



ORCHARD
LEARNING ALLIANCE

WHERE EVERYONE THRIVES

June 2026

PA to the Chief Executive Officer & Communications Lead Job Description and Person Specification



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PA to the Chief Executive Officer & Communications Lead

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining The Orchard Learning Alliance. We are a growing and ambitious Trust, committed to delivering high-quality education and creating strong, inclusive communities. This is an exciting opportunity to join our Central Team in a varied and impactful role, supporting our CEO while helping shape how we communicate our work and achievements.

About the Orchard Learning Alliance

The Orchard Learning Alliance is a Multi-Academy Trust committed to providing exceptional educational experiences for all pupils. We work collaboratively across our schools to deliver high standards, support staff development, and foster strong relationships with our local communities. Our schools are located in Woodley, Earley, Spencers Wood and Tilehurst, and our Central Team plays a key role in supporting their success.

Job details

Salary range: Grade 7 SCP 25 to 29 (£36,363 to £39,862 full time equivalent)

Working hours per week: Part time, 20 hours per week

Actual salary: £17,494.58 to £19,177.98 per annum

Working hours per week: Part time, 20 hours per week

Hours of work: The role is flexible to meet the needs of the business. While most of the role will be completed within the core working hours of 9am to 3pm, some evening work is also expected

Location: Hybrid. 50% of time will be at the Central Office located in Woodley. This role will require travel to schools on occasion (currently Woodley, Earley, Spencers Wood and Tilehurst) and some home working is also possible.

Contract type: Permanent, term time only plus 10 additional working days (5 inset days plus 5 additional days to be agreed with CEO)

Reporting to: Chief Executive Officer

Responsible for: n/a

Main purpose

The PA to the Chief Executive Officer & Communications Lead will provide high-level administrative support to ensure the effective and efficient operation of the CEO, while also leading the Trust's communications and marketing activity. This is a varied, hands-on role combining executive support with creative and strategic communications. You will enable the CEO to focus on strategic priorities by delivering a professional, confidential and proactive PA service.

Alongside this, you will lead on how Orchard Learning Alliance communicates internally and externally by strengthening engagement, enhancing the Trust's reputation, and showcasing the lived experiences, successes and values of our schools.



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Working closely with schools and the central team, you will create compelling content across print and digital platforms and play a key role in supporting recruitment, admissions, community engagement and staff communications.

Duties and Responsibilities

Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer

- Provide proactive, high-level administrative support to the CEO, anticipating needs and enabling a focus on strategic leadership.
- Manage and coordinate diaries, meetings and the Trust-wide calendar.
- Prepare agendas, papers and documentation, and ensure actions are recorded and followed up.
- Attend meetings as required, taking accurate minutes and maintaining records.
- Act as a first point of contact on behalf of the CEO, managing correspondence, emails and telephone enquiries.
- Prepare briefing papers, reports, presentations and other documentation.
- Coordinate visitor arrangements and hospitality for meetings and events.
- Arrange travel, accommodation, conference facilities and catering as required.
- Maintain accurate filing systems (electronic and hard copy) and develop effective tracking systems where needed.
- Process expenses and support the smooth administrative operation of the CEO
- Liaise with internal stakeholders (including Headteachers, SLTs and Central colleagues) to coordinate meetings, visits and information sharing.
- Lead on the organisation and delivery of Trust-wide and Central team events.

Communications Lead

Press and Media

- Identify and develop positive media opportunities across the Trust.
- Write and distribute press releases.
- Build and maintain relationships with local media and respond to press enquiries.

Social Media

- Deliver a consistent and engaging social media presence aligned with brand guidelines.
- Source content and write posts across platforms.
- Monitor engagement and respond appropriately to comments.
- Support targeted social media campaigns where required.

Websites

- Ensure Trust and school websites are regularly updated, accurate and engaging.
- Review content to maintain relevance and quality.

Content Creation

- Produce clear, engaging copy for a range of internal and external communications.
- Design and create promotional materials (e.g. posters, graphics, flyers, recruitment packs).
- Capture photography and video content at events.
- Support print production and branding consistency.

Internal Communications

- Support the delivery of effective and engaging internal communications.
- Work with colleagues to share successes, updates and key messages across the Trust.

General Communications Support

- Coordinate communications and marketing requests from schools.
- Maintain and manage the Trust's photo library, ensuring permissions are up to date.
- Provide general administrative support for communications activity.



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This role is varied and evolving. While key responsibilities are outlined above, the postholder will be expected to undertake any reasonable duties required to support the Trust's objectives.



Peron Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Education and Training	<p>Good general standard of education e.g. 5 GCSE's A* to C</p> <p>Level 2 in English and Maths (or equivalent)</p>	<p>Degree or equivalent in journalism, communications, marketing or related discipline</p>
Knowledge and Experience	<p>Experience of working in an office or an administrative environment</p> <p>Experience producing high quality written content (e.g. websites, brochures, communications materials)</p> <p>Experience of social media platforms and digital communication channels</p> <p>Experience of working with multiple stakeholders and building positive working relationships</p>	<p>Experience working as a Personal Assistant or in a senior administrative role</p> <p>Experience within education, a Multi-Academy Trust, or the public sector</p> <p>Experience writing press releases and liaising with the media</p> <p>Experience planning or supporting communications or marketing campaigns</p> <p>Experience supporting internal communications</p>
Skills	<p>Strong working knowledge of Microsoft Office</p> <p>Excellent written communication and proofreading skills</p> <p>Strong organisational and time management skills, with the ability to prioritise and manage competing demands</p> <p>Excellent interpersonal skills, with the ability to build relationships at all levels</p> <p>Ability to work independently and use initiative within defined boundaries</p> <p>High levels of discretion, professionalism and confidentiality</p>	<p>Experience using content management systems</p> <p>Experience using design tools such as Canva</p> <p>Experience managing or updating WordPress websites</p> <p>Photography and/or video editing skills</p>



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Confidence working with colleagues, stakeholders and the wider community

Personal qualities Positive, proactive and adaptable, with a willingness to learn

Friendly, approachable and professional at all times

Strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people

Commitment to the Trust's vision and values

Willingness to travel to the Central Office and Trust schools as required



Safer Recruitment & Safeguarding

Introduction

The Orchard Learning Alliance is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in its schools. The Trust complies with the statutory legislative requirements and guidance that seeks to protect children, including 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance. In order to meet this responsibility, we follow a rigorous selection process to discourage and screen out unsuitable applicants.

Safer Recruitment

Job descriptions and person specifications make reference to safeguarding and child protection. All posts are subject to satisfactory completion of enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate (DBS) checks. All advertisements include a safeguarding statement and commitment.

Application Stage

All applicants are scrutinised to verify identity and academic qualifications, and professional references are requested using our standard pro-forma for short-listed candidates. As a minimum, references should be from the two most recent employers. References are checked against previous employment history and gaps in employment. Professional references must be obtained from work email addresses. Our standard reference proforma makes reference to suitability to work with children and young people. The application form requires applicants to complete a disclosure of any criminal convictions.

Short-listing

Only those candidates meeting the criteria outlined in the person specification will be short listed. All short-listed candidates will be subject to an online search as part of our safer recruitment due diligence.

Interview

Shortlisted candidates will take part in an interview and selection process. Candidates will be asked to address any discrepancies or gaps in their employment history. Candidates will be reminded of their responsibility to disclose any criminal convictions if they have not already done so. Proof of identity, qualifications and right to work in the UK must also be provided at interview.

Appointment

An enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate (DBS) will be required for all appointed posts. Other pre-employment compliance checks will be carried out. This post is subject to satisfactory references which will be requested prior to interview, an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, online searches, medical check, evidence of qualifications plus verification of the right to work in the UK. For teaching positions, barred list checks and prohibition from teaching checks will also be carried out. For leadership positions, section 128 checks will be performed. All staff will receive a comprehensive induction programme covering all aspects of safeguarding and health and safety.

Probation

All new staff will be subject to the trust probation procedures for a period of 6 months. The probation period is to enable the assessment of an employee's suitability for the job and which includes a review of the performance of new staff in relation to duties, skills, qualifications and experience outlined in the job description and person specification.



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This will also include an employee's suitability to work with children and young people and their commitment to safeguarding and child protection.

Equal opportunities

OLA recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve, a diverse workforce and takes positive steps to create an employment culture in which people feel confident of being treated with fairness, dignity and respect, irrespective of their differences. The Trust is committed to the elimination of unlawful discrimination and to the promotion of good relations between all.

General Data Protection Regulation

OLA is committed to ensuring that the privacy of an individual is protected. By signing a contract of employment, the employee is agreeing to the Trust processing their personal data, including 'sensitive personal data' as defined in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), for the purposes of the operation, management, security and/or administrations, as well as complying with applicable laws, regulations and procedures. The information you provide (except Equality Monitoring Information) may be shared with partner organisations that provide services to the Trust. A full list of these organisations is available on request from the CFO.

