

# HEAD OF RESEARCH & EVALUATION

## *Recruitment Pack*



The Institute for  
Research in Schools

[www.researchinschools.org](http://www.researchinschools.org)

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# Head of Research & Evaluation

## *Recruitment Pack- December 2025*

**Role:** Head of Research & Evaluation

**Responsible to:** Deputy Director

**Working hours:** 37.5 hours per week

**Location:** Home-based with occasional travel throughout the UK

**Benefits:** £52,496, 10% pension, 30 days leave plus public holidays, CPD, employee assistance programme

The Institute for Research in Schools (IRIS) wants to change the culture in UK education so that authentic research and innovation is part of every young person's experience.

We're looking for a Head of Research & Evaluation to join our small but mighty team. We want you to lead research, evaluation and learning from our work with students, teachers and our wider network across the UK.

It's an exciting time to join IRIS. You will drive our research and evaluation practice forward, improving its efficiency and effectiveness, helping us to build a better understanding of our impact, which will inform the development of our work and make a real difference to the lives of thousands of young people.

Reporting to the Deputy Director and managing our Data Analyst, whilst working across the rest of the IRIS team, you will consider the best ways to evaluate and learn from our programmes and carry out high quality research leading to publication.

What the job looks like and what you'll be doing:

- **Work alongside our Education Innovation team** – to monitor, evaluate, report and inform the development of our work on the development of Research and Innovation in schools.
- **Work with our Engagement team** - to monitor, evaluate and report on the impact of our school engagement and student research projects.
- **Support the work of our Communications team** – informing the delivery of impact reports and the delivery of our communications strategy and overall accountability.
- **Work with our Finance & Operations team** – supporting the development of our information management and reporting systems.
- **Keep up to date with industry trends and best practice** – you'll stay up to date with research and evaluation, suggesting changes to our own systems to stay relevant



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After a period of sustained growth and development we are moving into a position where we will be able to influence and inform practice and policy across the UK, reaching many thousands of young people. This role will be important to helping us achieve our mission in the coming years.

We are keen to recruit from as wide a talent pool as possible, in terms of both personal and professional background. We welcome applications from any individuals regardless of age, sex, disability, ethnicity or personal circumstances.

## **About IRIS**

The Institute for Research in Schools (IRIS) was founded on the belief that young people have the capacity to change the world. If their education empowers them with the right tools, school-aged students can contribute to the community of scientific research right now.

Despite the evolution of IRIS over the last few years, this founding belief continues to be central to what we do. Our mission is to change the culture in UK education so that authentic research and innovation is part of every young person's experience. We do this by:

- Creating opportunities for students to participate in cutting-edge STEM research and collaborate with leading universities and institutions while still at school
- Evidencing the impact of students carrying out research while still at school
- Facilitating a research culture by influencing and demonstrating best practice of STEM research and innovation in schools.

As a charity, everything we do is driven by our moral purpose; to capture talent and break down barriers that impact underrepresented young people in STEM.





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## How to apply

We are inviting applications via completion of an [IRIS application form](#). Applications in different formats will not be considered. All applications should be accompanied by a completed [Diversity Monitoring form](#).

Applications should address:

- Why you wish to take on this role.
- What you can bring to the post.
- How you meet the criteria as stated in the job description and person specification.

If you wish to have an informal conversation about the role prior to applying, please contact Dr Jo Foster, Director by email at [info@researchinschools.org](mailto:info@researchinschools.org) ensuring that the subject of your email is ***Inquiry – Head of Research & Evaluation***. We will confirm in the first week of 2026.

The key dates to note for the recruitment process:

- **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026 - Midday:** Deadline for applications, which should be emailed to [info@researchinschools.org](mailto:info@researchinschools.org) with the subject heading ***IRIS Application – Head of Research & Evaluation***.
- **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2026:** first stage candidates will be invited to online shortlisting interviews. If you have not received an invitation to a shortlisting interview by 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026 you should assume that your application has not been taken forward to this stage.
- **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026:** formal interviews in London for all candidates who are shortlisted.
- **May 2026:** the successful candidate will commence in post.

Please note that candidates must have the right to live and work in the UK. The successful candidate will be employed under UK law. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. An online search based on the information provided by shortlisted candidates will also be conducted. Appointment will be contingent on a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check. All applications and recruitment records for unsuccessful candidates will be retained for a period of 12 months before being securely deleted.



<b>Job Description</b>	Head of Research & Evaluation
<b>Responsible to</b>	Director
<b>Working hours</b>	37.5
<b>Location</b>	Home-based with regular travel throughout the UK
<b>Benefits</b>	£52,496pa, 10% pension, 30 days leave plus public holidays, CPD, employee assistance programme
<b>Purpose of the Job:</b> Lead the development and implementation of research and evaluation on the impact of our work in schools and on students. This will include working closely with colleagues; developing new approaches to monitoring, evaluation and reporting; work across our network of partners; supporting the development of effective systems of information management; supporting the delivery of the Institute's communications strategy.	
<b>Main Duties</b>	
<b><u>Management and Leadership</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Data Analyst to set annual operational plans and standard procedures which set out how IRIS will collect, collate and evaluate impact against IRIS' objectives.</li> <li>• Ensure that all activities are delivered in line with operational plans.</li> <li>• Manage the Data Analyst, following the policies of the Institute, via one-to-one meetings, regular meetings, etc., ensuring that they feel valued and able to work effectively.</li> <li>• Ensure that there are clear lines of accountability and responsibility which foster and maintain effective working relationships.</li> <li>• Provide support for the continued professional development of the Data Analyst in line with policy and strategic priorities.</li> <li>• Ensure that effective communications are maintained with colleagues and external partners to ensure plans are implemented, monitored and reported.</li> <li>• Oversee the commissioning and effective delivery of external programme evaluation partner support.</li> </ul>	
<b><u>Research &amp; Evaluation</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead on innovative research, evaluation and learning in furtherance of strategic objectives.</li> <li>• Develop collaborations with other research and educational institutions to maximise impact, utilising internal/external data and our growing school networks.</li> <li>• Ensure that evaluation activity at project and programme level meets our strategic objectives, and is equitable and inclusive.</li> <li>• Work closely with colleagues to improve the fit of evaluation designs with our internal and external evidence needs, and the use of insights for both decision making and external communications.</li> <li>• Provide strategic and technical support to evaluations.</li> <li>• Champion a culture of learning, reflection and evidence-based decision making.</li> <li>• Lead the implementation of internal data collection systems and approaches.</li> <li>• Synthesise reports for the Directors summarising the latest research on areas of interest</li> <li>• Support the Head of Engagement in developing our Original Research offer and student publication routes</li> <li>• Write articles and papers and publish research on the work of IRIS</li> <li>• Represent IRIS and our work at conferences, in key policy forums and support the Directors to increase the public profile of the charity.</li> <li>• Provide thought leadership across the institute including through regular articles, blogs, peer-reviewed journals, research reports, evidence reviews, and podcasts.</li> </ul>	



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**Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Support the ongoing review and development of monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensure that monitoring information is collected and collated, working with the School Engagement Leads and the Data Analyst.
- Work closely with the Data Analyst and Directors on the continued development of the Institute's monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure continued learning and improvement of services.

**Conference Evaluation**

- Liaise with the Data Analyst on the planning and delivery of conference evaluation.

**Communications**

- Work with the communications team to produce the annual Impact Report.
- Act as an ambassador for the Institute, networking to support the development of new and existing strategic relationships.
- Support the appropriate communication of messages across about our work, helping translate complex information, scientific theory and research, into engaging communications and actions.

**This is not an exhaustive list of all the duties that may need to be undertaken. It may be necessary to undertake other duties to fulfil the objectives of the charity.**



Person Specification	Head of Research & Evaluation	
Criteria	Essential attributes	Assessment
Education & Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postgraduate-level qualification in a relevant discipline, preferably a PhD in a relevant area of Research and Evaluation</li> <li>• A high standard of written and spoken English</li> </ul>	Application
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive experience of leading research and evaluation design and implementation</li> <li>• Experience of leading learning processes or implementing evidence-based changes to strategy or intervention delivery</li> <li>• Experience in relationship management</li> <li>• Experience of leading and managing complex projects</li> <li>• Expertise in synthesising and sharing complex findings which are clear, succinct and influential</li> <li>• Experience of commissioning and/or managing external research or evaluation partners</li> <li>• Demonstrable experience and / or knowledge of overseeing evidence-based evaluations and action research and an understanding of systems level change and improvement</li> <li>• Proven experience of evaluating services and interventions, writing reports and briefings</li> <li>• Experience of designing and developing data-driven solutions and quantitative data analysis techniques</li> <li>• Experience and / or knowledge of developing regular reporting and monitoring, including designing data definitions and use of automated reporting tools</li> <li>• Experience of undertaking analysis of cost and outcome data alongside evaluations</li> <li>• Experience of managing and engaging stakeholders, enabling them to contribute whilst managing their expectations</li> <li>• Proven track record in managing a team to deliver challenging targets</li> <li>• Experience of operational planning and management</li> <li>• Experience of working within a team</li> </ul>	Application / Interview



Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of the STEM education sector and / or an understanding and commitment to the work of IRIS</li> <li>• Expertise in either, or both, quantitative and qualitative research methods</li> <li>• Expertise in developing inclusive evaluation designs in a test and learn and innovative context</li> <li>• Expertise in adapting evaluation methods and approach to different contexts and stages of programme development, and size/scale of projects</li> <li>• Expertise in synthesising and sharing complex findings which are clear, succinct and influential</li> <li>• Knowledge of determinants of educational improvement</li> <li>• Understanding of systems change principles and/or place-based intervention</li> <li>• Knowledge of data protection regulations and research ethics</li> <li>• Demonstrable expertise and ability to advise on research design</li> <li>• An understanding of charitable organisations</li> <li>• Knowledge of operational management and best practice</li> </ul>	Application / Interview
Skills & Competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good management skills and the ability to enthuse, motivate and develop a small team to deliver results</li> <li>• Ability to think strategically and to communicate effectively</li> <li>• Excellent operational management skills and experience</li> <li>• Excellent project management skills and experience</li> <li>• Excellent all round communication skills and relationship management abilities</li> <li>• Effective in both verbal and written communications. Numerate and able to interpret data and trends.</li> <li>• Strong IT skills with the ability to use statistical packages and advanced Excel</li> <li>• Ability to communicate confidently at all levels</li> <li>• Good organisation and time management</li> <li>• Ability to work from own initiative</li> <li>• Ability to prioritise and adapt to a flexible approach to working</li> <li>• Ability to maintain consistency throughout all work</li> </ul>	Application / Interview





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Personal Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multitasker accustomed to prioritising work schedules and working to tight deadlines</li><li>• Willing to work at all levels and adaptable to the situation or task in hand</li><li>• Personal drive, energy, integrity, adaptability and responsibility</li><li>• A good team player</li><li>• Ability to motivate and inspire others</li><li>• Confident in a variety of different situations and able to present a calm and level-headed approach to challenges</li><li>• Polite, friendly and approachable manner</li><li>• Ability to promote a professional image of the Institute at all times</li><li>• Ability to communicate confidently</li></ul>	Interview
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Able and willing to work outside normal office hours, including weekends – with TOIL accrued.</li><li>• Able and willing to travel within the UK to monitor and support the Institute's work</li></ul>	Application / Interview

