

**w**o**d**ard  
academies

opening minds | raising expectations  
transforming lives



# Chief Operating Officer

Candidate Information Pack





# About the Trust

## An introduction

Welcome to Woodard Academies Trust, a family of academies where we take pride in recognising young people's brilliance and nurturing their wisdom. We have six academies across the country, four secondaries and two all-through schools, educating just over 7,000 pupils. Three academies are based in the South East of England, Littlehampton, Lancing and Maidstone, two in the North East of England, Tynemouth and Darlington, and one in Stoke on Trent. Four are graded Ofsted Good and two are Requires Improvement.

This is an exciting time for us with our ambitious new five-year strategy to continue to drive up standards, nurture and educate our children into successful adults, develop, and recruit the best teachers, work collaboratively in our local area, and grow our Trust in geographical clusters. This is all enabled and overseen by our experienced and expert Trustees working closely with our local academy councils.

Woodard academies are part of the wider family of Woodard schools. The family includes other single and multi-academy Trusts, independent, state funded and international schools.

The Woodard Corporation is a significant charity founded on the vision of Canon Nathaniel Woodard, providing high quality education in an actively Christian school environment for all.

Today, the Woodard family educates over 30,000 pupils across academy, independent and state-maintained schools. Our aim is to be the educational provider of choice and a valued voice in UK education. The Woodard Corporation sponsors the Woodard Academies Trust.

**A family of academies where we take pride in recognising young people's brilliance and nurturing their wisdom.**

- **Supporting strong schools to deliver great outcomes:** rooted in our local communities, ensuring excellent educational provision and personal growth opportunities for all our young people.
- **Opening minds:** igniting a curiosity about the world, nurturing spiritual and cultural growth, championing diversity and inclusion and developing a lifelong love of learning.
- **Raising expectations:** for everyone in the Trust, pupils, staff and governors, about the standards we can reach and the outcomes we can achieve, irrespective of background.
- **Transforming lives:** maximising opportunities for our young people to have rewarding careers and strong relationships while making a positive contribution to their communities and society.



## Our values

### Wisdom

**We open our minds** and take personal responsibility for making a difference in the world.

### Trust

**We place trust at the heart of all we do:** to facilitate open and honest debate, to support hope and mutual respect, to empower us and to enable us to respond to all challenges.

### Faith

**We welcome and embrace people of all faiths** and none to our schools, which reflect the Christian ethos of the Trust and the wider group of Woodard schools.

### Ambition

**We set high expectations** full of ambition for ourselves and each other and we are relentless about meeting them. We will always support excellence and challenge under-performance.

### Unity

**We value collaboration**, promote well-being and invest in relationships, celebrating our individual and collective strengths and expertise, inspiring one another, inviting schools to join us while learning from best practice all around us.

## Our future

**“If you want to travel fast, go alone, if you want to travel far, go together.”** (African proverb)

We believe we can benefit our young people most and reap the benefits of working together, by being part of a Trust. We are proud of the diversity of our academies, serving very different communities across the country in a range of settings. “One size fits all” does not work for young people and it does not work for us. We are ready to welcome schools that want to be part of our growing Trust.

## Our priorities

The following sets out our priorities for the next five years.

### YOUNG PEOPLE MATTER

Our young people benefit from high standards of achievement and behaviour where the disadvantage gap is narrowed, and achievement raised for all. Pupil progress is accelerated by great teaching in a safe nurturing environment where pupils' wellbeing is a priority. Pupils leave with a well-rounded education moving onto meaningful next educational or work steps. This is written into the DNA of everybody working for or governing our academies and Trust. All our activities must directly contribute towards this priority.

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### GREAT TEACHING MATTERS

Our young people benefit from inspirational teaching of an engaging curriculum that supports the individual needs, interests and talents of our pupils while responding to the communities we serve. We recruit and develop the best teachers and support staff while growing strong inspirational leaders to ensure our pupils succeed. We use technology and innovation to encourage progression, development, and achievement. Our young people thrive in their communities and are successful in their lives.

2

### PEOPLE MATTER

Our staff understand and feel the benefits of being part of our Trust in a diverse and inclusive environment where we provide opportunities to grow our own talent supported by professional and career development opportunities tailored to meet individual needs. We are market leaders in staff wellbeing and good mental health.

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### STRONG LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Our Trustees and leadership team champion and model great leadership including excellent strategic thinking, risk management, robust oversight of educational performance, financial management, reporting, and accountability supported by clear lines of communication, transparency, working closely with and empowering the local Academy Councils.

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### **A FLOURISHING AND GROWING TRUST MATTERS**

Our Trust has a clearly articulated and distinct Woodard offer for prospective schools and Trusts considering joining or partnering with us. We are committed to developing fully rounded educational leaders, and to offering first class holistic educational and personal development to our pupils and staff. We believe in and practice, a collective leadership model to encourage innovation while driving consistent and excellent school improvement and central support. We understand that we move into a local community not just a local school. We have a successful model for managing diverse school communities across diverse geography, encouraging local school clusters, Trust mergers or looser federations to work more closely in the local area.

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### **WHERE WE LEARN MATTERS**

Our Trust builds and maintains great educational and physical spaces, keeping our buildings safe and comfortable, working across all our academies to maximise the impact of our investments, encouraging, supporting, creating, and improving our schools. Our facilities enable sporting opportunities to promote good health and wellbeing and an appreciation of all sports. We maximise learning opportunities across both purpose-built and historic educational spaces.

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### **GIVING SOMETHING BACK MATTERS**

Our academies are embedded community assets offering support and facilities beyond education. Full and active members of their local partnerships, Woodard Schools, together with our academy Trust, share resources and expertise making everybody better able to plan, share expertise and build resilience in a way which benefits local communities. We encourage our young people to give service to others in need and understand their civic duty and responsibility.

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## Our journey

Over the last two years the Trust has seen three of its academies move from an Ofsted RI grading to Good. The Trust's financial position has also improved taking the reserve position to around 7% of GAG income. We are currently developing our Trust support service increasing its capacity to offer better services to its academies.

St Peter's Academy was graded Ofsted overall Requires Improvement with Good for the quality of education in November 2022. This meant the Academy qualified as a coasting academy resulting in a Termination Warning Notice. St Augustine's moved from Ofsted overall, Good to RI in July 2023. We moved to an Executive Principal model where the principal of the Sir Robert Woodard Academy also took over responsibility for St Augustine's with a principal reporting to him. At St Peter's we have developed a Post-Ofsted Inspection Action Plan which we closely monitor and support progress. St Peter's received a section 8 Ofsted inspection in December 2023 focused on pupil behaviour and wellbeing. The Ofsted letter has been published which clearly recognises the positive progress the Academy has already made and continues to make in both of those areas. The summer examination results were mixed across our academies ranging from the top 5% to the bottom 5% in the country.

The geography of the Trust has required our staff to maximise the benefits of communication technology to reduce travelling time. This geography brings both opportunities and challenges. We are currently looking at how to grow the Trust in geographical clusters to realise the benefits of being closer alongside the opportunities a national view and experience brings.

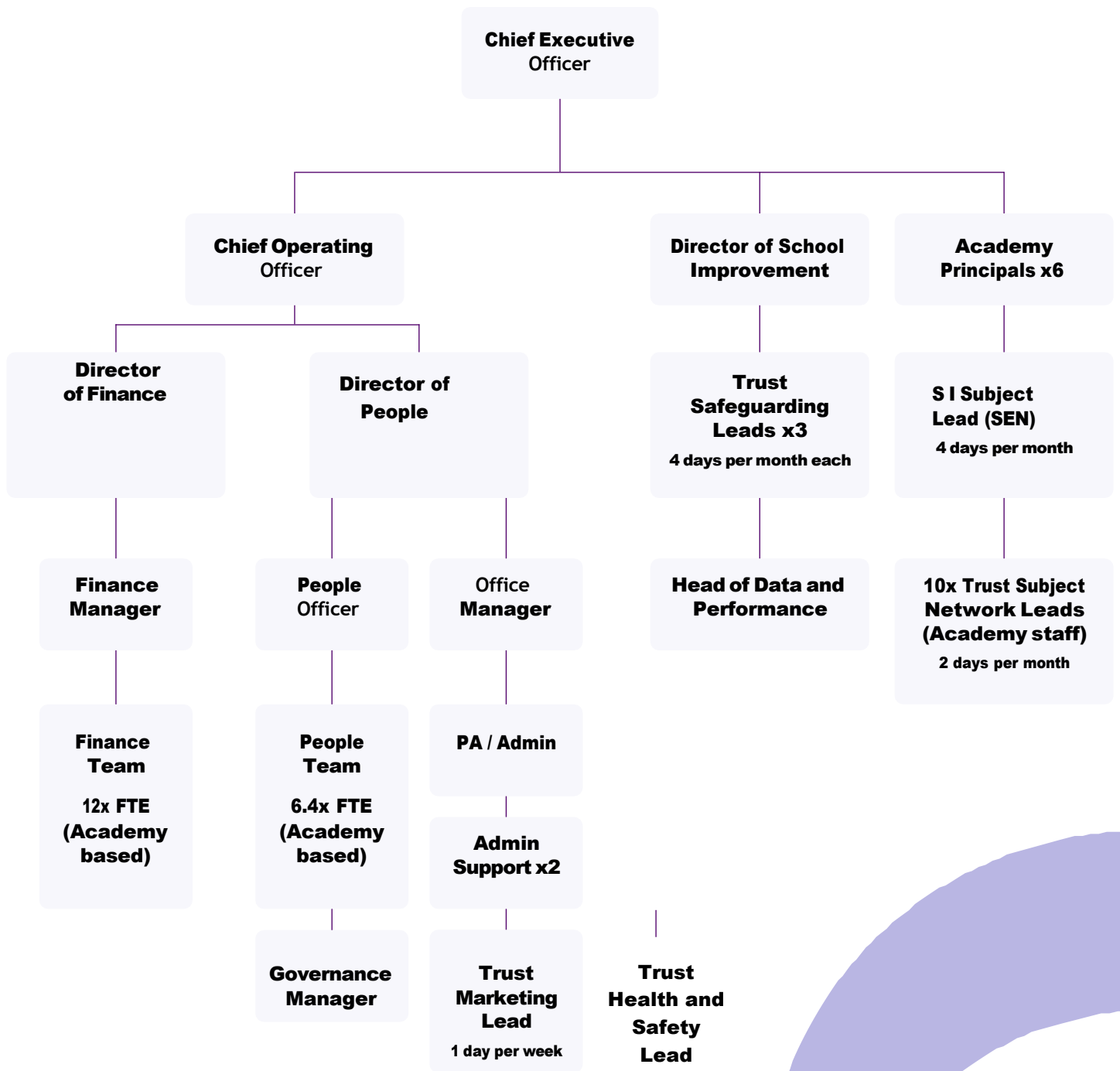
Our Trustees and local academy council members are at the heart of ensuring we are a well-run Trust meeting our regulatory, financial, educational, and moral responsibilities and commitments. They offer support and challenge in their oversight of what we do and decide our strategic priorities and longer-term planning. Our Sponsors, the Woodard corporation play an equally key role in this.

We consulted extensively on and agreed an ambitious and forward-looking five-year strategy for the Trust. The principals have joined with the CEO to develop a collective leadership approach to ensure the academies prosper and the Trust support adds nothing but value.

**We are beginning a journey we are confident will be transformational for the Trust for the sole purpose of offering the very best support, service, and oversight to our academies to enable them to continue to improve the educational experience and outcomes of all their pupils.**

This is the perfect time for a Chief Operating Officer to join our Trust. We have just recruited a new Director of School Improvement and you will be part of our leadership team embracing both the challenges and opportunities in shaping the future of our Trust building on our strengths while always developing new ones. Operational delivery excellence lies at the heart of this. Working with us will be a great opportunity to experience real collective leadership and responsibility for ensuring we create a Trust where our pupils and staff alike thrive and prosper. If you are up for this, we would love to hear from you.

# Organisational structure





# Job Description

## Purpose of the role

Our top priority is to ensure our academies deliver high quality teaching, ambitious curriculum and strong student achievement giving children personal resilience as well as academic success. You will lead the service offer that will best support and enable them to achieve.

You will do this by working as part of the Leadership Team with the Board, and academies to develop operational delivery excellence in all we do ensuring full compliance with our regulatory and reporting framework.

## Key responsibilities

Lead the journey to operational excellence in all services the Trust offers to its academies and our partners.

Support the collective leadership approach of the Trust as part of the senior leadership team playing a full corporate and collegiate role.

Ensure the Trust and all its academies fully comply with the regulatory framework within which it operates completing all statutory and business returns accurately and in a timely fashion.

Ensure effective systems and processes to enable robust and prudent financial planning, management and reporting across the Trust.

Lead the development of a Trust people

offer that creates a culture where they feel valued, supported, and developed in a way that makes the Trust a destination of choice as an employer.

- Take a lead role in delivery of the Trust's five-year strategy ensuring its effective ownership and oversight by the leadership team.
- Provide expert information and advice to the Trust Board and committees enabling them to exercise robust oversight of their responsibilities including service delivery, finance, people, and delivery of the Trust five-year strategy.
- Work closely with the CEO and the leadership team to promote and support the positive growth of the Trust.
- Lead on enabling the Trust to respond to and engage with emerging and new Government and local policy.
- Lead the governance function to provide an expert and responsive offer that enables the effective functioning of the Trust Board and all its delegated sub-committees including the Local Academy Councils.
- Lead the development and delivery of an estates strategy working across the six academies that allows effective building maintenance, prioritisation of funds and healthy and safe environments for all.
- Lead the development and delivery of a Digital & Data strategy for the Trust, ensuring the Trust is well positioned for the future.



# Person Specification

## Qualifications

- Educated to degree level.
- Finance, accountancy, operational delivery or management qualifications.
- Evidence of a commitment to on-going professional development.

## Experience, Knowledge and Skills

- Senior leadership experience where operational delivery excellence has been at the heart of all you do.
- High level of numeracy and experience in all aspects of academy finances, management, and reporting.
- Understanding of and confidence in effective people leadership and management strategies.
- Track record of effective delivery at a senior level in a multi-school organisation/s or an operational equivalent.
- Experience of working with non-executives, preferably Boards in the education sector.
- Expertise in effective governance of a multi-Academy Trust.
- Understanding the power of data and technology and understanding of how to make best use of them in a delivery context.
- A track record of championing diversity and inclusion.
- Experience of managing complex estates and working with contractors.

## Personal qualities

- Strong personal and cultural fit with the Trust's core values and mission.
- A strong leader able to take responsibility and work collaboratively when required always in the best interests of the academies, their pupils, and staff.
- An eye for detail, always taking an evidence-based approach to delivering excellence.
- Highly motivated, self-reliant, resourceful, and resilient.
- Excellent communication and influencing skills.
- An unrelenting advocate for the highest standards in public life reflected in everything they do.
- High standards of professionalism and confidentiality.
- Flexible and pragmatic but reluctant to compromise on quality.
- Displays calmness under pressure and can remain focused in a crisis.
- Champion of equality and diversity in everything they do.



## How to Apply

To apply, please forward your CV with a supporting statement (no more than three sides of A4 font size 12) outlining your suitability for the role. Please also include your contact details.

Your statement should evidence how you satisfy the qualification and experience elements of the Person Specification.

For candidates invited to interview, these responses will be explored further, together with the other elements of the Person Specification.

**Please send your completed application by email to**

**[applications@woodard.co.uk](mailto:applications@woodard.co.uk)**

**Closing date for applications:**

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

**Final interviews:**

**Between 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024**

*We will treat all enquiries, formal and informal, in confidence. All applications will be acknowledged.*

### Further information

If you would like an informal discussion about the role with the CEO, please use the contact details below to arrange.

**Gisele Santos**

**E: [giselle.santos@woodard.co.uk](mailto:giselle.santos@woodard.co.uk)**

**T: 0203 3975111**

*Woodard Academies Trust is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion. We encourage applications from black and minority ethnic groups and disabled people, which are currently under-represented.*

*Woodard Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The post is subject to work eligibility checks, an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, sight of original qualification certificates, satisfactory references and a medical. The post is also subject to a negative response to an enquiry as to whether a prohibition order has been made by the Secretary of State.*