



Director of School Improvement (Primary)

Recruitment Pack



A welcome letter from our CEO

Thank you for your interest in joining The White Horse Federation at this important and exciting time for the Trust. This is a significant opportunity for a Director of School Improvement to lead at the very heart of our organisation, supporting our strategic direction and enabling a high-performing Trust.

The Trust is a family of 30 schools with an excellent Professional Services team that works closely together to support and inspire all children and colleagues, offering greater opportunity and choice. The Trust aims to be a deeply connected, collaborative, and supportive organisation that creates the conditions for all colleagues to influence the lives of children positively.

The Trust enjoys a strong and growing reputation. As one of the most mature Trusts in the sector, with a significant track record of school improvement, this is an excellent opportunity and time for a motivated and committed individual to join us. Over time, the Trust has achieved substantial progress, with all 30 schools now graded at least 'Good' by Ofsted—compared to just 50% when they first joined. This summer, all key performance indicators improved and are now above national averages.

This is an exciting time to join the Trust as we anticipate future growth. The strength of our schools, Professional Services, outcomes, and other key measures means that growth is both desirable and well-supported.

The financial health of the Trust has significantly improved and is now strong. This provides a solid foundation for future investment and innovation.

The Trust comprises schools across Wiltshire, Swindon, Berkshire, and Oxfordshire, including primary, secondary, and special schools, educating around 11,000 pupils and supported by approximately 1,500 colleagues. The Trust has grown and matured over time and will celebrate its 15th anniversary as an organisation in 2027.

Our mission is:

“Inspiring every child to flourish through an inclusive, all-through education that nurtures opportunity, equity, and agency for life.”

To achieve this mission, we are guided by five core values:

- **Inclusivity:** A connected organisation with a strong culture and sense of belonging.
- **Kindness:** A culture of kindness for all colleagues and children.
- **Integrity:** A moral organisation—open, honest, consistent, and fair.
- **Equity:** Providing children and colleagues with what they specifically need to succeed.
- **Resilience:** Investing in our collective strength and mutual support to tackle challenges.

We strive to be a human organisation where colleagues support and work with one another to achieve our mission and inspire the lives of all children—and colleagues—with greater opportunity and choice. Our strong Professional Services function provides a platform for schools to deliver the highest possible standards for all pupils. The Trust aims to be well-organised, collaborative, and clear in its purpose, enabling colleagues to feel part of a team, develop a sense of belonging, and bring their best selves to work.

We look forward to welcoming you to the team as our Director of School Improvement. It is an exciting time to work within the Trust and contribute to our ambitious plans for the future. Please do reach out for a conversation—it would be great to connect and explore whether this opportunity is the right one for you.

Best wishes,

Dr Dan Nicholls | CEO

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Job Description

Employment Details:

Job Title: Director of School Improvement (Primary)

Reports to: Director of Education

Salary Band: L22-L26

Safeguarding Commitment:

The White Horse Federation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We therefore expect all staff and volunteers to work to and within school policies and procedures, including safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

This post is subject to satisfactory references which will be requested prior to interview, an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, medical clearance, evidence of qualifications and verification of the right to work in the UK.

Purpose of the Role

The Director of School Improvement (Primary) will provide strategic leadership, professional challenge and high impact support to primary schools across The White Horse Federation, ensuring that every school delivers a high-quality, ambitious and inclusive education. The postholder will be responsible for evaluating school effectiveness, driving improvement in teaching, curriculum and leadership, and securing sustained improvement in outcomes, particularly in schools requiring targeted or accelerated support. This role is both strategic and operational, working directly with headteachers and leadership teams, leading reviews and quality assurance activities, and ensuring that improvement activity is coherent, well-sequenced and demonstrably impactful.

Key Responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership of School Improvement

- Support the implementation of the Federation's primary school improvement strategy, ensuring consistency, clarity and impact across all schools.
- Translate Trust priorities into clear improvement expectations for schools, aligned to the Federation's improvement model and values.
- Keep abreast of national policy, Ofsted expectations and best practice to ensure The White Horse Federation remains outward-facing and ambitious.

Quality Assurance, Review and Evaluation

- Lead and participate in rigorous school reviews and evaluation activity, with a strong focus on:
 - Quality of education
 - Leadership and management
 - Behaviour, attitudes and inclusion
 - Outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils
 - Early Years
- Evaluate the impact of school improvement actions using qualitative and quantitative evidence, including performance data, work scrutiny, lesson observation and pupil voice.
- Provide clear written and verbal feedback to schools, including precise areas for development and measurable next steps.

School Support, Challenge and Intervention

- Work directly with primary headteachers and senior leaders to secure improvement, offering robust challenge alongside professional support.
- Support schools through periods of:
 - Ofsted inspection and post-inspection improvement
 - Leadership change or instability
 - Declining performance or increased risk
- Identify underperformance early and ensure proportionate, timely intervention is in place.
- Broker appropriate support, drawing on internal system leadership capacity and external expertise when required.

Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

- Secure consistent improvement in:
 - Curriculum design and refinement
 - Teaching and assessment practice
 - Early reading and writing
 - SEND and inclusive practice
- Promote evidence-informed approaches to teaching and learning across the primary phase.
- Support schools to evaluate and refine their curriculum offer so that it is ambitious, coherent and well sequenced.

Leadership Development and Capacity Building

- Contribute to the identification, development and succession planning of primary leaders across the federation.
- Support the induction and professional development of new and aspiring headteachers.
- Foster a strong culture of collaboration, peer review and shared practice across primary schools.
- Model and promote effective leadership behaviours aligned with TWHF values.

Inspection Readiness and Accountability

- Support schools to maintain high levels of inspection readiness, ensuring leaders are confident in articulating impact.
- Provide assurance to the Director of Education, Executive Team and Trustees on the effectiveness of schools and improvement work.
- Contribute to trust-level reporting, risk assessment and accountability processes.
- Work closely with professional services to ensure statutory compliance and high standards.

Safeguarding Responsibilities:

- Ensure that financial policies and procedures support the Trust's safeguarding culture, including safe recruitment practices and secure handling of sensitive data.
- Promote a culture of vigilance and accountability across all financial operations.

Additional Duties and Responsibilities

The principal responsibilities and tasks as set out above are not intended to be exhaustive. The need for flexibility, accountability and team working is required. The post holder is expected to carry out any other related duties that are within the employee's skills and abilities, commensurate with the post's grade and whenever reasonably instructed.

The post holder will respect the need for confidentiality at all times while performing this role.

The post holder must at all times carry out their responsibilities with due regard to Trust policy and arrangements for Health and Safety at Work.

All staff within The White Horse Federation will be expected to accept reasonable flexibility in working arrangements and the allocation of duties to reflect the changing roles and responsibilities.

Safe Working Practices with Children

It is the responsibility of each employee to carry out their duties in line with The White Horse Federation's ethos and culture of safe working practices for adults working with children and be sensitive and caring to the needs of the disadvantaged, promoting a positive approach to a harmonious working environment. Each employee should act as an exemplar on these issues and must, where appropriate, identify and monitor training for themselves and any employees they are responsible for.

General Data Protection Regulations

The post holder is required to comply with GDPR regulations and to maintain awareness of Trust policies and procedures in this area. Attention is specifically drawn to the need for confidentiality in handling personal data and the implications of unauthorised disclosure.

Equality and Diversity

There is a requirement for the post holder to promote the equality and diversity agenda within their own role and areas of responsibility and across the department. In fulfilling the requirements set out in this job description, the post holder will apply The White Horse Federation's commitment to equality by treating all employees fairly and without discrimination.

This job description sets out the duties of the post at the time when it was drawn up. Such duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and cannot in themselves justify a reconsideration of the grading of the post. The job description will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it relates to the role being performed and to incorporate reasonable changes that have occurred over time or are being processed. Any review will be carried out in consultation with the post holder before any changes are implemented.

Person Specification

Qualifications and Training

Essential	Desirable
	NPQH, NPQEL or equivalent leadership qualification.

Skills and Experience

Essential	Desirable
• Significant and successful leadership experience in primary education, including headship, executive leadership or trust-level improvement work. • Proven track record of leading or securing school improvement, including in schools facing challenge. • Ability to analyse school performance data and use evidence to drive improvement. • Credibility, confidence and interpersonal skill to provide challenge to senior leaders. • Excellent written and verbal communication skills.	• Experience of working within a multi-academy trust or system-leadership context. • Experience of leading or supporting schools in Ofsted categories. • Experience of designing or implementing trust-wide improvement frameworks

Specialist Knowledge

Essential	Desirable
• Strong, current understanding of the Ofsted inspection framework and effective school self-evaluation. • Deep knowledge of curriculum quality, teaching and learning, and inclusive practice.	

Personal Traits

The successful candidate will:

- Appreciate the differences between people regardless of ability or background and treat peoples' values, beliefs, cultures and lifestyles with respect and dignity at all times.
- Understand the boundaries of appropriate behaviour when working with children and young people and always act in a way that respects these boundaries.
- Understand the principles of confidentiality and adhere to them in respect to the information available within the workplace.
- Have values that align with the ethos and culture of The White Horse Federation.

