

The logo for TreeHouse School, featuring a stylized green triangle with a smaller orange triangle inside it.

**TreeHouse  
School**

**Head of Business and Operations  
Recruitment Pack 2024**

## Contents

<b>Welcome from Executive Head .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Ambitious about Autism .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our Schools and Colleges .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Job Description .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Person Specification .....</b>	<b>12</b>

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## Welcome from Executive Head



Thank you for your interest in the role of Head of Business and Operations. I hope that you will find our mission and this opportunity exciting and compelling and will consider joining our team. If you are ambitious and forward thinking this is a role for you. It offers a unique opportunity to join a thoroughly values driven organisation.

Ambitious about Autism has achieved and developed significantly since it was founded in 1997. Our education services continue to grow and develop to support the increasing and changing needs of autistic children and young people across a range of settings.

TreeHouse School continues to be innovative in meeting the needs of autistic children and young people with learning disabilities, the Rise School opened in 2014 as the first special free school in our multi-academy trust and is co-located with Springwest Academy, Ambitious College opened in the same year and was London's first autism- specific registered day college serving autistic young people with learning disabilities, aged 16 to 25 years and now has two permanent campuses co-located and developed in partnership with mainstream further education colleges. We also offer Supported Internship programmes at the Whittington Trust and a new one opening with the Merlin Group in September 2024. Spring School was opened in September 2023 and has a temporary home in Norbiton, Surrey and at the same time we merged with St John's in Brighton whereby we added St John's residential college to our portfolio.

We are now supporting over 450 autistic children and young people and thousands more through our national policy and practice influencing work.

We are looking for a Head of Business and Operations at Treehouse School and for someone who will share an absolute commitment to our mission and values. We are searching for an honest, approachable, adaptable, emotionally intelligent, resilient, patient, motivated, knowledgeable, and excellent communicator who can demonstrate that they work with integrity and respect for all.

This challenge is exciting and significant, and I hope you will consider this opportunity to contribute to our future and the lives of autistic children and young people. We very much welcome visits from prospective candidates considering this exciting role.

Sam Newton  
Executive Head

## Ambitious about Autism

### Our History

Our journey started in 1997 with a small group of parents deciding that at a time when autistic children faced little or no chance of receiving a full and rewarding education, they would set up their own school.

This pioneering approach has evolved over time as we've adapted and grown. What started with four pupils has developed into a national charity that has supported thousands of autistic children and young people.

We are ambitious by name and by ambitious by nature! We started as one school and have become a movement for change. Today we run both schools and colleges that focus on improving the quality of life of pupils and learners to enable them to learn, thrive and achieve. In addition, our national services provide information and practical support to autistic young people, run a Youth Network, an Internship Programme and actively campaign for policy change.

## We are Ambitious about Autism

### Our vision

Our vision is a future where every autistic child and young person can be themselves and realise their ambitions.

### Our mission

We stand with autistic children and young people, champion their rights and create opportunities.



## Our Schools and Colleges

### Treehouse School

TreeHouse School is registered with the [Department for Education](#) as a non-maintained special school.

The school was founded in 1997 by parents of autistic children dedicated to educating and supporting autistic pupils with learning disabilities. The school is located in Muswell Hill, North London and currently has 100 pupils aged 4-19, from across London and the Home Counties.

All pupils have an Education, Health and Care (EHCP) plan and are supported by a staff team consisting of qualified teachers and teaching assistants, Allied Health Professionals including speech and language therapists, and occupational therapists. We also have specialist Positive Behaviour Support staff.

Pupils at TreeHouse School receive individual and personalised learning and support suited to their needs, talents and interests.



### Ambitious College

Ambitious College is an independent specialist day college dedicated to supporting autistic young people aged 16–25.

We believe that every young person who attends Ambitious College deserves a fulfilling, happy, and rewarding life. Our educational approach focuses, at all times, on the individual. We offer a highly personalised curriculum and positively support our learners to acquire new skills and take part in everyday life. We are located within two mainstream further education college campuses: the College of Haringey, Enfield, and North East London (CONEL), and West Thames College, West London. At each campus, our team of dedicated and passionate professionals includes teachers, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, employment specialists, behaviour analysts, and specialist support staff. They do not take a 'one size fits all' approach. Instead, they work together to develop learning and support approaches tailored to each individual student.



### **Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust (The Rise School and Spring School)**

The Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust was established as a Multi-Academy Trust to develop new free schools. The Trust shares Ambitious about Autism's vision and mission and through the Trust, we intend to develop more schools to reach the autistic children and young people who need our specialist support.

In 2014 the Trust set up our first special free school, The Rise School, in west London, dedicated to educating pupils with autism aged 4-19.

In 2019 we opened The Rise School Sixth Form in partnership with and co-located at West Thames College. Pupils at The Rise School access the national curriculum at approximately the same level as their neuro-typical peers but are provided specialist support and challenge they need to learn and succeed in the world beyond school.

In September 2023 we opened Spring School on a temporary site in Norbiton. The school will have its permanent home in Kingston and will eventually support 90 autistic pupils aged 4-19.



### **St John's College**

In September 2023 we merged with St Johns Charity in Brighton. As a result, St. John's College is now also part of the Ambitious about Autism group.

This provision offers autistic young people (16-25 years), specialist education and expertise to help them gain the knowledge and skills they need to achieve significant life enhancing outcomes and is our first setting offering both day and residential provision.



## Job description

<b>Job title</b>	<b>Head of Business and Operations</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Treehouse School</b>
<b>Job band</b>	<b>Band 7 – Circa £65,000 (Depending on skills and experience)</b>	<b>Reporting to</b>	<b>Head of School</b>
<b>Hours</b>	<b>40 hours per week</b>	<b>Line manages</b>	<b>Operations Managers x 2 Data Manager School Office Manager Facilities Learning Support Coordinators</b>

**Approved by: Director of Education**

**Updated: March 2024**

### **Role purpose**

To lead on all aspects of business and operations in TreeHouse School.

To have strategic ownership of induction and training needs required for the support team at TreeHouse School and work collaboratively with the Senior Leadership Team around the day-to-day care needs of learners and practices, policies and training aligned to this. Effectively manage, record and report the school's finances, including budget planning, monitoring, control and adherence to regulatory requirements with Finance Business Partner.

This role will support, promote, and celebrate the development and embedding of an inclusive culture, practice and ways of working. You will support and coordinate the drafting, implementation and evaluation of our EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) strategy and plans working with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), EDI committee, staff, networks and your People team colleagues.

### **Key accountabilities and dimensions**

#### **Financial planning and management**

Effectively manage, record and reporting the school's or trust's finances, including budget planning, monitoring, control and adherence to regulatory requirements with Finance Business Partner.

#### **Financial administration and regulatory compliance**

- Strategically leads to promotes a culture of sustainable, evidence-based financial planning with due consideration for regulatory requirements.
- Monitors financial performance and determines appropriate approaches to internal control procedures.
- Ensures that key strategic decisions are taken with a full understanding of the financial implications in the decision-making process critically evaluating financial information to inform strategic proposals and recommendations.
- Has a deep understanding of financial assurance and regulatory frameworks to ensure timely and accurate submissions of statutory returns.
- Has sound understanding of VAT and can / support ensure compliance with tax and VAT regimes as applicable to the school or trust.
- Supports the development of and is accountable to finance policies that underpin sustainable long-term financial health and robust assurance.
- Ensure there is appropriate financial competency and knowledge across the school.

#### **Financial reporting and monitoring**

- Can critically evaluate financial information and use professional judgement to inform proposals and recommendations. Interpret management accounts strategically and subsequently makes recommendations to key stakeholders.

- Collaboratively plans for and can evidence impact of capital investment strategy.
- Understands the need for proportionate measures and systems to limit and, where possible, eliminate financial risk and fraud.
- Understands and supports the key components of a robust business continuity plan / risk assessments.

### **Resource Management for Continuous Improvement and the use of Data**

- Consults with other strategic leaders in the prioritisation of available resources (human and physical) to ensure optimisation.
- Uses evidence-based assumptions to support the budget planning process.
- Makes effective use of historic and current data, draws on intelligence from a variety of sources, alongside the school's or trust's curriculum ambition and improvement strategy to develop sustainable budget plans, including longer-term forecasts.
- Has a deep technical understanding of national and local funding formulae and can assess and challenge allocations. Contributes to strategic admissions planning.
- Promotes and embeds a culture founded on the principles of best value- agrees principles on which this can be evidenced. Ensure that permanent records of pupils' work are kept and that pupils work and portfolios are marked to a high quality.

### **Non-grant income and trading activity**

- Understands how to develop compelling bids to secure non- grant funding. Understands the key considerations when developing arrangements for any trading activity.

### **Operational Leadership**

Leading operational planning across all school business functions to ensure effective a sustainable resource allocation to maximise outcomes for pupils across the school or trust.

### **Managing People and Stakeholders**

- Strategically plans for and drives transformative change to create a climate in which multidisciplinary teams and individuals collaborate to provide effective and responsive operational services, which reduce duplication and optimise the use of resources.
- Has an inclusive and innovative leadership style that engages key stakeholders across the wider education sector and strategically plans for leadership styles that will favorably impact organisational culture and performance / outcomes for learners.
- Has a collaborative approach, seeks input from others, builds and sustains team morale/spirit, sets expectations, drives performance, and provides feedback and encouragement.
- Implements, monitors and reports qualitative and quantitative data analysis to assess operational performance.
- Champions wellbeing and EDI as overarching values, including a commitment to impact evaluation. Promotes a culture of compassion and inclusivity.
- Leads on annual organisational skills / satisfaction audits, understands the value and influences future strategic development plans.

### **Innovation, change management, Governance and accountability**

- Engages in and uses internal and external sector research and national consultations to understand local and national policy drivers. Using intelligence to influence policy making and inform future strategic planning.
- Continually evaluates and identifies opportunities for organisational improvement to systems, processes, structures & human / physical deployment.
- Promotes a culture of continuous improvement, where appropriate change and innovation are embraced.
- Understands the need for schools to develop their digital infrastructure in support of teaching and learning and effective operational services & understands and mitigates the risks associated with digital information and workflows.

### **Governance and accountability**



- Implements and maintains systems and processes to collect and analyse school management information to contribute to school improvement.
- Monitors performance and identifies, escalates and mitigates risks.

### **Managing Risk**

- Understands risk assessment and risk management techniques and how to implement mitigations. Develops robust risk management strategy ensuring a high level of awareness across the school.
- Leads the development and implementation of clear processes for dealing with adverse events, ensuring best practice procedures are adopted.

### **Human Resources**

#### **People strategy and workforce planning**

- Contributes to an organisational people strategy and embeds change models to maximise pupil outcomes.
- Has expertise in developing robust strategic staff planning.
- Analyses staffing models and plans strategically considering the projected budget.
- Challenges and leads change with a solution focused evaluation process planning talent and succession.
- Provides evidence-based reports, including EDI and protected characteristics.
- Has a deep understanding of relevant employment law, (including diversity) and data protection law and any proposed changes. Is experienced in identifying and resolving risks.
- Provides recommendations for resource optimisation using financial analysis and options that are solution-focused to maximise efficiency and meet the school's or trust's strategic plans.
- Understands the school's or trust's culture in which they operate and including the legal capacity and resource constraints when evaluating and planning change.
- Ensures up-to-date and compliant safer recruitment practice is in place, SCR is completed, and all DBS disclosures are appropriately followed up by relevant senior leaders. Demonstrates an understanding and ability to apply KCSIE and any other future equivalent statutory requirements.
- Identifies and plans for workforce retention through non-financial incentives.

#### **Performance management (PM) and continuing professional development (CPD)**

- Develops a clear rationale and system for PM.
- Identifies and supports management of underperformance.
- Supports organisational developments related to pay and reward, understanding local and national factors in the attraction, motivation and retention of staff.
- Has a sound understanding of equal and gender pay obligations.
- Embeds a system to plan, implement and analyse the impact of CPD / learning and development linking this to strategic plans for pupil outcomes / regulatory compliance.

#### **Human resource management**

- Develops a workforce strategy to maximise pupil outcomes and resources through effective talent and succession management that meets regulatory and legal compliance and ensures delivery of the school's or trust's strategic priorities and plans.
- Leads and evaluates the effectiveness of grievance, absence management, staff wellbeing, underperformance and disciplinary practice and procedures across the school or trust.
- Advises or seeks advice for senior leaders on appropriate approaches when dealing with conflict resolution, trade unions and employee forums. Seeks external legal advice as required.
- Understands relevant and current employment (including diversity) and data protection law and any proposed changes. Is experienced in identifying and resolving risks.
- Is experienced in developing and leading a wellbeing strategy.

## **Estate Management**

Safely and securely optimising the use and development of the school or trust estate to deliver the identified strategic plans, while meeting sustainability requirements and delivering an effective teaching and learning environment.

### **Strategic estate management**

- Has experience of leading estate management strategic planning to optimise school or trust estate resources.
- Leads assessment of capital development, asset management, life-cycle maintenance.
- Uses condition surveys to inform planning and improvements.
- Considers school sustainability in all projects.
- Can react to and adjust business continuity, disaster recovery and contingency planning processes when required.

### **Effective use of estate resources**

- Leads on community cohesion in relation to site disputes / access.
- Understand options for funding – able to develop capital / estate bids.
- Seeks external advice as required and works collaboratively with the central service teams / Director.

### **Grounds Management**

- Is experienced in evaluating strategies for effective project management to ensure that maintenance, facilities and grounds management plans, and improvements are prioritised and carried out to optimise the use of estate resources sustainably.
- Ensure there is proactive and less reactive management.

### **Health and safety compliance**

- Contributes to the development of the school or trust health and safety policy.
- Ensures compliance with guidance and regulations set by the local authority, Department for Education, Health and Safety Executive, Public Health England and other relevant agencies.
- Understands duties placed on individuals and the school or trust by the HSE and DfE and health and safety regulations relating to estate management, including environmental issues, and ensures that the school or trust is meeting its legal duties.
- Has systems and processes to capture, analyse and reports H&S / estate management data.
- Completes a risk register for the school.
- Leads inspection and quality assurance regimes to ensure health, safety and environmental legislation compliance.

### **Additional duties**

- To line manage identified teams.
- Demonstrate a continual commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- To uphold Ambitious about Autism policies to protect and safeguard pupils in order to secure their health, safety and wellbeing.
- Demonstrate a continual commitment to the promotion of diversity initiatives and the sharing of best practice in line with Ambitious about Autisms Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and procedures.
- Ensure the highest degree of confidentiality and data protection of all materials.
- Demonstrate the vision and values of Ambitious about Autism in everyday work and practice, upholding the ethos of challenge and support where all pupils/learners can reach their full potential and maximise their engagement in learning.

This job description is not exhaustive and reflects the type and range of tasks responsibilities and outcomes associated with the role. The post holder will be expected to also complete any tasks, as requested by the Head of School.

<p><b>Role and band competencies</b></p> <p>Specific knowledge, experience and technical skills</p>	<p><b>Essential</b></p>
1. Financial management experience including setting budgets, forecasting and financial risk management (in excess of £5million). people, premises and provision in a school	X
2. Proven ability to use relevant IT / data systems proficiently required for the role e.g. Excel, Finance and HR software	X
3. Experience and skills related to people management & direct line management of diverse teams (operations team, facilities, administration)	X
4. Experience of effective business partnering with broader service teams (Finance, HR, Property, IT, Fundraising, Health & Safety) with ability to build and leverage a network of internal and external relationships.	X
5. Experience of establishing effective systems and processes to ensure efficient, effective and safe running of a school.	X
6. Proven ability to develop clear strategies resulting in staff management, recruitment, development and retention of high performing teams.	X
7. Experience of working within a school / Charity and interest in children and autistic young people.	X
8. Experience and skill in reporting for a range of purposes and audiences to include to senior leads, Governors, Executive teams	X
9. Creates a culture of accountability, ensuring ownership for improvement and focused on learning outcomes with experience of change management where required to achieve this	X
10. Can lead with confidence when required including when there is significant opposition or challenge	X
11. Acquires and maintain appropriate technical and other relevant skills and competence to perform work thoroughly, to a high standard, in a timely manner with awareness to limitations and risks	X
12. Complies with professional standards (ISBLs ethical code and Nolan principles-principles of public life) and statutory obligations avoiding actions that might bring the organisation into disrepute	X
13. Ambitious about Autism is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment	X
<p><b>Personal attributes</b></p>	
14. Uses an evidence based approach to manage the avoidance of bias. Escalates concerns in the event of identifying or observing irregularities	X
15. Leads and manages in an open, honest, transparent and fair way	X
16. Uses a wide range of influencing styles and strategies to secure commitment internally and externally across the school or charity	X
17. Ability to work independently and as part of a team and to resolve problems knowing when to refer them if necessary	X
18. Good appreciation of health and safety in the workplace, data protection principles and equal opportunities.	X

Stage	Timescale
Closing date for applications	<b>Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> of October</b>
Candidates informed of outcome of application	<b>Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> of October</b>
Interviews – face to face	<b>Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> and Friday 18<sup>th</sup> of October</b>

### Equal opportunities monitoring

*Ambitious about Autism is fully committed to equality of opportunity and diversity and we warmly welcome applications from all suitably-qualified candidates. We welcome applications regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, disability, or age. All applications will be considered solely on merit.*

*Ambitious about Autism is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and successful candidates will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check. As part of our Safer Recruitment checks, an online search may be carried out in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.*

*The Safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and personal specification. Whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendment to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2021. This means that when applying for certain jobs and activities certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed to employers, and if they are disclosed, employers cannot take them into account. Further information about filtering offences can be found in the DBS Filter Guidance.*



**Ambitious about Autism** is the national charity standing with autistic children and young people.

We believe every autistic child and young person has the right to be themselves and realise their ambitions. We started as one school and have become a movement for change. We champion rights, campaign for change and create opportunities.

## Contact us

### TreeHouse School

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f,,treehouseschool.org.uk

## Follow us

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Ambitious about Autism is a registered charity in England and Wales: 1063184 and a registered company: 3375255.

## How to find us

### Public transport

We're a short walk or bus ride away from Highgate and East Finchley Tube stations. Both are on the High Barnet branch of the Northern line. Bus routes 43 and 134 run nearby from Highgate Tube and routes 102 and 234 from East Finchley Tube.

### Travelling by car

Parking is available on our premises if there is space available. Cars should be parked in designated spaces only.

