
JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Head of Early Years
Responsible to:	Directly: Director of Enterprise, Community & Youth Indirectly: None
Responsible for:	Directly: Nursery Manager Indirectly: None
Based at:	Billy Bears, Brownley Rd, Shirley, Solihull B90 4QP

Organisation Context

YMCA Heart of England is an independent charity, and registered provider of social housing, affiliated to the national and international YMCA Movement. YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by and faithful to our Christian values, we create supporting, energising and creative communities where young people can truly belong contribute and thrive.

Since 1849 we've been serving the people of Birmingham, Coventry and Warwickshire in a variety of ways from numerous locations across the region. Today we:

- Provide over 350 units of supported accommodation to people who have been homeless, helping them to live independently.
- In addition we provide general needs accommodation for when they no longer need the intensive support YMCA traditionally provides
- Provide affordable childcare from our nursery, trying to give children the very best start in life.
- Provide out-of-school clubs, and holiday playschemes for older children.
- Provide youth services and safe spaces for young people to engage and interact

We employ around 100 people who are supported by a team of volunteers, without whom we simply wouldn't be able to offer the range of services that we do.

Everything we do is focused on delivering our mission, which is:

To inspire young people to discover their potential so that they can live life in all its fullness.

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

Job Context

YMCA Heart of England currently operates one nursery setting, Billy Bears, where we are focused on improving the quality of provision and expanding capacity. As part of our five-year strategic plan, we aim to grow our nursery offer across Birmingham and Coventry, developing a group of high-quality early years settings that reflect our values and commitment to children's learning and development.

This role will play a central part in that growth. The Head of Early Years will lead on curriculum, pedagogy, and quality improvement, embedding a consistent educational approach across all current and future settings. The role requires strong leadership in EYFS practice, a commitment to inclusive and child-led learning.

Job Purpose

- To deliver effective leadership, management and oversight of YMCA Heart of England's Early Years portfolio, ensuring that services are:
 - Lead the development and delivery of a consistent, high-quality early years curriculum and setting in line with Ofsted requirements.
 - Managed in line with organisational values,
 - strategically relevant,
 - sustainable and cost effective,
 - recognised as being of a high quality,
 - Provide strategic leadership and oversight of educational quality across all nursery settings, starting with Billy Bears.
 - Build capacity and readiness for future growth across Birmingham and Coventry in line with the organisation's five-year strategic plan.
 - Develop and support a strong team culture focused on reflective practice, continuous improvement, and child-centred provision.
 - As part of the Senior Management Team, contribute to broader organisational planning, reporting and decision-making.
- As a key member of the Senior Management Team, you will contribute to the leadership of YMCA Heart of England by actively contributing to the values-driven strategic and operational direction of the organisation as a whole, and by working co-operatively with colleagues to proactively contribute to the strategic development of the department and the Association.
- To be responsible for the management and oversight of Early Years portfolio, ensuring that the services and facilities for which you are responsible are managed and delivered in line with the association's ethos and values, within approved budgets, compliant with all relevant regulatory requirements, and in accordance with the association's policies and procedures.
- To ensure that the values, the Christian ethos from which they derive, and the Aims and Purposes of YMCA Heart of England are reflected in the area of the business for which you are responsible, including by modelling the values of the organisation in your personal behaviour.

Duties

1. Contribute to overall strategic leadership of YMCA Heart of England as a member of the Senior Management Team, including but not limited to:

- a) Actively contributing to the development and outworking of the Christian ethos of the organisation, promoting and modelling the ethos and values of the organisation throughout the staff team, and especially within the area of business for which you are responsible.
- b) Communicating and promoting the vision, objectives and priorities of the organisation effectively to staff and other stakeholders.
- c) Contributing to the strategic direction of the organisation as a whole.

Educational Leadership

- d) Embed and Lead curriculum planning and development across all nursery settings, starting with Billy Bears.
- e) Support consistency of practice through coaching and mentoring.
- f) Maintain high standards of practice aligned with the EYFS and latest sector guidance.
- g) Lead on quality assurance, including observations, audits, action plans and monitoring cycles.

2. Provide strategic leadership to the Early Years portfolio, including but not limited to:

- a) Ensuring effective management of your team through the setting of clear targets and objectives, day-to-day direction, regular supervision and appraisal in accordance with HR policies and procedures and in line with the organisation's ethos and values.
- b) Leading and developing your department to ensure that staff are well-motivated, sufficiently skilled, deliver high quality services with all reasonable skill and diligence in line with Ofsted and YMCA HoE policies and procedures, and operate and behave in line with the association's ethos and values.
- c) Supporting relevant managers in the recruitment, appointment, induction, supervision, development and (where necessary) disciplining of staff, following the advice and direction of the HR team.
- d) Managing budgets effectively and responsibly using prudent cost control and alerting your line manager of any potential challenges in a timely manner.
- e) Leading and developing your team members to ensure that they are well-motivated, sufficiently skilled, and meet best practice, and operate and behave in line with the association's ethos and values
- f) Ensuring your team(s) completes all the duties for which they are responsible with all reasonable skill and diligence
- g) Managing the recruitment and induction of new team members, following the advice and direction of the HR team.
- h) Managing formal processes, including investigations, grievances and disciplinaries involving employees from your own and other departments when requested to do so by the HR team.

Strategic Planning & Improvement

- i) Analyse progress, data and intervention outcomes to identify trends and drive improvement.
- j) Develop strategic initiatives that raise standards and improve outcomes.
- k) Provide regular performance and risk reports to the Director and Board.

- i) Support the Director of Enterprise, Community and Youth to identify and assess future opportunities that align with strategic objectives to grow and expand nursery provision.
3. Safeguarding and Compliance
 - a) Work with DSLs and senior managers to maintain a strong safeguarding culture.
 - b) Ensure compliance with Ofsted, statutory frameworks and local authority requirements.
 - c) Lead preparation for Ofsted inspections.
 - d) Upload inclusive practices that meet the needs of all children.
4. Family and Community Engagement
 - a) Build strong partnerships with parents and carers.
 - b) Represent YMCA at SEND panels, multi-agency meetings and local authority forums.
 - c) Foster collaborative working across internal departments and external services to support children and families.
5. People and Culture
 - a) Line manage Nursery Manager(s) across current and future sites, ensuring all settings operate in alignment with the YMCA's culture, values and mission as the organisation grows.
 - b) Oversee and track staff development, ensuring all team members complete appropriate and regular CPD each year in line with their roles and regulatory requirements.
 - c) Promote reflective practice, professional curiosity and positive behaviour support.
6. Safer Recruitment
 - a) To adhere to YMCA Heart of England's Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities and all other policies and procedures, and to contribute as required to their review and development.
 - a) To carry out any other duties not detailed in this Job Description, but in line with the overall purpose of the role, as directed by your line manager.
 - b) To promote the activities of YMCA Heart of England in a positive way to all staff, service users, other organisations and the general public.
7. Ethos and Values
 - a) At all times to act in accordance with the ethos and values of the association and the general standards expected of all employees of YMCA Heart of England.
 - b) To promote a caring, helpful and unbiased attitude towards all employees, service users, trustees and members of the general public, and to maintain an impeccable standard of honesty and professionalism in all such dealings.
 - c) To uphold at all times the principles of equality and diversity and to report any discriminatory or abusive behaviour to your line manager (or if necessary, Senior Management) so that appropriate action can be taken.
8. At all times to act in accordance with the ethos and values of the association and the general standards expected of all employees of YMCA Heart of England, including
 - a) To respect and promote the association's Christian ethos and uphold its values, namely:

- **Inspire:** We inspire people to be the best they can be through their experience and interaction with us.
- **Believe:** Our faith means that we believe in people's potential and have confidence for a positive future.
- **Excellence:** We seek excellence and deliver quality services by setting high standards and going the extra mile.
- **Compassion:** We serve others with compassion and kindness in order to transform lives and communities.
- **Integrity:** Our ethos supports us to challenge ourselves and others to do the right thing at all times.

- b) To promote a caring, helpful and unbiased attitude towards all employees, service users, trustees and members of the general public, and to maintain an impeccable standard of honesty and professionalism in all such dealings;
- c) To uphold at all times the principles of equality and diversity and to report any discriminatory or abusive behaviour to your line manager (or if necessary, Senior Management) so that appropriate action can be taken
- d) To adhere to YMCA Heart of England's Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities and all other policies and procedures, and to contribute as required to their review and development
- e) To carry out any other duties not detailed in this Job Description, but in line with the overall purpose of the role, as directed by your line manager
- f) To promote the activities of YMCA Heart of England in a positive way to all staff, service users, other organisations and the general public.

Person Specification – Head of Early Years

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Alignment with Ethos and Values		
A good understanding of, and wholehearted commitment to, the ethos and values of YMCA Heart of England, with genuine respect and conduct in line with them.	✓	
Good understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of equality and diversity.	✓	
A wholehearted commitment to promoting the association's Christian ethos and to upholding its values within your area of responsibility.	✓	
Skills		
Proven track record of leading teams to achieve and maintain high-quality provision.	✓	
Ability to embed and lead consistent, high-quality curriculum planning across multiple sites	✓	
Able to analyse data to inform decisions, improve outcomes and drive quality	✓	
Confident in working with external agencies, local authorities, and multi-agency forums	✓	
Strong interpersonal and communication skills to lead change, motivate teams and represent the organisation externally	✓	
Knowledge		
Strong knowledge of EYFS framework, Ofsted requirements, and best practice in early years provision and maintaining inspection standards.	✓	
Up-to-date knowledge of current and upcoming changes to government funding for childcare places, including eligibility criteria, funding models and their impact on nursery operations and sustainability.	✓	
Experience		
Budget management and strategic planning experience	✓	
Experience in curriculum leadership and embedding EYFS principles	✓	
Experience of Ofsted inspections, including leading preparation and response	✓	

Qualifications		
Level 6 qualification in Early Years or Education (e.g. BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies, PGCE, or equivalent) And/or Minimum 4 years' management experience in nursery or early years settings, including managing performance and quality across multiple sites.	✓	
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training (or willingness to undertake)		✓
A full, clean driving licence and willingness to travel.	✓	