

A young woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark blue school uniform with a white shirt and tie, is looking upwards with an open-mouthed expression of awe. Her hair is being attracted to a large, silver, spherical Van de Graaff generator, causing it to stand on end and radiate outwards. The background is dark, and the scene is lit with a cool blue light. The generator is on a stand to the left of the woman.

Chief Executive Officer Recruitment Pack

Closing date:
Wednesday 26th February 2025



SIGMA TRUST

www.sigmatrust.org.uk



February 2025

Dear Candidate,

A very warm welcome to The Sigma Trust in North East Essex. We are an established Trust with a very positive reputation both locally and at national level. We have a family of 8 secondary schools and 4 primary phase schools serving over 11,500 students and employing approximately 1,700 staff. Throughout our time, we have continued to put our vision and values at the heart of everything we do.

We are at an exciting stage of our journey as we look to appoint an inspirational leader to take over from the current CEO who is stepping back at the end of the academic year. We hope that the new Chief Executive will take time to promote the work of the schools in the Sigma Trust. This is a unique opportunity for a new CEO to work with the Trust Board to shape and lead our continued development, ensuring that our young people have the very best experience of school possible and gain the qualifications and personal skills that they will need to have the life chances and choices they deserve. Our schools are all within around a 30-minute car ride of each other and this local approach is one of our fundamental principles, enabling us to maximise the provision of school-to-school support. Although our schools serve a variety of catchment areas, our vision leads us to specialise particularly in partnering schools in challenging areas and with a high level of local need where we work to ensure that no child and no school is left behind.

We firmly believe that Sigma is 'greater than the sum of its parts' and that our schools — and, therefore, our children and staff — cannot be successful unless we work in partnership together. This can be seen in practice in the formation of the Education Team and Executive Leaders working across the schools who lead our innovative initiatives and Trust priorities. This work is supported by a strong centralised operations team of approximately 40 staff, based at our head office in Clacton-on-Sea, providing Finance, People and Culture and Payroll support to all our schools along with strategic leadership of IT, Estates, Governance and Data Management.

We are committed to appointing the right person to this role and we have partnered with Perrett Laver to ensure all prospective and actual applicants have the best possible experience of our recruitment and selection process. If you would like to discuss this post in more detail, please refer to the 'How to Apply' section at the back of this pack for more information.

In the meantime, thank you for taking the time and trouble to explore this post in more detail and I wish you well in your consideration of this opportunity and with your application. Thank you for your interest in this post.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hammond
Chair, Board of Trustees

1. Job Purpose

The CEO will be responsible for helping the Trust Board fulfil its vision and values; developing Trust wide strategies and action plans for the improvement of educational standards and governance across the Trust; ensuring the communication of these externally, as well as to academy staff within the Trust; and securing educational success through effective strategic planning and execution.

A MAT CEO is responsible for the education of all of the young people in the Trust's academies. They lead the Executive Team of the Trust, ensuring the Trust and all its schools are successful over time in a sustainable way. They provide high level strategic leadership and management across all aspects of the Trust's activities. They ensure that the Trust provides high quality education for all its pupils through the effective and efficient use of resources and people. As a system leader, the CEO represents the Trust with a wide range of stakeholders and partners and enables the Trust to fulfil its civic responsibilities. They are the Accounting Officer for the Trust, responsible for ensuring the Trust meets its statutory and legal requirements.

The successful candidate will be inspirational, creating a culture of constant improvement, implementing effective systems of organisation and control and high levels of professional standards to secure the highest possible achievement for all in every aspect of the provision across The Sigma Trust partner academies.

2. Safeguarding

Safeguarding children is at the heart of all that Sigma stands for and works to achieve. The CEO will demonstrate a commitment to keeping children and young people safe; fulfil personal responsibilities; ensure Trust policies in relation to safeguarding are kept up to date; and support Headteachers in securing compliance by those working in school in respect of safeguarding.

This includes:

- Ensuring a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services;
- Operating clear whistleblowing procedures;
- Sharing information with other professionals;
- Operating safer recruitment practices;
- Ensuring appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking induction, safeguarding training and reviews of practice;
- Operating and monitoring clear policies for dealing with allegations against people who work with children;
- Having oversight and leading the Children in Care strategy to ensure all students have their statutory needs met to promote progress in line with national expectations.

The Sigma Trust is committed to safeguarding and protecting the children and young people that we work with. As such, all posts are subject to safer recruitment process, including the disclosure of criminal records and vetting checks. We ensure that we have a range of policies in place which promote safeguarding and safer working practice across our schools.

3. Ethics and Professional Conduct

As leaders of educational charities, CEOs of MATs are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct. MAT CEOs should always uphold and demonstrate The Seven Principles of Public Life (The Nolan Principles):

Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.

MAT CEOs are responsible for upholding public trust in trust, civic and system leadership, and should maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour. As leaders of MATs, their academy communities and the profession, CEOs should serve in the best interests of the Trust's pupils, conducting themselves in a manner compatible with their influential position in society.

4. CEO Core Responsibilities

Academy trusts are education charities that run schools to give children a better future. Every trust has a single legal and moral purpose: to advance education for the public benefit. The Sigma Trust's driven purpose is 'No child and no school is left behind'.

There are six interlinked areas of a MAT CEO's core responsibilities. These are:

- Strategic leadership - Trust values, culture and strategy
- Quality of Education
- Finance, sustainability and compliance
- People and Culture strategy
- Governance and accountability
- System leadership and civic responsibility

Strategic leadership – Trust values, culture, and strategy

- Establish and sustain the Trust's values, culture, and strategic direction in partnership with the Trust Board
- Provide leadership that enables the Trust to achieve its strategic objectives and secure its future sustainability
- Create a safe, inclusive and positive culture across the Trust and its schools
- Develop operational objectives that are appropriate, deliverable and aligned to securing a sustainable future through the Trust's strategic direction
- Enable the Trust's organisational design and operational systems to meet its current and future requirements and manage change effectively

Quality of Education

- Tackle educational inequality, upholding and securing ambitious educational and behavioural standards for all pupils
- Promote further support for the most disadvantaged and those with additional and special educational needs and disabilities within a safe and secure environment
- Enable the Trust to establish and sustain a broad, rich and coherent curriculum entitlement for all pupils, supported by effective curricular leadership and delivered through high-quality teaching in all its schools

- Ensure the Trust has high-quality, expert teaching in all of the Trust's schools, built on an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how pupils learn
- Ensure that priority areas for improvement are identified
- Enable the Trust and its schools to engage with appropriate evidence-based strategies for improvement and ensure their effective implementation

Finance, sustainability and compliance

Work with the COFO to:

- Ensure that sound financial management systems are in place
- Prioritise and allocate financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds
- Ensure rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk
- Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Trust and its schools through effective financial and estates management
- Direct the Trust's activities to achieve the most efficient, effective and sustainable provision of education to the highest quality, prioritising and making the most effective use of the resources available.
- Ensure the organisation complies with all statutory and legal requirements, including safeguarding and health and safety

People and Culture Strategy

- Lead and effectively manage the activities and performance of the Trust's central services and Executive Team
- Enable a People and Culture strategy that identifies talent, supports and develops all staff and sustains a culture of staff well-being and high staff professionalism
- Ensure the Trust has high quality employment practices that promote equality, diversity and inclusion, including ethical practices of recruitment and retention of staff
- Ensure staff have access to high quality professional development, aligned to balance organisational and individual needs
- Ensure the Trust has strong talent management and succession planning programmes across all areas of the organisation's work
- Take account of the outcomes of the staff wellbeing surveys and respond appropriately

Accountability and Governance

- Promote a culture of accountability that is recognised and accepted as an essential element of improvement at all levels and across all aspects of the Trust's work
- Understand the role of relevant regulatory bodies and ensure the Trust and its schools respond to their requirements
- Understand and welcome the role of effective Trust governance, at a local governance committee and Trust level, upholding the obligation to give account and recognising that Trust Boards are ultimately responsible and accountable for the Trust's work
- Develop and maintain effective relationships with the Trust Board recognising their key role in holding the CEO and Executive Team to account
- Ensure the Trust Board receives quality information in the level of detail needed to make informed decisions and fulfil its functions and legal obligations

- Ensure positive communications that promote the Trust and its work, and present the Trust effectively when dealing with the media

System leadership and civic responsibility

- Promote and enable ways in which the Trust's schools and their local governance committees engage meaningfully with their communities and are responsive and accountable to them
- In line with the Trust's civic role, work with civic partners and stakeholders in the local area, region and/or nationally to contribute to the Public Good, ensuring the value of the child and coherent public service for children and families
- Foster and engage in the collective leadership of the sector, building strong local systems to address disadvantage and improve the quality of education for all pupils
- Exert external influence on behalf of the Trust by active engagement with sector organisations, regulators, policy makers, local and national government, industry and other partners
- Give public assurance of high standards of probity

5. Accounting Officer Responsibilities

The Accounting Officer responsibilities are given the Academies Trust Handbook sections 1.31 – 1.38. The designated responsibilities are:

- Giving assurance (to Parliament and the public) of high standards of probity in the management of public funds, particularly regularity, propriety and value for money
- Adhering to the Nolan Principles of Standards in Public Life
- Having oversight of financial transactions (under Trustees' control, measures to prevent losses or misuse, multi-person operation of accounts and records, accurate accounting records)
- Completing an annual statement on regularity, propriety and compliance
- Taking personal responsibility for assuring compliance to the Board
- Advising on Board intent or action if incompatible with the articles, funding agreement or handbook
- Notifying the ESFA if they consider the Board is in breach of the articles, funding agreement or handbook

6. Working with Trustees

The CEO works closely with the Trust Board, particularly the Chair. The CEO recognises the responsibilities and statutory duties of the Trustees and that the CEO operates under the oversight and direction of the Board of Trustees.

The Academy Trust Handbook indicates that Trustees must comply with the Trust's charitable objects, with company and charitable law and with their contractual obligations under the funding agreement. As an organisation, the Trust has a range of obligations under current legislation and statutory guidance, including matters such as safeguarding, health and safety and estates management. The Academy Trust Handbook states that ensuring strong governance in these areas will be a key priority for the Board.

The Academy Trust Handbook indicates that Trustees should focus on three core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- Overseeing and ensuring effective financial performance

The CEO will recognise that, in fulfilling these core functions, the Trust Board is ultimately responsible for approving and monitoring certain aspects of the Trust's work, including the Trust's vision and strategy.

7. General

- To participate in the performance and development review process of their own performance, taking personal responsibility for identification of learning, development and training opportunities in discussion with their line manager
- Participate in arrangements for the performance and development review of other teachers and support staff, where appropriate.
- To comply with individual responsibilities, in accordance with the role, for health & safety in the workplace
- Ensure all duties and services provided are in accordance with the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy

The duties above are neither exclusive nor exhaustive and the post holder may be required by the Board of Trustees to carry out appropriate duties as commensurate within the grade in order to ensure the smooth running of the Trust.

This job description is current at the date of issue, but, in consultation with you, may be changed by the Board of Trustees to reflect or anticipate changes in the job commensurate with the grade and job title.

Person specification

Safeguarding	Essential	Desirable
Secure knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policy and practice and promoting the welfare of children and young people	✓	
Qualifications & Experience	Essential	Desirable
Degree or equivalent	✓	
Qualified Teacher Status		✓
Further, recognised professional qualification, e.g. master's degree, NPQEL, Business Management Degree in a relevant area		✓
Successful Headship or a significant leadership role within a MAT, Local Authority or other education environment	✓	
Experience of system leadership outside a single institution		✓
Highly politically astute with well-developed networking, stakeholder management, negotiation and influencing skills	✓	
Up to date knowledge and strategic view of the current educational landscape	✓	
Substantial involvement in school self-evaluation and development planning	✓	
Building and leading supportive and effective teams	✓	
Demonstrable experience of successful line management and staff development	✓	
Comprehensive experience of managing the performance of staff	✓	
Demonstrable experience of creating sustainable collaborative partnerships both with and beyond an organisation	✓	
Experience of successfully managing large scale projects	✓	
Successful track record of strategic financial planning and resource management	✓	
Knowledge & Skills	Essential	Desirable
Comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the education sector, government policy and school improvement strategies	✓	
Thorough knowledge of the statutory and legislative requirements with which academy trusts must comply	✓	
Clear understanding of the role of a CEO and Chief Accounting Officer in a large organisation	✓	

Clear understanding of the challenges of being a single employer of staff across multiple sites	✓	
Data analysis skills, and the ability to use data to set targets and identify weaknesses	✓	
Knowledge and understanding of high-quality learning and teaching; curriculum and assessment	✓	
Demonstrates analytical and strategic planning skills particularly in educational data analysis with underpinning curriculum knowledge	✓	
Secure knowledge and understanding of school finances and financial management	✓	
Able to communicate an inspiring vision for the Trust	✓	
Clear understanding of how to build, motivate and sustain teams	✓	
Ability to plan strategically and to monitor outcomes at an appropriate level	✓	
Experience of the management of change and continuous improvement	✓	
Ability to use the full range of leadership skills and qualities, appropriate to the situation	✓	
Ability to work to tight deadlines and under pressure	✓	
Ability to respond positively to high levels of scrutiny and accountability	✓	
Ability to manage politically sensitive situations with high levels of diplomacy	✓	
Personal	Essential	Desirable
A strong understanding of personal and organisational values coupled with the ability to act consistently in accordance with these	✓	
High expectations of self and others	✓	
Resilience and determination coupled with the ability to support and show empathy	✓	
The highest levels of integrity and reliability	✓	
Optimistic, with the all-important sense of humour	✓	
Calm and positive outlook on life	✓	
Self-motivated and able to take the initiative	✓	
An enthusiastic and motivational leader with strong morale building skills	✓	
Approachable, with highly effective communication and interpersonal skills	✓	
An ability to build and sustain effective working relationships	✓	

Appointment Process and How to Apply

The Sigma Trust has retained the services of Perrett Laver to help identify the widest possible field of suitable candidates and assist in the assessment of candidates against the requirements for the role. An executive search exercise is being undertaken alongside the public advertisement of the post.

Applicants should complete and submit the Trust application form, fully addressing the competencies outlined in the job description and person specification and outlining their interest in The Sigma Trust. The application form is available through the link: [APPLICATION](#)

If you are interested in finding out more about this role please visit:

<https://candidates.perrettlaver.com/vacancies/> quoting reference number 7733. If you would like an informal conversation to discuss this role in confidence, or would like to visit the Trust, please contact Frances Crossley (frances.crossley@perrettlaver.com)

- The closing date for applications is Wednesday 26th February 2025 at 00:00 GMT.
- Longlisted candidates will be invited for interview with Perrett Laver during the weeks commencing 3rd March and 10th March 2025.
- The shortlist of candidates will be selected in the week commencing 17th March 2025, and shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend a first-round interview with The Sigma Trust on Thursday 20th March 2025.
- A smaller group of finalist candidates will attend a final selection process with the Trust on Friday 21st March 2025.

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The Sigma Trust is proud to be an equal opportunity workplace. We are committed to equal employment opportunities regardless of any protected characteristics. This is embedded in our vision 'To Be Greater Than The Sum Of Its Parts', where we believe we are stronger and more successful working together, creating a workplace which celebrates diversity. If you require any reasonable adjustments to assist you in the selection process, please advise us of these so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to Perrett Laver and this responsibility is taken very seriously. Any information obtained by Perrett Laver's trading divisions is held and processed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation. The data provided is securely stored on Perrett Laver's computerised database and transferred to clients for the purposes of presenting you as a candidate and/or considering your suitability for a role you have registered interest in.

As defined under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Perrett Laver is a Data Controller and a Data Processor, and their legal basis for processing your personal data is 'Legitimate Interests'. You have the right to object to Perrett Laver processing your data in this way. For more information about this, your rights, and Perrett Laver's approach to Data Protection and Privacy, please visit the website <https://perrettlaver.com/privacy-policy/>