

Chief Executive Officer

Forward Education Trust, Central Office,
c/o Leycroft Academy, Leycroft Avenue, Birmingham, B33 9UH

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Chief Executive Officer
Salary	Salary range – competitive and negotiable
Contract Type	Permanent – 36.5 hours per week – Full Time, full year Due to the seniority of this post, there is a requirement for flexibility in approach to hours worked and to out-of-hours events/meetings to meet the full responsibilities of the post.

PURPOSE:

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for the overall leadership, strategic direction, and performance of the Trust, ensuring the delivery of high-quality education for all pupils. They lead the Executive Team of the Trust, ensuring the Trust and all its schools are successful over time in a sustainable way.

The CEO is the Trust's Accounting Officer, responsible for ensuring the Trust meets its statutory and legal requirements and is accountable to the Board of Trustees for educational outcomes, financial performance, governance, and organisational effectiveness. As a system leader, the CEO represents the Trust with a wide range of stakeholders and partners and enables the Trust to fulfil its civic responsibilities.

Success in the role will be defined by improved outcomes for pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged, strong organisational sustainability, and growing system impact.

REPORT TO: Chair of the Trust Board

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Note: Whilst the CEO will hold all these core responsibilities and be accountable for ensuring that they are met, it is recognised that they will meet some through the successful leadership and management of teams and individuals within the Trust. It is therefore not expected that the core responsibilities will be enacted operationally, in all cases, by the CEO.

Strategic Leadership and Organisational Development

Lead the Trust through periods of risk, challenge or crisis with calm, visible and ethical leadership, ensuring continuity, safety and confidence for pupils, families, staff and other stakeholders.

Strategy

- The Trust has a compelling mission, vision, and value and a clear, evidence-informed strategy. The role of the Chief Executive Officer is to provide leadership that enables the Trust to achieve its strategic goals and secure its future sustainability.
- Translate the Trust strategy into measurable outcomes and aligned operational and financial plans.
- Lead long-term planning (3–5 years), including growth, sustainability, and system impact.
- Develop and deliver a clearly articulated growth strategy, including pipeline development, due diligence, and successful integration of new schools. Ensure growth is values-aligned, geographically coherent and sustainable thoughtfully considering opportunities for new partnerships and school sponsorships that strengthen inclusive education.

Organisation

- Evolve an effective Trust operating model that supports scalability and ongoing impact. Define and continuously refine the Trust’s operating model, ensuring clarity between central capacity and school autonomy.
- Ensure clarity of roles, accountability, and decision-making through a robust scheme of delegation.
- Sustain a strong organisational culture across the Trust and its schools, aligned with Trust values.
- Promote innovation and forward-looking practice, ensuring the Trust remains responsive to developments in pedagogy, technology and the wider education landscape.
- Develop and maintain an organisational culture of candour and accountability ensuring complaints are managed effectively and efficiently.

Senior Leadership Team

- Lead and develop a high-performing executive team.
- Establish clear expectations, roles, and performance management systems and act when these standards are not met.
- Foster a culture of collaboration, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Board

- Build and maintain a strong, effective relationship with the Board of Trustees and Chair, recognising their key role in holding the CEO and Executive team to account.
- Ensure Trustees receive accurate, timely, and strategic information in the level of detail needed to make informed decisions and fulfil their functions and legal obligations.
- Support governance structures, committees, and compliance with statutory responsibilities.

External Stakeholders

- Represent the Trust externally with credibility and influence.
- Build strategic partnerships with schools, local authorities, and wider system partners.
- Engage effectively with parents, communities, and civic stakeholders.
- Act as a civic leader, contributing to place-based solutions for improving outcomes and reducing disadvantage.
- Ensure positive communications that promote the Trust and its work and present the Trust effectively when dealing with the media.

Personal Working Norms

- Model ethical, principled leadership, always upholding and demonstrating The Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles) and the Trust's values and behaviours.
- Maintain personal resilience, wellbeing, and professional development.
- Demonstrate reflective practice and openness to feedback and challenge.

Quality of Education

Teaching, Curriculum and Assessment

- Ensure the Trust has high quality, expert teaching in all the Trust's schools, built on an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how pupils learn.
- Enable the Trust to establish and sustain a broad, rich and coherent curriculum entitlement for all pupils, supported by effective curricular leadership and delivered through high-quality teaching in all its schools.
- Promote effective, proportionate use of assessment to drive improvement.
- Enable the Trust and its schools to engage with appropriate evidence-based strategies for improvement and ensure their effective implementation

Behaviour and Inclusion

- Establish a culture of high expectations for behaviour and attendance.

- Ensure safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments.

Education for All

- Ensure inclusive education that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND.
- Promote equity and improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Quality Assurance

- Implement rigorous systems for monitoring educational quality.
- Use data confidently to inform decision-making and drive improvement.
- Benchmark performance and ensure continuous improvement across the Trust.
- Hold ultimate accountability for inspection outcomes, including Ofsted, across the Trust and ensure robust preparation, improvement and follow-up in response to inspection findings.
- Establish and oversee a structured Trust-wide performance framework, including regular school reviews, data dashboards, and clear intervention thresholds.

Strategic Governance

- Understand and develop the role of effective Trust governance, upholding the obligation to give account and recognising that Trust Boards are ultimately responsible and accountable for the Trust's work
- Operate within a strong governance framework recognising the distinct roles of Members, Trustees, and executive leaders.
- Understand the role of relevant regulatory bodies and ensure the Trust and its schools meet/respond to their requirements.
- Support Trustees in fulfilling their duties through high-quality reporting and advice.
- Promote a culture of transparency, accountability and ethical governance that is recognised and accepted as an essential element of improvement at all levels and across all aspects of the Trust's work

Finance and Operations

Finance

- Act as Accounting Officer with responsibility for public funds, in accordance with the Academy Trust Handbook.
- Prioritise and allocate financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness, fairness/equity and probity in the use of public funds
- Ensure financial sustainability, value for money, and compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook.

- Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Trust and its schools through effective financial and estates management
- Lead integrated curriculum and financial planning.

Operations

- Ensure effective risk management, including safeguarding and health & safety.
- Oversee estates, IT, HR, and operational systems. Ensure that the Trust meets and exceeds requirements around DfE Estates Management Standards and Digital & Technology Standards.
- Ensure efficient and effective central services that support schools.

Workforce and Talent Development

- Develop and implement a Trust-wide people and talent management/succession planning strategy, ensuring that this positively supports the Trust's core objectives over time.
- Ensure recruitment, retention, and development of high-quality staff.
- Ensure the Trust has high quality employment practices that promote equality, diversity and inclusion, including ethical practices of recruitment and retention of staff
- Promote a strong professional culture with high expectations and support.
- Invest in high quality evidence-informed professional development for all staff, aligned to balance organisational and individual needs.
- Ensure staff wellbeing, workload management, and engagement.
- Ensure compliance with statutory and legal obligations.

Public Benefit and Civic Duty

- Promote and enable ways in which the Trust's schools and their local boards engage meaningfully with their communities and are responsive and accountable to them
- Ensure the Trust fulfils its charitable purpose and public benefit obligations.
- Promote equality, diversity, and inclusion across the organisation.
- Engage with and contribute to the wider education system.
- Build meaningful partnerships that widen opportunities for pupils and strengthen community ties
- Exert external influence on behalf of the Trust by active engagement with sector organisations, regulators, policy makers, local and national government, industry and other partners
- Build strong civic partnerships and act as a system leader.
- Demonstrate and give public assurance of high standards of probity.

Safeguarding and Compliance

- Promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.
- Ensure a deep commitment to safeguarding across the trust and its schools, through effective leadership, robust safeguarding systems, policies, and training across the Trust.
- Comply with all relevant legislation and Trust policies.

Other Responsibilities

- Demonstrate commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- Carry out your duties with full regard to the Trust's published employment policies.
- Comply with health and safety policies, organisational statements, and procedures, undertake to report any incidents/accidents/hazards and to take a proactive approach to health and safety matters in order to protect both yourself and others.
- Any other duties as commensurate with the post.

Safeguarding and safer recruitment

Forward Education Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We expect all staff, volunteers and trustees to share this commitment. Our recruitment process follows the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.

Offers of employment may be subject to the following checks (where relevant): Childcare disqualification; Enhanced DBS check, pre-employment medical questionnaire confirming suitability for the role, online and social media checks, prohibition from teaching (if relevant), right to work, professional and personal satisfactory references and confirmation of suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

You must tell us about any unspent conviction, cautions, reprimands or warnings under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975.

ANNUAL LEAVE

1. There is an expectation that up to 5 days annual leave may be needed to cover the Christmas closure period.
2. Annual leave entitlement is in line with those who work to all-year staff contracts and is 26 days annually, plus 8 statutory bank holidays. The holiday year for this role commences on 1st September annually.
3. Holidays may be taken in term-time up to a maximum of 5 days annually.

PENSION SCHEME

The Trust will ensure that the postholder can participate in a recognised pension scheme, either the Teacher Pension scheme or Local Government Pension Scheme.

REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

This job description is normally subject to annual review. It may be amended at the request of the Chair of the Trust Board or the post holder but only after full consultation with the post holder.

This job description is current at the date shown. It will be reviewed at least annually and, in consultation with you, it may be changed to reflect or anticipate changes in the job commensurate with the grade and job title.

The role has recently been independently evaluated in respect of responsibilities and pay range.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE - Chief Executive Officer

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Education, qualification and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree or equivalent professional qualification • Evidence of sustained professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified Teacher Status or equivalent educational leadership experience • National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL) or equivalent • Postgraduate qualification in education or leadership
Experience, professional skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant senior leadership experience, possibly in education, but open to exceptional leaders from other sectors who have led organisations of similar scale and complexity. • Experience of leading organisational change and strategy with understanding of contemporary challenges in education. • Strong demonstrable understanding of governance, accountability, and regulatory frameworks • Financial acumen and experience of budget oversight • Experience of collaborative leadership and working effectively with Boards and governance structures. • Understanding of the legal and regulatory framework within which schools work (or ability to develop this rapidly if from outside education). • Strong strategic thinking skills with the ability to bring fresh perspective and challenge the status quo constructively • Ability to lead change with care, demonstrating empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of leading within a Multi-Academy Trust • Experience as Accounting Officer or working closely with boards • Experience of system leadership or partnership working • Proven track record of improving educational outcomes at scale

	<p>and understanding of impact on people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong analytical skills and the ability to use data and insight to drive improvement • Excellent organisational skills and ability to manage competing priorities across multiple schools. 	
<p>Personal qualities and attributes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong moral purpose and commitment to improving life chances • Strategic thinking combined with operational excellence and attention to detail with the ability to translate vision into action • Highly effective communicator and influencer • Resilient, adaptable, and reflective leader • High levels of integrity and professional credibility • Collaborative and inclusive leadership style that values partnership and collective success • Willingness to travel regularly across all school sites • Ability to bring fresh eyes and new thinking whilst respecting established values and culture. • Open to constructive disruption and innovation where it delivers improved results. • Current and tuned into societal changes affecting education, particularly in relation to workforce challenges. • Emotionally intelligent, caring and able to lead change thoughtfully. • Genuine passion for improving outcomes for all children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political awareness and ability to operate in complex environments • Commitment to innovation and continuous improvement