

The logo for Challenge Partners, featuring the words "CHALLENGE" and "PARTNERS" in a bold, teal, sans-serif font. The word "CHALLENGE" is positioned above "PARTNERS". To the right of "CHALLENGE", there are three teal diagonal lines that sweep upwards and to the right, suggesting motion or a stylized 'E'. The logo is set against a white circular background.

CHALLENGE
PARTNERS

A green circular graphic containing white text. The text is arranged in three lines: "Recruitment Pack", "School Improvement Programmes", and "Manager: Maternity Cover".

Recruitment Pack
School Improvement Programmes
Manager: Maternity Cover

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Charity number: 1149266
Company registered number: 08048330
Registered in England and Wales

About Challenge Partners

Challenge Partners is a national partnership of schools and trusts who believe the best way to reduce educational inequality and enhance the life chances of children is through collaboration, challenge and leadership development. We work together to ensure every school community can benefit from the combined wisdom of the education system.

Our national partnership currently reaches more than 420,000 pupils in over 540 schools and 137 trusts across the country. All fervently believe that working together is the best way to reduce educational inequality and increase the life chances of all children.

School leadership plays a significant role in pupil outcomes, and our practitioner-led programmes and networks offer unique continuing professional development (CPD) for leaders at all levels - from classroom teachers to CEOs.

And our approach works; pupils in our schools consistently achieve more and progress faster than national averages, despite serving a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils. Inspection and peer review outcomes demonstrate how long-term participation in Challenge Partners leads to sustained improvements over time.

By rapidly sharing innovative practices across the country, we ensure that the most effective support reaches the children who need it most.

You can read our 5-year strategy [here](#) and our latest impact report [here](#).

Working at Challenge Partners

At Challenge Partners, we invest in our people to ensure they feel valued, supported and inspired to make a real impact on the life chances of children.

Our culture is built on our six core values: excellence, collaboration, innovation, equity, challenge and courageous leadership. We are committed to cultivating a workplace that promotes professional development, where everyone has the opportunity to take on new challenges and contribute to reducing educational inequality through meaningful work.

As a small but effective team with big ambitions, we offer the chance to work across the organisation and collaborate with executive leaders and practitioners - creating an environment where ideas are shared and progress is driven collectively.

Listening to and learning from our staff is important to us and we are passionate about championing diversity, equity and inclusion to create a positive workplace where every individual feels a true sense of belonging and is encouraged to bring their authentic selves to work.

“Joining Challenge Partners has been a really positive experience - the team has been super welcoming and I’ve felt supported from day one. I’ve enjoyed getting stuck into the work and learning more about how we make an impact.”

Mohamed, Partnership Coordinator (joined 2024)

Benefits of working for Challenge Partners

Work-life balance

- Blended working with two in-office days and more when required (Tuesday to Thursday) during school term time as per our current Ways of Working policy
- Flexibility to work from home during school holidays and flexible start and finish time
- Extended leave policy (for travel, study, personal development etc.) after 3 years of service

Annual leave

- 33 days of annual leave (inclusive of bank holidays)
- 3 bonus days of annual leave over the Christmas period, as determined by Challenge Partners

Employer pension contributions

- We match up to 5% of your own contributions

Health and wellbeing support

- Confidential 24/7 helpline through our Employee Assistance Programme
- SimplyHealth cash plan (GP, dental, optical, physiotherapy and more)

Training and development

- Access to training programmes, coaching and mentoring
- Opportunities to work closely with senior leaders and practitioners in a small and collaborative team

Family-friendly policies

- Enhanced maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave pay (conditions apply)
- Compassionate and dependants' leave

Connection and celebration

- A 1-year anniversary gift voucher to celebrate employee contributions
- Monthly Whole Team Meetings to deepen connections and celebrate achievements across the organisation

"I have worked at Challenge Partners for over five years, in three different roles. It is a wonderful place to work that offers the perfect balance of support and challenge. I am frequently pushed beyond my comfort zone to take on new areas of development, which has helped me to further my career."

Georgina, Partnership Experience Manager (joined 2019)

School Improvement Programmes Manager (Maternity Cover)

Salary: Full-time £38,814 - £43,139 per annum (depending on experience and FTE)

Reporting to: Head of Programmes and Network

Line Managing: 1–2 persons

Contract Type: 12-months fixed-term (Maternity Cover- might be potentially extended)

Working Pattern: 37.5 hours per week. Our core hours are 09:30 - 16:00 from Monday to Friday. This role can be either full-time or part-time (0.8 FTE) and we are open to flexible working requests.

Start Date: June 2025 (Specific date to be agreed)

Location: This is a blended-working role with two in-office days (Tuesday-Thursday) during term time and the flexibility to work from home during school holidays. Occasional travel to schools and events will be required. We are currently based at Resource for London near Holloway Road station, however, our office will be moving to another location in London in the coming months.

About the role

The School Improvement Programmes Manager will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of three national programmes: [Growing the Top](#), the [SEND Developmental Peer Review](#), and the [Trust Leaders' Network](#).

Working closely with the Review Programmes Manager, they will provide leadership to the programmes team, ensuring high-quality programme management and embedding scalable and sustainable processes to support our ambition of reaching over half a million children annually by 2027.

The School Improvement Programmes Manager will line-manage Programme Leads and Partnership Coordinators and will act as a role model, coaching and supporting colleagues in addressing complex and sensitive issues raised by schools and programme facilitators. With a proactive and solutions-focused mindset, they will foster a culture of continuous improvement.

As a middle leader in a matrix team, they will possess the ability to influence and inspire colleagues across different teams and levels. They will be collaborative and adaptable, able to navigate complexity while ensuring clarity of purpose and shared accountability. They will bring strong emotional intelligence, motivating and empowering others to lead while providing the necessary guidance and support to maintain high standards of delivery.

Key Responsibilities

The School Improvement Programmes Manager will have the following key areas of responsibility and will be expected to undertake other responsibilities commensurate with the role as requested:

1. Programme Management

- Oversee programme delivery, ensuring high-quality, impact and continuous improvement.
- Lead the design and content development for programme events, in collaboration with senior leaders.
- Monitor data and feedback trends to maintain excellent partner experience and engagement.
- Act as a point of escalation for delivery challenges, collaborating with senior leaders and other teams to resolve issues.
- Ensure budgets are managed effectively, reporting any variances to the Finance and Operations Manager.

2. Programme Development

- Lead practitioner advisory groups, setting agendas, facilitating meetings and using insights to shape programme direction.
- Recruit and support programme facilitators, ensuring they meet Challenge Partners' high standards.
- Lead the design and delivery of two programme facilitator training sessions, in collaboration with senior leaders and external stakeholders.
- Oversee the group matching process for schools participating in Growing the Top and the SEND Developmental Peer Review.
- Work with the Partnerships Team to support school recruitment and retention.
- Implement scalable onboarding and induction processes to enhance partner engagement.

3. Line Management & Team Leadership

- Oversee ways of working within the programmes team, ensuring effective collaboration and alignment with Challenge Partners' culture, strategy and priorities.
- Provide high-quality line management, including regular one-to-ones, performance reviews, and return-to-work support.
- Identify and facilitate professional development opportunities for direct reports.
- Ensure accountability and high standards in programme delivery.

4. Leadership Responsibilities for all Managers

- Foster a collaborative, high-performance team culture.
- Provide coaching and mentorship to develop team members' potential.
- Drive innovation and professional development, aligning with Challenge Partners' vision and growth strategy.

- Collaborate with Managers across teams to align efforts, ensuring a seamless experience for our school and trust partners.
- Contribute to organisational strategy, future planning, and priorities as part of the middle leadership team.

5. General Responsibilities

- Champion Challenge Partners' vision, values, and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Take ownership of personal development and actively contribute to team learning.
- Work flexibly, undertaking additional duties as required.
- Maintain high standards of health, safety, and welfare for yourself and others.
- Attend events and external meetings, which may require travel and occasional overnight stays.

Person Specification

- Strong commitment to our vision, mission
- Proven experience in delivering programmes or projects
- Knowledge or experience of the education sector
- Excellent interpersonal skills to build positive relationships with diverse stakeholders.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Experience in leading teams and developing others (formal line management experience is not required if transferable people management skills can be demonstrated)
- Proactive in improving processes, identifying risks and solving problems
- Exceptional organisational skills, with the ability to prioritise and adapt to changing needs

How to apply

We would really welcome your application via Be Applied- please [click here](#). **Application deadline:** by **09:30am on Monday 24th March 2025**.

A note on AI

At Challenge Partners, we are committed to a fair and inclusive recruitment process. We don't use Artificial Intelligence (AI) for recruitment - applications are reviewed by members of the team.

Whilst we recognise that AI can be a useful tool for tasks like proofreading, we encourage you to share genuine examples from your own experience so we can better understand your unique skills and perspective. Authenticity is important to us and we want to hear your voice throughout the application process.

DEI Statement

Challenge Partners is committed to further enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion within our team and we welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons regardless of their race, gender, sex, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age.

Safeguarding Statement

Challenge Partners is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, beneficiaries and staff. We expect all employees, consultants and volunteers to share this commitment. All offers of employment or contracts with us are subject to a satisfactory DBS check and references.

“Balancing parenthood and work presents its challenges, but Challenge Partners’ supportive environment made the transition after my maternity leave smoother than I expected. I’ve grown through two roles here, each stretching me and providing valuable training and development opportunities.”

Rebecca, National Networks Lead (joined 2019)