



EMMANUEL SCHOOLS
FOUNDATION

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

VALUED, CHALLENGED, INSPIRED



WELCOME

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in the post of Chief Operating Officer with Emmanuel Schools Foundation (ESF) which marks a significant step-change in the evolution of our Trust. We provide Christian-Ethos Schools of Character for the whole community, serving disadvantaged communities in the Northeast and Yorkshire.

This is a significant opportunity for a talented leader to join us and help take ESF to the next level. Whilst we currently have the privilege of educating over eight thousand young people every day across our seven campuses, we seek to increase this to twelve to fifteen thousand children and young people in more primary and secondary schools.

Our Trust vision, mission, values and virtues are characterised by high expectations where each person is valued as being made in God's image. Our mission is rooted in the belief that every child is infinitely precious, gifted for a purpose, and morally responsible. ESF's Core Virtues (Love, Wisdom, Fairness, Self-Control, Integrity, Humility and Courage) are inspired by the ministry of Christ and characterise a life well-lived for people of all faiths and none. This belief underpins our approach to student development, student support and seeking inclusion and success for the most vulnerable.

As COO, you will serve as the Trust's lead operational professional; collaborating closely with the CEO and line managing senior leaders; you will combine your operational leadership with expertise to drive organisational transformation and ensure complete alignment between operations, strategy, and educational ambition. You will lead our business transformation programme, ensuring redesigned professional services and back-office functions support educational delivery. Your remit will span digital transformation and infrastructure, people and wellbeing, estates and facilities, and governance and finance. You will drive service modernisation, implement new operating models, and embed continuous improvement across our multi-site Trust.

We seek an experienced operational leader with proven expertise in complex transformation programmes, professional services management, and systems-level problem-solving. You will be a collaborative strategic thinker who balances operational efficiency with our educational mission.

If enabling schools to act as a catalyst for social change, improving outcomes for students and the wider community, resonates with you; if you have empathy for our Christian ethos and you believe you can apply your passion for excellence at Emmanuel Schools Foundation, then please get in touch via email (mpike@esf-mail.org.uk) to arrange an informal conversation.



Dr Mark Pike MA, PGCE, MBA, PhD
Chief Executive Officer, Emmanuel Schools Foundation

Safeguarding

Emmanuel Schools Foundation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All appointments are subject to enhanced DBS checks and satisfactory references. This post is also subject to Section 128 and qualifications checks.



“

ALL PEOPLE ARE INFINITELY
PRECIOUS, MORALLY
RESPONSIBLE AND GIFTED
FOR A PURPOSE”

MISSION

CHARACTER EDUCATION

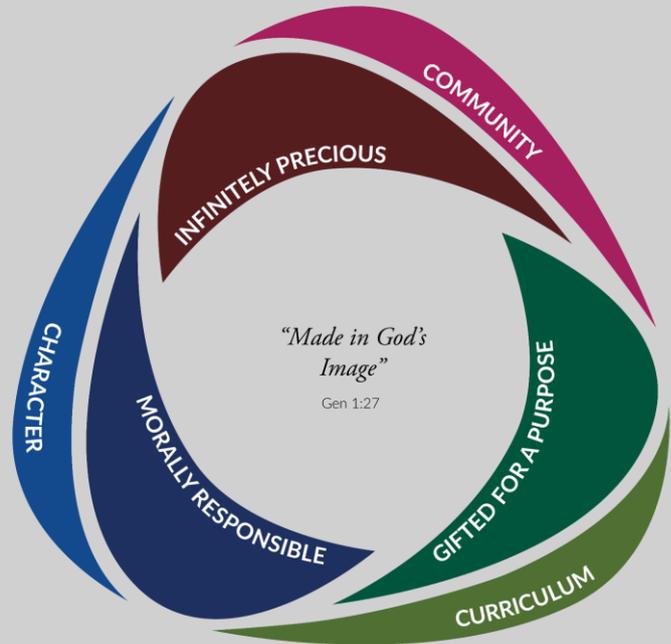
We build good character. We learn about good character, why it matters and how to develop it.

CURRICULUM EXCELLENCE

We are determined to achieve a personal best. We provide a broad ambitious curriculum that ensures excellent student learning, progress and future destinations.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We serve with gratitude. We use our gifts to benefit the community and the environment.



Emmanuel Schools Foundation (ESF) has been involved in education since 1989 and in that time has established a significant track record of substantial educational improvement in Northern England. Our MAT has the privilege of educating over eight thousand students aged four to nineteen from the Northeast to Yorkshire – from Northumberland, Gateshead, Sunderland and Middlesbrough to Doncaster.

Our schools provide exceptional opportunities for all young people, raising their aspirations, encouraging their talents, supporting their ambitions and developing their confidence. ESF believes this is the dream of every parent, the desire of every community and the right of all young people, regardless of their ability or background.

Attainment has been raised in a variety of challenging circumstances through different State-funded school models. Highly regarded by parents and significantly oversubscribed, our non-selective schools have proved to be catalysts for positive change within their local communities. We inspire our students to succeed at school and in life by providing Christian-ethos schools of character for the whole community. Our students practise a range of core virtues (love, wisdom, fairness, self-control, courage, humility and integrity) which enable them to flourish and achieve excellence.

VIRTUES

All of our work will be characterised by the following Core Virtues:



LOVE

We act selflessly, with kindness and compassion, for the good of others.



WISDOM

We exercise good judgement; seeing and doing what is true and good.



FAIRNESS

We treat everyone fairly and justly, the way we would like to be treated ourselves.



SELF-CONTROL

We control our desires, not letting our desires control us.



COURAGE

We are determined to achieve what is worthwhile even in the face of difficulty.



HUMILITY

We avoid arrogance, being realistic about our strengths and weaknesses.



INTEGRITY

We are honest with ourselves and others, so that our words and actions agree.



“

**SUPPORTING STUDENTS
AND STAFF TO BECOME
THE PERSON THEY HAVE
THE POTENTIAL TO BE”**

OVERVIEW

Core Purpose

Our appointment of Chief Operating Officer represents a significant, strategic investment in the ongoing evolution of Emmanuel Schools Foundation's (ESF) central function.

A key executive leader, responsible for ensuring that the Trust's operational domains—People, Estates, Digital, Corporate Services, and Commercial—are designed, equipped, and ready to deliver ESF's educational priorities and growth ambitions of scaling up to 7 to 15 schools.

This role is about engineering the conditions for excellence, building a scalable operating model, and ensuring every aspect of ESF's infrastructure, systems, and services strengthens teaching, learning, inclusion, and impact.

The COO will be a key architect of efficient and naturally collaborative operations and ensuring that all flourish within their team and across the Trust and will be aligned with the inclusive Christian ethos of the Trust.

Contract:	Permanent (subject to satisfactory completion of a probationary period)
Hours of work:	Full Time. Whole Year. Owing to the nature of the role, and from time to time, the post holder may be required to attend evening and weekend meetings and undertake other out-of-hours work. Reasonable notice will be given, and the post holder is expected to be flexible wherever possible.
Compensation:	Competitive salary, negotiable depending on skills and experience. Likely to be in the range £100,000 to £135,000. Access to Local Government Pension Scheme. Private Health Care scheme. Generous annual leave allowance
Location:	Hybrid, with a base location at one of our schools and within the Trust geography (Northeast England and Yorkshire). This role will require regular (usually weekly) travel to, and between, ESF schools, partner organisations and other locations.
Start Date:	ASAP

THE JOB

You will lead transformation of Trust's operational architecture, across multiple disciplines to facilitate an agile organization; working closely with executive stakeholders, their direct reports and Trustees to ensure that operational systems and resources (people, data, estates, and digital tools) are aligned to our mission and deliver maximum value for learners, staff, and communities.

1. Strategic Operational Leadership

- Lead and execute a Trust-wide operational strategy aligned to educational priorities
- Translate vision into measurable objectives and aligned operational delivery
- Shape a long-term scalable operating model
- Provide expert, data-driven, evidence-informed advice to CEO and Trustees
- Deputise for the CEO when required, including external representation

2. Financial Stewardship

- Support the CFO in ensuring strong internal controls, audit and risk frameworks enabling the prompt resolution of audit actions
- Deliver value for money and long-term financial resilience within the operational context
- Support Trustees and Audit & Risk Committee with high-quality reporting
- Working with the CFO, support the CEO in their oversight of financial planning, forecasting and sustainability compliance with DfE requirements and the Academy Trust Handbook

3. Building an Operating Model for Scale

- Embed service standards and performance frameworks across operational domains
- Enable delivery of data dashboards and real-time performance insight and decision making
- Drive digital-first, automated and collaborative systems
- Enable the development of systems that eliminate duplication and improve cost-to-serve
- Align central and site-based operational functions

4. People, Culture & Workforce

- Enable delivery of the Trust's People Strategy
- Create an environment where leadership capability and succession pipelines are facilitated and enabled
- Strengthen workforce planning and staff wellbeing through the leadership of their team
- Embed a high-performance, high-trust culture

5. Digital, Data & Technology

- Enable digital transformation of the Trust and across all areas, including AI deployment, to meet organisational priorities and aligned with national strategy.
- Drive a strategy where cloud-first and automated systems are effective and seen as routine solutions
- Lead and embed a culture that develops a cyber-threat awareness and strengthens resilience
- Ensure appropriate digital tools are selected, procured, implemented and evaluated so that teaching, leadership and governance are facilitated and improved

6. Estates, Infrastructure & Capital

- Lead long-term estates and capital strategy
- Ensure compliance, maintenance, sustainability and innovation
- Lead the delivery of capital projects on time and on budget
- Secure external funding (including, but not limited to, SCA.)
- Ensure full statutory compliance across all sites

7. Corporate Services & Governance

- Ensure high-quality central administrative and analytics services
- Provide Trustees with assurance, transparency and oversight
- Maintain effective systems to record and document governance decision making and responsibilities
- Ensure compliance with charity law, company law and data protection

8. Growth, Integration & Change

- Lead due diligence for prospective schools
- Lead the development of integration success measures on adoption of new schools, supporting their assimilation through effective deployment of operational resources
- Deliver transformational change programmes
- Ensure infrastructure can support a growth trajectory

THE PERSON

Essential attributes:

- Evidence of continuous professional development in leadership and operational management, with a track record of professional development in complex organisational environments
- Significant senior executive leadership experience within a complex, multi-site organisation of comparable scale and budget
- Successful leadership of diverse multi-disciplinary professional service functions (e.g. IT, Governance, HR, Compliance, Finance)
- Successful experience of leading organisational transformation and change-management programmes;
- Managing complex projects, contract monitoring, and organizational risk management expertise
- Comprehensive understanding of regulatory requirements, Health & Safety, and compliance
- Understanding of educational environments and commitment to safeguarding
- Proven track record of leading organisational growth, transformation and service improvement to support front-line delivery
- Exceptional data- and evidence-informed strategic thinking and systems-level problem-solving ability
- Strong analytical ability, able to interpret and synthesise complex data from a range of sources using technology. Strong financial acumen.
- Strong influencing and stakeholder (internal and external) management skills with the confidence and credibility to provide constructive challenge at Board level
- Proven ability to build, lead and develop high-performing central teams with a strong service ethos.
- Proven ability to design and build scalable systems and processes that support growth and continuous improvement.
- Knowledge of procurement, contract management, governance and cybersecurity frameworks
- Clearly articulates vision and develops and maintains mutually respectful and supportive relationships with colleagues at all levels that enables continuous improvement as “organisational habit”
- Able to establish & sustain partnerships to bring new opportunities for revenue & growth aligned to the strategic direction of the Trust
- Unwavering commitment to our Trust values; aligned to our vision and mission and supportive of our Christian ethos.
- Demonstrate a passion for education and its ability to transform the lives of students and their communities
- Values-led and collaborative leadership style that builds trust and organisational capability
- Emotionally intelligent, with the credibility to work alongside educational leaders
- Resilient, adaptable with a growth mindset and able to operate effectively within a complex, highly regulated environment
- Unquestionable integrity and commitment to the stewardship of public funds.

Desirable attributes include:

- Master’s Degree, MBA or equivalent in Business Administration, Operations or Strategic Management) or equivalent professional experience
- Professional membership of relevant bodies (E.g. CMI, CIPD, ICSA, CIMA)
- Senior leadership experience within schools and/or a Multi Academy Trust Central Team
- Knowledge of educational and public finance regulatory frameworks relevant to academy trusts
- Experience delivering transformation initiatives at a national scale
- Deep understanding of educational operations and shared services models
- Experience with digital transformation, systems integration, and service modernization at scale





APPLICATION DETAILS

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Reporting to: Chief Executive Officer

Member of: Emmanuel Schools Foundation Trust Executive Leadership Group

Salary: Competitive, DOSE in the range £100,000 to £135,000.

We welcome applicants from a broad range of contexts and backgrounds who are supportive of the Christian ethos of Emmanuel Schools Foundation.

Closing date: NOON FRIDAY 10th APRIL 2026 .

Interviews : W/C 20 April 2026

How to apply:

For further information, please visit www.esf-web.org.uk. A CV may be submitted to supplement your application but will not be accepted instead of a completed on-line application. If you have any questions based on any aspect of the appointment process or require any additional information, please contact Director of Human Resources, Heather Robinson at hrobinson@esf-mail.org.uk

APPLY ONLINE HERE

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff to share this commitment. This post will involve daily contact with children and is subject to an enhanced DBS check. In addition, as part of the shortlisting process, and in accordance with statutory guidance, we may carry out an online search (for publicly available material) to help identify any incidents or issues that have happened which we may want to explore with shortlisted applicants at interview.

Please note that this detail is indicative and can be amended, updated or replaced as felt appropriate at any time and in order to remain in line with any future legal requirements or expectation.

