

**Head of Learning Job Description**

**Context**

Discover is the UK’s first Story Centre for children aged 0-11 and their families, based in Stratford, rooted in the borough of Newham, and resonating through east London and beyond. We are an inspirational cultural resource, providing excellent story-based play and learning experiences for all children to support and develop a love of language, literature, and storytelling. At the heart of the centre are our purpose-built Story Worlds and Story Garden which are creative play spaces designed to inspire children’s curiosity, creativity, and imagination.

Our temporary interactive exhibitions immerse families in enchanting, fantastical worlds, often working with popular authors and illustrators, from Oliver Jeffers to Michael Rosen to Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. The current exhibition is based on Fairy Tales, created in collaboration with David Litchfield and Ross Montgomery. We also curate a programme of high quality story-telling events for 0-3’s, developed with writers, directors and designers and our Story Builders. Throughout the year we invite much-loved and up-and-coming authors, illustrators, poets, musicians, artists, and storytellers to run workshops and events

Our Community and Education projects prioritise communities most in need, through long-term, year-round projects such as Mighty Mega for disabled children and their families, and Story Sandwich for local homeless mothers and children. We work with our Children’s Forum to ensure that children’s voices are central to our organisation and with our Teachers’ Forum to ensure our schools’ strategy remains relevant.

Alongside the offer in our venue we also deliver an extensive range of activities externally, creating and running programmes or events in schools, libraries, children’s centres, and parks. Over the last four years we have also delivered the Newham Word Festival; a two-week programme for adults and children at venues across the borough.

**Main Purpose**

The Head of Learning is one of eight members of the Senior Management Team (SMT). As a member of SMT you will be expected to contribute to the development of policy, the programme, and its delivery. The Head of Learning is responsible for the vision, development, management and monitoring of Discover’s learning programmes, including the creation and implementation of the schools’ programmes at the Story Centre, the learning through creative play that takes place on the Story Worlds, and the formal and informal learning projects that take place in schools, early years, and community settings. The post holder represents Discover on external learning, community, and literacy forums.

Responsible to: Chief Executive

Responsible for: Community and Education Manager (who manages the Education and Marketing Assistant – a Kickstart funded fixed term post) and for the pastoral care of the Story Builder team, particularly for the educational content of their work.

Works closely with all members of SMT (Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Finance Director, Head of Development, Head of Operations, Head of Marketing and Head of Creative Events).

**Main Tasks**

**Learning Programme**

* Strategically plan and oversee delivery of Discover’s Learning programme throughout the Centre.
* Design new projects, internal and external, responding to Newham and wider east London primary schools, early years and local community needs including the production of the highest quality project outcomes where appropriate. This has included working with other professionals and partners to produce books co-created with children, celebratory performance events, installations, and videos.
* Champion Discover’s provision for disabled children and their families and develop and plan for inclusivity within the Centre. Support the Community and Education Manager who leads on Mighty Mega Saturday Club.
* Work with the Exhibitions Department to support and embed learning content development. Design schools’ sessions ensuring that Exhibitions and the Story World schools programmes have clear learning outcomes linked to curriculum objectives and training Story Builders to deliver them.
* Work with the Senior Management team to identify potential contacts within the fields of arts, literature, and education and develop new partnerships.
* Liaise with the Head of Development to support funding proposals and with the Head of Marketing to support marketing of these programmes and projects.
* Work with the Chief Executive and Finance Director to set and manage department budgets.

**Staff Management**

* Manage the Community and Education Manager (who is currently responsible for a fixed term funded Education and Marketing Assistant), and Story Builders. The Head of Learning, alongside the Community and Education Manager, is also responsible for recruiting freelance artists, writers and other staff involved in learning projects.
* Support the Community and Education Manager who leads on Children’s Forum.
* Observe schools’ sessions, events, and family engagement on the Story Worlds to provide feedback, undertake review meetings and offer continuing professional development and pastoral care to Story Builders.
* Complete and publish monthly rotas for Story Builders and provide them with weekly updates.

**Teachers and Schools**

* Oversee Discover’s Teacher’s Forum and participation/consultation projects.
* Monitor and develop the schools’ sessions and learning resources to ensure they are of a consistent high standard and link to appropriate curriculum areas. This includes developing information and materials for use pre and post visits.
* Attend webinars and training to etc. to keep up to date with education and learning developments.
* Ensure Story Builders are trained and supported to deliver schools sessions.
* Develop training programmes for teachers and people who work with young people.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

* Work with the Head of Development, and Renaisi (consultant organisation), on the creation and implementation of a self-evaluation framework for the informal learning work that the organisation undertakes.
* Monitor and evaluate all learning projects with participants, staff, partner organisations and external evaluators including ensuring projects achieve agreed outcomes and targets.
* Ensure statistics are collated and write reports for funders and supporters.

**Access**

* Maintain, develop, and disseminate information to Discover staff to raise awareness of access, child protection, equal ops, and disability related issues.
* Implement training for permanent, freelance, and volunteer staff where appropriate.
* Work with SMT developing and disseminating best practice to ensure that all Discover programmes are as inclusive, diverse, and accessible as possible.

**Child Protection**

* To be the designated staff member with responsibility for child protection.
* To ensure all staff and freelance artists have the appropriate DBS checks.
* Lead on Child Protection issues within the organisation, including updating and implementing the Child Protection policy and ensuring all staff have appropriate training.

**General**

* Generate income through the various strands of outreach activities.
* Act as a spokesperson for Discover’s work at conferences, on steering groups, and through written articles; promoting the charity’s work through effective advocacy at individual, local and governmental level.
* Act as a senior member of staff and head of department, attending meetings and, where necessary, representing Discover at functions within and outside the building.
* Take on any other duties as mutually agreed with the Chief Executive.

Please note, this job description is a guide to the nature of the work required of the Head of Learning. It is not wholly comprehensive or restrictive and may be reviewed with the post holder and the Chief Executive as required.

**Head of Learning Person Specification**

You will be a specialist in arts education with a passion for improving literacy levels particularly among children from a wide range of backgrounds. You will recognise creativity in everyone and as a skilled collaborator have experience of managing and coordinating creative education projects.

**Essential**

* At least three years’ experience of managing community and education programmes and measuring impact within an arts education environment
* Experience of developing exciting and innovative projects with children and families
* A track record of designing and delivering literacy/literature-based programmes for primary schools
* Knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, principles and workings of early years settings and primary schools
* Knowledge of child progression and appropriate activities for different age levels
* A minimum of two years’ experience of line managing staff and experience of managing and recruiting freelance artists
* A track record in successful budget management of budgets of £50k +
* Demonstrable ability to think strategically and establish partnerships between different agencies
* Knowledge of and enthusiasm for children’s literature and literacy
* Understanding and experience of working with children with SEN
* Understanding of and commitment to the principles and practice of equality, diversity, and inclusion
* Excellent verbal and written communication skills
* Experience and enjoyment of working in a team
* Ability and willingness to work outside of normal office hours when required
* An ability to represent Discover in a calm and positive manner

**Desirable**

* Experience of designing and delivering training programmes
* Experience of working within a diverse environment
* Understanding and knowledge of Child Protection including managing Disclosure and Barring Service checks
* Experience of evaluating own work and of working with independent evaluators
* Knowledge of, or experience with, hands-on exhibitions for children
* Knowledge and understanding of family learning
* An understanding and commitment to consulting with children

**Type of Contract**

This post is offered on a permanent contract which is subject to a three-month probationary period. The post holder will be required to undertake an Enhanced DBS check.

**Working Hours**

This post is offered on a full-time contract working five days (35 hours) per week Monday to Friday although we would consider a four-day (28 hours) contract. Evening and weekends will be required for which time off in lieu will be given.

**Location**

A regular presence is required in Discover Story Centre to deliver this role effectively however, it is possible to work remotely for between 1-2 days per week.

**Salary**

The full-time salary is £35,895 per annum for five days (35 hours). Reduced hours would be reflected in a pro-rata salary.

**Holidays**

25 days plus bank holidays.

Discover’s premises are fully accessible.