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Achieving the expected standards in all areas – Ofsted 2026

Applicant Information Pack 2026-27

Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA)

Required immediately

11-18 MIXED COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL
1000 STUDENTS INCLUDING 139 IN SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

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An introductory note from Miss Emma Lambden the Headteacher

Dear Applicant,

We are delighted that you are interested in joining us here at Thirsk School & Sixth Form College. We are pleased that you are interested in both the post and in becoming part of our community. I hope that what we can offer you inspires you to apply. We do appreciate that applying for a post is a time-consuming process and would like to do whatever we can to help. Please do look at our recently overhauled website and do not hesitate to get in touch should you require more information or wish to arrange to visit the school.

We are a school which is constantly seeking ways to further improve, and we pride ourselves on our focus in putting people at the heart of what we do, both students and staff. There is a strong sense of collegiality amongst staff and Thirsk is a very good place to come and work. We were very pleased to achieve 'expected standards' in all areas of provision in our Ofsted inspection in March 2026, but we have much to do to push us on to the next phase of being consistently excellent. We hope that with your skills, experience and ambition, you will become a part of achieving this aim.

We will offer you:

- Great students, "The pupils are confident, polite and eager to share their views…They make the school welcoming and embrace diversity. Behaviour in school, both in lessons and during social times, is generally calm" Ofsted report March 2026
- Great colleagues who go the extra mile for our students, "Staff instil ambition and high aspirations in the pupils. Care and compassion underpin the high aspirations staff have for the pupils." Ofsted report March 2026
- A commitment to staff professional development, both within school and as part of external professional networks.
- An opportunity to access leadership training and development, for example via NPQ programmes
- A very supportive leadership team who have an open-door approach
- A school that has clear ambition expressed in its strategic plan and fully supported by its Governing Board

If this interests you, we'd love to hear from you. Please complete the application form.

Please email your application to andrew.rickard@thirskschool.org

Alternatively, your application can be sent to us by post. Also, please ensure that you have identified in your application when you would be available to commence employment with us.

The deadline is **9am on Wednesday 25th November** and interviews will take place shortly thereafter. We reserve the right to close our application process early if we get a strong response to this advert.

I know from my own experience that applying for a post is an intensive process and if you do choose to apply, I am grateful for the efforts that this will require of you. I look forward to receiving your application.

Best wishes and good luck.

E Lambden

Emma Lambden
Headteacher



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Thirsk – the Heart of North Yorkshire

A great place to live, learn and work

As a market town serving the heart of North Yorkshire, Thirsk has all the facilities you might expect from a larger town, but with an intimacy and sense of community. The town itself has a traditional marketplace, banks, shops, supermarkets, pubs and restaurants, medical facilities, primary schools, and childcare providers.

Culture

There is a unique community-run cinema in Thirsk which is small and characterful but has all the latest releases along with more unusual productions. The arts scene is complemented by several galleries and Thirsk is the home to North Yorkshire's Rural Arts Centre which promotes exhibitions, workshops and classes in a variety of the arts. Thirsk is also the home of the nationally recognised Herriot Museum and this reflects its traditional roots as the centre of the agricultural community. Local history is well promoted with information boards linking walks around the town. Additionally, Thirsk remains the centre of the hand-made furniture industry with several nationally renowned brands, each with distinctive carved trademarks. Some showrooms have workshop tours and cafes.

Sport

Sporting interests are facilitated by a local leisure centre with swimming pool, newly expanded and upgraded gym and other facilities. Local clubs including Thirsk and Sowerby Harriers and Thirsk Netball use the school's facilities for their training sessions and matches. Thirsk Hockey Club, and Thirsk Falcons Football Club run a full spectrum of junior and senior teams for both genders. Thirsk Netball club runs training for junios from age seven, right through to walking netball. There is a rich tradition in rugby and cricket with clubs based in the town and many local football and cricket teams in the local villages. A squash club and a golf club lie on the town's fringes and of course, Thirsk has its own well-regarded racecourse. A fantastic development has been the establishment of the Sowerby Sports Village on the school's doorstep. This developing facility provides for a variety of clubs and individuals, offering a measured one-kilometre track that attracts runners, cyclists, and walkers.

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Leisure

Thirsk lies between two National Parks, The Yorkshire Dales, and the North Yorkshire Moors, which are easily accessible and provide wonderful walking, mountain biking, fell running and bird-watching opportunities. The hosting of the Tour de France in 2014 elevated the cycling tradition in the area and the school has previously hosted the London to Edinburgh cycle venture. North Yorkshire's stunning coast is within easy reach, offering wild and dramatic cliffs, beautiful fishing villages and traditional seaside resorts along the bracing North Sea coast.

Housing and Transport

There is a variety of housing available in the area, including more traditional market town houses and local village cottages, family houses, apartments, and terraced properties. The Sowerby Gateway development on the southern fringe of the town offers a wide range of housing on a modern estate. Fantastic transport links via the A1 (M), A19, A61 and the mainline railway running from London to Edinburgh enhance Thirsk as a great place to locate. Many staff members live within the school's catchment and send their children to our neighbouring primary schools or to our school, whilst others choose to live in York, Harrogate, Ripon, Northallerton and Teesside.







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Benefits of working at Thirsk School & Sixth Form College

Our range of employee benefits aims to support the health and wellbeing of our staff ensuring they are valued and supported throughout their time at work.

Pension Scheme

As an employee of Thirsk School & Sixth Form College you are offered membership of either the Teachers' Pension Scheme; or for support staff, the Local Government Pension Scheme. As well as employees paying contributions into the scheme (banded, based on earnings level) the school also pays into the scheme on your behalf.

Staff benefits platform

vivup

Our dedicated employee benefits platform Vivup provides staff with access to all of our benefits in one easy to use and convenient place. Vivup also provides exclusive benefits through their platform, including discounts from major retailers as part of the lifestyle savings benefit and the option to spread the cost of purchasing items straight from your salary through the home and electronics and cycle to work benefits.

Financial Wellbeing – Mental Wellbeing – Physical Wellbeing

Health Assured

A confidential support service for employees and their immediate family members. A FREE 24-hour personal support service. Your call will always be answered by a qualified and experienced counsellor who will offer support in a professional, friendly and non-judgemental manner.

myview

MyView is a self-service facility and can be accessed via your PC or via an app on your mobile. Within MyView, you can access and change your personal details, view payslips online, P60s, input and view expense and timesheet claims.

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SEND Department Information

Our SEND department is hard working and committed; it embodies the whole-school values offering a genuinely inclusive and ambitious service led by the belief that with the right support everyone can meet their potential. We have specialist and dedicated provision, taking up the upper floor of our F block, known as 'The Nest'. Here we have dedicated classrooms alongside smaller spaces to support small group work and one-to-one support. In another building we operate 'The Perch' where students access a range of services to support shorter-term needs. A third aspect of our specialist provision is our Targeted Mainstream Provision (TMP), our specialist resource for students who needs are greater than can typically be met through ordinary SEND support. A strong and experienced team of Teacher Assistants and HLTAs, are complemented by a great team of student mentors. In all this provision staff operate as a close-knit team as well as working effectively with a wide range of external partners who also support our students.

Our SEND team is led by a SENDCO who as Assistant Headteacher is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. He is supported by a Deputy SENDCO with strong expertise in high-needs students, having previously been the lead member of staff in our Targeted Mainstream Provision.

At Thirsk School & Sixth Form College, we are committed to providing high-quality education for all students, ensuring that every child's individual needs are met. Our approach to supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is grounded in a philosophy of inclusivity and a graduated response that allows for tailored intervention and support at every stage of their educational journey.

Identification and Early Intervention

We recognise that early identification and intervention are key to supporting the needs of our students with SEND. A child or young person may be placed on our SEND Register through a combination of factors, including communication with previous settings, performance below age-related expectations, concerns raised by parents/carers or teachers, and collaboration with external agencies. We also use standardised assessments to help us identify specific needs and ensure that no student's potential is overlooked.

Quality First Teaching (Wave 1)

We believe that all students should receive the highest standard of education through Quality First Teaching (QFT). Teachers are expected to deliver lessons that build on students' prior knowledge and adapt to their individual learning needs. If students are not making adequate progress, they will be monitored, and adjustments will be made to their learning experiences

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as part of a proactive, inclusive approach. Continued monitoring and support are provided, particularly for those who may have previously been on the SEND register.

SEND Support (Wave 2)

For students who require more specific intervention, our SEND team will step in to provide additional and targeted support. This may include small-group interventions, tailored learning plans, and close collaboration with subject teachers to implement appropriate strategies. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are developed for each student at this stage, setting out clear targets and provisions. We work closely with parents/carers to ensure that they are fully informed and involved in the process. Students may also benefit from support in our specialised settings, such as The Perch and The Nest, which focus on emotional literacy, social and emotional development, and targeted academic interventions.

Intensive Support and EHCP (Wave 3)

In cases where students do not make the expected progress despite Wave 2 interventions, we consider further support under Wave 3. This may involve a more intensive intervention program, such as time spent in our Enhanced Internal Provision (EIP), where students receive more focused support in core subjects, alongside therapeutic and social interventions. We also work closely with external professionals to assess and address specific needs, and, where necessary, we may begin the process of applying for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to ensure that the student receives the appropriate level of support.

Collaborative Working and Review

At all stages, we emphasise the importance of regular review and collaboration. Our SEND team works closely with teachers, parents, external agencies, and support services to ensure that all students with SEND receive the best possible provision. We monitor the progress of interventions regularly, adjusting our approach as necessary to ensure the needs of each student are fully met.

At Thirsk School & Sixth Form College, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment where all students can thrive, and we are committed to providing the support and opportunities necessary for each child to reach their full potential.

Our SEND Department is dedicated to providing tailored support for students with additional learning needs, ensuring they can thrive in a supportive and inclusive environment. Our team of teaching assistants works closely with teachers to assist students in the classroom and deliver targeted small-group interventions designed to address individual needs. Many of our staff have been with us for several years, bringing a wealth of experience and a deep

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understanding of the students we support, while new members of the team bring fresh perspectives and energy. Above all, our department is defined by a shared commitment to kindness, care, and a student-centred approach, fostering an environment where every student is encouraged to reach their full potential.

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Advert

Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA)

Required immediately

Working alongside the SENDCO and Deputy SENDCO you will be required to work with students from KS3 and KS4 with the overarching aim to support our pupils to achieve their full potential. Specialism in SEMH is preferred but we are open to applicants with a variety of experience. As well as delivering learning activities for individuals and groups there will be an expectation to both plan and prepare work to deliver lessons as well as assessing and reporting on the progress and attainment of pupils.

Holidays are not permitted to be taken during term time.

37 hours per week, term time only plus training days. Grade F (SCP 9 - 13), £24,405.75 pro-rata salary

Selection Process:

If candidates want to get a flavour of our school, please visit our website, though aspects of our information are currently under revision. We would also direct you to our social media feeds. You can find us on Facebook by searching 'Thirsk School and Sixth Form College' and on Instagram by searching 'Be More Thirsk'. A downloadable application form is available from our website: www.thirskschool.org or upon request from andrew.rickard@thirskschool.org. We will conduct interviews in school.

Our ambitious school is based in the easily accessible market town of Thirsk, which lies very close to the A1(M), A19 and mainline rail links, between two beautiful National Parks.

Closing Date: **9am on Wednesday 25th November,** although we reserve the right to close our application process early if we get a strong response to this advert. Interviews will take place shortly thereafter.

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If you are excited by the opportunity to join us, please send your completed application to andrew.rickard@thirskschool.org

Please note that CVs will not be accepted.

Thirsk School and Sixth Form College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children and young people. We have a robust Child Protection Policy, and all staff will receive training relevant to their role at induction and throughout employment at the school. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service criminal records check for work with children and approved references.

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POST:	**Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA)**
GRADE:	Grade F
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Assistant Headteacher (SENDCO)
STAFF MANAGED:	None
JOB PURPOSE:	To support students' learning, progress, inclusion and wellbeing, with a particular responsibility for planning, preparing and delivering learning activities for a small group of students with specific learning needs as part of the EIP (Enhanced Internal Provision). To monitor students' engagement and progress and communicate relevant information to colleagues and parents/carers in line with agreed school procedures.
JOB CONTEXT:	Thirsk School and Sixth Form College is a comprehensive community school. Students have a wide range of needs, experiences and aspirations. Inclusivity is at the heart of the school's work. The postholder will help ensure that students in our Enhanced Internal Provision are valued members of the school community and have meaningful opportunities to learn, participate and make progress.
ACCOUNTABILITIES / MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES	
Teaching, Learning and EIP Provision	• Plan, prepare and deliver purposeful learning activities for a small group of students with specific learning needs in the EIP, within the agreed remit of the role and in liaison with the SENDCO and Deputy SENDCO. • Adapt teaching approaches, resources, pace and level of challenge to respond to students' strengths, needs, prior attainment and individual targets. • Use a range of teaching approaches and resources, including appropriate digital tools, to engage students and support learning. • Establish clear routines and provide a structured, calm and safe learning environment that supports engagement, independence and positive relationships. • Support students to access a broad and balanced curriculum and, where appropriate, maintain links with learning in their mainstream classes and subject areas.

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	• Promote high expectations, effort, resilience and progress while recognising and celebrating students' achievements. • Accompany or act as a group leader on educational visits and other activities outside of the classroom. • Support pupils in their social and emotional wellbeing • Take account of the effects of different parenting approaches, background and routines, and be involved in home school liaison • Encourage and motivate pupils to develop independence and resilience and increase self-esteem • Participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of systems relating to attendance and integration e.g. registration, truancy, pastoral systems etc. • Provide supervision during breaks as required
Assessment, monitoring and reporting	• Monitor students' participation, learning, behaviour and progress against agreed objectives and targets. • Maintain accurate, timely records of work undertaken, progress, interventions, attendance and any barriers to learning. • Use assessment information to adapt subsequent activities and identify when a student may need additional support or greater challenge. • Share observations and concerns promptly with the SENDCO/Deputy SENDCO, class teachers, SEND staff or other relevant colleagues. • Contribute to the review of students' progress, provision and support plans, as requested. • Provide feedback to parents/carers about learning and progress, in line with school procedures and under the direction of the SENDCO/Deputy SENDCO. • Contribute to meetings with parents/carers when required, sharing information within the agreed remit of the role.
Inclusion, behaviour and student wellbeing	• Promote the participation, dignity and inclusion of all students. • Recognise that students' circumstances and needs vary; avoid assumptions and provide support that is responsive to each student. • Use consistent, positive behaviour approaches in line with school policies and agreed student support strategies. • Help students develop self-regulation, independence, confidence and positive learning habits.

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	• Respond calmly and appropriately to distress, conflict or changes in behaviour and seek support when needed. • Promote respectful relationships and challenge behaviour or language that undermines the safety, dignity or inclusion of others.
Planning, resources and collaboration	• Read and use relevant lesson plans, curriculum materials, student information and support plans. • Prepare learning spaces, materials and equipment to support effective teaching and learning. • Select, adapt and organise resources appropriate to students' learning activities and needs. • Contribute to planning and preparation for EIP learning activities, including identifying suitable adaptions and ways to support student participation. • Work collaboratively with other colleagues and relevant external professionals to promote co-ordinated support. • Maintain professional and constructive relationships with students, colleagues, parents and carers.
Professional Responsibilities	• Follow school policies, procedures and reasonable instructions relevant to the role. • Maintain professional boundaries and confidentiality, sharing information only with appropriate people and in accordance with school procedures. • Take part in performance management, supervision and relevant training. • Reflect on practice, respond constructively to feedback and contribute to improving provision for students. • Carry out other duties appropriate to the level and responsibilities of the post.
Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children/Young People	• Where necessary, assist pupils with personal hygiene, and welfare, including physical and medical needs, whilst encouraging independence • Be responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of pupils that you are responsible for and come into contact with, reporting concerns as appropriate
Data Protection	• To comply with the County Council's policies and supporting documentation in relation to Information Governance this includes Data Protection, Information Security and Confidentiality
Health & Safety	• Be aware of and implement your health and safety responsibilities as an employee and where appropriate any

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	additional specialist or managerial health and safety responsibilities as defined in the Health and Safety policy and procedure • Work with colleagues and others to maintain health, safety and welfare within the working environment
Equalities	• Promote inclusion and acceptance of all pupils • Ensure services are delivered in accordance with the aims of the equality Policy Statement • Develop own and team members understanding of equality issues
Flexibility	• North Yorkshire County Council provides front line services, which recognises the need to respond flexibly to changing demands and circumstances. Whilst this job outline provides a summary of the post, this may need to be adapted or adjusted to meet changing circumstances. Such changes would be commensurate with the grading of the post and would be subject to consultation. All staff are required to comply with County Council Policies and Procedures
Customer Service	• The County Council requires a commitment to equity of access and outcomes, this will include due regard to equality, diversity, dignity, respect and human rights and working with others to keep vulnerable people safe from abuse and mistreatment • The County Council requires that staff offer the best level of service to their customers and behave in a way that gives them confidence. Customers will be treated as individuals, with respect for their diversity, culture and values

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential upon appointment	Desirable on appointment
Qualifications and training • HLTA status/QTS or the willingness to undertake training to achieve HLTA status. • Level 2 literacy and numeracy qualifications or equivalent.	Relevant qualification or training in education, SEND, inclusion, behaviour support or a related area

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Experience • Significant experience of supporting students' learning in a school or comparable educational setting	Experience of working with secondary-age students, including in a small-group or specialist provision setting
Knowledge and understanding • Understanding of how to support students with different strengths, prior attainment and learning needs • Understanding of effective approaches to behaviour management and the creating of a safe, calm and purposeful learning environment • Understanding of the importance of inclusion, high expectations and positive relationships in supporting students' learning and wellbeing • Understanding of professional boundaries, confidentiality and the need to share information appropriately	Familiarity with school systems for recording progress, interventions and concerns Knowledge of approaches that support self-regulation, independence and successful transitions or re-integration into mainstream lessons
Personal Qualities • Demonstrable interpersonal skills, including the ability to build positive relationships with students • Ability to work constructively as part of a team • Good organisational skills and the ability to manage competing priorities • Ability to work independently within the boundaries of the role, use sound judgement and seek advice or escalate concerns when appropriate • Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours and attitudes • Commitment to professional development, reflection and responding constructively to feedback	
Safeguarding and statutory responsibilities • Enhanced DBS clearance • Committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students • Ability to follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures	

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