

The De Curci Trust

Based in Portsmouth, The De Curci Trust has over 1700 students on roll across three schools. The Trust seeks a Trustee (Non-Executive Director) to join the Board who ideally has a professional background in:

- Education (school, college or university);
- Surveying / Construction; or
- Public Sector Management.

However, applications from candidates with different professional backgrounds are encouraged; we would particularly welcome applicants from an ethnic minority, as they are underrepresented within the Trust at this level.

Board meetings are usually held in Drayton, Portsmouth; occasionally, meetings are on-line.

About the Trust

Founded in April 2017, The De Curci Trust comprises three local schools: Solent Infant School , Solent Junior School and Springfield School (secondary). All three schools are currently rated 'Good' by Ofsted and anticipating reinspection in the 2023/24 academic year.

Solent Infant school was rated 'Good' by Ofsted in February 2020 with inspectors writing, 'This is a very welcoming and nurturing school. Teachers have worked with staff from other trust schools to design a creative and exciting curriculum in all subjects. Children are engaged in the interesting learning activities that teachers plan for them'.

Solent Junior School was rated 'Good' by Ofsted in March 2020 with inspectors writing, ' Pupils are positive, confident and have excellent manners. Leaders and teachers are united in their ambition for all pupils to fulfil their potential. Teachers provide pupils with a rich variety of learning experiences.'

Springfield School was rated 'Good' in October 2019, with Inspectors writing, 'Leaders are determined to provide a high-quality education for all pupils, regardless of their ability or circumstances. Pupils are happy and safe at this school. Pupils achieve well at the school'.

Academic results have been sound, with KS2 and GCSE attainment generally being in line with or above national averages. The schools have ambitious curriculum approaches with the secondary school having an EBacc entry rate that is higher than similar schools locally and nationally. However, the schools are working to improve progress outcomes at both KS2 and KS4, as these have been variable over recent years, notably for specific pupil groups including middle ability boys and disadvantaged pupils. The impact of the COVID- 19 pandemic has been significant on pupils' learning and welfare, and also on school operations. Responding proactively to these challenges over the short and medium term is a Trust priority.

As an outward facing organisation, The De Curci Trust is committed to leading school improvement within its own organisation and across the wider school system. The Trust shares a vision of promoting high aspirations and achieving excellent outcomes for all children; its schools are inclusive and exist to serve the children who live in their locality. The Trust recognises that schools are different and have unique identities; its approach is to allow schools to co-construct their own routes to excellence within the context of the trust's vision, schemes of delegation/governance and philosophy of 'stronger together'.

The Trust currently serves the communities of Cosham, Drayton and Farlington, a few miles north of Portsmouth City centre. The majority of pupils are of White British origin, with the number of pupils with EAL being below national averages. The schools are inclusive and cater for pupils of all aptitudes and abilities. While the number of pupils in

receipt of the pupil premium is lower than the national average, this has shown a marked increase over recent years as the local demographic has changed. Similarly, the secondary school now has more children with SEND than the national average. Portsmouth was identified as an Education Investment Area in the Government's Levelling Up White Paper (February 2022) and the Trust is working actively with local partners, including the Portsmouth Education Partnership, to realise this opportunity for the community.

A belief that learning is a continuum and that cross-phase working can enhance the quality of teaching and learning in all school phases is a central part of The De Curci Trust's culture. Staff employed by the trust have the opportunity to work with infant, junior and secondary age children and to develop practice and schemes of learning with specialists from each phase. The Trust's teachers come together annually in joint conferences (INSET) on pedagogy and leading learning. These have included other commissioned partners e.g. the University of Portsmouth and distinguished visiting speakers. Increasingly, pupils from the infant and junior schools are becoming involved in activities with older pupils at the secondary school. Projects involving staff professional development have included 'Challenge the Gap' (to develop disadvantaged pupils' learning skills), a year 5 to 8 Maths continuity project, work on relational approaches and conscious inclusion.

Plans for the Future

Moving forwards, the Trust will be focusing on strategies which: deliver its vision of providing a high-quality education; result in excellent outcomes for pupils; and confirm the 'better together' principle of being part of the multi-academy trust. In addition, the Trust is delighted that Springfield School is on the DfE's capital re-build list (feasibility stage commenced autumn 2023), and working through the rebuild process will be a significant and exciting part of the Trust's work over the next few years.

Four priority workstream areas have been identified to support the strategy:

1. School Improvement
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Managing the Organisation
4. Growth

Future plans include ongoing review and development of the Trust's strategic priorities in the context of the current wider educational context and the potential expansion of the Trust to develop capacity and support other partners within the locality. The nature of any potential expansion would depend upon the circumstances of the joining school(s), but ideally working towards doubling the size of the trust and including a school from each phase would be ideal and allow the Trust's model to develop. Realistically, this would be over the medium term and require significant due diligence. The Trust engages in discussions with potential, suitable partners on an ongoing basis.

Trust Ethos & Values

The De Curci Trust promotes high aspirations and achieving excellent holistic outcomes for all children. It maintains a school learning environment that delivers a vibrant, creative and relevant education for all pupils. The Trust utilises expertise across all phases of education that can be shared within and beyond their schools.

The De Curci Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. DBS Disclosure at Enhanced level, and any other background checks, including overseas checks, will be required prior to any offer of employment.

Role Summary (Number of Positions Advertised: 1)

Trustee (Voluntary Role)

Trustees are both charity trustees and company directors of the academy trust; the role is to hold to account the executive and senior leadership team. The Board of Trustees manages the business of the academy trust and may exercise all the powers of the Trust. The Trustees ensure compliance with the Trust's charitable objects and with company and charity law.

The ideal person will work collaboratively with other Trustees, Local Governors and staff to maintain a high standard of education for all pupils. This includes oversight of the monitoring and improvement of performance and the achievement of objectives; ensuring compliance with legislation, company and charity law whilst ensuring sound financial and administrative management of the trust.

Person Specification

The competencies required for this role include:

Essential

- Organisational leadership / governance
- Commitment to holistic, inclusive education
- Demonstrable commitment to the Nolan Principles
- 'Team player', approachable, effective communicator

Desirable

- Professional background in education/construction/surveying/public sector management
- Finance/audit experience
- Legal/due diligence experience
- Organisational growth/merger experience

The De Curci Trust is eager to appoint a Trustee with governance (or relevant leadership) experience from either the private, public or third sectors. The Trust seeks a team player who can make impartial decisions when working on behalf of all pupils and other stakeholders. The Trust would particularly welcome applicants from an ethnic minority, as they are underrepresented within the Trust at this level.

Candidates must have integrity and follow the Nolan Principles of Public Life, fulfilling the role with professionalism and diligence. Ideal candidates will be capable of acting as a 'critical friend', providing support and challenge to the executive team, and acting fairly and without prejudice. They will be committed to attending meetings and visiting the schools and colleagues, as appropriate.

Time Commitment

Approximately 2.5 hours per month (minimum).

Location of Board Meetings

The majority of board meetings are held at Springfield School, Central Road, Drayton, PO6 1QY; some are held on-line.

Website

For more information on the Trust, please see the website: <https://thedecurcitrust.co.uk/>

Governance Structure

For more information with regard to the Trust's governance structure, please see:

<https://thedecurcitrust.co.uk/index.php/home/structure>

Closing Date: Monday, 25th March 2024

Please complete the attached application form and send it to the Trust's Governance Officer and CoSec.:
Danielle.Skinner@thedecurcitrust.co.uk