
4. Affordable Technology Scheme (Let's Connect)
5. Staff Discounts – discounts and competitions across retail, cinema, travel, and more.