

Chief Operating Officer Candidate Brochure



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Inspiring Futures
through Learning



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Chiltern Learning Trust

Our vision is to educate, empower, and inspire generations of children through a network of outstanding schools that are recognised at a local, regional, and national level as being the absolute benchmark in teaching and learning.

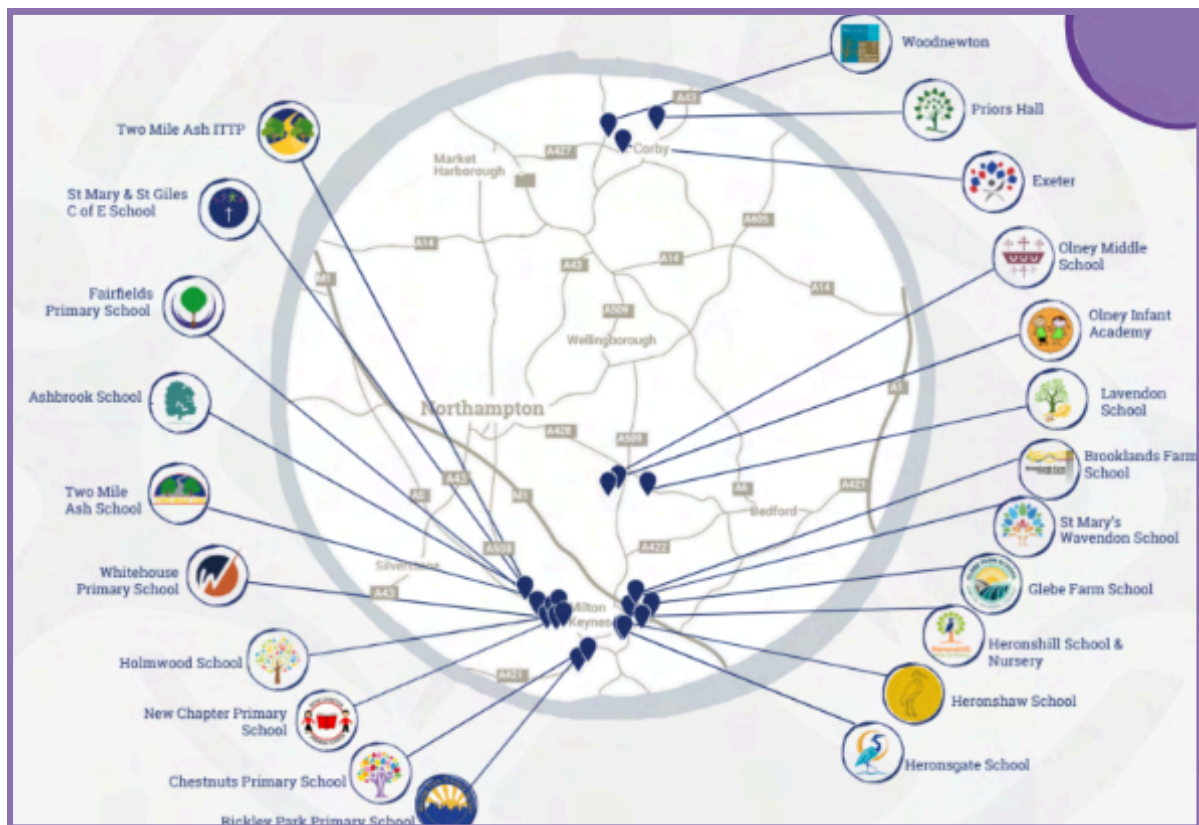


'Together Towards Excellence Ambition and Inspiration'

Inspiring Futures through Learning

At IFtL, we are committed to developing a family of schools who inspire all of our futures through learning.

Schools within our Trust share the same values and ethos; our teams are constantly in the pursuit of development and excellence everyday. We open doors to opportunity and unlock the potential of both our children and our adults so that we all develop the confidence to achieve both our independent and collective ambitions. At IFtL, we are never alone. We know we are stronger together – one united family striving for excellence for all, in everything we do.





Welcome Letter

Dear Applicant,

We are delighted that you are considering applying to the role of Chief Operations Officer.

Inspiring Futures through Learning (IFtL) and Chiltern Learning Trust (CLT) submitted a formal application to the Department for Education to merge (in May 2026). We are now seeking an inspirational and forward-thinking Chief Operating Officer to support the merger, and more importantly, to provide outstanding leadership of our Trust operations. We require a highly skilled and motivated leader to bring together best practices and establish excellent systems to run a combined trust of 42 schools.

We believe this will be a career defining role for the successful applicant. Currently, both trusts are held in high regard across the education sector. By bringing together two strong organisations, we aim to create a single trust that provides cutting-edge, high-quality education and leadership. Whilst we are confident the merger will proceed, the role has been designed to provide strategic operational leadership across both organisations regardless of the outcome of the Department for Education's decision. In the unlikely event that the merger does not proceed, the successful applicant will continue to provide operational leadership and support collaborative working across the two trusts.

Chiltern Learning Trust comprises 21 schools based in Bedfordshire and Stevenage. With 13 secondary schools and 8 primary schools, we are responsible for educating over 15,000 students. We hold a national reputation for our contribution to system leadership, running two Teaching School Hubs and four teacher training organisations. The Trust is also consistently in the top ten performing trusts nationally for progress at GCSE level.

Inspiring Futures through Learning also operates 21 schools, with several free school projects on the horizon. The Trust features 20 primary schools and one Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' all-through school. IFtL has a proud tradition in Teacher Training and a specialism in early years and primary practice. Its schools are located primarily in Milton Keynes, as well as Northamptonshire and Corby. Furthermore, CLT currently offers RISE support to six secondary schools, and we are looking for the new merged trust to extend this support into primary advisory work.

Full details of the role can be found in the job description within this pack. We are seeking an individual to provide strategic oversight across our estates, health and safety, risk management, IT and Data, growth and admissions. This is a key strategic leadership position and we are looking for someone capable of motivating and inspiring our strong operations teams across both trusts. The successful candidate will closely support the CEO and form part of a fast paced, dynamic senior leadership team.

The successful applicant will be line-managed by Sarah Bennett, CEO of IFtL, and will work closely with the Executive Leadership Teams and Boards of both trusts to support the delivery of shared strategic priorities. The role will operate across both trusts, with a regular presence in our central offices and schools across Bedfordshire, Stevenage, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire and Corby. We are looking for a highly visible leader who is comfortable working across multiple locations and building strong relationships throughout both organisations.

If you wish to discuss the post further, please contact pa.ceo@chilternlearningtrust.org to arrange a conversation with our CEO, Adrian Rogers.

We look forward to receiving your application; the closing date for applications is 9.00am on Wednesday 8th July 2026 and interviews will take place on w/c 13th July 2026.

Yours faithfully,

Adrian Rogers
Chief Executive Officer - CLT

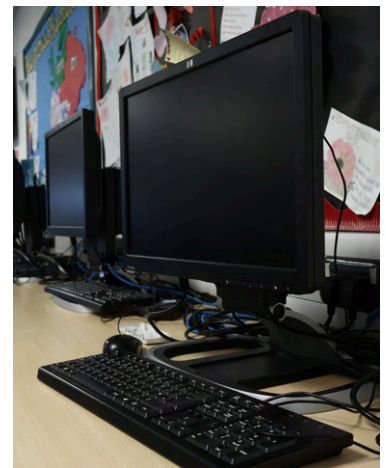
Sarah Bennett
Chief Executive Officer - IFtL



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Chief Operating Officer - CLT & IFtL

Job Description

Responsible to: Chief Executive Officer – Inspiring Futures through Learning

Grade: £115,000 - £135,000 per annum

Purpose of Post:

The Chief Operations Officer (COO) will be a key member of the Executive Leadership Team, reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The COO will provide strong strategic and visible operational leadership for the business and commercial operations of the Trust. We expect the post holder to put the provision of the very best education for our pupils at the heart of every decision they make.

The COO will be responsible for the leadership and development of the business and commercial operations across the Trust; to include, Estates, Health and Safety, IT and Data Systems, Risk Management; Strategic Projects and Trust Growth.

Leadership Team Roles and Responsibilities

This post will involve close working with all other colleagues within the Central Team including the Chief Education Officer; Chief Financial Officer; Director & Deputy Directors of School Improvement, Director of SEND and Safeguarding and senior team members.

Key accountabilities

1. Operational Leadership and Oversight

- To provide Trust-wide leadership for all operational functions within the COO remit, ensuring they are strategically aligned and deliver high-quality services to our schools.
- To ensure the operational side of the Trust is robust, resilient and compliant with all legal and regulatory requirements at all times.
- To oversee the admissions arrangements across the Trust ensuring compliance with the Schools Admissions Code.
- To lead on the due diligence activity prior to conversion of potential joiner-schools and evaluate the implications of potential incoming academies and successfully incorporate them into the Trust.
- To investigate, source and maximise income opportunities (revenue and capital), liaising with funding agencies and government to prepare bid submissions.

2. Estates and Capital Projects Delivery

- To implement and oversee the Trust-wide estates strategy, ensuring all premises remain safe, fit for purpose, and support future growth plans.
- To oversee the delivery of all major capital projects including identifying and prioritising capital spending requirements and the acquisition and spending of capital grants.
- To oversee the effective management and maintenance of the Trust's sites, grounds and buildings and their security, maximising the use of the Trust's estate to deliver our vision.
- To lead on health and safety trust to ensure compliance at all times.
- To advise the CEO and oversee academies on all matters relating to the development, funding and management of capital works on the sites

3. IT, Digital Infrastructure, and Data Systems

- To drive the Trust's digital transformation agenda, overseeing the delivery, security, and improvement of IT infrastructure and management information systems across our schools and the central team.
- To oversee the implementation of the Trust's IT strategy ensuring that there is an IT infrastructure and IT services that support a growing network of schools that align with the educational and development plans of the Trust.
- To ensure that quality assurance and disaster recovery procedures are robust.



4. Governance and Compliance Leadership

- To strengthen governance processes across the Trust, ensuring effective oversight, regulatory compliance, and readiness for external audit, inspections, and scrutiny.
- To ensure the Trust is compliant with all Data Protection and Free of Information legislation and requirements.

5. Risk Management Framework Development

- To lead the implementation of a robust and proactive risk management culture across the Trust, including risk identification, mitigation planning, and reporting.
- To lead on risk management and mitigation, strengthening control, ensuring that the Chief Executive and Trustees are appraised of risks and issues and these are being mitigated against and managed appropriately.

6. Strategic Project Delivery

- To provide programme leadership for Trust-wide strategic projects (e.g., estates improvement programmes, digital transformation), ensuring delivery is on time, within scope, and on budget.
- To oversee and manage all elements of free school new builds for the Trust and to lead on any future free school bids.

7. Organisational Capacity and Scalability

- To develop operational models and infrastructure that can scale with future growth, ensuring the Trust is ready for expansion without compromising service quality.

8. Stakeholder Collaboration and Communication

- To build strong relationships with key stakeholders including school leaders, Trustees, regulators, and external partners, ensuring clear communication and collaborative working.
- In partnership with the CEO, provide operational / business support to new schools and academies joining the Trust.

9. Operational Performance Monitoring and Reporting

- To establish effective performance management frameworks for operational functions, ensuring clear KPIs, regular reporting to the CEO and Board, and ongoing continuous improvement.

Other educational and operational matters

- To maintain leading edge knowledge and understanding of effective school/academy improvement, with a focus on assessment, tracking and effective data analysis.
- To comply with and assist with the development of policies and procedures relating to Health and Safety, ICT, Data protection, confidentiality and Estates, reporting all concerns to the appropriate person.

The above job description is an outline of expectations. The post holder should always carry out their role by benchmarking themselves against the highest standards of practice as evidenced through Ofsted findings and other respected research. The list is not exhaustive and the need for flexibility, shared 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 banding and whenever reasonably instructed.



Person Specification – Chief Operating Officer

This acts as a selection criteria and gives an outline of the types of person and the characteristics required to do the job.

Essential (E):- without which candidate would be rejected
Desirable (D):- useful for choosing between two good candidates.

Attributes	Essential Criteria	Desireable Criteria
Qualifications	<p>Educated to degree level or an equivalent level of knowledge, skills and experience in an appropriate setting</p> <p>Evidence of relevant continued professional development.</p>	<p>A recognised Health and Safety qualification such as IOSH Managing Safely or a willingness to complete as soon as possible.</p> <p>Executive leadership or management qualification, such as NPQEL.</p>
Relevant Experience	<p>Substantial recent experience of senior operational leadership in a complex, multi-stakeholder environment.</p> <p>Significant senior-level experience in effective strategic and operational planning and implementation.</p> <p>Significant experience of working collaboratively with senior managers and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Proven recent success of delivery of large-scale project management ensuring projects are completed on time and on budget.</p> <p>A proven track record of successful leadership and project management with a strong track record in delivering operational excellence.</p> <p>Experience of negotiating and managing large contracts, defining and managing service level agreements.</p>	<p>Experience of working in the education sector or a similarly regulated sector.</p> <p>Significant understanding of Health and Safety and construction legislation and compliance.</p>
Skills and Abilities	<p>Deep understanding of estates management, IT infrastructure, and risk management frameworks, with the ability to oversee diverse operational portfolios.</p>	



	<p>Deep understanding of estates management, IT infrastructure, and risk management frameworks, with the ability to oversee diverse operational portfolios.</p> <p>Excellent communication skills, ICT, written and oral. Able to communicate effectively with external agencies and colleagues.</p> <p>Able to develop effective working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders.</p> <p>Robust negotiation skills and with the ability to influence outcomes.</p> <p>Familiarity with governance frameworks, regulatory compliance, and audit processes, with the ability to drive high standards of accountability and transparency.</p> <p>Strong analytical and literacy skills to be able to draft reports and understand complex written guidance.</p> <p>Ability to adjust to constantly changing work demands and to meet competing deadlines.</p> <p>Ability to line manage and undertake performance management of others.</p> <p>Ability to act on own initiative and make effective decisions</p>	
Equality Issues	<p>Committed to the principles of equality of opportunity.</p> <p>Able to recognise discrimination and take action within the policies and procedures of the school.</p> <p>Able to understand the issues for pupil's education in an urban, multi-cultural context.</p>	
Other	<p>Able to adapt to changing operational demands in terms of tasks undertaken.</p> <p>Able to work flexibly to meet the needs of the school (this may include some evening and weekend events / meetings).</p> <p>Full UK driving licence.</p>	



We will consider any reasonable adjustments under the terms of the Equality Act (2010) to enable an applicant with a disability (as defined under the Act) to meet the requirements of the post.

The Job-holder will ensure that the Trust's policies are reflected in all aspects of his/her work, in particular those relating to;

- (i) Equal Opportunities
- (ii) Health and Safety
- (iii) Data Protection Act (2018)

In addition to candidates' ability to perform the duties of the post, the interview will also explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including:

- Motivation to work with children and young people;
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people;
- Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours; and, attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline.



The Application Process

If you wish to discuss the post further, please contact pa.ceo@chilternlearningtrust.org to arrange a conversation with our CEO, Adrian Rogers.

Closing Date: 9:00am, Wednesday 8th July 2026

Interview Dates: w/c 13th July 2026

Start Date: September 2026

If you are interested in applying, please visit www.mynewterm.com



Chiltern Learning Trust and Inspiring Futures through Learning are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment.

Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

CV's will not be accepted.



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