



Woodland
Academy Trust

Human Resources & Operations Manager

Applicant Information Pack



Ignite the spark, reveal the champion



AMBITION



COLLABORATION



COMPASSION



EXCELLENCE



INCLUSIVITY

Welcome from the CEO

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for expressing an interest in this role at Woodland Academy Trust. We are a small but ambitious Trust that puts the children and community first. We are on an exciting journey to achieve the best possible outcomes and excellence for all.

To support us on our journey, we are welcoming applications from skilled and committed applicants who have vision, drive and ambition and would be keen to hear about your experiences and what skills you can bring to this role. We seek to attract staff who have a growth mindset, strong values and work ethic and care deeply about serving communities.

This is an exciting time to join Woodland Academy Trust as we further strengthen our school improvement offer across the Trust. You will benefit from working with a strong team, receive the very best professional development and have the opportunity to make a real difference to the daily learning experiences of our wonderful children.

We look forward to your application.

Yours faithfully,

Nav Sanghara,

Trust Leader (CEO)



About Woodland Academy Trust

The Woodland Academy Trust was formed in September 2011 and currently consists of five primary schools, four of which are located in the London Borough of Bexley and one in Kent.

All our schools share the same mission; *ignite the spark, reveal the champion*. We are an inclusive and ambitious Trust, striving to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children. Our aim is to provide the highest quality learning experiences for every child by creating an ethical culture of empowerment and growth for all. We believe deeply in the importance of nurturing strong partnerships with our local communities and beyond.



Discover more about us by watching our video [here](#). You can also find out information about Woodland Academy Trust by visiting our website: [Woodland Academy Trust](#).

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Our Schools

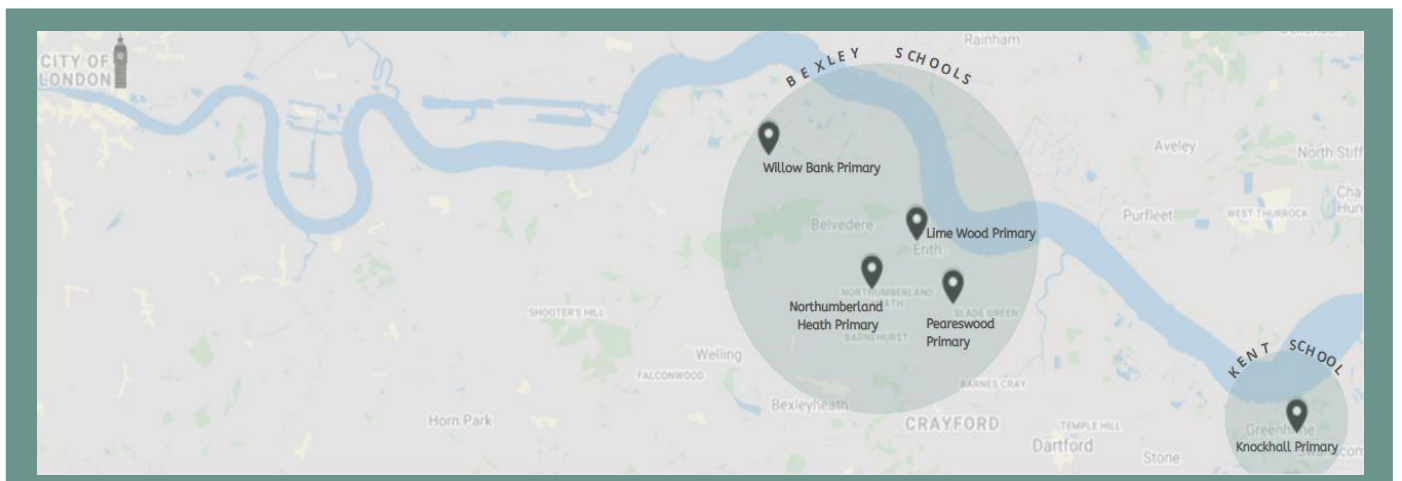


Discover more about our schools and our Trust by watching our videos:

[Watch our Trust videos](#)

You can also explore our schools' websites to find out more

<https://www.woodlandacademytrust.co.uk/our-schools/>



Ignite the spark, reveal the champion

The Role

Job title:	Human Resources & Operations Manager
Status:	Permanent
Hours:	36 hours per week
Working weeks per year:	52 weeks per year
Grade:	Hay Grade 18.1-18.4 (£51,732-£59,778)
Post Start Date:	As soon as possible

Woodland Academy Trust are seeking an outstanding HR and Operations Manager to lead and develop our HR, compliance and operational systems across our family of primary schools. Reporting to the Chief Financial Officer and working closely with the CEO, Deputy CEO, Headteachers and central teams, you will play a key role in ensuring that our people practices, compliance arrangements and operational processes are effective, compliant and aligned with the Trust's strategic priorities.

This is a varied and rewarding role for someone who thrives on balancing strategic thinking with hands-on operational delivery. You will provide expert advice and practical support on a wide range of HR matters, including employee relations, recruitment, workforce planning, wellbeing, policy development and organisational change. You will also oversee key compliance processes, governance administration, workforce reporting and the effective use of systems and data to support decision-making across the Trust.

As a values-led organisation, we are looking for someone who can build positive relationships, communicate with confidence and integrity, and support leaders to achieve the best outcomes for staff and pupils. The successful candidate will be committed to continuous improvement and interested in exploring how digital tools, automation and AI can be used safely, ethically and effectively to improve services and efficiency.

The successful candidate will...

- Lead and oversee HR, compliance and operational systems across the Trust, ensuring consistency, efficiency and legal compliance.
- Provide trusted advice and support to senior leaders on HR, staffing, employee relations and operational matters.
- Manage complex and sensitive employee relations casework with professionalism, sound judgement and discretion.
- Oversee recruitment, onboarding and safer recruitment processes, ensuring all statutory requirements are met.
- Maintain oversight of workforce records, employment checks, contracts and HR documentation.
- Support schools in maintaining compliant Single Central Records and safeguarding-related employment processes.

- Lead the review, implementation and communication of Trust policies and compliance requirements.
- Produce high-quality workforce data, reports and analysis to support informed decision-making.
- Identify trends, risks and opportunities relating to staffing, recruitment, attendance, wellbeing and compliance.
- Work effectively with external providers including payroll, occupational health, HR and legal advisers.
- Build positive working relationships with leaders, staff, governors, trustees and external stakeholders.
- Promote continuous improvement and support the effective use of digital systems, automation and AI to enhance efficiency and accessibility.
- Demonstrate the highest standards of integrity, confidentiality and professional conduct.
- Champion the Trust's values of ambition, collaboration, compassion, excellence and inclusivity.

Please note that due to the volume of applications we receive, we reserve the right to close this position early should a suitable candidate be found. Therefore, early application is advised.

Applications

Please apply by visiting our current vacancies page at: [Woodland Academy Trust- Work With Us](#)

We want to ensure that our recruitment process is accessible to all. If you would prefer the application form and material in an alternative format or you would like to know more about our recruitment process, please email recruitment@watschools.org.uk

Application Deadline: Midday on Friday 18th September
Interviews: To be arranged

For further information or to arrange an informal chat about the role, please contact recruitment@watschools.org.uk

Diversity and Inclusion

We strive to achieve a diverse workforce, fully representative of our diverse society and the ethnic make-up of the pupil population in the UK. People of colour are currently under-represented on our staff teams. We are keen to attract applications from a diverse pool of candidates and determined to be a fully inclusive employer, and a great workplace for people of ethnic minority heritage as well as white heritage.

Our Offer

Woodland Academy Trust seek to appoint colleagues who share in our values and mission to *ignite the spark and reveal the champion*. We recognise that in order to offer the best outcomes for our children, our staff teams need the opportunity to be the very best they can be too. We do this by ensuring we have in place for all staff:

- Continuous professional learning focusing on core areas;
- Collaborative working with agencies around us and offering formal training opportunities, bespoke and targeted professional development as well as in-house, bespoke training from our many experts and coaching and mentoring;
- Embedding initiatives to support with reducing workload;
- Having a strong supportive ethos with dedicated line management structures and clear communication channels;
- Offering wellbeing assistance and support including a dedicated employee assistance helpline and occupational health;
- Opportunities to take part in exciting initiatives and projects that help shape the way our children will learn in the future;
- A wide range of family friendly policies in place for staff;
- Recognising national terms and conditions for staff;
- Teachers and Local Government pension schemes;
- Cycle to work schemes.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Woodland Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All staff and volunteers are therefore expected to behave in such a way that supports this commitment. Appointment to this post will be subject to the following satisfactory pre-employment checks:

- Health

- Identity
- Relevant work qualifications
- Right to work in the UK
- Barred List Check (previously List 99)
- Disclosure & Barring Service Check (for all staff and volunteers)
- References

We are committed to ensuring a positive work environment and selecting candidates who align with our values and culture. As part of our thorough recruitment process, in accordance with the DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education, an online search will be completed on all shortlisted applicants prior to interview. Any relevant information will be discussed further with the applicant during the recruitment process.

Any information we come across will be handled confidentially and considered in a professional manner. Our aim is to better understand your qualifications and suitability for the role. If you have any concerns or questions about this process, please contact us for more information.

Our Commitment to Innovation in Recruitment

At Woodland Academy Trust, we are proud to be at the forefront of innovation in education- this includes how we recruit. We actively use AI-powered tools and digital platforms to support and streamline our recruitment processes. From anonymised shortlisting grids to data-informed candidate scoring, we ensure fairness, transparency, and efficiency at every stage.

As a Trust, we believe in human decision-making enhanced by smart technology. AI supports us in removing unconscious bias, improving turnaround times, and focusing more of our time on getting to know the people behind the applications. For further information, or to opt-out, please view the Privacy Statement on our website.



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JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE	HR and Operations Manager
RESPONSIBLE TO	Chief Financial Officer. The postholder will work closely with the CEO and Deputy CEO on strategic people matters.
GRADE	Hay Grade 18.1-18.4
HOURS	36 hours per week / 52 weeks per year
ALL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES	• Live the Trust values, demonstrating ambition, collaboration, compassion, excellence and inclusivity in everyday work. • Follow Trust policies and procedures and contribute to a professional, respectful and inclusive working culture. • Participate in relevant professional development and training. • Share responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils.
MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE	The HR and Operations Manager will oversee the Trust's HR, compliance and operational systems, ensuring they are legally compliant, efficient, well organised and applied consistently across all schools. The postholder will provide clear advice, accurate information and practical support to the CEO, Deputy CEO, CFO, Headteachers and central team. The role includes responsibility for HR processes, employee relations, recruitment and safer recruitment, policy management, compliance systems, governance administration, workforce data, reporting, external providers and relevant operational systems. The postholder will also support the appropriate use of digital tools, automation and AI to improve efficiency and accessibility, ensuring that all use is ethical, secure, transparent and aligned with safeguarding expectations, Trust policy and UK GDPR.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES	1. Strategic and operational oversight • Oversee HR, compliance and operational systems so they support the Trust's priorities and the effective running of schools. • Provide timely, practical advice to the CEO, Deputy CEO, CFO, Headteachers and other leaders on HR, staffing, compliance and operational matters. • Line manage identified HR and compliance staff, setting clear expectations and ensuring effective service standards. • Promote consistent processes across the Trust, while recognising the context and needs of individual schools. • Keep up to date with relevant legislation, statutory guidance and sector developments, advising leaders on implications for the Trust. 2. HR management, employee relations and wellbeing • Manage and oversee the Trust's HR function, ensuring processes are compliant, consistent, timely and aligned with Trust policy. • Advise leaders on employee relations matters, including absence, conduct, capability, grievance, performance, pay, terms and conditions and contractual issues. • Support and oversee formal HR processes, including meetings, hearings, panels, appeals and complex casework, seeking external HR or legal advice where required. • Support organisational change processes where required, including restructures, redundancy, consultation and TUPE, with appropriate advice.
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	• Oversee sickness absence processes, occupational health referrals and workforce wellbeing actions to support attendance, retention and fair decision-making. 3. Recruitment, safer recruitment and HR administration • Oversee recruitment and onboarding processes, ensuring they are efficient, professional and compliant with safer recruitment requirements and Keeping Children Safe in Education. • Maintain oversight of pre-employment checks, including references, right to work, qualifications, prohibition checks, medical clearance, DBS checks and other statutory checks. • Support schools in maintaining accurate and compliant Single Central Records. • Ensure employment contracts, contract variations, offer letters and other HR documentation are produced, issued and retained accurately. • Liaise with payroll and relevant providers so that staffing, contractual and pay information is processed accurately and within agreed timescales. 4. Policy, compliance, governance and risk • Manage the Trust's policy schedule, ensuring statutory and non-statutory policies are reviewed, approved, published and communicated in line with agreed requirements. • Maintain oversight of relevant compliance systems, including HR records, employment checks, equalities information, website compliance and governance-related documentation. • Support governance administration by ensuring relevant papers, records and compliance information are accurate, timely and well organised. • Work with colleagues to monitor health and safety, risk, training and operational compliance requirements relevant to the role. • Escalate significant risks, gaps or compliance concerns to the CFO and senior leaders in a timely manner. 5. Workforce data, reporting and systems improvement • Maintain accurate workforce and operational data relevant to HR, compliance and central operations. • Produce clear reports and analysis for the CEO, Deputy CEO, CFO, Executive Team, Trust Board and relevant committees. • Use data to identify trends, risks and areas for improvement, including staffing, recruitment, retention, absence, wellbeing, casework and training compliance. • Support the effective use of HR, payroll, compliance and management information systems. • Identify opportunities to improve efficiency, consistency and accessibility through appropriate use of digital tools, automation and AI, maintaining human oversight and professional judgement. 6. External providers and professional standards • Maintain effective working relationships with external HR, legal, payroll, occupational health, governance, compliance and other relevant providers. • Monitor the quality and responsiveness of external services, escalating concerns and supporting contract monitoring where appropriate. • Maintain the highest standards of confidentiality, discretion and professional integrity when handling sensitive information. • Communicate clearly, professionally and respectfully with staff, leaders, trustees, governors, external advisers and other stakeholders. • Model a calm, solution-focused and values-led approach and undertake other duties commensurate with the grade and responsibility of the post
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Person Specification		
	Essential	Desirable
Education, Qualifications and Training	• Degree level education or equivalent relevant experience. • CIPD Level 5 qualification or equivalent HR management experience. • Continuing professional development in HR, employment law, compliance or operational management, with secure understanding of safer recruitment and safeguarding expectations within schools.	• CIPD Level 7 qualification or Chartered Membership of the CIPD. • Training or qualification in safer recruitment, data protection, UK GDPR, governance, compliance, health and safety, school business management or operations. • Training or experience in digital systems, automation or AI to improve operational efficiency.
Experience	• Managing HR or operational processes in a complex organisation, including line management and work with external providers. • Advising leaders on HR, staffing or operational matters and handling employee relations casework. • Supporting formal HR procedures, including meetings, hearings, panels or appeals. • Overseeing recruitment, onboarding, employment checks, contracts and confidential HR records. • Using workforce data, reports, policy cycles and compliance processes to identify risk and inform decisions.	• Working in a school, academy trust or wider education setting, including across more than one site. • Supporting safer recruitment, Single Central Record compliance, governance administration, statutory reporting, health and safety, risk management or business continuity systems. • Supporting organisational change, restructure, redundancy processes or TUPE. • Liaising with trade unions or employee representatives. • Using digital tools, automation or AI to improve HR, compliance or operational processes.
Knowledge and Skills	• Strong knowledge of HR practice, employment law, employment-related safeguarding, safer recruitment, Keeping Children Safe in Education, confidentiality and data protection. • Ability to provide clear, accurate and practical advice and manage sensitive matters with sound judgement. • Strong organisational skills, with the ability to manage competing priorities, meet deadlines and maintain accurate records. • Ability to analyse information and produce clear reports, recommendations, letters and policy updates. • Strong written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to advise, challenge and influence appropriately. • Confident use of HR, payroll, compliance and management information systems, with the ability to improve and simplify processes. • Understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion and how this applies to HR and operational practice.	• Knowledge of academy trust governance, compliance and statutory reporting requirements. • Knowledge of school staffing terms and conditions, including teacher and support staff frameworks. • Understanding of health and safety compliance within a school or Trust setting. • Understanding of ethical, secure and transparent use of AI or automation in HR and operational systems.
Personal Qualities	• Demonstrates integrity, confidentiality and professional discretion. • Communicates clearly, respectfully and confidently, building positive relationships across the Trust. • Calm, measured and solution-focused when dealing with complex or sensitive situations.	• Confident in supporting improvement and change. • Curious about how digital tools can improve efficiency and accessibility.

	• Organised, reliable, accurate, reflective and resilient. • Committed to safeguarding, equality, diversity, inclusion, staff wellbeing and the Trust values of ambition, collaboration, compassion, excellence and inclusivity.	• Able to balance consistency across the Trust with sensitivity to individual school contexts.
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www.woodlandacademytrust.co.uk

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Follow us on social media to see what's happening across our Trust!



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