

Recruitment Pack

Head of Digital Services





Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the role of Head of Digital Services at The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust.

This is a rare opportunity to take on a pivotal leadership role at a defining moment in our trust's development. As we continue to grow, we are investing in building a high-quality, sustainable digital service that will underpin how our schools operate, collaborate and deliver exceptional education.

At The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust, our mission is clear: we create extraordinary futures by empowering extraordinary people. Our schools are united by strong values, a deep commitment to inclusion and a shared belief that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

Our schools are already supported by a strong digital environment. We are now investing to build on this foundation - bringing greater consistency, scalability and strategic leadership to how digital services are delivered across the trust, so they work seamlessly for our schools and the communities they serve.

This newly created leadership role represents an important step forward. You will lead the next phase of our digital development - shaping strategy, building capability and establishing a service that delivers consistently high standards across the trust.

Alongside delivering excellent digital services, there is a significant opportunity to design and grow a strong in-house digital function, with a longer-term ambition to explore a traded service that could support other schools and organisations. This creates a unique platform to build something of lasting value and impact.

We are seeking a leader who combines strategic thinking with strong professional expertise and a clear commitment to service - someone motivated by the opportunity to build systems and services that genuinely make a difference to schools and the communities they serve.

If you share our commitment to delivering **extraordinary education** and are excited by the opportunity to lead and develop digital services within a growing trust, we warmly encourage you to apply.

With best wishes,

Matt Meckin – CEO

Susanna Taylor - CFOO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Meckin'.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Susanna Taylor'.



Our trust

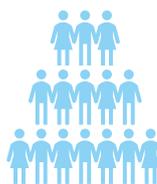
The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust, founded in 2014, is a primary-specialist trust with a strong and proven track record of improving schools and a collaborative yet singular purpose of providing an **extraordinary education** for every pupil.



16 Schools



5,500 pupils



850 Staff



Our community of sixteen schools serves over 5,500 pupils and employs more than 850 staff. As one of the largest primary multi-academy trusts in the West Midlands, our scale brings both opportunity and complexity – requiring strong systems and clear alignment so that every school can thrive. As we grow, we remain committed to building the capacity, infrastructure and leadership needed to sustain excellence across all our schools.

We pride ourselves on being front-line focused and our team of **extraordinary people** work passionately on our shared mission. Our ambition for each school remains a priority, with 100% of our schools rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, several of which have improved from weaker predecessor judgements.

Education provision across our family of schools is closely matched to the specific needs of our learners, particularly the most vulnerable and their families. We have high hopes for every child, whatever their background, need or prior attainment, and we empower our pupils to see their limitless potential so they can contribute positively to society and to their **extraordinary futures**.

Mission

Our mission defines what we do and why it matters – guiding every decision we make and every improvement we pursue:

Extraordinary Education
Extraordinary People
Extraordinary Futures

Vision

Through an **extraordinary** education, we empower pupils to be life-long learners and see their limitless potential. Respectful relationships and an unwavering focus on discovering talents and interests enable pupils to flourish and be **extraordinary** people. Together, we spark aspiration and drive achievement, so that pupils contribute positively to society and to their **extraordinary** futures in an ever-changing world.

Ethos and Values

We are a family of schools with a Christian ethos. We have Church of England and community schools, welcoming families from all faiths and no faith, but together we are guided by our mission, vision and values. Whilst each school's unique character and local community are celebrated, we are united through our shared mission, vision and our **STARS** values. These are the characteristics and behaviours that we ALL share.



2030 Strategy

Our 2030 Strategy sets out how we will deliver this ambition of scale, with digital playing a critical role in improving efficiency, insight and collaboration across the trust. While we are proud of our progress, we are not complacent and continue to strive for excellence in everything we do. The strategy sets out our three key themes, and the three 'anchors' within each theme, which outline our areas of focus as we move into our second decade.

Extraordinary Education

- Excellent teaching and provision
- High-quality support for vulnerable pupils
- Exceptional enrichment

Extraordinary People

- Empowered and valued employees
- Clear professional learning pathways
- High-quality collaboration and networks

Extraordinary Futures

- Purposeful environments
- Digital innovation and efficiency
- Thriving growth and partnerships

Extraordinary People

The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust is a mission-driven, connected learning community committed to transforming lives by providing an **extraordinary education** for every pupil.

We believe that **extraordinary people** create **extraordinary futures**. Together, through shared values and a commitment to excellence, we empower each other to grow, achieve, and make a lasting impact for our pupils.

Our people are the heart of our success. We have built a strong, supportive community of professionals, investing in every team member through collaboration and a broad menu of CPD. You will have access to a range of professional opportunities, including a strong network of like-minded peers.

Staff Benefits: Our Commitment to You



In 2024, to mark our 10th anniversary, we launched Rivers' **“10 for 10”** initiative by introducing 10 brand-new staff benefits to thank our **extraordinary people**.

These benefits include enhanced wellbeing support, flexible working opportunities and access to professional development designed to support long-term career growth. They have been created to support staff wellbeing, growth, and work-life balance.

Click here to [Find out more about our staff benefits](#)

Head of Digital Services

Salary Range: PO6 £64,970 -£68,594 Pay award pending

Contract: Full-time, permanent contract

Start date: September 2026, Immediate start available for the right candidate.

Line of responsibility: Responsible to the Chief Financial and Operations Officer (CFOO)

Direct staff reports: Trust IT and digital staff (including hub IT technicians and other centrally appointed digital roles as the trust grows).

About the Role

We are seeking an exceptional Head of Digital Services to lead a pivotal phase of digital transformation across our growing and ambitious multi-academy trust.

This is a strategic leadership role with the opportunity to build, shape and scale a high-quality digital service. You will lead the trust's digital strategy, ensuring systems, infrastructure and cyber security are secure, reliable and aligned to educational priorities.

Working closely with senior leaders, you will play a key role in enabling outstanding teaching, learning and operational excellence through technology.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead and deliver the trust-wide digital strategy
- Ensure secure, reliable and high-performing digital services
- Oversee cyber security, compliance and risk
- Lead and develop the trust's IT and digital team
- Drive innovation and build a scalable digital service model

Opportunity

This is a rare opportunity to build – not just maintain - a digital service.

There is clear ambition to grow this into a sustainable traded service, supporting schools beyond the trust and creating long-term value.

About You

We are looking for a credible, forward-thinking leader who can combine strategic vision with strong operational delivery. You will bring proven experience of leading IT and digital services at scale, with a strong understanding of infrastructure, systems and cyber security. You can translate strategy into delivery in complex environments, build and lead effective teams, and work collaboratively with senior stakeholders. Above all, you are motivated by the opportunity to use technology to improve outcomes for children.

Why Join Us?

This is a unique opportunity to:

- Shape digital services across a growing organisation
- Influence strategy at senior leadership level
- Deliver meaningful impact for schools, staff and pupils
- Create something with lasting value and reach beyond the trust

Job Description

Head of Digital Services

Key purpose:

The Head of Digital Services is a senior professional leadership role within the trust's central professional services structure. The postholder provides strategic and operational leadership for digital services across the trust, ensuring that technology is used purposefully, securely and sustainably to support excellent pedagogy, inclusion, operational effectiveness and future growth.

Working closely with the CFOO, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), trust executive team (TET), trustees, central and hub leadership teams, the role leads the delivery of the trust's digital strategy. This includes oversight of digital systems, IT operations, infrastructure, cyber security, online safety and supplier management.

The role adopts a pedagogy-first and inclusion-led approach to digital transformation, ensuring that all digital investment enhances teaching and learning, improves staff efficiency and wellbeing, and provides equitable access for pupils and staff.

The postholder is accountable for the performance, security, resilience and value for money of the trust's digital services, and for providing clear professional advice and reporting to the CFOO, TET and trustees.

Key accountabilities:

Leadership and corporate responsibilities

- The role reports to the CFOO and operates within the trust's scheme of delegation, providing professional leadership and operational delivery across the trust's digital services.
- Work collaboratively as part of the trust's senior professional services leadership and wider trust leadership teams.
- Ensure that the responsibilities of the role are carried out in a way that reflects the trust's vision and values, contributing to a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.
- Build strong, trusted relationships with headteachers, school leaders and staff, maintaining a visible and accessible presence in schools to understand context, support improvement and ensure services are responsive to need.
- Provide professional advice and reporting to the CFOO and TET and trustees on:
 - digital strategy delivery
 - service performance and reliability
 - cyber security and digital risk
 - system resilience and business continuity
 - compliance with DfE Digital and Technology Standards
 - value for money and sustainability of digital investment.
- Provide early warning of emerging risks, service capacity pressures or financial concerns.

- Escalate significant digital risks, cyber incidents or service failures to the CFOO in a timely manner.
- Work in close partnership with the CFOO and Head of Finance to ensure that digital investment, device leasing commitments, refresh cycles, capital expenditure and revenue implications are accurately forecast, budgeted and reflected in medium-term financial planning and statutory reporting.
- Hold delegated responsibility for the digital (IT) budget (as agreed by the CFOO), ensuring expenditure remains within approved limits; lease and contractual commitments are monitored; and early warning is provided of financial pressures, cost escalation or emerging financial risk.
- Provide professional leadership for digital staff across the trust, setting clear performance expectations, service standards and accountability frameworks, and holding individuals and teams to account for delivery.
- Promote a strong customer-service ethos and champion consistently high user experience across digital services.
- Contribute reports and professional advice to the CFOO, executive team and trustee committees and meetings as required, providing clear and timely reporting on digital performance, risk and strategic progress.
- Develop, implement and review trust-wide digital policies, standards and procedures.

Strategy and digital transformation

- Lead the implementation, monitoring and review of the trust's digital strategy, ensuring alignment with educational priorities, trust growth and expansion plans, and the DfE Digital Standards, and be accountable for delivery against agreed milestones, outcomes and benefits, reporting progress, risks and dependencies to the CFOO and TET.
- Lead the strategic development of the trust's digital service model, including the planned evolution of an in-house traded service capability over a 3–5–year horizon, ensuring alignment with trust growth plans, capacity, risk appetite and financial frameworks, and providing clear recommendations and assurance to the CFOO and trustees.
- Advise the CFOO, CEO and trustees on digital strategy, including the implications of trust growth, school onboarding and system scalability, providing clear professional recommendations, options appraisals and risk assessments, while recognising that strategic direction and investment decisions rest with the CFOO and trustees.
- Champion a pedagogy-first approach to digital leadership, ensuring technology enhances – and does not replace – high-quality teaching, learning and inclusive practice.
- Establish and work with the Digital Strategy Group to provide cross-functional governance, prioritisation and assurance for digital initiatives.
- Work in partnership with the Head of Information Governance, who leads the trust's data strategy, to provide the systems, infrastructure and integrations that enable secure data aggregation, access and use across the trust.
- Provide strategic leadership for the provision of digital systems, infrastructure and integrations that enable the secure collection, aggregation and flow of data from individual systems into a trust-wide data platform or "data lake", enabling end users to produce reports and insights to support decision-making.

- Lead horizon scanning for emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, advising the CFOO and senior leaders on opportunities, risks and ethical considerations.
- Keep up to date with developments, policy changes and best practice across the education and wider public sector, identifying opportunities to improve digital services delivery and advising the CFOO and senior leaders on implications for the trust.

Operational oversight and service delivery

- Provide oversight of day-to-day digital and IT operations across all schools and hubs, ensuring reliability, resilience and consistent standards.
- Be accountable for trust-wide digital service performance, including availability, reliability, incident response, user experience and recovery times.
- Establish and monitor service standards and performance measures.
- Act as the senior operational escalation point for significant digital incidents, cyber events or service failures, ensuring timely resolution, clear communication, post-incident learning and improvement.
- Line manage digital teams, including hub IT technicians, providing professional direction while working collaboratively with hub leaders on local priorities.
- Oversee incident management, service performance and user experience, ensuring issues are resolved effectively and learning is embedded.

Digital asset and device lifecycle management

- Lead full lifecycle digital asset management across the trust, including device strategy, contract management, deployment, imaging, distribution, collection, repair, refresh cycles and secure disposals.
- Manage digital leasing arrangements in line with approved budgets and the trust's scheme of delegation, with contractual approval retained by the CFOO.
- Oversee procurement processes for devices and digital services in collaboration with finance colleagues.
- Ensure effective arrangements for:
 - device imaging
 - distribution and collection
 - coordination of repairs, including management of third-party repair providers
 - warranty claims
 - secure data-wiped disposal
 - accurate asset tracking and inventory control.
- Ensure that digital systems, networks, devices and applications are secure, resilient and aligned with trust standards.

Technology, infrastructure and innovation

- Lead the development of a secure, scalable and sustainable digital infrastructure, including networks, cloud services, devices and core systems.
- Ensure ethical, compliant and value-for-money procurement of digital systems and services, working closely with finance and estates colleagues, providing whole-life cost analysis and affordability assessments prior to commitment.
- Ensure digital platforms (e.g. PowerBI and data architecture) support intuitive, secure and scalable access to dashboards and reporting tools.

- Lead the review of the current managed service provider model and the transition to a high-quality in-house digital and IT service.
- Shape the development of the in-house digital and IT service into a scalable, sustainable and professionally governed traded service capability, aligned with trust growth plans and agreed commercial frameworks, and subject to CFOO approval and oversight.
- The Head of Digital Services is accountable for the design, readiness and professional operation of the traded service model, but not for setting trust-wide commercial strategy or risk appetite, which remain the responsibility of the CFOO and trustees.

Privacy, cyber security and online safety

- Act as The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust's lead professional for cyber security and digital risk, ensuring alignment with DfE Cyber Security Standards and national best practice.
- Embed data protection by design and default across all digital systems and projects, working closely with the Head of Information Governance.
- Ensure robust arrangements are in place for identity management, access controls, backup and disaster recovery, threat monitoring and incident response.
- Provide assurance that online safety, safeguarding and digital compliance requirements are consistently met across all schools.

Governance, assurance and compliance

- Establish and maintain effective governance, assurance and reporting mechanisms for digital services.
- Work closely with the Head of Information Governance to ensure that digital architecture, system design and integrations support accurate, reliable and compliant use of data across the trust.
- Maintain clear accountability between:
 - system provision, architecture and security (Head of Digital Services)
 - data quality, compliance and integrity (Head of Information Governance)
- Be accountable for ensuring that digital systems, integrations and access controls support compliant, accurate and secure use of data, while recognising that data quality assurance and regulatory compliance sit with the Head of Information Governance.
- Support the design and implementation of additional or bespoke reporting solutions where required, working collaboratively with the Head of Information Governance and external providers.
- Ensure regular audits, reviews and testing are undertaken to evidence compliance, resilience and continuous improvement.

Growth, change and continuous improvement

- Support trust growth, school conversions and expansion by ensuring digital services are scalable, resilient and ready to integrate new schools.
- Contribute to trust-wide due diligence activity for schools joining The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust, providing digital input under the coordination of the Head of Information Governance.
- Lead and manage change initiatives within digital services that strengthen service quality, capacity and long-term sustainability.

Generic Responsibilities

Seek ongoing improvement within own area of responsibility and undertake further training as required.

Maintain a flexible and team-working approach and undertake other duties consistent with the level of the role.

Promote and uphold the trust's safeguarding policies and procedures, ensuring a safe and secure environment for all.

Comply with the trust's equality, diversity, data protection, information security and health and safety policies at all times.

Maintain confidentiality in relation to pupils, staff and trust business.

Principal Contacts

CFOO, CEO, TET, central team, hub workforce, school workforce and trustees.

Additional Responsibilities

To carry out any such duties as may be reasonably required by the CFOO/CEO.

To undertake any further training as required.

To be aware of and observe all policies, procedures, working practices and regulations. In particular:

- Employees must comply with the provisions of 'The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974' and must take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts of omissions whilst at work. Employees are also required to cooperate with their employer to enable them to perform or comply with any statutory provisions. The trust's efforts to promote a safe and healthy working environment can only succeed with the full co-operation of its employees.
- To understand, comply with and promote the trust's safeguarding policy and procedures. It is the responsibility of all employees to make the working environment safe and secure for all.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to comply with the trust's equal opportunities policy. The key responsibilities for staff under this policy are set out in the trust's code of conduct. The duties described in this job description must be carried out in a manner which promotes equality of opportunity, dignity and due respect for all employees and service users.
- To maintain the confidentiality about pupils, clients, staff and other trust business. The work is of a confidential nature and information gained must not be communicated to other persons except in the recognised course of duty. The post holder must meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act at all times.
- To report to line manager, or other appropriate person, in the event of awareness of bad practice.
- Employees must adhere to the code of conduct and comply with all reasonable management requests. This job description is intended to provide a broad outline of the accountabilities and responsibilities only. The post holder will need to be flexible in developing the role in conjunction with the line manager. The post holder may be asked to carry out any other delegated duty or task that is in line with their post.

The trust reserves the right to alter the content of this job description, after consultation, to reflect changes to the job or services provided, without altering the general character or level of responsibility.

The Rivers C.of E. Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful candidates will be subject to an enhanced DBS check, barred list check, online searches and a medical questionnaire.

Person Specification

Head of Digital Services

Education and qualifications:

Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Degree-level qualification or equivalent senior professional experience in a relevant discipline (e.g. digital technologies, IT, information systems, computer science, engineering or similar).Evidence of ongoing continuing professional development relevant to senior digital, technology and cyber leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Postgraduate qualification or professional accreditation in a relevant digital, technology, cyber security or leadership discipline.

Experience, skills and knowledge:

Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Proven leadership of technical and digital teams across multiple sites or a complex organisation, including accountability for infrastructure, service reliability, performance standards and team development.Significant senior-level experience developing leading and maturing digital and/or technology services, translating organisational priorities into clear digital strategies, operating models, governance and performance frameworks.Strong technical credibility in enterprise IT infrastructure, including networks, cloud services, end-user computing and core platforms, with the ability to provide assurance, challenge supplier designs and make informed strategic decisions.Experience managing outsourced or managed service providers, including contract performance, service improvement and operational escalation.Experience supporting organisational growth or estate standardisation, such as onboarding new sites, refresh planning or scaling IT operations.Demonstrable experience of digital asset management and device lifecycle programmes, including leasing models, refresh planning, inventory control, third-party repair, secure disposal and value-for-money decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Experience of working within the education sector, ideally within a multi-academy trust or similar organisation.Experience of leading or contributing to large-scale digital transformation or service redesign programmes.Experience of transitioning from outsourced or managed service models to in-house digital provision.Experience of developing or supporting traded or commercial service models within a public or education context.Knowledge of data protection, GDPR and information governance frameworks, and experience of working closely with information governance specialists.Experience of supporting organisational growth, onboarding or integration of new sites or organisations.

Person Specification continued

Head of Digital Services

Experience, skills and knowledge:

Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience of working closely with finance teams on capital/revenue modelling, lease accounting implications and medium-term financial forecasting.• Experience of designing, implementing or overseeing secure, scalable digital architectures and system integrations.• Experience of providing the systems and infrastructure that enable data collection, aggregation and access (e.g. data platforms or data lakes), with a clear understanding of the distinction between system provision and data integrity or reporting ownership.• Strong understanding of cyber security, online safety and digital risk management, including alignment with recognised standards (e.g. DfE, NCSC or equivalent).• Demonstrable experience of procuring complex digital and IT services and solutions, including developing specifications, evaluating bids, assessing technical risk and ensuring value for money in a public or regulated environment.• Proven ability to balance strategic leadership with operational assurance, ensuring day-to-day service reliability while evolving service models, capabilities and capacity over time.• Ability to analyse complex technical and operational issues, assess risk and make evidence-based recommendations.• Strong communication and influencing skills, with the ability to explain complex technical matters clearly to non-technical audiences, including senior leaders and trustees.• High level of IT and digital literacy, with confidence in using management information and performance data to drive improvement and present clear, well-reasoned advice and recommendations to senior leaders and trustees.	

Person Specification continued

Head of Digital Services

Leadership and personal attributes

Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Credible, confident and professional presence, able to operate effectively at executive and trustee level.• Strategic thinker with a clear pedagogy-first mindset, recognising technology as an enabler of teaching, learning, inclusion and staff wellbeing.• Strong judgement, resilience and ability to manage competing priorities in a fast-evolving technical and regulatory environment.• Ability to lead change, drive innovation responsibly and embed sustainable digital solutions.• Collaborative leadership style, with the ability to work effectively with other heads of service, particularly Information Governance, Finance and Professional Services.• High level of integrity, professionalism and accountability.• Commitment to the trust's vision, values and culture, including safeguarding, equality, inclusion and ethical use of technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enthusiasm for innovation, emerging technologies and continuous improvement, balanced with strong ethical and governance awareness.• Ability to act as a role model for collaborative, values-led leadership across the trust.

The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children and expects everyone to share this commitment. The successful applicant will undergo a full enhanced DBS check.

The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust reserves the right to withdraw the vacancy should a suitable candidate be found at any time during the recruitment process.



How to Apply

Application forms can be accessed via the link below:

[The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust - Vacancies](#)

Please download a copy and email your completed application form to hr@riverscofe.co.uk by 9.00am **on Tuesday 14th April 2026.**

(applications received after this date/time will not be accepted)

Please demonstrate in your personal statement how your career to date and the impact you have made has prepared you for this role. We would also like you to outline how you would develop and take this role forward if appointed.

Please do not submit a curriculum vitae as these will not be included in the shortlisting process.

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted by **Friday 17th April**, and interviews will be held on **Friday 24th April**.

To find out more, you can visit our [trust website](#) .

We are pleased to offer prospective candidates the opportunity to have an informal conversation about the Head of Digital Services role with our CFOO. These discussions are designed to give you the opportunity to learn more about the role, the trust and our strategic priorities.

If you would like to book and confirm an informal discussion via teams, please contact HR on HR@riverscofe.co.uk. We ask that you commit to one of the scheduled time slots wherever possible.

We will have time slots available:

- Friday 27th March between 9:00am – 3:00pm
- Monday 30th March between 10:00am – 1:00pm
- Tuesday 31st March between 1:00pm – 4:00pm
- Wednesday 1st April between 10:00am – 1:00pm
- Thursday 2nd April between 1:00pm – 4:00pm

If you are unable to make any of these dates/times and would still like to discuss the role further, please contact HR to see if an alternative time can be arranged.

Thank you for your interest in working with The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust.



The Rivers

C.of E. Academy Trust

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 The Rivers CofE Academy Trust

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