



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 (UET). I am delighted to present the first Strategic Development Plan for the Trust which sets out our priorities and objectives for 2017-2020. This document describes how we will plan, guide, support and improve our academies in mid-Norfolk (and schools that are yet to join), ensuring there is a clear focus on continuing to improve leadership & governance, teaching & learning and raising standards.

UET's Board of Trustees is determined to be a high performing Multi Academy Trust that delivers the very best educational experience for pupils aged 3-19. 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', to 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 our academies and develop UET to benefit all our students and staff. We are realistic about what can be achieved in the current financial climate but what we do, we intend to do well.

We believe in allowing each academy to retain its own distinct identity, firmly rooted in its local community and supported by efficient and effective central services and expertise. All our academies are focused on school improvement, 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 person. Our Trust is committed to encouraging creativity, confidence and academic achievement so that our students 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.

Mr Alan Jones - Chair of Trustees

# INTRODUCTION

I am very pleased to introduce the Unity Education Trust Strategic Development Plan. This is the second edition of our plan updated following a review by the Trustees at the end of our first full year (2017-8). Our vision, guiding principles and three-year objectives remain unchanged. The one-year priorities for 2017-8 listed in the first edition of the plan focused on the structures and processes that all new Multi Academy Trusts need to put in place. The one-year priorities for 2018-9 in this edition build on what we have achieved so far in order to further strengthen UET and all its schools in the year ahead.

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.

Our 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. We also take 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 Board of Trustees 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 and operate efficiently. We have a cost effective organisation and a business model that delivers efficiency, so that all our students benefit from enhanced resources enabled by economies of scale. It's often said that children get one chance of education. Our role at UET is to ensure that the education provided by our academies is of the highest standard.

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 and an ability to be adaptable and supportive of all within our community.

## Underlying Principles

- UET sets high aspirations for all its learners. We believe 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 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 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 core education, business, operational and Governor services have been designed to challenge and support leadership and management within our academies.
- UET believes in maintaining strong 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 has clear lines of delegation and support for our academy local governing bodies 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

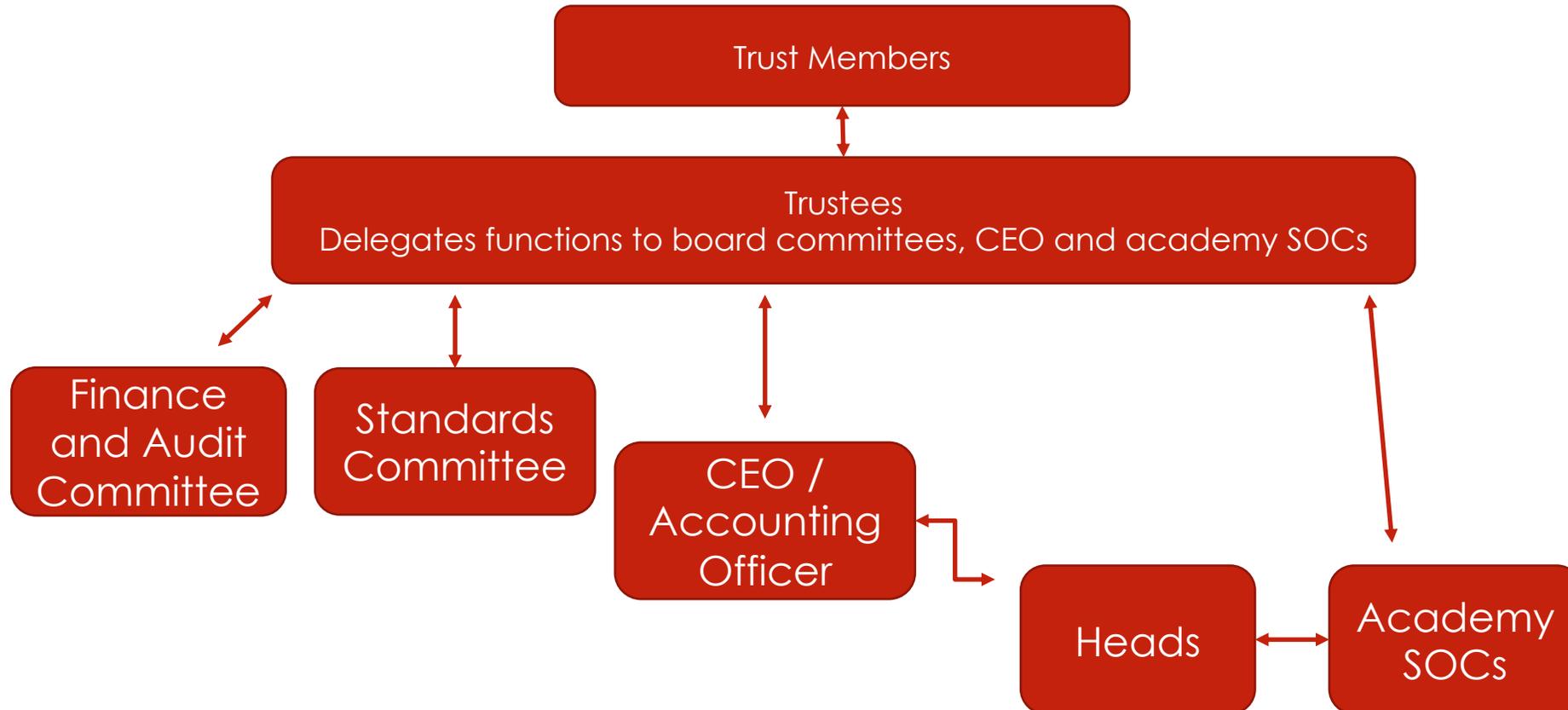
The core offer is built around individual needs of UET academies by:

- 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 allow an unrelenting focus on 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.

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, and provide quality-assured and value-for-money central services.

# LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

- As a charitable Trust, our Board members ensure that they comply with charity and company law requirements.
- The Board of UET has two core functions: to set the strategic direction of the organisation and to ensure financial probity.
- As a Multi Academy Trust, the Board of UET is responsible for all of the academies in the Trust. We do this by delegating functions to the School Oversight Committee (SOC) 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

The Board believes that best results will be achieved when each academy's School Oversight Committee receives a level of responsibility and autonomy appropriate to its specific circumstances.

Where the academy is in an Ofsted category, or judged by our own review processes to require improvement in some areas, 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 School Oversight Committee 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

## **UET gives flexible and 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

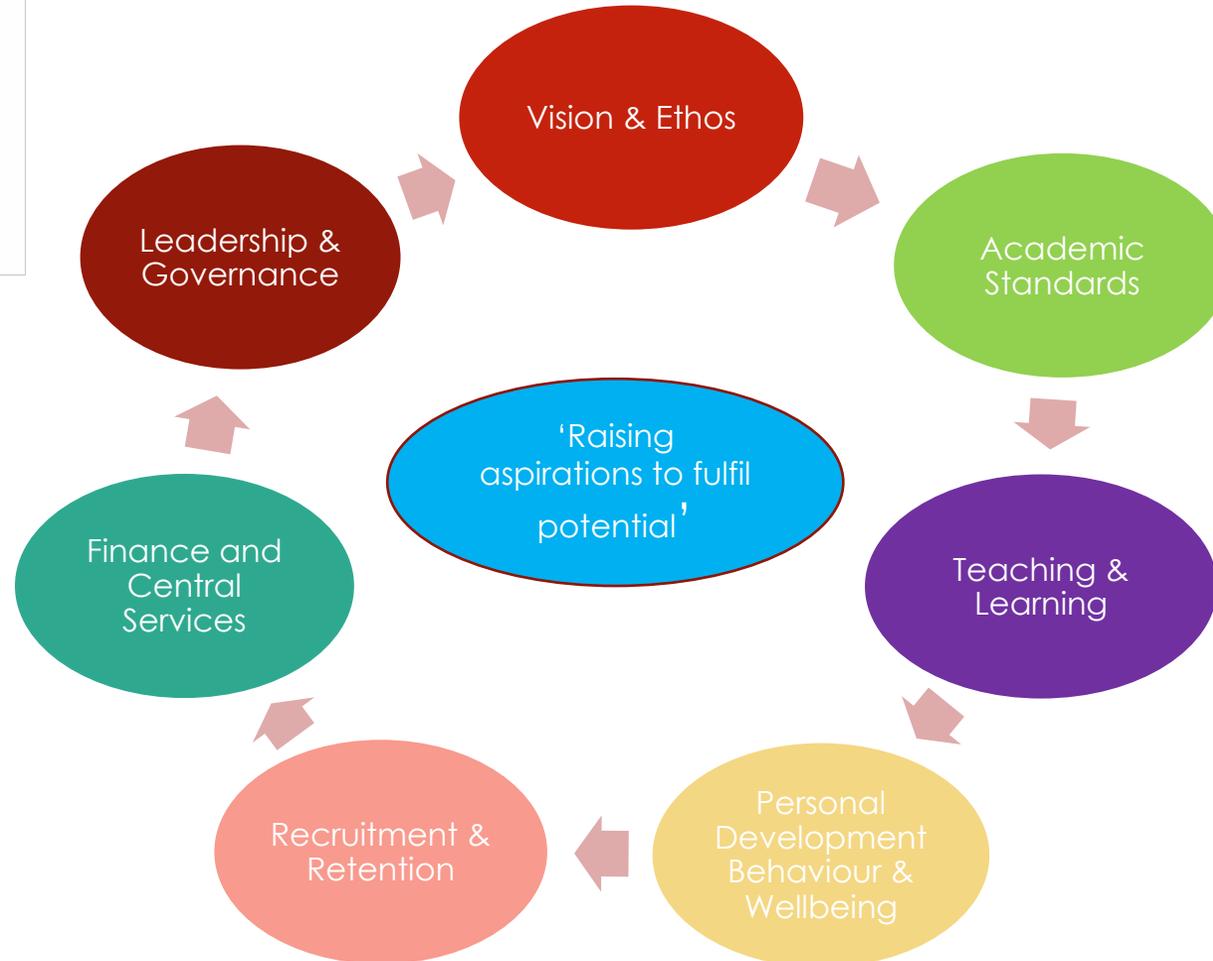
## **By providing:**

- Data support (ensuring understanding, interpreting and applying performance data by all staff)
- Effective learning support and Special Educational Needs services
- Effective behaviour support
- Robust and compliant safeguarding support
- Effective and responsive ICT services to enhance learning
- A core school improvement team
- Finance and other central services including 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 has the following objectives to ensure that, parents and all other stakeholders can have confidence in our approach. We aim to deliver the best in:

## **Leadership & Governance:**

- To ensure that the Board of Trustees of UET acts 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 delivery of 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 be 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.
- All academies aspire to ensure that the gap between Pupil Premium and Non-Pupil Premium children (on the above two measures) is smaller than the national average.

# OUR THREE YEAR OBJECTIVES

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

- To implement a CPD programme for our academies that ensures our staff have the right skills to further raise standards, deliver good teaching and learning, and disseminate good practice to ensure 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.
- To operate integrated support & shared services:
- To ensure that the Trust has business arrangements that are efficient and effective, and enable it to deliver on its commitments to grow and prosper. Also, to deliver value-for-money and minimise risk across all of our operations thereby enabling resources to be concentrated to the front line of our academies.

# OUR ONE YEAR PRIORITIES

Priority 2018 - 19	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	<p>Board and Trustees: implement annual self-review</p> <p>Skills gaps analysed and active recruitment of Trustees to fill skills gaps</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Chair/Trustee</p>	<p>Summer 2019</p> <p>Autumn 2018/ Spring 2019</p>	<p>Trustees govern effectively within a framework which enables the Trust to meet its educational, business and financial objectives</p> <p>UET Board is continually refreshed with the right skill set to drive forward the organisation</p>	<p>Leadership &amp; Governance</p> <p>Quality Assurance</p>

# OUR ONE YEAR PRIORITIES

Priority 2018—19	What will we do	Lead	Timescale	What will success look like	Which 3 year objective will this meet
Improving our local governor structures to ensure high performing academies	Review scheme of delegation to ensure that local governors (School Oversight Committees) function effectively to support and challenge the Head Teacher to deliver outstanding education.	Chair/CEO	Summer/ Autumn 2018 (reviewed each year and prior to any conversion)	School Oversight Committees have the right balance of skills and experience along with clear plans & processes which focus on teaching & learning, attendance, sub-group progress, behaviour & welfare and community engagement.	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 2018	Support matched to SOC's main areas of responsibility (as set out above) and governors confident in their accountability for those areas.	Standards & School Improvement.
	Continue to improve two-way communication between Trust Board and School Oversight Committees concerning performance of the academy including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustee to attend SOC meetings to act as a communication conduit</li> <li>• SOC to provide Trust Board regular reports on its work</li> </ul>	CEO / Chair of Trustees COG	From Autumn 2018	Better understanding of the respective roles of the Trustees and of Local Governors; all working together to achieve common goals; unnecessary duplication avoided; mutual trust embedded.  SOC's provide first level scrutiny and challenge on behalf of Trustees.	Teaching & Learning  Continued Professional Development

# OUR ONE YEAR PRIORITIES

Priority 2018—19	What will we do	Lead	Timescale	What will success look like	Which 3 year objective will this meet
Standards & School improvement	Through bespoke school improvement packages we will target “next steps” for each academy’s teaching and learning development.	CEO	Autumn 2018 and termly review against milestones	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	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that judgements of school performance are accurate and highlight strengths and development needs</li> <li>inform School improvement and Development Plan priorities in attainment, progress and achievement</li> </ul>	HT/CEO COG	Autumn 2018 and half - termly reviews	Our academies will be able to self-evaluate accurately and will have a culture of continued improvement and high aspiration	Leadership & Governance Governance  Quality Assurance
	Keep under review leadership skills and expertise within each school and across UET to identify strengths and	CEO	CEO to report to Standards Committee at	High quality professional development of staff will mean that our academies will attract and retain the very best teachers	

# OUR ONE YEAR PRIORITIES

Priority 2018—19	What will we do	Lead	Timescale	What will success look like	Which 3 year objective will this meet
Financial management business efficiencies & effectiveness	Review the current framework of financial procedures and policies to ensure continued proper management of the financial resources within the Trust.	CEO/CFO Trust Finance Committee	Autumn 2018 (and annually as well as prior to each conversion)	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.  Risks accurately identified and actions taken to resolve or mitigate.  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 hours expenditure.	Leadership & Governance  Quality Assurance.
	Centralise financial and banking processes to optimum effect	CEO/CFO Trust Finance Committee	Autumn 2018/Spring 2019		
	Set a realistic service support grant contribution for each academy and financial reserves objectives for each academy and the Trust as a whole	UET Board	Annually as part of each budget round		
	Assess risks and implement effective strategies to address them	CEO/Trust Board/ Trust committees	Risk register on each agenda and full review Summer 2019		
	Specify & procure School Improvement services / Services for schools in & outside of the MAT	CEO/CFO	In line with contract/ SLA renewals		
Ensure compliance with UET and DfE	CEO				

# 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, 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 individual schools and Clusters, businesses and other Multi Academy Trusts.

# JOINING UNITY EDUCATION TRUST

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

A key aim of Unity Education Trust 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 with 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 School Oversight Committee (SOC) to continue to lead and manage the school
- A chance collaboratively to lead our school improvement by offering school-to-school support
- CPD / Health Care Plans for all staff
- An opportunity for a member of the SOC 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 & the benefits of 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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