



# Welcome Letter from our Chair

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for expressing an interest in the role of CEO at Unity Schools Partnership (Unity). Tim Coulson's departure after eight years at Unity, to take up the role of Director General of Regions Group at DfE, comes at an interesting and significant time for us. Our ambition for improvement at pace, underpinned by a commitment to work alongside leaders at all levels to embed ethical leadership throughout Unity and its schools, offers a strong foundation for a new CEO to take us through our next phase. Tim has left us in great shape; our new CEO has a platform for even greater success.

Our forty schools across East Anglia and North East London are committed to making remarkable change happen, with the achievement and well-being of pupils and students at the core of what they do. Staff in schools are supported by a skilled, multi-disciplinary central team to improve the experience of all learners, with a particular focus on those with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Unity considers itself as a family of interdependent schools with a shared ambition to transform lives.

Our Board is proud of the significant contribution Unity makes to the school system. We are particularly proud of the quality, reach and impact of Unity Teaching School Hub and Unity Research School, which are transforming the professional development of educational practitioners across the region and beyond. CUSP, our primary curriculum, exemplifies our national influence and impact, with more than 800 primary schools currently benefiting from this exceptional resource. More subjects are being developed to expand the offer, and work is underway on a KS3 version.

Our determination to serve our communities well is underpinned by a commitment to high-quality scrutiny. Over recent years we have engaged recognised experts and leaders to review elements of our work including governance, structures and central team provision, in addition to the work in our schools. We engage external experts in many of our board committees to provide extra challenge. Our school governing bodies, working alongside our executive team provide similar challenge and support to our schools at the same time as giving assurance to our communities.

Whilst standards and inspection outcomes have significantly improved, our board is looking for a CEO to lead heads and the central team to the highest inspection outcomes and results that meet ambitious targets we have set for 2028. Our next CEO will find this combination of school improvement, professional development and system leadership an interesting challenge.

Our Board want to appoint a professional with vision, integrity and commitment to build on current strengths in a sustainable way, keeping the experience and achievement of children and young people at the heart of everything. Our aim simply is to be as good as the best trust in the country.

If this opportunity excites you and you're ready to lead Unity to even greater success, we would be delighted to receive your application.

We look forward to hearing from you.



*Christine Quinn*  
*Chair, Unity Schools Partnership*





# We Are Unity

## Characterised by ethical leadership and ambition for improvement at pace

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Unity Schools Partnership is a family of 40 schools; 9 secondary (including 4 sixth forms), 26 primary and 5 special schools, located predominantly in Suffolk, but also in Cambridge, Essex, Norfolk and Romford in East London.

Beyond our schools, our work extends through a range of initiatives, including our Unity Stars Nurseries, which will open a second nursery in September 2025, as well as our Unity Teaching School Hub, our Unity Research School, and our Curriculum with Unity (CUSP).

We share the same values and face similar issues, whilst providing a close network of support and challenge. We recognise the unique characteristics of each of the communities we work in and how they are reflected in distinctive school cultures. We are committed to a partnership that respects, sustains, and supports.

We encourage cultural diversity, celebrate the special qualities of each of our schools and understand that communities must develop and grow to become sustainable. Our model is about creating interdependence, schools that are more self-sustaining than stand-alone academies, less dependent than local authority schools and more independent than schools in corporate chains.

We all subscribe to a set of shared values, principles and operational processes that ensure quality education for all our young people. Our central belief is that every young life is special, open to possibility, gifted with the potential to change the world for the better. Our ambition is to unlock the potential of all pupils, remove the barriers that limit aspiration and ensure that all our pupils succeed. This approach is already improving the life chances of pupils in primary, special and secondary schools throughout the trust.

# Unity Vision and Values

## – Making Remarkable Change Happen – – Unity Schools Partnership transforms lives –

Through geographical hubs of like-minded schools and a vision of excellence that is shared by all, schools smash through barriers to achieve more than others think possible.

- The vision of Unity Schools Partnership is to achieve the highest standards of education in its primary, secondary and special schools.
- It is our intention that all trust schools, and the trust as a whole, be recognised locally and nationally for the exceptional quality of its educational provision
- We are a family of interdependent schools with a shared ambition to transform lives
- We are committed to the development of a very high-quality, and evidence-informed, model of how excellence is achieved
- Our work is fostered by geographical hubs of schools in close proximity that understand their specific communities.

### Our Values

The trust expects its work to be characterised by:

**INTEGRITY**

**INCLUSION**

**KINDNESS**





# Strategy & Supporting Schools

The trust has a strong central team. The trust's strategy has been for this team to work with heads on developing common strategies across schools whilst being clear that each head runs their school. This is an important tension and requires constant attention to get the right balance of commonality across schools and individuality of each school that leads to the most rapid development and improvement.

The central team has expert teams in safeguarding, local governance HR, finance, IT and procurement that aim to provide excellent service to schools. It also has an extensive school improvement team, of curriculum expertise and former heads who each oversee a group of schools. Each school is allocated a Director of Education who works alongside the school leadership team to quality assure self-evaluation judgements, agree priorities and then facilitate support from across the trust and our external partners.

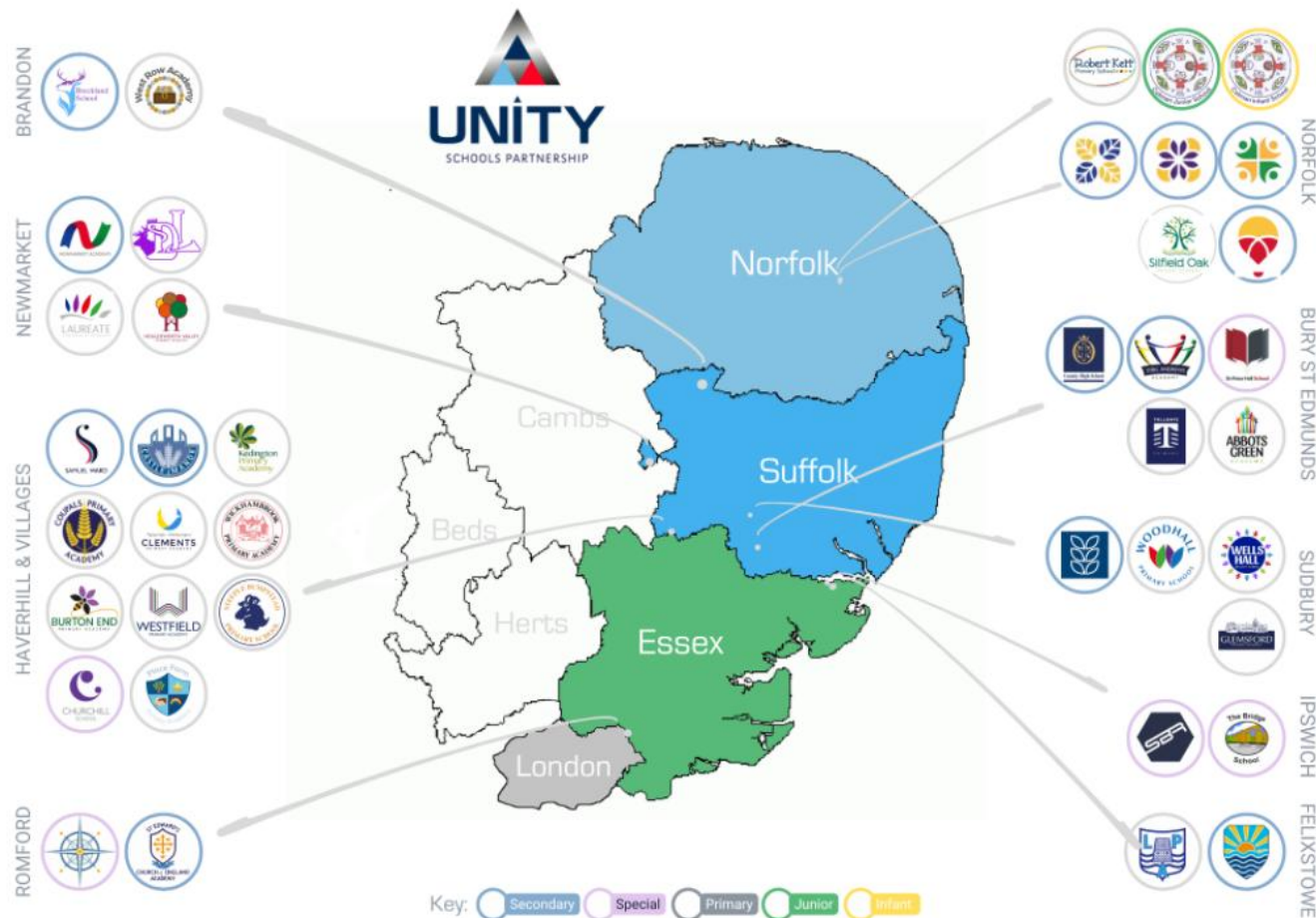
Closing the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils a particular focus. Given its importance Unity invests in and benefits from the Unity Research School (URS), which is instrumental in informing Unity School Partnership's strategy, which is itself rooted in research evidence.

The trust supports schools to:

- Audit their provision
- Benchmark against key principles
- Collaborate and share good practice in context
- Share collective responsibility for the outcomes of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds

The trust places a high value on local governance and brings together chairs each term and holds an annual conference for all governors. Education directors work with chairs of local governing bodies on performance management arrangements for heads.





# Our Schools

At USP we benefit from having both a large Teaching School Hub and a Research School from which we draw knowledge, skill and insight into best practice in teaching and leadership. We provide evidence-informed CPD, share valuable messages and signpost the 'best bets' of research to promote classroom practice that is rooted in evidence. As an associate college of the National Institute of Teaching (NlOT), we have been able to deliver initial teacher training in Bury St Edmunds from July 2025.

Unity Teaching School Hub in Suffolk is the designated Teaching School Hub for 180 schools within Forest Heath, St Edmundsbury, Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal and 220 schools in east Suffolk and north-east Essex. We're committed to providing all schools in the area with excellence in professional learning from Initial Teacher Training through to Executive Leadership, via the Early Career Framework and the National Professional Qualifications.

Unity Schools Partnership and our schools are committed to the communities in which we serve, for example our trust wide Happy Sheds initiative provides essential goods and support to families disproportionately affected by the cost-of-living crisis. In addition, our schools work towards a variety of quality marks and net zero environmental initiatives.

A family of interdependent schools with a shared ambition to transform lives





# Our Curriculum & Pedagogy

We strive for best practices across the trust, with Trust Leadership, Headteachers, and the Central Team collaborating to enhance each school's curriculum. Our primary objective is to ensure that all students, irrespective of their backgrounds, needs, or abilities, have equal access to opportunities. The school improvement team, including subject advisers, works across phases to promote consistency and drive forward improvements, particularly in our special schools, where we aim for pupils to achieve their full potential through a well-rounded and tailored curriculum.

## CUSP:

In line with our vision of making remarkable change happen, Unity Schools Partnership is proud to have its own curriculum, Curriculum with Unity Schools Partnership (CUSP), originated by Curriculum Development Director, Alex Bedford.

CUSP is underpinned by evidence, research and cognitive science. The curriculum is deliberately sequenced to activate prior learning, build on skills and deepen knowledge and understanding, enabling robust progression for every pupil. There is an emphasis on vocabulary acquisition, retention and use to break down learning barriers and accelerate progress. Specific skills are discreetly taught and practised so that they become transferrable. Learning, vocabulary and content is cumulative; content is learned, retrieved and built upon.

Although the curriculum was developed for schools in the Unity Schools Partnership, we have been pleased to share it with 600 schools nationally and internationally – and this number is growing every day.

## Unity Research School:

Unity Research School is proud to be part of the Research Schools Network, aiming to support schools to bridge the gap between research and practice. We work with classroom practitioners, school leaders and system leaders to engage, unite and reflect around the use of research evidence to address educational disadvantage. We disseminate evidence-informed practice through communications, articles, video, exemplification, training and publications. We work with experts within our research school network and beyond, as part of a mission to help all pupils, irrespective of background and starting points, to thrive.



### Connected

Our work is built around  
|  
cognitive load theory  
|  
principles of instruction  
|  
evidence informed practice



### Cumulative

We believe learning isn't an event  
|  
It must be  
knowledge-rich  
|  
vocabulary-rich  
|  
skilful



### Coherent

Sequence matters  
|  
systematically planned  
|  
explicit instruction  
|  
supports acquisition of curriculum content

[Read more about CUSP  
Early Foundations](#)

[Read more about CUSP  
Primary](#)

[Read more about CUSP  
Secondary](#)



# The Role

This is a rare opportunity to lead a large and varied multi-academy trust with a strong regional focus. The Trust is in good financial health, has enjoyed a period of sustained growth, with schools that are working every day to deliver for their communities and the young people and families they serve.

The Board of Trustees are committed and experienced, with a Chair who has been in role since 2020. They are looking to work with, and support, a new Chief Executive who can build on the excellent work done to date by the organisation, under Tim Coulson's leadership. It is highly likely that the next CEO's tenure will include a period of consolidation and review, alongside the development of a strategic plan to map out the ways in which the Trust can evolve and develop yet further.

Alongside providing leadership to the hubs, and through them to the schools directly, the CEO has the opportunity to bring ideas and thinking in other areas, including through oversight of the Unity Schools Partnership Education (UE) subsidiary, the Trust's teacher training provision, and its nurseries. It is also hoped that the incumbent will take an active interest in the ways in which the Trust can continue to be a real contributor to the communities and region in which its academies operate.

## **Core Job Purpose**

As the Accounting Officer for the trust the CEO is accountable to the Board of Directors for setting overall strategic direction and ensuring it is implemented. The CEO leads the team to achieve consistently high professional standards in every aspect of provision and ensures rigorous policy development. The CEO communicates the trust's vision and purpose to staff and regional and national stakeholders and ensures sustainability and continuous improvement across the schools. The CEO role models values-led leadership, promotes a culture of shared challenge and support between individual schools and implements an effective, centrally led system of control.

Modelling and actively promoting commitment to the trust's values and, more broadly, commitment to ethical governance, leadership, and practice across the organisation. The CEO adheres to and embodies the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education and the Seven Principles of Public Life (The Nolan Principles).



# The Role

## Key Responsibilities

### Leadership

- Work with the Board of Directors, Leadership Team, local governing bodies and staff in the academies to define and deliver the vision, aims and objectives through clear strategic direction and values-led leadership, with measurable targets and development plans in place.
- Develop and implement a strategic plan that positions the trust as a leader in the sector, through fostering a culture of excellence and innovation across all levels of the organisation.
- Develop and execute a comprehensive growth strategy aligned with the trust's mission and vision. Identify and prioritise growth opportunities in key areas such as services, geography and partnerships.
- Conduct comprehensive due diligence on potential growth initiatives, including mergers, acquisitions, partnerships and new ventures.
- Evaluate the financial, legal, operational, and strategic implications of proposed initiatives and ensure robust risk management practices are integrated initiatives.
- Serve as the primary spokesperson and representative of the trust to external stakeholders.
- Lead and manage the Executive Team to achieve high levels of performance, developing a culture of personal accountability, mutual challenge and support, recognising excellence and implementing strategies that address under performance.
- Remain abreast of educational and other relevant developments, regionally and nationally, ensuring senior leaders operate within a flexible environment which is responsive to change.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with sponsors, educational partners and others to enhance education provision and widen opportunities for all pupils, with a particular a focus on and identifying opportunities to further widen provision for the benefit of local communities.
- Promote high quality recruitment and retention of staff, effective deployment of human resources and delivery of appraisals and continuing professional development schemes, in order to develop and retain outstanding staff.
- Develop and foster a positive, inclusive and supportive culture that prioritises wellbeing.
- Keep the Board informed on performance and identify key risks.
- Regularly visit all site locations to ensure alignment with the trust's mission, values and strategic objectives.





# The Role

## Managing the organisation

- Ensure priorities are underpinned by sound financial advice and that the Board has access to timely financial information about income and expenditure.
- Work closely with the Deputy CEO to ensure the trust's financial health and sustainability through prudent fiscal management and diversified revenue streams.
- Ensure that Trust meets all legislative and statutory requirements, including Health and Safety, Safeguarding and those required by Companies House and the Charity Commission, Data Protection and the Master and Supplementary Funding agreements.
- Ensure that the Trust's strategy is supported by effective, efficient, responsive and integrated central services, as well as high-quality operational delivery across all schools.
- Ensure a deep commitment to safeguarding and compliance with safeguarding responsibilities across the trust, through effective leadership, training, systems and monitoring both centrally and in all schools.

## Leading teaching and learning

- Support and secure delivery of excellent teaching and learning through the promotion of high professional standards and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching quality and pupil achievement.
- In consultation with the Leadership Team, local governing bodies and headteachers, determine and implement curriculum provision and related assessment that meets the needs of all pupils.
- Oversee the annual cycle of reviews and effectiveness visits and facilitate a culture of continuous self-improvement within each academy.
- Demonstrate a commitment to working flexibly with local governing bodies and senior colleagues to build effective teams and collaborative approaches to provision.





# The Person

## Knowledge & Experience

- Outstanding personal and professional record of achievement as an educationalist or leader within a mainstream educational setting; known to, or be advising or connected with, national education players in the policy making or regulatory communities.
- A deep and current knowledge of school leadership and how excellence is achieved in the context of national policy drivers and frameworks.
- Strong track record of collaboration and partnership working in a complex and ever-changing multi-agency context.
- Proven track record of innovation and of shaping and formulating strategies that take organisations to the next level. This is likely to be supported by a solid track record of performance management, continuous professional development and sustained school improvement.
- Strong strategic planning skills, including budget management and best value principles.
- Experience of shaping, implementing and promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategies.
- Postgraduate educational / leadership or management qualification. (Desirable)
- Experience in schools across a range of settings including those in areas of disadvantage and those serving children with significant need. (Desirable)

## Skills & Abilities

- Able to provide clear and inspiring leadership and direction that generates collective vision within a distributed leadership model.
- Able to lift, challenge, motivate and empower others to attain challenging outcomes.
- Outstanding influencing and interpersonal abilities with the skills to build a vision and communicate clear purpose and direction.
- Highly effective verbal and written communication skills.
- Strategic acumen; high analytical capacity with the ability to think strategically and creatively.
- Strong organisational skills, with the ability to manage competing priorities.



## Ethos & Values

- Inclusive and collaborative leadership style that encourages ideas and contributions from others.
- Willing to hold people to account and challenge under performance and is committed to learning and continuous professional development.
- Fosters an open, fair and equitable culture where achievement is celebrated and excellence acknowledged.
- High capacity for self-reflection and is emotionally intelligent, personally flexible and comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty.
- Engaged with and curious about the future of teaching and learning.
- Role models the vision and values of Unity Schools Partnership and demonstrates a strong personal commitment to leadership that makes a positive difference to children and young people and raises standards.
- Willingness to regularly visit all site locations.
- Be available to travel on short notice to address urgent issues, emergencies or crises at any site location.



# Why be part of the Unity Team?

At Unity Schools Partnership, we break barriers to create remarkable change, putting pupils first and supporting the vulnerable and disadvantaged. We are dedicated to fostering a positive work environment where employees can grow, valuing collaboration, wellbeing, diversity, equality, and work-life balance. Across our schools and central hub, we nurture talent at all career stages, offering a wide range of roles.

## PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

We recognise the importance of providing professional development opportunities and support all our staff with a CPD programme to equip them for their current role and next steps. Our aim is to retain talent and so we actively encourage and facilitate movement within the Trust. In fact, several members of our executive team originate from internal promotions, and we have enabled a number of staff to follow their passions and embark on new careers within the Trust. From apprenticeships to leadership training, we offer open doors, not glass ceilings.

## MEANINGFUL WORK THAT MAKES A REAL CONTRIBUTION

All roles within the Trust contribute towards ensuring our pupils receive the education they deserve so that they can achieve their potential. We rely on our teams to take the initiative to make things better, to work smarter, to collaborate within and across teams to be the best we can be, so that our pupils can be the best they can be. We facilitate collaborative working across schools and multi-disciplinary projects to share best practice and maximise our skills, talent and knowledge sharing.

## WELLBEING & SAFEGUARDING

Of course, as an educational organisation, safeguarding is front and centre of what we do. But our care extends to our employees too. We value every member of staff as a person in their own right, everyone needs support in different ways and at different points in their lives. We have invested in wellbeing systems to ensure that staff get the right support at the right time and whenever needed.

## FAIRNESS & FLEXIBILITY MATTERS

We pride ourselves on being fully committed to equality and diversity best practice. We follow Teachers' Pay and Local Government pay scales for fair compensation and transparency. Our benefits package includes final/average salary pensions, wellbeing service, an employee assistance programme, cycle to work scheme, flu vouchers and EV leasing. In addition, we recognise the need for, and benefits of flexible working and hybrid working and are pleased to offer these where appropriate for the job role.



# Staff Benefits & Wellbeing

We aim to recruit and retain top talent, recognising that every team member contributes to improving pupil outcomes. Our primary focus is on breaking down barriers to facilitate remarkable change, empowering teachers to teach and leaders to lead. Supporting staff wellbeing and professional growth is crucial; we want everyone to feel valued and have opportunities to progress within the trust. Our team fosters a culture of belonging, enhancing staff happiness and service delivery.

We prioritise inclusive working practices and welcome diverse teams, offering flexible arrangements for a healthy work-life balance. Our commitment to equal opportunities is evident in our initiatives celebrating diversity.

Professional development is a cornerstone of our approach, supported by our Teaching School and access to national experts. We offer talent management programmes, executive coaching, and an extensive CPD framework, including:

- Instructional coaching
- Access to the National College CPD portal
- Funded professional courses (up to Level 7)
- Internal CPD opportunities
- Strong ties with the Unity Teaching School Hub for NPQs

**Join us to work, learn, and grow together.**

## Staff Wellbeing

We prioritise wellbeing through the DfE Wellbeing Charter, offering benefits such as workload reduction commitments, discounted gym memberships, and mental health support via TELUS.

Our Pluxee package includes discounts on shopping, holidays, and leisure activities, enhancing overall wellbeing.

Eligible staff can also join the Blue Light Card discount scheme for exclusive savings.

## Unity Schools Partnership Education (UE)

We have established UE as a subsidiary trading company to independently trade with commercial organisations, generating additional income for the trust. This initiative has already returned over £1 million to Unity Schools Partnership schools through tutoring and consultancy, providing staff opportunities to develop their ideas and work on a commission basis.





# How to Apply

LOCATION	Haverhill, Central Trust Team. Schools across Suffolk, Cambridge, Norfolk, Essex and Havering.
GRADE / SCALE POINT – SALARY	Highly Competitive Salary

## Application Process:

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Unity Schools Partnership on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role via [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code **RBQPC**. Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring\* form. An application form will be requested for final round candidates.

\* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application

The closing date for applications is noon on **Thursday 18 September**.

## Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.

## Safeguarding:

Unity Schools Partnership is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young persons at all times. The CEO will be responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of all children with whom they come into contact, in accordance with the Trust's and the School's Safeguarding policies. The post holder is required to hold a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

## GDPR personal data notice:

According to GDPR guidelines, Saxton Bampfylde Ltd are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.



