



Enriching lives

Unleashing possibilities

Building futures



# Chief Operating Officer Opossum Federation

## Ethos and Values

*Enriching Lives  
Unleashing Possibilities  
Building Futures*

The Opossum ethos is based on our core belief that all pupils deserve high quality education, which engages, inspires and challenges, to ensure that everyone meets their full potential. We strive to create safe and happy learning environments, which promote independence and high expectations of all. We are committed to providing opportunities, which promote open mindedness, empathy and celebration of the rich and diverse communities which we serve, aiming to ensure that everyone is able to contribute positively to society. We are dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyle choices so that our pupils develop physically, emotionally and morally. We are determined that our pupils will be successful and will leave us as confident, highly educated members of the community.

### **We do this by:**

- Raising achievement through quality first teaching, which enthuses and motivates; encouraging aspiration to fulfil their potential.
- Ensuring pupil voice is at the heart of all we do to enable children to become confident, resilient and reflective independent learners.
- Offering a broad and varied curriculum, which ensures all children can read, write and are numerate.
- Having an open and welcoming environment where everyone feels welcome and included.

## Our Federation

Opossum is a family of schools located in east London, in the borough of Waltham Forest. The federation is comprised of Dawlish and Newport schools, in Leyton, Oakhill Primary School in Woodford Green and Thorpe Hall Primary School in Walthamstow.

The Opossum Federation is committed to transforming and enriching the lives of the communities it serves.

# Permanent position External Advert

<b>Job Title:</b>	Chief Operating Officer
<b>Salary:</b>	Competitive salary
<b>Hours:</b>	37 hours per week
<b>Contract type:</b>	52.14 weeks per year (Full time)
<b>Line Management</b>	Administration Function including finance, HR and executive admin teams

We are looking for an enthusiastic and committed **Chief Operating Officer** to join our team as soon as possible. The holder of this key post will be responsible for ensuring the successful and efficient day-to-day operation of the Federation support services. Reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer, a member of the Federations Executive Leadership Team taking responsibility for the non-teaching administration of the Federation

We are looking for someone with:

- Demonstrable and relevant experience in financial and budget management (budgets over 10 million)
- Professional qualifications in accountancy, business management and Health and Safety
- Experience in leading strategic planning for a large organisation
- Proven successful leadership experience in a senior position, managing, organizing and motivating multi-disciplinary teams, including successfully managing change
- Advance ICT skills with the ability to use and manage ICT systems and resources effectively
- Experience in estates management including building maintenance, new building projects, relevant legislative requirements and liaison with architects, planning authorities and external organisations
- Proven business and administrative experience
- Experience with working with a Board of Governors or equivalent structure
- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills: diplomatic, open-minded and able to persuade, negotiate and influence others
- Flexible, strategically minded and solution focused in approach
- High level decision making skills
- Able to self-evaluate and willing to continue CPD
- Knowledge of Safeguarding within education
- Knowledge of GDPR within education

If you feel you have the necessary skills to contribute to our continuing successful journey we would love to hear from you.

An application pack is attached. Please submit all completed applications to:

[Chloe.foulger@opossumed.org](mailto:Chloe.foulger@opossumed.org)

Only applications submitted on the school's application form will be considered.

Closing Date for Applications: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2024

## Safeguarding Statement

Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

*All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS clearance and Satisfactory References and candidates are required to submit a self – disclosure form with their application.*

*The school is registered in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation UK (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018)*

*The school is required to share some of the data with the Local Authority and with the DfE.*

# Job Description

The Chief Operating Officer will form part of the Executive Leadership Team currently consisting of the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Headteacher and Head of Infrastructure and Communications. The role will oversee the central Federation operations and lead on implementing a Federation programme of best value, improvement and innovation as well as rigorous accountability to ensure outstanding service provision and targeted support where necessary for the community we serve.

The Chief Operating Officer will be responsible for;

- High quality leadership and management of the Federation's business functions.
- Lead for Opossum consultancy – undertaking external work with other schools/boroughs
- Estate management including compliance and health and safety
- Strategic and operational leadership in all aspects of finance
- Strategic and operational leadership in all aspects of GDPR
- Human resources management
- Central contracts and services
- Project management, including funding bids and grants submissions
- be accountable for the operation, maintenance and development of systems, processes and procedures relating to budgets, finance, human resources, administration, and premises (inclusive of health and safety)

The Chief Operating Officer will report directly to the Chief Executive Officer and will ensure that an effective financial strategy is in place which maximises funding opportunities and continues a sustainable business model for the Federation.

- To give strategic vision and leadership to all aspects of budget, finance, Human Resources and operations across the Federation
- To be the responsible person in relation to Health and Safety across the Federation
- To lead, operate, maintain, and develop the financial, administrative, premises, catering, Information Technology, and premises service and building programme in conjunction with the Executive Leadership team and Governors, ensuring that legal and safety requirements with regards to people, property and function of the school are maintained
- To support the Governing Body and Executive Leadership Team in formulating aims and objectives of the school and in establishing the policies, systems and procedures through which they shall be achieved, including development of strategic and resource plans
- To promote the highest standards of business ethos ensuring best value principles
- To support and encourage the school's ethos and its objectives, policies and procedures

## Duties (General)

- To advise the Governors, Executive Leadership Team on matters relating to premises, finance, human resources, operations and health and safety
- To advise the leadership teams and all staff on all matters relating to their collective responsibility for prudent financial management of the school and other related activity. This includes maintaining appropriate financial systems and controls, ensuring the school complies with all regulatory requirements and that financial information is both accurate and readily available to support financial decision-making processes
- To offer strategic contribution to the overall development of all schools in the Federation and the wider organisation
- To line manage finance and human resources teams
- To act as key point of contact for agency staff working to a finance/human resources brief
- To effect the schools risk mitigation through responsibilities for Health and Safety, Security, critical incident management, insurance and coordinating audit check across areas as appropriate
- To act as a key point of contact for Opossum Consultancy

## Administrative

- Ensure the federation's administrative systems and structures provide an excellent service and best value for money
- Ensure communication with all stakeholders is of a high standard
- Assist in the development of and promotion of a corporative image across the different sites.
- Problem Solve in all aspects of Business Management, when visiting the different sites
- To be proactive and highly organised in ensuring all systems/folders/files are kept up to date
- To ensure effective administration systems are deployed across the Federation.

## Operational

- To participate in leadership meetings, Governing Body, and appropriate governors' sub committees
- To advise on strategic decision making within the school's Executive Leadership Team
- To plan and manage change in accordance with the Federation's school development plans.
- To understand the effects and implications of Government policies and guidance, company, and charity legislation, for current and future initiatives
- To ensure resources are organised, used appropriately and communicated effectively.
- To authorise orders and invoices as per the financial regulations

## Finance

- Provide sound financial advice to Governing Bodies and the leadership team
- Provide an effective financial management service to all schools
- Act as the leading interface between management and Governing Bodies on financial matters
- Report on a timely basis, to the Local Authority in line with their specific requirements
- To maintain a strategic financial plan that indicates requirements of school development overviews and forecast future budgets
- The preparation of annual budgets and maintaining a regular overview of the financial monthly accounting of all schools
- Completion of all financial returns for the Local Authority
- Management of all cost centres with a view to implementing best value
- Ensure in close co-operation with the Executive team and Governing Body that an appropriate financial policy framework exists to guide schools' decision making
- Identify and tender for all regeneration and external funding opportunities
- Undertake business and financial strategy, planning, monitoring, management and reporting including policies, systems, processes and risk assessment
- Maintain records to meet legal and tax requirements and to measure both inputs and outcomes of the schools' operations
- Assist auditors as necessary
- Maintain contact with bankers, investment managers and pension advisers.
- Oversee the completion of the schools' payroll and ensure that these are processed through the financial management system
- To supervise and monitor the computerised finance account package
- Overall management of debt recovery reporting back to Executive Leadership team and Governing Bodies
- Liaise with appropriate bodies with respect to:
  - Insurance
  - Legal activities
  - Supplier/partner relationships
  - Regulatory body relationships
  - Approvals and accreditations
  - Purchasing, contracts and agreements
- Manage, negotiate and monitor all contracts, leases, service level agreements and relationships with external contractors
- Submit capital bids to the DfE and Local Authority, monitor and control of capital expenditure on buildings and grounds, placing of contracts, appointment and monitoring of contractors.
- Promote the schools' activities and premises with the objective of maximizing letting income, within agreed policies

- Manage the schools' bank accounts and cash flow
- Develop and maintain a finance manual

In co-operation with Executive Leadership Team ensure;

- Governors are fully informed of schools' performance through access to management information systems
- Governors are briefed on financial and operational issues during committee and full Governing Body meetings
- Direct, motivate and develop the Federations support staff management teams to ensure the efficient day to day provision of support services
- Liaise with leadership teams across the Federation to ensure that all aspects of school life operate efficiently and successfully, including the co-ordination of logistical support for events and able to exercise broad trouble shooting responsibilities for resolving operational issues
- The Federation meets all targets and standards
- The Federation develops effective policies, practices and procedures.
- The Federation remains in sound financial health
- Effective governance is achieved and maintained

## Human Resources

- Oversee the Human Resources management for the Federation including line management of Human Resources team
- Provide support, advice and guidance to the Executive Leadership team in the development of HR policies and plans, ensuring that the objectives and priorities are implemented and reviewed systematically as per the Governing Body policy cycle
- Provide advice and guidance to the Executive Leadership Team in developing new initiatives and managing change and maintain an oversight of the HR services provided to the Federation, including development of these services
- Ensure that administrative, personnel, services and systems within the federation meet current legislation
- Provide strategic and operational support in federation projects, partnerships, and developments.
- To understand and accurately apply the school pay policy and teachers pay and conditions.
- To be an active participant in the performance management processes which will include an annual review
- To regularly support the review of staff roles and responsibilities in the interest of the Federation needs
- Looking at the viability of staffing in line with income streams
- Pensions – to be the named professional for all pension related queries.
- Comply with statutory returns as requested locally and nationally inclusive of the submission of the School Census'
- Liaise as and when appropriate with the Local Authority personnel, traded services, legal departments, and other statutory and professional bodies
- Payroll: to manage and complete the payroll returns for the entire federation, monthly

## Premises

The Chief Operating Officer will be responsible for the overall management and maintenance of the school premises, working with the Executive Leadership, Head of Schools and administrators. Specific responsibilities include:

- Duty holder for asbestos, legionella and fire for all four schools
- Lead on compiling and implementing a premises development plan including a schedule of works, Asset Management Plan, and energy conservation
- Work with the Extended Services/Health and Safety Manager to ensure that the school is compliant with all areas of monitoring and checks
- Analyse condition surveys and report to Executive Leadership and Governing Bodies
- Ensure the appropriate placing and monitoring of all service contracts.
- Advising on all health and safety matters, including measures in the event of emergencies
- Financially appraise projects for the development of the school

- Be responsible and report back to the Executive team on security, maintenance, heating, in-house cleaning, catering, and other general site services within the premises
- To deal with all external agencies, delivering services to the school and to deal with all aspects of tendering
- To be responsible for liaison with the premises teams regarding letting of school premises to outside organisations and school staff, the development of all school facilities for out of school use
- To monitor and oversee quality and programme of work by contractors
- To be the schools point of contact for all major building projects

## Health and Safety

- To be the named responsible person for health and safety
- To undertake appropriate training to ensure that the Federation is compliant with health and safety regulations
- To develop and deliver Health and Safety training programs to raise awareness and ensure understanding of health and safety requirements across the Federation
- To formulate, monitor, implement and review the health and safety policies including risk assessment procedures
- Advise staff of health and safety practices and procedures
- Review risk assessments, monitor and implement

## Information Technology

- Manage all Freedom of Information and subject access requests
- Ensure that General Data Protection Regulations are updated, applied to all data held and adhered to
- Liaise with the named data protection officer to ensure that all requests are dealt with in accordance with current regulations
- Deputise for Head of Infrastructure and Communications in their absence.
- In conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer ensure that the Federation has an effective Business Continuity plan

## Opossum Consultancy

- Act as a primary contact for clients, understanding their needs, objectives and challenges
- Develop strong, trusted relationships with clients, ensuring clear communication and alignment of expectations throughout the engagement
- Lead and manage consultancy projects from initiation to completion, ensuring adherence to timelines, budgets and quality standards
- Define project scopes, objectives and deliverables in collaboration with clients and internal stakeholders
- Monitor project progress, identify potential risks or issues, and implement effective mitigation strategies to ensure successful project outcomes
- Drive continuous improvement in consultancy processes, methodologies, and tools to enhance service delivery efficiency and effectiveness.
- Lead the development and implementation of new service offerings or approaches to meet evolving client needs and market demands.
- Devise and implement service level agreements in consultation with the client and legal services

## Safeguarding

- To be fully aware and understand the duties and responsibilities arising from the Children's Act 2004 and Working Together in relation to child protection and safeguarding children and young people as this applies to the role within the organization. To also be fully aware of the principles of safeguarding as they apply to vulnerable adults in relation to the role
- To work within in the KCSIE statutory guidance
- To lead and monitor the Single Central Record and DBS's ensuring that the Federation is compliant with Safeguarding regulations

## GDPR

- To be fully aware and understand the duties and responsibilities from the GDPR regulation including the GDPR principles, rights and lawful bases for requests
- Develop and implement policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure compliance with GDPR regulations
- Regularly review and update existing policies to align with changes in regulations and organisational needs.
- To lead and implement strategies for all GDPR requests including Subject, Educational, Environments ensuring that the Federation complies with all statutory deadlines.
- To lead and manage all data breaches where they are logged and preventative measures considered and put in place.
- Ensure that GDPR training programmes are implemented to raise awareness and ensure understanding of GDPR requirements across the Federation
- Provide guidance and support to employees on GDPR compliance related matters
- Establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and review of GDPR activities
- Prepare reports for executive team and Governors on the status of GDPR compliance efforts, including any identified issues and remediation

*The above is not an exhaustive list and any other reasonable executive leadership and administration duties will be expected to be undertaken.*

*All positions will be subject to review yearly in line with current leadership and administration needs. Any changes in duties that are above the current scale will result in the job description being moderated*

# Person Specification

Attributes	Essential	Desirable
<b>QUALIFICATIONS &amp; TRAINING</b>	Degree or equivalent experience within accountancy Professional qualification in business management or equivalent Member of an accredited accountancy body such as ACCA Recognised qualification in Health and Safety Qualification in contract management	Degree in health and safety or willingness to undertake  Working towards an accredited accountancy masters
<b>KNOWLEDGE &amp; EXPERIENCE</b>	Leading strategic planning for a large organisation Ability to work strategically and seek and implement creative solutions Numerate with demonstrable and relevant experience in financial and budget management (budgets over 10 million) Monitoring or a range of contracts Successful leadership of diverse teams Working as a member of an senior team Working with a board of Governors Working with external partners Advanced ICT skills with the ability to use and manage ICT systems and resources effectively Managing complex projects from inception to completion Managing risk Managing GDPR related requests and understanding of relevant legislation Estates management of a multiple sites including building maintenance, new building projects, relevant legislative requirements and liaison with architects, planning authorities and external organisations	Understanding of working in a school context and how the role contributes to safeguarding positive outcomes for pupils

<b>COMPETENCIES &amp; PERSONAL SKILLS</b>	<p>Ability to prioritise workloads and to work to deadlines</p> <p>Flexible, strategically minded and solution focused in approach</p> <p>Sets high standards for themselves and others, able to work under pressure and leads by example</p> <p>Highly effective administrative and organizational skills</p> <p>Health and Safety legislation</p> <p>Strong skills in analysis, risk management and impact evaluation</p> <p>Energy, drive and enthusiasm</p> <p>Works well under pressure and remains calm in the face of the unexpected</p> <p>Enterprising, innovative and self-motivated</p> <p>Trustworthy, honest and discreet</p> <p>Excellent communication skills</p> <p>Commitment to own personal development</p> <p>Reflective and always willing to learn</p> <p>Resilient and optimistic</p> <p>Excellent attendance and punctuality</p>	
<b>OTHER JOB SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS</b>	<p>Commitment to the Council's Customer Care Standards.</p> <p>Ability to work flexibly and outside school hours as required (e.g. meetings, school events).</p>	
<b>DISQUALIFYING FACTORS</b>	<p>Indication of sexist, racist or anti-disability attitudes or any other attitudes inconsistent with the council's Equal Opportunities Policy.</p>	