



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. Whilst being a large Trust we are geographically well-connected, with our schools serving communities in Oxfordshire & Swindon.

With the retirement of the current post-holder we are seeking to appoint our next Director of Primary Education to enable us to deliver our commitment to excellence for all pupils and colleagues in the Trust. We are intentionally inclusive in our approach, aiming for all of our children and young people, whatever their backgrounds or additional needs, to lead successful lives. If you are passionate about delivering excellent education founded on brilliant curriculum, teaching and learning and personal development, then RLT is the place for you.

The post holder will work closely with the Director of Secondary Education, the Director of Inclusion and directly with me to lead the strategy for school improvement in the Trust, delivering both Trust and school improvement priorities.

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 support first-hand school improvement work as needed, whilst you will primarily oversee the work of the Deputy Director of Primary Education & our Primary Support and Challenge Partners. 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.

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 to arrange a convenient time.

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 L28 - L31

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, development 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 positive outcomes above national standards
- **Curriculum and Teaching:** Leading development of curriculum frameworks including approaches to content, sequencing, teaching and learning, and assessment
- **Collaboration:** Overall leadership of, and securing impact from, collaborative RLT networks
- **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
- **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: L28 - L31

Disclosure level: Enhanced DBS

DIRECT REPORTS

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



1. STRATEGIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- To lead the delivery of the RLT school improvement strategy through the three core priorities of strategy: People-First, Equity, and Community
- To champion equity and inclusion, ensuring that every child - whatever their background or starting point - enjoys an excellent education and opportunities to flourish
- To work with the Data Director to ensure that data is collected, reviewed, used and reported in a way which raises standards and provides relevant information and assurance to Governors and ees
- To have leadership oversight of the Ofsted preparation process for schools, supporting Headteachers, Governors and ees as required
- To lead any 'Team Around the School' process and other approaches specifically targeted at rapid intervention
- To work with the IT Director and AI lead to support effective implementation of appropriate digital technologies which support school improvement
- To support schools in the implementation of best practice in the broader aspects which contribute to high quality education including extra-curricular activities and parental and community engagement
- To attend the Board Impact Committee, preparing and presenting materials as required.

2. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

- To lead the sharing and implementation of best practice in evidence-based curriculum and assessment, teaching and learning and cognition
- To lead the sharing and implementation of best practice of approaches which support the best experiences and outcomes for pupils with additional needs (DA, PP, SEND) working closely with the Director of Inclusion
- To work closely with the Director of Education (Secondary) to ensure alignment between the primary and secondary phase in curriculum development and approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.

3. COLLABORATION

- To take responsibility for the appointment of collaborative network leads and secure measurable impact from collaborative networks
- To lead the development and work of collaborative networks in partnership with Support and Challenge partners and school leaders, having oversight of the work of Subject Network Leads

- To understand and work by the principles of collaborative professionalism in order to secure the sharing of best practice and impact of collaborative work across our schools
- To be professionally curious to seek out best practice from within and beyond the to support improvement.

4.TALENT MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

- To develop and deliver high quality training for leaders and other colleagues in schools
- To lead and have active engagement in the growth of future leaders in the primary phase, linking together talent management process with CPLD and career development opportunities for colleagues
- To take the lead in the appointment process for Headteachers for our Primary Schools working closely with school Local Governing Bodies
- To engage in other training opportunities as appropriate, for example with SCITT and Teaching School Hub.

5.SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE PARTNER [IF REQUIRED]

- *Provide challenge and support for the Headteacher and senior leadership team in the schools*
- *Assess a school's self-evaluation, priorities, targets, quality assurance processes and school improvement plan against available evidence, and support and challenge the accuracy and effectiveness of these*
- *Provide an objective review of the school's performance analysing the evidence for improvement, scrutinising the progress made by different groups of pupils to ensure that success for some does not hide failure of others, with a sharp focus on disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND*
- *Research and advise the school on resources and strategies which further priorities.*
- *Challenge the school where necessary, particularly on its capacity to improve and whether it is focusing on the most important priorities for improvement and development*
- *Discuss, identify, research, and secure relevant school improvement support from both within the and wider networks and ensure that this is appropriately managed*
- *Report the outcomes of this work to the school, to the school's governing body*
- *Provide advice and guidance on the school's performance and to inform the appraisal of the Headteacher.*

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 '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
- Employees 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 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

REQUIRED SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, AND KNOWLEDGE

SECTION	REQUIREMENTS
Qualifications & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified Teacher • NPQH and/or relevant leadership qualification • Ofsted Inspector or willingness to train (desirable)
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful implementation of complex school improvement strategies • Curriculum development, including approaches to content, sequencing, teaching, learning and assessment • Successful system-leadership in schools or other education setting (Headship with significant experience of system work, Executive Head, or MAT or LA experience) • Experience of successful system collaboration and leadership • Coaching, mentoring and leadership development • Creating positive relationships and harnessing networks to implement lasting collaborative change • Design and delivery of training for school leaders and Governors on a variety of topics • Enabling and facilitating schools to manage change for education improvement, building capacity and raising standards

REQUIRED SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, AND KNOWLEDGE

Continued

SECTION	REQUIREMENTS
Knowledge & Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best evidence and research findings on high quality curriculum and all aspects of assessment • School leadership, culture and change processes • Pedagogy and educational cognitive psychology • School self-evaluation and all relevant school data and information • Education improvement (understanding the breadth of educational provision) • Best practice in school governance
Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent communication skills (written and verbal) • Excellent interpersonal skills, having a strong understanding of 'self' as well as others • Highly developed persuading, motivating, negotiating and influencing skills • Excellent analytical skills (school data, information and people and teams) • Excellent at building supportive and productive professional relationships with colleagues
Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have personal values which align with the values of the Trust • Have a positive, enthusiastic outlook with the energy, drive, enthusiasm and determination to succeed • Be forward thinking with the ability to anticipate and solve potential barriers to success • Be an avid learner • Be calm under pressure of deadlines • Be conscientious with a strong eye for detail • Access to personal transport to enable regular school visits.

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 experience 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 CPLD 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

NB. Online applications through MyNewTerm

Please feel free to contact Clare Carpen, Executive Assistant to Paul James, at ccarpen@riverlearningtrust.org to arrange an informal discussion with Paul regarding the role.

- **Closing date** - Monday 2nd February 2026
- **Interview dates** - Thursday 5th and Friday 6th February 2026

The 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

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

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

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION (AP)

Meadowbrook College

SCITT (TEACHER TRAINING)

OTT

TEACHING SCHOOL HUB

Oxfordshire Teaching School Hub



