



Woodland
Academy Trust

Ignite the spark, reveal the champion

Head of Operations

Applicant Information Pack



AMBITION



COLLABORATION



COMPASSION



EXCELLENCE



INCLUSIVITY

Ignite the spark, reveal the champion

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.



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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



Visit our website:
www.knockhallprimaryschool.co.uk



Visit our website:
www.limewoodprimaryschool.co.uk



Visit our website:
www.northumberlandheathprimaryschool.co.uk



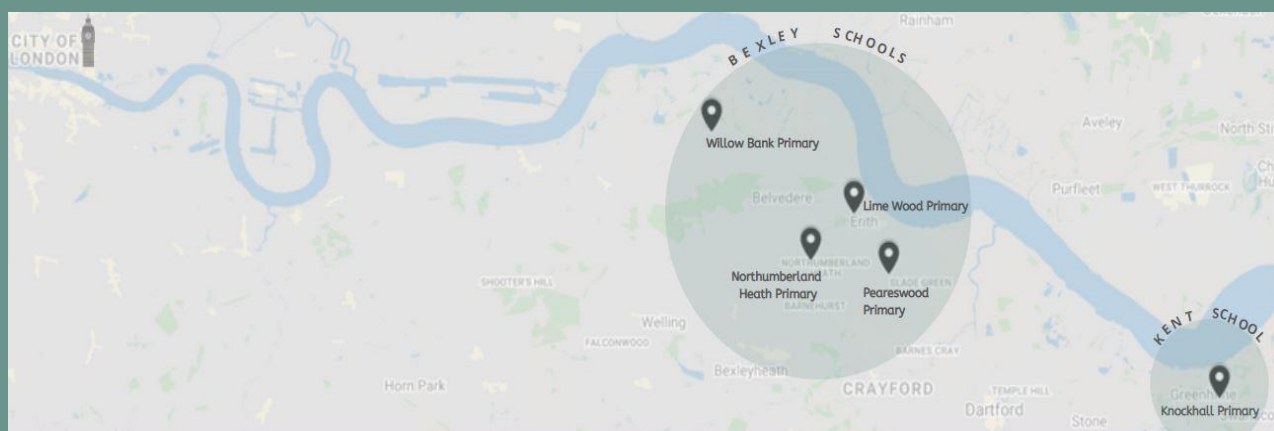
Visit our website:
www.peareswoodprimaryschool.co.uk



Visit our website:
www.willowbankprimaryschool.co.uk



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



The Role

Job title:	Head of Operations
Status:	Permanent
Hours:	21.6 hours per week (0.6)
Working weeks per year:	52 weeks per year
Grade:	Hay Grade 15.1 – 15.4 (£44,472 - £51,234)
Pro rata salary:	£26,683.20 -£30,740.40
Post Start Date:	As soon as possible
Closing Date:	5 th January 2026

Woodland Academy Trust is seeking a strategic and solutions-focused Head of Operations to play a pivotal role in shaping and leading operational excellence across our five primary schools. This is a highly collaborative and visible leadership position, ideal for someone who thrives on driving change, strengthening compliance frameworks, and ensuring the smooth running of Trust-wide operations.

Working closely with the CFOO and other senior leaders, you will oversee key areas including compliance, estates, governance support, health and safety, contracts, and digital systems development. You'll lead on embedding efficient processes, championing the use of technology and data dashboards, and building strong partnerships across central and school teams.

The successful candidate should:

- Have significant experience leading operational or compliance functions in a multi-site organisation.
- Demonstrate a strong understanding of compliance, health and safety, governance, and data protection frameworks.
- Be an effective leader, able to build collaborative relationships and manage staff with clarity and integrity.
- Be confident in using technology and data systems to drive operational improvement and reporting.
- Have excellent organisational, analytical and project management skills, with the ability to problem-solve and deliver results.
- Have experience of working with external contractors and suppliers, ensuring value for money and quality assurance.
- Be committed to the values of ambition, collaboration, compassion, excellence and inclusivity.
- Ideally, bring relevant qualifications such as IOSH/NEBOSH, GDPR/Data Protection training, or CIPD.
- Be passionate about delivering exceptional operational services that underpin the success of our schools and pupils.

This is a unique opportunity to join a forward-thinking, values-driven Trust at an exciting time in its development — making a tangible difference to how we deliver high-quality education and services for our school communities.

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: 5th January 2026
Interviews: w/c 12th January 2026

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 DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, 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.



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JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE	Head of Operations
RESPONSIBLE TO	CFOO
RESPONSIBLE FOR	Compliance Officer
GRADE	Hay Grade 15.1 – 15.4
HOURS	21.6 hours per week, 52 weeks per year (0.6 FTE)
ALL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To live our Trust values, demonstrating ambition, collaboration, compassion, excellence and inclusivity in your everyday work life. To value professional development and welcome any training opportunities to develop personal skills and knowledge To agree to follow the school and Trust's policies and procedures.
MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE	To lead and continuously improve the operational functions of the Trust, ensuring efficiency, compliance, and strong governance across all schools. The postholder will oversee compliance, health and safety, estates, governance support, and contract management, working collaboratively with the Head of HR to ensure systems and processes align across people, operations, and assurance.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES	<p>Strategic and Operational Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the development of operational systems and processes that deliver efficient, compliant services across the Trust. Work with the CFOO to develop an operational strategy aligned with the Trust Development Plan. Oversee the line management of the Compliance Officer and promote cross-departmental collaboration. Provide high-quality operational advice to Headteachers and the Executive Team. Champion the use of technology, AI, and data dashboards to streamline compliance and operational monitoring. Lead projects that strengthen cross-Trust collaboration (e.g., helpdesk automation, centralised risk tracking, policy management) and ensure these processes promote efficiency, consistency and legal compliance across schools. <p>Compliance and Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all statutory and regulatory obligations are met, including data protection, health and safety, and governance reporting. Oversee the Trust's policy management framework, ensuring policies are reviewed, approved, and published according to schedule.
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- Coordinate with the Head of HR and Compliance Officer to provide comprehensive assurance reports to Trustees.
- Maintain oversight of statutory returns and filings, including Companies House, gender pay gap, and equality reporting.
- Support the effective running of governance operations, including preparing papers, maintaining accurate records, and servicing committees when required.

Health and Safety and Risk Management

- Lead the development of a robust Trust-wide health and safety framework, ensuring consistency across schools.
- Oversee the regular review and maintenance of risk registers at both Trust and school level.
- Coordinate external health and safety audits and ensure actions are completed in a timely manner.
- Manage insurance arrangements and incident reporting, maintaining accurate logs and lessons learned.
- Support the CFOO in the preparation of capital funding bids (e.g. CIF) and oversee post-award compliance reporting.
- Lead on business continuity and critical incident planning, ensuring schools have up-to-date contingency plans tested and reviewed annually.
- Liaise with site managers to ensure compliance and maintenance schedules are in place across all schools.

Contracts and Supplier Management

- Maintain oversight of all operational contracts, ensuring value for money and adherence to procurement regulations.
- Lead on tendering and contract renewal processes in collaboration with the CFOO.
- Monitor service delivery of outsourced providers (HR, payroll, legal, compliance) and escalate concerns as necessary.
- Identify opportunities to improve operational efficiency, shared services, and sustainability across the Trust.

Systems and Digital Development

- Drive the use of technology to improve data collection, compliance tracking, and reporting accuracy.
- Collaborate with the Head of HR and CFOO to ensure systems such as HRIS, helpdesks and SharePoint are aligned and integrated.
- Introduce automation tools and dashboards that provide leaders with real-time insights into compliance and operational performance.

Leadership and Collaboration

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide visible leadership, modelling accountability, integrity, and a solution-focused approach. • Facilitate cross-functional collaboration between HR, finance, IT, and compliance functions. • Lead or contribute to Trust-wide projects designed to strengthen operational capacity or risk management. • Support training and induction for new central staff as part of building a consistent, high-performing team.
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- This job description sets out the duties of the post at the time it was published.
- The hours and the job description may be modified depending on the needs of the school.
- The post holder may be required from time to time to undertake other duties within the school as may be reasonably expected, without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility entailed.
- The priorities for each year will be reviewed against this job description annually through performance management meetings.

Signed by employee: _____

Signed by CFO: _____

Date: _____

Please note that we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expect all those who work with us to share this commitment. Successful applicants will need to undertake a DBS Enhanced Clearance check (Disclosure and Barring Service). We give high priority to promoting diversity throughout the Trust.

Person Specification		
	Essential	Desirable
Education, Qualifications and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated to degree level or equivalent experience in a relevant field. • Evidence of ongoing professional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIPD qualification (Level 5 or above). • Health & Safety qualification (IOSH or NEBOSH). • GDPR / Data Protection training or qualification.
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of managing HR, compliance or operations functions within a multi-site organisation. • Experience of line management and performance management of staff. • Proven track record of developing and implementing systems to improve organisational efficiency. • Experience of handling sensitive or confidential matters with discretion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in the education sector or within a multi-academy trust. • Experience of supporting or servicing governance or board functions. • Experience managing outsourced HR, legal or compliance providers. • Experience with risk management frameworks.
Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong understanding of HR and employment law principles. • Understanding of compliance, data protection and health & safety frameworks. • Excellent organisational and project management skills. • Ability to analyse complex information and produce clear reports and recommendations. • Highly proficient in Microsoft Office applications. 	
Essential Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective communicator • Is authentic • Builds relationships • Empowers others • Is self-aware and reflective • Demonstrates our values every day by demonstrating ambition, collaboration, compassion, excellence and inclusivity 	

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recruitment@watschools.org.uk



www.woodlandacademytrust.co.uk



[@w00dlandAcademy](https://twitter.com/w00dlandAcademy)



Woodland Academy Trust



[woodland_academy_trust](https://www.instagram.com/woodland_academy_trust)



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