

Applying for teaching jobs: top tips for cover letters

Principals, trainers and teachers share their advice on how to make sure your job applications stand out

Tailor it

People need to show how their values are aligned with the school they're applying to, says Harry French, principal at [Greenwood Academy](#). "Do your research and show how you're going to add value to the school."

"The most impressive applications are from people who've been on the school's website, read our prospectus, read our Ofsted report – and they can talk excitedly about the things we're doing," adds Phil Mellen, principal at [Stanley Grove primary](#).

Structure your letter

If you're stuck on how to structure your letter, use the government's [teachers' standards](#) or follow the structure of the person specification, says Dr McKenna, director of initial teacher education programmes at [Northumbria University](#).

Bullet points and short paragraphs can help emphasise points, while an inspirational quotation can give your introduction more impact, according to [@teach_psych](#). Starting sentences with adverbs or adverbial sentences can also "get your meaning moving", says [@glennmalcolm](#).

Don't leave any blanks

"Fill all of the sections in," says Mellen. "Sometimes we get applications where bits have been left blank. Everyone's done professional development of some kind. Even if you haven't done the latest trendy bit of training, put in that you've done your first aid training and been a Scout leader."

Sell yourself

"Don't think that your skills are irrelevant. If you play the piano, mention it," says Mellen. "It might be that we have a piano sitting in the corner of the hall and no teachers who can play it. We won't give you a job on that fact alone, but it might help draw attention to your application."

Don't forget the kids

"The one thing that we have quite regularly is that people tend to talk about themselves an awful lot and not about the students as much as they could," advises French. "Show an awareness of the students' needs and the local community."

Prove you can have an impact

Focus on the impact that you've had in previous positions, says [@train2teachchat](#): "What have you actually done and what did this achieve?"

Proofread

Don't get the name of the school wrong, advises Mellen, who says they often get letters applying for job adverts which aren't theirs. Reread, use a spell check or even get a member of the senior leadership team to check it for you, suggests [@Sharon Bingham](#)

Keep it concise

Dr McKenna recommends that, after tailoring your application letter, it should not exceed two sides of A4.

Applying as an NQT?

"Provide details of your training course, including the age range and subjects covered, and any special features, such as intervention placements, early years placements or family and community placements," says Dr McKenna.

"Tell the reader what year groups you have taught and the subjects you have covered. Give examples of how you planned and delivered lessons; monitored and evaluated learning outcomes – including differentiation and behaviour management.

"Particular emphasis should be paid to your experience of working with [teaching](#) assistants and/or parents in your class. This is not only a requirement of the Teacher's Standards, it is of increasing importance to [schools](#) under the new Ofsted inspection requirements.

"You will be asked about your philosophy of teaching and learning. Ensure that you can articulate your vision and beliefs about early years/primary/secondary education."

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