





# Welcome

Welcome to Cockermouth School. I am delighted to be Headteacher of a school which rightly puts learning and individual achievement at the heart of all it does. We are extremely proud of the academic achievements of our students who, for many years, have been performing above national levels.

The school is a high performing specialist school at the centre of its community, and we pride ourselves on it being a happy and purposeful environment in which to learn. At Cockermouth School, we will also aim to discover and develop the range of talents our students bring with them, giving them confidence, self-esteem and the ability to work as part of a team.

We believe that our success is built on the following five key principles:

- Everyone is honest and treats others with respect
- Everyone should do their best and aim to improve on their previous best
- Everyone sets high standards. High aspirations are encouraged
- Everyone feels supported and a secure, caring environment exists for all
- Everyone should enjoy their work and learning experiences

*(These principles were drawn up after consultation with staff and pupils).*

Our mission statement, 'A Community where Individuals matter', is core to our values and beliefs and I hope this brochure gives you a flavour of what we do at Cockermouth School. Should you need more information please look at our website [www.cockermouth.cumbria.sch.uk](http://www.cockermouth.cumbria.sch.uk) or even better, come to see us!

Geoff Walker  
Headteacher



“Cockermouth School is a good school with many outstanding features. It has an excellent reputation among parents and is consistently oversubscribed because of its deservedly high reputation in the locality”

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## Learning at Cockermouth

**Our aim is to make learning stimulating and enjoyable, and our curriculum is both broad and balanced, designed to ensure all students maximise their full potential.**

We believe that children learn best when:

- they are happy
- they are confident and understand what they are being asked to do
- they are treated with respect
- the school, classroom, learning opportunity is well ordered
- there is a wide variety of learning opportunities and experiences
- they are appropriately challenged
- they work in a stimulating environment

Our staff are well qualified, dedicated and specialists in their subject area. They give of their time generously to personalise the learning experience for our students.

Homework and independent study is an integral part of learning, and we ensure that it is set and marked regularly. We want to encourage students to establish skills of independent learning from the start of their time at Cockermouth School and would ask parents to support us, and their children, in this.

“Staff have an excellent understanding of the specific needs of each pupil and address these needs with considerable care and patience.”

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# Curriculum

Attainment at Cockermouth is high, and our students follow a personalised and balanced curriculum at each key stage, designed for all abilities and interests. Our students are mainly taught in mixed ability classes when they start in Year 7 (with setting in Maths). By the time they reach Year 9, they are also set in a range of their other subjects.

### Key Stage 3

In Years 7 to 9 all students follow a common core of subjects which include English, Maths, Science, Modern Languages (French, German and Spanish), Technology (Food and Design Technology), Art, Music, RE, History, Geography, ICT, PE and PD (Personal Development which includes Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship, Careers and Enterprise Education).

### Key Stage 4

In Years 10 and 11, students work towards formal accreditation in a variety of subjects, principally at GCSE level. All students follow a common core which includes English (both Language and Literature), Maths, Science (for many students this will be either Physics, Biology and Chemistry as separate subjects, or a double science award), RE, ICT, PE and PD. There is a

wide range of other subjects from which students can also choose, including academic, vocational and work-related learning.

### Key Stage 5

A broad and balanced range of subjects is offered to those wishing to join the 6th Form and full details are given in our separate brochure.

### NEW TECHNOLOGIES

We recognise that our students require access to the most innovative technologies as they prepare for the world of work in the 21st century. During their time at Cockermouth School, our students are taught how to use ICT confidently in all subject areas. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards, and there are numerous networked ICT specialist rooms. We have a multimedia room for digital work and the school's Eco Centre provides the latest technologies, including a high quality video conference system.



“Students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, reflecting the impact of the well planned curriculum. Students love coming to school as their good attendance indicates.”

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## School Status

Cockermouth is a co-educational comprehensive school. We have over 1400 students on roll and of these, there are approximately 300 in the 6th form. The school has expanded in size and we have excellent facilities providing a very pleasant environment on the edge of the town, close to the National Park boundary.

We are a Specialist Maths and Computing and Language College. However, all subjects have equal status and we provide a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum. We have undoubtedly benefited from specialist status in a number of ways.

- Additional subjects to the curriculum
- Funding for additional ICT technicians
- Primary support staff and extensive primary links
- Interactive whiteboards in all classrooms
- Additional specialist equipment for a number of departments
- Additional training opportunities and innovative curriculum projects
- Lead teachers in Maths, ICT and Languages

These benefits have permeated throughout the school to support the education of all our pupils.

“The school’s specialist status has provided the stimulus for innovative links between subjects.”

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# Support and Care

Care, guidance and support are all outstanding at Cockermouth School and we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of Pastoral care. This starts with the transition from Primary school where we ensure that a carefully planned induction process takes place.

Our tutorial system, working closely through Heads of Year, allows us to get to know our students as individuals, and we closely monitor both their academic and pastoral needs. Students with special needs, including our most gifted and talented, are provided with close support and personalised support and enrichment programmes. We have a high number of Teaching Assistants, and a Learning Support department which works closely to support all students with specific learning,

physical, sensory or emotional difficulties. This includes a strategically resourced Autistic facility which serves families from all of West Cumbria.

We believe in keeping parents informed and work closely with home, and with other agencies as necessary, responding quickly to potential problems. Parents receive regular Progress Reports whilst Parents' Evenings and Options' Days provide opportunities to meet staff to discuss their child's progress. Parents are always welcome to contact us and we encourage close communication between home and school. We produce termly newsletters and our website will be maintained regularly to inform all our community of important events and news.

“Senior leaders and pastoral staff ensure that vulnerable students have personalised learning programmes, so that they too have a platform for success.”

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“Students have extremely positive attitudes to school and each other.”

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## High Standards

Standards remain very high at Cockermonth School and the school is a calm, civilized and tolerant place. We have high expectations of our students in everything they do, and staff and students have excellent relationships.

Our overriding aim is to encourage the development of self-discipline and a sense of shared responsibility towards everyone within the school community. We provide positive reinforcement by recognising good behaviour and the contribution that individuals make for

the good of both the school and local community. This includes celebrating achievement and taking all opportunities to share and reward all successes at school.

We expect our pupils to look smart and follow our uniform guidelines, and similarly promote good attendance and punctuality.

Parents are asked to support us in maintaining all these standards by reading and signing our Home-School Partnership.

## Outside the Classroom

We place real emphasis on providing our students with additional educational experiences. Regular music concerts, school shows and Rock Challenge allow our artistic students to flourish, and opportunities exist to join the many lunchtime and after-school clubs and societies. We encourage all students to become involved in our countless enrichment activities: sporting fixtures, drama, art and musical activities, cultural trips and visits, and residential visits both at home and abroad are available. In addition, we have developed a programme of holiday, sporting, cultural and study activities.

All these activities help students to improve their skills of teamwork, motivation and self-esteem as well as being great fun!

A full list of activities is available in the annexe.

“Teachers give freely of their time, and this is seen in the exceptional range of out of school clubs and activities, which take place at lunchtimes and after school, as well as at weekends, as students take part in a huge array of outdoor and sporting activities.”

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## Facilities at Cockermouth

As over half the school has been built since 1990, we are well blessed with modern facilities. In the last five years, we have been fortunate to find funding to add some exciting new facilities to the school. These new additions include an Astro Turf pitch, six additional football pitches, a new Learning Support and Autistic Strategic facility and an Eco Centre. Overall more than £3 million has been found from other sources to help fund these initiatives.

**Astro Turf pitch:** This provides an all weather surface on which to play hockey and football. It is used extensively by the community in the evenings and at weekends.

**Football Pitches:** These are used jointly between Cockermouth Junior Football Club and the school. Six pitches were built on land leased from the Leconfield Estate with money from the Football Foundation and other sources.

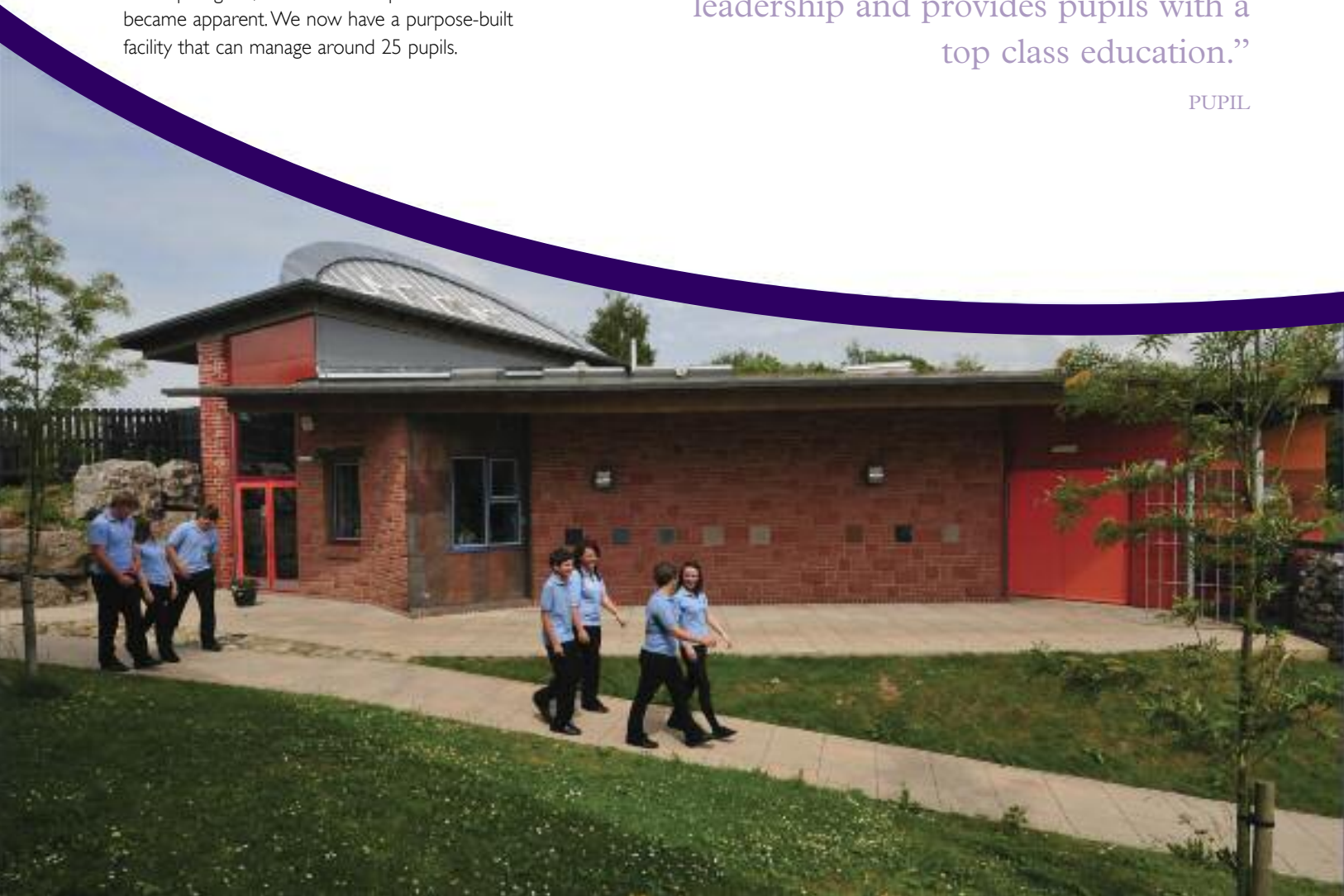
**Learning Support and Autistic Facility:** The school has been a strategic facility for autistic children for over ten years. As the number of children joining us to use the expertise that we have developed grew, the need for improved facilities became apparent. We now have a purpose-built facility that can manage around 25 pupils.

**Eco Centre:** The Eco Centre at Cockermouth School is a unique building designed in consultation with pupils, parents and the local community. The project was funded by a £1.3m grant from the Department for Education and Skills under the Teaching Environments for the Future award scheme. It is a sustainable building built from recycled and reused materials including bricks, timber, wool and paper. A wind turbine and photovoltaic cells generate electricity, and energy from a ground source heat pump heats the building. The main auditorium contains techno-pods in which pupils are able to access ICT equipment and data on the performance of the building. There are four biomes replicating different climatic conditions where plants are grown, which are used for research by pupils.



“Cockermouth School is a safe, learning environment which is under good leadership and provides pupils with a top class education.”

PUPIL





### CENTRAL RESOURCES AREA

At the heart of our school is the Resources Centre which includes our Library, well stocked with books, CD-ROMs, audio and videotapes, a fully networked Information and Communication Technology room, and a Connexions Room. The school radio station is also located here.

The Resources Area is centrally placed to support the intellectual life of the school, acting as a catalyst to learning in a creative, stimulating and supportive way. The centre is open until 4.30pm each day to allow pupils to access resources and do homework under the supervision of the school librarian.

We actively encourage and support our students to take more responsibility for their own learning, providing a wide range of carefully selected quality resources. Students can undertake research and complete assignments, choosing the most suitable resources for a particular task.

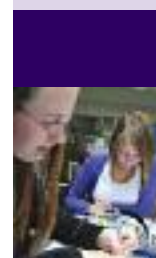


### SIXTH FORM WING

The school has a self-contained Sixth Form area. There are two spacious, comfortable Common Rooms with an additional Private Study Room. The Common Room is large enough to provide a 'cafeteria' type area. In addition the students have access to their own state of the art ICT room.

### PE AND GAMES FACILITIES

We are extremely fortunate to have an Astro Turf pitch which offers a wonderful facility for a variety of sports, and additional playing fields for football, rugby and athletics. Our other outdoor facilities include hard yard areas for netball, tennis and basketball. Indoor facilities include a newly refurbished gym and small sports hall. Being on the doorstep of some outstanding countryside allows us to make full use of the natural environment wherever possible.



“Since moving to Cockermonth School, our child has settled in far better than we could have hoped for. He has grown in confidence and is given help and encouraged to do his best at all times, both at school and home.”

PARENT



# Looking to the Future

**Our students leave school with the requisite qualifications and extra-curricular experiences . . . and more.**

We place great emphasis on our Student Council, giving students the opportunity, and responsibility, to become involved in the management of their school. Students have an enhanced awareness of environmental and sustainable issues as a result of our Green Flag eco school status, and forge international links through our partnerships with overseas schools.

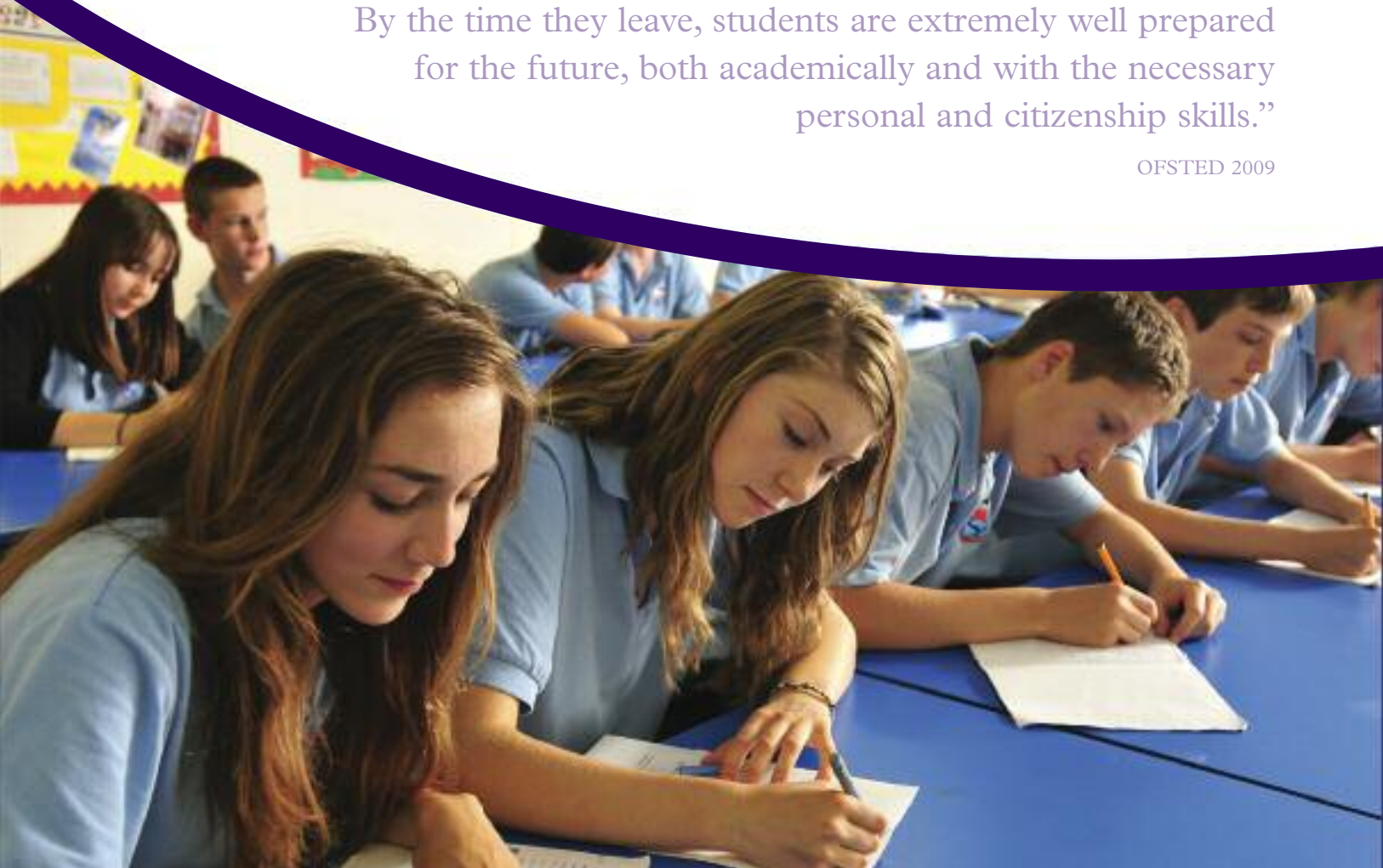
Above all, our students have an extremely strong sense of community, founded on the inclusive nature of the school. The benefit of this cannot be under-estimated and we hope this will serve them well in whatever they choose to do.



“Students are fully involved in all aspects of the school community and make a very good contribution to its smooth running and improvement by willingly taking on responsibilities and looking after younger students.

By the time they leave, students are extremely well prepared for the future, both academically and with the necessary personal and citizenship skills.”

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### **Cockermouth School**

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### **Headteacher**

Mr Geoff Walker BA, MBA

### **Chair of Governors**

Mr Len Cockcroft

