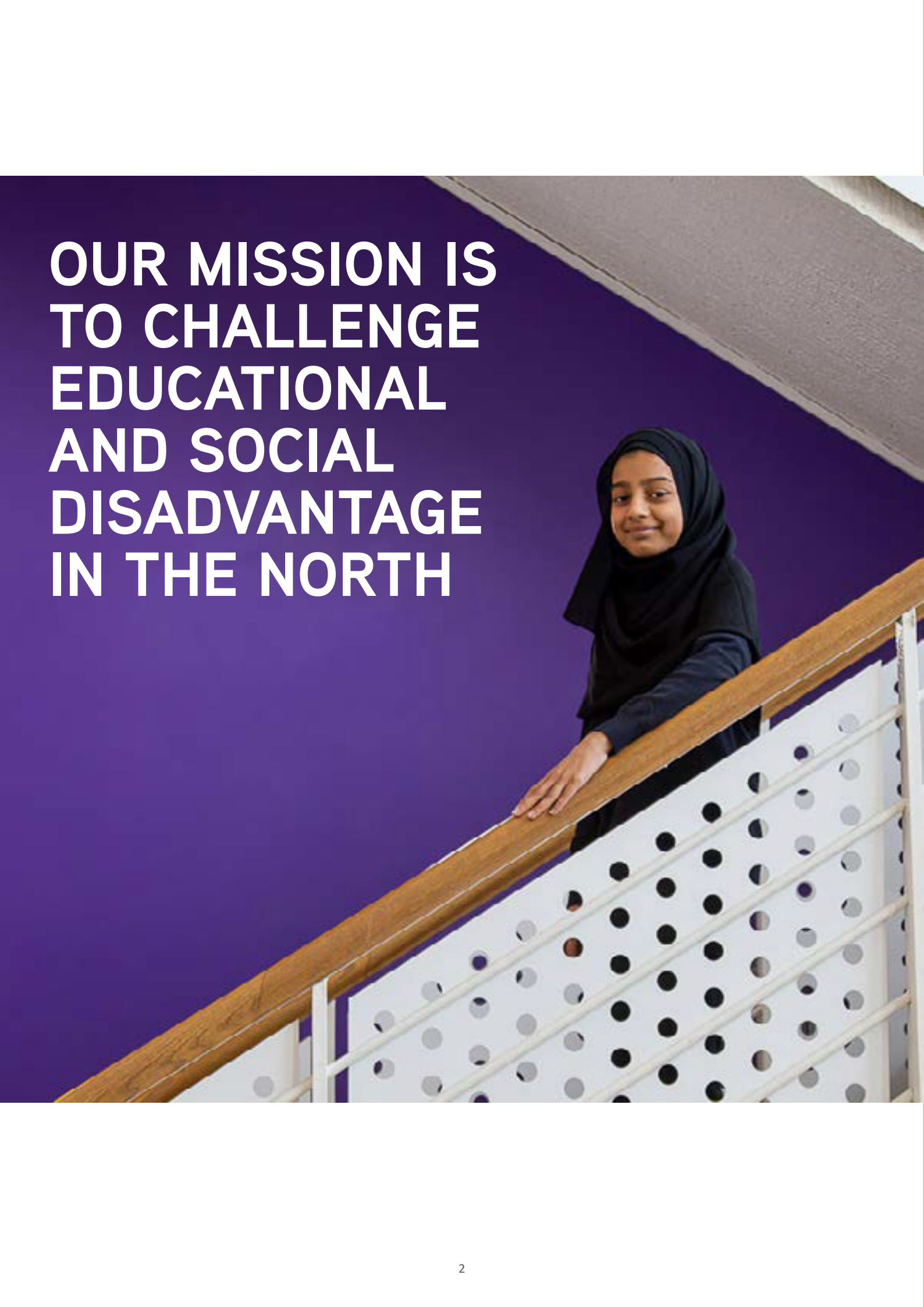


WE ARE  
MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE  
CAN YOU?

Principal  
Dixons Unity Academy





# OUR MISSION IS TO CHALLENGE EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE IN THE NORTH

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16 SCHOOLS  
ONE COLLEGE  
14,000  
STUDENTS  
2,000 STAFF  
IN TEAM DIXONS

At Dixons, we are committed to making a difference where it matters most. Our unapologetically ambitious mission is only achievable with the right people on our team. That's why 'putting talent first' is one of our strategic anchors.

Dixons Unity Academy serves a community which deserves the best in education, the best in community anchoring, and the best in impactful positive innovation. Dixons Unity is firmly on a positive trajectory, and we are now seeking the right leader to harness the opportunities of our trust to deliver for the students of this school.

At Dixons, We are committed to providing unparalleled support for our team so that we can add value in our roles, free from bureaucracy and afforded the best training to grow professionally. Our colleagues are proud to work here and do amazing and meaningful work. We are proud that in our trust-wide surveys we have an upwards trend in colleagues reporting that they feel confident being part of Dixons is beneficial – well above the national benchmark.

As a team, we work to live up to our highest values and ideals, knowing that we're not always going to achieve them perfectly, but working to get better every day, rooted in sincere, kindness-centred candour. Ultimately, I want Dixons to be the employer of choice for our sector and as we expand – we will be educating almost 20,000 students by the end of this academic year. We are excited to welcome new talent into Team Dixons to be part of this growth.

We know that if we can achieve work-life harmony and high levels of engagement for our people, then we can continue to transform educational outcomes for children in the North of England, who are most adversely affected by social and educational disadvantage. I hope you find this candidate pack informative and useful in finding out a bit more about our trust, our culture and the role of principal at Dixons Unity Academy. More information about our talent strategy and our trust can be found on our careers website: [join.dixonsat.com](https://join.dixonsat.com).

Luke Sparkes

School and college trust leader



# ABOUT DIXONS ACADEMIES TRUST

Dixons Academies Trust is a well-established trust of 16 schools and one college, serving the communities of Bradford, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester. Currently, we are formed of 11 secondary academies, three primaries, two all-through academies and a standalone sixth form, and

we are growing – set to welcome four more schools in Manchester in the spring. We ensure that Dixons students' aspirations are kept on track: ambitious and bold. Our collective ambition brings about success.

# ABOUT DIXONS UNITY ACADEMY

Dixons Unity Academy a school where every child can succeed.

Our team are committed to providing an exceptional education for every student, regardless of background or starting point. Our students are encouraged to aim high, not just academically, but in character, confidence, and contribution.

Dixons Unity Academy is a school built on strong values, where every student is known, supported, and inspired. From our warm and inclusive atmosphere to the ambition we hold for every learner, Dixons Unity Academy is more than a school, it's a community.

Dixons Unity Academy, located in Leeds, joined Dixons in 2018, and opened the Unity Community hub in 2023. Dixons Unity has transformed in recent years, seeing significant improvements in outcomes for students, in attendance, in engagement with the community we serve and in staff wellbeing. The next step in our transformation is good to great.

We are seeking a leader who will commit to our school, our community and our trust and accelerate Dixons Unity Academy to the school of choice for local families, supporting students to achieve and go on to university or a real alternative.



# FOUR CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Every day, we ask ourselves four critical questions to ensure clarity and focus. These, and their answers, are below.

## Why do we exist?

To challenge educational and social disadvantage in the North.

## How do we behave?

As a highly professional team, together:

We work hard on the things that matter, with humility.

We are good and kind.

We are motivated by mastery, autonomy and purpose.

## What do we do?

Within our communities, we work together to establish joyful, rigorous, high performing schools and colleges which maximise attainment, value diversity, develop character and build cultural capital.

## How will we succeed?

We have three strategic anchors:

Talent first: people, more than strategy, create value - we all belong and grow together.

Academic rigour: with powerful knowledge, our students shape their own future.

Aligned autonomy: finding the optimal balance between consistency and self-determination.

### Talent first

Talent is crucial to our success.

And we believe there are three critical moves to unleash talent:

- Our colleagues must be in roles where they can create significant value.
- We seek to create a low bureaucracy, high impact organisation
- Our team must be afforded the training and opportunities to expand their skills.

### Academic rigour

We believe all children are entitled to the powerful knowledge which maximises life chances. Children need powerful knowledge to understand and interpret the world. Without it they remain dependent upon those who have it. Our curriculum is designed to be remembered, and is led by, collaborated on, and delivered by high-quality subject specialists. Our schools and colleges serve diverse communities, and we believe the curriculum should embrace and value the most powerful knowledge from a variety of cultures and traditions.

At Dixons, we believe in preparing students thoroughly both for national assessment and for further study.

### Aligned autonomy

Our trust seeks the optimal balance between consistency and self-determination. We are aligned because we share the same mission and values, and because all Dixons students and staff should benefit from our best collective practice. But autonomy is also important because leadership and personal accountability are founded on ownership and self-direction, and because standardisation fails to respond to changing needs and fails to adapt to a changing environment.

# PUTTING TALENT FIRST

Culture may eat strategy for breakfast; talent, however, is king!

We know that talent is everything at Dixons. That's why we are focused on providing our staff with the support and training needed to develop in their roles. Here are some of the ways we are doing this:

## Regular coaching

Every member of staff receives regular coaching at Dixons. We have jettisoned appraisals and instead, we want every staff member to have conversations about performance as an organic part of their work. All staff receive personalised coaching at least once every four weeks.

## Decoupling pay and progression

Pay progression at Dixons is automatic and not specifically linked to performance. Staff will be automatically eligible for pay progression.

## Centre for Growth

We are fortunate to have a dedicated team of specialists leading our professional development offering. Our Centre for Growth leads on professional development for staff across our entire trust. We work hard to ensure that development opportunities are relevant, supportive and evidence-informed. Offers include leadership programmes, mindfulness training, and networks including Women in Education.

## Flexibility

We are committed to self-determination. Because of this, our staff are given the freedom and autonomy to innovate and shape their roles, making a real difference to the development of their functions.

Many of our roles in business services are hybrid or remote (work from home), with the option to work from our central Bradford office or a school near home.

## Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

For us, diversity and equality of opportunity is integral to our purpose and mission. Inclusion is paramount: we want all our staff to feel a sense of purpose and belonging. Our equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) strategy is designed to complement our work around professional growth. We have made some good progress, but we recognise there is lots to do. Because this work is so important to us, we have elevated our ED&I strategy into our 2 – 5 year plan.

## Dixons OpenSource

We know that culture is one of the most important things employees value in a workplace; that's why we place huge emphasis on cultivating a culture that is inclusive and fair. Dixons OpenSource is our free content platform which codifies our culture into bitesize video content. This content is intended to support sharing of knowledge across our trust, so all of our staff have access to everything we do and can learn from and support each other. If you want to find out more about what makes Dixons stand out, we would encourage you to subscribe to our Dixons OpenSource YouTube channel.



# STAFF BENEFITS



**PAY**

We at least match and often exceed national pay and conditions within the education sector. Our sick pay, maternity and paternity pay meet or exceed national standards.



**FLEXIBLE WORKING**

Term-time only, part-time, hybrid working for central roles where this works operationally and other flexible working patterns are available for a significant proportion of roles.



**PENSION SCHEME**

All associate employees are auto-enrolled into the defined benefit Local Government Pension Scheme operated by the West Yorkshire Pension Fund. This scheme includes a very generous employer contribution. You can opt out of the scheme at any time.

All teaching staff are auto-enrolled into the Teachers Pension scheme. You can opt out of the scheme at any time.



**EMPLOYEE COUNSELLING SERVICE**

Our Employee Assistance Programme provides access to free telephone and face-to-face counselling as well as a range of specialist information and wellbeing services.



**HOME AND TECHNOLOGY**

Similarly, you can spread the cost of the latest home and technology products through salary sacrifice.



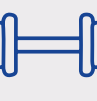
**MY DISCOUNTS**

We offer exclusive discounts at several outlets nationwide including Currys, Morrisons and Costa Coffee with special deals at key times of the year such as Christmas.



**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**

Cost shouldn't be a barrier to sound emotional, physical or financial health; that's why we've partnered with Simplyhealth to ensure all our employees have access to an employee assistance program and cash health plan.



**MY GYM DISCOUNTS**

We offer discounts of up to 25% across 3700 gym and leisure providers across the UK. Discounts are available for employees and their partners.

WE ARE A  
VALUES-DRIVEN  
ORGANISATION,  
AND OUR  
ACADEMIES ARE  
COMMUNITIES  
WITH A STRONG  
SENSE OF MORAL  
PURPOSE

# JOB DESCRIPTION

## Purpose

To challenge educational and social disadvantage in the North.

## Duties and Responsibilities

### Values driven

- Live the mission, values and drivers every day.
- Behave with integrity and treat people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect to create and maintain a healthy academy culture.
- Build an organisation which reflects the academy’s values and enables the systems and processes to work effectively in line with legal requirements.
- Build an academy culture and curriculum that values the richness and diversity of the local community.
- Ensure that strategic planning takes account of the diversity, values and experience of the academy and the community.
- Ensure that systems and processes are well considered, efficient and fit for purpose in order to uphold transparency, integrity and probity.
- Safeguard and protect all children in collaboration with other agencies, as appropriate.

### Empowered to lead

- Work with the school and college trust leaders and trustees and other key stakeholders to ensure the academy mission is clearly articulated, shared and understood by all.
- Translate the mission into agreed objectives and operational plans which will promote and sustain academy improvement.
- Produce and implement clear, evidence-informed improvement plans and policies for the development of the academy.
- Work with the school and college trust leaders and trustees (providing information, objective advice and support) to enable it to meet its responsibilities.
- Develop and present a coherent, understandable and accurate account of the academy’s performance to a range of audiences, including staff, governors and parents.
- Within an autonomous culture, ensure that policies and practices take account of national and trust context and controls.
- Deploy the academy’s financial and human resources efficiently to achieve the academy’s educational goals and priorities.
- Manage and organise the academy environment effectively to ensure that it meets the needs of the curriculum and health and safety regulations.

### High expectations

- Cultivate a positive academy culture and climate that promotes high autonomy, high challenge and high accountability.
- Maintain a common culture which enables everyone to work collaboratively, share knowledge and understanding, celebrate success and accept responsibility for outcomes.
- Demonstrate and articulate high expectations and set stretching targets for the whole academy community.
- Ensure a consistent and continuous academy-wide focus on students’ achievement where all teachers take responsibility for using data and benchmarks to monitor progress in every child’s learning.
- Challenge underperformance at all levels with effective corrective action.
- Implement strategies that secure high standards of behaviour and

attendance.

### Choice and commitment

- Build a collaborative learning culture within the academy and actively engage with other Dixons academies to build effective learning communities.
- Acknowledge the responsibilities and celebrate the achievements of individuals and teams.
- Manage own workload and that of others to allow an appropriate work / life balance.
- Ensure a culture and ethos of challenge and support where all students can achieve success and become engaged in their own learning.
- Create and maintain an effective three-way partnership with students, parents and carers to support and improve students’ achievement and personal development.

### Highly professionalised staff

- Recruit, retain and deploy staff appropriately to achieve the mission and goals of the academy.
- Develop and maintain effective strategies and procedures for staff induction and continuous professional development.
- Ensure individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, understood and agreed and are subject to rigorous review and evaluation.
- Ensure effective planning, allocation, support and evaluation of work undertaken by teams and individuals in order to ensure clear delegation of tasks and devolution of responsibilities.
- Regularly review own practice and set personal targets, taking responsibility for own personal development.

### Relentless focus on learning

- Ensure that a passion for learning is at the centre of strategic planning and resource management.
- Determine, organise and implement a diverse, flexible curriculum and implement an effective assessment framework.
- Monitor, evaluate and review classroom practice and promote improvement strategies.
- Ensure that the range, quality and use of all available resources improve the quality of education for all students and provide value for money.
- Ensure a range of real-world learning experiences.
- Take a strategic role in the development of new and emerging technologies to enhance and extend the learning experience of students.

**The principal is accountable to the trustees (via a local governing body) and the school and college trust leaders.**

**This job description is not necessarily a comprehensive definition of the post. It will be reviewed annually.**



# PERSON SPECIFICATION

## Essential Criteria

- Qualified Teacher Status
- Good honours degree
- Values driven
- Strong teaching ability backed up by good and outstanding outcomes
- Minimum three years' senior leadership experience with significant impact
- Leading culture
- Robust self-evaluation, strategic thinking and improvement planning
- Leading significant whole-school change successfully
- Engaging positively with different stakeholders
- High expectations which motivate and challenge students and staff
- Build a cohesive team, create clarity, over-communicate clarity and reinforce clarity
- Strong analytical and strategic thinking skills
- Simplify complex issues
- Thorough knowledge and understanding of current curriculum developments and how students learn
- Highly visible and sweat the small stuff
- Ensure a culture and structure for managing behaviour which enables all students to achieve
- Promote a sense of urgency and rigour
- Powerful incremental coaching
- Strong impact on teams, particularly in relation to improving learning
- Hold others to account for high standards and address underperformance
- Empower colleagues so they experience real, significant personal growth
- Develop staff to become better leaders
- Current educational policy
- Budgetary planning
- Governance
- Sensitively resolve conflict
- Strong self-awareness
- Commitment to safeguarding
- Strong moral purpose and drive for improvement
- Mission-aligned
- Humble and kind
- Motivated, enthusiastic and flexible
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Good sense of humour
- Desire to develop yourself
- Ability to give, receive and act on feedback
- Strong attention to detail
- Ability to work under pressure
- Commitment to the full life of the academy

## Desirable Criteria

- Relevant CPD e.g. NPQH
- Post-graduate study
- Working in an inner-city area of high deprivation
- Working in a high-performing school
- Senior leadership in an academy
- Senior leadership in more than one school
- Significant impact as a principal
- Financial planning and control
- Working with local governors
- Understanding of what makes a Dixons academy different and successful
- Contextual awareness and political astuteness
- Develop, maintain and use an effective network of contacts
- HR and operations

WE ARE  
AMBITIOUS  
AND MAKE  
NO EXCUSES





[dixonsat.com](http://dixonsat.com)  
[joindixonsat.com](http://joindixonsat.com)