



BLACKDOWN EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

BELIEF IN EVERY CHILD



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WELCOME TO BLACKDOWN EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Thank you for your interest in this post. Please take some time to have a look at this pack and gain a sense of who we are and what we stand for. All Multi-Academy Trusts are different, and we are keen to explain why we believe that our values and ethos make us a great employer.

The Blackdown Education Partnership is an established trust created by the merger of two highly successful founding trusts which shared some important similar values. Put simply, we believe that collaboration, partnership working and sharing our best ideas will enable us to deliver on our mission:

- To nurture and develop the ambition, talents and interests of every child
- To break down the barriers that inhibit the opportunities and achievements of disadvantaged pupils so that they can go on to lead lives of choice and opportunity
- To create a family of schools that are deeply and purposefully connected to their communities.

We are undertaking a period of rapid growth and therefore are looking to expand our central education team.

We do not believe in creating schools which are replicas of each other. Our philosophy of aligned autonomy enables Headteachers to make effective decisions within the context of each individual school. We do not have a common curriculum, but we do have a view on excellence and seek to harness the expertise of our subject leads to ensure that each school delivers schemes of learning that are rigorous, inspiring and rich in knowledge.

Curriculum and other leaders across our schools meet regularly to network, share and moderate and the Trust operates a well-developed programme of peer-review to ensure that leaders are challenged, supported and have access to excellent professional development.

Our schools are all characterised by a strong ethos, ambitious culture and compassionate environment which together drive success. We are lucky enough to employ brilliant people who share our vision, many of whom have started careers with us and stayed to progress these careers. We want people to join us who believe that whatever their role, they can make a difference to the life chances of students. We are totally committed therefore to helping all our staff thrive and fulfil their professional ambitions. A large number of colleagues are currently undertaking leadership development training which ranges from the full suite of NPQs to some more bespoke leadership programmes run through our outstanding network of partners.

We take staff wellbeing seriously and pride ourselves on a family friendly approach across our schools. The best resource we can provide for pupils is highly skilled, happy and fulfilled staff.

We are looking for an individual who shares the same vision and values – if you believe that you have the skills, drive and vision to help us achieve our aims we would be delighted to receive your application.

LORRAINE HEATH, OBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



ROLE

Director of Secondary Education

Full time, permanent

Leadership L36 - L40 (£117,601- £129,673) starting salary dependent on skills and experience

Start Date: September 2025, or sooner if available

The Blackdown Education Partnership is seeking a highly experienced and inspirational individual to join our team in leading our secondary school improvement strategy and delivering impactful school improvement across our schools. This role requires someone with deep expertise in raising standards, a strong record in building sustainable improvement cultures, and a passion for our core values.

We are particularly interested in candidates who bring substantial experience in school leadership and improvement, ideally having had significant impact in one or more secondary schools and/or with Ofsted. The successful applicant will not only have a proven track record of raising student outcomes but will also understand how to create and nurture an environment where sustainable improvements flourish.



In this pivotal role, you will lead our secondary school improvement strategy, reporting to and working closely with our central school improvement team and reporting directly into our Deputy CEO who is the Executive Lead for the Secondary Phase. Although the post is based at our Trust Headquarters, you will spend considerable time working directly in each of our secondary schools, providing support and challenge and driving our strategic objectives.

A central responsibility will therefore be balancing both support and accountability to foster an environment where our leaders feel both empowered and responsible for driving improvements. We seek someone who can skillfully navigate this dynamic, fostering a culture of trust, collaboration, and high expectation.

We are looking for an individual who:

- Possesses substantial experience in school improvement, either as a Headteacher, System Leader, School Improvement Partner and/or through roles with Ofsted
- Has a proven track record of raising standards in secondary education
- Demonstrates the ability to build strong cultures of continuous and sustainable improvement



- Can effectively evaluate school performance across a range of metrics and leverage extensive knowledge to close gaps and uplift outcomes for vulnerable students
- Can inspire and lead complex changes across schools, fostering collaboration and high expectations
- Can build trust with Headteachers and school leaders and deliver challenge clearly, ethically and with regard to the wellbeing of colleagues.



You will be joining an ambitious, committed and hardworking team of staff who offer amazing support to schools and to each other and who are relentless in their drive to make a genuine difference to and lasting impact on our young people, families and the wider community.

If you are keen to find out more about the role, our CEO will be holding a series of information sessions over Teams where she will outline the key requirements of the post and be available to answer any questions. You can book into one of these slots by contacting Paula Gibson: gibsonp@bep.ac

Times available are;

- 18th December – 9.30 – 10.30am
- 18th December – 4.00 – 5.00pm
- 8th January – 9.30 – 10.30am
- 8th January – 4.00 – 5.00pm

CVs are not accepted, please complete the application form in full. If you can meet the requirements of this role, we would love to hear from you. All applications should be made by completing the online application form via E-teach available at www.bep.ac/vacancies and include evidence of how you meet the person specification for the role. For full details of the role, please see the job description and person specification.

Closing date: 15th January

Interviews: 23rd and 24th January



Job Specification

Job Title: Director of Secondary Education
Location: Central Team
Responsible to: Deputy CEO
Salary Grade: Leadership scale L36-40
Working time: Full time, Permanent

Key Purpose of Job

The core purpose of the Director of Secondary Education is to improve standards, secure continuous school improvement and work with the wider education team to develop and facilitate a coherent secondary school improvement offer which has demonstrable impact across our family of schools.

The Director of Secondary Education must establish a culture that promotes excellence, equity and high expectations for all pupils. Working with our Headteachers and school leaders, you will be responsible for evaluating schools' performance and provision, challenging and supporting local priorities for continuous improvement, and raising standards to ensure equality of opportunity for all within our Trust schools. You will also provide line management for a group of our secondary heads.

We are particularly determined to ensure that improving the experience of school and thus the outcomes for Disadvantaged pupils are at the forefront of all school improvement activity and the Director of Secondary Education will be an important champion for this goal.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Culture and Ethos

The strategic direction and development of the school stems from the educational mission of the Trust. You will ensure that your leadership demonstrates commitment to promoting the Trust's values and strategic plan in all areas of activity

The Director of Secondary Education will:

- Demonstrate optimistic personal behaviour, positive relationships and attitudes towards school leaders, their staff and their communities and lead by example, with integrity, creativity, resilience, and clarity, drawing on your knowledge, expertise and skills and that of those around you.
- Act as an ambassador for the Trust locally, regionally and nationally, promoting the ethos and values of the trust at all times.
- Sustain wide, current knowledge and understanding of education and school systems



locally, nationally and globally, and pursue continuous professional development that reflects the needs of Secondary schools

- Have a proactive insight into national changes (policy or otherwise) which will affect educational provision and of which the Trust needs to take account.

Educational Provision and Performance

The Director of Secondary Education is responsible for leading on the quality of provision and pupil outcomes in our secondary schools. This includes setting high expectations and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of strategic leadership across schools.



Key Responsibilities

- Demand ambitious standards for all pupils, overcoming disadvantage and advancing equity, holding leaders to account, and instilling a strong sense of accountability in staff for the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes.
- Be accountable for the overall effectiveness of Trust secondary improvement strategy and delivery and its impact at each school, covering key aspects of school improvement in particular curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.
- Work with the Director of Student Support to ensure strategies for improving behaviour and attendance are effective and impactful.
- Work with school leaders to identify areas for review and embed the peer review process to ensure robust scrutiny goes hand in hand with professional development.
- Support the delivery of excellent teaching through an analytical understanding of how pupils learn and of the core features of successful classroom practice and curriculum design.
- Ensure that school leaders are actively prioritising disadvantaged students and developing robust strategies to break down barriers, address need and secure accelerated progress
- Identify emerging talents, coaching current and aspiring leaders in a climate where excellence is the standard, leading to clear succession planning.
- Hold all staff to account for their professional conduct and practice.
- Support the line management process of headteachers through close liaison with the Deputy CEO
- Contribute to the support and coaching of inexperienced teachers or those requiring improvement through brokerage of support.
- Support schools with Ofsted preparation and inspection
- Ensure schools are ready and prepared to meet the challenges of the curriculum and assessment review and remain responsive to future changes in best practice and national



education policy.

- Liaise with external agencies to ensure Trust schools are involved in the latest national projects and research, as well as high quality extra-curricular activities.
- Provide thorough, accurate and up-to-date reports on Trust performance and effectiveness to the CEO, Deputy CEO, Executive Team and the Trust Board.

Other Duties

- The Director of Secondary Education should be committed to their own continuing professional development and will participate in induction training, staff review processes and professional development opportunities.
- Work in partnership with and enable our school leaders to work and challenge each other together. The Director of Secondary Education will demonstrate a belief that community and school are interdependent and that engagement with the community promotes school development.
- Attend meetings within the Trust / academies and external events as required.
- To undertake additional duties as required, commensurate with the level of the role.
- All staff must commit to Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discriminatory Practice.
- The post-holder will be expected to have an agreed working pattern to ensure that all relevant functions are fulfilled through direct dialogue with employees, members of other agencies and community members.



Special Factors

- This role will involve traveling between schools within the Trust (and new ones that may join in the future). The reimbursement of travel costs to schools, other than the location of the central Trust office, will be as per the Trust's travel policy.
- There will be a requirement to work beyond school hours particularly in supporting and attending school and Trust based events.
- Working patterns will be aligned with school term dates and holidays must be taken during school closure periods
- The post-holder will support the achievement of the Trust's objectives by working proactively with colleagues on projects or activities outside their direct area of responsibility as required.
- The post-holder is expected to familiarise themselves with and adhere to all relevant Trust and Policies and Procedures.
- To be aware of and assume the appropriate level of responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and to report any concerns in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding policies.
- To comply with legislation, policies and procedures relating to confidentiality and data protection, reporting any concerns to the appropriate person.
- To comply with the Trust's ICT Acceptable Use and Confidentiality Agreement for Staff.
- To comply with the Trust's Health & Safety policy, procedures, and statutory requirements.
- As this post meets the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, all applicants who are offered employment will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS) before the appointment is confirmed. This will include details of ALL cautions, reprimands or final warnings as well as convictions, whether "spent" or "unspent". Criminal convictions will only be taken into account when they are relevant to the post.



Person Specification

Ideally candidates would meet the majority of the following criteria	Assessed through
Good hons degree (2:2 or higher)	Application
NPQH, NPQSL or similar relevant professional qualification	Application
Recent experience of successful school leadership or advisory work relating to school improvement	Application
Understanding of the current Ofsted inspection framework and engagement with the transition into scorecards	Application/interview
Experience of leading sustained school improvement in schools in challenging circumstances	Application/Interview
Experience of monitoring school performance in a number of schools	Application/Interview
Experience of providing professional challenge and support to senior leaders in other schools	Application/Interview
Excellent interpersonal skills	Letter/references/interview
Experience of building effective partnerships and networks to maximise opportunities for improvement	Application/Interview
Excellent ICT skills and understanding of school performance data	Letter/references
Excellent organisational and time management skills and a meticulous approach to record keeping	Application/letter/interview
Excellent relationships with colleagues	References
Ability to communicate effectively at all levels	Letter/References/interview
Infectious enthusiasm and relentless positivity	Interview
Creativity, imagination and ideas	Letter/interview
Flexibility	Letter/interview



The duties of this post may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or level of responsibility entailed.

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You have a duty of care for your own health and safety at work and that of others who may be affected by your actions at work.

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Disclosure Certificate.





We take staff wellbeing seriously and take active steps to reduce workload. We have a wellbeing offer which ranges from gym membership and support with personal fitness to talking therapies and subscribe to Carefirst. We also allow employees personal days to enable everyone to enjoy some flexibility over attendance and participation in events that they might not otherwise be able to.

We are always willing to consider flexible working requests and job-shares and pride ourselves on a family friendly approach across our schools. The best resource we can provide for pupils is highly skilled, happy and fulfilled staff.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US:

- Eligibility to join excellent pension scheme
- Option to make additional voluntary contributions to pension for local government pension scheme members which can help boost retirement benefits
- Access to a range of continuous professional development opportunities
- Trust wide charity events designed to encourage our people to participate in meaningful activities
- Access to wellbeing provision which offers information and advice on a range of workplace and personal issues
- Flexible working opportunities
- Enhanced special leave provision, including additional time off as part of our 'Personal Day' entitlement which supports employees to achieve a better work/life balance
- Free car parking
- On site catering facilities, all of which provide healthy and nutritious meals at a low cost
- Gym membership. Many of our schools have on-site gyms, the use of which is available to employees at a discounted rate
- Cycle to work scheme which enables employees to purchase a bike and accessories for their commute to work
- Free tea and coffee.





The Blackdown Education Partnership was formed in 2023 from the merger of two founding trusts: The Castle Partnership Trust and Uffculme Academy Trust. This merger brought together 5 primary and 5 secondary schools in Devon and Somerset. Since that time we continue to grow and are currently a 12 school MAT of 6 primaries, 6 secondaries, 5 pre-schools and one sixth form.

We are also a strategic partner for SWiFT and run the mid-Devon ITT hub on their behalf where we recruit and train the teachers of the future.

We believe that education is transformative: it changes lives; and that schools are uniquely placed to engineer social change through powerfully addressing disadvantage in all its forms. The trust that is placed in us to nurture and support our pupils into flourishing and confident young people is one which we are committed to justifying.

We serve a diverse range of communities in Devon and Somerset and are dedicated to working in partnership with everyone invested in these communities to enrich our children's lives and empower them to carve out positive futures for themselves.

LEADERSHIP

Our Senior Leadership Team brings together both the Education and Business Functions of the Trust – we continually strive to deliver student and business related outcome in line with our strategic plan.

Working in partnership with our support functions we aim to harness the power of deep collaboration to ensure that through our collective endeavours all Headteachers are enabled to deliver on our mission.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

We recognise the potential in collaboration, networking and sharing the of best practice to harness our collective energies for the benefit of our families and communities.

We run a number of Professional networks and School reviews which bring positive contributions to our staff and secures powerful professional learning for those taking part.





Our Strategy

INVEST

- Generate greater central capacity alongside organisational and financial resilience to support schools to grow and retain consistently high standards across the Trust
- Invest in excellent nursery and early years provision in every primary school
- Develop our capacity for outreach within our local communities to strengthen support for families and children
- Invest in infrastructure and the school estate to ensure that children are able to learn in positive and safe environments.

BUILD AND GROW

- Build a people strategy that delivers on our promise to be an employer of choice across the South West
- Expand our offer to include church schools in Devon and Somerset
- Ensure growth both brings capacity and supports underperforming schools.

DELIVER

- Deliver the best outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils in the South West
- Be a beacon for academic excellence
- Secure highly effective governance at all levels.

GOVERNANCE

Blackdown Education Partnership is governed by Members and Trustees. Members oversee the work of the Trust and are responsible for overarching decisions, and our Trustees are responsible for:

- determining the vision for the Trust and ensuring that its achievement underpins all strategic planning and decision making
- development, review and take ownership of the Trust's strategic and financial plan and monitor its implementation
- ensuring that all schools / academies within the Trust attain high standards and demonstrate at least good progress against national indicators
- ensuring the Trust maintains its vision and values and delivers the outcomes which it has defined for pupils and the Trust.



In numbers

1242
NURSERY & PRIMARY
AGED STUDENTS

5950
SECONDARY &
6TH FORM
AGED STUDENTS

1
SIXTH FORM

6
PRIMARIES

6
SECONDARIES

5
PRE-SCHOOLS

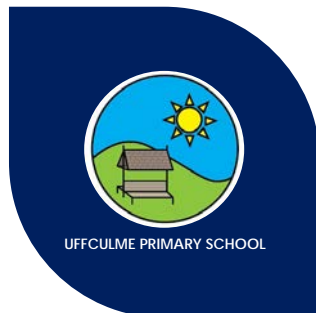
12
SCHOOL MAT

7191
STUDENTS

116
TRUSTEES AND
GOVERNORS

1041
STAFF

Our Schools



LOCATIONS

All our schools are situated in the beautiful countryside of Devon and Somerset, within easy commuting distance of Exeter to the west and Bristol to the North, being close to some of the most beautiful coastlines of Devon and Dorset.

Our schools' varied locations allow our staff to access not only beautiful beaches, but also some of the best areas for walking, biking and other outdoor activities; yet the cities of Exeter, Bristol and Bath are close by.



