



# **HORIZONS**

## EDUCATION TRUST

Horizons Education Trust, American Lane, Huntingdon, PE29 1TQ

[info@horizons.org.uk](mailto:info@horizons.org.uk)

Interim CEO: Jane Nolan

# **Director of Education**

Recruitment Booklet



Dear Applicant,

At Horizons Education Trust, we are united by our mission: 'empowering every child with SEND to excel through exceptional education'. As we embrace growth and transformation, we are seeking an outstanding Director of Education to join our Executive Team to lead with passion and purpose.

This pivotal role will help shape the aspiration for educational excellence in our three SEND academies across four sites in Cambridgeshire. We are searching for an inspirational leader who is dedicated not only to excellence in educational standards, but with the experience and passion to improve the lives and opportunities of children and young people with special educational needs.

As an integral member of the Executive Team, you will have the opportunity to shape our educational practices, foster continuous improvement, and drive forward the standards of excellence that are at the heart of our trust. We are looking for someone who can inspire and influence and who is committed to nurturing a culture of support, challenge and collaboration. As Director of Education, your vision will influence the success of every pupil across our academies.

If the challenge of transforming lives excites you and you are ready to contribute to our vision of excellence, we warmly encourage you to apply.

**Jane Nolan**  
**Interim CEO**



Dear Applicant,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am delighted to invite you to consider applying for the position of Director of Education at Horizons Education Trust. This is an inspiring time to join our trust as we advance into the next stage of growth as a small but ambitious multi-academy trust, dedicated to providing exceptional support and education for children with special educational needs and disabilities, including Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, complex needs, Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), and Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD).

Our trust currently comprises three academies across four sites, all deeply committed to delivering outstanding education in nurturing environments where every learner is valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential. We are immensely proud of the innovative, personalised approaches to learning that each of our academies embodies and the meaningful, positive impact we continue to make on the lives of our children, their families, and the wider community.

This role offers a unique opportunity to join a growing and dynamic trust at a pivotal moment. As Director of Education, you will play a vital role in shaping the future of our academies, influencing practices that uphold the highest standards of education and support for our learners. You will be part of a dedicated and experienced Executive Team, well supported by a committed Board of Trustees, ensuring you have the support needed to thrive in your leadership role.

We look forward to receiving your application and learning more about how your experience and vision can contribute to the future success of Horizons Education Trust.

**Mark Williams**  
**Chair of Trustees**



**Prestley Wood Academy**  
Alconbury Weald

Prestley Wood Academy is a new and joyful community Special Area School established to provide unique, contemporary and enjoyable learning experiences for pupils aged 4-19 with severe Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), based in Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire.

We are a values-led school, where pupils are guided on a clearly defined, personalised journey to gain the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to flourish as valued members of the community in life beyond the Academy.

### **Spring Common Academy** Huntingdon

Spring Common Academy is a community special school for pupils aged 3-19 with special needs in the Huntingdon area.

We are extremely proud of the achievements of all our pupils and the dedication and care provided by the staff team. We try to be the very best we can be, and we encourage all members of our school community to set high standards in whatever they do.

OFSTED found the school to be outstanding in all areas in December 2018 and recognised our shared 'aspiration for pupils' and the 'welcoming environment where pupils can flourish both academically and in their personal development'.

Our pupils leave us as self-confident young people; ready to take on the many challenges that may face them after school, within the local community and the wider world.

### **Riverside Meadows Academy** St Neots

We are an inclusive academy for pupils with special educational needs aged 11-16, specialising in Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH). The academy is split across two sites; St Neots, Huntingdonshire and a purpose-built new facility in Wisbech, which opened its doors in 2023.

Both academy sites provide a bespoke and diverse education for all pupils from Key Stages 3 & 4. All our pupils have SEMH needs and most have additional needs from the four areas of need that fall within the SEND Code of practice. We pride ourselves on providing a warm, inclusive ethos, where strong relationships between staff and pupils help learners to gain in confidence as they achieve their very best.

### **Riverside Meadows Academy** Wisbech

At Riverside Meadows Academy - Wisbech Green, our team is privileged to operate from a spectacular new academy building, carefully designed to meet the needs of our pupils.

The new facilities offer a welcoming and supportive space where we can focus on helping pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Our aim is to provide an environment where each student feels safe and valued, with resources that allow them to grow both academically and personally.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated team of staff who are enthusiastic about the opportunities this new building brings. Together, we are focused on working towards a shared vision of providing high-quality, inclusive education. While there is much to achieve, we are committed to making a positive impact, building strong relationships, and helping our pupils excel as they prepare for adulthood.





# Director of Education Overview

<b>Job Title:</b>	Director of Education	<b>Reporting to:</b>	CEO
<b>Location:</b>	Flexible working: home based with regular travel to academies in Cambridgeshire, and other locations as necessary	<b>Salary:</b>	Upto £100,000 for an exceptional candidate
<b>Contract:</b>	Full time, permanent	<b>Start Date:</b>	As soon as contractually available

**Benefits:**

- Flexible, hybrid working
- Generous holiday entitlement
- Opportunity to join the Local Government Pension Scheme
- Commitment to providing on-going training and development
- Mileage allowance paid at 45p per mile
- Medigold
- EAP Scheme

**Purpose:**

- To hold overarching responsibility for driving improvements in educational standards and overall effectiveness across all academies
- To serve as the trust's senior educational advisor, providing leadership, support, and challenge to ensure continuous educational improvement
- To offer strategic educational leadership, contributing to the development and expansion of the trust's vision and growth

The Director of Education will be an integral member of the trust's Executive Team, comprising the Chief Executive Officer, Director of Finance, Director of Operations and Director of Safeguarding & Attendance.

**Liasing with:**

- The Board of Trustees
- CEO
- Executive and Central Teams
- Academy Leadership Teams
- Local Authorities
- External partners and stakeholders



# Director of Education

## Core Duties & Responsibilities

### Strategic Leadership & Accountability:

- **Performance Monitoring & Improvement:** Monitor and evaluate the performance of all academies within the trust, agreeing challenging and meaningful targets for improvement. Support the development and implementation of robust self-evaluation processes and school improvement strategies.
- **Academy Leadership Accountability:** Work alongside the CEO to hold academy leaders accountable for educational outcomes, ensuring alignment with trust strategy, vision and values.
- **Support & Challenge:** Provide guidance and challenge to headteachers and senior leaders through the performance management process, ensuring continuous improvement and high standards.
- **Trust growth:** Lead the due diligence process for potential new schools wishing to join the trust, ensuring alignment with trust values and strategic priorities.

### Educational Standards Improvement:

- **Data Analysis & School Support:** Analyse performance and other data across the academies and work with leaders to interpret and use data effectively to raise standards. Provide an objective review of school performance, bench marking against national and local data.
- **Curriculum Development:** Collaborate with headteachers and senior leadership teams to ensure the delivery of innovative, high-quality curriculum and educational programmes across the trust.
- **ICT in Education:** Lead the promotion and development of improved use of ICT within the curriculum to enhance learning outcomes.
- **School Improvement Strategies:** Oversee the deployment of external educational improvement providers and intervention strategies, ensuring effective support for academies in need.
- **Policy Compliance:** Ensure all academies comply with trust-wide policies and educational regulations, maintaining a high standard of governance and accountability.
- **Safeguarding & Wellbeing:** Ensure compliance with safeguarding policies and procedures, and contribute to the wellbeing of pupils and staff.

### Staff Development & Performance Management:

- **Trust Culture:** Model and promote a positive climate and culture across the Trust, ensuring that all academies foster a supportive, inclusive, and high-performing environment.
- **Leadership Development:** Design and deliver career and leadership development programmes for staff at all levels within the trust.
- **Performance Management:** Manage the performance of headteachers and other allocated staff as required, ensuring clear expectations and support for professional growth.
- **Recruitment Support:** Actively support the recruitment of senior leaders and key personnel across academies, ensuring strong leadership teams.

### Collaboration & Partnership Building:

- **Collaborative Improvement:** Facilitate and support collaborative improvement efforts between academies within the trust, fostering a culture of shared best practice.
- **Partnerships:** Develop and manage strategic partnerships with local authorities, universities, teacher training providers, Teaching School Alliances, and other educational agencies to support school improvement and the trust's objectives.
- **External Engagement:** Maintain strong relationships with local, national, and international education policy networks, keeping abreast of the latest research and developments in education.

**Audits, Reviews & Inspections:**

- **Audits & Reviews:** Commission and/or conduct audits/reviews of educational performance and work with academies to implement subsequent improvement plans.
- **Ofsted Inspections:** Provide support for academies during Ofsted inspections, assisting with preparation, response, and post-inspection improvement planning.
- **Improvement Planning:** Work with academies to develop and monitor improvement plans following Ofsted inspections, ensuring that identified actions are implemented effectively.

**Strategic Planning & Reporting:**

- **Trust-wide Strategy Development:** Contribute to the development and monitoring of the trust's education strategic plan, workforce strategy, and other key priorities.
- **Performance Reporting:** Prepare and present accurate and up-to-date reports on academy standards, effectiveness, and progress to the Trust Board, CEO, Executive Team and local governors (Academy Advisory Groups).
- **Business Continuity:** Ensure business continuity within academies in the absence of headteachers or senior leaders.

**Financial Management:**

- **Budget Management:** Manage the allocated budget for school improvement, ensuring resources are deployed efficiently and effectively to support academy performance and development.

**Other:**

- Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task undertaken may not be identified.
- Employees will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from the CEO to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in this job description.



# Director of Education Person Specification

General	E	D
Educated at least to degree level with substantial evidence of further professional development	■	■
Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)	■	■
Masters level degree or NPQH	■	■
Experience	E	D
<b>Substantial experience of at least one of the following:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher/executive headteacher of a special school</li> <li>• Headteacher/executive headteacher of a mainstream school with significant SEND provision e.g. resourced provision</li> <li>• Experience of evaluating special schools as a School Improvement Advisor, HMI or Ofsted inspector or other comparable role</li> </ul>	■	■
Demonstrable experience of successful school improvement and effective self-evaluation	■	■
Experience of managing and/or advising on school improvement across multiple schools	■	■
Experience of coaching, mentoring, leading and challenging senior staff	■	■
Experience of designing, tracking, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on systems and data to support school improvement	■	■
Experience in developing and delivering effective CPD programmes	■	■
Experience of promoting inclusion, equality and diversity	■	■
Experience of managing resources effectively to achieve school improvement aims	■	■
Experience of formal processes including exclusions and complaints	■	■
Experience of effective liaison with external partners such as RSCs, DfE and Ofsted	■	■
Recent experience of Ofsted inspections and an up-to-date knowledge of the Education Inspection Framework	■	■
Current or former Ofsted inspector of special schools	■	■
Experience of policy writing, development and implementation	■	■





# Director of Education Person Specification

Knowledge	E	D
Extensive knowledge and understanding of special schools, including SEMH settings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detailed and up to date knowledge of special school/alternative curriculums and of effective teaching methods and strategies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Up to date knowledge of assessment and tracking of pupil progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of legal frameworks relating to managing schools, including Equalities, GDPR and Health & Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detailed knowledge of all statutory publications relevant to SEND, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills	E	D
Ability to accurately evaluate the effectiveness of a school and implement strategies and coaching of leaders to secure rapid improvement where necessary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to analyse issues, making informed decisions, take the necessary action and take responsibility for results	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to develop processes that encourage the sharing of best practice across more than one school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to interpret quantitative and qualitative data and use this analysis to inform planning, support, and challenge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent interpersonal and communication skills with the ability to interact effectively with all stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent written communication skills including the ability to write formal reports and respond to concerns and complaints	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Well-developed influencing skills to change practice via a collaborative approach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to analyse and deal with complex or difficult situations, with skill and discretion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to interpret and implement new legislation and directives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# Director of Education Person Specification

Personal Qualities	E	D
Confident, enthusiastic, motivated and committed, with a passion for securing the very best outcomes for children	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to work as part of a team and on own initiative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexible and solutions focused	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High levels of resilience and emotional maturity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to travel between Trust sites on a regular basis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current driving licence and own vehicle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you would like an informal discussion in relation to the role prior to applying, please contact Amy Spittle , who will arrange for a time to speak with Jane Nolan, Interim CEO.

- **The closing date for applications is 9am on the 24th January, 2025**
- **We welcome the successful candidate to start as soon as contractually available**
  
- **Interviews are scheduled for the 29th January, 2025**

To apply for this position please contact:

**Amy Spittle**  
**Executive Assistant & Communications Manager**  
**Email: [aspittle@horizons.org.uk](mailto:aspittle@horizons.org.uk)**

*Horizons Education Trust is committed to the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children and young people, and expect staff to share this commitment.*

*Successful candidates require a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check and will also be subject to a Barred List Check, to confirm that you are not barred from working with children.*



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