



Director of Standards

Appointment: September 2026

Salary: Leadership L33 – 39 (£113,644 – £131,576)

Contract: Full Time, Permanent

Create | Pioneer | Collaborate | Inspire | Achieve



Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in this role within Venn Academy Trust.

This opportunity arises following the retirement of a significant and longstanding leader within the organisation. That in itself tells you something important. We are not replacing a vacancy lightly. We are appointing someone to take forward a role that has mattered and will continue to matter at the centre of this trust.

Venn is now at a point where it must sharpen its next phase of educational delivery. This is not about expansion for its own sake. It is about ensuring that as we continue to grow, the quality of education, leadership and inclusion across every setting remains consistently strong and deeply understood.

Across the trust, our schools are financially secure and, importantly, they have improved their inspection outcomes since joining. That is not accidental. It reflects a clear approach to standards, accountability and leadership. This role sits at the heart of sustaining and strengthening that position.

We are looking for an ambitious, credible and proven leader of standards. Someone who understands inspection, who can evaluate with precision, and who is prepared to challenge where standards are not secure. This is not a role for someone who wants to sit alongside improvement. It is a role for someone who can see it clearly, test it properly and call it honestly.

Venn has established itself as a strong mixed multi-academy trust, working across mainstream, specialist and alternative provision. We are increasingly a key partner within the wider education system, supporting local authorities, schools and other trusts to strengthen inclusion and improve outcomes for children.

The person appointed will help shape what comes next. That means holding a clear line on standards, influencing leaders at every level and ensuring that our understanding of performance across the trust is accurate, evidence-based and uncompromising.

If you are a leader who is motivated by impact, who values clarity over comfort, and who has the experience to operate at this level, I would encourage you to apply.

I would also welcome an informal conversation if you would like to explore the role further.

Dr Simon Witham

Chief Executive Officer



Context

About Venn Academy Trust

Venn Academy Trust is committed to delivering high quality education and strong inclusive practice across a diverse range of schools and settings. Since its formation the trust has grown significantly and now operates across several local authority areas including Hull, Doncaster, Rotherham, North Yorkshire and Wakefield.

The trust works across a broad range of educational provision including mainstream primary schools, specialist provision across different phases and designations, pupil referral units and alternative provision. Through this breadth of provision, the trust plays an important role in supporting inclusive education and strengthening local education systems.

Venn Academy Trust has developed a strong reputation for supporting schools through periods of improvement and for establishing high quality provision for pupils with additional needs. The organisation works closely with local authorities and partners to ensure that schools are able to meet the needs of pupils effectively while maintaining high expectations for achievement, behaviour and attendance. Central to the trust's approach is the belief that strong leadership and collaboration between schools are essential in securing sustained improvement. The trust has therefore developed a leadership model that combines strong professional support for school leaders with rigorous evaluation of standards across the organisation.

As the trust continues to grow it is strengthening its leadership capacity in order to ensure that schools receive the support they need while maintaining a clear and accurate understanding of standards and performance across all settings.

Context

The Opportunity

This role provides an opportunity for experienced and ambitious leaders to play a central role in the next stage of development for Venn Academy Trust. The organisation is entering a period of continued growth and is strengthening its executive leadership capacity to ensure that schools across the trust benefit from strong improvement support while maintaining the highest standards of education.

The Director of Standards will lead the trust's quality assurance and inspection readiness framework, ensuring that the organisation maintains an accurate understanding of school performance and that all schools are supported and challenged to achieve strong outcomes for pupils.

This role, along with the Regional Directors will form part of the trust's senior leadership team and will work closely with the Chief Executive Officer and other senior leaders to support the continued development of the organisation and the success of the schools within it.

Executive Leadership Structure

The trust operates through a clear executive leadership structure that separates the work of delivering school improvement from the work of assuring educational standards. This ensures that schools benefit from strong professional support while the trust maintains a rigorous and independent understanding of performance across all settings.

The Chief Executive Officer provides overall strategic leadership for the organisation and line manages the Director of Standards together with the Regional Directors. The Director of Standards is responsible for assuring the quality of education across the trust. The role leads the trust quality assurance framework, moderates school evaluation and ensures that the organisation has an accurate understanding of performance across all schools. The Director also leads inspection readiness across the trust and reports standards and performance to the Chief Executive Officer and the Trust Board.

The Regional Director for Hull provides operational leadership for a cluster of schools within the trust. The role focuses on supporting headteachers, strengthening leadership capacity and delivering school improvement across the region. Directors of Learning (the school improvement team) sit beneath the Director of Standards and provide specialist expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning across the organisation.

Context

Operating Principles of the Trust Improvement Model

Regional Directors hold full accountability for the performance of schools within their hub. This includes the quality of education, leadership, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and pupil outcomes. Regional Directors are responsible for securing improvement and delivering sustained impact across their schools.

The Director of Standards operates as the trust's independent evaluator and pressure tester. The role is responsible for validating the accuracy of school evaluation, testing the strength of improvement work and ensuring that the trust maintains a clear and reliable understanding of performance across all schools.

The Director of Standards does not lead operational school improvement within hubs. Where concerns are identified, the Director of Standards will challenge, escalate and report these through the Chief Executive Officer and Trust Board.

Regional Directors are responsible for responding to this evaluation and securing the necessary improvement. This model ensures that school improvement is well supported while maintaining a strong and independent line of accountability for standards across the organisation.

Distinction of Roles within the Trust Improvement System

The trust separates two key functions within the school improvement system.

The first function is the delivery of school improvement, where experienced leaders work directly with Principals and school leadership teams to strengthen teaching, leadership, curriculum and pupil outcomes.

The second function is the assurance of standards, where an experienced leader independently evaluates the effectiveness of schools and the impact of improvement work, ensuring that the trust maintains an accurate understanding of performance and that schools are fully prepared for inspection.

Within this structure the Regional Director role operates as the improvement leader, providing coaching, guidance and operational support to schools. The Director of Standards role operates as the standards leader, responsible for evaluating performance, leading the trust quality assurance framework and ensuring that all schools are inspection ready. This separation ensures that improvement work is well supported while maintaining strong accountability for standards across the organisation.

Context

Key Leadership Expectations

These roles form part of the senior leadership structure of Venn Academy Trust and contribute to the wider strategic leadership of the organisation.

This post holder will have worked as an Ofsted inspector or HMI and will demonstrate the highest standards of professional integrity and will act as a role model for the trust's values and expectations. They will contribute to the development of trust wide strategy and support the Chief Executive Officer in ensuring that the organisation continues to deliver high quality education across all schools and settings. The leader appointed to this role will influence practice beyond individual schools, supporting collaboration across the trust and contributing to the wider improvement of education across the regions served by the organisation.

Additional information

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact:
info@vennacademytrust.org or telephone on 01482 505030

Closing date : Monday 20 April 2026 at 9am
Interviews: Monday 27 April 2026

Venn Academy Trust is committed to achieving fairness and equality in employment and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

Our Trust is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and expects all staff to share this commitment.

The successful candidate will be required to undertake an Enhanced DBS check.

Online searches will be carried out as part of Venn Academy Trust's recruitment due diligence for all shortlisted candidates, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Job Description

Core Purpose

The Director of Standards provides strategic leadership for educational standards across Venn Academy Trust. The role is responsible for ensuring that the trust maintains a clear, accurate and rigorous understanding of the quality of education, leadership, safeguarding and outcomes across all schools. Acting as the trust's independent evaluator and pressure tester, the Director of Standards validates school performance, moderates self-evaluation and ensures that the organisation has a reliable and evidence-based view of standards across all settings.

The role does not lead operational school improvement within hubs. Instead, it ensures that strengths and areas for development are accurately identified and clearly understood, so that improvement activity led by Regional Directors is sharply focused and effective. The Director of Standards also leads the trust's quality assurance framework, inspection readiness and the development of improvement infrastructure, including the work of Directors of Learning (School Improvement Team) and curriculum specialists.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership of Standards

- Provide strategic leadership for educational standards across the trust
- Ensure the organisation has an accurate and evidence-based understanding of performance across all schools
- Support the Chief Executive Officer and Trust Board in understanding standards across the organisation

Quality Assurance and School Review

- Lead the trust-wide school review programme
- Moderate and validate school self-evaluation to ensure accuracy and consistency
- Ensure that trust judgements, including RAG and Challenge, accurately reflect school performance
- Test the effectiveness of improvement work and identify any gaps between reported progress and actual impact

Inspection Readiness

- Ensure that all schools are fully prepared for inspection
- Lead inspection readiness reviews across the trust
- Provide clear and accurate guidance on the inspection framework and expectations

Job Description

Key Responsibilities

Performance Analysis

- Oversee the analysis of trust-wide performance data
- Identify schools where standards are not secure or where performance presents a risk
- Ensure that concerns are clearly articulated and understood at trust level
- Provide the trust’s formal evaluation of school performance to the Chief Executive Officer and Trust Board

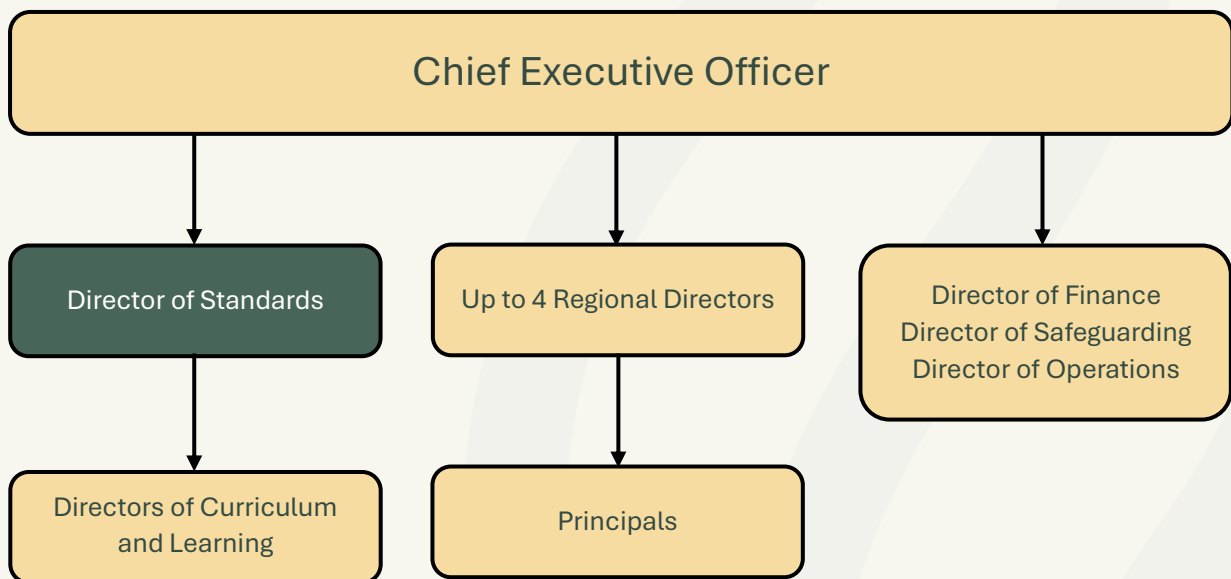
Leadership of Improvement Infrastructure

- Line manage Directors of Learning (School Improvement Team)
- Ensure that curriculum and teaching support is aligned to identified priorities
- Strengthen professional development systems across the trust

Safeguarding and Compliance

- Evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding practice across schools
- Ensure statutory safeguarding responsibilities are consistently met
- Identify and escalate any concerns relating to safeguarding or compliance

Structure Chart



Person Specification

The information listed as essential (shaded column) is used as part of the job evaluation process. The requirements identified as desirable are used for recruitment purposes only. Codes: AF = Application Form, I = Interview, CQ = Certificate of Qualification, R = References (should only be used for posts requiring DBS), T = Test/Assessment, P = Presentation.

Criteria	Essential	Desirable	Identified
01. Qualifications, Education and Training:			
1.1 Graduate with Qualified Teacher Status	X		AF, CQ
1.2 Evidence of sustained professional development at senior leadership level	X		AF, CQ
1.3 NPQH / NPQSL / NPQEL or equivalent executive leadership qualification		X	AF, CQ
1.4 Experience as an Ofsted inspector or equivalent inspection experience	X		AF, CQ
02. Relevant Experience:			
2.1 Strong and successful leadership experience at senior level, including headship or equivalent	X		AF
2.2 Proven track record of securing and sustaining school improvement, including achieving good or better outcomes	X		AF, I
2.3 Experience of working beyond a single school, contributing to school-to-school support or wider system improvement with demonstrable impact	X		AF, I, R
2.4 Experience of deploying resources, including staff and specialist support, to secure measurable improvement in outcomes	X		AF, I, R
2.5 Experience of developing, leading and holding senior leaders to account for performance	X		AF, I, R
2.6 Experience of designing or contributing to leadership development and professional development at scale	X		AF
2.7 Experience of monitoring, evaluating and challenging practice across a school or group of schools	X		I
2.8 Experience of leading or influencing curriculum development and ensuring high quality teaching and learning		X	I
2.9 Experience of working in contexts of high social disadvantage and improving outcomes for vulnerable pupils	X		AF
2.10 Trust-wide Standards Leadership			
Experience of evaluating the quality of education across multiple schools or settings			
Proven ability to moderate and validate school self-evaluation			
Experience of forming independent, evidence-based judgements about school performance	X		AF, I
Ability to provide clear, professional challenge to senior leaders, including Headteachers			
Experience of reporting standards and performance at senior leadership or governance level			

Criteria	Essential	Desirable	Identified
03. Skills (including thinking challenge / mental demands):			
3.1 Highly developed analytical skills with the ability to interrogate performance data, triangulate evidence and form accurate, evidence-based judgements	X		AF, I, R
3.2 Ability to evaluate the quality of education, leadership and safeguarding with clarity and professional rigour across a range of settings	X		AF, R
3.3 Ability to test, validate and challenge school performance, including the confidence to question overly positive self-evaluation	X		I, R
3.4 Ability to identify risk early, diagnose underlying issues and articulate concerns clearly and constructively	X		I, R
3.5 Ability to provide clear, professional challenge to senior leaders, including Headteachers and system leaders, where standards are not secure	X		AF, R, I
3.6 Ability to influence improvement through a balance of challenge and support, without taking ownership of operational delivery	X		I, R
3.7 Ability to manage complex and sensitive situations, including delivering difficult messages with clarity, professionalism and integrity	X		I, R
3.8 Strong written communication skills, including the ability to produce concise, evaluative reports for senior leaders and governance	X		I, R
3.9 Strong verbal communication skills, including the ability to present evidence-informed judgements with confidence and credibility	X		I
3.10 Experience of designing or refining quality assurance frameworks across a trust or group of schools		X	I, R
3.11 Experience of leading or contributing to review processes, inspection preparation or external evaluation		X	I, R
04. Knowledge:			
4.1 Strong knowledge of safeguarding requirements and statutory responsibilities, with the ability to evaluate safeguarding practice across schools	X		I, AF, R
4.2 Deep understanding of effective school improvement strategies and the factors that secure sustained improvement in outcomes for pupils	X		AF, I
4.3 Strong knowledge of curriculum design, teaching, learning and assessment, including evidence-informed practice	X		I
4.4 Secure understanding of the Ofsted inspection framework and wider accountability systems, including how these apply across different phases and provisions	X		AF, I
4.5 Knowledge of how to use performance data to evaluate school effectiveness, identify priorities and assess impact	X		I, AF, R
4.6 Understanding of education across a range of settings, including mainstream, specialist provision and alternative provision	X		I, AF, R
4.7 Knowledge of current national developments in SEND, inclusion and alternative provision		X	I, AF, R
4.8 Understanding of multi-academy trust structures, governance and quality assurance systems		X	AF, R

Criteria	Essential	Desirable	Identified
5. Interpersonal/Communication Skills: Verbal Skills:			
5.1 Ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders, including senior leaders, Headteachers, governors and external partners	X		AF, R
5.2 Ability to present clear, evidence-informed evaluations of school performance to senior audiences, including the Chief Executive Officer and Trust Board	X		AF, R
5.3 Ability to build professional credibility and trust with school leaders while maintaining independence of judgement	X		AF, R
5.4 Ability to influence and challenge constructively, ensuring that messages are understood and acted upon	X		AF, R
05. Interpersonal/Communication Skills: Written Skills:			
5.5 Strong written communication skills, including the ability to produce concise, accurate and evaluative reports	X		AF
06. Other:			
6.1 High levels of professional integrity, with a commitment to securing the best possible outcomes for all pupils	X		R
6.2 Confidence and resilience to challenge where standards are not secure, including the ability to hold firm professional positions	X		R
6.3 Clarity of thought and the ability to make sound, evidence-based judgements in complex situations	X		I, R
6.4 Strong sense of accountability for standards across the trust, with a focus on impact rather than activity	X		I, R
6.5 Ability to work collaboratively with senior leaders while maintaining independence of perspective	X		I, R
6.6 Emotional intelligence and professional judgement to challenge constructively without undermining relationships	X		I, R
6.7 Commitment to inclusion and improving outcomes for pupils across mainstream, specialist and alternative provision	X		I, R
6.8 Commitment to system leadership and collaboration beyond the trust		X	I, R
The requirements listed below are not considered during the job evaluation process, but are essential requirements for the role that will be assessed during the recruitment process			
07. Additional Requirements:			
7.1 Licence and willingness to drive between trust and partner school sites with your own transport (Travel expenses and mileage driving expenses are paid online with trust policies)	X		I
08. Disclosure of Criminal Record:			
8.1 The successful candidate's appointment will be subject to the Trust obtaining a satisfactory Enhanced and Barring List Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service	X	N/A	DBS DISCLOSURE
8.2 If the postholder requires a DBS disclosure the candidate is required to declare full details of everything on their criminal record	X	N/A	AF (after short listing)
8.3 If the postholder does not require a DBS disclosure the candidate is required to declare unspent convictions only	X	N/A	AF (after short listing)