



HEAD OF STRATEGIC DELIVERY CANDIDATE PACK



FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Thank you for your interest in working with us at River Learning Trust. You will see from our website that we are a flourishing Multi-Academy Trust and we are continuing to grow as like-minded schools choose to join us.

This is a new role within the Central Team and a significant development in our ability to drive forward our strategic priorities across the Trust. The postholder will work directly with our Chief Operating Officer (COO) and closely with the Chief Executive (CE), providing support to develop and deliver our strategy and will be instrumental in running our strategic planning process and reporting to the Board. They will also take ownership from initiation to delivery of projects to deliver key strategic priorities; these will be agreed with the appointed candidate and may involve projects relating to organisational culture, Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy, knowledge management, or workload reduction.

We ask a lot of the people that work with us, and we think we offer a lot in return. Most importantly we have a real commitment to training and professional development for everyone that works with us. It's busy, it's stretching, and it's incredibly rewarding. The role is flexible, with options for working between 0.8FTE and 1.0FTE (other options will be considered for the right candidate) on either a term-time only or year round basis. Hybrid working is available with a minimum of 1 day a week in the office. If you are passionate about working in a system committed to improving the life chances of children and young people, and would relish the opportunity to work in a role bridging the gap between high level strategy and on the ground execution, this post is for you. We would love to hear from you. If you have any questions, please email Caroline Pusey, COO, to arrange a call: coo@riverlearningtrust.org.

Thank you again for your interest and we look forward to hearing from you.

Paul James, Chief Executive

HEAD OF STRATEGIC DELIVERY

GRADE 15

Are you motivated by improving the life chances of children and young people? Would you relish a role bridging the gap between high level strategy and on the ground execution? Turning strategy into action by initiating and leading projects to change outcomes on the ground in our schools and settings. Can you balance strategic thinking with operational rigour and the gravitas to deal with the Board with the humility to dig into data and the administrative details of project planning. If so this is the role for you!

ABOUT THIS ROLE

This is a critical role at the heart of the River Learning Trust Central Team, working directly with the COO and in support of the CE. The Strategic Project Lead will play a key role in supporting the development and delivery of the RLT strategy, running the Strategic Planning process, supporting the CE and COO with Board reporting and developing and delivering projects in line with the Trust's strategic objectives.

WHAT SKILLS / EXPERIENCE ARE REQUIRED

Educated to degree level or with equivalent professional experience, you will be a highly organised individual with excellent strategic thinking, analytical, planning, delivery, stakeholder engagement and written and verbal communication skills. You will be determined and resilient, a self-starter who can navigate ambiguity. You will be experienced in project and change management and comfortable working in a complex, multi-stakeholder environment. While understanding and experience of the education sector and Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) context would be helpful it is not essential.

WHAT WE CAN OFFER

The River Learning Trust is a special place to work. Driven by our core values of Everyone Learning, Respectful Relationships and Commitment to Excellence we put people at the forefront of work: the children in our schools and the colleagues in schools and settings and in our Central Team. In line with our values we offer a commitment to professional development and growth, to well-being and to community and connection.



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title: Head of Strategic Delivery

Grade of post: Grade 15 - *A recruitment and retention payment may be available for an exceptional candidate*

Working hours: 30-37 hours per week - Term-time only, term time plus or all year round

Contract terms: 1- year fixed term contract - *possible scope for extension depending on organisational requirements*

Location: Hybrid working - Minimum 1 day in the central team offices located at Rose Hill Primary School, remote and schools visits as required

Line manager: Chief Operating Officer

Disclosure level: Enhanced DBS

JOB PURPOSE

This is a critical role at the heart of the River Learning Trust Central Team, working directly for the COO and supporting the CE. The Head of Strategic Delivery will play a key role in supporting the development and delivery of the RLT strategy, running the Strategic Planning process, supporting the CE and COO with Board reporting and developing and delivering projects in line with the Trust's strategic objectives. This includes attendance at Board meetings where required; and providing updates on progress against strategic objectives. This role requires a highly organised individual with excellent strategic thinking, analytical, planning, delivery, stakeholder engagement and written and verbal communication skills.

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

1.STRATEGIC PLANNING AND BOARD REPORTING

- Run the Trust level Strategic Planning Process, ensuring projects remain on track, interdependencies are managed and Board reporting supports Trustees to appropriately hold the Executive to account.
- Support CE and COO in preparation of Board reports and presentations/papers for other key stakeholders.
- Attendance at Board and Committee meetings on an ad hoc basis to provide updates is also required.
- Support Transformation Director in management of strategic change.

2.PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

- Working with the COO and other central senior leaders as applicable, take ownership of specific strategic projects from initiation to closure.
- Plan and deliver projects as identified through the Strategic Planning Process.
- Conduct initial research, analysis and stakeholder engagement to identify approaches to capitalise on strategic opportunities and mitigate threats.
- In consultation with key stakeholders, develop and test proposals including through user centred design techniques.
- Develop evidence-based recommendations.

3.PROJECT DELIVERY

- Plan the necessary changes developing clear implementation plans, timelines, and budgets.
- Allocate actions, monitor project progress and report on key milestones.
- Lead the delivery and own the necessary actions of agreed projects.
- Identify and manage project risks and issues.
- Support the initial implementation of approved recommendations, working closely with relevant teams.
- Establish mechanisms for evaluating the impact of changes.
- Monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress and identify areas for further improvement.
- Communicate project status and updates to senior leadership and stakeholders.

4. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Facilitate workshops, interviews, and focus groups with a diverse range of stakeholders (e.g. headteachers, teachers, governors, central staff) to gather feedback and insights.
- Collaborate with headteachers and central teams to understand their perspectives and needs.
- Build consensus and support for proposed changes.

5. OTHER DUTIES

- Given the role's position as critical support to the CE and COO they may be asked to support on other aspects of CE/COO responsibilities as required by the strategic priorities of the Trust. This is particularly the case in the first 6 months when one of the job-sharing COOs will be on sabbatical, meaning more support will be required to enable the other to continue to deliver on all their full range of responsibilities.

TRUST WIDE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

- Contribute to the overall ethos/work/aims of the River Learning Trust;
- Appreciate and support the role of other professionals;
- Attend and participate in relevant meetings as required;
- Participate in training and other learning activities and performance development as required;
- Follow the Trust's Health and Safety rules and procedures and adhere to safeguarding principles.
- Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task undertaken may not be identified.
- Employees will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from a manager to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in this job description.

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

The River Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and preventing extremism; all staff must ensure that the highest priority is given to following the guidance and regulations to safeguard children and young people. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and obtain any other statutorily required clearance. Employment will also be conditional on the receipt of at least two acceptable references (one from current/latest employer) and evidence of the formal qualifications required for the role.

REQUIREMENTS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED
QUALIFICATIONS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educated to degree level, ideally in a relevant field, such as public policy, political science, or social sciences/humanities, or equivalent professional experience. Relevant project management qualification such as PRINCE2 or equivalent. 	X	X	Application Form
SKILLS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical thinking: The ability to interpret complex data (financial, educational, or operational) and distill it into clear insights. Planning: Highly organised with the ability to manage conflicting priorities and tight deadlines without losing attention to detail. Written and verbal communication: Exceptional written English skills; able to adopt a professional, "Board-ready" tone. Digital Fluency: Advanced proficiency in office suites, ideally Google Workspace. 	X X X X		Application form and interview

PERSON SPECIFICATION

REQUIRED SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, AND KNOWLEDGE

REQUIREMENTS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED
EXPERIENCE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working in a complex, multi-stakeholder organisation at a senior level (public or private sector) in a role requiring cross-departmental coordination. • Experience working within the education sector or a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). • Proven track record of drafting high-quality written reports, papers, or presentations for senior leadership or Board-level audiences. • Projects and change management experience • Excellent communication and interpersonal skills including the ability to build relationships with diverse stakeholders. • Experience of user design approach to project planning and delivery. 	<p>×</p> <p>×</p> <p>×</p> <p>×</p>	<p>×</p> <p>×</p>	Application form and interview
KNOWLEDGE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of education sector • Understanding of best practice in terms of organisational and change management 	<p>×</p>	<p>×</p>	Application form and interview

PERSON SPECIFICATION

REQUIRED SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, AND KNOWLEDGE

REQUIREMENTS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic mindset: Ability to understand the big picture while executing the details. • Determined: A positive, enthusiastic outlook. • Self-starter: Able to plot a route through ambiguity, taking the initiative with the drive and determination to see things through to the end. • Resilient: Ability to remain calm under pressure. • Conscientious with a strong eye for detail. • Relationship Builder: Good at building supportive, productive, professional and trusting relationships with colleagues at all levels. 	× × × × × ×		Application form and interview
SAFEGUARDING			
Understanding of current statutory processes, procedures and associated documentation		×	Application form and interview

PERSON SPECIFICATION

REQUIRED SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, AND KNOWLEDGE

REQUIREMENTS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED
TRAINING/PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable accredited CPD record in Project and Change Management. • Project Management qualification. • Demonstrable accredited CPD record in User Centred Design. • User Centred Design Qualification 		<p>×</p> <p>×</p> <p>×</p> <p>×</p>	Application Form
SAFEGUARDING			
<p>SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT FOR ALL EMPLOYEES</p> <p>The River Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and preventing extremism; all staff must ensure that the highest priority is given to following the guidance and regulations to safeguard children and young people. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and obtain any other statutorily required clearance. Employment will also be conditional on the receipt of at least two acceptable references (1 from current/latest employer) and evidence of the formal qualifications required for the role.</p>			

RIVER LEARNING TRUST

Education has the power to change lives, communities and society for the better. At RLT we believe that we can achieve more for our pupils, trainees, staff and communities by working together rather than alone. Schools in RLT are united by a common belief in the benefits of working together, and by our commitment to shared principles.

OUR VISION is for our schools and SCITT to improve rapidly, continuously and sustainably: to be better, faster together.

OUR 'WHY?' is that children and young people 'only get one go' in school and therefore as part of RLT we aim to ensure the best possible 'go' for our pupils.

OUR 'HOW?' is through the highest support and challenge for our schools and each other, underpinned by our principles.

Our employees benefit from a wide variety of support including extensive continuing professional learning and development opportunities, well-being and staff networks and access to Defined Benefit Pension Schemes (TPS and LGPS) for all staff. For more information on what it is like to work for the Trust, and the benefits you could access, please see our "[Working in RLT](#)" guide.

This role includes regulated activity relevant to children.

If you would like to have a confidential conversation with Caroline Pusey, about the role, prior to application, then please email coo@riverlearningtrust.org.

- Closing date - Monday 2nd February 2026
- Interview dates - Monday 9th February 2026

The River Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and preventing extremism. The Trust is required to conduct a variety of checks and online searches about you as part of their recruitment process in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance. It is an offence to apply for certain roles within schools if you are barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

For all RLT Safer Recruitment Documentation candidates should click on the following link [RLT Safer Recruitment Documents for Candidates](#). Please see our website for up to date policies including our Child Protection and Behaviour Policies.

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. For further guidance for applicants click on this link [List of offences that are not filtered](#).

THE TRUST'S SCHOOLS

We currently educate more than 16,500 pupils and have more than 2,000 colleagues in the Trust. Our school-centred initial teacher training provider (OTT SCITT) and Oxfordshire Teaching School Hub trains around 150 trainees in around 50 schools in Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Wiltshire.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Cheney School
Chipping Norton School
Gillotts School
Gosford Hill School
Kingsdown School
The Cherwell School
The Marlborough CofE School
The Oxford Academy
The Swan School
Wheatley Park School

Horspath CofE Primary School
Larkrise Primary School
Madley Brook Primary School
Middle Barton Primary School
New Marston Primary School
Rose Hill Primary School
Sandhills Primary School
Seven Fields Primary School
Tower Hill Primary School
Witney Community Primary School
Windrush CofE Primary School
Wolvercote Primary School

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Barton Park Primary School
Bayards Hill Primary School
Beckley CofE Primary School
Charlbury Primary School
Cutteslowe Primary School
Edith Moorhouse Primary School
Edward Feild Primary School
Garsington CofE Primary School

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION (AP)

Meadowbrook College

SCITT (TEACHER TRAINING)

OTT

TEACHING SCHOOL HUB

Oxfordshire Teaching School Hub



