



Confederation
of School Trusts

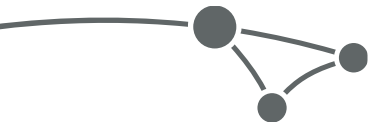
**Browne
Jacobson**

brightmine[™]



Salary survey of Executive Leadership roles in School Trusts





About the Confederation of School Trusts

The Confederation of School Trusts is the national organisation and sector body for School Trusts in England, advocating for, connecting, and supporting executive and governance leaders. Our members are responsible for the education of more than three million young people.

Bringing together trusts from every region and of every size, CST has a strong, strategic presence with access to government and policy makers to drive real change for education on the big issues that matter most.

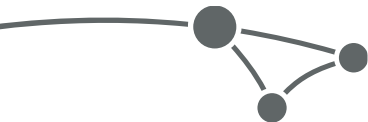
About Compensation Planning from Brightmine

Compensation Planning is one of the largest reported reward datasets in the UK with over 1.5 million employees. Compensation Planning is a Brightmine product, and part of the RELX Group – a trusted provider of data since 1968. It provides expert insight and practical tools to help organisations make fair, data-driven reward benchmarking decisions – from submission to using the data – as easily and efficiently as possible.

About Browne Jacobson

Independently recognised as one of the best education law practices in the country, Browne Jacobson has a wealth of sector-specific knowledge and experience to assist School Trusts, managing estate and construction projects, employment issues and funding matters, to intellectual property, health and safety, defamation and disputes. The firm has bases in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Exeter, Dublin and Nottingham.





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Foreword

Welcome to the 2024 salary survey of executive roles in school trusts, presented by the Confederation of School Trusts in partnership with Brightmine and Browne Jacobson.

This is the fourth year of our partnership and it continues to deliver interesting and useful insights into the approach to remuneration in the sector, with a total of nearly 2,500 senior roles covered by the data. As ever, we thank finance and HR teams across the country for helping us collate this information.

Attention on pay often, understandably, focuses on school trust chief executives. This year the data suggests that their pay rose by around 6.9%, broadly in line with the final 6.5% pay settlement for most teaching staff. Salaries for leaders at smaller trusts continued to be at similar levels to that of maintained headteachers, despite the additional legal responsibility that comes with the accounting officer role. Larger trusts do pay more – reflecting the complexity of leading large organisations with thousands of staff and multi-million pound budgets.

Beyond the headlines, the sector has work to do on increasing and supporting diversity in leadership. The survey found that the gender gap has slightly narrowed this year, but the median salary for female leaders is still 5.8% lower than for men. Elsewhere, research has found a stark lack of racial diversity in school and trust leadership. This is not unique to schools, but these are areas where we can and should do better.

To help with this, from September we at CST are launching a new professional community for people and culture, as well as continuing the conversations started at our CEO Leadership Summit on trust culture held in July. Pay, as well as training and culture, will always be part of how we recruit and retain the best people in our school trusts, and this report – and Brightmine's wider services – will help inform what the sector does next to ensure we continue to get the best outcomes for future generations.

Leora Cruddas

Chief Executive

Confederation of School Trust



Glossary of terms

Salary tables

Lower quartile: When all salaries are set out in ascending order, the figure below which one-quarter of all salaries lie. Shown in salary tables as LQ.

Median: When all salaries are set out in ascending order, the figure below which half of all salaries lie. Shown in salary tables as Med.

Upper quartile: When all salaries are set out in ascending order, the figure below which three-quarters of all salaries lie. Shown in salary tables as UQ.

Average: The sum of all individual salaries divided by the number of individuals. Shown in salary tables as Av.

Sample: The data used in a given survey or table. NB: the sample size (i.e. number of records) for many tables is likely to be less than the sample size for the survey as a whole as refinements (eg by region or job function) will lead to the exclusion of some individuals.

Number in sample: The number of individual salaries in the sample. Shown in salary tables as Ind. No.

Basic pay or basic salary: Annualised cash payment of basic salary including London or other location allowances, merit/performance pay and skills supplement if they are pensionable items and excluding mortgage subsidies, standby allowances, car allowances, shift, overtime and bonus payments.

Total earnings: Basic annual salary before deductions for tax, national insurance, pension contributions etc but including London or other location allowances, performance or skills supplements plus any bonuses, commission payments and mortgage subsidies as well as any shift or standby allowance paid and other cash allowances and honorarium.

Region: Regional breakdowns are provided for two broad areas – London, and the UK excluding London. This is in order to reflect some significant variations in the London market compared to the rest of the UK.



Number of participating organisations

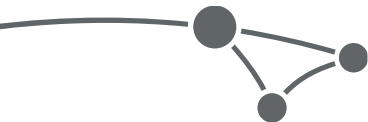
The tables below summarise the number of participating organisations (Org. No.) and the number of individual employees they provided data for (Ind. No.) as well as a summary of the number of individual records as a percentage of the overall total.

Summary by Job Level of employee

	Ind. No	Ind. %	Org. No.
Chief executive	129	5.2%	111
Senior director	273	11.0%	90
Director	391	15.7%	75
Senior function head	503	20.2%	55
Function head	569	22.8%	48
Department manager	628	25.2%	54
Whole sample	2,493	100%	117

Summary by number of schools within the trust

	Ind. No	Ind. %	Org. No.
1 - 5	325	13.0%	36
6 - 10	404	16.2%	35
11 - 20	520	20.9%	26
21 or more	1,087	43.6%	8
Not provided	157	6.3%	12
Whole sample	2,493	100%	117



Summary by number of pupils within the trust

	Ind. No	Ind. %	Org. No.
2,000 or fewer	135	5.4%	21
2,001 – 5,000	237	9.5%	34
5,001 – 10,000	592	23.7%	28
More than 10,000	283	11.4%	6
Not provided	1,246	50.0%	28
Whole sample	2,493	100%	117

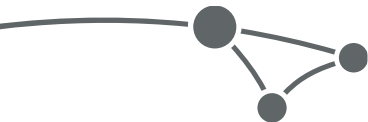
Summary by location of trust

	Ind. No	Ind. %	Org. No.
London	867	34.8%	39
Rest of the UK (excluding London)	1,600	64.2%	83
Not provided	26	1.0%	3
Whole sample	2,493	100%	117

Summary by education provision

	Ind. No	Ind. %	Org. No.
Primary	557	22.3%	56
Secondary	464	18.6%	42
Teaching School	197	7.9%	14
Alternative Provision	144	5.8%	7
Special (SEND)	210	8.4%	18
All Through	154	6.2%	8
Not provided	1,889	75.8%	54

Note: Respondents could select multiple options.



Salary tables

Level 10 (CEO)

Incumbents at this level will hold the most senior executive role in an organisation. They are accountable for the educational achievement of pupils and the mid to long term financial viability of the organisation. Along with the rest of the executive team, is responsible for creating trust strategy for ratification by the board.

Headline figures

£144,000

National median
basic salary

£144,493

National median
total cash earnings

129

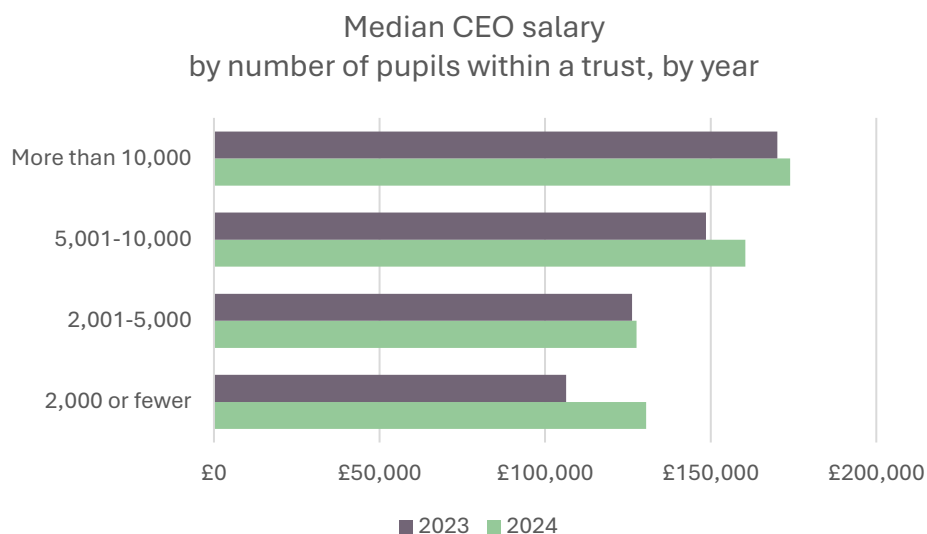
Sample size
(no. of individuals)

Year on year changes

The median basic salary for CEOs increased by 6.9% in 2024 compared with 2023, based on a matched sample analysis. CEOs in the sample had a smaller year-on-year increase compared to the total for all senior staff (Levels 10-15), whose salaries rose by 8.3%.

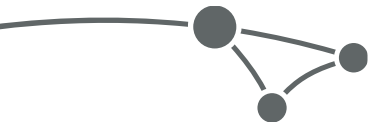


Number of pupils within the trust

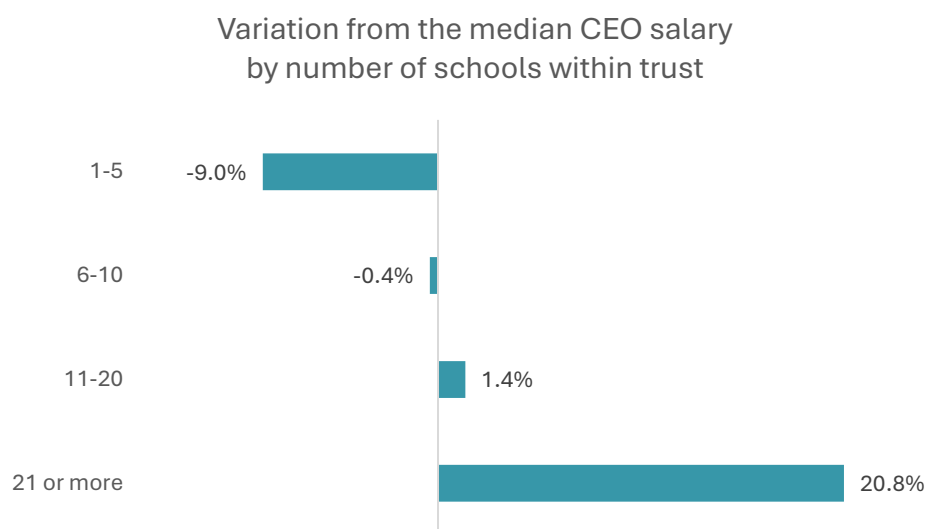


In 2023, CEO salaries increased in line with the number of pupils within a trust. In 2024, CEOs in trusts with up to 2,000 pupils have a median salary of £130,544, slightly higher than the £127,575 for those in trusts with 2,001–5,000 pupils. This represents a 22.7% increase in the median CEO salary in the smallest trust size, compared to a 1.1% increase in the median salary for those in trusts with 2,000–5,000 pupils.

The median salary for CEOs in the two largest trust sizes, based on pupil numbers, continues to be higher than the overall sample median. Those in trusts with 5,001–10,000 pupils receive a basic salary that is 11.4% higher than the whole sample median, while those in trusts with over 10,000 pupils receive a basic salary that is 20.8% higher.



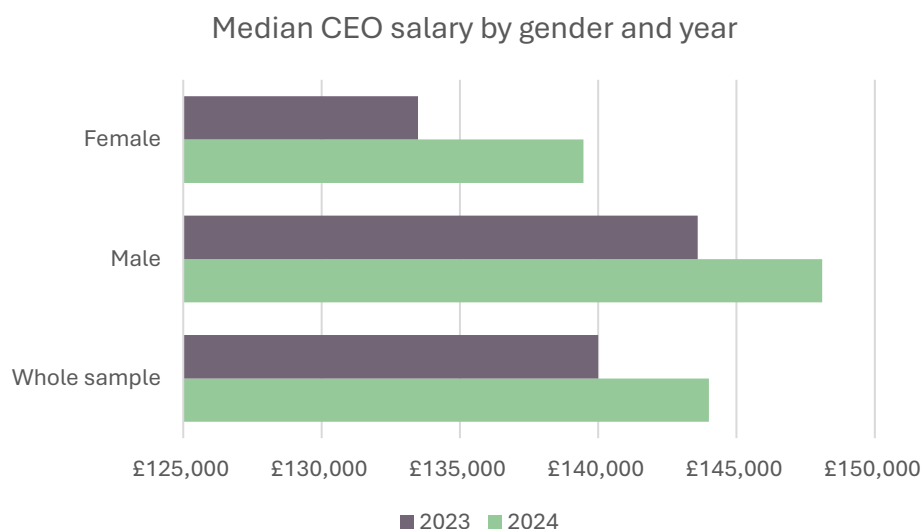
Number of schools within the trust



Consistent with 2023, median CEO salaries in 2024 increase in line with the number of schools within the trust. CEOs of the smallest trusts with up to five schools receive a median base salary of £131,056, 9% lower than the whole sample median. CEOs in the largest trusts have a median salary of £173,972, a fifth (20.8%) higher than the whole sample median.

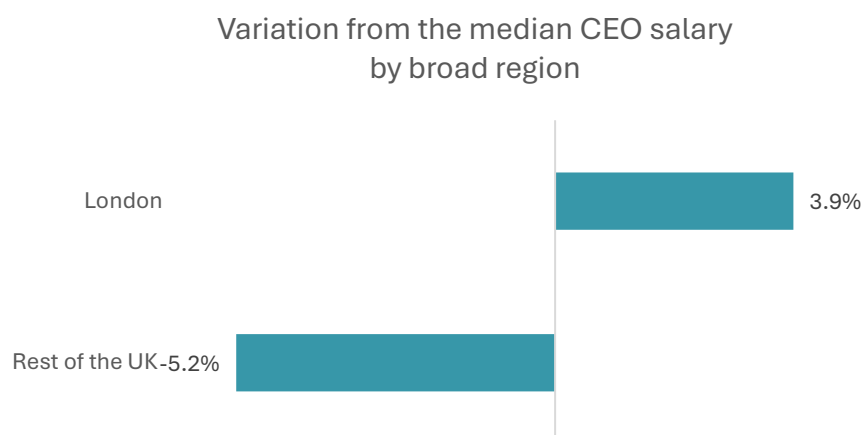


Gender

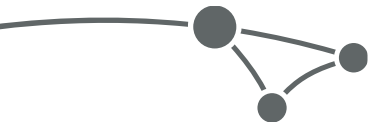


The median salary of female CEOs continues to be lower than that of their male counterparts, with women earning £8,634 less than men. The gap between men and women has narrowed slightly compared to 2023, with the median salary for women being 5.8% lower than that for men in 2024, compared to 7% lower in 2023.

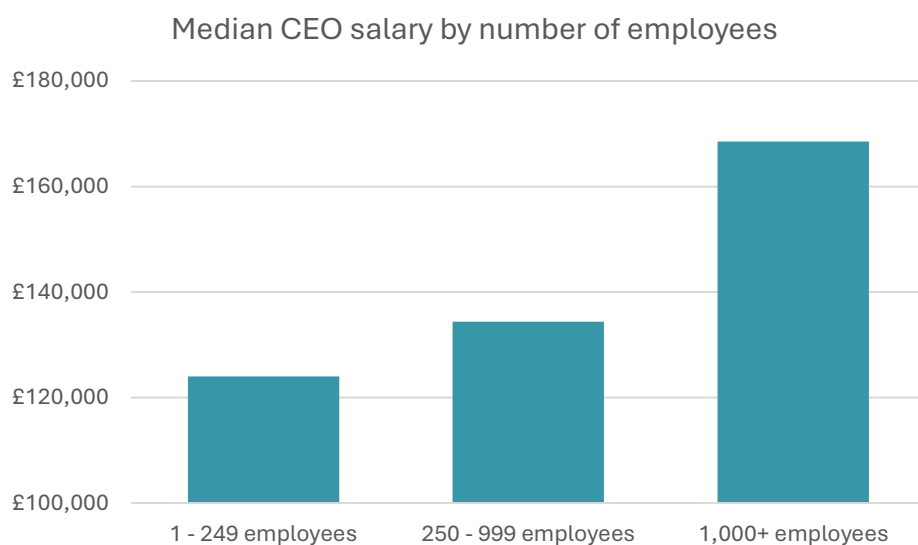
Region



The median basic salary for CEOs in London stands close to £150,000, which is 3.9% higher than the whole sample median and 9.5% higher than the median salary for the rest of the UK. This gap has reduced from 12.2% in 2023, with the median London CEO salary increasing by just 1% compared to a 5% increase for the rest of the UK.



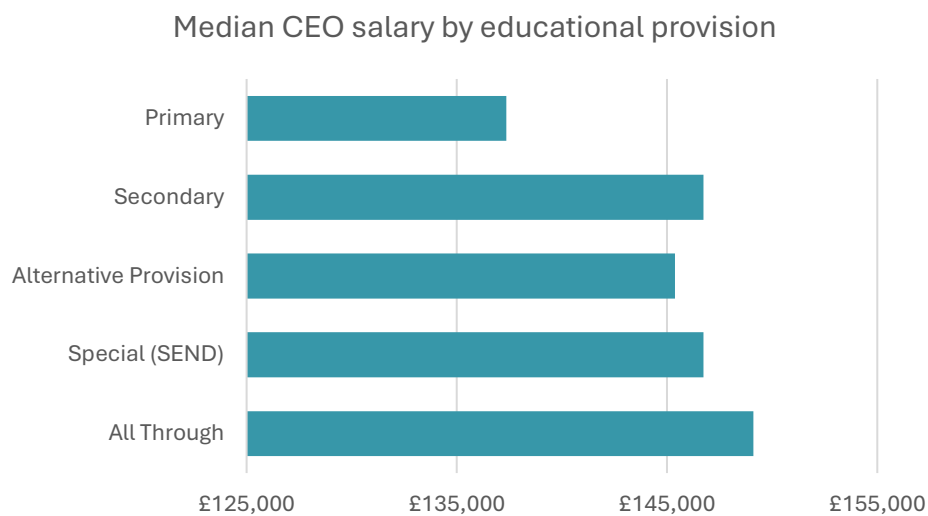
Number of employees



The median salary for CEOs with the largest number of staff is 17% higher than the median salary for all CEOs in the sample. While CEOs of trusts with less than 250 employees have the lowest median salary at £124,010, 13.9% lower than the whole sample median, this is almost £20,000 higher than for the same job level in 2023. In contrast, the median salary of CEOs of trusts with 250-999 employees has increased by around £3,500.

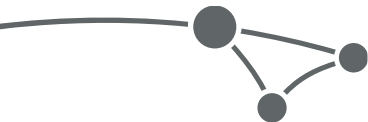


Educational provision



Median CEO salaries vary depending on the type of educational provision within their trust. Similar to 2023, CEOs of primary school trusts have the lowest median salary at £137,352, which is 4.6% lower than the whole sample median.

Note: Respondents were invited to select as many of the options as applied to their Trust. The total median salary by educational provision is £138,095 and differs from the whole sample median because some respondents did not provide details of their educational provision.



Salary tables

Level 12, General management function (Operations Director and similar roles)

Job holders at this level will almost always attend the board or executive committee of the organisation. As part of the executive team, is responsible for creating trust strategy for ratification by the board and then delivering this strategy.

This analysis is based on a subset of roles from within Level 12 (Director) where the general management function has been selected.

Headline figures

£78,570

Median basic salary

£78,764

Median total cash
earnings

293

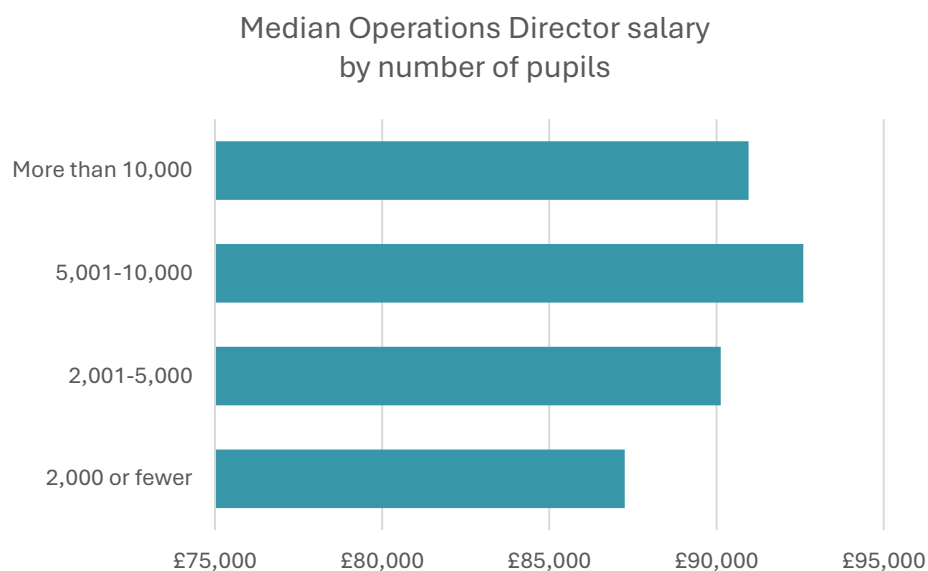
Sample size (no. of individuals)

Year on year changes

A matched sample analysis indicates the median basic salary for Directors (of any function) has increased by 9.1% in 2024, compared with 2023.

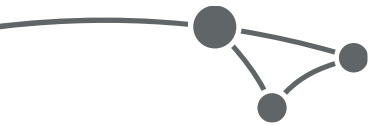


Number of pupils within the trust

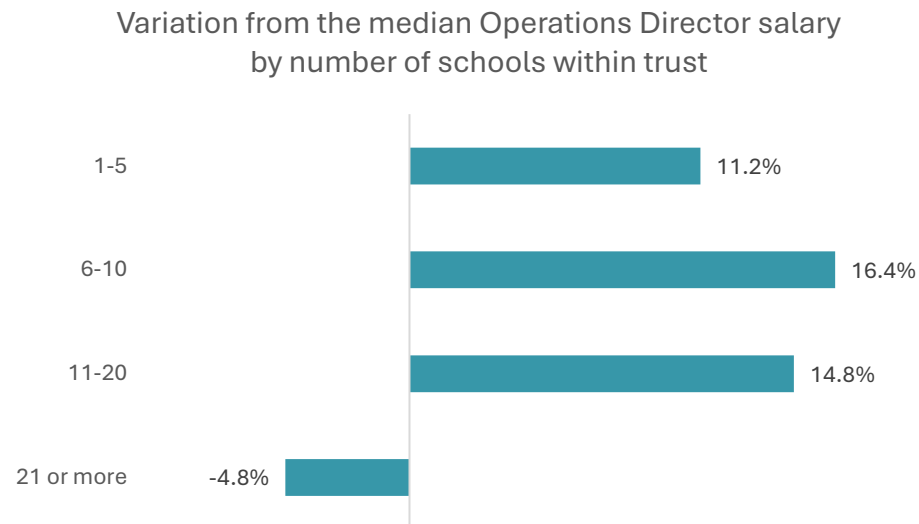


The median Operations Director salary increases in line with pupil numbers, until the highest grouping of 10,000 or more pupils is reached. Operations Directors working in trusts with 5,001-10,000 pupils now have the highest median salary at £92,597. Operations Directors in the smallest trusts with 2,000 or fewer pupils have the lowest median salary of £87,252.

Note: the median salaries for number of pupils within the trust are higher than the whole sample median because some respondents did not provide details of their pupil numbers.



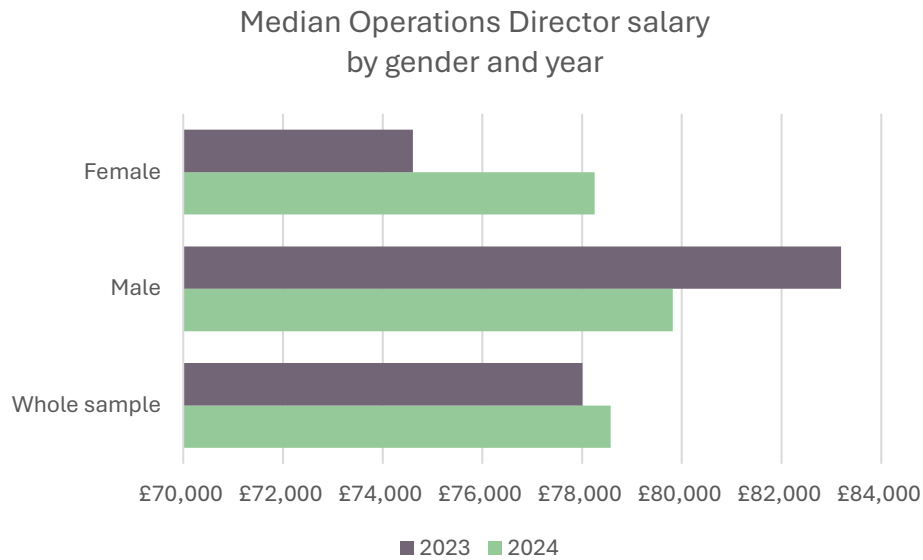
Number of schools within the trust



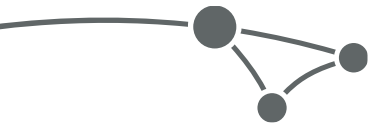
Consistent with 2023, Operations Directors in trusts with the largest number of schools (21 or more) receive the lowest median salary of £74,823, a figure that is largely unchanged when compared to 2023. Operations Directors working in all other trust sizes receive a median salary that is larger than the whole sample median, peaking at a median salary of £91,427 in trusts with 6-10 schools.



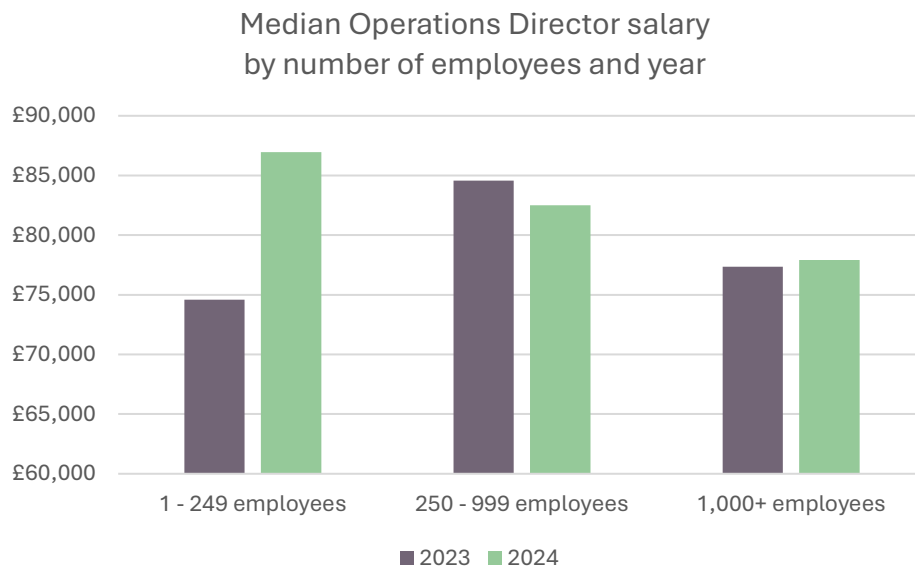
Gender



While male Operations Directors continue to have a median salary that is higher than that of their females counterparts, the gap has decreased notably compared to 2023. In 2024, men earn a median salary of £79,820, which is £1,568 or 2% more than women. In 2023, men received a median salary of £83,195, which was £8,588 or 10.3% more than women.

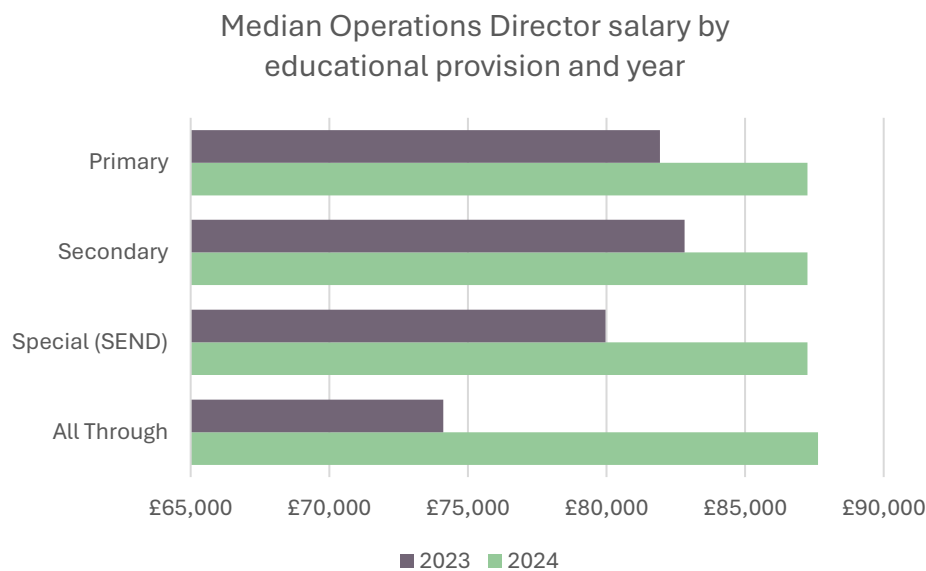


Number of employees



The highest median Operations Director salary is seen in organisations with the smallest number of employees, standing 10.7% higher than the whole sample median at £86,957. This represents an increase in the sample median salary of more than £12,000 since 2023. In contrast, the sample median salary for Operations Directors in organisations with 250-999 employees has decreased by more than £2,000 since 2023. The median salary for Operations Directors in the largest organisations has remained largely the same compared to 2023.

Educational provision



In 2023, the median salary for Operations Directors decreased across all types of educational provision. This trend has reversed in 2024, with the median Operations Directors salary increasing across all provision types.

The most pronounced increases in salaries were observed in all through and SEND schools, with the sample medians increasing by over £13,000 and £7,000 respectively. These school types received the largest median salary decreases in 2023. Overall, there is very little variation in median salary based on educational provision types, with salaries ranging from £87,251 to £87,635.

Note: Respondents were invited to select as many of the options as applied to their Trust. The total median salary by educational provision is £87,251 and differs from the whole sample median because some respondents did not provide details of their educational provision. Alternative provision schools have been excluded due to low respondent numbers.



Salary tables

Year on year changes, by broad industry sector

	Average annual turnover, £	Average number of employees	Number of participating organisations	Average increase in basic salary (12 months)
Private sector services	£738,251,841	5,328	313	8.9%
Manufacturing and production	£279,589,906	1,232	116	7.7%
Public services	£210,557,642	2,252	290	5.2%
Charities / not for profit	£61,044,205	733	348	7.5%
School trusts	£43,377,504	900	117	9.2%

Median basic salary, by broad industry sector

	School trusts	Private sector services	Manufacturing and production	Public services	Charities / not for profit
10 Chief executive	£144,000	£243,350	£255,025	£144,798	£142,072
11 Senior director	£106,395	£180,000	£174,360	£112,622	£124,715
12 Director	£78,025	£140,000	£124,163	£94,911	£98,800
13 Senior function head	£70,140	£110,250	£99,252	£77,049	£79,882
14 Function head	£59,223	£90,809	£87,500	£75,835	£69,000
15 Department manager	£54,683	£74,922	£73,372	£66,451	£59,860



Median total cash earnings, by broad industry sector

	School trusts	Private sector services	Manufacturing and production	Public services	Charities / not for profit
10 Chief executive	£144,493	£269,495	£277,764	£144,900	£142,120
11 Senior director	£107,182	£200,000	£203,888	£114,240	£126,000
12 Director	£78,252	£158,040	£136,155	£95,400	£99,764
13 Senior function head	£70,380	£123,312	£107,119	£77,249	£80,593
14 Function head	£59,250	£97,534	£95,154	£76,139	£69,680
15 Department manager	£54,683	£80,919	£77,926	£67,428	£60,429



Background

About this survey

This report summarises some of the key findings from the fourth national annual salary survey of executive leadership roles for school trusts.

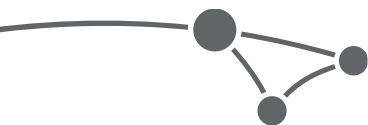
The data collected through this research will give trust boards much-needed robust benchmark data to support fair and transparent decisions about executive reward. This headline report focuses on high level results and is not intended to provide sufficient information to inform decision making. We strongly urge those who wish to undertake further work as a result of this exercise, to access and scrutinise the full survey results. Those wishing to delve deeper into the data can subscribe to the Brightmine Compensation Planning platform, to get a credible evidence base for their trusts decisions around pay.

Full survey results

The full survey results offer great depth and granularity in the breakdown of the results, allowing comparisons to be refined by parameters such as trust size (both number of schools within the trust and pupil numbers across the trust), detailed UK region, comparisons of part time and full time staff employees and article-based content summarizing pension provision and contribution and health benefits.

Why you need robust market pay data

HR professionals across all industry sectors increasingly turn to salary survey reports to access reliable, accurate, market pay data to inform and implement reward strategies. This data is increasingly used in ensuring pay levels are competitive yet fair, making informed pay review decisions and setting the right pay levels for new employees.



How to access the full survey results

The full benchmark dataset is now available for trusts to purchase and interrogate via our Brightmine Compensation Planning platform. CST members and all participants in this benchmarking study are able to subscribe to Brightmine Compensation Planning. Please get in touch with us at helpdesk.uk@brightmine.com for further information or to register your interest.

How we collect the data

Brightmine uses a consistent methodology to collect, verify and analyse data.

All data for any given survey is collected as accurate on a given date, to ensure that pay data is consistent from one participant to the next, and to allow year-on-year trends to be accurately calculated and reported.

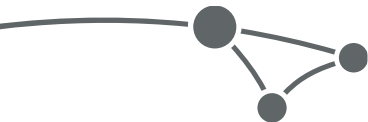
Participants are asked to complete two questionnaires for each survey:

- ✓ an organisation questionnaire which establishes characteristics of the company that can be applied to all individuals within it (eg the number of employees, turnover and industry group); and
- ✓ an individual questionnaire, which collects demographic, pay and benefits data for each employee as a unique line in a standard spreadsheet. Please note that for data protection reasons we cannot accept data that includes individual employee names, initials or similar information that might lead to their identification. However, we do ask participants to provide a unique but anonymous number or code enabling us to track changes in pay and employment status from one year to the next.

Data submitted to Brightmine on both questionnaires is further anonymised by the removal of the company name and contact details before it is added to our database and analysed.

How we check the data

Brightmine carries out a series of validation checks and audits on data to ensure that it is accurate and to identify anomalies that can be checked before being released for analysis and reporting. These include:



- ✓ checks within one organisation's spreadsheet – to ensure that all salaries submitted are within expected parameters, and that answers to linked questions are as expected;
- ✓ checks between one organisation's data and the whole survey data – to ensure that the salaries for one organisation are not consistently out of line with those for all other organisations; and
- ✓ checks from one year's survey database to the next – to ensure that trends are either as expected or can be explained.

Where anomalies are identified, Brightmine staff will ask participants to verify or amend data to ensure it is accurate. Further audits of the data are then carried out to ensure that no organisation dominates any given survey or table.

Where an organisation has previously submitted data for a Brightmine salary survey, this will be returned to the organisation for checking before subsequent publication – saving the participant from the time and effort involved in the initial submission.

How we analyse the data

This report includes a selection of salary tables. Further and more detailed breakdowns are available using the online Brightmine JobPricing tool.

Where possible, the sample size is shown on each line of every table. By default, we report the average, median and quartile salaries for each line. However, to protect the identity of participating organisations and individual employees:

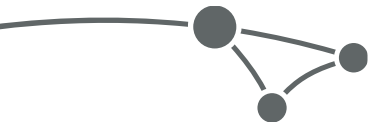
- ✓ no figures of any sort will be shown where the sample is less than four;
- ✓ median or average figures only are shown where the sample is greater than four; and
- ✓ a full quartile distribution is shown where the sample is greater than eight.

As an additional safeguard, no data will be published where all individuals in a data line are drawn from a single company.



Brightmine job levels

Level Code	Level Label	Level Descriptor
10	Chief Executive	Incumbents at this level will hold the most senior executive role in an organisation. They are accountable for the educational achievement of pupils and the mid to long term financial viability of the organisation. Along with the rest of the executive team, is responsible for creating trust strategy for ratification by the board.
11	Senior Director	Incumbents at this job level will hold the next most senior executive role below the chief executive. As part of the executive team, is responsible for creating trust strategy for ratification by the board and then delivering this strategy.
12	Director	Job holders at this level will almost always attend the board or executive committee of the organisation. As part of the executive team, is responsible for creating trust strategy for ratification by the board and then delivering this strategy.
13	Senior Function Head	Job holders at this level of seniority are often directors and senior managers who do not attend the main board or executive team but may otherwise part of the senior leadership team and have significant managerial input into the direction of the Trust. Smaller trusts may not have staff operating at this level and heads of function may be found at level 14.
14	Function Head	Incumbents at this job level will head up a functional area of an organisation. They are unlikely to sit on the SLT though may work closely with executive team members. In smaller Trusts staff at this level may sit just below the main executive team as they may not have staff at level 13.
15	Department Manager	Incumbents at this level will lead a particular department area and will most likely report to a head of function, though in smaller trusts may report directly to a Director.



Our portfolio of products



Exclusive suite of reference material, guidance, templates & tools



Proactive and collaborative employee handbook maintenance



Easy access to vital pension information and labour agreements



Real-time information about insights and pay trends



Pay equity analytics for inclusive employers

About Brightmine™

Global leader Brightmine empowers organizations to shape HR strategy, manage employee risk and embrace diverse talent ecosystems to create equitable, high-performing and purposeful workplaces. Since 2002, the data analytics and intelligent solutions provider has earned a reputation for providing expert insights, trusted resources and practical tools to help customers achieve greater efficiency, improve compliance and increase employee engagement. Brightmine is proud to be part of the LexisNexis® portfolio within RELX, a global provider of information-based analytics and decision tools for professional and business customers. To learn more visit brightmine.com.



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