



CANDIDATE PACK

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in becoming the new Chief Executive of Voice 21.

Voice 21 is the UK's oracy education charity, empowering children and young people to develop the speaking skills they need for success in school and life.

Since our launch in 2015 as a campaign hosted within one school in East London, we have championed the importance of oracy education and built a movement of over 1000 Voice 21 Oracy Schools from Devon to Dundee.

Everything we do flows from our mission to ensure that all children, not just a fortunate few, are taught at school how to use their voice to thrive in education and beyond. We believe it is a moral imperative that every young person has the opportunity to 'find their voice'.

Oracy is a driver of social mobility. It is also a powerful learning tool with purposeful talk in the classroom leading to better understanding, deeper thinking and more meaningful social interaction. Increasing access to a high-quality oracy education for those that need it most can transform learning and life chances.

This is a pivotal time for us. Our founding CEO, Beccy Earnshaw, who has grown an innovative, robust and well-respected organisation with national reach, a team of 60 skilled staff and an income of circa £3 million, is stepping down after eight years. We are therefore looking for a new Chief Executive to write the next chapter of the Voice 21 story.

We are looking for someone ambitious for our growth and impact and passionate about oracy, education and social justice, with the energy, experience and expertise to steer Voice 21's future success - retaining the dynamism, agility and buzz of a start-up with the development of systems to ensure the smooth running of a more mature organisation.

You need not have been a chief executive before; what you will bring is strategic leadership ability, vision and an entrepreneurial spirit.

As a collaborative team player, you will invest in our people to be their best and nurture an inclusive high-performance culture. You will be a natural partnership builder and a compelling communicator able to influence and engage senior stakeholders, leverage future opportunities for our continued success and inspire others to join our movement.

A champion of positive change, your insight and experience, alongside a social focus and commercial outlook, will ensure Voice 21 continues to deliver outstanding outcomes for children in our schools today and the generations to come.

If this sounds like the opportunity you have been looking for, we'd love to hear from you via <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/voice21-ceo/>

Best wishes,

Sarah David
Chair

ABOUT US

Voice 21 is the UK's oracy education charity, on a mission to ensure all children, not just a fortunate few, are taught at school how to use their voice to thrive in education and beyond.

Children's spoken language skills are one of the strongest predictors of their future life chances. Yet, too many disadvantaged children arrive at school with poor communication skills, already behind their more advantaged peers. Despite the strong evidence base, most schools do not consistently teach these vital skills.

Left unaddressed, this gap grows rather than diminishes as children move through school, hampering their academic outcomes, self-esteem and progression to higher education and employment.

Voice 21 transforms learning and life chances through talk, by increasing access to a high-quality oracy education for those that need it most.

We achieve this by partnering with teachers and schools through our Voice 21 Oracy Schools membership - providing a range of professional development, consultancy support, online learning and resources to enable them to embed oracy across school life and the curriculum for sustainable long-term improvements.

Our work is informed by an extensive evidence base, and we have received national and international recognition for our innovative approaches to teaching practice, with a demonstrable impact on students' oracy skills and future prospects. Our work is focused on the schools with the greatest need (those with above-average percentages of students eligible for Free School Meal) benefitting over 300,000 young people in 850 schools each year.

By demonstrating the value and impact of oracy, our schools inspire others to provide a high-quality oracy education and, in doing so, make society a fairer, more equitable place where all voices are valued and heard.

Since our inception eight years ago, Voice 21 has experienced exceptional growth in reputation, reach and influence. With a talented team, the backing of education influencers, leading funders, and growing demand for our work, we are on track to be a major force in education, leading systemic change to make real and lasting impacts for children and young people. You can learn more about our mission, theory of change and the difference we make to lives of children and young people across the country in these two short videos.

Voice21 - our mission and theory of change: <https://vimeo.com/791803047>

The Oracy Imperative – transforming learning and life chances : <https://vimeo.com/693601199>



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title: Chief Executive Officer

Reports to: Chair of the Board of Trustees

ROLE PROFILE

There are exciting possibilities and challenges ahead for the incoming CEO and we are looking to you to:

Continue to push the boundaries of oracy innovation – influencing government, schools and the wider sector.

Develop the culture within Voice 21, so that the organisation that has grown rapidly in a short period of time, continues to be a place that is empowering, collaborative and creative.

Expand the reach of Voice 21 to all parts of the country so that every child has the opportunity of an excellent oracy education, and the organisation continues to be financially sustainable.

Develop a community of oracy practitioners and thinkers who generate new ideas, new materials and fresh thinking on oracy.

Deepen the evidence base for oracy and finding new ways of measuring its impact so that it becomes clearer how students are progressing throughout their time at school.

In particular you will:

- Provide innovative, visionary and exceptional leadership to all of our people to achieve the highest standards of innovation and performance against Voice 21's priorities, aims and objectives.
- Lead Voice 21 through a period of growth, continuing to expand the reach of Voice 21 to all parts of the country so that every child has the opportunity of an excellent oracy education, and the organisation continues to be financially sustainable.
- Champion innovation, research and development and fresh thinking on oracy both inside and outside Voice 21.
- Lead the design and implementation of Voice 21's strategy, including the next phase strategy from 2024, together with the Board and Senior Leadership Team.
- Be confident in leading a remote workforce, model a high level of personal and professional integrity, providing strong and supportive day-to-day leadership.
- Support and develop the team to ensure a strong and sustainable pipeline across multiple income streams and building excellent relationships with key members and funders
- Champion, advocate for, create and maintain an open, sharing culture that encourages and values diversity, given the breadth of our stakeholders including member schools, funders, policy makers and partner organisations.
- Develop the evidence base to strengthen an effective engagement strategy which champions the voice of those children that need it most.
- Ensure that Voice 21's work continues to deliver impact and that we use Oracy School and donor funds optimally to fulfil our mission.
- Lead excellent financial management, budgeting, reporting and risk management. Ensure regulatory responsibilities are carried out and support excellent governance of the organisation.

The CEO will be expected to perform other duties commensurate with the post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

ESSENTIAL

- Demonstrable experience of strategic and operational leadership - setting a strategy and turning broad aims and direction into practical plans for delivery.
- Experience of successfully maintaining and raising the vision, reputation, and profile of an organisation alongside demonstrable experience of public speaking, media work, writing copy and engaging with diverse audiences.
- Change management and leadership will be essential. The successful candidate will bring recent experience of creating performance and results-oriented cultures.
- Knowledge and experience of organisational finance, financial planning, and budget management.
- Evidence of developing and maintaining innovative partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders and a track record of success in persuading, influencing and galvanising change.
- Experience of working with Boards and bringing knowledge and understanding of legal, regulatory, social and ethical responsibilities and corporate governance.

DESIRABLE

- Experience of successfully leading or managing a healthy organisation, including our people engagement, stewardship of resources, skills development, and the policies, systems and processes needed for sustainable delivery.
- Demonstrable track record of income generation from a variety of funding streams, the ability to build relationships with funders, and to lead on funding applications including bid writing.

SKILLS, ABILITIES AND BEHAVIOURS

- **An entrepreneurial spirit** - relentlessly ambitious for Voice 21 – seeking out new possibilities and avenues – and understanding the demands of scaling an organisation with the commercial imperatives of selling products to schools that are often operating in challenging financial circumstances.
- **A team builder** - skilled at building organisational culture with sophisticated people skills and an ability to empower and build trust with colleagues.
- **An energiser** - bringing drive and passion to the organisation – understanding the potency of oracy to the life chances of young people and wider society.
- **A story-teller** - with strong communication skills who can inspire people internally and externally to achieve greater things.
- **An influencer** - with an ability to influence others, network widely, fundraise, and keep oracy high on the education agenda - understanding that Voice 21 must always be at the cutting edge of new thinking on oracy, a thought leader in the sector.



YOUR PROGRESSION

WITHIN 1 MONTH, YOU'LL HAVE:

- Understood Voice 21's theory of change, operating model and ways of working.
- Reviewed Voice 21's scaling strategy, capabilities and plans
- Met the Voice 21 team, all of the Board, key stakeholders and started making senior leadership decisions.

WITHIN 3 MONTHS, YOU'LL HAVE:

- Worked with Senior Leadership Team to create strategic plans and budgets
- Identified and agreed KPIs, targets and areas for development across the Senior Leadership Team
- Developed an appreciation of our USP and how to maintain our position as the leader in our field
- Tested ideas for how to deepen our impact and explored new opportunities for leveraging our future growth
- Developed strong and effective relationships internally and externally representing Voice 21 at important meetings and events.

WITHIN 6 MONTHS, YOU'LL HAVE:

- Developed our new strategy alongside the Board, focusing on deepening our impact over the next 3-5 years.
- Set clear financial plans in support of our strategy
- Continued to build our organisational infrastructure to support our growth and sustainability
- Ensured the rigour of our work is maintained while the organisation continues to grow
- Embedded an impact focus across the whole organisation
- Established a high-performing culture across the organisation with evidence of your positive impact across Voice 21

FROM 6 MONTHS ONWARDS, WE EXPECT FOR YOU TO BE:

- Firmly established in post, owning the strategy and embedding plans to operationalise our future strategy
- Confident in your relationships across all of our stakeholders and developing new opportunities for our future growth and sustainability
- A visible, inspirational and proactive leader bringing your energy, experience and expertise to steering Voice 21's future success.

THIS JOB IS FOR YOU IF...

- You can think strategically whilst keeping a sharp focus on operational delivery
- You are excited by growth and impact and inspiring others to deliver social change
- You are looking for a new challenge where you can shape the future of a fast-growing organisation
- You know how to make things happen and achieve results
- You run towards problems - always looking for new ways to make things better
- You are a master in relationship building
- You role model inclusive leadership and love building and developing highly engaged teams
- You are motivated by our mission and excited by our ambition
- You believe that education has the power to change lives and want to be part of changing education.

WHO YOU'LL WORK WITH:

- The Voice 21 Board
- The Voice 21 Senior Leadership Team
- Senior stakeholders and advisors including funders and investors, school leaders, policy makers, and commissioners

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

We hope that we have given you a good sense of what life at Voice 21 is like and what the role entails - please see below for some more reasons to apply!

Salary

The salary for this role is c£95,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

The way we work:

We have an agile and flexible approach – our team can work when and wherever works best to deliver the requirements of their role. For staff working at home, we support them to create a workspace and provide technology that enables them to work effectively.

Our head office is School 360, Sugar House Lane, Stratford, London, E15 2RB. The majority of our meetings are virtual although our senior leadership team come together in person every week in London.

Holiday

25 days annual leave plus additional Christmas closure period. Holiday entitlement increases linked to length of service.

Benefits

Employer contribution to pension (5%), interest-free season ticket, cycle and technology loans and work from home allowance.

Wellbeing

We provide an Employee Assistance Programme through Health Assured which provides all Voice 21 employees 24/7/365 support if needed.

Development opportunities

We believe in supporting people to develop the skills they need to be excellent – whether this means funding external training, finding a mentor to support them or giving them the time to learn from others in the organisations through our regular CPD sessions. We also offer paid study leave for team members taking part in formal studies outside of work.

If you want to volunteer as a school governor, trustee or in some other capacity for a mission-aligned organisation, we support our team to take on these commitments without taking annual leave.

VOICES OF VOICE 21

We recently asked our team what they enjoy most about working at Voice 21. Below is a selection of their responses:

“I really enjoy working in an organisation that strives for innovation and is rooted in research of what actually works for teachers in the daily life of a classroom and a school curriculum.”

“At Voice 21, there is a strong culture of sharing expertise and this ensures that your voice is valued and ideas heard, no matter your role. Although a lot of the day-to-day work is virtual, relationships are strong. The very purposefully planned in-person meetings help these relationships to grow and flourish, as does the high level of collaboration in teams.”

“One of the many things I love about working at Voice 21 are the opportunities for professional development. Working in a small, fast-growing organisation has given me the chance to grow professionally and to expand my skill set in a supportive environment.”

“I find it inspiring being part of the Voice 21 team - being surrounded by passionate, mission-driven people makes me want to bring my best every day, because I know that my fab colleagues won't let a good idea gather dust - everything will be snapped up and built into something that helps us make a difference for the students in our schools.”

“Since working at Voice 21, I've been invited to take part in multiple projects and tasks outside of my 'core role', because we're encouraged to develop our areas of interest and expertise across the board. It's incredibly refreshing to work for an organisation that sees every employee as a key asset.”

HOW TO APPLY

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact Juliet Brown, juliet.brown@starfishsearch.com or Erin Fuller, erin.fuller@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to arrange a call. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/voice21-ceo/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out:
 - Tell us why you want to be our new CEO? Why does the mission of Voice 21 matter to you?
 - Explain the role of talk or oracy in your life and how this will enable you to lead Voice 21 with passion, authenticity and integrity.
 - How you have developed and nurtured a positive culture at work.

We would also be grateful if you would also complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date:	29th May 2023
Preliminary interviews:	w/c 12th June 2023
First stage panel interviews:	w/c 3rd July 2023
Second stage panel interviews:	w/c 10th July 2023

