



# WINDERMERE SCHOOL

FOUNDED 1863

## CANDIDATE INFORMATION

*Head of Windermere School*



## ABOUT WINDERMERE SCHOOL

Windermere School is a co-educational, independent boarding and day school located in the Lake District National Park, Cumbria, England. The school has a rich history, a strong academic focus and offers a broad range of subjects at GCSE. In the Sixth Form pupils study from the International Baccalaureate Diploma and Careers Programme. The Sunday Times recently named the School in the Top ten Independent Schools in the North West and is a past winner of The Sunday Times IB School of the Year award. Windermere School has a reputation for academic excellence with a high percentage of its students going on to study at top universities in the UK and abroad. The school is a member of Round Square, a network of 200 like-minded schools in 50 countries on six continents that connect and collaborate. We aim to participate in world-class programmes and experiences, developing global competence, character and confidence in well-rounded, responsible citizens who are equipped to make a positive difference in the world.

Windermere School sits on a hillside within the National Park landscape that has been the inspiration for world-famous artists, poets and authors and a sanctuary and the antidote to congested city life. The area offers a fascination to scientists, a home for adventurers as well as part of the masterpiece of human creative genius that affords us World Heritage status. It is a welcoming and supportive community with a strong focus on pastoral care. Pupils are encouraged to develop their individual talents and interests while learning independence, resilience and teamwork. The Lake District presents a range of significant advantages for anyone seeking both professional fulfilment and an enhanced quality of life. The region offers a stable and evolving economic landscape, complemented by the exceptional natural environment, creating a distinctive and motivating setting.

Cumbria provides a balanced pace of living, low crime rates, strong community cohesion and access to high-quality public services. The area is also recognised for its outstanding culinary reputation, with one of the highest concentrations of Michelin-starred restaurants outside London, contributing to an elevated standard of lifestyle and hospitality. Combined with excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation, well-maintained infrastructure, and a welcoming cultural environment, Cumbria represents a highly attractive destination for work.

The campus covers 23 acres and provides pupils with all they need in terms of academic, sports, music and drama facilities. The picturesque views over Lake Windermere provide an inspirational setting for academic achievement and physical adventure. The campus also contains our two boarding houses Langdale House and Westmorland House and the private Watersports Centre is located on Lake Windermere. Pupils learn to sail, kayak, canoe and embrace the spirit of adventure, which is central to life at the School. Outdoor Learning is woven throughout every aspect of the curriculum. Adventure is not merely an activity at Windermere School it is a way of life.

Windermere School pupils have the confidence and resilience to stand up for what is right and the desire to reach out to others. This balance of confidence and compassion is central to everything we do and embedded in our aims and values. Life at Windermere School is fundamentally fun and stimulates a real quest for excellence, mutual respect and a desire for life-long learning. Our pupils are well-rounded and motivated to put ideas into action and contribute to a more tolerant and safer world.

Windermere offers a high quality of life characterised by stunning natural surroundings, a peaceful pace of living and strong community values. Residents enjoy immediate access to the Lake District's outdoor activities, including walking, cycling and sailing, while still benefiting from reliable amenities, and good transport links. The town provides a welcoming atmosphere with independent shops, cafés and restaurants, and although tourism brings seasonal busyness, it also contributes to a vibrant local economy. Balancing tranquillity, natural beauty and convenient connectivity Windermere is a highly desirable place to live.



# HEAD OF WINDERMERE SCHOOL

## Overview

The Governing Body of Windermere School are seeking an exceptional educational leader to inspire and lead the school from September 2026 on the retirement of Mr Frank Thompson.

We are seeking a Head who is a strategic thinker, who has a clear vision and sense of purpose and who will build on the strengths of the School. The ideal candidate for this role will possess a proven track record of achieving exceptional outcomes, coupled with a deep dedication to providing a truly holistic education. In an increasingly competitive independent education landscape, the successful candidate will demonstrate strategic abilities, the capacity to inspire and motivate staff and pupils and business acumen. Building trust and fostering strong relationships with parents, the wider community and other stakeholders will be crucial to their success.

The Governing Body is open to applications from those with experience of independent and maintained education. A commitment to the boarding ethos of the school is essential. Diversity and inclusion are valued and the Governing Body wants to attract the best people for the role available regardless of age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability, socioeconomic status or religious beliefs.

## Accommodation

The Head shall be provided with rent-free occupation of a four bedroom house in its own grounds, for the duration of their employment. This is a requirement of the role to ensure the proper performance of their duties.

## Remuneration

The post attracts a competitive salary and pension contribution and the Head will be entitled to a discount on school fees.



# OUR VISION

- **To be a trailblazing, future-ready school** - highly sought after for its bold vision and unwavering ambition.
- **To unlock the potential in every child** - nurturing confident, grounded individuals ready to lead with positivity in tomorrow's world.
- **To thrive as a unified, all-through community** - a welcoming campus known for excellence and proud of its specialisms.
- **To redefine what's possible in education** - delivering experiences that are truly transformational.
- **To weave the outdoors into daily learning** - making nature and adventure a cornerstone of how we teach, think, and grow.
- **To give parents absolute confidence** - knowing their children are seen, valued, and growing in a school that lives its values out loud.
- **To be a happy, energised workplace** - where staff feel united, empowered, and proud to be part of something meaningful.
- **To lead with purpose and heart** - embedding values in every decision, every day, for every learner.
- **To communicate with clarity and act with integrity** - setting transparent expectations and holding ourselves to them with fairness and consistency.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the school's academic and administrative operations, as well as ensuring that the school provides an outstanding all-round educational experience for its pupils. The Head is responsible for:

### **Leadership and Vision**

Articulating and implementing the vision for the school and for providing strong and effective leadership to the staff and pupils.

### **Academic Excellence**

Ensuring that the academic programme at all ages is rigorous, engaging and meets the needs of all pupils.

### **Enrolment and Retention**

Recruiting and retaining a diverse and talented pupil body and for developing strategies to increase enrolment and retention.

### **Staff Development**

Recruiting, hiring and developing a highly qualified and motivated staff.

### **Budget and Finance**

With the school's finance team, the Head manages the school's budget and ensures that the school is financially sustainable.

### **Fundraising and Development**

Overseeing a development programme to support the school's mission and goals.

### **Community Relations**

Developing and maintaining positive relationships with the school's various constituencies, including parents, alumni (Stannites), donors and the broader community.

# CANDIDATE QUALITIES

## **Visionary leadership**

Able to demonstrate a clear vision for the school's future and be able to inspire staff, pupils and parents to work towards achieving that vision.

## **Strong communication skills**

An effective communicator and able to articulate the school's mission, aims, and objectives clearly to all stakeholders.

## **Collaborative approach**

Able to collaborate with staff and board members to make informed decisions and work towards achieving the school's goals.

## **Strategic thinking**

Able to think strategically and make decisions that are in the best interest of the school in the long term.

## **Empathy**

Able to understand the needs and concerns of all stakeholders, including pupils, staff and parents.

## **Integrity**

A strong sense of integrity and ethical principles and be able to act in the best interest of the school at all times.

## **Innovation**

Willing to explore new ideas and approaches to education and be open to innovation.

## **Resilience**

Able to handle pressure and challenges, remaining positive and focused in difficult situations.

# CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS

- Bachelor's and/or Master's degree and a teaching qualification.
- Experience in a school senior leadership role.
- Strong leadership and communication skills.
- Ability to think strategically and creatively.
- Financial management and budgeting experience.
- Knowledge of current educational trends and best practices.
- Ability to build and maintain positive relationships with a variety of stakeholders.
- Elevate school events and so increase variety, visibility and make them unmissable.

# RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHANGE

UK independent schools have faced intense pressure from both economic conditions and major government policy changes. 20% VAT on school fees from January 2025 led to steep fee increases in most schools. At the same time, charitable business-rates relief was removed. Rising staff expenses including higher National Insurance, minimum wage increases and elevated pension contributions added substantial fixed costs. UK pupil numbers, declined by around 11,000-pupil in 2025. Many families have moved children into the state sector due to rising costs while schools have tried to cushion the impact by increasing bursaries and discounts.

- Rather than retrench we responded proactively consolidating premises, moderating fees, diversifying revenue and adapting out longer-term financial model to thrive despite sector-wide headwinds
- In 2024 we decided to move our junior school onto the same site as the senior school, closing the separate junior campus. The new unified campus opened in early 2025. This consolidation reduced running costs while preserving our educational and extracurricular offerings.
- We did not pass the full 20% VAT on to parents, instead we lowered fees for the youngest year groups and for older pupils increased fees by less than the full VAT amount.  
We also announced we would not raise fees for September 2025, believing that parents had already borne a heavy burden. [Windermere School Fees](#)
- We launched a broader cost-reduction plan consolidating the estate, increasing non-tuition revenue (e.g., hiring out facilities, offering courses and services such as watersports centre memberships), exploring new ventures and leaving the Teachers' Pension Scheme.
- We reframed the school business model given new economic realities - focusing on sustainability rather than relying on past financial assumptions and practices.

The impact of these measures is that the school has been able to navigate a path through many of the difficulties that other smaller school are finding insurmountable.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

**The deadline for receipt of applications is 9 January 2026**

A completed application form and covering letter should be sent by email to the Chair of Governors at [chair@windermereschool.co.uk](mailto:chair@windermereschool.co.uk).

Windermere School is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.



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