



The Rivers
C.of E. Academy Trust

Headteacher Recruitment Pack

Unity Academy

Primary-phase
Alternative Provision

'An extraordinary education for every pupil'





Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the role of Headteacher at Unity Academy, our purpose-built alternative provision (AP) in Kidderminster.

At The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust, our mission is clear: create **extraordinary futures** by empowering **extraordinary people** to provide an **extraordinary education for every pupil**. We are proud of our nurturing ethos, our high expectations, and our focus on quality-first teaching and inclusive practice.

Unity Academy, as our specialist alternative provision, is an integral part of our collaborative learning community and stands as a beacon of hope and opportunity for children and families across the Wyre Forest District and beyond.

We are seeking a visionary, compassionate, calm and resilient leader who is committed to equity of opportunity and excellent outcomes for all, especially the most vulnerable pupils. This appointment is not only about leading a school – it's about championing a community.

The successful candidate will play a pivotal role in shaping the culture and ethos of Unity, ensuring it remains a safe and aspirational environment for pupils who require a bespoke and nurturing approach to education. A key part of the role will be to continue growing Unity's reputation and impact across the system.

If you share our vision and are ready to lead with passion and purpose, we encourage you to apply and become part of our journey.

With best wishes,

Matt Meckin
Chief Executive Officer

Sally Philpotts
Director of Inclusion

Job Advert

Headteacher – Unity Academy

Lead, Inspire, Transform: Shape the future of inclusive education

Salary Range: Leadership scale: 18 to 24 (£78,702 - £91,158)
Starting point on scale TBC and dependent upon experience

Contract: Full-time, permanent contract

Start date: Start of the summer term 2026 or as soon as possible

Are you ready to lead a purpose-built alternative provision at the heart of the Wyre Forest community? Do you want to make a genuine difference to the most vulnerable learners and underserved pupils?

Unity Academy, part of The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust, is seeking an inspirational, experienced and creative headteacher to drive our shared mission of delivering an **extraordinary education** for every pupil. We warmly welcome applications from leaders who are passionate about inclusive education and eager to bring new ideas and expertise.

This crucial role will offer the successful candidate an exciting opportunity to:

- Pioneer a flagship alternative provision free school, empowering vulnerable and underserved children to thrive.
- Join a dynamic, values-driven trust with a proven record of school improvement and innovation.
- Collaborate with passionate colleagues across the trust and work in partnership with the wider community.
- Shape a nurturing, ambitious environment where every child's potential is unlocked and every staff member is empowered to excel.

We are looking for a visionary leader who:

- Believes every child has the right to an extraordinary education and deserves a second chance to succeed.
- Understands inclusion, SEND and SEMH.
- Thrives on challenge, creativity and collaboration.

This is your opportunity to make a profound difference – building on our strong foundations and leading Unity Academy into its next exciting chapter.



Our school

Unity Academy is a purpose-built primary-phase alternative provision (AP) serving the Wyre Forest District and surrounding areas.

As part of The Rivers C .of E. Academy Trust, Unity Academy provides specialist support for children with complex needs, including Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

We operate as a central hub and work closely with mainstream primary schools within the Wyre Forest area. Our collaborative outreach, training and intervention services are designed to promote inclusion and provide support and continuity for pupils who have faced permanent exclusions or who are at risk of exclusion.

Our exceptional building has eight classrooms, a large school hall, a design and technology room and various break out spaces including intervention rooms, a nurture room and an immersive space.

We also have a commercial spec kitchen, multi-use games area (MUGA) and a well-maintained forest school area with wildflower planting to improve biodiversity, bug hotels and several bat and bird boxes.

Children are at the heart of everything we do. We place great emphasis on high expectations and quality first teaching to ensure that no child gets left behind.



What makes Unity Academy special?

Since opening our doors in September 2023, Unity Academy has been a beacon of hope for primary schools in the Wyre Forest area, offering expert knowledge, support and guidance. Our outreach model is grounded in partnership and collaboration, reflecting our commitment to inclusive education and community engagement.

Unity Academy has a nurturing ethos and a commitment to holistic development. By placing children at the heart of every decision and fostering a culture of high expectations and quality-first teaching, our staff have the privilege of working collaboratively to reignite a love of learning in disengaged and vulnerable learners.

We take pride in celebrating the successes of all the children who attend our academy, embracing everyone's unique qualities to promote a sense of achievement and positive attitude in tackling every challenge, no matter how small.

What makes Unity Academy unique?

Unity Academy mirrors the structure of a mainstream school wherever possible. The academy maintains high expectations and values, following a curriculum that reflects mainstream education whilst tailoring lessons to meet individual needs. This approach ensures that pupils are not only engaged but also prepared to transition back to mainstream schools.

Unity Academy accepts children via a range of different pathways. Placements include short-stay behaviour courses, provision for pupils that have been Permanently Excluded and Local Authority commissioned assessment places.

During the last academic year, Unity Academy has also worked closely with the Local Authority and remains committed to a role within the local area partnership's strategy (or Local Offer), admitting pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who require more intensive medium-term support before transitioning back into a mainstream setting.

Unity Academy is more than just a school: it is a lifeline for children in need, offering them a chance to succeed and thrive in mainstream education.



Our trust

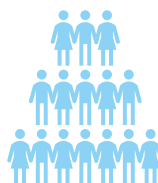
The Rivers C.of E. Academy Trust, founded in 2014, is a primary-specialist trust with a strong track record of improving schools and a collaborative yet singular purpose of providing an **extraordinary education** for every pupil.



16 Schools



5,500 pupils



850 Staff



Our community of sixteen schools has over 5,500 pupils and more than 850 staff. We are one of the largest primary multi-academy trusts in the West Midlands with a geographical reach across Worcestershire, Sandwell, and Dudley.

We pride ourselves on being front-line focused and our team of **extraordinary people** work passionately on our shared mission. Our ambition for each school remains a priority, with 100% of our schools rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, several of which have improved from weaker predecessor judgements.

Education provision across our family of schools is closely matched to the specific needs of our learners, particularly the most vulnerable and their families. We have high hopes for every child, whatever their background, need or prior attainment, and we empower our pupils to see their limitless potential so they can contribute positively to society and to their **extraordinary futures**.



The Rivers
C.of E. Academy Trust

'An extraordinary education for every pupil'

Mission

Our mission embraces the character, purpose and future direction of our trust. It defines what we do and why we do it:

Extraordinary Education
Extraordinary People
Extraordinary Futures

Vision

Through an **extraordinary** education, we empower pupils to be life-long learners and see their limitless potential. Respectful relationships and an unwavering focus on discovering talents and interests enable pupils to flourish and be **extraordinary** people. Together, we spark aspiration and drive achievement, so that pupils contribute positively to society and to their **extraordinary** futures in an ever-changing world.

Ethos and Values

We are a family of schools with a Christian ethos. We have church of England and community schools, welcoming families from all faiths and no faith, but together we are guided by our mission, vision and values. Whilst each school's unique character and local community are celebrated, we are united through our shared mission, vision and our **STARS** values. These are the characteristics and behaviours that we ALL share.



2030 Strategy

Whilst acknowledging and celebrating our many successes, we are not complacent and continue to strive for excellence in everything we do. Our 2030 strategy sets out our three key themes, and the three 'anchors' within each theme, which outline our areas of focus as we move into our second decade.

Extraordinary Education

- Excellent teaching and provision
- High-quality support for vulnerable pupils
- Exceptional enrichment

Extraordinary People

- Empowered and valued employees
- Clear professional learning pathways
- High-quality collaboration and networks

Extraordinary Futures

- Purposeful environments
- Digital innovation and efficiency
- Thriving growth and partnerships

Extraordinary People

The Rivers C.of E. Academy Trust is a mission-driven connected learning community committed to transforming lives by providing an **extraordinary education** for every pupil.

We believe that **extraordinary people** create **extraordinary futures**. Together, through shared values and a commitment to excellence, we empower each other to grow, achieve, and make a lasting impact for our pupils.

Our people are the heart of our success. We have built a strong, supportive community where collaboration, growth and best practice thrive. We invest in every team member through coaching, mentorship, collaboration and a wealth of learning opportunities – within the trust and beyond.

Staff Benefits: Our Commitment to You



In 2024, to mark our 10th anniversary, we launched Rivers' **"10 for 10"** initiative by introducing 10 brand-new staff benefits to thank our **extraordinary people**.

These benefits have been created to support staff wellbeing, growth, and work-life balance.

Click here to [Find out more about our staff benefits](#)

Job Description

Headteacher – Unity Academy

Salary range:	Leadership scale 18 to 24 (£78,702 - £91,158)
Contract:	Full time, permanent
Line of responsibility:	Responsible to the Director of Inclusion
Start Date:	Start of the summer term or as soon as possible

You will be an experienced and strategic leader who can articulate our mission, vision and values and encourage and empower others to be the best that they can be for our pupils.

Key purpose:

Extraordinary education:

Identify and address any barriers to ensure that all pupils have access to high-quality education and support.

Extraordinary people:

Create a supportive and inclusive environment that fosters a trust-wide culture of respect and supports Unity to thrive, as well as other pupils and schools in the local system. Empower others to be the best that they can be.

Extraordinary futures:

Maintain a strong and resolute focus on the frontline to ensure that pupils, families and staff receive the very best expertise and resources to do extraordinary things with their futures.

In line with strategic priorities, support the future growth and direction of Unity by maintaining and developing partnerships with key community stakeholders and external partners.

Key accountabilities:

Strategic thinking and outcomes:

In line with the trust's mission and vision, ensure that Unity achieves strong outcomes for underserved pupils and in Ofsted inspections.

Consistency and collaboration:

Lead, develop, oversee and quality assure robust strategies and approaches for SEMH, education, SEND, safeguarding and inclusion.

Outward facing:

Work in partnership with communities, external agencies, partners and local authorities to promote community cohesion, developing links and collaborative networks to support pupils with SEMH.

Coaching and staff development: Provide strategic leadership, champion best practice and provide expert professional advice, support and guidance to leaders, staff and families.

Key responsibilities:

Values and Vision

- Ensure the vision for the academy and trust is clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon effectively by all.
- Motivate and work with others to create a shared culture and positive climate.
- Ensure creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate new technologies to achieve excellence.
- Ensure that the strategic planning takes account of the diversity, values and experience of the academy and community.

Managing the Academy

- Establish an organisational structure that reflects the trust's values and supports the academy's development priorities.
- Manage financial and human resources efficiently to deliver and achieve the academy's educational aims.
- Recruit, develop and deploy staff effectively, ensuring workload balance and alignment with the trust's vision.
- Lead and coordinate the work of the senior leadership team to drive improvement and accountability.
- Implement robust performance management and exceptional professional learning opportunities and processes for all staff.
- Ensure the school environment is safe, well organised and conducive to high quality teaching and learning.

Securing Accountability

- Ensure staff accountabilities are clearly defined, and subject to regular review and evaluation.
- Lead the effective use of assessment, recording, and reporting systems to track progress and raise attainment.
- Use technology and data effectively to inform decision-making and school improvement.
- Regularly review own practice and work with the Director of Inclusion to meet objectives.
- Support the work of the Advocates/Trustees (as appropriate) providing accurate information to enable them to meet their responsibilities.

Key responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership of Teaching and Learning/Provision

- Maintain overall responsibility for provision including curriculum, enrichment and quality of teaching.
- Champion a culture of high expectations and high standards, alongside challenge and support, where all pupils become engaged in their own learning, achieve success and are empowered to succeed.
- Work closely with the trust school improvement team to support the implementation of research informed practices.
- Ensure teaching approaches reflect the unique SEMH context of the academy.
- Coordinate leaders to ensure the curriculum remains appropriate and meets the needs of SEMH pupils whilst aligning with the academy's improvement goals.
- Oversee the use of effective assessment systems to track pupil progress accurately.
- Promote personalised learning pathways tailored to individual pupil needs.
- Maximise curriculum enrichment opportunities including therapeutic and vocational activities.
- Use data and benchmarks to evaluate pupil and school performance.
- Ensure learning remains central to strategic planning and resource allocation.
- Promote restorative practices to enhance pupil motivation and behaviour.
- Encourage continuous professional development and sharing of best practice among staff.
- Drive the adoption of new technologies to enhance and extend learning opportunities.
- Lead the development of the school improvement plan and self-evaluation process related to teaching and learning.

Key responsibilities:

Outreach

- Lead and oversee the academy's outreach provision, ensuring high-quality support and interventions for pupils in local schools.
- Develop and maintain effective partnerships with local mainstream schools to promote inclusion and early intervention.
- Ensure outreach programmes are responsive to the SEMH needs of pupils and aligned with the academy's ethos, safeguarding standards and quality of education.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of outreach on pupil outcomes, school partnerships and community engagement.
- Provide leadership, guidance and professional development to outreach staff, ensuring consistency of practice and effective delivery of support across all settings.
- Share SEMH expertise, through training and advice to support capacity building within the wider education community.
- Ensure outreach activities contribute to positive transitions, re-engagement in learning, and improved attendance, behaviour and wellbeing outcomes for pupils.

Strengthening Community and Working with Others

- Treat all staff fairly, respectfully to foster a positive and inclusive culture.
- Build collaboration within the academy and across the trust to share best practice.
- Promote wellbeing and manageable workloads for all staff.
- Develop a culture and curriculum that reflects and celebrates community diversity.
- Promote positive strategies to challenge prejudice and address harassment.
- Maintain a strong working relationship with local authorities, particularly in relation to commissioning of places.
- Work with external agencies to support the academic, social emotional and cultural needs of pupils and families.
- Engage parents/carers, and community partners to enrich learning and strengthen the Academy's role in the community.
- Collaborate with trust and local schools on shared projects to drive improvement and innovation.

Key responsibilities:

Safeguarding (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

- Lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across the academy, ensuring full statutory compliance and a culture of vigilance.
- Advise and support staff on child welfare and safeguarding concerns, promoting a culture of vigilance and professional curiosity.
- Lead and participate in strategy discussions, conferences and multi-agency meetings, ensuring effective communication with safeguarding partners and external agencies.
- Contribute to the assessment and ongoing monitoring of pupils, ensuring that safeguarding concerns are identified early and addressed appropriately.
- Oversee, manage and quality assure referrals, assessments and record keeping, ensuring timely action and effective follow up.
- Undertake and maintain up-to-date mandatory safeguarding training (including Prevent) in line with statutory guidance.
- Ensure policies and procedures are current, compliant, understood and implemented consistently by all staff and volunteers.
- Ensure that safeguarding remains a standing priority in all aspects of school leadership including recruitment, curriculum, pastoral care and staff development
- Undertake any other safeguarding-related duties reasonably required to fulfil the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Additional Responsibilities

- To carry out any such duties as may be reasonably required by the Director of Inclusion.
- To undertake any further training as required.
- To be aware of and observe all policies, procedures, working practices and regulations. In particular:
 - a. Employees must comply with the provisions of 'The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974' and must take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts of omissions whilst at work. Employees are also required to cooperate with their employer to enable them to perform or comply with any statutory provisions. The trust's efforts to promote a safe and healthy working environment can only succeed with the full co-operation of its employees.
 - b. To understand, comply with and promote the trust's safeguarding policy and procedures. It is the responsibility of all employees to make the working environment safe and secure for all.
 - c. It is the responsibility of all staff to comply with the trust's equal opportunities policy. The key responsibilities for staff under this policy are set out in the trust's code of conduct. The duties described in this job description must be carried out in a manner which promotes equality of opportunity, dignity and due respect for all employees and service users.
 - d. To maintain the confidentiality about pupils, clients, staff and other trust business. The work is of a confidential nature and information gained must not be communicated to other persons except in the recognised course of duty. The post holder must meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act at all times.
 - e. To report to line manager, or other appropriate person, in the event of awareness of bad practice.
 - f. Employees must adhere to the code of conduct and comply with all reasonable management requests. This job description is intended to provide a broad outline of the accountabilities and responsibilities only. The post holder will need to be flexible in developing the role in conjunction with the line manager. The post holder may be asked to carry out any other delegated duty or task that is in line with their post.

The trust reserves the right to alter the content of this job description, after consultation, to reflect changes to the job or services provided, without altering the general character or level of responsibility.

The Rivers C. of E. Academy trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful candidates will be subject to an enhanced DBS check, barred list check, online searches and a medical questionnaire.

Person Specification

Unity Academy - Headteacher

Education and qualifications

Essential	Desirable
• Qualified to degree level or equivalent or relevant experience. • Evidence of appropriate levels of professional development and training in relation to SEND, SEMH, safeguarding, welfare and inclusion and/or leadership. • Driving licence, access to a vehicle and willingness to travel to the central offices, trust schools and wider community as required.	• Qualified teacher status. • Postgraduate study. • NPQH (or working towards)

Experience

Essential	Desirable
• Substantial experience in senior leadership within at least one of the following areas: mainstream education, alternative provision or specialist provision. • Demonstrable success in leading whole-school improvement and raising standards for vulnerable learners. • Experience of working with children across a wide ability range. • Experience working directly with pupils with SEMH, challenging behaviour and/or other complex special educational needs. • Strong track record in developing and embedding effective behaviour systems that support inclusion and emotional regulation. • In-depth experience of safeguarding procedures and promoting the welfare of vulnerable children. • Experience working effectively with multi-agency partners (e.g. social care, CAMHS, local authorities, Police). • Experience of building positive relationships with parents, carers, governors and external agencies.	• Leadership experience within an SEMH school, PRU or Alternative Provision setting. • Experience providing an outreach service. • Teaching/Leadership experience across the primary phase. • Experience of developing curriculum continuity and progression between Key Stages 1 & 2. • Experience of managing budgets. • Experience of representing a school/MAT within the wider community and local authority frameworks • Experience of developing community and stakeholder engagement.

Personal skills, attributes and knowledge

Essential	Desirable
Leadership and Management • Inspirational, visible and resilient leader. • Able to set a clear vision for and SEMH provision and lead improvement effectively. • Skilled at change management. • Confident decision maker. • Stamina and optimism for the long-term future of the AP. • Commitment to raising standards. • Commitment to the AP and its links with the wider community. Educational Knowledge and Understanding • Deep understanding of the needs of pupils with SEMH and other complex needs. • Knowledge of effective pedagogical approaches. • Secure understanding of curriculum design, assessment and data use for SEMH and/or the primary phase. • Knowledge of safeguarding, child protection and relevant legislation. • Knowledge of OFSTED expectations, and the pre/post-OFSTED planning process. • Awareness of current local and national developments within alternative provision, SEND and inclusion. Interpersonal and Communication Skills • Excellent communication and interpersonal skills. • Able to build trust and positive relationships with pupils, parents/carers, staff and stakeholders • Professional and approachable. • Active listener who can empathise, des-escalate conflict and mediate effectively. • Ability to work in strong partnership with local school leaders and other key agencies. Analytical and Organisational Skills • Strong planning, organisation and time management skills. • Excellent analytical skills to interpret data and drive continuous improvement. • Effective at prioritising competing demands and managing complex workloads. Professional Values and Personal Qualities • Commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion. • Passionate about improving outcomes for vulnerable pupils • Committed to collaboration, transparency and accountability at all levels. • Empathetic, patient and calm under pressure. • Positive role model who promotes high expectations. • Aware of and can live out the Rivers' STARS values.	• Understanding of trauma informed practice, attachment theory and restorative approaches. • Use of new and emerging technologies to enhance organisational effectiveness. • Sound knowledge of the role of ICT in teaching and learning across the curriculum. • Willingness to embrace the commissioning of places at the AP. • Confidence to take on new developments relating to commissioning. • Attention to detail. • Strong financial awareness and resource management capability.



How to Apply

Application forms can be accessed via the link below:

<https://www.riverscofe.co.uk/work-for-us-1/vacancies>

Your covering letter should demonstrate how your career to date has prepared you for this post and be no longer than two sides of A4.

Please download a copy and email your completed application form to jcarter@riverscofe.co.uk by **midday on Wednesday 3rd December 2025**.
(applications received after this date/time will not be accepted)

Please do not submit a curriculum vitae as these will not be included in the shortlisting process.

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted by **Friday 5th December** and interviews will be held week commencing **Monday 8th December 2025**.

To find out more about Rivers, you can visit our [trust website](#).

Informal tours of Unity Academy are being offered by our Director of Inclusion, Sally Philpotts on **Wednesday 26th and Friday 28th November**. If you would like to arrange a tour on one of these dates or a phone call, then please contact the executive assistant, Julia Carter, at jcarter@riverscofe.co.uk to register your interest and confirm a booking.

The Rivers C of E Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children and expects everyone to share this commitment. The successful applicant will undergo a full enhanced DBS check.

The Rivers C.of E. Academy Trust reserves the right to withdraw the vacancy should a suitable candidate be found at any time during the recruitment process.



The Rivers

C.of E. Academy Trust

Thank you for your interest in working with The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust.

We look forward to receiving your application.

 **The Rivers C of E Academy Trust**
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