



Wessex
Learning Trust

We Learn Together

Director of Secondary Phase Education



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Director of Secondary Phase Education

Permanent, 1.0 FTE, to start January 2027

Leadership Scale Points 31 – 35 £108,202 - £119,350

An exciting opportunity has arisen for an outstanding secondary Headteacher to take a central, strategic role within the Wessex Learning Trust. You will shape Trust-wide priorities, drive school improvement, and ensure our secondary schools achieve excellence for learners and staff alike.

This role is about impact at scale: leading innovation in curriculum and teaching, fostering a culture of high expectations, and collaborating closely with the Chief Executive, Executive Leadership Team, and Trust Management Group.

We are looking for a values-driven, dynamic leader who can inspire colleagues, strengthen the success of our secondary phase, and influence education across multiple schools. If you are passionate about school improvement, inclusive leadership, and delivering outstanding outcomes, this is your chance to make a lasting difference.

Candidates will need to demonstrate the following:

- Have significant secondary-phase Headteacher experience with credibility in leading others.
- Have the ability to demonstrate passion and enthusiasm for raising standards across a number of settings.
- Have an excellent understanding of teaching and curriculum development, educational policy and pedagogical best practices.
- Have proven experience of identifying and implementing effective strategies for improving outcomes in schools across secondary key stages.
- Have outstanding communication skills, with the ability to leverage influence with all levels of the organisation and be able to work effectively with secondary teams.
- The ability to combine rigour and high expectations with emotional intelligence and discretion.
- Be committed to ensuring that all learners in our schools receive an excellent education in a safe and stimulating environment.

We can offer:

- The full support of a dedicated committed team of staff.
- The benefit of working in an innovative and forward-thinking Trust.
- A commitment to offering excellent CPD opportunities.
- Staff benefits, including discounted gym membership and a cycle to work scheme.
- Teacher Pension Scheme with a generous employer contribution, subject to pension eligibility criteria.
- A staff assistance programme with specialist provider, who provide a 24/7 free phone helpline, or face-to-face counselling for every employee in the Wessex family.

To apply for this position, please submit an application form and letter of application (no more than two A4 sides) for the attention of Mr Gavin Ball, Chief Executive, detailing your experience and impact to date, what your vision would be for the post, and how your experience will enable you to deliver this. To be returned by email to HR@wessexlearningtrust.co.uk.

The Wessex Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding young people and promoting the welfare of children, and all staff appointed will undergo online checks and be required to undertake an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check.

Welcome

The Wessex Learning Trust is a leading Multi Academy Trust in Somerset and North Somerset, and as the Director of Secondary you will be part of the Executive Leadership Team who have a wealth of expertise across School Improvement, Operations, Estates, People and Culture and Finance as well as our other Trust Heads to advance our belief in providing an exceptional education to all our young people; as well as incredible schools for our staff.

This is an exciting opportunity for an innovative leader to help lead the secondary phase on its continuous improvement, translating the Trust's vision into strategic and operational plans, and ensuring high-quality outcomes for learners. This role will provide leadership, guidance and challenge to Headteachers and other school leaders, fostering a collaborative and high-performing culture across the secondary phase.

We will be pleased to receive applications from candidates who are experienced Headteachers. The successful candidate will benefit from being part of the Wessex team, and also a valued colleague within the wider Wessex Learning Trust family.

We are a modern Trust and believe that there is huge strength in our working together for the common good.

Gavin Ball, Chief Executive

Dear Candidate,

On behalf of the Wessex Learning Trust, I would like to thank you for your interest in the vacancy of Director of Secondary Phase Education. Your enquiry coincides with a very positive dynamic time in the Trust as we grow and continue to promote our vision of an outstanding education for all.

We are seeking to appoint an inspirational person with a track record of outstanding leadership and sustained school improvement, with proven success in implementing strategies to improve teaching and learning, as well as child welfare and behaviour.

I hope this information will help to steer you towards making an application but do please contact us if you need any further clarification. We look forward to hearing from you.

Paul Jacobs, Chair of the Trust Board

Our Trust



Fairlands Middle School



Hugh Sexey CofE Middle School



Crispin School



Kings Academy



Nailsea School

Within the Wessex Learning Trust family, we have 13 pre-schools, 9 first schools, 1 infants' school, 2 junior schools, 6 primary schools, and 5 successful secondary settings, as well as a teacher-training centre (Mid-Somerset Consortium ITT) and a Leisure Centre (Kings Fitness).

Many of our Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 schools feed into our two middle schools: Fairlands Middle School, located in the heart of Cheddar, and Hugh Sexey Middle School in Wedmore. Both middle schools then feed into Kings Academy, an upper school and sixth form serving over 1,000 young people.

Our secondary schools also include Crispin School, serving families across Mid-Somerset, and Nailsea School and sixth form in North Somerset.

Across all our secondary settings, there is a strong commitment to inclusive school communities that support not only academic achievement but also the personal development and well-being of every learner within the Trust.

How to apply

All candidates are asked to complete the leadership application form which you will find on our website under Work with Us, together with an accompanying letter addressed to Gavin Ball, Chief Executive (no more than two sides of A4) outlining your suitability for the post and how your experience to date relates to this post. CVs will not be accepted.

The closing date for applications is 11 May 2026, at 8am.

Applications can be emailed to HR@wessexlearningtrust.co.uk.

Interviews will be held on 21 and 22 May 2026.

The invitation to attend for interview will outline the expectations and pre-interview detail.

We welcome visits from potential applicants. Should you wish to come and visit the Trust and its settings, please contact us by emailing HR@wessexlearningtrust.co.uk

We look forward to receiving your application.



Job Description

Director of Secondary Phase Education

Role Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide inspirational, dynamic and strategic leadership and collaboration for our educational settings across the Trust.• Provide effective line management across designated middle and secondary settings, holding leaders to account for learner progress, financial best value and other key performance indicators agreed by the directorates of the Executive Leadership Team.• Drive consistent school improvement to achieve the highest standards of staff performance and learner achievement.• Work with the Chief Executive and the Director of the Mid Somerset Consortium (MSC) to develop the business plan for the MSC for growth and the integration into the core services of the Trust.• Be a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).
Reporting to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Wessex Learning Trust Chief Executive.

Strategic Leadership and School Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with the Chief Executive, Trustees, Executive Leadership Team (ELT), Local Partners, and other stakeholders to further develop the Trust's school improvement strategy.• Translate the Wessex Learning Trust's vision into agreed objectives and operational plans that drive sustained improvement, respecting each school's ethos, diversity, and community.• Identify schools' vulnerabilities and co-lead the development of strategic and practical responses with Headteachers to mitigate risks.• Work strategically with the Director of Primary and Primary school improvement team to align curriculum, assessment and pedagogy across key stages supporting seamless education pathways.• Promote collaboration between middle, secondary and primary colleagues to ensure curriculum continuity, progression and enrichment through the key stages.• Ensure evidence-based improvement plans and policies are in place across the Trust, aligned with national and local initiatives.
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Leadership and Line Management

- Present clear, accurate, and accessible accounts of key stage 3,4 and 5's performance to Trustees, Local Partners, parents, and other stakeholders.
- Lead the process of preparing schools for external inspection, including Ofsted, ensuring rigorous and thorough planning to lead to the best possible outcomes.
- Collaborate with the Wessex Teacher Training Centre (MSC) to develop and embed a sustainable pipeline of high-quality, trained teaching staff to meet the Trust's current and future workforce needs.
- Line manage the Director of MSC and play a key role within the operational and strategic Boards of this complex area of our Trust.
- Champion inclusion, SEND provision and a Priority Learner strategy across the Trust ensuring strategic planning promotes equitable outcomes for all learners, including vulnerable and underrepresented groups.
- Monitor priority learner outcomes using data to identify gaps in achievement, attendance, or engagement, and implement targeted strategies to address disparities.
- Promote the Trust as a beacon of educational excellence within the wider community.
- Influence and motivate middle and secondary Headteachers, providing advice, support, and challenge with ambition and radical candor to deliver improved outcomes.
- Line manage designated Headteachers and Curriculum Directors, undertaking appraisals, setting objectives, and reviewing progress regularly.
- Line manage relevant executive and senior leadership posts centrally as directed.
- Coach, mentor, and develop school leaders to achieve Trust priorities and personal development goals.
- Lead the secondary Heads management group with inspiration and motivation to promote shared learning and collaboration across the sector.
- Ensure leaders are accountable for embedding inclusive practices, SEND provision and Priority Learner strategies within their schools.
- Play a key role in the recruitment, appointment, onboarding, and training of new Headteachers and key senior leaders in the Trust.

Operational and Resource Management

- Drive the effectiveness of secondary school organisational structures and cluster models, ensuring resources are deployed efficiently to meet learner needs.
- Review staffing across secondary clusters to optimise learner outcomes and collaborative working.
- Work with the Trust's Finance Team to ensure resource deployment prioritises learning and achievement.
- Collaborate with People, Culture, and HR functions to promote a positive culture, encourage engagement, and proactively address personnel issues.
- Work with Estates and IT teams to ensure buildings, health & safety, and ICT systems meet operational needs and future planning.
- Support centralised recruitment strategies and other operational priorities across the secondary sector.

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

- Develop aligned principles for curriculum convergence, teaching, and learning across the Trust ensuring inclusive pedagogy is embedded.
- Support the planning and delivery of training, professional development, and networking opportunities for leaders and colleagues.

**Community,
Stakeholder and
Trust engagement**

- Explore opportunities for innovation and external support, including consultancy and advisory services.
- Ensure curriculum design and teaching approaches are inclusive, reflecting diverse learner needs and promoting high expectations for all groups.
- Promote evidence-informed strategies to close achievement gaps and ensure all learners have equitable access to the full curriculum.
- Promote tolerance, understanding, and positive community relationships.
- Maintain and develop effective partnerships with parents, carers, and the wider community to enhance learner outcomes.
- Engage with other Trusts and organisations to share knowledge, innovative practice, and contribute to the wider education system.
- Support Trust policy development and assist with Local Partner training, with a sharpened secondary-specific focus.
- Collaborate with Marketing and Communications to promote the Trust's middle and secondary schools and initiatives.
- Work with the Learner Welfare Team to ensure all systems and processes provide impact to the young people and families of Wessex, including those with SEND and disadvantaged.

**Governance,
Compliance and
Accountability**

- Ensure compliance with the Education Acts, academy agreements, Instruments of Governance, and other relevant legislation, including safeguarding, health, and safety requirements.
- Support Trustees, ELT, and Local Partnership Boards in fulfilling their statutory and strategic responsibilities.
- Maintain a culture of accountability, collaborative leadership, and high professional standards across Trust settings.
- Translate Trust and academy priorities into actionable plans with clear timelines and measurable outcomes.

**Additional Duties
and Professional
Expectations**

- Ensure the aims, priorities and policies of the Trust are adhered to.
- Act as a positive representative of the Trust and its learners in all circumstances and at all times.
- Carry out any other duties as commensurate within the grade, as reasonably requested by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Board of Trustees.
- Employees are expected to be courteous to colleagues and provide a welcoming environment to all, maintaining a professional standard of demeanour and dress.
- Attending relevant meetings, as required.
- Participating in training and other learning activities and performance development, as required.

Accountability

- Accountable for the day-to-day leadership and management of middle and secondary school improvement within the Trust.
- Responsible for inspiring a culture of collaboration, shared accountability, and continuous improvement.
- Develop effective communication systems to ensure transparency and engagement across schools, parents, carers, and community stakeholders.
- Work collegiately with the Deputy Chief Executive, ELT, Trustees, and Local Partners to shape the Trust's organisational structure and secondary strategy.

Safeguarding and Child Protection	<p>This job description is current and will be tailored to the successful applicant ensuring that the priorities and the values of the organisation are aligned. Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, not all individual tasks undertaken will necessarily have been identified. The job description will be reviewed annually as part of the appraisal process or at other appropriate times as determined by the Trust.</p> <p>The Wessex Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All staff working within the Trust are expected to share a commitment to doing this. You will be expected to follow and promote the procedures in the child protection and safeguarding policy and report any concerns in accordance with agreed procedures. If your own conduct in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people gives cause for concern the Trust’s child protection procedures will be followed alongside implementation of the Trust disciplinary procedures.</p>
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Person Specification		
Category	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications & Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified teacher status (QTS) with substantial experience in the secondary phase. • Evidence of senior leadership experience as a Headteacher or equivalent. • Degree-level qualification or equivalent professional experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) or equivalent senior leadership qualification. • Additional leadership/management qualifications relevant to Trusts.
Leadership & Strategic Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven track record of strategic leadership across secondary schools, driving improvement in outcomes for learners. • Ability to translate vision into actionable plans with measurable impact. • Experience in developing and embedding trust-wide priorities across multiple schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in all-through leadership or cross-phase curriculum alignment. • Experience in shaping regional or national educational strategy.
School Improvement & Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated ability to lead school improvement initiatives and achieve consistently high standards. • Strong understanding of curriculum design, assessment, and teaching & learning strategies. • Ability to promote innovative curriculum practices across multiple schools. • Experience of integrating primary and secondary curriculum pathways for seamless education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in introducing innovative pedagogical approaches or digital learning strategies.
Leadership of People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of line management, coaching, and mentoring of senior leaders to achieve high performance. • Ability to inspire, motivate, and hold leaders accountable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of leading cross-phase or multi-school leadership teams.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of recruiting, developing, and retaining leadership talent. 	
Inclusion & SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of SEND statutory requirements and best practice. • Proven commitment to inclusive education and ensuring equitable outcomes for all learners. • Ability to use data effectively to identify and address disparities. • Experience in developing, monitoring, and evaluating priority learner strategies to close attainment and engagement gaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of designing interventions for vulnerable or underrepresented learners. • Familiarity with alternative provision and additional learning support structures.
Operational & Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of managing budgets, staffing, and resources efficiently across multiple schools. • Ability to deploy resources strategically to maximise learner outcomes, including SEND and priority learners. • Knowledge of health, safety, ICT, and estates management in a school context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of financial planning at trust-wide or MAT-level scale.
Stakeholder Engagement & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to communicate effectively with Trustees, ELT, staff, parents, carers, and wider community stakeholders. • Experience of building effective partnerships with external organisations. • Ability to promote the Trust and its schools as centres of excellence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of influencing policy or practice at local or national education networks.
Governance, Compliance & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong understanding of governance frameworks, statutory obligations, and inspection requirements (Ofsted, DfE guidelines). • Ability to provide accurate, timely, and accessible performance reporting. • Experience of translating strategy into measurable outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working closely with governing boards or trustees at MAT-level.
Personal Attributes & Professional Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspirational, dynamic, and strategic thinker. • Committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. • Resilient, confident, and able to manage complex challenges effectively. • Collaborative, with the ability to build trust and maintain professional relationships. • Strong ethical standards and commitment to safeguarding. 	
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to travel across schools in the Trust as required. • Commitment to ongoing professional learning and development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in a large multi-academy Trust or similar educational organisation.