

---

# LIGHThouse

---

JANUARY 2023

ISSUE 26



“ENABLING EVERYONE IN OUR COMMUNITIES TO LET THEIR LIGHT SHINE.”

WELCOME TO THE FIRST LIGHTHOUSE NEWSLETTER OF 2023



## WE'LL TAKE THE 'GOOD' BUT COMMENTS ARE MUCH MORE IMPORTANT

When we returned from the Christmas break in January, we finally received and were allowed to publish the OFSTED inspection report for Castle School. This followed the publication of the inspection report for Bishop's at the end of November. Both schools received reports which judged them to be 'Good' in all categories, which is great news for each of the school communities and is validation of the great work of our staff in each school.

OFSTED will be appointing a new Chair later this year and this has sparked a lot of debate of how it might change in the future. In particular, discussion has focused on how useful grades are and whether they should continue in the future.

My experience as school leader has meant that I have been involved in more than twenty inspections over the years. This has ranged from being Headteacher of school judged as 'Outstanding' and keeping this grade on re-inspection, to helping schools improve where they have been judged as 'Inadequate'. My experience here has shown that often there are very narrow margins between judgements, which can be determined by one or two things during a two day inspection. I've seen this both ways, where things fortunately fall into place and show a school at its very best and at other times where one or two minor points prevent a school getting the judgment that it deserves.

A recent national survey looked at what parents felt were the most important reasons for picking their child's school. The two most important factors both locally and nationally were location and local reputation. Only 29% of parents and carers in the North East (33% nationally) felt that OFSTED ratings were the most important reason, so maybe it is time to look again at inspections, as the main purpose is to provide information for parents.

I'm not against inspections: I think that schools have to be accountable for the education we provide for our children and our spending of taxpayers' money.

However, I don't believe that the current way that schools are inspected is the best use of resources. Looking at the two recent reports for our Trust schools, I think that the comments are much more helpful than the grades.

For Bishop's, I would like to think that as parent you would be most reassured that "pupils enjoy being at school. They feel safe, happy and well looked after" and that "Leaders have designed a curriculum to engage and inspire pupils". As a leader of a Trust where we aim for all our schools to be at the heart of their local communities, I was delighted to see that the "excellent links between school and home create a strong community feel".

In the Castle report, again I would hope that parents and carers are reassured that "Castle School is a warm and welcoming place" and that all pupils are "encouraged to achieve their best and shine their light" and that they "enjoy coming to school". For my role as CEO, I was delighted to see that "the school is highly inclusive. The core values of love, inclusivity, goodness, hope and truth are shared by pupils and staff alike". It was also great to see that the efforts and commitment of the staff were recognised as "all staff share leaders ambitions for pupils to be the best they can be. Teachers and their class teams, from early years through to sixth form are proud of the difference they make to pupils lives".

I think at those extracts point to what the future focus of inspection could be. Rather than concentrating on grades, where the goalposts for schools shift every time the inspection framework changes, why not focus on the things that a school is doing well and identify what they need to do to become even better?

Wouldn't that be clearer and more helpful for parents and carers?

Alan Hardie, CEO

## IN THIS EDITION:

CEO's Blog - 1

'Good' for Castle School - 2

Winter Warmer - 3

Year 9 Options - 4

Chaplain's Column - 5

Free School Meals - 6

Our Vacancies - 7 & 8

Important Trust News - 9



'GOOD' FOR

# CASTLE SCHOOL

## CELEBRATING ITS FIRST EVER OFSTED

We are excited to announce Castle School has achieved 'Good' in its Ofsted report published on 10th January 2023. This is the first time Castle has been inspected.

In the report, the inspector opened by saying "NCEA Castle School is a warm and welcoming place".

All pupils are encouraged to achieve their best and 'shine their light'. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are proud of how well they do."

## SHINING A LIGHT ON OUR CORE VALUES



"Pupils feel safe at NCEA Castle School. They say that bullying rarely happens. They know that they can let adults know if this were to happen and it would be sorted out.."



Other highlights included that 'learning is both appropriate and meaningful.' and that ' Staff work alongside other professionals to understand how best to meet each pupils' specific needs"



Areas that could be improved included the processes for quality assurance of the curriculum and the personal development programme and its wider opportunities for pupils.



## A PROUD COMMUNITY

Patrick Ford-Hutchinson, Acting Head of School at Castle School, said:

"I am delighted with the outcome of our recent OFSTED inspection. The report is very positive and I am glad that it captures the school so well. I would like to take the opportunity to thank and congratulate the staff on their hard work and continued support for the children and families in this community"

Alan Hardie, Chief Executive Officer at NCEAT, commented:

"I am thrilled that OFSTED recognised the hard work of staff in making Castle School a place where all of our pupils can "shine their light" and achieve their best. This was Castle's first OFSTED inspection as a separate school and our whole community can be very proud of the report".



**A WARM AND WELCOMING PLACE**



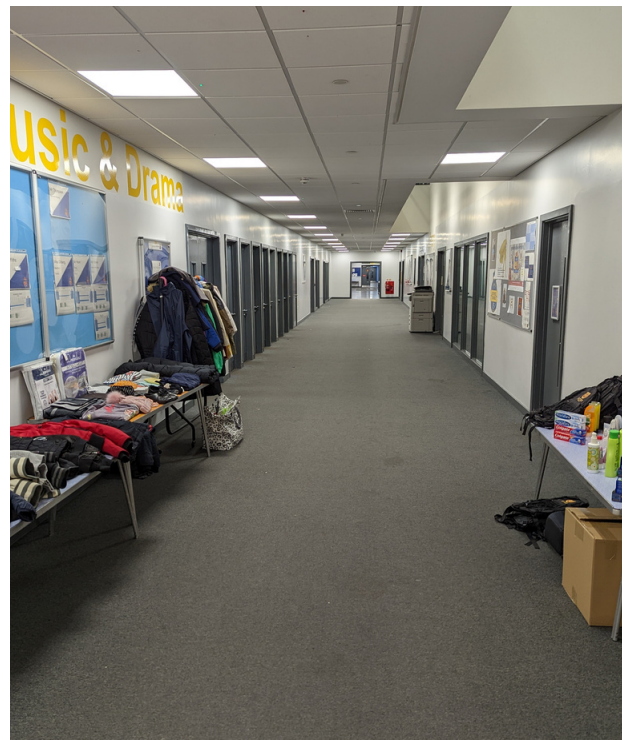
# WINTER WARMER

AT DUKE'S

Duke's were happy to host another Winter Warmer event on Wednesday 25th January. The event was really popular with lots of people gathering together. It was a lovely evening with a free game of bingo and a raffle, a lovely way for members of our community to come together in a warm space.

We offered free food and refreshments at the event as well as having stalls of pre-loved coats, new toiletries and sanitary products.

We are so delighted to have hosted a night like this.



Don't worry, if you missed out on this event, we will soon be announcing dates for our next one, so please check parentmail or look out for posters.

Thank you to everybody who helped out and everyone who joined us.

We would also like to thank Asda Ashington for their very kind donation of food for the event.

# YEAR 9 OPTIONS

Our Year 9 pupils are ready to start looking at their subject options for study in Year 10 and Year 11.

## SUBJECT VIDEOS

Calling all Year 9s - you can head over to our YouTube to see all the subject videos created by the subject leaders for each of their courses.

## THE NEXT STEP

Join us on 1st March 2023 to find out more about all of the subjects available to study at Duke's Secondary and ask any questions about future options.



## 22ND & 23RD MARCH

A further opportunity for you and your parents to ask for further advice and discuss any concerns you may have about your options choices.



# CHAPLAIN'S COLUMN

In the dark days of December it feels like it will never be light ever again. Today the sunrise was 7.59am, the first time it has been before 8am for months and months. It was an absolute joy last week to be at St Nicholas Cathedral in Newcastle with over 100 pupils from the Trust. It was wonderful to see the newly refurbished cathedral alive with you people, singing, praying and celebrating the work of the Children's Society. At one point the lights were lowered and eleven students from Duke's Secondary held lighted Christingles for everyone to see. The candles were a sign of hope in a dark world, twinkling and illuminating the area around them.

Light and darkness are common themes in the Bible from St John's gospel

*"The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not overcome it"* John 1:5

Jesus describes himself

*"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* John 8: 12

Jesus tells us in Matthew's gospel

*"No one after lighting a lamp puts it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to everyone in the house."* Matthew 5:15

And we are asked to be that light

*"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."* Matthew 5:16



”

**“THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS BUT THE DARKNESS HAS NOT OVERCOME IT” JOHN 1:5**

“

As the days start to lengthen and the warmth of spring and summer returns, may we find fresh energy to be lights in the world. If we find ourselves in a dark places in life, may we have people around us willing to walk with us, to guide us to the light.

Let us pray

Almighty God, your Son is the Prince of Peace and King of Kings, Guide us by your Holy Spirit to be beacons of light dispelling darkness and fear.  
In Jesus' name. Amen

# FREE SCHOOL MEALS



## WHAT IS IT AND CAN I GET IT?

We want to make sure that we are providing your child with the best education and support we can. Healthy school food has obvious health benefits and can help pupils establish healthy habits for life. Healthy school food can also help to improve pupils' readiness to learn.

APPLY FOR FREE  
SCHOOL MEALS

It's quick and easy :

[Primary & Castle Parents](#)

[Duke's Parents](#)

Families who receive certain benefits may be eligible for free school meals **BUT YOU MUST APPLY**. Your child is eligible for free school meals if you're in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400.
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for the four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual income of no more than £16,190

# VACANCIES



## Primary School Teacher

Are you passionate about inspiring children to achieve their full potential? If so, we have the perfect opportunity for you.

We are looking to appoint a part time teacher to cover maternity leave starting in March 2023.

**APPLY NOW**

## Learning Mentor Maths

If you want to make a difference to the lives of our young people, not just now, but for their future. If you believe you can make a significant contribution to our school community, then we want to hear from you.

Our pupils need you to provide a strong presence and to support them through their educational journey.

**APPLY NOW**



## Catering Coordinator

We have an exciting opportunity for a newly created post to work within our growing facilities team based at our head office in Ashington.

If you feel that you would like to make a contribution to the success of our Trust and support the development and improvement in NCEAT internal catering operations and contracted cleaning services then apply.

**APPLY NOW**





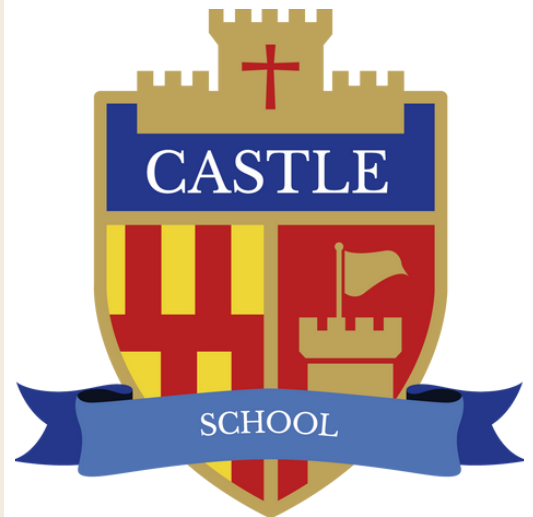
# VACANCIES

## SEN Teacher

Castle School is looking for an energetic, enthusiastic, creative and resilient teacher to work in a committed team at Castle School.

The learners within Castle School have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, including autism and receive their education from a highly dedicated and experienced team of teachers and teaching assistants.

**APPLY NOW**



## Lunchtime Supervisor

Some of our schools are looking for Lunchtime Supervisors to support the children over the lunchtime period.

If you feel that you would like to make a contribution to the success of one of our Schools by joining our friendly team we look forward to receiving your application.

**APPLY NOW**

## Recruitment Specialist

NCEA Trust has a rare opportunity for an experienced recruiter to join our busy HR team at its head office in Ashington.

Candidates should be a person of integrity and be able to maintain confidentiality while remaining impartial. You should have a good eye for detail, be of a resilient nature and be able to remain positive in challenging circumstances.

**APPLY NOW**



# KEEP UP TO DATE

*with the Trust*

## Strike Action

You will be aware that one of the main teaching unions, the NEU, is organising a number of regional strikes over the coming weeks, the first one being this Wednesday 1st February.

All NCEAT schools have looked at their situations and have sent out correspondence regarding their own arrangements for the strikes.

Further strike days have been called by the NEU for 28th February, 15th March & 16th March. Schools will communicate with parents regarding arrangements as soon as we can.

