



**Ambitious
about Autism**

Recruitment Information Pack

Director of Education



**Ambitious
about Autism**
Schools Trust



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If you, or someone you know would like this publication in an email, in Braille, large print, Easy Read transcription or audio tape, please contact: Victoria Lewis (Tel: **Victoria Lewis** on 020 8815 5435 E: vlewis@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk)

Introduction from Jolanta Lasota

Thank you for your interest in this role of Director of Education at Ambitious about Autism. I hope that you will find our mission and this opportunity exciting and compelling and will consider joining our team.

Ambitious about Autism has achieved and developed so much since it was founded in 1997. Our services continue to grow and develop. Our outstanding TreeHouse School celebrates its 21st anniversary in 2018 and continues to innovate to meet the needs of young people with complex autism. The Rise School, developed as part of our multi-academy trust, opened in 2014 co-located within a mainstream school and has celebrated its first year in its new purpose-built building. Ambitious College is London's only autism specific registered day college serving young people with complex autism aged 16 to 25 years. It now has two permanent campuses co-located and developed in partnership with mainstream further education colleges. Both new services achieved a Good Ofsted rating in 2017. Through these services we educate and support nearly 200 children and young people with autism and thousands more through our training and development work.

We are all passionate and driven by our mission to make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism and improve their life chances. Around 45% of children and young people with autism experience informal exclusion and, less than 25% progress to any form of education beyond school. Our new strategy, Ambitious Futures 2020, sets out our plans to have an even greater reach and impact over the next three years. As part of this, we aim to further develop our existing and new education services, based on innovative models of best practice that achieve outstanding outcomes for children and young people and have a wider impact on our educational community.

The scale of our ambition now requires a highly successful Director of Education to join the Executive Leadership Team and bring established strategic leadership experience, credibility and expertise in special educational needs, and to work with me, the ELT, Trustees and Governors to maintain the pace of innovation, development and success in the services we provide. The Director will work across services for Ambitious about Autism and the Schools Trust, so will lead the development of all schools and college provision.

Above all, you will share an absolute commitment to our mission and values. This challenge is both exciting and significant and I hope very much that you will consider this opportunity to contribute to our future and the lives of young people with autism.



Jolanta Lasota



Chief Executive of Ambitious about Autism

About Autism

Ambitious about Autism is committed to making the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism.

- **Autism is a lifelong developmental disability which affects 1 in 100 people in the UK. It affects the way a person communicates and how they experience the world around them.**
- **Children with autism face many barriers: these include a lack of understanding of their needs and how to meet them, a lack of good quality services and opportunities to have their views taken into account.**

As a result:

- 4 in 10 children with autism have been excluded from school and 40% are bullied.
- Only 16% of people with autism work full-time and 90% remain dependant on their families for the rest of their lives.
- Many families struggle to support their child and live in poverty and feel isolated.

This must be addressed with urgency if we are to stop the wasted opportunities for these children, their families and our society.

Ambitious about Autism

Our History

Ambitious about Autism is the national charity for children and young people with autism.

The charity was established in 1997 by a group of families of children with autism concerned at the lack of appropriate provision for their children. They set out to establish a school that would support their children to learn, thrive and achieve positive outcomes. Following a major capital fundraising campaign and a series of temporary locations and premises, the school and the charity moved into purpose-built accommodation in 2008, together creating the Pears National Centre for Autism Education. Since then the charity has grown its education services, opening both Ambitious College and The Rise School in 2014, and extended its national influencing and enabling activities.

The Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust was set up in 2014 to support the development of free schools and operates the Rise School.

Our vision

A world where the ordinary is the everyday experience of children and young people with autism.

Our mission

Our ambition is to make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism.

Our Values

Children and young people with autism are at the centre of all that we do: their well-being and safety is our number one priority.

To achieve this:

➤ **We are ambitious**

We invest in our people and aim high to make sure our work has the biggest impact for children and young people with autism and their families.

➤ **We value difference**

We know that creating equal opportunity does not mean one size fits all. We aim to make ourselves accessible to children and young people with autism across the spectrum, from all communities and backgrounds.



➤ **We are team players**

Collaboratively working and building strong partnerships are essential if we are to make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism.

➤ **We are open**

We strive to be open – open to new ideas, open in how we work and open in how we make decisions.

➤ **We are experts**

We respect and develop the expertise of our talented staff and make sure that we are evidence-based, rigorous and accountable in everything that we do.

Our Aims


1. **More and better services** that meet the needs of children and young people with autism effectively
2. **Greater awareness and understanding of the needs** of children with autism and how best to meet these needs
3. **Policy at national and local level** that takes into account the needs of children with autism
4. **Ambitious about Autism has the capacity** to deliver its strategy.

Our Services

Ambitious about Autism is focused on developing innovative service models that demonstrate excellent outcomes for young people and are replicable and sustainable. We are committed to creating pathways to enable young people to live a fulfilling life as part of their community.

School years: TreeHouse School is a non-maintained special school for pupils aged 4 to 19 with autism. Established in 1997, the school has an Outstanding Ofsted rating and is well known for its pioneering evidence-based approach. The charity set up a multi-academy trust, Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust, which developed and launched its first free school, The Rise School in September 2014.

College years: Ambitious about Autism runs Ambitious College which opened in September 2014. This is London's only registered Specialist College dedicated to educating and training young people with complex autism aged 16-25 years. The college is now based on two permanent campuses co-located and in partnership with mainstream further education colleges.



Capacity building for families and professionals: Ambitious about Autism continues to provide training and support to enable families and professionals to support children and young people with autism. We are the appointed Autism Education Trust (AET) training hub for London for school and Post 16 services.

Our research work

Ambitious about Autism works directly and in partnership to increase understanding of the needs of children and young people with autism and how they can be met. We do this by carrying out, commissioning and collaborating on research projects. The charity continues to work as a founding partner with the Institute of Education on the work of the Centre for Research into Autism and Education. We also work with Bangor University to evaluate the effectiveness of our work and to build the evidence base for autism education.

Our awareness raising activities

Building awareness and understanding of autism and the work we do to support children and young people with autism is critical to our ongoing success. We communicate with and involve children and young people, parents and carers, the children's workforce, decision makers and influencers to support the delivery of our mission. Ambitious about Autism is growing and developing its online community, Talk about Autism, to provide support and as a means to engage the autism community in our policy and influencing work.

Our policy and participation work

Our policy work is evidence-based and focuses on influencing the policies and practices of both local and central government. Ambitious about Autism works to respond to policy developments and to proactively campaign on the issues that matter to children and young people with autism and their families. We have developed and grown our participation work and are working hard to influence the implementation of the Children & Families Act, alongside other key legislation. We provide platforms for young people and parents to share their experiences directly with policy and decision-makers. We also use our experience as a service provider to inform policy and practice.

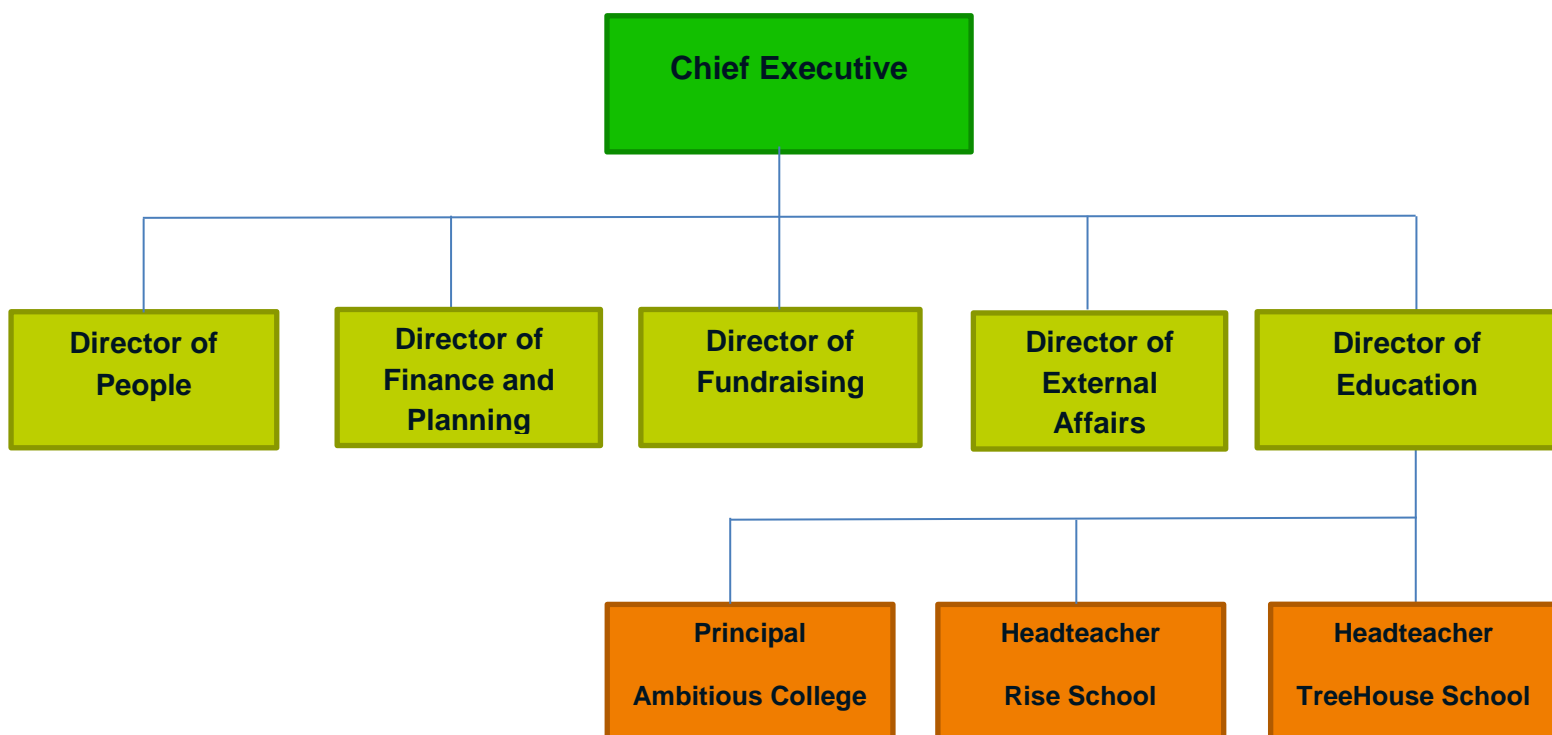
For further information about our work, please see www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk

Executive Leadership Team

The leadership team is responsible to the trustees for running Ambitious about Autism and delivering the strategy agreed by the trustee Board. The Executive Leadership Team comprises of:

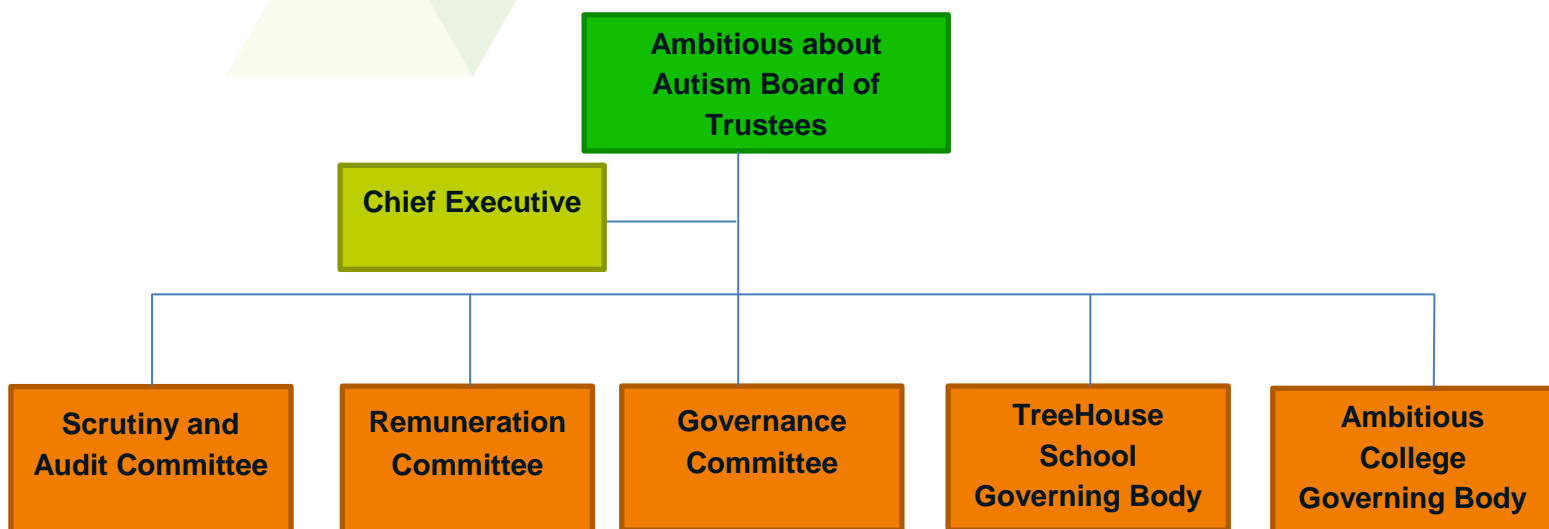
Jolanta Lasota
Viv Berkeley
Danae Leaman-Hill
Louise Posocco
Sarah Roscoe
Kerry Sternstein
Zoe Weaver
Alison Worsley

Chief Executive
Principal Ambitious College
Director of Fundraising
Director of Finance and Planning
Headteacher, Rise School
Headteacher, TreeHouse School
Director of People
Director of External Affairs



Organisation Structure

Ambitious about Autism Governance Structures



Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the governance of Ambitious about Autism. It consists of individuals who have the skills, competencies and perspective needed to govern the organisation and includes a number of parents of children with autism. The Board members are:

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Neil Goulden | Chair of Board of Trustees |
| Koral Anderson | |
| Maria Chambers | Chair of Ambitious College Governing Body |
| John Constantine | |
| Martyn Craddock | |
| Paul Disley-Tindell | Chair of Remuneration Committee |
| Michael Fiddy | |
| Lesley Longstone | Vice Chair of Board of Trustees Chair of Impact Committee |
| Elizabeth Stanton | Chair of Scrutiny and Audit Committee Treasurer |
| Philippa Stobbs | Chair of TreeHouse School Governing Body |
| Charlotte Warner | |


Job Description

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|--|--|
| Job Title: | Director of Education |
| Position in Organisation | |
| Reports to: | Chief Executive |
| Responsible for: | Headteacher TreeHouse School, Headteacher Rise School, Principal Ambitious College, Executive Assistant and other support staff. |
| Main Relationships: | Chief Executive, Trustees, Governors, Executive Leadership Team. |
| Main Purpose of the Job | |
| To lead the charity's education services so that all pupils/learners make outstanding progress and achieve positive outcomes, the schools and college secure outstanding Ofsted ratings and are recognised as centres of excellence and new services are developed as replicable models of best practice. | |
| Duties and Key Responsibilities | |
| <p>Lead and manage education services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the development of the organisation's overall strategy and operational plan, as a member of the Executive Leadership Team. • Develop, monitor and report on budget for education services with the support of the Finance Director and Heads of services. • Recruit, manage, develop and motivate the Heads of each service including the Headteachers (TreeHouse School and The Rise School) and Principal (Ambitious College). • Lead the development of the charity's educational model and support the service leadership to translate and implement them in the context of their services. • Develop the overall quality framework and cycle and ensure that it is understood and implemented across services. This includes working with academic bodies to evidence long-term outcomes and impact of services. | |

- Work with service users (including children young people and their parents/carers) to understand their needs and inform service planning.
- Develop new education services and partnerships, with a particular focus on new free schools and further college campuses.
- Develop strategic partnerships with other organisations to maximise impact, reach and sustainability of education services.
- Support the understanding of and research into best practice in autism education and promote the charity's practice externally with key influencers.
- Develop the policies and processes relating to education services.
- Ensure education services are managed in line with organisational policy, statutory requirements and best practice guidance.
- Be the overall safeguarding lead for the organisation leading on development of policies, procedures and developments in this area to ensure that children's and young people's safety and welfare is always paramount and the organisation exercises best practice in this area.
- Support the development of the Governing Bodies and act as Governor as appropriate.
- Act as an ambassador for Ambitious about Autism where appropriate.
- Commission and manage third party providers in line with organisation's policies.

Develop and manage a personal work programme

- Actively participate in the organisation's performance management processes including the appraisal and competency review process and the induction.
- Proactively maintain the knowledge, skills and networks needed to deliver this role.
- Work effectively with the Chief Executive, trustees, executive team to fulfil this role and support the work of the organisation.
- Support Ambitious about Autism's core values and carry out all responsibilities with due regard to Safeguarding Children/Adults, Health and Safety and Equal



Opportunities policies and procedures

- This job description is not an exhaustive list. The post holder may be required to undertake other duties as directed by their Manager.

Person Specification

| Competencies | Essential/ Desirable | Method of assessment |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Knowledge & Qualifications | | |
| Educated to degree level, or equivalent written and analytical skills | Essential | Application |
| Qualified teacher | Essential | Application |
| Education leadership or post-graduate qualification | Desirable | Application/Interview |
| Working knowledge of: the policy, practice and regulatory issues affecting the education of children and young people with autism and their families. commissioning and service delivery for these children and their families. supporting children and young people with SEND, including autism, in education. | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Knowledge of third sector | Desirable | Application/Interview |
| Experience | | |
| Proven experience of leading the strategic planning, development and delivery of education/other services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities either from a third sector, educational or local authority background | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Proven track record of strategic planning | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Proven experience of developing and managing an income and expenditure budget of £5m+ | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Proven track record of developing strategic partnerships with commissioners, agencies and providers | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Proven track record of working with service users to co-produce services | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Track record of working as part of an executive team and working with a board | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Proven experience of leading and managing complex projects | Essential | Application/Interview |

| Skills and Attributes | | |
|--|------------------|------------------------------|
| Committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Strong commercial acumen and financially literate | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Entrepreneurial with a flair for innovation | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Strong leadership skills and ability to inspire people | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Interpersonal skills and the ability to lead and build effective partnerships with individuals and organisations | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Ability to plan, manage and deliver work to agreed deadlines | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Excellent communication and presentation skills | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Highly resilient and able to work on own initiative and as part of a team | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Computer literate with working knowledge of all Word, Excel and PowerPoint | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Other | | |
| Ability to frequently travel across all Ambitious about Autism sites | Essential | Application/Interview |

How to Apply

If you would like to find out more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or wish to have an informal discussion please contact:

Penny Wood on [07967621093](tel:07967621093) E: penny.wood@careermentoring.org.uk

Please send your CV and supporting statement to penny.wood@careermentoring.org.uk stating why you are interested in this role and how your knowledge, skills and experience meet the requirements.

You will also need to supply 2 references and indicate which one can be taken up in advance of interview.

| Stage | Timescale |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Role advertised | 15th December 2017 |
| Closing date for applications | 22nd January 2018 |
| Shortlisting meeting | 26th January 2018 |
| First Interview | 31st January 2018 |
| Stakeholder Engagement Day (including visit to Pears National Centre and informal meeting with Chief Executive and ELT) | 5th February 2018 |
| Final interviews | 7th February 2018 |