



**DIRECTOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION  
CANDIDATE PACK**



## FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Thank you for your interest in working with us at River Learning Trust. You will see from our website that we are a flourishing multi-academy trust with 20 primary schools, 10 secondary schools, an Alternative Provision and a Teaching School Hub both serving Oxfordshire, and a large SCITT working across Oxfordshire, West Berkshire and Swindon. We are also continuing to grow and whilst a large Trust, we are geographically well-connected in Oxfordshire and Swindon.

As we look towards the next chapter following the retirement of our current post holder, we are seeking a visionary system leader to serve as the Director of Primary Education. This is not a role for a 'super-head' looking to fix schools one by one; it is a role for a strategic architect who understands how to build the relationships, systems, frameworks, and culture that enable excellence to flourish at scale.

We are intentionally inclusive, aiming for all our children, regardless of their background or starting point, to lead successful, empowered lives. If you are passionate about delivering an education founded on evidence-based curricula and pedagogical brilliance, and you have the relational and leadership skills to influence a diverse network of leaders, RLT is the place for you.

Working as part of our central strategic team alongside the Director of Secondary Education, the Director of Inclusion, and directly with me, you will lead the overarching school improvement strategy for our Primary phase.

Our current priorities of People-First, Equity and Community provide a framework within which we are aiming for both continuous improvement and a significant impact on the experiences and outcomes of our most disadvantaged pupils. You will have the opportunity to research, develop and implement best practice frameworks, develop future leaders & engage in medium and long-term strategic development. You will primarily oversee the work of the Deputy Director of Primary Education & our Primary Support and Challenge Partners, and support first-hand school improvement work as needed.

We ask a lot of the people that work with us, and we think we offer a lot in return. Most importantly we have a real commitment to training and professional development for everyone that works with us. It's busy, it's stretching, and it's incredibly rewarding. If you think this might be for you, then we would love to hear from you.

Applications should be made online through MyNewTerm. Please ensure that in the 'Supporting Statement' of the application form you outline both your understanding and experience of system leadership.

If you have any questions and would like to speak with me, please contact Clare Carpen, Executive Assistant to Paul James, at [ccarpen@riverlearningtrust.org](mailto:ccarpen@riverlearningtrust.org) to arrange a convenient time.

**Closing date for applications:** 9am, Thursday 16th April 2026.

Thank you again for your interest and we look forward to hearing from you. Paul James  
Chief Executive

# DIRECTOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

STARTING SEPTEMBER 2026

SCALE POINT L33 - L36

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## THE ROLE

The Directors of Education (Primary and Secondary) have an essential strategic leadership role in the development and delivery of excellent education for our children and young people. The work of the Directors of Education is to lead the school improvement strategy across the Trust including leadership of a team of Support and Challenge partners and supporting the professional learning, leadership development, talent management and performance of staff across our schools and settings.

The nature of the work will support the wellbeing and effectiveness of colleagues by providing frameworks, resources and training to support efficient use of time and high performance within schools.

The Directors of Education and Director of Inclusion must work closely together to ensure alignment of strategy and approach, whilst recognising the phase specific expertise required to ensure impact.



The 5 most significant areas of focus for the roles are:

- **Strategic School Improvement:** Lead the implementation and further development of the RLT school improvement strategy in the context of the Strategic Plan, leading a team of Support and Challenge Partners to secure pupil outcomes above national standards.
- **Curriculum and Teaching:** Ensuring high quality curricula are in place in all schools, including approaches to content, sequencing, teaching and learning, and assessment.
- **Collaboration:** Overall leadership of, and securing impact from, collaborative RLT networks, and enabling innovation to support continuous improvement.
- **Talent Management and Professional Learning and Development:** Leadership of system-level talent management in the primary phase, including leading Headteacher appointment processes, and the design and delivery of CPLD for the development of school leaders, teachers and support staff.
- **Support and Challenge:** Line manage a team of Support and Challenge partners and, if necessary, act as a Support and Challenge Partner for one or more schools.



## JOB DESCRIPTION

**Responsible to:** Chief Executive Officer

**Time Commitment:** Full-time, Permanent

**Location:** Hybrid (RLT Central Team Office at Rose Hill Primary School, Home, Schools)

**Salary:** L33 - L36 (£113,646 - £122,306)

**Disclosure level:** Enhanced DBS

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### DIRECT REPORTS

- Primary Deputy Director of Education
- Primary Support and Challenge Partners
- Primary Subject Network Leads



## 1. STRATEGIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- **Strategy Delivery:** Lead the Trust's school improvement strategy in the Primary Phase, prioritising *People-First, Equity, and Community*.
- **Equity Champion:** Ensure an inclusive, high-quality education that enables every child to flourish, regardless of background.
- **Data & Assurance:** Collaborate with the Data Director to utilise performance metrics for raising standards and providing Board/Governor assurance.
- **Inspection & Intervention:** Lead Ofsted preparation and oversight, including "Team Around the School" processes for rapid intervention.
- **Innovation:** Partner with colleagues to harness knowledge in the Trust and wider system, including oversight of primary focussed digital strategy.
- **Holistic Excellence:** Support schools in optimising extra-curricular provision and community engagement.

## 2. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

- **Evidence-Based Pedagogy:** Drive the implementation of best practices in curriculum design, assessment, and cognitive science.
- **Inclusion:** Partner with the Director of Inclusion to maximise outcomes for pupils with additional needs (SEND, PP, DA).
- **Cross-Phase Alignment:** Collaborate with the Director of Secondary Education to support highly effective curriculum and pedagogical transitions.

## 3. COLLABORATION

- **Network Leadership:** Appoint and oversee Collaborative Network Leads to ensure measurable impact across the Trust.
- **Professionalism:** Cultivate a culture of "collaborative professionalism," seeking internal and external best practices to drive collective improvement.

## 4. TALENT MANAGEMENT AND CPLD

- **Leadership Development:** Design and deliver high-quality training and talent pipelines to grow future Primary leaders.
- **Recruitment:** Lead the appointment process for Primary Headteachers in partnership with Local Governing Bodies.
- **External Partnerships:** Engage with SCITT and Teaching School Hubs to align the Trust with national professional development trends and the needs of the Trust.

## 5. SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE PARTNER [IF REQUIRED]

- **School Validation:** Provide support and rigorous challenge to Headteachers, validating self-evaluations (SEF) and school improvement plans (SIP) against objective evidence.
- **Performance Scrutiny:** Conduct objective reviews of school performance, with a sharp focus on closing attainment gaps for disadvantaged and SEND pupils.
- **Resource Brokering:** Identify and secure bespoke school improvement support from within the Trust or wider networks.
- **Governance & Appraisal:** Report outcomes to Governing Bodies and provide expert counsel for Headteacher performance appraisals.

**GENERAL DUTIES:**

- Contribute to the overall ethos/work/aims of the River Learning Trust.
- Appreciate and support the role of other professionals.
- Attend and participate in relevant meetings as required.
- Participate in training and other learning activities and performance development as required.
- Follow the Trust's Health and Safety rules and procedures and adhere to safeguarding principles.
- Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task undertaken may not be identified.
- All staff will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from a manager to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in this job description.

*The River Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and preventing extremism; all staff must ensure that the highest priority is given to following the guidance and regulations to safeguard children and young people. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and obtain any other statutorily required clearance. Employment will also be conditional on the receipt of at least two acceptable references (one from current/latest employer) and evidence of the formal qualifications required for the role.*



# PERSON SPECIFICATION: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (PRIMARY)

## REQUIRED SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, AND KNOWLEDGE

SECTION	REQUIREMENTS
<b>Qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).</li> <li>• NPQH or equivalent high-level leadership qualification.</li> <li>• Ofsted Inspector experience or a willingness to train.</li> </ul>
<b>Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Leading at Scale:</b> Proven record of improving standards across multiple schools or at a Trust-wide level.</li> <li>• <b>System Leadership:</b> Experience as an Executive Head, or in a central MAT/LA role, focused on group-wide success.</li> <li>• <b>Building Capacity:</b> Success in coaching Headteachers and designing training that improves leadership across a network.</li> <li>• <b>Collaboration:</b> Experience creating school networks where best practice is shared to drive collective improvement.</li> <li>• <b>Change Management:</b> Able to lead large-scale projects that result in lasting educational gains.</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Evidence-Based Teaching:</b> Deep understanding of research-led curriculum design and pedagogy.</li> <li>• <b>Systemic Analysis:</b> Ability to use data from 20+ schools to identify trends and deploy resources effectively.</li> <li>• <b>School Improvement:</b> Thorough knowledge of school self-evaluation, governance, and national inspection frameworks.</li> </ul>

# PERSON SPECIFICATION: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (PRIMARY)

## REQUIRED SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, AND KNOWLEDGE

SECTION	REQUIREMENTS
<p><b>Abilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Influencing Others:</b> Able to motivate and enrol experienced Headteachers to align with Trust-wide priorities.</li> <li>• <b>Communication:</b> Exceptional at explaining complex strategies clearly to diverse audiences (Trustees to staff).</li> <li>• <b>Relationship Building:</b> Skilled at forming high-trust, productive professional relationships.</li> <li>• <b>Analytical Thinking:</b> Able to spot patterns and solve problems.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal Qualities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trust Values:</b> A deep personal commitment to the "People-First" and "Equity" mission of RLT.</li> <li>• <b>Resilience:</b> Calm under pressure and comfortable providing honest challenge to senior leaders.</li> <li>• <b>Drive:</b> High energy and a proactive approach to overcoming barriers to success.</li> <li>• <b>Detail-Oriented:</b> Conscientious with a sharp eye for quality and accuracy.</li> </ul>



# RIVER LEARNING TRUST

## WHAT WE CAN OFFER

Education has the power to change lives, communities and society for the better. At RLT we believe that we can achieve more for our pupils, trainees, staff and communities by working together rather than alone. Schools in RLT are united by a common belief in the benefits of working together, and by our commitment to shared principles.

**OUR VISION** is for our schools and SCITT to improve rapidly, continuously and sustainably: to be better faster together.

**OUR 'WHY?'** is that children and young people 'only get one go' in school and therefore as part of RLT we aim to ensure the best possible 'go' for our pupils.

**OUR 'HOW?'** is through the highest support and challenge for our schools and each other, underpinned by our principles.

Our employees benefit from a wide variety of support including extensive continuing professional learning and development opportunities, wellbeing and staff networks and access to Defined Benefit Pension Schemes (TPS and LGPS) for all staff. For more information on what it is like to work for the Trust, and the benefits you could access, please see our "[Working in RLT](#)" guide. This role includes regulated activity relevant to children.



## HOW TO APPLY AND WHERE TO FIND FURTHER DETAILS

Online applications through MyNewTerm.

Please ensure that in the 'Supporting Statement' of the application form that you outline both your understanding and experience of system leadership.

Please feel free to contact Clare Carpen, Executive Assistant to Paul James: [ccarpen@riverlearningtrust.org](mailto:ccarpen@riverlearningtrust.org) to arrange an informal discussion with Paul regarding the role.

**Closing date** - 9am, Thursday 16th April

**Interview dates** - Thursday 23rd and Friday 24th April

River Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and preventing extremism. The Trust is required to conduct a variety of checks and online searches about you as part of their recruitment process in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance. It is an offence to apply for certain roles within schools if you are barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

For all RLT Safer Recruitment Documentation candidates should click on the following link [RLT Safer Recruitment Documents for Candidates](#). Please see our website for up to date policies including our Child Protection and Behaviour Policies. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. For further guidance for applicants click on this link [List of offences that are not filtered](#).

# THE TRUST'S SCHOOLS

We currently educate more than 16,500 pupils and have more than 2,000 colleagues in the Trust. Our school-centred initial teacher training arm (OTT) trains around 150 trainees in around 50 schools in Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Wiltshire.

## SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Cheney School  
Chipping Norton School  
Gillotts School  
Gosford Hill School  
Kingsdown School  
The Cherwell School  
The Marlborough CofE School  
The Oxford Academy  
The Swan School  
Wheatley Park School

## PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Barton Park Primary School  
Bayards Hill Primary School  
Beckley CofE Primary School  
Charlbury Primary School  
Cutteslowe Primary School  
Edith Moorhouse Primary School  
Edward Feild Primary School  
Garsington CofE Primary School

Horspath CofE Primary School  
Larkrise Primary School  
Madley Brook Primary School  
Middle Barton Primary School  
New Marston Primary School  
Rose Hill Primary School  
Sandhills Primary School  
Seven Fields Primary School  
Tower Hill Primary School  
Witney Community Primary School  
Windrush CofE Primary School  
Wolvercote Primary School

## ALTERNATIVE PROVISION (AP)

Meadowbrook College

## SCITT (TEACHER TRAINING)

OTT

## TEACHING SCHOOL HUB

Oxfordshire Teaching School Hub



