



LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY

Job Description

POST TITLE: Head of School Organisation and Place Planning

DIRECTORATE: Education and Children

SERVICE: School Organisation and Place Planning

GRADE: PO14

LOCATION: Hackney Service Centre, 1 Hillman Street, E8 1DY

RESPONSIBLE TO: Assistant Director, School Organisation and Place Planning

RESPONSIBLE FOR: 3 Positions (Head of Admissions and Pupil Benefits, School Organisation Delivery Lead and School Organisation Provision Planning Lead)

BUDGET RESPONSIBILITY: Yes

LEADERSHIP LEVEL: Strategic

DBS REQUIREMENT: Yes

INTRODUCTION TO HACKNEY

Hackney is recognised as one of the UK's most diverse and highest-performing local authorities. It serves one of London's most desirable places to live and work, reflecting a vibrant and dynamic community.

The success of Hackney Council is driven by its dedicated staff, who embody the organisation's core values. The Council thrives on challenge and change, and is characterised by being open, inclusive, ambitious, pioneering, proactive, and proud. This pride extends to Hackney itself, to each other, to the work being done, and to the Council as a whole.

School Organisation and Place Planning plays a vital role in Hackney's Education Service, aiming to improve outcomes for all children and learners. The Service offers an ambitious, inclusive education that supports individuality and belonging across communities.

The role will require the post holder to undertake visits to schools and meet with governors and parent or carer groups. Some of these engagements may take place outside of normal working hours to accommodate the needs of the school communities.

NB: All employees are expected to adhere to the Council's Diversity & Equality and Health and Safety Policies.

PURPOSE OF THE JOB:

To lead the strategic direction of the School Organisation and Place Planning, School Admissions and Pupil Benefits Teams to plan, develop and implement changes to the provision of places 0-25. to provide or create if necessary the right conditions for the effective operation and organisation of schools, ensuring access to sufficient and sustainable provision that meet the needs of all communities in the borough.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **School Organisation:** To be responsible for the structure and types of schools in the local area, including initiatives to support financial sustainability i.e. partnerships, federations, other types of governance changes, along with school expansions, mergers and closures. Supporting the Assistant Director in the strategic planning and delivery of new school places in appropriate settings (mainstream, early years, or SEND).
- **Pupil Place Planning:** Strategically analysing demographic trends and projected housing developments to accurately forecast future demand for school places (ages 0–25), and devising strategic plans to ensure adequate mainstream and specialist provision.
- **School Admissions:** Strategically managing the ‘end-to-end’ legal and operational processes for primary and secondary school applications, ensuring all procedures comply with the School Admissions Code. Management of the LA’s Fair Access Protocol (FAP) to secure school places for vulnerable, unplaced, or challenging children quickly, coordinating with schools and agencies to ensure the fair, equitable distribution of pupils.
- **Pupil Benefits:** Having strategic oversight of both statutory and discretionary support services for families, such as Free School Meals, travel assistance, and clothing grants.

STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL DUTIES

1. **Statutory Compliance:** Acting as an expert on changes in education legislation to ensure the council meets its legal duties regarding school sufficiency, school admissions and fair access.
2. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Fostering collaborative relationships with school leaders, academy trusts, diocesan representatives, community partners, and parents to deliver key strategies, including the Education Strategic Plan and School Organisation Plan.
3. **Data Analysis:** Steer the monitoring of school rolls to identify risks and support evidence-based decisions on education infrastructure.
4. **Systems Management:** To be the organisation lead professional overseeing information systems and databases for school organisation, place planning, pupil records and admissions.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Leadership and management of the School Organisation and Place Planning Team, ensuring clear oversight and accountability for its activities and service standards and performance outcomes.
- Act as the management lead for the Local Authority's School Organisation Plan, ensuring sufficient and appropriate school places to meet local demand, including on matters related to the opening, closure, or re-designation of schools.
- To play an active leadership role to foster school partnerships and collaborative models that encourage school improvement, sustainability, and continuity for children and families. Co-produce and develop major change programmes for school organisation proposals.
- To be accountable for effective leadership and management for the School Admissions and Pupil Benefits Team to ensure smooth implementation of the education sufficiency and estates strategy.
- Collaborate with schools to establish area-wide admissions agreements and processes, particularly for pupils with complex needs, guaranteeing place availability and promoting inclusion of vulnerable students.
- Formulate a strategic accommodation plan for the Education Service area to guide the repurposing and sustainable utilisation of vacant or underutilised school sites.
- Develop a clear process for independent schools to join the LA Maintained Sector as voluntary aided schools, focusing on sustainable ways to support growing pupil populations in some of our communities (e.g. Charedi Community).
- Ensure an integrated approach to service delivery to ensure all services under your remit are of high quality, responsive, and adaptable to local needs.
- To act as a lead officer in the preparation of comprehensive reports for council forums, boards, and committees, and actively participate in these meetings.
- Contribute to Cabinet and Scrutiny reports and meetings as required, providing professional advice to elected members under the direction of the Assistant Director, School Estate Strategy.
- Promote and maintain strong business relationships with internal departments, maximising opportunities for innovation and service development.
- Work with the Department for Education(DfE) and external partners to promote communication and collaboration, supporting strategic goals and key initiatives.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

- To be a strategic lead and expert adviser for borough-wide policies and procedures for the monitoring, challenge, and intervention regarding school organisation and pupil place planning, school admissions and pupil benefits, ensuring compliance with statutory guidance.

- Innovatively manage processes to identify all children, with particular focus on the most vulnerable or those not currently in school, ensuring their needs are assessed and supported for reintegration into appropriate educational settings.
- To lead an overarching approach to the development and implementation of a cohesive commissioning strategy for new school places, aimed at improving outcomes for children and young people across Hackney.
- Lead the effective administration of admissions and appeal processes on behalf of the local authority.
- Ensure statutory information, guidance, and support for schools, staff, and parents regarding coordinated admissions, In-year admissions, and appeals is accurate, accessible, and compliant with legislation.
- Ensure school compliance with the Admissions Code of Practice and other relevant legislation, ensuring timely and appropriate admissions in line with admissions criteria.
- As a member of the education senior leadership group collaborate with colleagues to foster a high-quality workplace and deliver equitable, high-standard services.
- Support headteachers in strategic planning to address the impact of falling pupil numbers on school budgets.
- Deputise for the Assistant Director, School Estate Strategy, as required at meetings, conferences, and working groups.

TEAM LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

- Provide leadership and line management to the Head of School Admissions and Pupil Benefits, and the delivery leads within the school organisation and pupil place planning service areas.
- Drive the strategic development and leadership of an effective School Admissions and Pupil Benefits Team.
- Lead on the development and implementation of complex processes, authoring new procedures as needed and updating existing policies annually.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Provide expert advice on all matters related to the council's statutory responsibilities for school organisation and pupil place planning, school admissions and pupil benefits.
- Ensure stakeholders within Hackney Council and schools have a clear understanding of legislation and guidance regarding school organisation, place planning, admissions and pupil benefits. .
- Undertake duties as requested by the Assistant Director of School Estate Strategy and the wider Directorate Leadership Team.
- Carry out any other duties and responsibilities within the scope of the salary grade as required.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Ensure compliance with Council policies, standing orders, financial regulations and other requirements.
- Ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act and confidentiality policies.
- To achieve agreed service area outcomes and personal appraisal targets, as determined by the line manager.
- You must promote and safeguard the welfare of children, young and vulnerable people that you are responsible for or come into contact with.
- Actively champion equity, diversity and inclusion, and take a proactive stance against racism and all forms of discrimination.
- Actively be anti-racist and inclusive.
- All Hackney Education Staff are expected to demonstrate and work towards developing the Hackney Education Leadership Qualities which are:
 - A strong sense of direction and purpose
 - Creativity
 - Resilience
 - Credibility
 - Presence
 - Connecting
 - Self-Awareness.

FLEXIBILITY

- The key responsibilities and duties of the role are neither exclusive nor exhaustive. All workers are expected to operate flexibly to support the delivery of services and from time to time will be required to undertake responsibilities outside the normal remit of role description as required, which are broadly commensurate with the job level and scope of competence.

WORKING PATTERN AND TRAVEL:

- Working Days: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday.
- The role may occasionally be required to work irregular working patterns (with reasonable notice) in order to attend certain events and member meetings. The post holder should be able and willing to work flexibly during these periods.
- You have a statutory right to request flexible working (changes to hours, times, or place of work) from the date of your appointment.

Person Specification

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| Requirement |
| Candidates/post holders will be expected to demonstrate the following:- |
| Education |
| Educated to degree level, equivalent professional qualification or relevant experience |
| Experience |
| Leadership experience in a Local Authority setting or equivalent |
| Experience as a senior leader in whole organisation, strategy, and development |
| Demonstrable experience in managing school re-organisation. |
| Substantial experience in school place planning, admissions, and pupil benefits (e.g., Free School Meals) in a Local Authority. |
| Significant experience in developing and implementing strategic plans and evaluating their impact, seeking continuous improvement |
| Extensive experience of benchmarking, statistics and strategic planning |
| Proven leadership experience managing teams, budgets, and ideally, school infrastructure delivery projects. |
| Experience of building successful working relationships with Headteachers, Governors, local authority staff and external agencies |
| Experience of building and maintaining high quality relationships at all levels and supporting teams and individuals to maximise their potential and achieve objectives |
| Management experience and excellent understanding of the provision of schools' accommodation |
| Experience of leading successful change programmes |
| Experience of solving complex issues and having a solution oriented approach to managing risk appropriately |
| Knowledge |
| In depth knowledge of the regulations for school organisation and place planning, including the several operational guides published by the Department for Education (DfE). |
| In-depth understanding of the School Admissions Code, relevant education legislation, and statutory guidance. |
| In depth knowledge of schools and how teaching, learning, curriculum, leadership, management, and governance contribute to their overall effectiveness and sustainability, and use this to establish a whole school approach to school organisation and place planning. |

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| Knowledge of pupil forecasting methodologies and demographic data analysis. |
| Understanding of school funding, capital planning, and procurement. |
| Skills and Abilities |
| Significant political acumen and diplomacy, combined with exceptional negotiation and interpersonal abilities. |
| Excellent skills in communicating complex information to diverse audiences (e.g. councillors, school leaders, parents). |
| Personal and professional credibility to work with and influence all stakeholders and to represent the directorate at local, region and national level including children young people and their families |
| Proven and effective management skills: ability to motivate, lead and develop within a constantly changing environment. |
| Ability to develop, implement, and evaluate strategic plans. |
| Strong commercial acumen with an ability to consider the needs of children and young people alongside the need to develop financially robust and resilient commissioning arrangements |
| Initiates and leads compelling vision, strategies and priorities that foster an environment of achievement, innovation and continuous learning |
| Ability to think creatively, to solve problems and seek opportunities to work differently |
| Capable of managing competing, high-pressure priorities and deadlines. |
| Provide leadership in management, understanding strategic goals and converting these into practical outcomes through decision making |
| Strong ability to analyse data to inform decision-making, such as school expansions or new school commissionings. |
| Ability to recognise and support the distinct perspectives of groups that are minoritised or underrepresented. |
| Proven skill in engaging diverse communities and agencies to build trust and collaboration. |
| Comfort working in dynamic, fast-paced environments with a willingness to adjust strategies based on community feedback. |
| A firm commitment to anti-racist and inclusive practice, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. |