



Star

NURTURING TODAY'S **YOUNG PEOPLE**,
INSPIRING TOMORROW'S **LEADERS**

Chief Operating Officer

STAR ACADEMIES



Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Chief Operating Officer role at Star Academies.

Building on our success as a Trust, Star Academies has now reached a scale that requires dedicated operational expertise at the most senior level. This Chief Operating Officer (COO) role will be pivotal to our next phase of growth, enabling our executive team to focus on strategic priorities while ensuring operational excellence across all our schools and services.

As COO, you will serve as the Trust's lead operational professional within the Senior Leadership Team. Collaborating closely with school leaders and Regional Directors, you will combine your operational leadership with their educational expertise to drive organisational transformation and ensure complete alignment between operations, strategy, and educational ambition.

You will lead our business transformation programme, redesigning professional services and back-office functions to support educational delivery. Your remit will span digital transformation, people and wellbeing, estates and facilities, IT infrastructure, and governance. You will drive service modernisation, implement new operating models, and embed continuous improvement across our multi-site Trust.

We seek an experienced operational leader with proven expertise in complex transformation programmes, professional services management, and systems-level problem-solving. You will be a collaborative strategic thinker who balances operational efficiency with our educational mission.

If this opportunity excites you and you believe you can make a significant contribution, we would be delighted to receive your application.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hamid Patel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

SIR (MUFTI) HAMID PATEL (CBE)
Chief Executive Officer
Star Academies

Who we are

Star Academies is a mixed Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) that runs a diverse network of primary and secondary schools. We are a values-based organisation, committed to enhancing social mobility. All our efforts are geared towards raising the aspirations of children and young people in areas of social and economic deprivation to improve their life chances and help them succeed at the highest levels of education, employment and the professions.

Star Academies is one of the country's leading education providers, and our schools promote excellence in everything they do. In every school, the entire staff team – working in partnership with parents and the local community – is committed to nurturing today's young people and inspiring tomorrow's leaders.

Our schools work together as Star Partnerships in five cluster areas – Lancashire, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, the Midlands and London. Schools within the Partnerships collaborate to share expertise and maximise opportunities and experiences for our pupils.

Star Academies employs the very best staff and invests heavily in their professional development. Staff benefit from an extensive programme of training and coaching through our professional development hub, Star Talent Academy.

We aim to transform the quality and breadth of opportunities available to every child by working with key strategic partners. We have active partnerships with charities, universities, professional bodies, businesses, multi-academy trusts, schools and education providers. Our partnerships help us deliver the outstanding educational outcomes and transformational life experiences that every child deserves.

Our Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

We aspire to create outstanding organisations that promote educational excellence, character development and service to communities.

Vision

Nurturing Today's Young People, Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders. Our vision is wide-ranging. It encompasses aspiration, educational excellence, system leadership, social mobility and cohesion.

We aim to:

- Transform the educational achievement of the nation's young people, schools and academies
- Elevate the life chances of young people in areas of social and economic deprivation – from all backgrounds – to help them succeed at the highest levels of education, employment and the professions
- Lead a national drive based on rigour and high expectations designed to improve school standards
- Provide more choice for parents by offering them the chance to send their children to an inspirational school
- Ensure ambition and high aspirations are rewarded through all our schools
- Make a demonstrable impact on social mobility and equality in communities that have called out for change for so long
- Create a diverse network of faith and non-faith schools, ensuring every child has access to a first-rate education that embodies opportunity for all

In doing so we will **nurture today's young people and inspire tomorrow's leaders.**

Values

SERVICE	Being a responsible citizen in our community.
TEAMWORK	Working together for excellence.
AMBITION	Aspiring to be our best.
RESPECT	Treating others as we wish to be treated.

Priorities

All our work is structured under three overarching priorities:

- Educational excellence.
- Operational excellence.
- A strong Star community.

STAR ACADEMIES EMPLOYS THE VERY BEST STAFF AND INVESTS HEAVILY IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT"

Our Executive Team

Chief Executive Officer

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Chief Strategy and Finance Officer (CSFO)

Chief Education Officer

Executive Director: Education

Executive Director: Strategy and Communications

Executive Director: Capital and Infrastructure

About the role

We welcome applications from a broad range of contexts and backgrounds.

Overview

Post	Chief Operating Officer (COO)
Contract	Permanent (subject to probationary period)
Hours	Full-time. The post holder may be required to attend evening and weekend meetings and other out of hours work. Reasonable notice will be given, and the post holder is expected to be flexible wherever possible.
Compensation	£160,000
Staff Benefits	<p>Professional development is key to our ongoing success, so we continually invest in our employees through our professional development hub, Star Talent Academy. With a wealth of training, mentoring and progression opportunities across a large, growing group of academies, joining our team of leading education experts could propel your career to the next level.</p> <p>We can also offer you a range of rewards and benefits, including competitive salaries and pension schemes, generous holiday entitlements and healthcare cash plans.</p>
Location	Hybrid. The post holder will be required to work three days a week in a Star Academies office. We have office locations in Blackburn, Birmingham, London and Manchester. This role requires regular travel to Star Academies' Blackburn office, and between schools, partner agencies and other locations.
Start Date	April 2026 (or as soon as possible)



Overall Purpose

The creation of the Chief Operating Officer role represents a strategic investment in the continued evolution of Star Academies' central function - one of the most advanced and high-performing operational teams in the sector. Star Central is already delivering exceptional service and driving innovation across digital transformation, estates development, and professional services.

As the Trust continues to grow, the COO will lead the next phase of organisational development - ensuring our infrastructure, systems, and people strategies remain cutting-edge, scalable, and aligned with our educational mission. This role will champion operational excellence, harness emerging technologies, and embed modern, agile processes across the organisation.

Working alongside the wider executive team, the COO will help shape a future-ready business architecture that enables educational excellence and strengthens Star's position as a sector leader.

Key Responsibilities

As Chief Operating Officer, the key responsibilities for which you will be accountable are:

Strategy / Programme

Business Transformation Programme

- Lead the redesign of professional services and back-office functions across schools and central teams.
- Implement new operating models (e.g., regional business support centres).
- Manage change processes, including role redesigns and technology integration.
- Embed continuous improvement and service excellence.

Education Transformation Programme

- Support workforce planning and staffing model redesign.
- Align operational and financial strategies to enable educational delivery.

People & Wellbeing Strategy

- Promote a positive organisational culture rooted in Star's values, with a focus on inclusion, engagement, and staff wellbeing.
- Lead the development and implementation of a Trust-wide people and wellbeing strategy.
- Oversee workforce wellbeing initiatives, including mental health support, flexible working, and workload management.
- Support succession planning, talent development, and staff retention across central and school teams.
- Ensure alignment between HR policies, operational delivery, and strategic workforce planning.

Digital Strategy

- Drive Trust-wide digital transformation, including infrastructure, systems, and platforms.
- Oversee IT strategy, cybersecurity, and digital learning environments.
- Ensure alignment between digital initiatives and educational/operational priorities.
- Integrate digital tools to enhance teaching, learning, and business efficiency.

Estate Strategy

- Lead the development and delivery of a Trust-wide estate strategy aligned with educational and organisational priorities.
- Oversee capital planning, asset management, and facilities development.
- Integrate environmental sustainability and accessibility into estate planning and refurbishment projects.

Star Central Organisational Development

- Develop Star Central as a high-performing organisational unit with a clear identity, culture, and strategic direction.
- Invest in leadership, talent development, and internal systems to ensure Star Central is not only supporting schools but evolving as a centre of operational excellence.
- Foster collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement across central teams.
- Ensure Star Central is aligned with Trust-wide values while developing its own organisational maturity.

Operational Risk & Business Continuity

- Lead operational risk management.
- Develop and implement business continuity and resilience planning.
- Ensure operational compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements across all areas.

Line Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and oversight for key professional service areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People and Wellbeing - Talent Academy - Estates and Facilities - Capital Projects - IT and Digital Infrastructure - Governance and Compliance
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the running of the Board's Policy and Resources Committee. • Attend and contribute to Board of Trustees meetings.
Other responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Trust's vision of 'nurturing today's young people, inspiring tomorrow's leaders'. • Champion the Trust's values of 'Service', 'Teamwork', 'Ambition' and 'Respect'. • Contribute to the wider life of the Trust and the Star community. • Carry out any such duties as may be reasonably required by the Trust.

This appointment is with Star Academies. The job description forms part of the contract of employment of the person appointed to this post. It reflects the position at the present time only and may be reviewed in negotiation with the employee in the future. The appointment is subject to the terms and conditions outlined in the 'Star Academies Contract'.



About You

We are looking for someone who brings most of the following:

	↓ ESSENTIAL	↓ DESIRABLE
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of continuous professional development in leadership and operational management • Demonstrable commitment to ongoing learning and professional growth • Track record of professional development in complex organisational environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree (MBA or equivalent) in Business Administration, Operations, or Strategic Management • Professional membership of relevant bodies (e.g., CMI, CIPD, ICSA)
Experience and Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven senior operational leadership in complex, multi-site organisations • Experience leading organisational transformation and change management programs • Managing diverse professional service functions (HR, IT, Governance, Compliance) • Managing complex projects, contract monitoring, and risk management expertise • Comprehensive understanding of regulatory requirements, Health & Safety, and compliance • Understanding of educational environments and commitment to safeguarding • Experience optimising back-office operations to support front-line delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leadership experience within schools and/or Multi-Academy Trusts • Knowledge of educational regulatory frameworks relevant to academy trusts • Experience delivering transformation initiatives at national scale
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional strategic thinking and systems-level problem-solving • Strong analytical, data interpretation, and financial acumen • Organisational risk identification and management • Advanced communication and stakeholder influence at all levels • Change leadership and organisational development with proven delivery • Board reporting and governance capabilities • Knowledge of procurement, contract management, and cybersecurity frameworks • Multi-site coordination and remote leadership skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep understanding of educational operations and shared services models • Experience with digital transformation, systems integration, and service modernisation
Attributes and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwavering commitment to our Trust values • Commitment to support Star Academies' agenda for safeguarding and equality and diversity. • Sympathetic to and supportive of the Mixed Multi-Academy Trust Model and ethos of the Establishment • Collaborative leadership style that builds trust and organisational capability • Resilience, adaptability, and growth mindset • Strategic thinker who balances operational rigour with broader organisational objectives 	

How to apply

Star Academies is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. You can apply for this post by visiting our vacancies page: www.jobtrain.co.uk/starcareers/vacancies.aspx and filling in the associated application form. CVs will not be accepted for this post.

Star Academies is committed to making our recruitment practices barrier-free and as accessible as possible for everyone. This includes making adjustments or changes for disabled people, neurodiverse people or people with long-term health conditions. If you would like us to do anything differently during the application, interview or assessment process, please add details to the reasonable adjustment question on the application form.

If you have any questions based on any aspect of the appointment process or require any additional information, please contact Daniel Burgess, Resourcing Partner by emailing daniel.burgess@staracademies.org



Our commitment to inclusive recruitment

We are committed to recruitment campaigns that are developed with inclusivity at their core.

Pillars of an inclusive approach

1. Ensuring roles are designed and described clearly and accurately, removing hidden barriers that might inadvertently dissuade a great candidate from applying.
2. Communicating a clear commitment to inclusivity throughout all recruitment marketing materials – showing as well as telling candidates that we are an open, inclusive employer.
3. Taking positive action by seeking and welcoming applications from under-represented groups – using recruitment interactions and headhunting to reach a wider pool.
4. Assessing impact and improvement through effective diversity and equal opportunities monitoring and ongoing dialogue with staff.

We ask all candidates to complete an Equality Monitoring Form. Completion of the Equality Monitoring Form is optional. Any responses you give will assist us in our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will not be used in any decisions affecting you.

Confidential disclosure

Star Academies is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share that commitment. All applicants who are offered employment will be subject to Enhanced Disclosure check from the Disclosure Barring Service before their appointment is confirmed. As the job for which you are applying involves substantial opportunity of access to children it is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. You are, therefore, required to declare any current or spent convictions, cautions, reprimands, bind-overs or warnings you may have had, regardless of how long ago. The disclosure of a current or spent conviction, caution, reprimand or warning does not necessarily mean that your application will not be progressed or that an offer of employment cannot be confirmed. The main consideration should be whether the nature or timing of the offence makes you unsuitable for work within an education environment.

Use of AI in applications:

We know that AI tools are increasingly used in application writing. While you may use them to support drafting, we are most interested in hearing your authentic voice, illustrated with your own experiences and examples.

Right to Work in the UK:

All applicants must have the right to work in the UK