



Delivering tangible recruitment results in a challenging environment

The Richard Rose Federation opened the Richard Rose Central Academy in September 2008, with the aim of improving the future of young people in Carlisle. With 18% of the schools teachers and support staff on long-term absence, high levels of class disruption and a poor geographical position, the Academy and its new management team were faced with severe recruitment issues. Efforts to tackle this critical issue for the future of the Academy, had not proved successful – despite trying standard local and national advertising on and offline, alongside third party resourcing. These recruitment initiatives had proved frustrating, time consuming and ultimately very costly.

Background

The Academy is the amalgamation of two secondary schools with 1,600 pupils. The move was completed during the new build program and the time constraints of the build and the lack of time to 'bed-in' the management team, resulted in a scathing OfSTED report and the Academy being placed in Special Measures after only five months.

The new CEO, Peter Noble, an ex-NHS director with a strong public sector background was hailed for bringing skills and experience of dealing with fragmented management teams. However, this new form of leadership by a non-education expert did not prove a success. By January 2009, under the spotlight of continuing critical press, Peter Noble moved on and the then Minister for Schools, Jim Knight intervened personally.

The Minister vowed to do all he could to turn the Academy around following his visit, acknowledging that the problems had not been created overnight and that the Academy suffered from a severe lack of teachers. He met with the sponsors to ensure that the right action plan was put in place with immediate effect, starting with the appointment of a new CEO, capable of handling such a difficult situation. By the end of January, Mike Gibbons, an internationally renowned educator and the ex-CEO of the department for innovation and universities, was appointed as CEO. Mike was quickly joined by Russell Wallace as Head Teacher.

SAS Fast Facts

Client: Richard Rose Academy

Scope
Recruitment services for challenging Academy

Contract Start Date
March 2009 – ongoing

Services Provided
Environmental Mapping
UK & Overseas Recruitment
Candidate Management
Support for Work Permits

The Results
100% of September posts filled
Last minute post filled under 48 hours

Synarbor PLC is unique in the UK as a provider of a unique integrated recruitment service – **Synarbor Absolute Solutions (SAS)**. We deliver human capital, resource support and consultancy to both the Education and Children Services sectors.

Our contingent recruitment services are complemented by 'Teach in', a leading education managed resource system (used in partnership successfully since 2002 in 15 schemes across the country) and further unique resource and recruitment solutions used to deliver staff across all areas in any volume. Our teams all consist of recruitment experts and subject matter specialists. This added real value to the recruitment project for Richard Rose as the environment map proved critical in attracting the right calibre of candidates.

As one of the UKs top providers of educationalists, bolstered by 13 UK offices and three international resource centres, Synarbor had both the scale and flexibility to mobilise a worldwide campaign overnight.

Richard Rose Central Academy – Case Study

Synarbor take on the recruitment challenge

In March 2009, Synarbor and their 'Absolute' resource solution were recommended to the CEO through a referral via a senior school leader's network. We conducted a due diligence visit to the Academy. Existing recruitment and retention issues, geographical location and constant press attention remained the backdrop for any new campaign or initiatives.

We recommended an outsourced recruitment approach and a proposal was presented to the Governors. This led in May 2009, to a formal arrangement to recruit and we immediately started work on 10 of the most difficult to recruit for positions, including Maths, Science and English posts for directors and key-stage coordinators.



"Great Service, with amazing results" Russell Wallace,
Head Teacher

Services delivered

Our work with the Academy began with a process of an 'Environment Map' (EM) a resource process unique to Synarbor. The mapping provided an insight into the Academy; their present staff, core values, the school culture and the demographic influences. Information from the mapping exercise was then used to write specific advertisements that appealed to appropriately skilled candidates but who would have a close personality and behavioural fit for the Academy. It is impossible to have 'true efficiencies' unless the right people are in the right roles, therefore conducting the mapping was always more than a tick box exercise!

The Academy benefits from a recruitment process managed through both the international and UK network of Synarbor offering probably the largest pool of teachers available anywhere in the UK. Teachers were sourced quickly for the Academy and with a great deal of precision, attracting both active and passive candidates.

Every candidate, whether UK or overseas based, were contacted then qualified against the specification and the Environment Map, interviewed, referenced, and assessed for working rights. After passing the Synarbor vetting process the candidates were submitted to the school for interview. A compliance manager was appointed to assist the Academy with managing work permit applications for overseas candidates.

The Results

- Interviews were arranged quickly and **70%** of the vacancies were confirmed or under offer by the end of May.
- The SAS system offers sufficient contingency to ensure that when two candidates declined offers they were immediately replaced at the beginning of June - ending the month with **80%** of the vacancies completed and filled. Due to a second Ofsted inspection during June 2009 the recruitment process temporarily slowed, leaving interviews to roll over into July.
- At present (July 2009) applicants have been submitted for all of the remaining vacancies and Synarbor await the interview results and offer confirmations. It is confidently expected that **100%** of the positions will have been cleared by the start of the Academic year.

The Synarbor resource team is now and developing a provision to cover the increase in supply work as a result of 'Rarely Cover' legislation.

Due to the success at Richard Rose Central Academy, their 6th form – Morton Academy has also reaped the benefits of SAS. A last minute role was required for the academy, Synarbor SAS were able to filter, interview and place an appropriate teacher within 48 hours of the initial enquiry. Outstanding service, achieved by our dedicated 24/7 system and consultants.

Testimonials

“Richard Rose Central has been working with Synarbor since May 2009 and I would recommend them to other schools. Synarbor works with a lot of energy, is in at least daily contact with updates and suggestions, and has been able to source colleagues from far and wide, briefing all candidates thoroughly, explaining the key issues facing the school, interviews have been able to concentrate on experience and teaching skills rather than on the history of the Academy. The quality of the candidates has also been good.

Synarbor understands the unique position of the school and thus make strong recommendations, their judgements have been robust, very professional, with good humour and are able to move decisions along when required. They are sensitive to know when schools are under pressure that head teachers don't like to rush. Synarbor helped our overseas colleagues transfer to the UK and has advised our HR re licences...they aided us in appointing key posts which are crucial to our future success. Without thier hard work this could not have happened.”

Jacky Kennedy, Senior Deputy Head

“I would like to thank Synarbor for the speed and efficiency with which they have worked on my behalf. From first contact to interview was four days, followed by the job offer and acceptance on the same day.

Synarbor worked tirelessly on my behalf and they remain in contact even though I am now in place.

As a company, Synarbor are patient and cheerful in the way they operate which helped my move from Oxford to be less stressful and their assurance that all would be well has proved to be just that.

I have recommended Synarbor to the Oxford Academy as they too were impressed with the speed at which they work.”

Elaine Johnson, Key-Stage 4 Coordinator

“I have never experienced such dedication and support from a teaching agency before. Synarbor has got to know me personally and what my teaching strengths are and what I require personally as a teacher; such as location, teaching specialty and school type. My representative spent a lot of time on the phone getting to know my preferences as a teacher and wrote a glowing review of myself to be distributed to the UK schools, which in turn helped me secure many teaching interviews that I was interested in.

Synarbor as a recruiting agency has been a pleasure to deal with. At all times I have been well looked after in a professional and caring matter. All of my queries have been investigated immediately, and I have always been assured that I am high on their priorities.”

Kendall Ward, Secondary School Teacher

“We had an emergency staffing gap in Geography that was causing real anxiety for students and parents alike. After following all of our local contacts, I was not able to come up with a solution that met all students' needs and offered a stable, high quality learning experience for them.

A colleague suggested to call Synarbor. 20 minutes later I had a lead. A further 15 minutes later an interview was booked and well within 24 hours an appointment had been made that secured a full year of Geography teaching.

My relief is immense. My students and their parents are very grateful. The speed, efficiency, cheerfulness and quality of the service so far has been very impressive.”

Kate Holt, Principal Richard Rose Sixth Form College