



COCKBURN
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST
TRANSFORMATION TO EXCELLENCE



We're Hiring

Recruitment Booklet

Chief Operating Officer

COCKBURN SCHOOL
Specialist status in the Performing Arts



COCKBURN JOHN CHARLES ACADEMY



COCKBURN LAURENCE CALVERT ACADEMY



COCKBURN INGRAM ROAD ACADEMY



FOOTSTEPS
to success



MIDDLETON PRIMARY SCHOOL



COCKBURN REACH ACADEMY



MINDFUL EMPLOYER



0113 271 9962



recruitment@cockburnmat.org



www.cockburnmat.org

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in Cockburn MAT. We are excited to be recruiting a Chief Operating Officer who will help shape the next chapter of our Trust's journey.

Cockburn MAT is entering a period of significant growth and transformation. With major building projects underway and new schools preparing to join us, we are strengthening our foundations for long-term success on our journey of Transformation to Excellence.

The MAT is made up of secondary, primary, and alternative provision schools. Our diverse estate — spanning buildings of different ages, sizes, and complexities — reflects the richness of our community, and we are committed to ensuring every space enables excellence for pupils and provides a high-quality workplace for staff.

As COO, you will be at the forefront of this work. Your leadership will drive operational excellence, strategic delivery, and organisational resilience across the Trust. This role offers the opportunity to influence change at scale and to contribute meaningfully to the future of education within our community.

Thank you for your interest in joining us at such an exciting time. We hope you will feel inspired to apply and to play a central role in shaping the future of Cockburn MAT. I look forward to meeting candidates who share our ambition and commitment to Transformation to Excellence.

Job Description

Post:	Chief Operating Officer (COO)
Required:	June 2026
Pay scale and salary:	Dir 52.5% £70,210 - £77,020 per annum, pay award pending (negotiable for an exceptional candidate)
Contract Type:	Permanent
Hours of work:	Full Time, 37 hours per week all year round

Accountable to: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Responsible for: Central Finance Team, IT Network & Services, Estate & Facilities, Governance and Risk Management

Purpose of Role:

The COO will support the CEO in the strategic development and operation of Cockburn Multi-academy Trust. They will:

- Lead the non-academic operations and central service functions of the trust
- Deputise for the CEO where required
- Uphold, promote and model the vision and values of the trust

Main Duties:

The duties and responsibilities listed below are indicative of the tasks the COO will perform and are not intended to be an exhaustive list. The postholder will be expected to take on additional responsibilities appropriate to the role as they arise.

Strategic leadership and trust development

The COO will be accountable for providing strategic vision and leadership across non-educational trust functions, and for supporting the delivery of the trust's vision and values.

The COO will:

- Contribute to, and support the delivery of, the trust's strategic aims
- Contribute to the trust's strategic planning, taking ownership of aspects of key documents such as the operational plan, the long-term strategic plan and risk assessments and self-evaluation documents
- Develop the trust's central services to meet requirements and promote operational excellence

- Support the growth and development of the trust, including due diligence and supporting schools as they join the trust
- Contribute to the trust’s risk assessment and risk management efforts, and take appropriate steps to mitigate identified risks
- Develop and embed the trust’s ethos and values, supporting the creation of a trust culture that embodies these values
- Ensure the wider executive team and Trust Board are kept up to date and assured of all Trust non educational developments and plans through regular evaluative reporting arrangements

Finance and procurement

The COO will be accountable for the health and sustainability of the trust’s finances.

The COO will:

- Develop, implement and monitor the trust’s business plan and budget, using effective financial and budget modelling and benchmarking to support strong decision-making
- Establish and monitor the trust’s financial policies and procedures, taking appropriate action to address financial risks, problems and irregularities
- Present the board with accurate and timely financial reports
- Develop and oversee the trust’s marketing and income generation strategies, including grant applications and other fundraising, and supporting individual academies with their fundraising efforts
- Work with Executive Headteacher, Finance Manager, Headteachers, within the trust to prepare and monitor individual academies’ budgets in line with school development plans and the trust’s strategic objectives
- Work with the Finance Manager to ensure the submission of the trust’s financial returns and reports, including monthly management accounts
- Manage the internal and external audit procedures for the trust and its constituent academies, and follow up on any recommendations resulting from audits
- Establish and monitor effective procurement procedures in order to achieve financial efficiencies, including overseeing the tendering process
- Ensure the trust complies with financial regulations and standards, working with the CEO in their capacity as accounting officer
- Oversee the trust’s commercial contracts, ensuring the represent value for money
- Implement and maintain an effective internal audit procedure

Compliance

The COO will be accountable for ensuring that the trust remains compliant in all relevant legal and statutory responsibilities.

The COO will:

- Ensure that the trust, and each of its schools, meets its legal and statutory responsibilities in line with current legislation
- Support the CEO and other senior trust leaders with their responsibility for safeguarding
- Ensure the trust meets requirements set out by Companies House, the Charity Commission, the Department for Education and the Education and Skills Funding Agency
- Embed trust-wide accountability and quality assurance procedures to achieve compliance
- Ensure the trust meets requirements related to health and safety and data protection
- Identify, monitor and mitigate operational risks through effective work with other Trust leaders.

Resource and services management

The COO will be accountable for the development, delivery and quality of the trust's non-educational functions and services, including, IT, premises and facilities and catering.

The COO will:

- Develop, implement and monitor strategies and operational models for central services that are fit for purpose, high quality and facilitate continuous improvement
- Ensure, through strong business planning, that the trust has the human, material and financial resources it needs to operate effectively and meet its aims
- Provide line management for IT, Finance, Estates and Trust Data lead and be responsible for their professional development and annual appraisals
- Provide operational support and direction for Business managers and equivalents
- Oversee and review contracts for services, ensuring that these are fit for purpose and provide value for money
- Work with Head of IT to develop, implement and monitor the trust's ICT strategy, ensuring that it supports trust and academy needs and aims across all trust functions

Leading and managing the trust

The COO will be accountable for supporting the efficient, effective and compliant management of the trust and its academies, and for providing motivational leadership at all levels of the trust's organisation.

The COO will:

- Develop effective relationships with trust stakeholders in order to support the trust's development and growth

- Develop, implement and monitor trust policies within their remit
- Provide appropriate and timely reports to the trust board and other trust leaders to support effective leadership and governance
- Ensure that the trust has the appropriate management systems and structures to carry out its work effectively, identifying opportunities to improve the trust’s overall effectiveness and implementing appropriate strategies to achieve improvements
- Monitor and develop organisational progress, providing information to the board as appropriate
- Lead the process of adding new schools to the trust, including due diligence and on-boarding procedures
- Act as a representative of the trust in external networks and forums, raising the profile of the trust, engaging with the wider sector, and ensuring that the trust is alert to information, changes or opportunities that could impact on its work
- Identify, monitor and mitigate operational risks through effective work with other trust leaders
- Act as a representative of the Trust in external networks and forums, raising the profile of the Trust, engaging with the wider sector, and ensuring that the Trust is alert to information, changes or opportunities that could impact on its work

Any other duties and responsibilities

- All the above duties and responsibilities to be carried out in accordance with Cockburn Multi Academy Trust Policies, Academies Financial Handbook and current legislation with an emphasis on Safeguarding, Customer Care, Equal Opportunities, Data Protection and Health and Safety.
- Uphold and promote the safety and well-being of students as set out in the Trust safeguarding procedures.
- Promote high standards of personal professional conduct in accordance with the Trust Employee Code of Conduct and Nolan Principles
- Be aware of and support differences ensuring fairness and equal opportunities for all
- Contribute to the overall vision and values of the Trust
- Enable and support the role of other professionals
- Work collaboratively and effectively as part of a team
- Attend and participate in relevant meetings as required
- Participate in training and other learning activities and performance development as required
- Flexible and willing to travel between different sites as required

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in the job description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and scope of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.

Person Specification

Detailed below are the types of skills, experience and knowledge that are required of applicants applying for the post. The 'Essential Requirements' indicate the minimum requirements and applicants lacking these attributes will not be considered for the post. The points detailed under 'Desirable Requirements' are additional attributes to enable the applicant to perform the position more effectively or with little or no training. They are not essential, but may be used to distinguish between acceptable candidates.

QUALIFICATIONS	Essential	Desirable
Degree or equivalent experience working as a Chief Operating Officer in a Trust	*	
Professional qualification in at least one of the following areas: finance, business management, facilities management, health & safety or equivalent	*	
KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS	Essential	Desirable
Ability to work strategically and seek and implement creative solutions	*	
Knowledge of and demonstrable commitment safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people	*	
Ability to get the best out of any contractors	*	
Exceptional leadership skills	*	
Exceptional presentation skills	*	
Ability to prioritise workloads and to work to deadline	*	
Highly effective administrative and organisational skills	*	
Relevant literacy, numeracy and ICT skills	*	
Health & Safety legislation	*	
Exceptional problem-solving skills	*	
Strong skills in analysis, risk management and impact evaluation	*	
Ability to performance manage a diverse range of staff	*	
Knowledge of any additional specific area of expertise, for example: ICT project development; Governance; Estate & Facilities.	*	
Understanding of working in a school		*

context and how the role contributes to safeguarding and positive outcomes for students		
Management experience across multi-sites		*
<u>EXPERIENCE</u>	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Desirable</u>
Strategic decision making	*	
Leading strategic planning for a large organisation	*	
Track of effective operational leadership and management	*	
Monitoring a range of contracts	*	
Successful leadership of diverse teams	*	
Working as a member of senior team	*	
Working with Trust Boards or Governors or equivalent	*	
Presenting at committee or broad level meetings	*	
Written & delivered training to a range of audiences	*	
Working with external partners	*	
Leading procurement projects	*	
Managing complex projects from inception to completion	*	
Budget management	*	
Managing risk	*	
Leadership experience in an educational setting		*
Managing premises related projects		*
<u>PERSONAL QUALITIES</u>	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Desirable</u>
Energy, drive and enthusiasm, self-motivated and positive	*	
Creative with a can-do attitude and able to think outside the box	*	
Works well under pressure and remains calm in the face of the unexpected	*	
Enterprising, innovative and self-motivated	*	
Trustworthy, honest, discreet and loyal	*	
Excellent communication skills	*	
Commitment to own professional development	*	

Reflective and always willing to learn	*	
Commitment to partnership working	*	
Ability to make good decisions	*	
Resilient and optimistic	*	
Excellent attendance and punctuality	*	
<p>Employment is conditional on confirmation of the right to work in the UK – either as a UK or Irish citizen, under the EU Settlement scheme or having secured any other relevant work visa. If you do not have the right to work in the UK and the role does not meet eligibility for sponsorship, please consider carefully whether you meet the eligibility to apply for this position.</p>		
<p>This role is subject to a six-month probationary period and satisfactory enhanced DBS check. As one organisation Cockburn Multi-academy Trust expects all its employees to work across any academy within the trust as and when required.</p>		
<p>Cockburn MAT is committed to creating a diverse workforce. We will consider all qualified applicants for employment without regard to sex, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, age, disability, marriage, or civil partnership.</p>		

COCKBURN

CAREER PATHWAYS

What job roles am I interested in?

Pastoral

Safeguarding Officer, Family Support Worker, Early Intervention Therapeutic Worker, Attendance Outreach Worker, Outreach Co-ordinator, Early Intervention Worker Assistant SENCO, Head of Year

Facilities

Cleaner, Cleaning Supervisor, Caretaker, Caretaker, Site Manager, Premises Assistant, General Kitchen Assistant, Senior Catering Assistant, Catering Supervisor, Catering Manager

Data/technical support

Reprographics, Data Assistant, Data Manager, Trust Data and MIS Officer, IT Technician, Senior IT Technician, IT Manager

Operational

Receptionist, Administrator, Office Manager, School Business Manager, Personal Assistant to Head of School/ Executive Headteacher, Exams Officer, Finance Assistant, Finance Officer, Trainee Accountant, Finance Manager, HR Manager, Head of HR, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Chief Operating Officer

Classroom support

Midday Supervisor, Before/After School Club Assistant, Playworker, Nursery Assistant Child and Family Practitioner Behaviour & Learning Inclusion Practitioner, Teaching Assistant, Learning Mentor, Cover Supervisor, HLTA, DT/Art/Food/Science Technician LRC Coordinator

Routes into teaching

QTS, QTLS, PGCE, SCITT, School Direct Teach First, Teaching Apprenticeship, Straight to Teaching

What career path should I take?

Ongoing training and development

PDD Days, annual updates, staff briefings, departmental specific training, away days

What qualifications do I need to reach my goal?

GCSEs, A Levels, NVQs, diploma, foundation degree, PGCE, QTS, ECT, Level 3 TA, CIPD, accountancy, H&S, NEBOSH, computing and IT, apprenticeship

Annual appraisal

CPD, training and development, career aspiration conversations, succession planning

Training for new starters...

Staff induction, statutory training including child protection and safeguarding, online safety, data protection, school policies, behaviour management

What internal training may there be available?

Shadowing, acting up, secondments, mentor support, volunteering, associate roles

How do I find out more about job roles?

Job adverts/website, line manager, careers officer, departmental heads, teacher training lead, HR

Smart clinic resources

Self-care and personal development

National College resources

Teaching and learning, pedagogy. SEND, admin, finance, staffing, recruitment, facilities, H&S

Our values and ethos

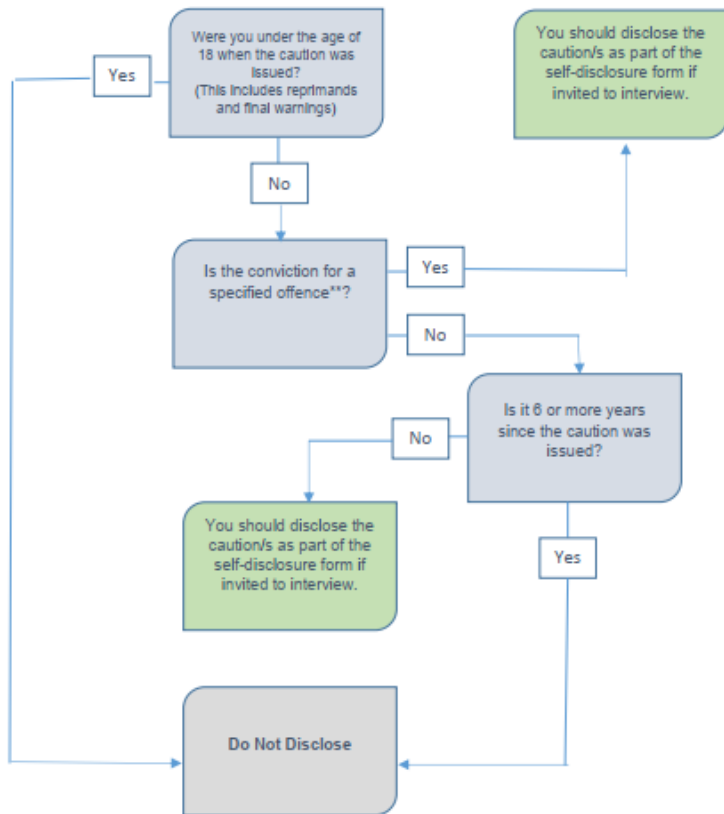
Equality, diversity and inclusion, high quality professional development, internal coaching and individual CPD rewarding jobs, lifelong learning, growth mindset, work life balance, flexibility

SUPPORT STAFF



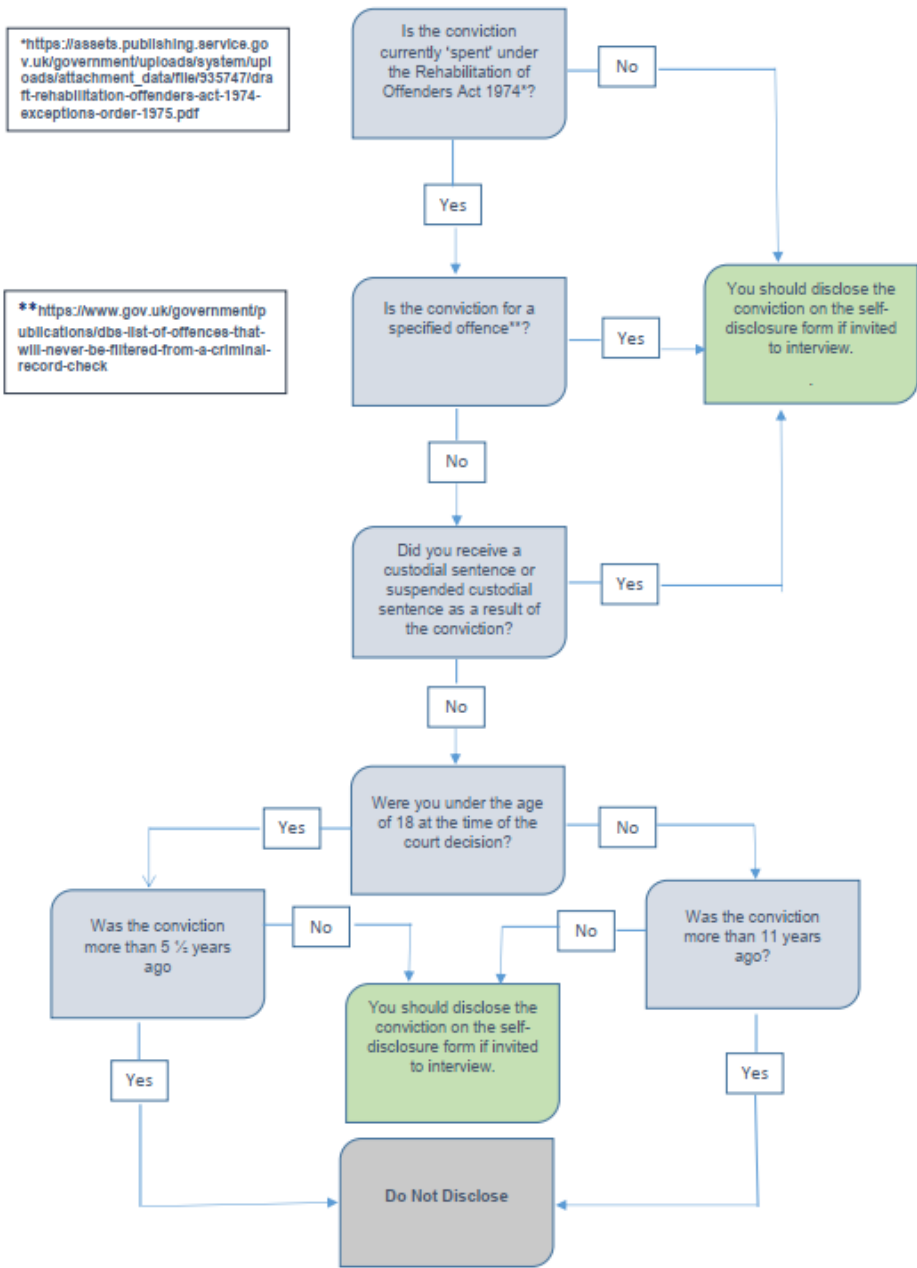
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Disclosure of a Caution
(this includes reprimands and final warnings)



**<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dba-list-of-offences-that-will-never-be-filtered-from-a-criminal-record-check>

Disclosure of a Conviction
Please work this through for each conviction you have separately even if they were part of the same legal proceedings



*https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/935747/draft-rehabilitation-offenders-act-1974-exceptions-order-1975.pdf

**<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dba-list-of-offences-that-will-never-be-filtered-from-a-criminal-record-check>