



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECRUITMENT PACK

SEPTEMBER 2026



Welcome from the Chair of the Trust Board



On behalf of Bedfordshire Schools Trust, I would like to thank you for your interest in the post of Chief Executive Officer.

We are at an exciting point in our journey having just celebrated our first ten years.

As a Trust committed to ensuring everyone belongs, progresses, and thrives, we are looking for a CEO who can build on the successes of our first ten years, share our belief that strategic thinking, community dedication, and true partnership and collaboration are the foundations of lasting impact.

Our vision is underpinned by an ethos of inclusivity, integrity, openness and honesty. All our Principals work closely as a team and at our ten-year celebration day they all spoke about what it is like to be a leader of a BEST academy. These are a few of the quotes from them:

"BEST is a values driven organisation, with compassion at the heart. There is a lived belief in the innate worth and deep connectedness of all members of the BEST community. BEST always puts people first and aims for human flourishing."

"Each school is its own ecosystem, all very different, and celebrated as such. Professionally, I am so grateful that I am empowered to do my job, that my skills and expertise are recognised and put to good use. I simply could not work in an organisation that did not give me autonomy to flourish."

"BEST is a trust that does not just talk about values, it lives them. We are trusted to lead with integrity, supported to grow with confidence, and connected through a shared ambition to do what is right for our children, staff, and communities."

The successful candidate will have the backing of a strong Board of Trustees who will challenge and support but expect our ethos to be sustained and lived out.

Thank you for your interest in this position and we look forward to receiving your application.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "I. Bond".

Ilona Bond
Chair of Trustees

Welcome from the Founding CEO



Thank you for considering the Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST). I am sure you won't regret it!

Founding BEST in September 2016 and leading our community for its first 10 years has been the highlight of my career and an absolute joy. Over this time, our Trust has more than doubled in size, delivered Good or Outstanding Ofsted grades in all our nurseries and schools and secured financial sustainability.

More than this BEST is a vibrant community, with compassion at its heart. It is distinctive in that we encourage all our nurseries and schools to nurture their own identities, where values are lived and community needs are met. All interpret our mission – to grow the BEST in everyone – differently; all treasure difference and prize the unique. We have a high autonomy approach and are nationally acclaimed for our work on mindfulness and placing wellbeing at the core of everything we do. External review judged BEST as: 'leading the way on wellbeing in the educational sector'. (Juniper 2022)

Of course, there are challenges. BEST possesses a number of schools of different size and structure and operates across two underperforming local authorities, characterised by low outcomes. However, as part of our Big Community Listen size and structure were not regarded as a concern, with 92% of parents praising BEST schools and, outcomes at BEST schools across all key stages are regularly amongst the highest in their respective local authority. Nonetheless, we can be and do better.

BEST is in a great position and is ready for your vision, ambition and energy. The foundations are in place and you will benefit hugely from a highly professional, efficient and supportive Board; highly talented staff and local governing committees; supportive parents/carers, and the most wonderful children ever!

If you are the right person, this is a rare and tremendously exciting opportunity. I would encourage you to apply.

With every BEST wish.

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read "Alan".

Dr Alan Lee
Chief Executive Officer and National Leader of Education

About the Trust

The Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST) is a multi-academy trust providing exceptional education across a community of 11 schools and five nurseries.

Since forming in 2016, we have grown significantly into one of the largest trusts in the county. We now educate 8,000 children across the area, from nursery age to advanced level study, and have over 1,000 members of staff.



Our Schools

The 11 schools that make up the BEST family are:

- Campton Academy, Campton
- Castle Newnham All-through School, Bedford
- Etonbury Academy, Arlesey
- Gothic Mede Academy, Arlesey
- Gravenhurst Academy, Upper Gravenhurst
- Langford Village Academy, Langford
- Lawnside Academy, Biggleswade
- Pix Brook Academy, Stotfold
- Robert Bloomfield Academy, Shefford
- Samuel Whitbread Academy, Clifton
- St Christophers Academy, Dunstable



We also have five nurseries:

- BEST Nursery (Arlesey)
- BEST Nursery (Langford)
- BEST Nursery (Shefford)
- School-based nursery provision at Gothic Mede Academy
- School-based nursery provision at St Christophers Academy





It is our aim to grow the BEST in everyone, and everything we do is driven by our values. We will:

- Always put children first
- Collaborate to support and compete to challenge.
- Provide community-based provision.
- Have the courage to be compassionate.

Our aims can only be achieved if we recruit, retain and develop the highest quality workforce – and we want those we employ to be valued in the workplace.

As a single employer, we are able to offer all our staff a fantastic range of benefits, including an excellent working environment, opportunities for career development and training, and discounts and deals that will help save you money.

Full details can be found in our BEST People staff benefits brochure, available for download from our MyNewTerm careers page, or on our website at www.bestacademies.org.uk/jobs

The formative years of BEST have been a real success story – and we are looking forward to an exciting future ahead.



About the Role

BEST is seeking an exceptional leader who will take forward and develop our Trust, ensuring that all children and young people enjoy an excellent education and are well prepared for adult life.

Our new CEO will wholeheartedly embrace the vision, mission and values of the Trust and engage and empower the team to deliver excellent outcomes and provision across all our schools.

You will be able to demonstrate a strong track record of success in developing and delivering strategic school improvement through a highly collaborative approach with excellent communication and strong interpersonal skills.

Our ideal candidate will have the skills and experience to identify, nurture and co-ordinate the talent across our schools showing a commitment to developing people and building capacity.

You will have a strong understanding of the efficient and effective use of resources including open and transparent strategic financial planning and decision making to ensure our Trust priorities can be achieved.

You will work with our talented Executive Team, supported and challenged by a committed and skilled Trust Board, to ensure that BEST continues to grow and develop and be recognised as a Trust of choice.



Job Description

Post: Chief Executive Officer

Contract: Full-time, permanent

Salary: BEST-CEO Scale Pt 1-7 - £155,000 to £172,000

Location: BEST House, Shefford

Responsible to: The Board of Trustees

Start date: April 2027 with transition period from January 2027

ROLE SUMMARY:

The CEO is the Trust's strategic leader, responsible for upholding and articulating the vision, values and ethos of the Trust and for inspiring and empowering others to deliver the Trust's strategic aims.

The CEO is accountable for both the educational and financial performance of the Trust.





Job Description

LEADERSHIP, STRATEGY AND ETHOS:

- Secure the realisation of the mission and vision of BEST Schools Trust, as developed by the Trust Board, by developing a clear organisational strategy and plan.
- Strategically plan and embed a culture of unity and excellence across the organisation ensuring regular and meaningful engagement with staff (at all levels) and with stakeholders and end users.
- Motivate, lead and continue to develop the highly experienced and skilled Executive Team to achieve in-year and multi-year objectives as agreed by the Trust Board.
- Establish an 'employer of choice' culture, with a strong sense of purpose, commitment to talent management and development, sustainable workload and flexibility.
- Model a positive and sustainable workplace culture.
- Line manages the Executive Directors ensuring high performance and effectiveness across the Trust; Demonstrates a commitment to developing leaders, ensuring a succession planning strategy is in place.
- Develop positive relationships with the Board keeping them informed of key developments, successes and risks through attendance at meetings, effective reporting and joint visits.
- Ensure that the Trust Board, local governing bodies, related committees and the executive team have a clear understanding of their roles and have reporting mechanisms that contribute to efficient governance of the Trust.
- Foster a cultural and operational commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion across the Trust.





Job Description

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES, IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION:

- Nurture and develop the culture of collective commitment to excellence in all the Trust's academies supporting leaders at all levels to develop and grow capacity for improvement.
- Ensure a high-quality curriculum that is accessible to all pupils through excellent teaching and accurate assessment of pupil learning across all academies in the Trust.
- Ensure that data captured is consistent, relevant, triangulated and used formatively to inform ongoing improvement across the Trust.
- Develop a culture of self-evaluation ensuring that quality assurance processes are robust, challenging and collaborative resulting in improved outcomes for all pupils.
- Foster a culture of innovation where staff are empowered and motivated to engage in research and development activity to further the vision and strategy of the Trust as well as for their own development.
- Ensure a deep commitment to safeguarding and compliance with safeguarding responsibilities across the Trust, through effective leadership, training, systems and monitoring both centrally and in all schools.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE:

- Be the Accounting Officer for the Trust, ensuring that all requirements of the Academies Trust Handbook are met.
- Ensure that risk management systems and compliance monitoring systems are in place so that the organisation can anticipate and plan for risks and fulfil all its statutory duties and responsibilities.
- Work with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to manage the resources efficiently ensuring the Trust's strategy is supported by effective, responsive and integrated central services along with high quality operational delivery across all schools.
- Build on the 'green' culture across the Trust, creating a strategy that demonstrates a commitment to sustainability that will successfully improve social and environmental performance.
- Engage with the Board to ensure the Trust remains a viable entity including strategic discussions and decisions on ways to meet the Trust's medium and long-term needs.
- Work with the Board to develop a culture that values, encourages and ensures financial compliance, robust checks and balances and a commitment to always achieving value for money and financial probity.



Job Description

WIDER COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:

- Act as an advocate and public face of BEST, using influencing skills to maximise the profile of the organisation and promote the core purpose, values and ethos.
- Build and maintain effective communication and strong relationships with families and carers and community partners.
- Ensure that effective stakeholder networks and partnership arrangements are developed and maintained.

Accounting Officer:

The Accounting Officer role includes specific responsibilities for financial matters. It includes a personal responsibility to Parliament, and to DfE's Accounting Officer, for the Trust's financial resources.

Accounting Officers must be able to assure DfE's account officer, Parliament, and the public, of high standards of probity in the management of public funds, particularly regularity, propriety, feasibility and value for money, including economy, efficiency and effectiveness – the 3 elements of value for money.

Accounting Officers must adhere to the seven principles of public life.

The Accounting Officer must have oversight of financial transactions, by:

- Ensuring the academy Trust's property and assets are under the Trustees' control, and measures exist to prevent losses or misuse.
- Ensuring bank accounts, financial systems and financial records are operated by more than one person.
- Keeping full and accurate accounting records to support their annual accounts.



Job Description

The Accounting Officer's annual statement

The Accounting Officer must complete and sign a statement on regularity, propriety and compliance each year and submit this to DfE with the audited accounts.

The Accounting Officer's duty to raise concerns.

The Accounting Officer must take personal responsibility (which must not be delegated) for assuring the board that the Trust is complying with the funding agreement and handbook. This includes applying candour and transparency in discussions with the board relating to, but not limited to, financial assurance, financial management, financial reporting and irregularity.

The Accounting Officer must advise the board, in writing, if action it is considering is incompatible with the articles, funding agreement or handbook. This includes where such action conflicts with the duties of the accounting officer, to ensure regularity, propriety, value for money and feasibility.

Similarly, the Accounting Officer must advise the board in writing if the board fails to act where required by the funding agreement or handbook. Where the board is minded to proceed, despite the Accounting Officer's advice, the Accounting Officer must consider the board's reasons and if the Accounting Officer still considers the action proposed by the board is in breach of the articles, the funding agreement or handbook, the Accounting Officer must notify DfE's Accounting Officer immediately in writing.

Please note, while every effort has been made to explain the duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task undertaken may not be identified.

Employees will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from the BEST Trust Board to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in this job description.

Person Specification

Essential

Desirable

Qualifications and Education

- Qualified to degree level
- Qualified Teacher Status
- National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)

- NPQEL or Masters
- National Leader in Education

Training

- Evidence of commitment to continuing professional and personal development of self and others

Professional Experience

- Significant experience of headship with demonstrable impact on outcomes for pupils within a MAT setting
- Experience of working collegiately with other Professional experts (e.g. CFO, HR, COO) to deliver an organisational strategy.
- A strong communicator at all levels
- Well-developed presentation skills and the analytical ability to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences, acting as an effective ambassador for the trust
- Highly organised but flexible, and comfortable working with intellectually challenging teams and stakeholders
- Evidence of leading strategic planning and financial management, including identifying and addressing strategic risks and building organisational resilience and sustainability
- Experience of working cross educational phases between other academies/schools.

- Experience of leading a Multi Academy Trust
- Demonstrable experience of successful system leadership/school improvement across a wide and diverse range of schools leading to rapid and sustained improvement

Person Specification

Essential

Professional Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

- Current and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of effective governance systems in MATs
- Experience of line managing staff and of working effectively with internal and external partners
- Demonstrable up-to-date knowledge of developments in education.
- Proven experience of strategic financial management, including budget formulation, medium-term financial planning, monitoring and control
- Evidence of strategic planning which has brought about significant organisational change.
- Evidence of ability to build effective leadership teams and experience of partnership working of leadership teams across a Trust
- Evidence of robust performance management resulting in improvement in standards and building leadership capacity
- Experience in monitoring, analysing and reporting on an organisation's activity, outcomes and impact to Trustees or governors.

Desirable

- Proven success in building effective partnerships with the DfE and local authorities

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
	• Experience of risk management and producing proactive risk mitigation strategies. • Experience of promoting equality and diversity in relation to employment and service delivery	
Safeguarding	• Have a comprehensive knowledge of safeguarding in educational settings.	• Have significant practical experience as a designated safeguarding lead in an educational setting
Professional Competencies	• Ability to think strategically and develop a vision for the MAT underpinned by a strong ethos and values. • Ability to build positive organisational culture, encourage reflection, delegate responsibility, build teams, strive for continuous improvement and inspire staff to achieve their full potential. • Ability to think analytically, making informed use of inspection, benchmarking, KPIs and research findings. • Ability to investigate problems, evaluate options, identify solutions, make and implement plans and monitor outcomes. • Well-developed written, presentation and public speaking skills including the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of audiences. • Ability to organise work, prioritise tasks, make decisions and manage time effectively providing calm and mature leadership in the context of a dynamic and fast environment. • Ability to manage conflict effectively.	

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Personal Qualities	• Positive (can-do) approach to handling issues and interaction with others by using full range of interpersonal skills (e.g. tact, diplomacy, negotiation, assertiveness) • Ability to demonstrate high standards of integrity, confidentiality and reliability • A team player with the ability to establish sound relationships and help develop a cohesive team. • Demonstrate a variety of leadership styles and management approaches. • To have emotional resilience • To have the ability to self-evaluate and reflect. • Able to adapt to changing circumstances and new ideas. • Visible and approachable, empathetic and enjoys engaging with children of all ages, staff, parents and the wider community. • To be an inspiring role model for staff and pupils	
Physical	• Ability to travel	
Other	• Values and respects the views and needs of children and young people • Appropriate DBS clearance (before post is taken up)	• An awareness and understanding of Mindfulness within an educational setting

We are committed to the safeguarding and promotion of children's welfare and offers of employment are subject to DBS clearance.

How to apply...

To arrange an informal, confidential discussion regarding this role, please contact Laura McGunigle on 07931 384 683 or email Laura@satiseducation.co.uk

- **The closing date for applications is:** Monday 5th October at 9.00am
- **Shortlisting will take place:** w/c Monday 5th October
- **Interviews will take place on:** Monday 19th & Tuesday 20th October 2026

Please read the information in this pack. Apply online (*) via the MyNewTerm website at www.mynewterm.com before the closing date.

Visits are warmly invited and can be arranged via Satis Education, please contact Laura McGunigle on 07931 384 683 or email Laura@satiseducation.co.uk

BEST is an equal opportunities employer, and we are committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All offers of employment will be subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks and references, including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance.

Strictly no agencies.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Bedfordshire Schools Trust
Shefford Road, Clifton, Shefford,
Bedfordshire SG17 5QS

