



DDAT
Derby Diocesan Academy Trust

Chief Operating Officer Recruitment Pack

MARCH 2026

Welcome from the Chief Executive Officer

Dear applicant,

Thank you for showing an interest in working for DDAT.

Joining DDAT as Chief Operating Officer – leading operational excellence, strategic delivery, and organisational growth across our Trust.

We are delighted to be recruiting for this pivotal senior role at the heart of our Central Team. As a growing Trust with an ambitious strategic vision, DDAT is entering an exciting new phase of development - from potential new builds and school acquisitions to strengthening our existing estate. Our schools span a wide variety of building types, sizes, and ages, and we are committed to ensuring every environment supports exceptional outcomes for pupils and provides an engaging, safe workplace for our staff.

Recent investments - including the implementation of a single management information system across our primaries and the introduction of new finance and HR systems - have already delivered greater alignment, efficiency, and transparency across the Trust. Several further systems and improvement programmes are now coming online, and the Chief Operating Officer will play a critical role in shaping and driving the next stage of DDAT's operational evolution.

As COO, you will provide strategic leadership across all core operational functions, enabling sustainable growth, operational resilience, and high-quality service delivery across our Derbyshire hubs. This is an exciting opportunity to make a significant and lasting impact on the Trust's journey.

I very much hope you are encouraged to apply for the position and, if successful, I look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Clark

Sarah Clark
Chief Executive Officer



About the Trust

Our Trust was established in 2014 for schools choosing to become an academy as well as for those who found themselves in need of a sponsor.

DDAT's vision is to build a better future for all across our academies who, in turn, will positively impact their communities.

DDAT academies demonstrate their distinctiveness by providing an inspirational and holistic education that enables all children and staff to develop and achieve their full potential. Church schools within DDAT are not faith schools for the faithful, but Church schools for the community.



The DDAT family of schools consists of both Church and non-Church schools who all work together to achieve the aims of the Trust as follows:

- Provide children with excellent educational provision
- Rapidly improve underperforming schools
- Develop effective school-to-school support
- Build strong relationships and promote work with external partners
- Raise aspirations and tackle disadvantage so that no pupil is failed by their school.

We want our children and young people to be able to 'experience life in all its fullness' and although this phrase is rooted in a Christian narrative (taken from John 10:10), irrespective of a faith perspective, that is what all of us want for our pupils. This has been borne out by the number of community schools that have chosen to join DDAT, signing up to the vision and values that have children at their core.



About the Role

Our thriving and values-driven multi-academy trust is seeking to appoint an experienced Chief Operating Officer (COO) to help realise our vision of delivering high-quality, inclusive education rooted in Christian values.

You will join a committed and collaborative Executive Leadership Team, united in its mission to enable every child and young person to flourish, regardless of background or circumstance. Together, we work to remove barriers, nurture potential, and ensure that all our schools are places where communities grow in faith, learning, and wellbeing.

This is an exciting opportunity for a skilled and strategic leader to shape and strengthen our Central Services Team, playing a key role in delivering our ambitious plans for sustainable growth. Excellence across all operational functions will be vital in supporting our current family of schools, while also developing the systems, structures, and capacity needed for the future.

Working closely with the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Finance Officer, you will contribute to the strategic leadership and operational effectiveness of the Trust, deputising where required. You will lead all non-academic and central service functions alongside the CFO who oversees finance, ensuring they reflect and reinforce our vision, values, and distinctively Christian ethos.

We are looking for a highly experienced leader with a proven track record of delivering organisational improvement and managing complex operations within a comparable setting. You will bring strong strategic insight, a collaborative approach, and a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities across central support services.

Above all, you will be committed to making a meaningful difference to the lives of children and young people.



Job Description

Post: Chief Operating Officer

Contract: Full time, year-round

Salary: L1-5 £95,039 - £107,430

Responsible to: CEO

Location: Multi-site across the Trust (with regular travel), Central Office Bakewell

Purpose of the role:

Provide strategic leadership and assurance across all Trust operations so that DDAT's schools have the systems, infrastructure and support to deliver excellent educational outcomes. The COO sets operational strategy, ensures statutory and regulatory compliance, drives value for money and continuous improvement, and leads the operations team to deliver safe, efficient and future-ready services aligned to DDAT's Christian vision and values.

Key Responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership & Governance

- Act as a senior leader within the Executive Team, shaping and delivering the Trust's strategy and operational plan.
- Provide assurance to the CEO and Board on the effectiveness of operations, compliance and risk management through high-quality reports and insight.
- Lead Trust-wide policy development and review, ensuring clarity, currency and consistent application across schools.
- Foster strong relationships with the Diocese, Local Trust Committees (LTCs), Headteachers and system partners.

Operational Oversight (Accountable Owner)

Property, Estates & Health and Safety

- Provide strategic leadership of estates, capital and H&S.
- Oversee capital planning and bids.
- Drive best value and lifecycle planning.
- Oversee the delivery of all new academy development projects as well as any significant existing academy building projects



Job Description

IT, Digital & Data Protection

- Own the Trust's IT and digital strategy.
- Ensure robust data protection and act as the Named Data Protection Lead.
- Embed digital transformation.
- Ensure the Trust and all academies within it maintain a sufficient level of cyber security at all time, and complies with all regulatory requirements for the standard of cyber and information security.

Risk, Compliance & Internal Control

- Lead the Trust's risk management framework.
- Commission and oversee an internal audit programme.

HR (People & Culture)

- Provide strategic leadership for HR.
- Promote a positive culture reflecting DDAT's values.

Procurement & Commercial

- Set procurement strategy and standards.
- Oversee major procurements and contracts.

Admissions & Complaints

- Ensure consistent and compliant processes

Growth & Development of the Trust

- Identify, evaluate and lead operational due diligence for growth opportunities.
- Explore income generation opportunities.
- Manage pre- and post-transfer activities.



Job Description

Financial Stewardship & Value for Money

- Champion cost control and benefits realisation.
- Track operational KPIs.

People Leadership

- Lead and coach the operations team.
- Deliver operational training for school and central leaders.

Measures of Success

- Statutory and regulatory compliance.
- Successful onboarding of new schools.
- Improvements in operational KPIs.
- High engagement within the operations team.

Additional Information

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: We welcome applications from all sections of the community.

Travel & Flexibility: The role requires travel across Trust locations.

Derby Diocesan Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and we will check the suitability of staff to work with children. Applicants must be willing to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check and overseas police checks (where applicable). As part of the shortlisting process, online searches will be carried out on shortlisted candidates in accordance with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education



Person Specification

Key: E = essential criteria and D = desirable criteria.

	ESSENTIAL / DESIRABLE
Qualifications	
Degree (or equivalent professional experience)	E
Evidence of continuous professional development	E
Relevant professional qualifications or willingness to work towards one	D
Experience	
Senior leadership of complex operations	E
Delivery of service improvement	E
Leadership in education or public sector	D
Experience of oversight of IT/cyber security	D
Experience of oversight of building/construction projects	D
Knowledge, Skills & Abilities	
Strategic thinker with commercial judgement	E
Excellent communication skills	E



Person Specification

Key: E = essential criteria and D = desirable criteria.

	ESSENTIAL / DESIRABLE
Strong programme and project leadership	E
IT literate and confident with digital concepts	E
Personal Qualities	
Acts with integrity and professional courage	E
Resilient, calm and decisive under pressure	E
Collaborative and service-minded	E
Committed to learning and development	E

How to apply...

To arrange an informal, confidential discussion regarding this role, please contact Jenna Everett on 01744 634654 or email jenna@satiseducation.co.uk

- **The closing date for applications is:** Monday 27th April 2026, 9am
- **Shortlisting:** Tuesday 28th April 2026
- **Interviews will take place on:** 7th & 8th May 2026

Please read the information in this pack. If you decide to apply, include a letter with your application form that is no longer than two A4 pages. In your letter, explain your reasons for applying for the position, refer to the information contained in the pack, specifically the person specification and highlight any relevant experience and personal qualities you would bring to the role.

Please click the link to access the application portal and submit your application: [Online Application - DDAT COO](#)



www.ddat.org.uk

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