



Alpha Plus
group

the **Gold Standard** in education



Prospectus

A guide to our principles of governance
and central services



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Introduction



CEO
Mark Hanley-Browne

Alpha Plus is the largest private education company in London and the second largest private education company in the UK. However, although we own many Schools, each of which has their own distinctive approach and ethos, there is a single common purpose for all our Schools and that is **to ensure the best possible start in life for every child in our care**. To help us achieve this aim, all our Schools have signed up to deliver the “Gold Standard”. There is more about this on page 5 of this prospectus but, in essence, the Gold Standard is about strong leadership and governance, having high expectations of both staff and pupils and having effective partnerships with parents. It is also about providing every teacher in our schools with the tools they need in order to deliver at the very highest level. To this end we organise regular educational forums and conferences for our staff where good practice is shared and innovation in the classroom is encouraged. We know that the staff are our greatest asset and this is why we invest heavily in staff training and development as this is absolutely fundamental to what we do.

Although all of us who work for the Alpha Plus Group share a common aim and values, those of us who work at Head Office also appreciate the diversity of the Schools and Colleges within the Group and we seek to be collegiate in our culture. We know that the power of the Group lies in the sheer range of expertise we can draw upon: from specialists in Early Years education to those who are preparing Sixth Form students for careers and Higher Education, we have much which we can learn from one another. Moreover the beauty of having a relatively flat structure at Head Office means that Heads and Principals, and their senior teams, can have easy access to Head Office senior management and so we can share our professional expertise and support one another.

The purpose of this prospectus is to show Heads and Principals what they can expect from those of us who work at Head Office. This prospectus also seeks to give a clear sense of what we, at Head Office, are expecting of Heads and Principals, and it is via effective communication between central management and the leadership teams of our schools and colleges, together with a firm commitment from everyone for continuous improvement, that we will be able to deliver on our promise to provide the best possible start in life for every child in our care.

What is expected of Heads & Principals?

As the Group continues on its journey to ‘raise the bar’ in professional services, it is important that Heads and Principals understand that the relationship with Head Office is a two-way street, and must familiarise themselves with the document *Governance at Alpha Plus*, which is available on the Portal.

Whilst there is no doubt regarding the ultimate responsibility of Heads and Principals for the educational quality and safety of their schools and colleges, it is necessary that Schools and Colleges embrace and promote Group resources, processes, policies, procedures and initiatives to maximise economies of scale.

They should also actively collaborate and contribute to make these services stronger. This may involve Schools and Colleges offering consultation and knowledge-sharing within the Group where opportunities arise. It also includes Heads and Principals caring enough about the Group to provide feedback, and constructively to hold Head Office to account against the stated services, so that we remain on a continuous journey of improvement.

What can be expected of Head Office?

In short, robust governance and professional services. The governance framework is illustrated in the diagram on page 6 and 7. On page 8 we explain the Alpha Plus Board and the Alpha Plus Council, following which each member of the senior management team at Queen Anne Street gives a short overview of how they see their function, what can be expected of them, and what they expect from Heads and Principals in return.



Alpha Plus appreciates the diversity of the schools and colleges within the Group and strives to be collegiate in its culture



The Alpha Plus 'Gold Standard'

The Gold Standard is the Group's vision of educational excellence. It comprises two dimensions:

- *Cultural* - fostering high aspirations and expectations of staff and pupils, always recognising that excellence is a never-ending pursuit
- *Operational* - robust governance through which Schools, Colleges and central services are simultaneously supported and challenged in their pursuit of excellence

We recognise that great schools have their own identity and ethos and we seek to preserve such independent values. Whilst the interpretation and execution of 'excellence' may therefore vary across the Group, many elements, such as outstanding leadership, and passion and pride in teaching and learning, are common to all.

In addition to academic attainment, our cultural aspirations are rooted in the following common principles:

- Achievement defined according to the needs and potential of the child
- Development of character and resilience, leading to more rounded and grounded children who will be well-placed to contribute and thrive in the world
- Effective partnerships with parents, including advice and help with those subsequent educational placements which will be most suitable for their children

Mutual trust in these shared principles is what defines being part of the Alpha Plus Group.

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What is expected of Schools and Colleges?

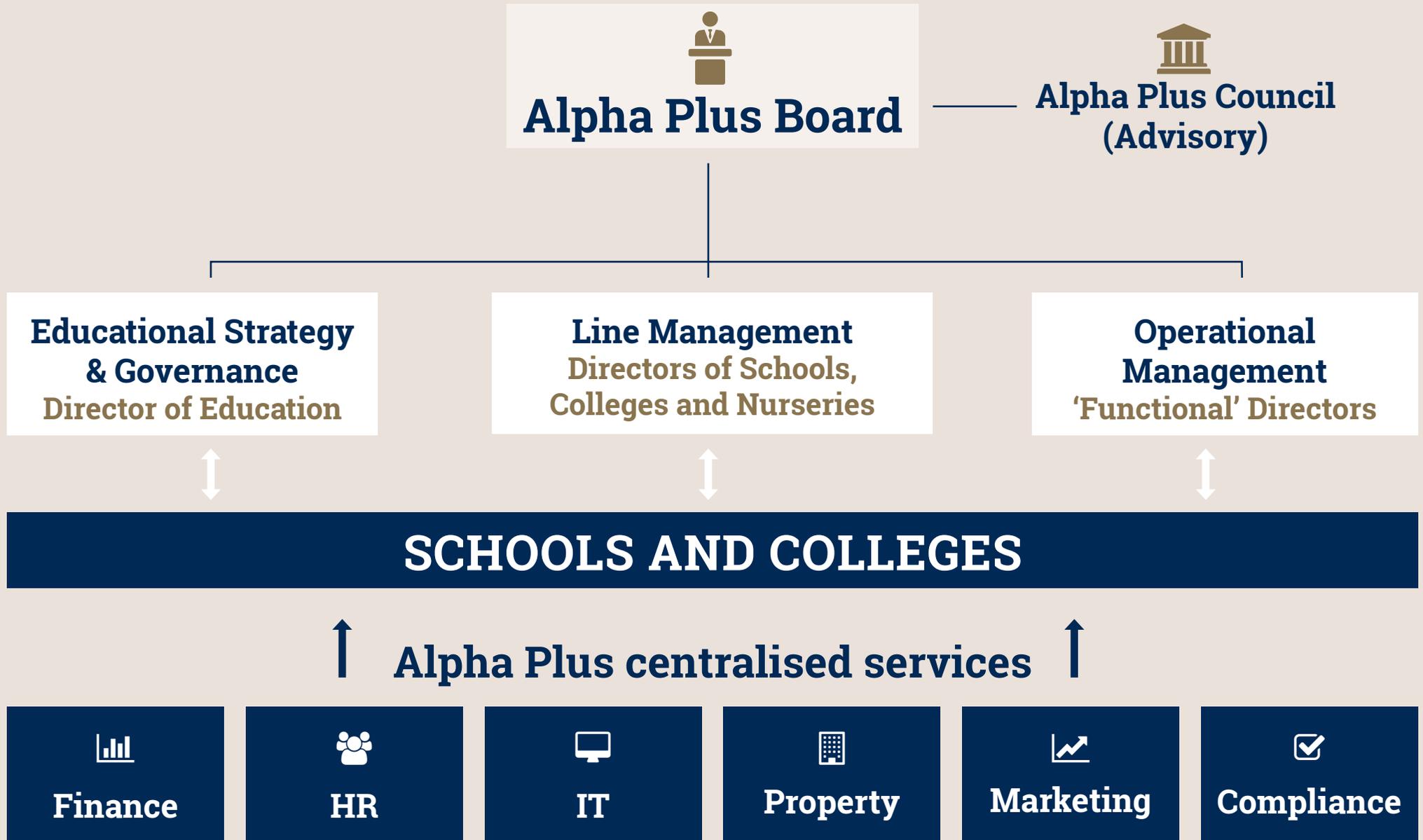
Heads and Principals are expected to proactively engage with the principles of the Gold Standard:

- Challenging what the principles mean in practice, and tailoring them where appropriate to the specific context and culture of their environments
- Demonstrably championing the concept of the Gold Standard, and holding their staff accountable to its principles, both at induction and through the cycle of appraisals

What can be expected of Head Office?

- Support and challenge through a robust structure of professional governance
- Facilitation of the sharing of insights to inform practice
- Published exemplars of the Gold Standard based on latest research and in consultation with, Group schools and colleges. The first of these, *Assessment: the Gold Standard*, was published in May 2017 and was followed by similar publications on leadership and digital literacy
- Accountability of the central services (as described in this Prospectus) to the same Gold Standard principles





Governance Framework

Educational Governance

Director of Education

- Strategic development and quality assurance of teaching, curriculum & assessment, leadership, and CPD
- Coordination and quality assurance of governance process (e.g. cycle of visits, programme of review and checks, follow-up)
- Nominated Lead Governor for safeguarding and SEND and Governor contact for Inspectors
- Liaison with ISI and educational bodies
- Annual safeguarding and achievement reports to the Board

Line Management

Directors of Schools, Colleges and Nurseries

- Support, challenge, mentor (as required)
- Objective-setting, review, appraisals
- Recruitment, induction, succession planning
- Advice on teaching, learning and child welfare (as required)
- Primary Head Office contact point, ensuring communicative efficiency with functional Directors and Director of Education
- Review of school and college performance and reporting to Board
- Agree first draft annual budget and strategic plan

Operational Management

'Functional' Directors

- Professional expertise
- Optimise scale benefits across the Group
- Sharing of good practice
- Change- and project-management
- Process efficiency
- Risk management and compliance
- Finance
- Human Resources (HR)
- Information Technology (IT)
- Marketing
- Property
- Business Development

Alpha Plus centralised services

- **Finance:** accounting, reporting, payroll, insurance, internal controls, audit
- **HR:** recruitment, compensation and benefits, training and development, staff welfare and discipline, dismissal, grievances, employment law compliance
- **IT:** network infrastructure and communications, systems and applications, data protection
- **Property:** acquisitions, development, estate and facilities management; health and safety
- **Marketing:** market research, brand development, alumni development, PR and communications, new school launches, operational support where needed
- **Compliance:** policy/procedural guidance and templates; organizational process efficiency
- **Other:** Centralised procurement (e.g. catering); admissions (colleges only)

Head/Principal

Leadership and management responsibilities

- Assurance of child welfare and protection
- Delivery of excellence in teaching, learning and assessment
- Recruitment and retention
- Reputation management
- Parental and community relations
- Administration, including budgetary control and local procurement
- Liaison with Head Office to optimise centralised services
- Regulatory compliance: policies and procedures, adapted from Group templates, or locally created where context dictates

The Alpha Plus Board



Chairman
Sir John Ritblat



Deputy Chairman
Graham Able

The Board

The functions of Educational Governance, Operational and Line Management (as illustrated in the Governance Diagram on page 6) are all accountable to the Board of Alpha Plus Holdings plc which is also responsible for corporate governance.

The majority of Board Directors are also Governors of all of the Group's Schools and Colleges, and the Group Chairman is Chair of the Governors. Governance is explained in more detail in the document *Governance at Alpha Plus*, available on the Portal.

The Board typically meets nine times a year to consider major operational and strategic matters. It reviews various reports, including the CEO's executive summary, a financial report, and summary progress reports prepared by each Director. These contain academic, pastoral, and operational performance data and commentary for each School and College, as well as safeguarding and compliance issues, and inspection outcomes.

Biographies of Governors, Executive Management and Council members are available on the Alpha Plus Group website.

The Alpha Plus Council (advisory only)

The Council advises independently on the educational direction of the Group, and reviews the educational performance aspects of the Schools and Colleges. It meets once per term and its observations and advice are noted by the Board.

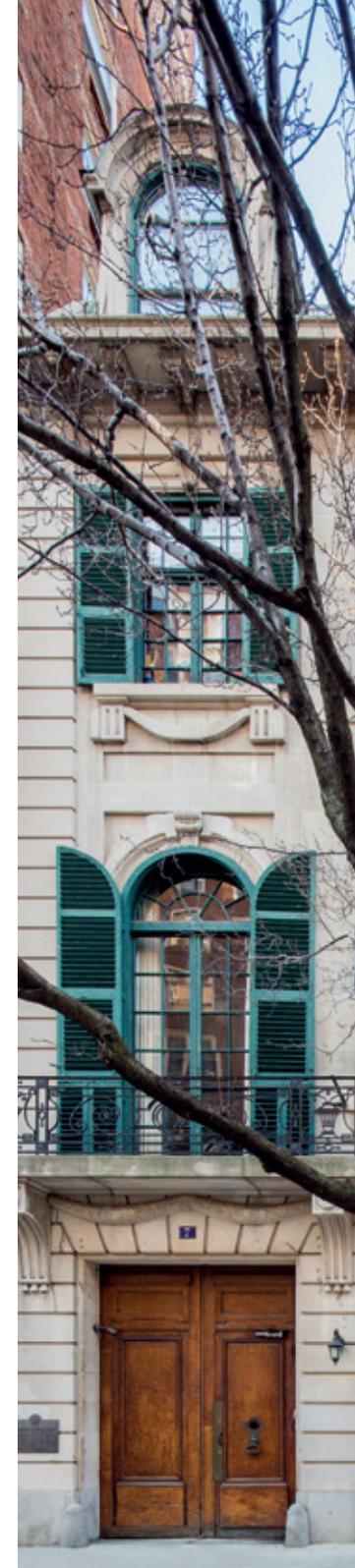
Council members offer a wide range of experience, and include a current parent. The Council considers latest developments in education and their implications for Alpha Plus Schools and Colleges. Such developments might include: curriculum and assessment; child welfare and protection; government policy; regulatory and inspection issues; independent sector market developments; and social issues such as trends in social media and technology.

What is expected of Heads and Principals?

- Understand and engage with the Alpha Plus governance structure and programme
- Promote understanding of governance principles amongst staff
- Explain, with confidence, the robustness and added value of the Group governance structure to parents and inspectors
- Periodically attend a Board and Council meeting to make a formal presentation regarding school/college progress, performance, priorities and issues

What can be expected of Head Office?

- A clear, efficient and professionally executed programme of governance (see also Educational Strategy and Governance *on the next page*)
- An annual Invitation to Heads and Principals to present to the Board and Council
- Provision of information on Governors, Board meeting minutes (extracts), and other data to meet compliance and inspection requirements



Educational Strategy and Governance



Educational Strategy
and Governance
Liz Francis

Educational Strategy*

There are many benefits to being part of an education Group, most notably the dedication of time and resources to:

- Identify and assess the implications of relevant developments in Education
- Engage productively with educational partners and professional institutional bodies
- Promote collaboration and knowledge-sharing across Schools and Colleges
- Coordinate programmes of targeted training and leadership development
- Critically appraise the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOTs) of Schools and Colleges to feed into their individual strategic planning (and that of the Group)
- The production of a series of APG Gold Standard in Education publications that exemplify the Gold Standard

Governance

The focus here is to provide structure and discipline to the governance process (e.g. cycle of visits, programme of review and checks, follow-up).

Further details are available in the document: *Governance at Alpha Plus*, available on the Portal.

The key is to support and challenge Heads and Principals and their SLTs, helping them to achieve the highest standards, and to be 'inspection-ready'

Liaison with ISI helps to ensure in-house inspection briefings are up to date, and to identify more efficient solutions to ISI inspections of APG institutions.

What is expected of Schools and Colleges?

- Being open to both support and challenge
- A proactive disposition to collaboration and sharing of best practice
- Preparation in advance of governance visits
- Flag inspection notifications at the earliest possible opportunity
- Maintain awareness amongst staff (especially the DSLs) that the Director of Education is also the Lead Governor for Safeguarding

What can be expected of Head Office?

- A programme of meetings, forums, seminars, technical updates, training and a newsletter on relevant topics as required
- Published exemplars of the Gold Standard based on latest research and consultation with Group schools and colleges. The first of these, *Assessment: the Gold Standard* was published in May 2017, followed by similar publications: *Leadership*, *Digital Literacy 2018*
- A well-organised cycle of governance visits, with clear feedback
- Before and during inspections, support and on-site presence (with other senior management) where possible and appropriate
- Provision of a consultation point for queries on specialist educational matters
- Enthusiastic support for innovation and knowledge-sharing initiatives
- Annual leadership conference
- Annual achievement report (for use with inspectors)
- The availability of a 'critical friend' to draw on as required

**Educational strategy focuses on development in curriculum, assessment, welfare, leadership and CPD.*



Compliance



Compliance
Liz Francis

Diligent compliance practice, supported and challenged through good governance, and publicly reported through formal inspection, is as critical to reputation as is the quality of teaching.

Primary responsibility for being compliant with laws and guidelines which are specific to educational settings sits with Heads and Principals, with the welfare and safety of children being their first priority.

Central support is provided in certain areas of professional specialism as indicated below. In this context, the role of the Head Office compliance function is to monitor the whole picture, and look at ways to optimise scale efficiencies and reduce the technical-drafting burden on staff, such that they can focus more on executing good compliance in practice.

Head Office compliance responsibilities:

- *Health & safety* – Director of Property
- *Financial* – Director of Finance
- *Employment* – Director of HR
- *Data protection* – Director of IT and Director of Education
- *Immigration law & visas* – Director of Sales and Marketing

What is expected of Schools and Colleges?

- A culture amongst staff where child welfare and protection are paramount
- A DSL and Deputy DSL who are part of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and who have appropriate time, funding, training, resources and support to fulfil their responsibilities
- An awareness of risk in areas of specialist compliance (e.g. health & safety, employment, data protection) and proactive engagement with Head Office to ensure these risks are adequately addressed
- A nominated Portal administrator who will champion high standards in policy document administration, including annual updates. The role description of the Portal administrator is located on the Portal
- Appropriate preparation in advance of governance visits
- Openness and proactivity in communications and knowledge sharing on compliance matters

What can be expected of Head Office?

- A well-organised central repository for all policy and procedural documents (The Portal), with quality assurance review on inspection-sensitive policies.
- The publication of guidance and policy templates on key policy areas (e.g. Safeguarding, E-Safety, SEND), updated as required to reflect regulatory changes
- The publication of key Group policy documents (e.g. Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct; Complaints procedure and internal guidelines)
- Support and challenge on compliance inspection-readiness as part of cyclical governance visits
- Facilitation of dialogue and knowledge-sharing on compliance topics



Primary responsibility for being compliant with laws and guidelines which are specific to educational settings sits with Heads and Principals, with the welfare and safety of children being their first priority.





α+ Alpha Plus
group

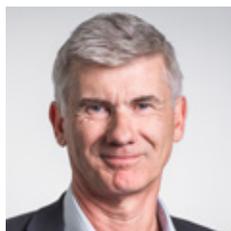
the **Gold Standard** in education



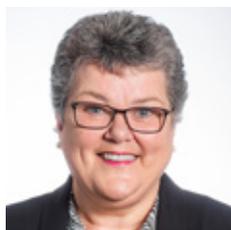
Schools, Colleges and Nurseries Management



Schools Management
Jenny Stephen



Senior Schools and
Colleges Management
Tim Haynes



Nurseries Management
Jane Ritchie

The Directors of Schools, Colleges and Nurseries are primarily a line management function for the Heads and Principals. The number and variety of institutions mean that the management relationship will not be identical in each case, but certain basic duties will be common to all:

- Set objectives, performance reviews and appraisals
- Support, challenge and mentor Heads and Principals, as appropriate
- Review school performance, and report to Board meetings
- Agree first draft strategic plans and budgets with Heads and Principals
- Joint quality assurance of learning, teaching and governance
- Be the primary Head Office contact for Heads and Principals, and first-line escalation point

- Promote and develop leadership skills
- Succession planning, and induction of new Heads and Principals
- Monitor and report child welfare incidents and complaints, liaising with HO colleagues

These roles promote highly effective co-ordination and collaboration between Head Office colleagues to ensure communicative efficiency with schools (i.e. to minimise the risk of duplication and confusion).

New Schools/Projects

The Directors of Schools, Colleges and Nurseries have two roles to play on new school projects/expansions/disposals:

- To challenge the educational-commercial logic and the operational viability of new proposals
- To quality-assure the educational leadership aspects of project delivery

What is expected of Schools, Colleges and Nurseries?

- Be proactive in communication; flag things early
- Own your data (strategic plans and budgets; operational and performance data)
- Don't be afraid to ask for help or advice – use the resources of the Group

What can be expected of Head Office?

- Honest, frank, and objective opinions
- Pragmatic advice from seasoned experience
- Professional and moral support, where needed
- A structured managerial relationship, tailored to the needs of the individual school or college



These roles promote highly effective co-ordination and collaboration between Head Office colleagues to ensure communicative efficiency with schools (i.e. to minimise the risk of duplication and confusion).



Human Resources (HR)



Human Resources (HR)
Paul Brereton

People are our biggest investment, and their effectiveness has a direct and immediate impact on the successes (and failures) of our Schools and Colleges. Good HR can be transformational, efficiently harnessing the talent, knowledge and skills of its people and maximising their potential.

Our systems, processes and data are currently labour-intensive and inefficient to manage with the scale of our current and future activities, making it difficult for HR to add-value beyond the basics.

New investment in the form of the HR project (My HR) has started to deliver a step-change in process efficiency and management information, enabling HR to move towards being a full-service function.

What can a full-service HR function offer?

- Talent management (recruitment, retention, succession planning)
- Leadership development
- Performance management
- Employee welfare (engagement, disciplining, grievance resolution)
- Collective and individual case-work support
- Tribunal and union negotiation and arbitration
- Pay and reward
- Knowledge management
- Compliance (expertise in employment law, DBS and SCR)

What is expected of Schools and Colleges?

- Trust in central HR, including openness and early consultation. The best outcomes invariably depend on anticipation, early identification and communication with Head Office, such that they can be dealt with in a professional and constructive way
- Enthusiasm for the new system and procedures, championing its benefits with your staff, and constructively feeding back any implementation issues

What can be expected of Head Office?

- A 24/7 service that always addresses difficult issues professionally and effectively, coordinating with other Head Office functions
- Grounded and practical problem-solving advice and recommendations from experienced practitioners
- An expanding offering from the full-service list above, especially where demand-driven by HR-savvy Heads and Principals

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Property



Property
Rick Jones

Strategic-project dimension

The smart and efficient use of property, leased or owned, and especially in the high value areas in which we operate, is complex yet fundamental to the success of the Group.

The market opportunities are far from static. Equally, our space needs, whether in the existing portfolio or driven by the desire to expand existing or open new premises or exit current ones, are subject to continuous re-evaluation and research.

Forward thinking to understand the future needs of our schools and colleges is critically important to the planning and successful delivery of new or enlarged facilities and in the ongoing efficient management of the estate.

Operational support dimension

In addition to supporting the strategic development opportunities of the Group, the existing estate demands considerable attention in areas such as:

- Repairs and maintenance; re-decoration, refurbishment and expansion
- Procurement and contract maintenance for the building and its services, furniture, fixtures and fittings, specialist equipment, transport
- Re-configuration of space (buildings, rooms, outside space)
- Health and safety and other DfE compliance/inspection matters
- Local authority engagement
- Neighbour dispute resolution
- Insurance claims
- Rent review and rating negotiations

What is expected of Schools and Colleges?

- A good understanding of the current condition and needs of your estate
- Awareness of health and safety risks
- Regular review of evacuation and lockdown procedures (including drills)
- Annual update of your Business Continuity Plan
- Ask questions if in any doubt
- Forward thinking (next 12 months and next 5 years)
- Wish-list requests communicated early in the financial year

What can be expected of Head Office?

- An integrated and all-encompassing service to the schools and colleges
- Rapid response, especially where safety or critical operational continuity is concerned
- Regular Health & Safety surveys to reassure you that you are fulfilling your legal responsibilities

“

The smart and efficient use of property, leased or owned, and especially in the high value areas in which we operate, is complex yet fundamental to the success of the Group.

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Marketing



Marketing
Rossella Proscia

Marketing is the art and science of communicating value to customers (parents), in order to grow/retain our place in the market. In practice this is a process of research, evaluation and strategy development that addresses brand, content, promotional channels and mix.

Group marketing at Alpha Plus involves

- Managing and developing the Alpha Plus Group brand
- Group communications
- Market and customer research
- Budget setting, supplier control

Services provided to Schools and Colleges

- Marketing planning and implementation for new schools' launches
- Marketing planning support
- Marketing services (ad design, copy writing, digital ad set up, website management)
- Guidance, development and training of designated staff
- Alumni development (Tom Robertson)
- Colleges – international student marketing, sales, agent and IAC support

What is expected of Schools and Colleges?

To “own” their institution’s brand, to embody its values and champion its reputation. To understand and communicate parents’ needs and perceptions. To support Group-wide marketing initiatives where needed.

In practical terms, Heads and Principals are responsible for recruitment, retention and community relations. Typical in-school marketing responsibilities include managing events, website and social media channels, communications with current and prospective parents, with feeder schools etc.

What can be expected of Head Office?

- Transparency, collaboration, responsiveness, trust
- Marketing advice and guidance
- Hands on marketing where needed
- Media relations support



Heads and Principals are responsible for recruitment, retention and community relations.



College Recruitment



College Recruitment
Rossella Proscia

Our colleges admit students from all over the world, to work alongside students from the UK.

The nationality mix is a very important component of the education on offer at our Colleges, in that we are helping students from other countries to understand our culture and we are offering our UK students an understanding of other cultures. The mix helps prepare all our students to be global citizens.

We have an extensive recruitment network across the globe which helps us to describe what we offer, abroad, and supports those students through the application process from registration to enrolment.

What do the International Recruitment teams deliver?

- Presence in countries around the world that have students who are interested in receiving a UK education for between one and four years
- Training for agents abroad, so they understand what our Colleges offer and can help the students decide whether or not they wish to apply
- Advice and assistance directly to students who are deciding whether or not to apply to our colleges

Admissions

- A welcoming and supportive experience, from registration to enrolment
- Management of the admission process to ensure students know what standards are required to study in our colleges to take full advantage of the education we are providing
- Advice on Tier 4 visa applications and assistance in visa sponsorship

What is expected of Colleges?

- Close integration and cooperation with the sales team. This may involve supporting sales activities in-country (e.g. access to facilities, development of marketing material, timely response to enquiries) and out-of-country (e.g. travelling to key markets to support sales activities)
- A can-do attitude, particularly in the working relationship between central and local admissions

What can be expected of Head Office?

- A recruitment team that can represent the Colleges' educational proposition effectively in different countries
- A smooth customer experience for students from first contact through to enrolment
- Growth in international student numbers



Finance



Finance
Mark Sample

Scope of function

- Planning (budgeting and forecasting), supporting strategic development of the Group
- Management reporting and analytical review to ensure good financial discipline and control, and to aid performance management
- Working with shareholders to ensure that the Group is appropriately capitalised to meet its short and long-term financing needs
- Ensuring compliance with relevant statutory, and tax regulations
- Maintenance of risk register and internal control framework

Services provided to Schools and Colleges

- Monthly management reporting
- Maintenance of accounting and billing systems, processes and controls
- Supplier payments and expense reimbursement
- Payroll services
- Statutory reporting and audit
- Insurance policy administration

What is expected of Schools and Colleges?

- Rigour in planning and management of costs within your agreed budgets
- A good understanding of the cost and profit drivers of your school/college, including re-charges and allocations
- Adherence to Group financial policies, notably credit control, and expenditure authorisation
- Prompt submission of purchase invoices

What can be expected of Head Office?

- A consistent and reliable standard across all the services provided
- Quick responses to any queries, ad hoc financial support and analysis
- Decisions regarding annual fee increases and changes to pay scales
- Assistance with unpaid fee situations





IT
Russell Seaman

We are committed to providing first class customer service and continuing to work in partnership with the schools delivering both the day-to-day organisation IT and supporting the schools and colleges in the development of educational IT needs, including the technology required to enable their digital literacy strategy.

The distinction between *Organisational IT* and *Educational IT* is clarified on the next page.



What is expected of Schools and Colleges?

- A nominated ICT co-ordinator to work with IT, and engage with other schools, to shape the direction of both organisational IT and to lead on the vision for educational IT. Requirements and skill-set of an ICT coordinator can be found on the Portal
- To follow the agreed processes for incidents, requests and procurement in line with IT policies, ensuring that IT can be delivered in a controlled and proactive way
- Forward thinking and communication of IT needs, for the next 12 months and any major changes in the longer term

What can be expected of Head Office?

- A focus on ensuring that IT is robust, reliable and performs as needed, as much for the demands of the modern classroom environment as for the requirements of good organisational administration
- Collaboration with the schools and colleges to document their vision for the development of Educational IT and ensure that this can be efficiently supported
- Leveraging the power of the Group to ensure best value when procuring both hardware and software, whilst still supporting the individual requirements of the schools and colleges

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We are committed to becoming the trusted IT partner delivering both day-to-day Organisational IT and supporting schools and colleges in the development and delivery of their Educational IT needs.

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IT (2) -Technology in an educational environment -principles and terminology



Educational technology

- Identification of needs/benefits of teaching and learning solutions (e.g. use of platforms, tablets, applications, interactivity, social media)
- Curriculum - and inspection-driven requirements for classroom technology
- Educational assessment solutions
- Training of staff
- E-safety (educational elements)
- Procurement, installation, maintenance of screens (IWBs; Touchscreens; projectors)*
- Procurement, installation and renewal of licensed educational software*
- Content management of pupil devices (desktops; laptops; tablets)*

Organisational systems and applications:

- Educational management and administration (SIMS)
- Microsoft Office suite: Outlook (email; calendar), Word, PowerPoint, Excel
- Finance and management information
- Payroll
- HR database
- Compliance (e.g. the Portal)
- Marketing (e.g. school/college website development and support)

Network infrastructure:

- Reliable and secure network and communications (including Wi-Fi, remote access and safe content filtering)
- Provision of IT helpdesk
- Provision of on-site/desk-top engineers (primarily supporting network infrastructure)
- Procurement, set-up and maintenance of laptops/PCs/phones/tablets/printers/other network devices
- Data protection and IT Usage policies
- E-safety (infrastructure elements)

** Likely to remain centrally managed, though schools/colleges should 'own' the solutions, and discuss local requirements/alternatives with the Directors of Education and IT*

Educational IT

Demand-driven by Schools and Colleges, challenged and supported as appropriate by Director of IT and Director of Education

Organisational IT

Centrally-driven by Director of IT in consultation with relevant Head Office functional heads.





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