



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (COO)

RECRUITMENT PACK

SEPTEMBER
2026

A LETTER FROM THE CEO



Sue Collings

CEO

The Alliance Schools Trust

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in joining the Alliance Schools Trust at such a pivotal and energising moment in our development. We are a Trust built on a simple but powerful belief: that when schools work as true allies, sharing expertise, championing one another, and holding fast to a shared moral purpose, then young people thrive. Our mission is clear: to deliver exceptional Education, Care, and Opportunity for every child, every day.

Across our Trust, each school retains its distinctive character, but we are united by values that shape everything we do: being Allied, Loyal, Learning-focused, Inclusive, Ambitious, No-nonsense, Community-focused, and Empathetic. These values are not slogans; they are lived behaviours that guide our decisions, our culture, and our commitment to excellence.

As we continue to grow, the role of Chief Operating Officer becomes ever more central to our success. This is an exciting opportunity to shape the strategic infrastructure that underpins our educational mission. You will lead the Trust's finance, estates, and IT functions, areas that are not simply operational necessities, but powerful enablers of innovation, sustainability, and long-term impact.

Our schools are vibrant, ambitious, and forward-looking. Currently we have two secondary schools and four primaries. With a further primary and secondary joining us and being part of the Alliance family, we are growing steadily. Our long-established Maths Hub serves over 400 schools in the region and has a strong reputation for high quality delivery. We are also a Early Career Framework (ECF) delivery partner for UCL where we support nearly 200 new entrants to the teaching profession. As COO, you will help ensure that our systems, resources, and environments match our ambition to create the conditions in which staff can excel and students can flourish.

You will join a collaborative and values-driven executive team, and a committed set of Headteachers and a Trust community that believes deeply in the transformative power of education. If you are energised by complexity, motivated by purpose, and ready to make a lasting contribution to the lives of young people, we would be delighted to explore this opportunity with you.

Regards,

Sue Collings
CEO

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (COO)

SALARY: £85,000 - £105,000 (DEPENDENT ON SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE)

CONTRACT: FULL-TIME, PERMANENT

START DATE: SEPTEMBER 2026

We are looking for a dynamic, commercially minded, and visionary leader ready to make a profound impact on children's lives. The Alliance Schools Trust is seeking an exceptional Chief Operating Officer (COO) to join our Executive Leadership Team and drive the strategic and operational excellence that underpins an outstanding education in each of our schools.

What You'll Lead

- **Strategic Direction** — Help shape the strategic direction of the Trust, aligning resources and systems with long-term educational goals.
- **Financial Excellence** — Oversee budgeting, forecasting, reporting, and compliance, ensuring value for money and long-term sustainability.
- **Estates & Safety** — Ensure our learning environments are safe, inspiring, and future-proof.
- **Digital Transformation** — Lead the Trust's digital strategy, ensuring secure, resilient, and innovative IT systems.

What We're Looking For

- Senior leadership experience in education, or a complex multi-site organisation
- Strong financial expertise (ACA/ACCA/CIMA desirable)
- Proven leadership across other non-educational areas

- A track record of delivering efficiencies and driving organisational improvement
- Integrity, strategic insight, and a deep commitment to educational values

What You'll Bring to Our Trust

- The ability to turn data into business information
- Confidence to influence at every level
- A passion for operational excellence
- Commercial acumen that enhances quality, not compromises it
- A mindset focused on innovation, sustainability, and long-term impact

Why Join Us

This is more than a job, it's a chance to shape the heartbeat of a growing Trust, working alongside a dedicated CEO, Education Director and Board of Trustees. You'll have the autonomy to innovate, the platform to lead, and the opportunity to leave a legacy that improves outcomes for thousands of young people.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Strategic Leadership

- Lead the Trust's operational strategy, ensuring alignment with the Trust's educational priorities and long-term goals.
- Provide expert advice to the CEO, Education Director and Board on financial planning, and organisational performance.
- Drive continuous improvement, innovation, and operational excellence across specific support functions.
- Oversee schools joining the Trust and all essential stakeholder communications.
- Line manage key personnel within the business function of the Trust.

Finance & Business Management

- Oversee all financial operations, including monthly, quarterly and annual budgeting, forecasting, financial reporting, and audit processes.
- Ensure Headteachers, Local School Boards and Trustees receive timely information that turns the numbers into business information.
- Ensure robust financial controls, value for money, and long-term financial sustainability.
- Lead on funding strategy, capital planning, investments and financial compliance with the DfE and charity regulations.
- Liaise closely with HR to ensure headcount matches planned budgets.

Estates & Facilities

- Lead the strategic management of the Trust's estate, ensuring safe, compliant, and inspiring learning environments.
- Oversee capital projects, maintenance programmes, and long-term estate planning.
- Ensure effective health and safety management across all sites.

Information Technology

- Ensure IT systems support high-quality teaching, learning, and operational efficiency.
- Oversee the Trust's digital strategy, ensuring robust, secure, and future-ready IT infrastructure.
- Ensure the cybersecurity, data protection compliance, and digital transformation initiatives.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications and/or Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior business leadership experience within education, public sector, or a complex multi-site organisation.• Strong financial expertise, ideally with a recognised accounting qualification (e.g., ACA, ACCA, CIMA).• Experience managing large budgets and delivering organisational efficiencies.• Demonstrable success in leading change and improving operational performance.• Understanding of strategic HR issues and solutions in relation to Trust operations• Knowledge of UK Employment Law
Skills & Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic thinker with excellent analytical and problem-solving skills.• Strong leadership presence with the ability to influence at all levels.• Excellent communication and stakeholder-management skills.• High integrity, sound judgement, and a commitment to the values of education.• Has commercially minded acumen that delivers efficiencies without compromising quality of provision in our schools.

ABOUT OUR MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Allied

Loyal

Learning Focused

Inclusive

Ambitious

No-nonsense

Community Focused

Empathetic

The Alliance Schools Multi-Academy Trust consists of six schools in Milton Keynes; 2 secondaries and 4 primaries. We also deliver a Maths Hub and we are a delivery partner for Early Career Framework.

The vision of the Trust is to unite the collective strengths of its schools to deliver exceptional **Education, Care and Opportunity** for everyone within its learning community. Through meaningful collaboration and partnership, each school retains its distinctive character while working as true allies - celebrating diversity, empowering lives and driving ambition and achievements for all.

Our Shared Services Team is committed to delivering an exceptional service with our schools so that each school can have an increased focus on teaching and learning. We have a Scheme of Delegation that empowers schools to meet the needs of the students in their care.



OUR TRUST MISSION AND VALUES

EDUCATION

We aim to achieve outstanding outcomes for all students, regardless of ability or background.



CARE

We are a big organisation with a small feel and offer individualised care to our students.

OPPORTUNITY

We have a responsibility to enrich, broaden and deepen students' learning by providing valuable experiences inside and outside the classroom.



OUR TRUST MISSION

In the Alliance schools, we deliver for our children, staff and communities through collaboration, partnership and innovation.

- *An inclusive, ambitious and successful EDUCATION*
- *A culture of CARE, loyalty and empathy*
- *Inspiring and memorable learning OPPORTUNITIES*

WHY WORK FOR THE ALLIANCE SCHOOLS?



PAY

Our salaries are nationally benchmarked and aligned to similar roles in the Milton Keynes area, with annual cost of living increases and performance based pay rises.



PENSION

For this role, the employee will be automatically enrolled in the Local Government Pension Scheme. Employer contributions for 2026/27 are 21.1%.



LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

We pride ourselves on prioritising staff development with support from experienced leaders, such as access to the CFO group in Milton Keynes and the local Teaching School Hub.



MENTAL HEALTH

From Day 1, all staff will have access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and on-site support from HR and trained mental health first aiders. Our policies are designed to support you through various life stages, including flexible working arrangements and menopause support.



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Our Cycle to Work scheme promotes healthy and sustainable commuting options. We also give all staff the option to have a free flu jab annually.



LIFE OUTSIDE WORK

We understand the importance of work-life balance and have policies in place to support it. In this role, there is an annual leave entitlement of 33 days, increasing to 38 days after 5 years of service. Term-time holidays are also approved.

LIFE IN MILTON KEYNES

Established just over 50 years ago, Milton Keynes is a diverse, welcoming and expanding place. Beautiful open spaces sit alongside popular leisure attractions, there's lots on offer culturally, and our friendly neighbourhoods feature high quality community facilities with easy ways to get around on foot and by bike as well as by car.

Milton Keynes is 40 minutes from London, 30 minutes from London Luton Airport and a stop on the West Coast Mainline, connecting Scotland and the North West with the capital.

We're known to be a 'smart city', leading the way in projects like autonomous vehicles and robot deliveries, and we have a strong economy with plenty of highly skilled jobs. We also have a great deal of unexpected history with rural villages and busy towns like Bletchley (home of The Codebreakers).

Facilities include a large shopping centre (over 190 stores), a 1400 seat theatre, a municipal art gallery, two multiplex cinemas, an ecumenical central church, a 400 seat concert hall, a teaching hospital, a 30,500 seat football stadium, an indoor ski-slope and a 65,000 capacity open-air concert venue. Seven railway stations serve the Milton Keynes urban area (one inter-city). The Open University is based here and there is a small campus of the University of Bedfordshire.

Most major sports are represented at amateur level; Red Bull Racing (Formula One), MK Dons (association football) and Milton Keynes Lightning (ice hockey) are its professional sports teams.





Closing date: Wednesday 24th June 2026

Interview date: Tuesday 7th July 2026