



Unity Education Trust

# STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017 -2020

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# FOREWORD

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to read about our vision for Unity Education Trust Trust. I am delighted to present the first Strategic Development Plan for the Trust which sets out our priorities and objectives for the next 3 years. This document sets out how we will plan, guide support and improve our academies (and schools that are yet to join) across our diverse geographical area that we operate, ensuring there is a clear focus on continuing to improve leadership & governance, teaching & learning and raising standards.

Unity's Board is determined to see a high performing Multi Academy Trust that delivers the very best educational experience for pupils aged 3-19. The changing educational landscape continues at a fast pace with more schools converting to academies.

The overarching aim for the Trust is to create academies that provide an environment which is welcoming, caring, calm, disciplined and purposeful and through the 'Unity Way', will stretch our young people academically, support them pastorally and help them develop socially.

As a Board, our responsibility is for the strategic direction of the Trust. We see collaboration as the key to building a strong and confident Trust. Our structures and processes will continue to evolve to support and develop the Trust to benefit all our students and staff.

We believe in allowing each Academy to retain its own distinct identity, supporting all with efficient and effective Central Services and expertise. All our Academies are focused on School Improvement Practices sharing best practice and developing deep partnerships that will embed consistent levels of student outcomes and ensure positive progress.

We believe passionately that education, at every stage of the student journey, is about the development and nurture of the whole child. The environment of the Trust is designed to encourage creativity, physical excellence and academic achievement so that they are ready to take their place in the world and bring their contribution to society.

Should you require any further information or wish to arrange a visit to Unity Education Trust our contact details are available on the website.

# INTRODUCTION

I am very pleased to introduce the Unity Education Trust Strategic Development Plan covering the period 2017 – 2020. This plan sets out our 3 year strategic objectives including our priorities for 2017 – 2018.

Unity Education Trust (UET) is a Multi-Academy Trust built on developing like-minded schools to outstanding through collaborative working and support that develops a unity of purpose in all that we do.

That support takes many forms. Schools are first and foremost for education, so it is right that at the heart of what we do is a focus on school improvement, staff development, and enabling our young people to excel. We support schools in meeting the challenges of rising expectations through mutually supportive intervention and training. Secondly, the Trust takes responsibility for central financial and resource management, so that schools can concentrate on what matters: the education of young people.

Unity is supported by a strong Trust Board who provide effective support and the challenge required to ensure that we strive for excellence and provide strong strategic partnerships to improve quality, share best practice, operate effectively and efficiently. We have a cost effective organisation and a business model that delivers efficiency, so that all our students benefit from enhanced resources created by effective economies of scale. It's often said that children get one chance of education. Our role at RDAT is to ensure that our academies provide the highest standards to enable this. I look forward to working with you to deliver this plan.

Mr Glyn Hambling BEd (Hons) MSc. NPQH  
Chief Executive Officer.

# OUR VISION, ETHOS AND UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

## Vision Statement

- Unity Education Trust (UET) is a Multi-Academy Trust built on developing like-minded schools to outstanding through collaborative working that develops a unity of purpose in all that we do.
- The Trust sets high expectations in every aspect of our work, providing pupils with the best opportunities through outstanding teaching, the development of 21st century facilities, inspirational leadership and a growth mind-set approach.
- We will ensure that each of our academies maintains their unique identities at the heart of their communities as well as engaging with all partners and stakeholders and other high performing educational organisations.

## Ethos

- An unrelenting belief and focus that all students can achieve high standards, whatever their background and life experiences when given a positive climate of support, challenge and the development of Growth Mind-set through outstanding teaching.
- Committed to the notion of 'raising aspirations to fulfil potential' ensuring our learners are encouraged to build confidence, expand their leadership qualities and embrace British values that enable all to thrive in an ever-changing society.
- All members of our UET are valued for their individuality and nurtured to ensure high levels of success through creative approaches which develop people with a passion for learning, ability to be adaptable and supportive of all within our community.

## Underlying Principles

UET believes in setting high aspirations for all its learners and that all children, regardless of their background, ability or life experiences, can achieve high standards and flourish in an outstanding education setting that cares for all.

- UET academies ensure a growth mind-set for all that does not place limitations on any of its learners and, as a result, learners' aspirations are high and strongly self-motivated.
- UET academies operate on the principle 'Unity of Purpose' in all that they do, supporting each other.
- UET is a multi-academy trust which recognises that successful academies are built upon the key foundations of:
  - excellent leadership and high expectations, standards and professional effectiveness;
  - an unrelenting focus on raising aspirations and the focus on progress and improvement for all;
  - high standards of behaviour, positive environments and work ethic - "The Unity Way"
  - innovative teaching and learning that is led by active teacher practitioners and researchers and that engages all learners;
  - precise and focussed improvement planning that is designed to develop all our academies incorporating cutting-edge developments and succession planning;
  - promoting a positive work life balance for all.
- UET core education, business, operational and Governor services have been designed to effectively challenge and support leadership and management within our academies.
- UET believes in maintaining local community schools and providing children and their families in those communities with access to those schools.
- UET is not a selective trust and we follow the Local Authority admissions criteria.
- UET will set up clear lines of support for our academy LGB's in terms of accountability, transparency and compliancy.
- UET is an employer of excellence, providing high level continued professional development combined with detailed career development opportunities where all feel valued.

# STRATEGIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

## Our Core Offer

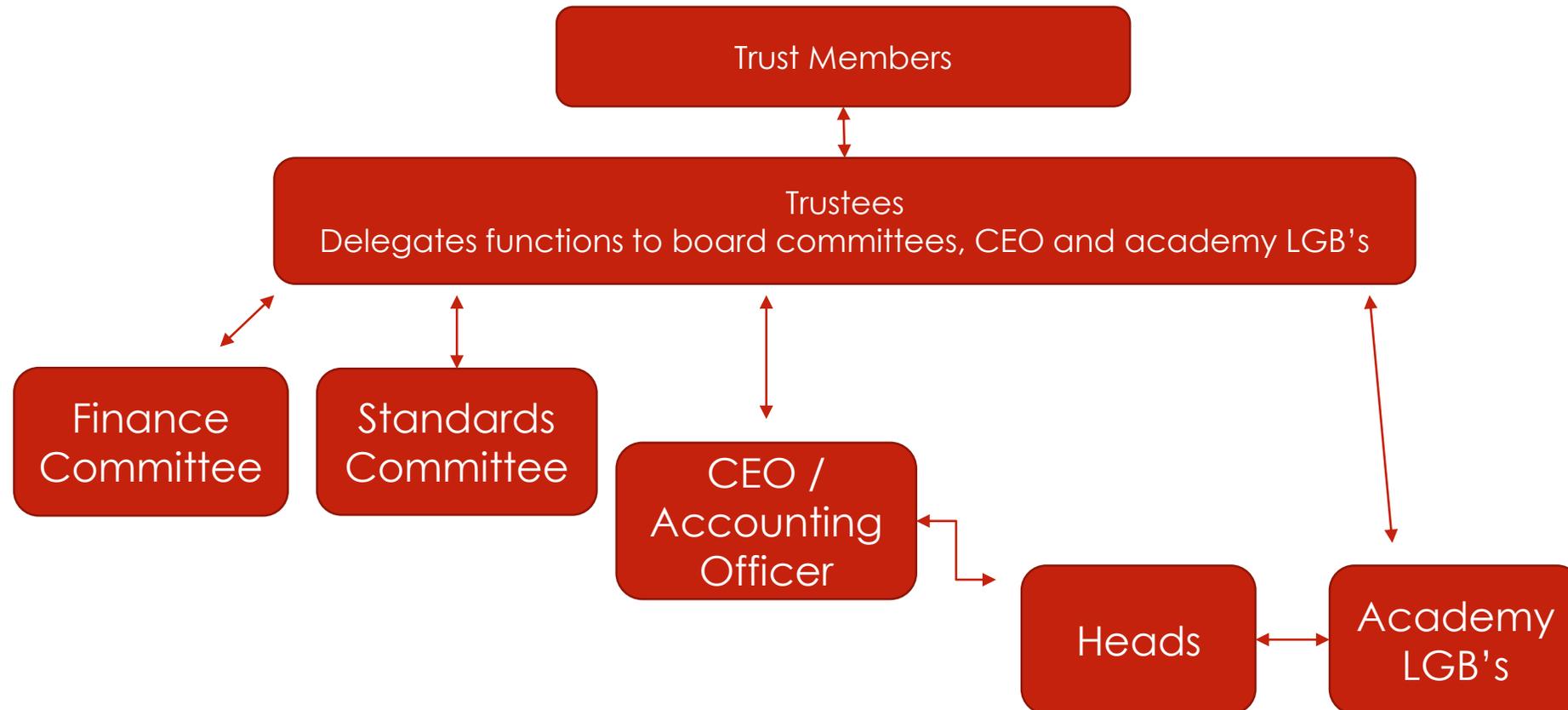
The core offer is built around individual needs of UET academies by:

- enabling leaders and all other academy staff to raise standards of achievement and attainment by ensuring outstanding practices;
- ensuring that the academies of UET achieve outstanding value for money;
- building capacity across all aspects of education, business and operational activity;
- ensuring we minimise bureaucracy to enable all to achieve an unrelenting focus of supporting and achieving the best for our learners;
- recruiting and retaining excellent staff by ensuring there are career opportunities within the Trust and effective and comprehensive continued professional development as our founding principles.

We will achieve this by deploying a central team of outstanding practitioners who will work with every academy to develop and confidently share consistent best practice, providing quality assured and value for money central services.

# LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

- As a charitable Trust, our Board ensure that they comply with charity and company law requirements.
- UET has two core functions, that is to set the strategic direction of the organisation and ensure financial probity.
- As a Multi Academy Trust, UET is responsible for all of the Academies in the Trust. We do this by delegating functions to the Local Governing Body of each Academy through a Scheme of Delegation.



# LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

## Essential features of Governance

UET has an expectation that governance at all levels will be:

- outward facing rather than internally preoccupied
- encouraging of equality and diversity
- consistent in leadership
- collaborative in approaches to decision-making and sharing practice
- proactive in its approach to strategic leadership in an ever-changing educational landscape rather than simply reacting to national developments and initiatives.

## Overall Level of Education Delegation

UET believes that best results will be achieved when each Academy's Local Governing Body receives a level of responsibility and autonomy appropriate to its specific circumstances.

Where the Academy is in an Ofsted category there will be close supervision of the Academy by UET through its Officers and Central Team. Where an Academy is Good or Outstanding minimal day-to-day supervision by UET is needed and the Local Governing Body will operate with maximum autonomy.

- The level of authority to each academy is in line with one of the following three categories:
- Consultative – UET provides advice, support and monitors the process
- Collaborative – collaborative activity between UET and the individual academy, but UET approval required through the CEO.
- None – UET Board of Trustees, Chief Executive Officer and senior officers steer, oversee and approve the improvement focus and process

# EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT SERVICES

To provide flexible active support for raising standards in:

- Teaching & learning
- Leadership development at all levels – to include leadership quality assurance
- English and Literacy
- Mathematics and numeracy
- ICT / computing
- Science and humanities
- Creative arts and performance

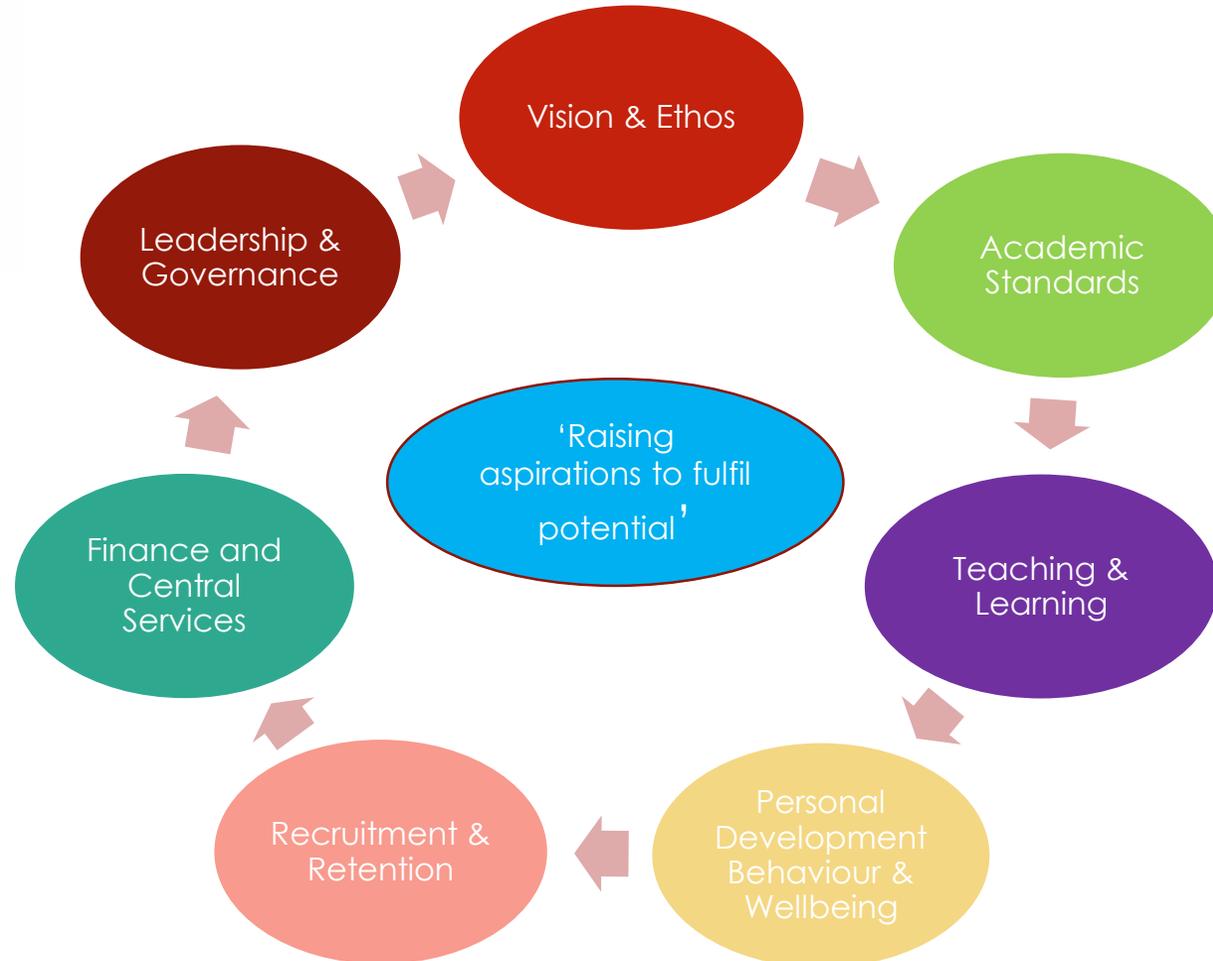
Providing:

- Data support (ensuring understanding, interpreting and applying performance data by all staff)
- Effective learning support and Special Educational Needs services
- Effective behaviour support and centre
- Robust and compliant safeguarding support
- Effective and responsive ICT services to enhance learning
- A core school improvement team.
- Strategic central finance to include, policy compliancy, payroll and personnel services

# STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT



Unity Education Trust



# OUR THREE YEAR OBJECTIVES

As a Multi Academy Trust we have clear strategic aims built on our vision and ethos. Our three year Strategic Development Plan sets out the following objectives to ensure that as a Trust, the public, parents and stakeholders have confidence in our approach. We aim to deliver the best in:

## **Leadership & Governance:**

- To ensure that the Board of Trustees of Unity acts on behalf of its moral and legal owners in the best interests of the Trust, governing lawfully in accordance with its Articles of Association and having governance arrangements that demonstrate legitimate and visionary leadership, clarity of governing and managerial relationships, effective oversight, adequate support structures for sustainability and to achieve the greatest possible economies.

## **Standards / School Improvement:**

- All primary Academies aspire to be at or above the national average for expected progress in Reading, Writing and Mathematics and a Key Stage 2 value added score in the top 25% of primary schools nationally.
- All secondary Academies aspire to attain at, or above, the national average for students attainment in English and Maths and a Progress score in the top 25% of secondary schools nationally.
- The gap between Pupil Premium and Non-Pupil Premium children (on the above two measures) to be below the national average.

# OUR THREE YEAR OBJECTIVES

## **Teaching & Learning & Continued Professional Development:**

- To implement a CPD programme for our academies to ensure that our staff have the right skills to further raise standards deliver good teaching and learning and disseminate good practice to ensure the rapid improvement

## **Quality Assurance:**

- To ensure that there is a rigorous and robust programme of Quality Assurance that helps to support teachers, build expertise and capacity and raise standards in our academies to deliver positive outcomes for pupils.
- Integrated Support & Shared Services:
- To ensure that the Trust has business arrangements that are efficient and effective and enables it to deliver on its commitments to grow and prosper and deliver value for money across all of our operations. Delivering best practice, minimisation of risk and for management of resources to be concentrated to the front line of our academies.

# OUR ONE YEAR PRIORITIES

Priority 2017 - 18	What will we do	Lead	Timescale	What will success look like	Which 3 year objective will this meet
Enhancing the governance of the UET Board	Establish Schemes of Delegation and agree a 3 year Plan for the period 2017 – 2020 to include one year progress measures.	CEO / Chair	Summer 2017 / Autumn 2017	The Board of directors are supported ensuring that a framework is established and maintained for optimising the employment of all the resources available to the Trust to enable it to meet its business and financial objectives	Leadership & Governance  Quality Assurance
	Board meets six times per year	Chair			
	Board implements and resources sub committees:	Trustees	On going		
	Finance & Audit Committee Standards Committee	Chair/CEO	November 14 November 14	The UET Board fully understands the management of risk to the Trust and has in place mitigating actions to tolerate and control such risks	
	Board appraisal is implemented	Chair	February 15 April 15	UET Board is continually refreshed with the right skill set to drive forward the organisation	
	Skills gaps analysed and recruitment process agreed	Chair/CEO			

# OUR ONE YEAR PRIORITIES

Priority 2017—18	What will we do	Lead	Timescale	What will success look like	Which 3 year objective will this meet
Improving our Local Governing Bodies to ensure high performing academies	Agree a scheme of delegation to ensure that the Governing body is able to function & supports and challenges the Head Teacher to deliver outstanding education.	Chair/CEO	Reviewed each year and prior to any conversion	Local Governing Bodies have the right balance of skills and experience along with clear plans & processes in place to effectively carry out their role	Leadership & Governance
	Broker support from approved organisations such as the NCSL, NGA to provide on-going training and support, in particular to the Chair and new members of the LGB.	CEO / Standards Comm.	Autumn term 2017	Highly skilled LGB's that are able to discharge all duties confidently.	Standards & School Improvement.
	Ensure that Local Governing Bodies provide regular reports to the UET Board on the performance of the academy.	CEO / Chair of Trustees COG	Termly	LGB's take greater ownership of accountability are more open and transparent acknowledging individual and collective accountability to the UET Board.	Teaching & Learning Continued Professional Development
	CEO & UET Board Members attend at least one LGB per academy and that minutes of meetings are distributed to the UET Board	UET Board of Trustees	Termly with an annual review and network meeting	LGB's provide first level scrutiny and challenge on behalf of Trust Directors. Quality assurance is robust and informative.	

# OUR ONE YEAR PRIORITIES

Priority 2017—18	What will we do	Lead	Timescale	What will success look like	Which 3 year objective will this meet
Standards & School improvement	Implement the UET Academy Improvement Strategy Assign the School Improvement Partner to work with each academy.	CEO	September 17	All academies will be judged good or outstanding by both Ofsted and by UET external verification within 2 years.	Standards & School Improvement
	Each academy prior to joining the Trust will undergo a school performance review to assess the current position of Teaching & Learning and performance against pupil progress.	CEO	September 17 Prior to any new conversion	All teaching within our academies will be good or better.  Progress and attainment in our academies will not only exceed floor targets but will aspire to be comparable with the very best for pupil progress and outcomes.	Teaching & Learning Continued Professional Development
	Each academy produces a robust self-evaluation procedure to ensure that judgements of school performance are accurate and highlight strengths and development needs.	HT/CEO COG	September 17 and then half term reviews	Our academies will demonstrate good leadership, including governance and this inspirational leadership will be shared across academies	Leadership & Governance Governance
	Undertake an audit of leadership skills and expertise within each academy and across the academy group to identify strengths and development areas.	CEO UET Standards Comm.	Autumn Term and when required.	Our academies will be able to accurately self-evaluate and will have a culture of continued improvement and high aspiration  High quality professional development of staff will mean that our academies will attract and retain the very best teachers	Quality Assurance

# OUR ONE YEAR PRIORITIES

Priority 2017—18	What will we do	Lead	Timescale	What will success look like	Which 3 year objective will this meet
Financial management business efficiencies & effectiveness	Implement a framework of financial planning, treasury management, systems to enable the proper management of the financial resources within the organisation.	CE / CFO / Trustees Finance Comms	March 17 prior to full conversion.  Reviewed Autumn 17.	Business management structures, systems and ways of working enable trust resources (whether finance, staff, buildings, systems or information) are primarily directed to supporting the learner and not back offices or administrative activities.	Leadership & Governance  Quality Assurance.
	Set a realistic service support grant contribution for each academy.	UET Board	Prior to each conversion.	All commissioned services whether from third parties or the Trust staff have added value over time to the learner and to the business ensuring they are effective, efficient and avoid duplication and unnecessary bureaucracy.	
	Implement PS Financials for the MAT & Schools Specify & procure School Improvement services / Services for schools in & outside of the MAT	CEO / CFO/ Head of Servcies	September 17		
	We will consolidate each academy's accounts and support academy HT / Finance officers to ensure they comply with UET & DfE finance regulations	CFO / CEO / Finance Comms	On going As per DfE cycle		

# DEVELOPING & GROWING UNITY

## Statement of Growth

In a world of ongoing change, bringing together leaders to shape and drive the educational ambition and operational management of a group of schools provides a powerful way to chart a successful path into the future. Unity Education Trust is a small locally-based MAT working with primary and secondary schools.

The Trust is committed to working with like-minded organisations and our plans for growth whilst initially working with 'Outstanding' and 'Good Schools' will also look to continue to develop our capacity support those schools which require support to improve outcomes for learners. The Trust will build on existing partnerships, which have been underpinned by trust and mutual respect, a shared ethos and a history of being rooted in the community.

The Trust model for recruitment and growth will be carefully planned and operate on local partnerships and 'Hub School' provision. Any new school wishing to join the Trust will be carefully scrutinised through a documented due diligence process involving a review of finance, achievement, staffing, health & safety and facilities.

With any potential growth the Trust is clear that there will always be sufficient infrastructure dedicated to providing school improvement and back office support. With growth we will look to establish hub schools to ensure quality local school-to-school support and sustained leadership capacity and school improvement. Trustees will monitor progress and regularly review what needs to happen to support schools further.

Unity Education Trust is committed to developing mutually beneficial partnerships with schools, businesses and other Multi Academy Trusts.

# JOINING UNITY EDUCATION TRUST

## **Joining a forward looking Multi Academy Trust**

A key aim of Unity is to have high performing schools as part of our family of academies. We accept that each school will be at a different starting point in their journey of improvement and we will work collaboratively to achieve our objective.

Our improvement approach is for schools to support schools and to achieve this we aim to attract Good or Outstanding schools into our Trust. Our engagement of these schools will focus on a two core approach:

1. Communicating the benefits of being part of Unity Education Trust
2. Proactive engagement with the Trust Board
  - A flexible scheme of delegation for their LGB to continue to lead and manage the school
  - A chance to collaboratively lead our school improvement by offering school to school support
  - CPD / Health Care Plans for all staff
  - An opportunity for a member of the LGB to join the main Trust Board
  - Effective central services provision to support leadership and governance
  - Stability in a fast changing educational landscape
  - □ Access to shared services & economies of scale

# CONTACT DETAILS

Chair of Trustees: Mr Alan Jones

Vice Chair of Trustees: Mrs Nicola Youles

Chief Executive Officer: Mr Glyn Hambling

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