



# **Astrea Academy Trust Central Team**

## **Recruitment Pack**

### **Governance & Policy Adviser**



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# Welcome Letter

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in this role within the Astrea Academy Trust.

This is a hugely exciting time for our family of academies. The Trust has been recognised by the Department for Education as being well placed to raise standards and achieve excellence for pupils in a growing number of academies. We are presented with a rare opportunity to make a real difference to the lives and life chances of so many primary school children – many of whom haven't previously received the educational opportunities they deserve.

The Trust currently has academies based across South Yorkshire and includes academies at various stages of development. As a Trust, we are clear about the importance of achieving long term sustainability for our academies. Our vision is to enable individual academies to flourish with real autonomy, whilst also ensuring a strong ethos of support and collaboration across our Academies.

Employees within Astrea belong to a community of professionals, and benefit from a wide range of networks and development opportunities across the Trust. The Trust provides a strong culture of collaboration and support, together with high expectations for staff and pupils alike.

Those we recruit can demonstrate that they share our values, are highly motivated to work with colleagues to continuously develop their skills, pursue professional excellence and are committed to providing the highest standards. If that is you then we would be delighted to receive your application.

**Libby Nicholas**

Chief Executive, Astrea Academy Trust





## Astrea Academy Trust: Our Educational Vision

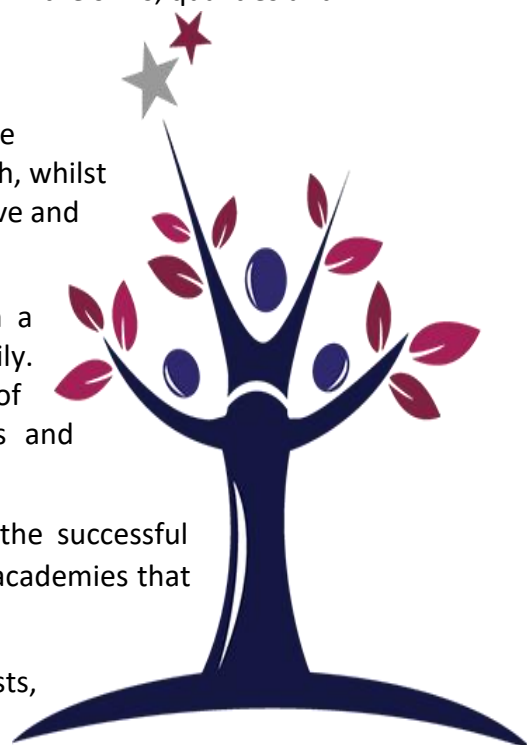
We value all-round development of the individual, through arts, sports, leadership opportunities, enrichment and community. This is encapsulated in the skills, qualities and personalities we foster in our pupils.

The Astrea Academy Trust logo communicates the values collaboration, development and aspiration. The three figures are coming together in the shape of a tree, which represents growth, whilst the tallest figure reaches upwards, towards a star, which is above and beyond the highest branch of the tree.

Academies, staff and children within the Trust benefit from a strong ethos of support and collaboration across the Astrea family. Teachers within Astrea belong to a national community of professionals, and benefit from a wide range of networks and development opportunities across the Trust.

Our approach is to ensure school improvement – including the successful improvements that have been achieved so far in many of our academies that have joined the Trust as sponsored academies.

Astrea benefits from the involvement of leading educationalists, including our Professional Adviser Professor John West-Burnham, and strong links to prestigious institutions such as the Institute of Education.





# Astrea Academy Trust Ethos

The work of the Astrea Academy Trust is underpinned by five core Value Partners, which are equally applicable to pupils, staff and the work of the Trust itself.

Each pair of Value Partners is accompanied by a call for action in the form of a hashtag, which is used in verbal, digital and hard copy communications.

The Value Partners can be used as a measure of individual, school and Trust progress and as a guide to inform the direction of change.

## Responsibility and Leadership

Individuals in the Astrea community are accountable for their own decisions and actions and are supported by strong leaders, while trailblazers are encouraged to develop skills and talents in others. The Trust has a strong commitment to developing and nurturing our own leaders. **#4equity**

## Enjoyment and Innovation

We know that everyone learns best when they enjoy what they do and can follow their innate desire to achieve. Astrea pushes boundaries so that pioneering ideas are tried and tested so that our academies remain leaders in the advancement of teaching and learning methods. **#go4it**

## Aspiration and Development

Every member of the Astrea community, from the youngest pupil to the oldest member of staff, is encouraged to cultivate opportunities to grow. We achieve excellence by being inspired to become the best we can be. The progress and well-being of pupils is our top priority, at the centre of every decision. **#Reach4thestars**

## Collaboration and Inclusion

Astrea honours and applauds the differences that make us unique whilst actively seeking and celebrating the common ground that binds us together as a strong community. We work together in a productive environment where dynamic ideas are shared in partnership, so that every member of the community may thrive **#all4one**

## Honesty and Integrity

We are honest and open. Astrea decisions and responses are grounded in time-honoured moral principles that remain constant in the face of challenges and change **#4good**

**You can learn more about the Values, and hear from staff and pupils across Astrea Academies, at our website:** <https://astreaacademytrust.org/>



# Astrea Academy Trust Family

## Academies currently within Astrea Academy Trust:

- ★ Atlas Primary Academy, Doncaster
- ★ Byron Wood Academy, Sheffield
- ★ Carrfield Primary Academy, Rotherham
- ★ Castle Academy, Doncaster
- ★ Cottenham Village College, Cambridgeshire
- ★ Denaby Main Primary Academy, Doncaster
- ★ Edenthorpe Hall Academy, Edenthorpe
- ★ Gooseacre Primary Academy, Rotherham
- ★ Greengate Lane Academy, Sheffield
- ★ Hartley Brook Primary Academy, Sheffield
- ★ Hatfield Primary Academy, Sheffield
- ★ Hexthorpe Primary Academy, Doncaster
- ★ Highgate Primary Academy, Rotherham
- ★ Hillside Academy, Doncaster
- ★ Intake Primary Academy, Doncaster
- ★ Kingfisher Primary Academy, Doncaster
- ★ Lower Meadow Primary Academy, Sheffield
- ★ Netherwood Academy, Barnsley
- ★ The Centre School, Cambridgeshire
- ★ The Hill Primary Academy, Rotherham



# Job Description

**Position: Governance & Policy Adviser**

**Salary Range: £35,000 - £40,000**

**Reporting to: Executive Director of Operations**

**Location of this position: London or Sheffield, with national travel**

## **Purpose of this role:**

At Astrea we firmly believe in the importance of local volunteers' challenge and support for the Academy in their community. As the Principal's critical friend local governors play a crucial role in working alongside the academy leadership team to drive school improvement and maintain high standards of education and pastoral support. The primary purpose of our new Governance and Policy Adviser will be working with governing bodies at each Academy to enable them to fulfil this function effectively.

The postholder will need to be proactive and creative in identifying where governance is working well but also where interventions may be required. They will build strong relationships with Principals, Chairs and National Leaders of Governance, ensuring governance at each Academy is fully 'Ofsted-ready'. As the Trust's Governance expert the postholder will design and roll-out a professional governor training programme, and also lead on governor recruitment and retention, with a licence to be innovative in attracting high calibre volunteers.

As part of this role the postholder will also help to ensure that the flow of information between the various layers of Astrea governance – local, hub, Trustees – is functioning effectively. We have recently conducted a review into our first full academic year of governance and the successful candidate will play a crucial role in embedding the changes to our governance model that this has entailed.

Critically, this role also oversees Policy development and production across the Trust, an area that underpins so much of our work at central and local level. The postholder will co-ordinate the ongoing process of policy refresh across Astrea, ensuring central functions are clear about deadlines for review and updates so that the Trust can continue to meet its compliance responsibilities.

This is the perfect time to join Astrea as a Governance and Policy Adviser, as we implement improvements to our model of governance, consolidate the excellent support and challenge provided by our committed groups of local volunteers, and build on the success in raising standards of our first full year. This is an ideal role for an ambitious and autonomous individual keen to embed a forward-thinking approach to governance within a multi-academy trust committed to addressing educational inequality.



## Main duties and responsibilities

1. To support, enable and drive development of Astrea's governance arrangements through ensuring high standards of local challenge and support, and strong links between all layers of governance in the Trust:
  - Ensure a high standard of local non-executive challenge and support in Astrea schools through knowing how all local arrangements are working, standardising and spreading good practice, facilitating the right mix of skills on governing bodies, and identifying where local interventions are necessary
  - Oversee the linkages between the various layers of Astrea governance – local, regional and Trustee – so that information flows efficiently both ways, including managing annual strategic events for Members, Trustees, Principals, and local Chairs
  - Build proactive and productive working relationships with Principals, local Chairs, and local governors, and act as troubleshooter for governance issues across all academies
  - Lead recruitment and retention of local governors
  - Define and roll-out an annual programme of training and development for all local governors
  - Lead on embedding Astrea's new governance handbook, code of conduct and local governance terms of reference across the whole Trust
2. Ensure Astrea governance meets all statutory and regulatory compliance requirements, working with Academies and central Trust functions to identify and address gaps, and clearly defining what Academies need to have in place to ensure their governance is fully compliant:
  - Monitor Academies' compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements in relation to governance, working with Principals to address these where clear gaps are identified
  - Ensuring statutory compliance across the Trust including filings with Companies House, the Charity Commission, the Department for Education (eg Edubase/GIAS), and the Education and Skills Funding Agency
  - Work in conjunction with Astrea's legal advisers to ensure all other regulatory obligations continue to be fulfilled
3. Lead on the co-ordination of key policies across Astrea so that Trust-wide and Academy-level policies are concise, clear, of a high standard, and subject to a process of ongoing review:
  - Ensure it is well understood across the Trust and its Academies which policies are Trust-wide and which sit at Academy-level, and where responsibility lies for ongoing development
  - Define a process for ongoing refresh of all Trust-wide policies and work collaboratively with other central functions to implement this
  - Be the first point of contact for Academies on policy-related queries
4. To work collaboratively with other key Astrea functions so that Governance and Policy within the Trust supports and enables the delivery of Astrea's strategic objectives:
  - Support due diligence activity of new academies potentially joining Astrea by preparing the schools' current governing body for conversion/transfer
  - Ensure local governance complements school improvement activity by working alongside the Deputy Directors of Education and Executive Principals to ensure local arrangements are providing robust support and challenge for school action plans





The duties and responsibilities in this job description are not exclusive or exhaustive and the post holder will be required to complete such duties as may reasonably be expected within the scope and grade of the post.



## Person Specification

This part will allow you to understand who we are looking for within this role and the skills knowledge or experience that we would expect.

Attributes	Criteria
<i>Experience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evidence of successfully building relationships with Principals, Chairs and groups of local volunteers in order to implement the highest possible standards of governance</li><li>• Experience of identifying good governance practice, standardising it across an organisation, and troubleshooting areas of weakness</li><li>• Familiarity with working in a regulated environment and ensuring all compliance responsibilities are fulfilled</li><li>• Evidence of supporting governance within a dynamic, entrepreneurial organisation, collaborating successfully with other non-governance functions to deliver on the organisation's strategic objectives</li><li>• Experience of developing or managing the production of education and academy-level policies</li></ul>
<i>Qualifications and Training</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Graduate or equivalent experience</li><li>• Ideally have been an academy or school governor, worked closely with school governors and/or Academy trustees</li></ul>
<i>Knowledge, Skills and Abilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thorough knowledge of governance in the education sector, including latest MAT best practice, plus DfE and Ofsted regulatory requirements</li><li>• The ability to quickly gain credibility and influence colleagues, including being persuasive and pushing back where necessary</li><li>• Ability to convey complex information concisely and with clarity</li><li>• Excellent planning and organisational skills</li><li>• Strong interpersonal skills coupled with high levels of EQ</li><li>• Resilient and autonomous, with the ability to deliver a complex and demanding workload alongside colleagues across disparate geographical locations</li></ul>



# Child Safeguarding Policy

The Trust is committed to Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of all its students. Each student's welfare is of paramount importance. We recognise that some children *may* be especially vulnerable to abuse e.g. those with Special Educational Needs, those living in adverse circumstances.

We recognise that children who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Whilst at the Academies, their behaviour may be challenging. We will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we can support all our students.

**The Trust's Child Safeguarding Policy applies to all adults, including volunteers, working in or on behalf of the Trust.**

Everyone in the education service shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

- Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn in education settings; and
- Identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in the education setting'

*Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2016*

The Trust pays full regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance 2016. We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works for the Trust who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult including e.g. volunteers and staff employed by contractors. Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and an Enhanced DBS check.

Please visit <https://astreaacademytrust.org/about-us/statutory-documents/> for the full policy.



# Explanatory Notes

Applications will only be accepted from candidates completing the Trust's Application Form. Please complete ALL sections of the Application Form which are relevant to you as clearly and fully as possible. CVs will **not** be accepted in place of a completed Application Form.

## Safeguarding Children and Young People

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We expect all staff to share this commitment and to undergo appropriate checks, including an enhanced check.

- Candidates should be aware that all posts in Astrea Academy Trust involve some degree of responsibility for safeguarding children and young people, although the extent of that responsibility will vary depending on the nature of the post. Please see the job description enclosed in this Application Pack for further details.
- Accordingly, this post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as "spent" must be declared.
- If you are currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, your current employer will be asked about disciplinary offence, including those related to children or young people (whether disciplinary sanction is current or time-expired), and whether you have been the subject of any child protection allegations or concerns and if so the outcome of any investigation or disciplinary proceedings. If you are not currently working with children, but have done in the past, that previous employer will be asked about these issues.
- Where neither your current or previous employment has involved working with children, your current employer will be asked about your suitability to work with children, although it may be answered not applicable where it is appropriate; if your duties have not brought you into contact with children or young people for instance.

## Interview Process

After the closing date, short listing will be conducted by a Panel. You will be selected for interview entirely on the contents of your application form, so please read the Job Description and Person Specification carefully before you complete your form.

All candidates invited to interview must bring the following documents:

- Documentary evidence of right to work in the UK
- Documentary evidence of identity that will satisfy DBS requirements
- Documentary proof of current name and address



- Where appropriate any documentation evidencing change of name
- Documents confirming any educational or professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post

Please note that originals of the above are necessary, photocopies or certified copies are **not** sufficient.

We will seek references on shortlisted candidates for Trust based positions and may approach previous employers for information to verify experience or qualifications before interview. Any relevant issues arising from references will be taken up at interview.

In addition to candidate's 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
- Attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline

### **Conditional Offer: Pre-Employment Checks**

Any offer to a successful candidate will be conditional upon:

- Verification of right to work in the UK
- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references (if these have not already been received)
- Verification of identity checks and qualifications
- Satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check
- Verification of professional status such as QTS Status, NPQH (where required)
- Satisfactory completion of a Health Assessment
- Satisfactory completion of the probationary period (where relevant)
- Where the successful candidate has worked, or been resident overseas in the previous five years, such checks and confirmations as may be required in accordance with statutory guidance



# How can I Apply?

This is an exciting and very rewarding role and we look forward to receiving your application.

**Please complete the Application Form and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which are available together with this document**

**Please send your completed Application Form to**

**Name:** Vicki Russell

**Position:** Recruitment Officer

**Contact:** [vicki.russell@astreaacademytrust.org](mailto:vicki.russell@astreaacademytrust.org)

## The Application Process

The candidates selected for interview will be informed after shortlisting and full details of the interview programme will be provided. If you do not hear from us within 14 days of the closing date of this position, unfortunately you have been unsuccessful on this occasion.